

10th Anniversary Issue: Part 1

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FOR SHAUNT, IN MEMORIAM

Shaunt Basmajian was a musician and poet. His writing has been published extensively, and is recognized internationally. Shaunt produced numerous articles, chapbooks and books, all of which challenged the limitations of the printed medium. He co-founded the Canadian Poetry Association and wrote regularly for Cross-Canada Writers' Magazine. He was outspoken about the holocaust that the Armenian people suffered. He frequently expressed the wish that one day Armenia would be liberated. In 1986, while driving cab, Shaunt was the victim of a knife attack. He was robbed of \$80. Shaunt also suffered from a rare heart condition. He died in January of 1990 at the age of 39. Shaunt sent us the following article in late 1989. It is an auto-biographical text dealing with the knife attack in the cab. Shaunt was much respected in the writing community, and he will be deeply missed by his friends and colleagues. Donations may be made to the Armenian Earthquake Relief Fund or to the Save Armenia Fund which will help the Armenian people during the civil war that is currently being fought in Armenia [Armenian National Committee, Attn: Lilly, 45 Hallcrown Place, Willowdale, Ontario, Canada M2J 4Y4].



THE STABBING (AS THE PUZZLE) A True Story By Shaunt Basmajian

The sight of the blood gushing out had an effect on everyone else. As the victim I was too busy digesting other things. But why did they do it after I gave them my wallet? Even I couldn't believe that. I was sure that they'd chase me until I was caught. It's times like these that even Ronald Reagan makes sense. As the cliché goes "people don't know what it's like until it happens to them". Right. The other cabbies told me they'd never pick "their" kind up. But I've never had that problem before. It's not sociological. It's more complicated than that. The situation will always remain complex and unexplained. But if I had a semi-automatic I would have loved to blow their heads off. Mathematically speaking the odds of this happening is approximately 20,000 to 1. What was on tv and the newspapers was exaggerated. Like they tell you, "it is just propaganda". People with power just making noise. I'll never know the full extent of the story, anyway. But if I did it to them I'd be stereotyped as a racist. But it is more complicated than that. It's times like these that I wish I could just roll over in bed and forget everything. Where I was and why I'm here and why I was born. The mystery behind the universe. The Armenian holocaust. Harold Ballard. Just forget everything. And everything.

Anyway, I was still thinking about them when the beautiful blonde nurse walked in. She was in her mid-twenties with that wide pair of blue eyes you rarely see on the cover of a magazine or anywhere else, for that matter. "How are you today?" she asked. "I'm fine" I replied. "I'm here to give you a wash and bath." I thought that might help get the situation off my mind. But I still couldn't forget it. I'll never forget it. After all it was premeditated. Another 1/2-inch and I would have been history. But why did the bastard try to cut my fingers off? And why did he jab the knife part way through my lungs? After all they had my money. I was more than happy to give it to them. What more did they want? "Hope I'm not hurting you?" "No, I'm fine!" "I was just thinking about something!" "You shouldn't worry about anything but I know how you must feel." Right.

My mind started to drift away again. It was nice to be touched by someone gentle. I started to think about the time I was at my buddy Al's place watching the hockey game. Even I was surprised when the blood came out gushing again out of my mouth then. But the doctors said this wasn't connected either. I suppose when the Nazis invaded Poland that wasn't connected either. Assholes. I remember telling the driver that the sound of an ambulance doesn't sound as loud when you've been in it a second time. Like anything else, I guess. But in this operation it seemed like they all were wearing masks or sunglasses. And it was all so informal and high tech. And the nerve of the bloody nurse saying to the head doctor that "they wouldn't have done all this if it happened in his country!" What a bitch! Who's country is it anyway? And so what if you only make \$16.50/hour. That's not bad for yapping your mouth off to your patients! "Hope you feel cleaner?" "Thank you, that was nice!" "Well I have to go and see about the others!" "Right!" "But try to relax." "Uh-huh." But my mind just started to drift back to the cab ride again. The 7-11. The click of the knife. The scream of the young passenger. The two runaways. And everything else. And I guess I'll never forget it! How can I? Bloody bastards. But as the cliché goes, "life does go on." And "it could have been worse." And "I was lucky to get out alive." And so on and so on and so on. Yeah, right! Bastards.

∞
4.5"

.5 1 .5 2 .5 3 .5 4 .5

RRRRRRRRRRRR

Real
Real to reel
They'r too real

Before your ears

Playback when your ears

Playback when the head is on

When the head is breaking down

The/head/ is/ break/ ing/ down/ language

Language is breaking down silence

Silence is breaking down silence

Silence is between

Silence is the screen

The war machine

The non organic life

Rhizomatic chips

↓ Buy a computer

The screen is small quares

on the side of which

precise gestures require

Additional gestures require

Additional revolutions require

Additional revolutions required

Otherwise on your left

calling for curves

On your right

↓ trying to make a point

Either way generating a point

Either way generating reality

Access Run Access Run

Daily level Group scale

↓ Vortical flow

Draw lines Draw lines

Striste the space

Take take take the place

and erase yourself

a d r s o r l

9' 15"

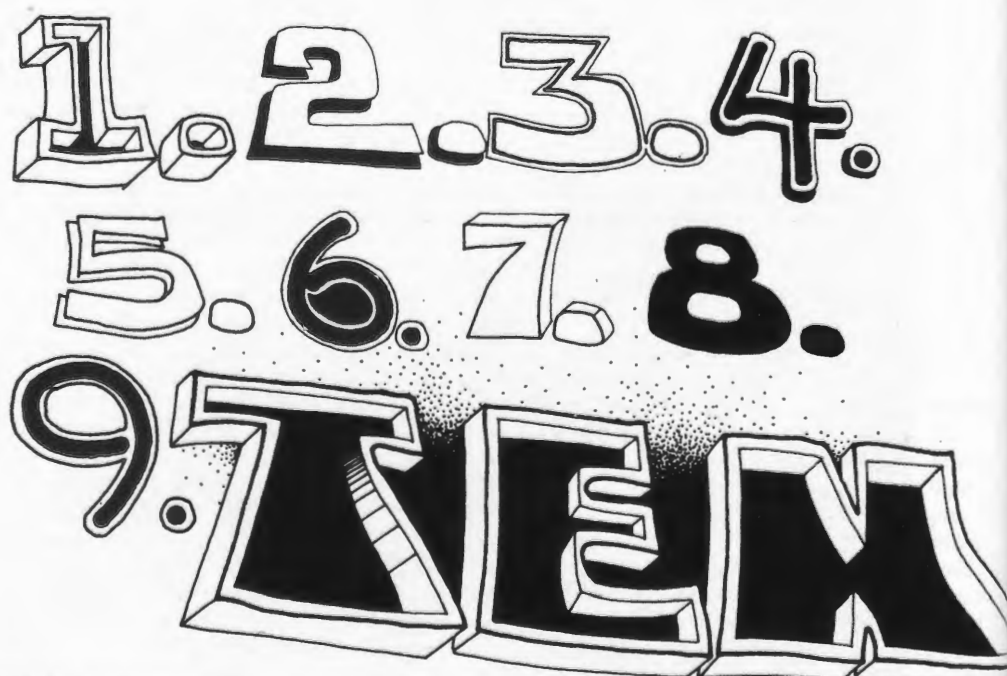
REAL TO REEL, Pierre-André Arcand, février 1987.

EDITORIAL

TEN, a full number, a cycle completed, a re-birth. Something both tenable and ephemeral happens when you publish a magazine this long. You begin by riding off in a cloud of dust tilting at the windmills. But by the time you arrive at the target point you find it has moved, the earth has shifted on its axis and only the hoofprints behind you give any indication of where you've been and where you might be heading. Or so it seems. Over the years *Rampike* has sought to present art and writing that is somehow innovative in both structure and subject matter. To a large extent, we feel that we have done exactly that. Humbly, we have tried to learn from our errors and our successes. And slowly, slowly, we have begun to understand what it means to publish a magazine of this sort. Since its inception, *Rampike* has expanded its horizons tremendously. *Rampike* began as a Toronto based journal and rapidly spread to include art and writing from across North America, South America, Europe, the Iron Curtain, India, Australia and Japan. Our distribution followed a similar route. We've been lucky enough to publish some very exceptional people. Theoreticians like Jacques Derrida, Marshall McLuhan, Northrop Frye, artists such as Joseph Beuys, Dennis Oppenheim and Laurie Anderson, writers including William Burroughs, Nicole Brossard, Josef Skvorecky, and political figures such as Rene Levesque and John Kenneth Galbraith. It is somehow ungracious to name only a few names in an editorial because so many writers and artists and thinkers have contributed so much to this magazine. It is difficult to express enough thanks to our many excellent contributors from Toronto, from Quebec, from Canada and the world. Thanks especially to those who have supported *Rampike* from the beginning. Thanks to the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council without whom we could not have lasted ten years. Thanks to our typesetters and the Coach House Press for their patient preparation and printing. And finally, thanks to you, our readers, for taking the time to consider our particular, and we hope, unique, point of view. If we have amused you and perhaps amazed you from time to time over our first ten years, then, we have done what we have set out to do. Thank you all!

ÉDITORIAL

DIX, un nombre entier, un cycle achevé, une renaissance. Lorsque vous publiez une publication pendant aussi longtemps, quelque chose de solide et d'éphémère à la fois prend corps. Vous commencez par bousculer un nuage de poussière en combattant des moulins à vent. Mais lorsque vous arrivez au but, vous découvrez qu'il s'est déplacé. La Terre a pivoté sur son axe et il semble que seules les marques de sabots, laissées derrière vous, indiquent votre point de départ et votre destination éventuelle. Au fil des ans, *Rampike* a cherché à présenter des écrits et de l'art qui, d'une manière ou d'une autre, innovaient et par leurs compositions et par leurs objets. Dans une large mesure, nous pensons avoir tout à fait rempli cette mission. Humblement, nous avons essayé de tirer des leçons de nos erreurs et de nos réussites. Et, doucement, très doucement, nous avons commencé à comprendre ce que représentait la publication d'un tel magazine. Depuis sa création, *Rampike* a considérablement élargi ses horizons. Domiciliée à Toronto lors de sa parution, la publication accueillait rapidement des écrits et de l'art en provenance d'Amérique du Nord, d'Amérique du Sud, d'Europe, du Rideau de Fer, de l'Inde, de l'Australie et du Japon. Notre diffusion s'élargit en conséquence et dans ces mêmes régions. Nous avons eu la chance exceptionnelle de publier des personnes remarquables. Des théoriciens, tels que Jacques Derrida, Marshall McLuhan, Northrop Frye, des artistes, tels que Joseph Beuys, Dennis Oppenheim et Laurie Anderson, des écrivains, y compris William Burroughs, Nicole Brossard, Josef Skvorecky, et des personnalités politiques, telles que René Lévesque et John Kenneth Galbraith. Il est quelque peu irrévérencieux de ne citer que quelques noms dans un éditorial, car tant d'écrivains, d'artistes et de penseurs ont contribué à cette publication. Il est difficile d'exprimer tous les remerciements dus à nos nombreux et excellents collaborateurs, de Toronto, de Québec, du Canada, et du monde entier. Nos sincères remerciements à ceux qui ont soutenu *Rampike* dès sa parution. Des remerciements au Conseil des Arts du Canada et au Conseil des Arts de l'Ontario, sans lesquels nous n'aurions pu connaître dix années de publication. Des remerciements à nos compositeurs et à la Coach House Press pour la patience exercée pour la préparation et l'impression. Et, enfin, merci à vous, nos lecteurs, pour avoir pris le temps de prendre en considération notre position particulière et, nous l'espérons, unique. Si nous vous avons amusés et peut-être surpris, de temps à autre, pendant ces dix années, alors, nous sommes parvenus au but que nous recherchions. Merci à tous.



CHUCK STAKE / JUNE / 88 - CALGARY, THE OLYMPIC CITY *Chuck Stake*

Karl Jirgen

PARODY/PARADOX

An Interview with Linda Hutcheon

Linda Hutcheon is a prolific theorist of postmodern aesthetics. She has served as president of the Toronto Semiotic Circle and has been an executive committee member of the Modern Language Association, and The International Comparative Literature Association. From 1988-89 she was the Robarts Professor of Canadian Studies at York University. Her critical texts which include *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox* (Wilfred Laurier Press, 1980), *Formalism and the Freudian Aesthetic: The Example of Charles Mauron* (Cambridge University Press, 1984), *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth Century Art Forms* (Methuen, 1985), *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory and Fiction* (Routledge, 1988) have received world-wide recognition. She has recently been conducting intensive studies in Canadian culture and irony. Her upcoming book, *The Politics of Postmodernism* will be available from Routledge Press. Prof. Hutcheon spoke with Rampike's Karl Jirgens during the summer of 1989.



KJ: In *Formalism and the Freudian Aesthetic* you explain that literary studies have split into opposite directions, between a "humanistic discipline" or more traditional modes of interpretation that seek meaning in a text, and the "pursuit of signs" or what we generally refer to as semiotics.

LH: Actually the better terminology might be that suggested by Roger Seamon recently when he wrote about "hermeneutic" and "scientific" impulses in critical theory today.

KJ: What is the distinction?

LH: I suppose the most emphatic way of defining either would be to use the reductive rhetoric of its opponent. (Given that literary studies constitutes an institutionally based enterprise, the increase in professionalism recently has often led to these frequently debilitating turf wars!) The hermeneutic impulse would be seen by its opposite as an elitist, impressionistic exercise of the critic's innate appreciation of ineffable beauty or exquisitely fine moral vision. The scientific would be seen as the sterile, pseudo-objective description of form at the expense of all human content, meaning, or even interest. That's the extreme formulation of each, of course.

KJ: Have your recent studies in irony and parody led you to review the peculiarities of this schism?

LH: I suspect that it was more my particular position in that schism that actually determined my interest in parody and irony. What happened is that, from being trained (in chronological order) as a Leavisite, a New Critic, a Structuralist and a Hermeneut, I suppose I had become what people today call a Feminist Poststructuralist with a strong interest in the branch of semiotics called pragmatics. Irony is a tempting trope to investigate when you are interested in what Peirce and Eco called "unlimited semiosis" and the role of language in the constitution of the subject.

KJ: You also mention in *Formalism and the Freudian Aesthetic* that in recent years it is Paul Ricoeur who has most probingly questioned the epistemological and metaphysical issues involved with psychocriticism and literary analysis. You point out that Lacanian analysts appeared to be aware of the metaphysical nature of their work, but structuralists perhaps did not. Do you feel that at the heart of this matter lies the difference between art and science?

LH: Less art and science than, maybe, some difference between the "subjective" and the "objective." I realize this is a distinction that Nietzsche said had no value whatsoever for aesthetics, but John Casey once convincingly argued that the dichotomy between them has, in fact, been the central dilemma of criticism in English since Wordsworth. We have spent almost two centuries trying to resolve or solve it and often those attempts have been in terms of art and science. Do you remember Eliot's platinum catalyst image for how the imagination worked? In that particular book I was most interested in how that dichotomy gets translated — in modernist terms — into the clash between a formalist (classical) impulse and an impressionistic (romantic) one.

KJ: A number of critics such as Paul Ricoeur, Fredric Jameson, Julia Kristeva and yourself, have to some degree dealt with the difference between "humanistic" and "semiotic" systems or subjective and objective approaches. Where would you say you stand in relation to other critics with reference to what we might call a "post-modern" context?

LH: Actually my interest in postmodernism as a cultural phenomenon (including critical theory) is in the fact that it appears to straddle the fence: it both exploits and seeks to repudiate the cultural dominants in which it finds itself inexorably enmeshed. It is certainly paradoxical in its contextualizing contesting of humanistic universals, for instance, while at the same time milking those "universals" for all their traditional power and value. Isn't there a centre to even the most decentred of postmodern critical stances? What is power to Foucault? writing to Derrida? the Phallus to Lacan? These are wilful paradoxes, deliberate dilemmas.

KJ: In *Narcissistic Narrative* you discuss the issue of self-reflexivity in metafictional writing. In your preface to the paperback edition, you say that metafiction's vital link between art and life exists on the level of imaginative process. You go on to say that you situate that process within a consideration of discourse. You make it clear that self-reflexivity is not an especially new phenomenon. With this in mind, what self-reflections do you have on your model of the inter-relationship of mimesis, discourse and the imaginative process?

LH: Self-reflection is not quite the kind of narcissism that book wanted to provoke, but—. The preface you mention was written primarily in response to my uneasiness at reprinting — in 1984 — something I had originally written as a doctoral thesis in 1975. In that decade I had moved from being a reader-response-tainted formalist to a critical position that acknowledged the role of political and ideological address in the formal structuration and effect of any text. This is obviously where discourse enters. I suspect the three books on postmodernism [*A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (1988); *The Canadian Postmodern* (1988) and *The Politics of Postmodernism* (1989)], all reflect this change. Postmodern art and theory themselves, of course, won't ever let us forget (or ignore) social practices, the historical conditions of meaning, and the positions from which those texts we are reading are both produced and received. Somehow liberal humanist approaches to literature had managed to suppress both the act and the responsibility of meaning-making as a process, just as it had separated discourse from the notion of the exercise of power. Postmodernism works to reveal the complicity of power and discourse by re-emphasizing the process, the act of saying as an inherently political act.

KJ: In your working paper "The Politics of Representation in Canadian Art and Literature", written during your stay as Robarts Professor of Canadian Studies at York University (1988-1989), you also speak of mimesis and politics and their relationship to the self-reflexive and parodic art of the postmodern. You point out the relative importance of parody to the representation of history, and the history of representation. If history itself is representation, a type of "Other" to society, then a parody of historical modes of representation can be thought of as a mirror of a mirror. As we know with a mirror image, things are reversed, left is right and so on. Does the second mirror of parody show us that what is right is right and all that is left is left? Would answering this question necessarily lead to an infinite regression?

LH: Nicely put! But your mirror image — and the subsequent infinite regression image — both depend, do they not, upon a concept of mimesis that is essentially a realist one: Stendhal's idea of the novel as the mirror walking down the road? What parody and other postmodern rhetorical strategies do is to foreground the important Saussurian insight that language *constitutes* rather than *reflects* reality. It is the constructed, rather than the reflected or mirrored, nature of both history and art as re-presentation that postmodern fiction, for example highlights.

KJ: Yes, that makes sense. When I was referring to the differences between left and right in mirror images, I was also coyly alluding to political matters. Now, if we accept the Saussurian idea that language *constitutes* reality, what happens when we come to literary texts that are ironic attacks on socio-political reality? I am thinking of fictional texts that, among other things, pointedly criticize real or actual political figures and situations. So, we can consider the utterance, or the act of saying as a political act that is produced in response to certain historical/socio-political conditions. And we can read that statement as a *position* in reference to those socio-political conditions at the time it was uttered. But, when we read the utterance in this way, don't we return to the objective/subjective schism that you were speaking of earlier?

LH: Not really, though there will always be some sort of "schism", as you say, or some sort of paradox. Thanks to ironic inversion, left may look left, and right may look right. But left and right as political positions only take their meaning from each other. We're back again to Saussure, but this time to his notion of difference. What is fascinating for me about those political novels you mention — and I presume you mean those by writers like E.L. Doctorow, Timothy Findley, Roa Bastos, Christa Wolf and so on — is that they are doubly political. As you say, they pointedly criticize a current (or historical) political situation. Yet on the other hand, they are often — and this is where the parody often enters — extremely self-reflexive. They are at one and the same time saying to their readers: "I am political" and "I am art". Modernist aesthetics didn't feel the least bit comfortable with that conjunction: art should be autonomous, self-sufficient artifact. Postmodernism uses that metafictional self-consciousness about artifice to point to the other way in which these texts are political: that is, that they are unavoidably very much a part of the situation they also desire to criticize. So you are dead-on when you say there is still a "schism" or paradox. I'm just not sure it's the objective/subjective one, except indirectly. It's more complicity/critique.

KJ: You have been conducting a research seminar on irony at the Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies at York University recently. Are you planning a book on irony?

LH: Actually, probably two books. One will be a preliminary study, a way of thinking through more theoretical issues that I'd like to explore later. It will be a series of essays on the ironies of Canadian culture and also on the use of irony as a rhetorical strategy by Canadian artists, in particular poets and visual artists, in relation to a series of self-defining self-positionings: that is, the position in response to the past, both French and English, and the present (mostly in terms of American culture); the positions taken by the regional in relation to the central; the "minoritarian" (female; ethnic; visible minorities; native; gay, etc.) positioning with regard to majority cultures. I guess what has been behind these different investigations has been the general postmodern questioning of any notion of coherent, stable, autonomous

Later on, I want to work on a study not so much of a theory of irony but more of the discursive politics of it, its various and conflicting motives and uses.

KJ: You are working as an advisory editor for the *Lexicon of Contemporary Literatures in English*, *The Dictionary of Contemporary Criticism* and for Utrecht Publications in General and Comparative Literature. What kinds of things are you dealing with when working on these publications?

LH: Well, they are all interesting and very different projects. I suppose, now that you group them together like that, that there is some sort of common denominator — a desire to open up what has been almost a “closed shop” of either canonical texts or theoretical discourse. The *Lexicon* is devoted to bringing forward the work of contemporary — living — writers (rather than safely dead and canonized ones) as worthy of serious study. It is interesting that this is being done out of the Netherlands. Like Canada, Holland is one of those cultures that manages to be both marginalized and central — and so, in a wonderful position to theorize the postmodern! The *Dictionary* is one of a number of attempts in Canada and elsewhere today to try to explicate the technical terminology (a.k.a. jargon, to those unsympathetic) that has been gradually developing over the years in literary studies, but seems to have just taken off in the last decade. It wants to stop both those accusations of jargon and also the complacent (frankly, often obnoxious) stance of those who use their language as a weapon of exclusion. As a teacher, I welcome both kinds of enterprise.

KJ: Do you have any other areas of interest or projects in progress right now?

LH: There is one major one that I feel a real commitment to — both politically and pedagogically. I am co-editing an anthology of interviews and short fiction that focuses on the questions of ethnicity, race and multiculturalism in Canada. The idea is to challenge the Canadian educational system at secondary and university levels and the public at large to rethink their notion of the canon of Can Lit in terms of the multi-ethnic and multi-racial social reality of the country. As a crypto-ethnic myself (I was a Bortolotti before becoming a Hutcheon), I know that I increasingly feel that the idea of Canada as simply an Anglo-French cultural entity needs contesting. Not that bilingual and bicultural duality isn't complicated enough, of course! And that's part of the problem.

KJ: Is there any connection between this and the irony projects?

LH: However bizarre this may sound: yes. Irony is a wonderful mode for addressing a dominant culture (for Canadians this could be American, British, French; for women, it is patriarchal) from within its structures of understanding while simultaneously signalling a position of difference and opposition. As such it becomes the rhetorical weapon of choice of many racially and ethnically marginalized voices: think of the tone of the writing of Dionne Brand, Marlene Nourbese Philip, Austin Clark, Pier Giorgio di Cicco, Andrew Suknaski, Himani Bannerje, Di Brandt, and so on. These are all becoming the new and important voices in Canadian Literature, and their often strange mix of self-deprecation and anger is not unrelated to their success.

[illegible]

Image by Anna Noël

COMPLETED NOTES

Interview with Robert Kroetsch

In this interview with Rampike, Robert Kroetsch speaks about his most recent book Completed Field Notes and about writing in general. Kroetsch's work has been enthusiastically received wherever it is read. Eli Mandel has called Kroetsch "a creative force of stunning power". Born in Alberta, winner of the 1969 Governor General's Award for The Studhorse Man, Kroetsch currently teaches at the University of Manitoba. [For further information on Completed Field Notes or other books by Robert Kroetsch, please contact: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 481 University Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5G 2E9.]



KJ: You've spoken about the long poem as a series of climaxes not unlike sexual climaxes, or rises and falls, a kind of roller coaster ride that never ends. And yet, here you have completed a long poem, is *Completed Field Notes* a kind of final literary ejaculation?

RK: Well, this would be the most outrageous thing I could do, to finish an unfinishable poem.

KJ: OK, that makes sense. I was also interested in the “Country and Western” section of the book, and it made me happy to hear you read from it at your launch at Harbourfront. One of the subsections in that portion of the book is called “Excerpts from the Real World”. I was wondering if there was some kind of pun going on with “real” in terms of Lacan or something like that?

RK: Yeah, I'm playing with that notion of "real", and even to excerpt a "real" world is already to destroy or bring it into question. And then there is that reference to Lacan, at least once in the poem.

KJ: Yes, in reference to the Mountie.

RK: Yes, that's right.

KJ: I suppose that the mountie represents authority, a type of father figure. I just wonder how far can we take this? On the one hand, just in terms of completion, Lacan himself has said that self-examination or psychoanalysis can go on forever, but once you realize that it can go on, you can stop.

RK: That's interesting, I hadn't thought about it that way, but my head agrees. You're right, that's exactly it, I like that. There are some very profound reasons for me being able to quit that being one of them.

KJ: In regard to this Lacanian notion of the “real”; it seems to me that the “Country and Western” section deals with desire in some way and with unreachable desire. The woman is associated with the Unicorn, a fabulous animal that exists on a dimension that can never actually be reached.

RK: I agree that that section is about desire, the long poem is about desire and it goes back to what you were saying, and I think that once you realize that what you're after is the unrealizable, it becomes just as interesting to quit as it does to go on. Earlier in one of the poems I think it says that even to desire an end to desire, is to desire. But this changes it.

KJ: In some places you are talking about the influence of time and how you look back at the poem and you say you never wrote this. "This is a poem that I didn't write and not because I wasn't writing and not because it isn't a poem, I'm beside myself purely as a way to anticipate the past." I see that as a spatio-temporal disjunction, as a gesture to the "Other" self. The past self or the future self. But always the Other, and the text itself is a kind of Other as well.

RK: I very much got interested in that notion of the Other and the notion that we read ourselves through the Other, but it gets into this double bind again. It has to be like you and it has to be unlike you. In order for us to be able to read an Other and deal with that — that's why even the pronoun "I" starts to become so problematic. The minute I say "I", I've already lost myself because I've made up another self.

KJ: That seems to tie in with your use of the image of the mirror. The idea of wanting to buy mirrors that other people have used.

RK: Yeah, exactly. Again, that's sort of a comic structure. I think that it says exactly what this Lacanian thing is all about. And of course you have the notion of the mirror which Lacan is so obsessed with, but, I want that mirror to show me the Other.

KJ: I see. Then, I saw this thing in your writing with the shoes and the shirts. You talk about absences, and about things like shoes that dream of being filled, and empty shirts in the closet, waiting, maybe slipping off the hanger. To me those absences signal a kind of a fetish. You focus on the shoe instead of the thing that goes into the shoe. Just as you would focus on the absence of the object of desire or talk about the object of desire through absence.

RK: I like the word fetish there. I think it says a lot because it goes beyond notions of metonymy and so on. It really is something else that is happening there. It's desire again really, you know.

KJ: In a funny kind of way, I felt that you were using language much the same way you use images. That language represents a presence *and* an absence.

RK: I think so. One thing that has happened in the last 10 or 20 years or so, certainly in my mind, is the whole kind of doubt about the idea of image which, in a sense, collapses into language in a certain way. So, it does become what you said, it becomes a question of language. The notion of image is as much a convention as we now see in the notion of realism, a set of conventions. That's a puzzling question, now that we look back. I mean why isn't "the" as much an image as "cow"? Why did they think that only certain types of nouns had this kind of privileged position as images? It's just ridiculous.

KJ: You seem to be exploring new territories. I was interested in your use of the "Ishtar" image. We looked up the reference and found that she is a type of bitch goddess, the goddess of courtesans in ancient Babylon among other things. And you make direct comments and references to "Ishtar". Is she the unobtainable or maybe the audience?

RK: In a sense, she is an unobtainable object of desire that can be attained. A kind of paradox again. I'm also interested in her, as the Christian story went, as the "whore of Babylon". So you get a kind of metamorphosis. What I'm interested in also, is how minimal you can make story. Just the word "Ishtar" gives us all the story. And another thing she suggests, is this kind of whore/virgin dichotomy that Western thinking has so much of. It's all right there. And again, it is interesting, a kind of matriarchal structure. One of the things that kept intriguing me more and more was audience, and where is the audience in the text?

KJ: Perhaps another opposition between presence and absence? There is one section where you are looking for your own book, *On the Silence of Cucumbers*. The bookstore is in Holland. It's kind of a funny inversion because you become an audience for something of your own which doesn't actually exist.

RK: Another thing, as you write the long poem, you become audience instead of writer in a sense, because you start to be confronted by the text more and more.

KJ: So do you feel that you will leave Poetry behind?

RK: Well, I would like to go over the edge into some other genre. I do feel that this is completed. My language obsession continues. I don't want to pretend I'm free of that. What you said about the Lacanian thing is certainly one way to understand the completion. I think another thing that happens is that my sense of what a self is, changes so radically that the statement about it is completed.

KJ: Maybe there is a bit of the trickster coming through here.

RK: I think maybe I am being tricked you see, and that would fit perfectly.

JF: I think in another way that completing the *Field Notes* resolves the question of audience in a way and gives it over to anyone who wants to approach it critically or simply for the visceral enjoyment of the text itself. The audience doesn't have to sit hanging, wondering if they have all the pieces, it belongs to the audience and there is nothing that can be done about that.

RK: I quite agree. Then the audience can have a different kind of pleasure. They don't have that anxiety.

KJ: Still there is another kind of anxiety that opens up from within the text because you're dealing with things like overdetermination of language. Instead of saying "a rose is red" you can say "red roses are red". That becomes a different kind of opening. So, just because it's closed at the tail end doesn't mean its not open elsewhere.

RK: I also think that the book is fat enough that you never really get a hold of it. So there's another kind of looseness or freedom that takes place. With "Excerpts from the Real World" I find myself as reader now, as audience hearing different tones even as I read it. It can be kind of cynical almost, then at the same time it can be tender if you let yourself go into it at a different place.

KJ: So, do you think you will do more critical texts?

RK: No, what I would like to attempt is some anti-autobiographical writing. That's my real intention. I think that it's impossible to write autobiography. So how could I resist writing it? It goes back to Gertrude Stein, you know. If it can be done, then why do it. And that's it you know. I gave a talk in Germany when it all started to happen for me. Last month I guess it was. About my going up North to become a writer, 20 years old or whatever, and I wrote this essay, and my wife, she looked at it and said this is all hindsight! So, I wanted to deal with that tension. The fact that we can read a narrative into our lives and know at the same time that there are conventions, strategies, deceptions, self-deceptions that enable us. I don't know — it's what I would call at the moment anti-autobiography.

KJ: That sounds like an interesting attack. It's an area not too many have explored either.

RK: No. At least the kind of autobiographical writing that I read as a young man. Somebody can remember 22 years ago on the afternoon of a certain day! It seems a little unlikely to me.

KJ: So is that going to be a fat book too?

RK: It's going to be a slow one. This is another 15 year project. I'm really pressing time with this.

JF: It seems in some way to beg to involve the concerns that are deep in *Field Notes*.

RK: You're quite right. I see it as the inverse side of *Field Notes*. So. I think in that sense I am still talking to the issues of *Field Notes*. Coming at them from the underbelly.

JF: Putting the guts on the outside?

RK: Yeah, that's right. It's an inversion autobiography, if you will.

KJ: In *The Completed Field Notes* there is a portion where you talk about a sharp-tongued woman who deals with the protagonist, and a reference to a "pricked rejoinder" and that certainly sounds like some kind of castration thing going on. The prick and the sharp tongue.

RK: Oh sure. Well, I think it would be ridiculous to see Ishtar if you will, as something benevolent. She is something very threatening to the male.

KJ: I noticed that the whole thing was couched in language about language. In that poem, the phallus becomes language, so you are really talking about voice being cut off.

RK: Yeah, I was playing with that word "rejoinder". It is language, you're right. It was punning with the notion of "sharp-tongued".

KJ: Language being used to cut off language, and in another way, that's a type of completion, or closure, a cut-off.

RK: Yeah, because the word "completed" there is so interesting to me, as opposed to the "complete", or "entire" or whatever you want to call it.

JF: Or, "collected"?



RK: Yeah, "collected", exactly, which would be the logical word in publishing probably. It is the *completed* that is shocking to me you see. It is almost, what was your word? Castration. There is that, when he talks about castrating calves. The male anxiety, thinking "Jesus, this is dangerous work!" I mean you're right on about these things, I like that sense exactly. That is a version of completion, completed.

KJ: The funny thing is that you are entering into another mythic dimension, and I think with this autobiographical or anti-autobiographical work that what you are talking about is a kind of re-claiming of the phallus. It's like a new opening and because it's an opening, it has no determined boundaries. It's like a regeneration.

RK: What I like about the sense of no boundary is that I have no sense that I am going to go from the beginning to the end. That doesn't interest me. I could go into a particular patch somewhere and stumble around. What if you take a 10 minute period of your life and try to read it for instance, instead of reading a life. It's like reading a line of poetry in a sense. What enables you to write a line of poetry is a mind boggling question. Aside from the temptation to see vast design. You can get right down to one word, one day, when you said, "yes" when you could have said "no" or something like that.

JF: It seems like it is more of a process of examining the junctures where *lateral* moves took place rather than *forward* ones.

RK: Yeah, the notion of lateral moves. Yeah, you're right on.

KJ: Maybe we could make a lateral move here and take off on the word "boundary". At one time you were co-editing *Boundary Two* magazine. I was wondering if you could say a few words about that and looking back at that now, what your thoughts on it are.

RK: Yes, OK. Well at the time Bill Spanos and I thought of *Boundary Two* as a kind of second boundary after the Pound era began, if you want to call it an era. And it was, in a sense, crying out to be named and described. And we had that subtitle of post-modern literature. Of course the word "post-modern" which we thought of as a neutral term, turned out to be pretty hot stuff to handle. Well, looking back, you realize that these are almost fictive strategies that make for a junction and disjunction and kind of willfully announcing disjunction almost makes it true in a way. There is that question. There were surprises, we thought it was going to be a study of literature and it turned out, really, to be the study of culture, which was nice as far as I'm concerned, but it was a study that left us, in a certain way, ill-equipped because we were all trained to deal with literature and suddenly someone was saying you can't talk about that. But that was exciting too, and that became another version of boundary, a boundary both as something that joins and separates. Again, Spanos, I suppose, would have still defended the metaphor in terms of depth, while I'm much more concerned with the notion of surface, in the sense that it is harder to read surface than it is to read depth, it seems to me. It's easy to be profound but how do you describe a —

KJ: A prairie.

RK: It's funny how now in 1989, I could never go to that word "boundary" with that sense of security about it. I would have to find another word now, it's funny how a word exhausts itself. I could call a magazine "Boundary" now.

KJ: Or even "Field" or "Space".

RK: Yeah, it would be fun to try to discover the word that would let you speak. Isn't that interesting?

KJ: Let's jump out of the boundary for a minute. We moved into a lateral thing, maybe we could move back again. Jim, you were about to make a comment when I digressed on the Buffalo mag.

JF: One of the questions I had been mulling over in the last couple of moments is the idea of boundaries and points of reference and it struck me that in *Field Notes* and in the out west books, landscape is one of the dominant features of the text. It seems that there is a very profound awareness of the absolute necessity of a fixed point of reference when you're in a landscape that wide.

RK: Well, one of the things I've noticed recently is how geographical my world is, even more specifically than landscape which may be a convention in a certain way. And I've noticed that with younger writers, younger poets that geography is not there anymore. Mine is literally trees, flowers, birds; though I kind of had a temptation to move into language of landscape but I would never lose sight of this geographical ting. I'm puzzled, and I want to understand where you guys go. Is it because I grew up rural? In the sense that there was still an awareness of landscape. Does the genuine city life alter that, what I call, ground?

KJ: I do that in my own writing. I cross-reference the country that I used to visit in my childhood with cityscape. Landscape and cityscape, that's how I deal with it. I don't know about other people.

JF: My feeling is that grasping points of reference in an urbanscape can be a lot trickier and obviously there are less organic qualities to the points of reference. They are extremely artificial and I'm painfully aware of it. They are points of reference that can be comprehended in terms of other points of reference. They are significant only in how we refer to other things, whereas that might not be true of a large natural landscape.

RK: That helps, right. There's lots of change here, it must be 6 months since I've been in Toronto, and the sense of changed landscape is really quite amazing. Whereas I go back to Alberta and the trees don't seem to have grown. They are still there, doing their thing.

KJ: In our last interview we spoke a little about the new electronic media. Have you used it much?

RK: I haven't really, no.

KJ: So, you're staying away from computers?

RK: No, I'm not staying away. In fact I was thinking that when I go back to writing my novel, one way to get a new take on it might be to use a computer. Just to get a new sense of value on it. Feel your way into it.

KJ: George Bowering sometimes talks about word processors or computers and typewriters. I think he once said that he used his typewriter for one kind of writing and his desk top computer for another type of writing. I think it was the poetry he did on a typewriter and the prose on a computer because he could move faster on the computer and he said it gave him a different feeling.

JF: A different rhythm.

KJ: Yeah, the typewriter slows you down some, and you really have to think of each word as you go.

RK: Yes, I think it has an effect. It would be astonishing if it didn't have an effect. The thing that intrigues me is the sense of page which disappears as you look at it. Not only the page but a certain page size. I'm even disconcerted in Europe when I have a slightly larger sheet of paper, as the standard sheet. I ask myself, "What do I do with it. What have they done to me?"

JF: I think one of the dangers of involving yourself with readily available technologies is the possibility of fetishizing the technique which brings us back to the issue of the fetish again. People who write on computers often come up with the idea of circulating their texts on discs rather than in books.

KJ: Or on data bases such as Frank Davey's *Swift Current*.

JF: Yes, and that moves you into a large matrix of implications in terms of the availability. You have to have the technology in order to read somebody's writing.

RK: Yes, it's pretty hard to beat the book in some obvious ways. Even in the sense of the presence of books. A lot of us are hooked on that in a certain way.

KJ: Well, floppies and hard disks are great for storage, and you can pack so much information on them. Also, nationwide data bases do have the advantage of giving you instantaneous access to writing from distant places. On the other hand, you don't get the sensual pleasure involved with the texture and general feel of a book. Do you write much by hand?

RK: No, I compose pretty much on a typewriter and again it is an extravagant use of time, as you said. I use a Brothers electric typewriter. I only bought my electric typewriter 3 to 4 years ago though. I used to have an Olympia manual for years and years. A portable. I'm interested in this notion of the lateral move affects the notion of narrative, that's interesting.

KJ: Well, it goes back quite a way, for example Sterne used it in *Sentimental Journey*. At first it seems that he's giving us a bunch of unconnected incidents, but really he's talking about how he's torn between his lascivious side and his virtuous side. It seems to me that a lot of your writing has that kind of laterality.

RK: Well, it does in a certain way because I'm using narrative all of the time. It's kind of stupid to think that you can get away from narrative.

KJ: Yes, the way I see it, the lateral involves a kind of disjointed approach as opposed to the sequential. Instead of going: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 — you go: 1, B, September, Friday, Tango, Mexico, or something like that.

RK: Then the notion of juncture gets interesting as opposed to climax for instance. It changes the aspect of writing as sexual metaphor really, it takes the emphasis of ejaculation and puts it at the moment of union/disunion.

JF: If nothing else, it's a departure from an overemphasis on causation.

RK: I thought of that as we were talking. You get away from that -- I remember when I was a young writer, they would talk about motivation. I mean I couldn't give you the motive for having breakfast, you know. Half the time you aren't hungry, then you say, "What time is it? Oh. I must be hungry, it's five to twelve." One of the things I've been fascinated with lately is models of consciousness. I'm learning all kinds of things.



Images by Jürgen O. Olbrich

LIVING INSIDE OF LANGUAGE

Interview with Paul Auster

Paul Auster's fiction explores the gaps between consciousness and language. His constant subject is the limit of the say-able. His characters might be reduced to incoherent shouting or paranoid silence. They might be subjected to cruel language experiments or they might seek out emotional and physical deprivation. They might be haunted by coincidence or victimized by chance. Always, they are struggling with their physicality, and with the inevitable isolation of human consciousness. His work includes an experimental memoir, *The Invention of Solitude*, a trilogy of genre-derived novels, *City of Glass*, *Ghosts*, and *The Locked Room*, and *In the Country of Last Things*, a futuristic seeming novel that brings some of the more bizarre realities of the twentieth century together in a single city. Paul Auster's most recent novel is *Moon Palace*. Jim Francis interviewed Paul Auster for *Rampike* magazine while Mr. Auster was in Toronto to promote his new novel.



Photo by Diane Ford

JF: You created a unique experience for me when I was reading *Moon Palace*. All of your prose that I read before your new book set up some sort of stumbling block to the imaginative engagement of the reader. As a result, what others have observed as unlikely coincidences in the plot of *Moon Palace* came across to me as quite restrained.

PA: I don't know what to say to this! Let me see if I can frame an answer ...

There might be a telling difference between first person and third person narratives. I think. Certainly in the third person narratives that I've written, which would be *City of Glass* and *Ghosts*, there is a kind of distance. No question about it. It's purposeful. Especially in *Ghosts*, which is very, very remote — the voice is hovering above the scene. It's a conscious decision to tell a story as though I'm telling a story as though I'm telling a story.... But I think in *The Locked Room* — well I don't know if that distance is there. I think of that as a "love story", and that first person narrator is much more intimate than the third person narrator in the first two volumes of the trilogy. Anna Blume's voice, in *In the Country of Last Things*, to me is also an intimate voice. I don't see how there is any impediment to entering the story. I suppose all those books create in the reader a sense of the writer consciously writing a story, and perhaps that is less so in *Moon Palace*. But I think of it as simply Marco, the narrator, having a different personality from these other people. So it's not as though this represents a move in any one particular direction. My books all seem to be — I've said this before, but I can't think of a better metaphor — it's as though one's interior were a continent, and each book were a country within that continent. If I could write forever perhaps those countries would attach themselves to one another, fill in the whole map, ultimately.

I read a long piece in the *New Republic* last week, and this critic, Sven Berkerts, said that in this book "it all opens up, everything flowers, there's a progress we can see in the work". But the fact is, *Moon Palace* is the first book I ever thought of writing. It's something that has knocked around in my head for twenty years, and I was not able to write it until now. There are passages written fifteen or twenty years ago that I have included almost intact. So I can't talk about an evolution. That certainly is not true.

JF: Perhaps we can talk about an evolution of a different kind. One of the things that has struck me is that, in isolation, the other books all work toward ideas that come to fruition — as a group — in *Moon Palace*.

PA: Well, it's true, the same themes are there, there's no question about it. And I think that probably for as long as I write I'll be dealing with the "same" material. One is somehow cornered by all this, you have no choice. You write about what haunts you, and obsesses you, and what is problematic for you. It's not as if I go out looking for the stories. They find me. There's no question that *Moon Palace* is what I would call a "warmer" book than the others. It is, at times, even a sentimental book. I had to restrain myself! I have a great weakness for sentimentality, and I think that's closer to the surface than it is in the other books. It's longer too, and structurally it's more complex. Also, it's funnier! I thought of it always as a comic novel. So there was this desire in me to do that, to do something a little different while at the same time sticking to the territory that interests me. But as I said, I've been thinking about it for a long time. I was simply too young to write the book I wanted to write. In earlier versions it was much longer. It would have been immense. A thousand pages, gigantic! And it went through many, many changes. At one stage, a lot of material that would later appear in *City of Glass* was in there. All of the business about language, the tower of Babel, etc., I pillaged from my earlier ideas and used in *City of Glass*, for example. Little by little the book got whittled down to three hundred pages. My big stumbling block in that book was that all along I had conceived it as a story in the third person, so that all three generations would have equal weight. It never seemed to work. The third person wasn't satisfactory, and by limiting it to Marco's voice things changed, of course. It couldn't have the kind of scope I'd imagined. In *The Invention of Solitude* I had the opposite problem. I started writing the second part of that book in the first person, and was dissatisfied, and it was only when I went to the third person that I was able to do it. So each book poses its own problems.

JF: While you were just talking about the necessity of moving to the first person in order to finish *Moon Palace*, it struck me that you were still dealing with one of the ideas prominent in the first part of *The Invention of Solitude*, "Portrait of an Invisible Man." You? Or the narrator? As a memoir it's you ...

PA: It's me. *The Invention of Solitude* is me. That book really is fact, as far as it is possible to talk about "facts". I didn't invent anything. Everything in it is, in quotes, "true".

JF: But in quotes.

PA: Well, because the very act of writing about it can distort it. I didn't make up anything, I was doing my best to interpret what I saw. There is some possible distortion, but you can say that it is *me*.

JF: Okay. In "Portrait of an Invisible Man" one of the things you're grappling with is the "un-knowable-ness" of another consciousness.

PA: Exactly! That's the essence of the first part.

JF: In order, in *Moon Palace*, to center the ideas you were addressing, it seems they had to enter into a single consciousness — and that consciousness could not know the consciousness of the father and grandfather.

PA: You're saying that Marco is built such that there is no room inside him to understand his father or grandfather?

JF: No more or less than any other human being.

PA: Right. But at the same time, it seems to me, we all have to come to terms with our past, our ancestors, our fathers and our grandfathers. And in some sense we invent them, we invent the past in order to come to terms with it. That's what Marco does. And the fact that he meets his grandfather and father in these strange ways, by chance — I hope what that does is create a circle around the book, so we are dealing with a metaphorical structure rather than a real structure. But at the same time I wanted it to be convincing enough — as you said earlier, on a purely "realistic" plane — so that it seemed plausible to some degree. As you said too, this book is, in that sense, much more restrained than otherwise.

JF: The characters in all of your books, but especially in *Moon Palace*, seem to be struggling with the absence of absolute points of reference, and stripping themselves down to try to get them.

PA: And never finding them! You can't find them. I first started exploring the question of chance in *The Invention of Solitude*. I did a lot of reading about it, a lot of thinking about it. Jung wrote a book of synchronicity. It's very poor, I didn't get anything out of it at all. But then I found that, oddly enough, Freud seemed to be much closer to it than anyone else I've read, in his little essay on the uncanny. A wonderful piece, I strongly recommend it. It's in a little book called *Creativity and the Uncanny*. He talks a lot about grief, the desire to attach a meaning to things. And of course you can just look at it from a logical point of view, and statistically these things are going to happen. But why do they disturb us? This is what he tries to get at. And his answer — which seems to me to be somehow valid — is that what we are doing when we have these experiences is remembering how we thought as children. But we've somehow outgrown that kind of consciousness, and we're suddenly caught in the gap between the two ways of thinking. Consequently it's unsettling to us. I think throwing it back into childhood is probably accurate. As I was working on *Moon Palace* it seemed more and more true that writing is an act of digging down into a place before memory, where images, ideas, and events are reverberating, but you don't know why they disturb you and haunt you. I continue to think about chance, and in fact I think the book I'm working on now will have the word chance in the title. So it remains a preoccupation. But I'm not looking for a meaning in chance. It is a way of organizing the world. Our lives are determined by chance. I don't think anyone would dispute that. On the most fundamental level, our parents all met by chance. There are no arranged marriages any more, are there?

JF: Chance is all that's left, unless you're attaching yourself to a particular ideology, most of which have been discredited in one way or another.

PA: Okay, yes. If I'm abandoning religion, if I'm abandoning any system of belief, then it's folly to attach any meaning to things. Yet there is a sense of the connectedness of all people that is very present for me. Once you begin to think of the myriad little chance moves we make, each individual in the world every day — these things have repercussions.

JF: Electrons vibrating in atoms.

PA: Absolutely. What a novel gives me the chance to do is express some of my wilder ideas through the mouths of others.

JF: And you don't have to take the fall for it.

PA: No, you don't have to take the fall for it, you don't have to defend it. I remember reading Hawthorne's notebooks. When he finally understood that this was possible, it was a tremendous revelation for him. A world of absolute freedom opened up in his novels when he realized that his WILDEST thoughts could be expressed. I think that's why people keep writing novels. They can keep digging and digging, and they don't have to be afraid.

JF: I said a moment ago that virtually all ideologies have been discredited in one way or another in the contemporary world. It occurs to me that the ability to identify "odd-matches" by attaching significance to things is increased in a system of only relational values. If you don't have an absolute to touch then you can attach significance where you want, and you have more and more opportunity for coincidences. At the same time the significance of the coincidences is diminished.

PA: Yes, but something happens. Let's talk about abstract painting. It's difficult to attach conventional literary meanings to an abstract painting. There can be patterns that mean nothing in themselves. But the fact that a painter uses a stroke up here in the left corner and a similar stroke over here in the right corner creates a tension between the two. It doesn't mean anything, but it creates an effect. What that effect is, is probably too complex to articulate.

JF: Visceral.

PA: Yes, visceral. But something *does* happen. In poetry, a rhyme will yoke together two things that don't seem connected, yet the fact that they rhyme creates an association and starts you thinking about new kinds of connections in the world. The same thing occurs with events in life — thought is connection.

JF: Immediately I go to the second half of *The Invention of Solitude*, "The Book of Memory". As structurally complex as it appears, there is a simple explanation: it all takes place in a single moment in the character's mind.

PA: Right! There I was writing about *my own mind*, and what was happening to me. And in order to see it I had to step out of my self. It was almost that simple. I had to become an *other* in order to see myself. All consciousness is double, of course. The moment you begin to think you are two.

JF: Okay, this is where we get to that theme that is prominent throughout everything of yours I've read — the mind-body schism. It seems to me that the process of deprivation, whether it's through sensory deprivation, or hunger, or through an emotional deprivation, always — in your work — moves toward a re-connecting of the consciousness with an absolute, i.e. the body, in a world where absolutes are hard to come by.

PA: Fogg articulates it. He says, "I was trying to overcome the mind-body situation by ignoring the body." Mind over matter, but you can't do it.

JF: The brain is part of the body.

PA: Exactly! You discover the mind is matter. A startling, and maybe obvious, conclusion, but I think we have to rediscover that all the time. Deprivation functions in different ways in the books. The deprivation of Peter Stillman in *City of Glass* is really quite different from Marco's self-deprivation in *Moon Palace*. Marco's jump into the void is youthful nihilism, in a sense. I hope I'm writing about it with enough distance, and I hope he is — he's writing about this twenty years later. And he's saying "I was wrong, and this is foolish, but this is what I did." In *City of Glass* Stillman is victimized as a child, before he could make Marco's mistakes. I suppose what it all proves is that we *are* connected, we can't be isolated from one another because we all live inside of language. There's no such thing as a one-man-language, it's a contradiction.

JF: I think this also comes up in the imminence of mortality in *Moon Palace*. There are occasions of vast shouting. Fogg in Central Park, Effing in the wilderness.

PA: When you come to the end of your rope there is a desire to scream. I guess these are people in extremity, and that scream — I mean, I haven't even thought about this — but you're an infant again. What other way does a two week old person have to express himself, except through screaming?

JF: You've leapt out of language, that's why it's so hard to wrap it in words.

PA: You've leapt out of language, you've leapt out of the system.

JF: And back to that mode of childhood thinking that you spoke of earlier?

PA: Exactly.

JF: You've stated elsewhere that you are initially inevitably disappointed with your work.

PA: Is there a writer anywhere who isn't? I don't know.

JF: I would suggest that part of this disappointment might stem from the "slippery" quality of your subject matter.

PA: It's slippery, yes, it's almost ineffable. It's very frustrating. It's not discourse, it's narrative, and trying to express things through story. I'm talking also on the level of craft, however, that disappointment in the sentences and paragraphs. The reason you can't read your own work — I've discovered this again and again — is that you've written the book and you essentially know the book by heart. The moment you sit down to read you are anticipating the next sentence, and there's a voice in your head that speeds up. Everything takes on a comical, simpleminded, idiotic tone. And you think it's awful. What you labored hours or weeks or days to come up with seems so apparent, and you think "any other person could have written this". So there is that disgust. What was it someone said to me? That Beckett phrase. "No sooner is the ink dry than I am disgusted."

JF: You've also said that you eventually come to accept what you've created.

PA: Well, accept in the sense that it's too late to do anything about it. Sometimes though, if years later I have to look at something I've done, it doesn't seem as bad as when I wrote it. It's acquired a kind of historic haze over it, and it's not as important anymore.

JF: A little less ego attached to it at that stage?

PA: Yes, it's truly detached from you.

JF: Russell Banks has characterized writing as a continuous process of self-critique. Does previous work take on a function of "statements-along-the-way" to the creation of that critique.

PA: No question about it! One, as a writer I'm getting a little older and I have some things behind me. There's no question that you carry those past books with you, and each book is in some way a response to what has happened to you. You're answering yourself, you're prodding yourself further. I feel that the book I'm writing now really did grow out of *Moon Palace*. Certain things that I was talking about at the end of that book became important for what I'm doing now. A dialogue evolves. A self-critique in many ways, yes. In terms of the craft, crossing out and trying to say it better. Also, I think, humanly. I know it sounds absurd, but there is a sense of trying to write in order to become a better person. Not better in a conventional sense. Better, perhaps, in the sense of understanding more, becoming bigger inside, more compassionate. To write from a position of real honesty — whatever that means. I'm sure that what honesty means shifts from person to person, but for myself I feel that I know what I'm talking about: not accepting the easy conquest. Always pushing farther and farther, no matter how strange, or dark, or *funny* it might become.

JF: You bring all of your characters through a purging process. Then you end by releasing the characters as if there would be something fraudulent in taking them beyond that point.

PA: Well, I think in some sense each character reaches a point where the story that I'm telling is finished. It doesn't mean that that person's story is finished. The *book* is done. I guess it happens in book after book, as you say. Quinn, in *City of Glass*, evaporates out of the book. Literally evaporates. It's not a depressing ending. He's just somewhere else by the time the book is over. Blue, in *Ghosts*, leaves. He's no longer entranced. The spell has been broken and he can leave. In *The Locked Room*, the character does the same thing. He tears up the manuscript, and that spell is broken. Anna Blume, in *In The Country of Last Things*, leaves — or at least the characters are trying to get out. The subtext of that book is that the manuscript does arrive. Whoever she's sending it to got it. I think of them as getting out, and a whole new story is starting. God knows what that is. Of all the characters I've ever lived with, she's the one I most admired. I started writing that book in 1970 and I finished it in 1985. It's a little book, 170 pages. But I could only work on it when I heard her voice. And it would go away for long periods of time. And then there was a long time when I was troubled by the idea of writing from the point of view of a woman. It seemed too audacious, almost arrogant on my part, to presume to think as a woman. Yet it wouldn't leave me alone. I truly didn't want to write that book. But every time I went back to it, it was the voice of the woman. And finally she imposed herself on me so much that I sat down and did it. I wrote maybe the first 30 or 40 pages. I didn't know what to think of it at all, and I handed it to my wife. I said, "Well what do you think of this?" And she said, "This is the best stuff you've written, you have to continue it, you have to finish it for me." So it's dedicated to her. There you are. And I don't even think of it as a fantasy. I think of it as a somewhat skewed or skewed view of the twentieth century. Many of the things that are in it are based on historical fact. The garbage system is Cairo today. *Garbage Brokers!* The incident with the shoes in the library, and the human slaughter houses. That's Russia during the second world war. Yes, it has a fantastic varnish to it. But when you get inside the story there's nothing so bizarre going on.

THE EYE OF THE WRITER

An Interview with David Donnell

David Donnell's writing has been called urban and urbane, magic realist, and bizarre. His poetry has been compared to Ginsberg's and Ferlinghetti's. Donnell's book of poems *Settlements* won the Governor General's award (1983). His most recent book of prose is *The Blue Ontario Hemingway Boat Race*. In this interview with Rampike, David Donnell talks about photography, time-loops, movies, and his most recent book *Water Street Days* [McClelland & Stewart Inc., Toronto, Canada].



JF: I noticed that on the cover and inside your new book *Water Street Days* and in *Settlements* [1983], you have used rather obviously old photographs or have written about taking photos. Also, the names of well known photographers like Atget and Stieglitz keep popping up in different places, and I was wondering just how much connection there was between the old photographs and the writing.

DD: That's a good observation. I hadn't thought of it myself in regard to the two cover photos on *Water Street Days*, but I like photography a lot, I do a little photography myself, but I don't put enough into it. Photography is an exact discipline, like writing or anything else. You've got to put a lot into it. I like a lot of photography. I certainly like Stieglitz's. This fellow on the cover of *Settlements*, William James, was the house photographer for the *Toronto Star* from 1901-1951. A long period. Excellent photographer. Just doesn't have the depth of Atget or Stieglitz from a compositional stance. Interesting though, not as a profoundly good photographer, but as a fascinating guy to study if you are interested in Toronto. He would cover a lot of ground. He did a wonderful photograph of an Armistice Day Parade on University Avenue in which somehow one of the cars must have been parked too far out or something but one of the tanks had run over the car. These aren't the type of photographs done by a Atget or a Diane Arbus or whatever. There's something about a good photograph that's two days old or a good photograph that's 150 years old. The way it reflects other worlds.

JF: There is something more than just journalistic approach in that photography.

DD: More than journalistic. A lot more human, a lot more conceptual perhaps.

KJ: For instance in the poem "Mazatlan" you talk about James Warren Donnell who was a photographer.

DD: Right, my father's father was a photographer.

KJ: Do you think that when you write you sometimes use a photographer's type of perspective or way of seeing?

DD: Well, I wouldn't put it that formally, I like visual detail. I like to see things. I like to say that you can't write about the angel if you can't see the angel. I don't get myself in any particular F16/500 headset or whatever.

KJ: Eli Mandel has said that the camera always lies. Do you think of yourself as a liar of sorts when you write?

DD: No, that's the thing some people take up. This concept of literature as truth, literature as false. They seem to be obsessed with it. Of course the philosophers are obsessed with it in the first place. So why should arts people get so obsessed with what is true and what is false when the philosophy people can't solve it. I get more impressed if you point out something that is existentialist or Buddhist-influenced or something that is good, or something that is in some sort of way inadequate or lacking.

JF: William James, the photographer, is that the same photographer who is with Ernest Hemingway at the end of *The Blue Ontario Hemingway Boat Race*, just as the city starts moving south?

DD: Yes/no. You've got me. I have to think back. This is good. William James I've got on the cover you see. A very nice cover Gord Robertson did at Coach House. But this William James is the philosopher. Varieties of religious experience, pragmatism, Henry James' brother. He was quite a big influence in 19th century America, early 20th century America. No, there is a photographer that went with him, I think, when he got this call to cover the island boat race. But I don't think it's William James that got the call.

JF: I don't think that the photographer is identified.

DD: Ahh, so, it wouldn't be James then. I guess I'm just referring to a stringer around the office. That's a good point, maybe I should have put James in the story. If I ever re-write the story, I may put James into it, and get a couple of special pictures.

KJ: Did you do a large amount of research on that book?

DD: Well, a bit. And I know a lot of people in the book pretty well in the first place. So I didn't really have to research every little aspect or anything like that.

KJ: There seems to be a lot of historical detail and facts. One thing I noticed in your poetry is a kind of dualism. Maybe it comes out of the ironic tone that you use. I'm not even sure if that is the right word, but, for example, Chaviva Hosek said that your work is "never easily merely ironic" —

DD: You guys have to help me out, who is Chaviva Hosek?

KJ: She's the current Housing Minister —

DD: For Ontario? Oh, I'd like to know her! I could use some influence there.

KJ: Well, we figured something along those lines. That's why we're using her quote here. Because in the *Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature*, she said that your writing is "never easily merely ironic in its willingness to court embarrassment and ridiculousness and come back from that edge."

DD: Does that mean it struggles with difficulty and perceives the irony of that struggle? Would you like a beer? My cat does the most incredible adaptationist thing. He'll find the newest thing brought home, like a bag or whatever, and he will single it out and he will often go to sleep on it. As if there has never been a sleeping surface in the apartment before someone brought the new thing. Bring a suitcase down from the shelf and he parks there for a while. What was the question again?

KJ: Well, I just thought it was ironic. You see Hosek was a book reviewer and literary critic for a while. I'm not sure how, but she got a job with the government as Housing Minister. Actually, she has been under very heavy fire lately by people who think she has done a poor job because Toronto is in big trouble as far as housing goes. Anyway, I thought it was interesting that she had something to say about your writing. I'm not exactly sure what she meant, but I was interested in this issue of irony in your writing.

DD: I don't know if irony is the right word. Irony might be the general word. I wouldn't call them ironic so much as bizarre. The poems in *Water Street Days* are quite different. First of all, the whole of *Water Street Days* is one book. And there might be a touch of irony here and a touch of humour there and so on. But it is different subject matter and I think the approach changes quite a bit.

KJ: I'll pick a popular poem that quite a few readers might know about, like "Potatoes". Its been anthologized in the Oxford and the Norton books on modern literature. I think of that poem, as perhaps a mock heroic about the potato. You use the potato to give us a kind of myth about the world really, an alternate myth. And in the meantime you take pot shots at the puritans, and you associate the potato with important historical figures such as Hannibal and Caesar and you glorify the potato in a way, yet there seems to be a tongue in cheek kind of approach.

DD: Well, a little tongue in cheek, but I don't think the main point of the poem is irony but rather a marvelling at how such simple things can play a role in history. Of course, it is quite true. I am being quite literally truthful. The potato has played a lot of roles in history.

KJ: Well, you know Kroetsch's "Stone Hammer Poem"?

DD: I'm familiar with the poem.

KJ: Well, I was just wondering about any similarity, because he does a similar kind of thing with a sort of potato-sized object as well. Although his is perhaps more down to earth, in some ways. He builds or names or re-names or un-names a myth around the stone hammer not unlike the way you build a myth around the potato.

DD: Well, I don't think that I had read his poem when I wrote "Potatoes", but I think it is very effective to take a very specific thing and to show a number of different sides, or different uses.

KJ: Then I thought that there is an innerscape that we are dealing with, which just happens to be your mind, and an outer scape which involves the potato, and somehow you are using that tuber as a kind of link through which you are channeling your thoughts to the reader.

DD: The only thing I see is the potato as a subject in history.

KJ: Hmmm, I still see a kind of duality in your work, the inner and the outer space being juxtaposed, and that juxtaposition resulting in a contrast that's really very funny.

DD: Yup. I see a number of dualities, out there, but I'm not sure if there are a number of dualities, or a three part-ality, or a four part-ality. I'm just putting a plur-ality into history.

KJ: OK, that makes sense. Was the poem "True Story of Pat Garrett" a response to Nichol's or Ondaatje's poems on Billy the Kid?

DD: I think I was certainly conscious of their poems, and Jack Spicer's poem [Billy the Kid, 1959], which I guess kicked off McClure's play *The Beard* [1967], in which Billy the Kid meets Jean Harlow, all of which is before Barry's poem or Michael's poem. I think I've seen what the Billy the Kid poems have seen. I think I saw *A Kid From Texas* when I was twelve. I've seen Kris Kristoferson's *Billy the Kid* and *The Left Handed Gun* with Paul Newman which was made before Newman became famous. That's a very good film. Is that a Billy the Kid film? I think it is. Anyway, I'm interested in the subject.

KJ: I noticed in the poem "The Canadian Prairie View of Literature", that you mock some of the clichés of prairie writing. For instance you talk about the clichés of the Hotel whores or the town drunk and so on.

DD: I don't think that that is a very good poem. I don't think it's a terrific poem because in terms of behaviour it doesn't make any separation or differentiation between prairie and rural areas. Or rural and poor rural. There's quite a difference. You can be prosperous, and be rural, and you can be well-educated, you can have a computer take care of your cows. You can watch PBS on your satellite-dish television, all sorts of things. Then, there's poor rural. They're two different things. There's prairie rural and prairie poor rural, but there is also prairie urban. Their cities aren't all that urban in terms of development but I would say it's not a terrific poem because it doesn't make much differentiation. What it's really talking about, I think, is about prairie, poor rural.

KJ: You were born in a small town.

DD: St. Mary's.

KJ: I don't want to go on forever about this one poem, but at the end of it, you talk about yourself at the age of twelve walking through the streets of Galt, and imagining yourself as a great writer one day, and doing all of these things like making people laugh and cry, and making love to other men's wives and so on. And yet, at the very end of the poem, the narrator mentions that the kid has corn under his shirt, he's awkward, he's a little rough, and the corn in his shirt makes him itch sometimes. So there is this kind of contrast between what he really is, and what he hopes to be.

DD: Yes, I think the ending of the poem is probably a separate poem. And the first three-fifths is a somewhat inadequate poem about the prairies, about a poor farm on the south of Saskatchewan. It doesn't focus on any one specific thing.

KJ: Do you feel yourself, as a writer, that you still have some of that corn itch around you?

DD: Oh, yeah, always, always.

KJ: What would you say is the primary focus of *Water Street Days*?

DD: Well, *Water Street Days* is a family memoir in a sense. Usually we think of a family memoir as something dull and something where you get the family at the beginning and then this happened in 1950, and this in 1951. You're talking about a simple kind of serial progression, a certain kind of coziness associated with the family memoir. *Water Street Days* is more of a post-modern turnaround kind of family memoir where you deal with each family member separately. A number of times, once, twice, four times, whatever. But separately and around specific events. So, the poems become poems in themselves, in which a family member becomes deeply involved or sometimes less involved. So, there's quite a different take on the formality of the structure than you would find in most family memoirs. There are people who obviously know each other, presumably love each other, but they are in quite different positions at different times.

JF: It's funny that you would take something that would have traditionally such a strong direct linear narrative line, and fragment it in that way. Yet, you speak of the book as being much more organic than *Settlements*. Seems like a double twist going on here.

DD: Yes, very much so. But I don't think the pieces in *Water Street Days* are fragments really. They seem quite complete to me. But they do separate the individual from the family.

JF: Yes, they have been fragmented with specific different voices.

DD: I think there is a lot of organic unity over the four different sections of the book. And a lot of playful touches. There's a lot of unity in as much as you can cross-refer quite a bit from poem to poem, or story to story. For example, the voice in *Water Street Days* is like a mixed track in a studio. Not that you can see these things in the piece but these are just normal pieces, a poem or a story you might write. But the thing about the voice — the voice throughout the book, to some degree is a base. It's the voice of the 12 year old boy. Although, he might be referred to as being 10 1/2 in one poem or 9 1/2 in another poem, for some reason. The voice that you would generally think of as you read the poems or the stories is the voice of an older person, compared to 12. Could be a guy in his twenties. It's the narrator. You read different stories and poems, you have a narrator of some form. There is also a third voice which some of the poems verge into which is perhaps more widely educated. A cross-cultural kind of voice. So, you get interesting degrees of simplicity with the family or degrees of difference and similarity. But the narrator, to the degree that you have met the narrator as a small boy or otherwise in some of the poems in the stories, turns up in the end in section four where you have a set of stories called "Light Photographs", which is all about a 12 year old boy and told in a first person voice, and there is no family anymore in a sense. There is just his favourite pursuits, fishing or taking-off school, the great peach thefts, things like that.

KJ: How long did it take you to put together the new book, *Water Street Days*?

DD: Maybe a few of the poems were written as early as '83, or '84, or '85. I'm not sure. I began the book January '87. And the book I had in mind was perhaps a little different. Perhaps more mixed. And there wasn't any specific number of sections and I hadn't written any of the stories at the back as of yet. Of course a lot of things changed during the writing. Let's say about 26 months.

KJ: That's not bad for solid writing. Do you spend most of your time writing? Or, do you do other things too? Much travelling?

DD: Well, doing a little travelling. Watch a lot of films, once in a while some music.

KJ: Does *Water Street Days* signal a swing toward regionalism?

DD: It certainly does in a sense during the duration of the book. But as far as I can see it hasn't created an on-going regionalist period. The work I'm writing now is not specifically regionalist anyway.

KJ: How long have you been in Toronto?

DD: Since I was 12.

JF: Earlier you spoke of the detached memoir, the notion of someone in their 20s or 30s recalling earlier experiences in other parts of *Water Street Days*. Then, another consciousness makes its presence felt at certain times and at some level it sounds like all of the material except that last section happens concurrently — and then the last section has to sit on its own strength.

DD: Well, I think all four sections are happening concurrently in *Water Street Days*. In terms of time, I tend to treat my parents' generation, let's say, so we're talking roughly late 40s or 50s. I had to treat that as the present to a degree which means that I can draw in a lot of things from the present. It could even be an image of a space station or something. I tend to push the time focus back in a sort of time loop. So, I get back to one poem, my father, my grandfather, and the family in Mexico, for example, where my father was born. Or, in another poem I get back to White Plains, New York, 1916, 1917, 1918, after the war, when my mother was born. So, there is the tendency to start there and pull up to the present or compare to the present. But, I think I have a tendency to start there and treat it as the present in terms of language, in terms of things that are going on around me. So, my overall time parameter for the book would be in a sense, something like 1904 to the 1950s, and in some cases, treating it as the present and pushing it back to 1904.

JF: Specifically, then, does that suggest a very large scope of possibilities every time you turn the page?

DD: Well, it shouldn't suggest *too* large a scope if possible.

JF: "Light Photographs" as you said, seems to have a narrow chronological scope.

DD: Narrow by comparison, in a sense. A different kind of surface. Different time scope for sure. Narrower, I would say, more specific. More stable. A different surface to the writing. But "Light Photographs" could be two weeks ago in Brantford, or could be "x" years ago in Galt, or could be before it actually was, it could be possibly back in the 1940s or further back.

JF: Suddenly it opens up larger.

DD: Possibly, yes. If you were an outside cultural commentator. French or American or English, and you were asked to date it based on content, well you would know something because there doesn't seem to be any hint of the depression. It must be before or after the 1930s. But if the guy said to you, is it the 1920s or the 1940s, you would find a particular detail here or there perhaps.

JF: In *Blue Ontario* you pull a very tight trick. There is a suggestion on some level that the language is mimicking a Hemingway technique and at the same time it is clearly a stream of consciousness, which wasn't Hemingway's *forte* at all. Also, you've fragmented what could have easily been a much more novel-type structure. There seem to be a number of contradictory elements, yet, the whole thing reads very smoothly in that the last surreal section about the boat race itself seems to justify all of those bits and pieces that have been scattered around in the previous chapters, or stories, or whatever you want to call them.

DD: I sure like your description Jim.

JF: OK, but how did you arrive at that?

DD: I don't think I ever thought of writing a novel, although I could have, I suppose, based on Hemingway's stay in 1923. I don't really think of it as a good subject for a novel. Because there was no novel. He was here briefly, it was quite a fragmented experience. I wanted to think about what *he* was thinking about at different times, either before he was here, while he was here, or after he was here. So, approaching it that way was an ideal situation to explore a number of things. I was writing about him in the general format of his being here briefly. If he had been here longer, then, there might have been a novel of some kind.

JF: So, a straight linear novel form was out.

DD: I think pretty well, because he didn't fall in love with anyone while he was here that we know of. He didn't work that long for the paper. He didn't lose his job at the paper and then stay here for any length of time, he didn't make any lasting friends except for Morley Callaghan. I don't think he ever corresponded with Greg Clark or any of those people. I think in a novel, a lot of things tend to get flattened into one stream. The other option is to treat different people and different experiences like islands.

KJ: So, this large time frame you're dealing with and the contradictions that sometimes come out in it, and the anachronisms. Do you think these contribute to the plurality of meaning that you were talking about earlier?

DD: Very much so. *Water Street Days* is sort of a novel, in terms of point of view, and a shifting point of view. And dealing with different people separately, for example. I couldn't have done the same kind of thing in a conventional novel. It would have been totally different, and perhaps not as satisfying from my point of view. Not as specifically satisfying. There is no general plan for the book that is more important than any of the pieces. The whole may be greater than the sum of the pieces, but, in terms of pleasure, I don't think that there is any plan that the sum of the pieces can demonstrate. The father, at times, may be in Poland in the 1940s. The mother may be in England, in her mind, in the 1950s. Yet here they are, both living in Toronto, and they have three children. To a degree we're just talking about individualism as a common structure. So, we've got the point of view that *Water Street Days* has a *general* plan in terms of a ground plan. It demonstrates the family as a family, even though they are at different places, at different times, sometimes at the same time. I think this is a pretty important thesis to work around.

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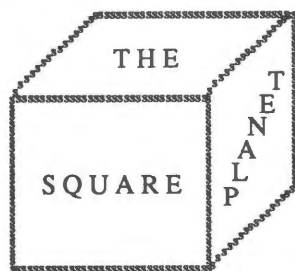
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THE SQUARE PLANET

By Raymond Federman

And thou shalt make an altar of shittim wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad: the altar shall be foursquare: EXODUS (XVII /1)



INSTRUCTIONS: Before reading cut the following six squares of words and shape them into a cubic story::

:: THE SQUARE PLANET ::

Everything on that planet was square :: we immediately noticed it when we landed :: but even that is a misleading statement :: because it was impossible not to see that everything here was square :: in fact :: the planet itself was square :: in a three dimensional fashion of course :: for when I say square I really mean cubic :: since all these squares formed cubes :: or boxes rather as we called them because often one of the sides of the cube was missing or left open :: we had never seen anything like this before :: a square planet full of squares :: even though we had traveled a great deal :: Angela and I :: from one end of the galaxy to the other :: and had seen many curious planets with very unusual shapes of things and beings :: but never before had we encountered a place where everything was square :: or cubic :: without exception :: however I must state that we were not sure at first :: when it came into sight of our spaceship :: that we were approaching a square planet :: for in the extremely rapid rotations of this planet around its axis the squareness became blurred :: erased so to speak by the great speed :: thus giving the distant space observer the false impression of normal planetary roundness :: however when we approached and prepared to land it became apparent to us that indeed this planet was cubic :: which of course made for rather

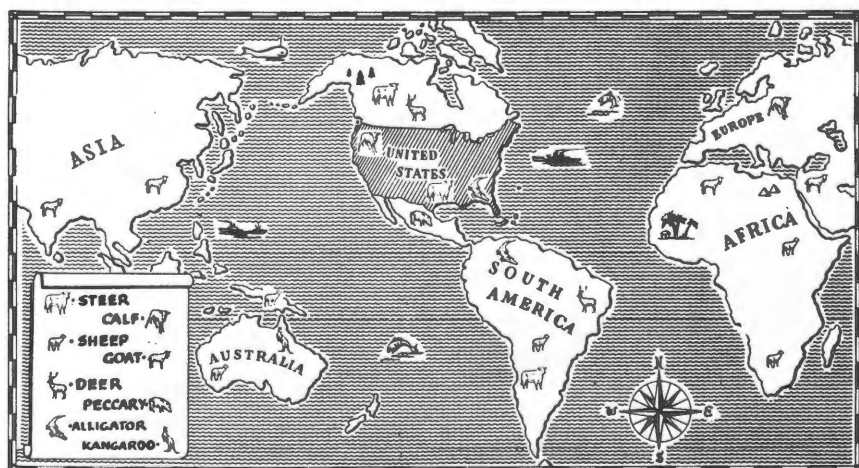
unstable and unpredictable rotations and revolutions :: which Angela :: my traveling companion :: and why not say it outright since it was common knowledge all over the galaxy :: my sexual complement :: jokingly called convulsions and convolutions :: even the planet's eight moons were square and situated in space in such a way that they also formed a perfect cube :: the same size as the planet itself :: but abstract of course :: so that in fact there were two giant cubes whirling together in space in perfect harmony :: one full and the other empty :: at first Angela and I had difficulties adjusting to the total squareness and the absolute symmetry of this planetary system which we found restricting rather than satisfying :: and yet enigmatic in its simplicity and the monotonous repetition of its equal sides and corners :: after a while we discovered that these squares in their regularity and redundancy created a series of mysterious but related designs :: eventually I explained to Angela :: once I became accustomed to moving among all these mineral and vegetal cubes :: some animate others inanimate :: that the square is the purest form of spatial idea complete in itself :: and as such represents one of the highest orders of pregnant spiritual and cosmic symbolism :: but that explanation did not seem to make Angela happy nor help her adjust to life

among these squares :: perhaps because she was undergoing at the time a serious crisis concerning her sexual adequacy :: in fact :: she seemed annoyed by the ambiguous use I have made of certain terms in my explanation :: no doubt she had read more in these than I had meant for I had no perverted intention when I offered that spiritual explanation of the square :: in any event :: Angela and I were extremely uncomfortable on this planet :: for it soon became evident to us that squares make for rather hard and angular relations :: and everything here was square :: the mountains :: the valleys :: the meadows :: the clouds :: even the bodies of water were square which was hard for us to accept :: the entire vegetation was square :: the trees the plants the flowers :: with square leaves and square roots of course :: animals were also square :: even those who lived in the water or flew in the air :: in other words all of nature was squarely shaped :: but so were all the fabricated objects :: for indeed everything on that planet was constructed according to the great square model :: therefore every building in the cities was square :: and of course square too the living thinking creatures in control of this planet :: these beings had square bodies square heads square hands and feet :: and all these square parts together formed a conscious

living cubic shape :: in other words when objects or beings were square as a whole their parts were also square so that everything within everything was a system of squares within squares :: or rather cubes within cubes :: during our stay on this planet Angela and I had problems getting used to all this angularity and withinness :: but since we had no choice but to pursue to its end our investigation of this recently discovered planet as ordered by galactic command :: as a cosmic scientist Angela was to record precise data :: while I as a space poet had to describe the place in metaphorical terms :: we made the best of that squareness and tried to adjust to it physically and mentally :: and I suppose spiritually too :: though let me assure you it was not easy for Angela and I to sleep or make love inside a cubic bed whose dimensions were smaller than our bodies :: not easy for us to defecate in a square toilet :: the human anatomy :: especially the rear end :: was designed more for the circle than the square :: and imagine having to eat square lumps of food all the time :: that doesn't make for easy digestion :: or having to think all the time in terms of cubes or squares :: the mind gets caught in corners and impasses and can no longer function freely :: but gradually we adjusted and after a while even found if not pleasure at least some degree

of satisfaction in relating with these squares even though we did not always understand how they functioned in relation to one another :: it was not until we were almost ready to depart and proceed to our next assignment that we finally understood the great principle that governs all the squares of that planet :: it is true that we had noticed along the way :: this was unavoidable :: that the squares :: or boxes as we also called them :: were all of different dimensions :: some were large :: some were small :: and others larger or smaller :: but during our entire stay we never encountered two squares or two cubes of the same size :: this was so amazing to us that eventually we went around measuring as many boxes as we could in the hope that we might chance upon two identical in size :: this never happened :: what we finally discovered :: almost by chance :: during the day of the great emboxing as it is called here :: an annual celebration of the planet's divine system :: is that all the squares :: inanimate as well as animate :: form a series stretching from the smallest to the largest :: from the most minuscule to the most gigantic :: and that ultimately :: and probably inevitably :: all the squares can be contained into one another according to their size :: the smaller into the next bigger one and so one until finally all the squares are

inside one great square :: and of course there can only be one such square capable of containing all the others :: the planet itself :: thus it became clear to us why we felt so uneasy in that world :: it was governed by such a rigid system :: such an autocratic principle :: yes a dictatorial system whereby only one square :: the largest :: swallowed all the others :: and naturally that hierarchy was unmovable and irreversible :: it controlled all social moral aesthetic and political activities on this planet :: once we understood that principle it made the rest of our stay unbearable :: Angela and I felt great relief when we finally left :: as we watched together through the round porthole of our ship the planet getting smaller as it receded into space :: its squareness once again erased by the speed of its rotation :: Angela said in a whisper :: it's a hard life on that planet :: everything there is so hard :: I did not reply :: hers was not a question asking for an answer :: it was just a reflection :: a conclusion to our investigation :: yes everything there is hard :: I shook my head in silent agreement and thought how important it is to have softness and roundness in one's life :: and as we entered the great night of space :: I put my arms around Angela :: cupped her breasts in my hands :: and gently squeezed the softness of her flesh ::



LATVIAN MYTHS & LEGENDS

Talking with Arvids Ulme

Arvids Ulme is a Latvian writer who visited Canada during the summer of 1989. His visit occurred prior to the Baltic States' declarations of independence from the Soviet Union. Visits by artists from the Baltic have been greatly restricted in light of the recent socio-political crisis. The food and gas embargos imposed by the Soviets have resulted in much suffering. However, the Baltic people are determined to gain self-determination. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were forced to become part of the Soviet Union in 1940. This was the direct result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, a secret agreement between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. This pact was and remains illegal under international law. While here, Ulme did not speak directly about political issues. Rather, he talked about the inter-relationship between literature and spiritual values. Ulme's talk was prefaced by comments about the stone circle in the Latvian countryside that is similar to the circle at Stonehenge. He discussed the ancient pagan beliefs that were connected with the rock circles and the fact that Soviet authorities have imposed restrictions on studying the circles. The rocks feature ancient carvings and letterforms that may reveal important details concerning the history of myth in the region. Ulme also spoke about his views on ancient Latvian myth and about how important a culture is in shaping a people's consciousness. Ulme spoke to a number of groups while in Toronto as well as to Rampike editor Karl Jirgens. Jirgens, a native Canadian of Latvian descent, translated this talk.

[Donations towards desperately needed medicine, food, vitamins and medical care for the people of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania can be sent (cheques payable) to the following: "Latvian National Federation in Canada" c/o The Latvian Canadian Cultural Centre, 4 Credit Union Dr., Toronto, Ontario M4A 2N8 (755-2353), or, "Estonian Central Council in Canada" c/o The Estonian House 958 Broadview Ave., Toronto, Ontario M4K 2R6 (929-5168), or "The Lithuanian-Canadian Community" c/o The Lithuanian Crisis Centre, 1573 Bloor St. W., Toronto, Ontario M6P 1A6 (588-6225) registered charities.]



AU: I've been writing for many years now, and I became involved in a process that started leading me back to the origins of some ancient Latvian legends and myths. I'll describe the process for you. Initially, I started thinking about "Kurbads" who is a well-known legendary hero. And I thought about the oral tradition and how folk-tales are passed from one generation to the next, and how along the way some things are lost and others are changed. His origins have become obscured after many re-tellings. It's difficult to perpetuate an oral tradition over hundreds of years, through wars and other crises. And I thought about other folk images, the man who could tear bears apart with his bare hands, "Lacplesis", and other various legends from the folk-songs that have been passed down through the ages. And I started thinking about how the legends began, and then about how they were remembered and handed down from generation to generation. And I got into an argument with some other writers and theoreticians who felt that over the years things had changed so much that what we were getting were legends that were somehow corrupted, that is, they were not true to their origins because they had been changed so much along the way. They saw them as a kind of mixed up hodge podge of various half-remembered stories. But I felt that the legends and folk-songs that had been passed down were absolutely fundamental to the culture. The changes that had been incurred along the way were essential in defining the character of the legends and those that passed the legends on. I felt that although some things might have been changed along the way, the fundamental essence of the original legend was still there, and perhaps even refined as it was modified over time. So, I began researching the different versions of some of the more popular legends. I talked to as many people as I could, especially older folks who still remembered the legends well. And I noticed that however much the stories varied, they still held a number of essential images in common. It was quite interesting. For example, numbers are significant. The numbers 3, 6, and 9 are especially important. Typically, the hero must make three efforts before he succeeds. This progression is often symbolized by a progression in mineral images from bronze, to silver to gold. Also, monsters typically have, say, three or twelve heads. And I began to wonder why. The stories were written for children, but the significance of the numbers held a significance that said something about society that included the adults that created and perpetuated these myths. So, I decided to investigate. After considering a number of eastern and Biblical myths, it soon became apparent that the numbers served an allegorical function. There was an underlying mathematical structure to the symbolism of the stories. And within our ancient legends is stored a precise form of knowledge. I got this far, and began to wonder about the point of all of this. I began to wonder about the process on which the legends were founded. Obviously, on one level, the stories served a teaching function and at the same time they were entertaining. The meaning of the stories was fairly accessible on a material plane. The formulas were not unlike those of stories from cultures around the world. Revolution, reform, casting off oppression, success through struggle and so on. I began reading Ansis L. Puskaitis and he opened my eyes to an important



point. That was, that the forces that overcome the forces of evil are inevitably new forces. This relationship between the old and the new could relate equally well to Latvia, or to the cosmos. Then, this started relating to matters of physics and the physical make-up of the universe. For example, all atomic structures are divided into three essential parts, whose properties are either positive, negative and neutral. And, for example, the princess that gets rescued is usually cast as neutral, she generally makes a show of impotence, she either does not smile, or she cries or she is asleep, and so on. And so the demonic forces that oppressed, the devil or some other evil figure is obviously the negative element while the active hero, the "Kurbads" figure is the positive. So you see a struggle between the two active forces over the third element. And so, the overall structure typically involves a trinity of some sort. This trinity of course serves a symbolic function, and it became apparent to me that after we consider the writing on a physical level, then we can see that it also functions on a spiritual level, and that the stories are actually allegories about a spiritual evolution, a process of spiritual growth. On one level, you could say that through compassion and mercy one can find love. So, the legend about the young boy who must guard his recently deceased father's grave for three days and nights following his burial involves three levels of spiritual growth. Patience and propriety are extolled, and eventually those who practice these virtues are rewarded. So, in terms of this trinity, the recurring mineral images can be understood as follows; the bronze represents the desire to succeed, the silver represents a virtue such as mercy or wisdom which is required to achieve success, and the gold represents the achievement of success which also includes entry into a condition of love. Sometimes diamond is substituted for gold, but the basic structure remains the same. Further, in a state of love the trinity is reduced to a unity. The principles are easy to apply to world conditions. The world has managed to screw itself up, and only by desire, wisdom and love can we hope to restore order. There are various fundamental symbols that emerge within these structures. Water becomes a symbol of submissiveness and malleability, it washes through everywhere, cleans things, and it finds the lowest place to settle in, it is the most calm of all things, but it is also the quickest to be aroused by a tempest, say. Against water we see stone, which is unmoved and can be relied upon, is sometimes used as a foundation, and becomes a symbol of high-mindedness. The snake is one of the oldest symbols of wisdom, although its meaning varies within a world-wide context. But the snake is seen as being related to the dragon. It is the snake that offers knowledge that ultimately tests one's worthiness, and depending on how one uses this knowledge one can eventually rise spiritually. These symbols are common throughout the world, including the Bible. One of the things that is characteristic in Latvian folk-tales or folksongs is the fall of the virtuous hero. This is somewhat unusual within a world-wide context. Typically, the hero falls because he is overwhelmed by the forces of evil who enjoy superiority in numbers. This might be symptomatic of the overwhelming socio-political hardships experienced by the nation of Latvia over the centuries. These then were some of the more superficial elements that I discovered in the structures of typical folk-tales. Of course, I have done far more precise readings of the various tales, but in general, this is what I have uncovered to date. That is, that the individual who fails to be compassionate or merciful is one who is lost in every sense of the word.

I'm not sure why it is that Latvian myths tend to feature *three* brothers. And the youngest is always something of a loser, at least initially. He is always sleeping, or he's lazy or people think that he isn't very bright. But when the crisis comes, he rouses himself and he takes care of things, he saves the day. And the situation in Latvia currently seems to parallel these myths. The mythology has obvious parallels in society, today as in the past. For example, one might ask whether we will deal satisfactorily with the situation involving Latvia and the Soviet Union or will we permit things to fall into ruin? There is the feeling that in the global picture of things, the evolution of the world can not be dramatically affected by a single individual. And so, there is a tendency to withdraw from any crisis — to go to a quiet, clean place, where you can wash yourself in the morning dew. In other words to turn your back on the world, after all, you already gave it a shot, and in the meantime you've got to seek out your own personal path, to follow your own karma, to seek your own nirvana and ignore the rest. I find that when I go on a retreat from the world it only takes a week or so before I can't help but think about what is going on in the rest of the world. But myth shows that an individual can make a difference through love or knowledge, or mercy or compassion. And during the current socio-political awakening in Latvia it suddenly becomes apparent just how important these ancient myths are.

WORKS IN THE FIELD

By Ruta Gravlejs

Ruta Gravlejs has been exhibiting her work in Canada for over ten years. Among other places, her sculptures and installations have appeared at Artcote in Windsor, the Phillips Gallery in Banff, the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, and A Space in Toronto. Ruta Gravlejs currently lives in Toronto, and is of Latvian descent. In 1987, her work was shown as part of an "unofficial" group presentation in Riga, Latvia. The following installation was presented recently at York University in Toronto. Here, Gravlejs offers a statement concerning her work.



The production of my work involves making observations of phenomena in and of the immediate environment. These observations are manifested as three dimensional multi-media works, which I perceive as an equivalence, as an objectification of my subjective response to a perceived order at a particular moment in time. The question I am offering in presenting the work is: It's like this, isn't it? This order has to do with recognizing a relationship between nature and culture.

The most recent work recognizes an opposition, an irony or contradiction in this relationship. I am fascinated by the breadth of human effort and encounter, caught between nature and culture. There are everpresent disturbances that arise in our fields of activity. Circumstances are not always as they seem, they also constantly shift. These disturbances I would typify as a collision between: gesture and geometry, or, poetry and politics, or, longing, versus that which is occurring.

My work utilizes the inherent phenomenon of objects and the elements. The human body is also implicated. For example — a plumb bob suspended from a line, is perpendicular to the surface of the earth, its buoyancy is kept in check by its mass — gravity does not stop doing what it does. We are also involved in such a physical relationship, having a physical body we are subject to the same forces and dynamics. The body can be an observer of a work as well. — R.G.



DISTURBANCES IN THE FIELD: FEAR OF FLUID, 1989.

A metal 1/4 scale bridge, field stones, film loop with text projected on north wall (not visible in photo), text located on floor (not visible in photo), "I heard a story about a man who carried a bridge on his back —".



MUCKWADING, 1989.

30 wooden stilts, two clay covered walls, clay chair and clay birdhouse.



UNTITLED, 1989.

Twenty-five wooden swings, 600 lbs. of earth formed into steps, blackboard.

LET'S CALL IT FRANKY

By Steve McCaffery

A signal through space defines this group:

at the foot of a hill,
through a hole in the fence,
from one state to one province;
by a rift in a set.
from this hoof to that hook.

In more radical encounters direction shifts to somewhere in the following:

having an internal shell,
describing a known state of things,
suggesting a predetermined disposition,
attacking a primary growth.

These paramount beliefs revive the following despairs:

sudden seizures	graceful replies
maladjusted declensions	symbolized parts
unrecognized grandeurs	deoxidized claims

Such analogues to instance via detour lead to neighbourhoods like these:

hat hatch:
prefer preferable;
trilateral trill,
kid kidnap:
cub cube.

We may contrast that sentence to this set which intervenes:

antiphon swivel predicate
chowder "instrument" rodeo
discharge bunt dirigible
bungalow inanity "waistband"

To return predictably to the following:

somebody somehow somersaulted
something sometime before someone
solvent somewhere soothed

The next exploited paradigm implies a legislative sanction:

nineteen, seventy four, eight, twenty,
six, nine hundred, seventeen, thirty,
five, two, eleven, six, ten.

We move closer to a theme in the following continuum:

action in.	arbitrary nature of.
classification by.	differential structure of.
nonrepressive nature of.	inordinate repression by.
structure in.	transparency of.
victimization by.	weakness in.
yearning for.	parallel risk within.

The assumptions in the Model lead to these displacements:

Popeye
Froozles
Dennis the Menace
Spiral Zone
Sesame Street
Divorce Court
Star Trek.

In contrast the following closed thoughts market a retreat from Being:

pipe	equals	synephrine
gyve	equals	twist.

The objective contradictions find resolution thus:

when indigo then puce,
if ochre not madder,
neither violet nor beige,
as purple so green.

At issue is the register which designates these sounds as sites:

as, it,
on, up,
in, of,
or, us,

The next examples fix a pathos in exterior marks as fact:

Geneva 1793.
342a Great Portland Street.

Their evolution as interiorities diminish in the following breaks with truth:

cook botch spavin
Bolshevik clinamen plus maroon.

The next intensive aggregates produce a vague suggestion of the Plot:

Ice octoplasm.
Reciprocity plus obligation to invade.
Ice reticence.

None of the following exist inside the tradition we call passage:

the act of turning over,
the description of leaping suddenly,
the verb to discharge;
the complicity of driving away.

Two of the next three tactics mirror social practice not the Real:

I have cleaned my teeth.
I have read Saussure.
Last week i walked to Los Angeles.

The twilight turned murky as they closed the door inside the implications of the following names for where:

labyrinth ... highway ...
portico ... barbecue ...
syndicate ... collage.

The rules of substitution still agreed on will allow the use of the following complex form:

A propositional affront destroys the memory
of change:

Spinoza as anagram.

With the nasal passage opened by reason of the lowered velum, the following phrase flows through the nasopharynx to mark the centre of this end:

Pigeon should be pidgeon.

SHADOWS

A Short Story

for R. Murray Schafer

By Paul Dutton

I know the city in intimate detail, contain it in my mind, its shapes and patterns conned through years of close attention and eager exploration, its vastness encompassed, intricacies traced and traversed, at first in toddling thrall to circuits determined by parent or elder sibling, then in loose adherence to routes dictated by like authority for my independent travel to this destination or that, until I graduated to the greater autonomy that a bicycle affords, and later a car, availing myself, too, of the network of public transit, getting to know the city sector by sector, becoming familiar with one neighbourhood and then another, perhaps on some mission — a visit to friend or relative, an item to be secured, an event to be attended — but as likely not, content to wander idly where the city led me, straying down byways, exploring lanes and alleys that give off them, dawdling in out-of-the-way parks that nestle within an intertwining of crooked streets, sheltered mews, arced crescents, chancing then on some small avenue, turning into a broader boulevard and breaking out finally onto a main thoroughfare where traffic coursed and I could board a bus or subway to return to my home and study the veined pages of a dog-eared guidebook, hovering over the area I had lately set foot in, noting a miniscule turn-off that links two streets I had thought not connected, recalling a bend that the guide ignores, pursuing with finger a fork I had not followed on foot and that leads to the edge of the page, where I obey the directive to turn to another page, behind or ahead, where further cartographic detail is imprinted, imprinting the lace of the city's arteries, veins, and capillaries on the memory-cells of my brain that contains the city as the city contains me: an inhabitant, a thought, an integral unit in a populous and expanding throng of units, linked, if by no other element, and no matter how isolated, by the common bond of existence within a shared environment. Yet for all my knowledge of the city, for all my study of maps and my tireless peripatetics, I have always known nothing better than that sections of it remain unfamiliar to me or that time has dulled my memory of the convolutions that characterize an area unvisited for several years in a city so immense that competing companies publish their annual updates of guides, each proclaiming their version definitive, each proving, upon examination of their version, to have gotten one detail or another wrong, to have indicated a curve where no curve exists or to have omitted a lane that is manifestly there. Aware, then, of what I did not know of the city, I was careful, when some expedient goal prevailed, to plot a course that entailed no path through any such unknown territory.

Strange, then, to find myself, in pursuit of an urgent late-night appointment, on a street I do not know, with access, as I learned through one or two briefly conducted sorties, to no known avenue, with no familiar landmark visible, nothing to guide me, nothing to fix the point I am at within the expansive sprawl of the city I love and thought I knew so well — so well that I ventured forth without guidebook or map, confident in my knowledge, and in my knowledge of my ignorance, sure that I would arrive, and arrive on time, where my presence was required — left to my own devices, stranded at night in a part of town whose geography, let alone whose character (could it be a criminal quarter, prowled by predators, rife with marauders intent on any casual booty, populated by desperados for whom life was as cheap as the drink or dope they primed themselves with before setting out on their missions of mayhem?) whose character and geography is foreign to me. I might retrace my steps — and I attempt to — but the first conjunction of streets I encounter is unfamiliar, a jumble of buildings that might be any buildings, a house with a hedge that could be any house with any hedge, a street-sign that bears a name I cannot place, have not encountered in travel or study, a name whose very strangeness strikes a tiny spark of panic in my breast, swiftly quelled, for panic in this city is inadmissible, is a prelude to

disaster: I have not panicked, I will not panic, I am not panicked. I am curious. It is merely —this street-sign that bears a name I can't recall; must know, but can't recall — is merely a piece of information, new information perhaps, but probably known and only momentarily forgotten, to be put together with all the plentiful information I have accumulated over years of intensive study and research, to be put together and processed and used to guide me out of this dark area of the sole city I have lived in and know, better than anyone knows, better than I know any city, better than this strange street-sign that confronts me and that I pass by, quelling the incipient panic that I sense arising within me, passing by and pursuing a course that leads off to the left (which is surely right) past a clump of bushes that skirts a large property where I notice a figure in shadow, bent by a basement window, fiddling, it seems, with a lock, though I cannot tell, there is only shadow, the pale light of the one dim nearby streetlight failing to extend to the area where the shadow seems to be bent, paying no heed to me, as I pay no heed to him — or to her, for there is nothing to aid in determining gender -- passing on in the dark, passing on in silence, ignoring the figure that stoops by window or doorway or car, closing my ears to the shout that breaks the quiet, the drum of hurried footsteps, the muted rustlings and thwaps and grunts that bespeak a physical struggle, an exchange of blows, blood brimming from the left side of one combatant's mouth, gushing from the nose of the other, seeping in tiny droplets from the scraped knuckles of the first that smashed into a face whose teeth raked the flesh and left a scarlet film forming, while I move on through the night street, eyes ahead, coming to an intersection where two other streets meet the one I am on and I elect to follow the one to the right, which comes, after some distance and not a few subsequent intersections, to a dead end, so that I follow it back out — or at least, back — for "out" is not precise: I am "in", and "in" I know not where, nor can I find the initial three-street intersection. And though the pride (or caution) that kept me from seeking directions at one of the houses where a lit window suggested an inhabitant up and about — though that pride or caution has dissipated and I would readily risk aid from a stranger, no lit window is now in evidence. I am without my watch, so can only estimate the hour, only guess at how long I have wandered, trying one futile route after another, encountering dead ends or following streets that seem somehow to return me to the point at which I took them up, testing the occasional lane or alley in hopes that it might arrive at some prospect — otherwise concealed from my view — from which I might catch sight of a landmark that would at least provide some clue to the direction in which I should move (for the overcast sky, glowing with the lights the city casts on it, precludes my being guided by the position of the stars), prepared to strike out across yards or through a ravine, contending with thick underbrush and bog-like patches, scrambling up an incline to find myself in a small lot where a car sits with its motor running, a man immobile at the wheel, face impassive, eyes fixed, unresponsive to my taps on the window beside him, on the windshield before him, convincing me by his attitude, which appears inspired by fear, that my own fear (no, not fear, but wariness) is justified, so that I do not holler to him that I am lost, honest but lost, lest such loud proclamation attract some waiting predator, who approaches the car I have found unlocked in a driveway beside a darkened house, a car I have entered in search of a street-guide possibly left there, seeing a figure approach from out of an alley, and closing and locking the door, hastily ensuring that all the others are locked, then sitting immobile at the wheel, fixing my eyes ahead, ignoring the taps on the window, on the windshield, the urgent gesticulation, the mouth shaping what seems to be the word "please" and another word, perhaps "help", which may or may not be spoken aloud, for the rumble of the motor muffles any sound from outside, save the vague suggestion of a distant siren-wail pulsing through the night air, barely audible to me and possibly not audible at all were I inside the car I have found empty on one of the innumerable deserted streets I've wound up on, crouching at the curb and, though ignorant of how to pick a lock, poking at it with a piece of wire found nearby, hoping that, should I manage to gain access to the vehicle, I might discover, left there by the owner, a street-guide I could use to plot a course to some known part of the city, when the wire slips or my hand slips or I push too hard or not hard enough and feel a sharp stab of pain in my finger, pricked by the piece of wire, jerking my hand away, back and up, then quickly down, as though to shake out the pain that contorts my face, continuing to flutter my hand and looking down to check what damage might be done, seeing a streak of red against my white jacket, my finger not just pricked but cut and bleeding. Having no handkerchief, I tug at my shirttail to rip from it a bandage, when a piercing yowl, from close behind me, shreds the silence, and even as I recognize the sound as that of a cat entering combat, its yowl echoed by its opponent, I convulse involuntarily, pulling my hands up across my chest, smearing more blood on the white fabric of my jacket that bears spots of mud and smudges of dirt from the bark of trees brushed against in the ravine, the bottoms of my pants damp and mud-spattered, a brown freckling on the white cloth, my face scratched by branches as I make my way blindly across unknown terrain, stumbling over rocks, tripping on tree-roots, at last encountering an incline that I scramble up, envisioning a known thoroughfare, a familiar neighbourhood only to be met, about forty metres from the top, at the rim of a yard stretching back from a house, by a tall wire fence I determine to scale, clutching at the mesh that sways back and forth with my weight, clumsily seeking purchase, the toes of my shoes poking inadequately at the small spaces between the intertwinings, slipping, cursing hoarsely, making the top and easing myself over the row of twisted metal ends, on one of which a pantleg catches and rips, as I feel another scratch across the skin on my right palm and I begin a descent that is speeded both by my fear of losing my grip and by my inability to gain a secure hold, my fingers beginning to cramp from the unaccustomed clutching and pained by the pull of my weight against the thin wire strands, so that I drop the last few feet and land in a heap amid damp leaves, my white jacket streaked with blood from my cut hand. Having no handkerchief, I tug at my shirttail to rip from it a makeshift bandage, hearing a car-door slam somewhere, perhaps by the house at the top of the yard in which I lie still a few moments, listening for the possible sound of footsteps, which does not occur or, if it does, fails to reach my ears, perhaps because there is the sound of a catfight nearby and, some distance away, the whooping howl of a siren, which would be barely audible if I were inside the car I see approach a block or so ahead, slowing abruptly and turning into a driveway down which it disappears and which I hasten towards, the pride or caution I had felt about approaching a stranger for directions having dissipated. But by the time I reach the spot near which the car turned in there is no sound nor no light, nor no way of knowing which driveway has been used, but on the other side of the street I hear a faint sound, a slight "chink", short and sharp, as though a pane of glass were broken with a cloth-muffled hammer, having first been carefully prepared for this operation by the expert application of a glass-cutter, an item available in any hardware store, a pencil-like tool with, at the tip, a small, sharp, metal wheel fixed on a minuscule axle between tiny shafts, a tool that aids in the quiet removal of a piece of glass that one might otherwise have to break more noisily before reaching in and unlocking the window or door, thus gaining admission to the house, except that the glass did not, for all the care executed in applying the glass-cutter, break cleanly, so that a jagged shard, protruding from the frame, scratches across the flesh of the wrist as the fingers reach for the lock, the hand then swiftly withdrawn, first flung out, then pulled abruptly back, thus causing the front of the black leather jacket, worn for the purpose of decreased visibility, to be spattered with blood, blood coursing, too, down the black sleeve of the jacket, following the creases and crinkles, creating a map-like lace of red, tracing on the sleeve's surface a simulation of the arm's interior, the network of arteries, veins, and capillaries that permeate the tissue beneath, the skin and clothing invisible, the pattern of vessels discernible, as the other hand reaches to tug the black shirttail from the black pants, the intention being to rip from it a makeshift bandage, during which operation there is a stirring within the house, a hurried rustle on the porch and then on the lawn the muffled beat of running feet, lights in the house, a shout, an impact on my shoulder, as when a fixed object is encountered while one is in full flight or a heedless bump is received from a fleeing figure in whose path one stands, an impact that spins me round and knocks me to the ground, where I lie dazed for a moment, perhaps longer, then struggle to my feet, hearing the muted rustlings and thwaps and grunts that bespeak a physical struggle, an exchange of blows, blood brimming from the left side of one combatant's mouth, gushing from the nose of the other, seeping in tiny droplets from the scraped knuckles of a fist that smashes into a face whose teeth rake the flesh and leave a scarlet film forming, while I move on through the night street, eyes ahead, coming to an intersection where two other streets meet the one I'm on and I follow the left one, a makeshift bandage wrapped round my finger or hand or wrist, a siren whooping urgently in the distance.

SYNTAXIS

By Marina deBellagente LaPalma

"Pavlov, the Russian psychologist, once theorized that the two most fundamental reflexes in all animals, including humans, are those involving freedom and orientation. Grab any animal, he said, and it will immediately struggle to accomplish two things: to break free and to orient itself."

Moving to a new country.

One: A long train ride: Like the "long sleep that is infancy before memory" I don't remember much of it. Just as well. Metaphysical shrug. Do not know what it is I am like, et cetera. The well-dressed woman in our compartment holds a sheaf of papers. Out of a forties or late thirties film, mysterious, elegant, perhaps she is in danger but then she is certainly in this situation by choice. Hard choice.

Two: The huge ship we arrive in. Many immigrants on board — Sikhs, dark southern Italians, a French family with two small children, boy of 6 and girl about 3 years old. Vietnamese perhaps? The little girl and I become close friends on this voyage. She wants to come "coucher chez moi ce soir." Not clear if her parents will allow it. Not clear if my family is meeting me.

"The key instrument of the creative imagination is analogy."

Les premiers phrases
Now the hermaphrodite in the room at the end of the garden
sont tres important
prepares herself.
dans lequel le type de rapport
A black leather coat he keeps smelling
que le roman va entretenir
and finally,
avec le lecteur
instead of wearing it, stuffs it behind the sofa bolster.
Going out the door to her wedding, appointment, or destiny
est etablis.

Research by Belgian psychologists indicates maximal arousal (alpha blockage measurements) achieved with figures having approximately 20% redundancy. Examples:
a spiral with two or three turns;
ten or so triangles in a neat cluster;
a relatively simple maze.

Aside from the fairly archaic quality. Of base, shaft, column.
You talk you shift your weight you sing (not often anymore)
or stop and pet a mammal — dog, cat, horse.
Yearning for freedom — even when it is merely
a screech in the wind, a pebble on a stony path,
a wolf that calls to its mate in vain, a piece of metal rusting on the out-skirts of ... Panama City?

Evolution as a change in gene frequency?

I walk away from Columbia University. Down Broadway.
My companion and I wear army green shirts. It is warm.
I've been in Europe for several years.
Not so thrilled to be back.
As I'm about to enter the building
someone I know intercepts me just outside the glass doors.
Asks how I am. I say, "All right.
A little strung out, but all right."

"Instead of confronting the outer world as an objectified field for scientific calculation and instrumental technological use, they held that it must be conceived as the plane upon which humans express and realize their inner moral, aesthetic and spiritual potentials."

If the voice that speaks has an air of truth about it, or at least the uninterruptability of the Media Announcer, you may feel yourself standing on firm ground.

"To a considerable degree science consists in organizing the maximum amount of information with the minimum expenditure of energy. Beauty is the cleanness of line in such formulations, along with symmetry, surprise, and congruence with other prevailing beliefs."

People are milling about on the dock. Confusion.
I become separated from the child without saying goodbye.
Feel this as a great loss, an emptiness.

"Elegance is more a product of the human mind than external reality. It is best understood as a product of organic evolution. The brain depends upon elegance to compensate for its own small size and short lifetime ..."

Tricks to enlarge memory and speed of computation. Specializing in metaphor. Workable categories.

This thing you call your life, it slips through your fingers easily with great and simple pain, in small pieces each of which is marked with a price, negotiable.

The three major forms of rock
as described in the 13th edition of
The Encyclopedia Britannica:

— IGNEOUS, that is something that once erupted, was molten liquid ... like acid silicates or obsidian crystal I think.

— STRATIFIED also called sedimentary; this includes shingle, gravel, mud, gypsum, dolomite, peat bogs, sand dunes, something that has been pushed from above or below, shifted, layered, shoved around. Are granite and limestone in this category?

— METAMORPHIC this is a more complex category for mineral matter that has undergone foliation and recrystallization. They call it fissile or schistose ...

Bidding goodbye to friends from the boat, I get into the elevator which happens to be the size of a ballroom. The doors keep flying open, which sets us plummeting downward. So everyone rushes about trying to keep the doors shut long enough to get where we're going.

At last we settle into some Louis Quinze armchairs and we begin to converse. It's a sort of charade. The proper responses to other people's comments seem to be "Chardin", "Watteau", "Fragonard", "David", "Delacroix", and so on. Beyond the terrace, through the French doors, I glimpse the guttural structures of Mayan architecture.

A long, sharp pencil touching down on the surface of a tub full of water, greenish and vague with steam. A hollow echoing sound. "Ha". The pencil rises. Cut to a mirror. The pencil again tries to cross the barrier-surface; this time it fails.

Panmixia: each reproductive male of a population is equally likely to mate with any female, regardless of their position in the "deme" (local set). Not likely attained in nature in absolute form, but used as a simplifying assumption in elementary quantitative theory.

The ghost in the machine. The machine in the garden. The garden in the dream. The dream in hand. The hand in the bush. The bush in the rain. The rain in Spain.

"Shifting responsibility from the manipulator to the manipulated is a widespread ideological pattern."

To move into the new housing development we must apply at a visa office; the Interview an arduous interrogation. The Mother is a blonde, polished looking, well-kept woman in her early fifties. She turns to me and says "please, please ... get away from him. Please."

"For the more prosaic cultural anthropologists art above all else expresses the purposes of a society."

Hillside. California terrain, probably. Steep. Terraced garden. Gravel, sycamores, pines. Three, then five, men strolling on the neighbor's property above mine. I notice they seem to be descending. Are they coming to get me now? Seems unlikely on such a beautiful morning. A voice says: he always does this, shows them around.

"Anguish there was. The philosophes had two enemies: the institutions of Christianity and the idea of hierarchy. And they had two problems: God and the masses. Both the enemies and the problems were related and woven into the single task of rethinking the world."

Reconsider the enemies now as the institutions of capitalism and the idea of hierarchy, the two problems as Power and the masses.

His attitude towards us is one of scarcely veiled contempt. Any dealings with him will inevitably lead to violence, I know. A dark-haired, handsome, but very jumpy, young man. I begin thinking of ways to get him away from my mother, who is in the back seat of the car with me, of making some sort of deal. I guess I am trying to "save" her. There's no question of heroics, it simply seems expedient and proper to spare her. By arguments I do not recall, I persuade him to take me elsewhere and let her go. Eventually, he simply leaves.

Contemporary functional biology posits four competing theories of aging:

- rate of living
- collagen
- auto-immunity
- somatic mutation

Storefront. Used to be a tailor shop, according to paper signs covering the windows. Bare wooden floors, sleeping loft. My husband is there with some of our furniture. The previous tenant seems to have left a large aquarium behind. In it are some very pretty colorful fish gliding about. And, in the bottom of the tank, these creatures that I find grotesque. They seem too big and ugly to be in the aquarium with the delicate ones. I'd like to keep only the lovely top fish. But what would we do with the monsters? Kill them?

"Freedom, in this view, was understood as the recognition by the 'subject' that the world is constituted by its own expressive activity." This of course is literally true in the realm of dreams.

I am walking down Broadway, away from Columbia University. Going to visit the midwife who delivered me. I do not remember her name.

"Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated — overpopulated — with the intentions of others."

I see the first woman again in a train, again very elegantly dressed; this time she's holding a large sheaf of dollars which threaten to fly away in the wind from the open compartment door.

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Image by Wolfgang Luh



LEDBETTER'S CAT

By Constance Rooke

Can I help it this story starts with a person waking up? You give that a popsicle's chance in hell you'd be taking a big risk. I can't stand it, stories open with some moron yawns. Phone ringing on top of that? Let me just say I share your concern. This is a very tight spot I'm in. You can afford to show a little mercy, right? A little patience. Justice even, because I ask you: who *made* that call? You think at six a.m. in the morning I phone myself up just to get a *story*?

Have a heart!

We're talking a boy that loves his sleep better than candy. Better than tacos. Boy's a Mexican food fanatic.

Rolls his own tortillas.

Sits on avocados. Like a hen, right?

I mean this is a guy from Guacamole City.

Devotion like that, priorities that run sleep *uno*, enchiladas and company *dos*, you think I'd screw up my own z-z-z-z-z's? No disrespect intended — because hey, I'm crazy for readers, Louis L'Amour got nothing on me. You think I'm out of my head? You think I don't know where the butter *is*? Plus, I say this in all modesty, for you I have got a tale and a half nailed down. It's a no-lose situation. But the thing is, I want you to believe me. *I did not make that call.*

RING! RING!! RING!!!

Insistent, you know? You're down there in the deep water where it's lovely, maybe a warm sex place but you can't remember the action, and some bastard's hauling you in to steam-clean the rugs or whatever. I look for digital illumination, eight inches from my head, past an ashtray that could use a good wipe-out next time it's dumped. Are we in the Park Plaza? The Savoy or the Hilton mayhap? We are not. There's a reason I can't see the display thing, white haze all over it since last night as per usual I was too frigging dead and/or stupid to pull down the paper shade. There are *three* of these white sun-suckers. And did I even do the one that gets my face worst? Not to mention the clock which I peruse in a comely (scratch that, a *virile*) squint whenever the jack-hammer starts up, or else the phone — whichever on any said day gets the go-ahead from His Nibs.

RING!!!!

"Ledbetter here," is what I say.

"We do try. Shoddy leadership is not our metier."

I just woke up is my point. I am not at my swiftest.

"I'm Ledbetter. My name is. And you're who?"

"Now, now, Mr. Ledbetter. We know who you are. Do I smell coffee over there? You've got the pot on, I hope?"

"No, I do not. No coffee cooking round here, Boss, you want to give me a minute I'll go put it on."

This person sighs. "There is no need to be sarcastic."

"You woke me up. This is a wrong number you got."

"No, no. It's six, Mr. Ledbetter. We had a terrible feeling you'd slept in again."

"You have inadvertently reached 920-1057. Paul Ledbetter, of Area Code 416."

"That's right."

"I know that's right."

"Mr. Ledbetter, please. Calm yourself. It is now six-o-one. You want your whole life to tick away in these senseless denials, prevarications, and so forth? Is that what you want?"

"I want to be asleep. I want you not to have called in the first place! I want to go *back* to sleep right now!"

"You're too upset."

"I am not!"

"Go ahead, Mr. Ledbetter. You put that coffee on. I'll wait right here."

SLAM!

CRASH!

Four out of five times I slam the phone down, I *also* get the ashtray.

Ten minutes I give this joke: WATCH LEDBETTER SLEEP.

I go to the bathroom. (Enough said.) I go to the kitchen and fill and plug in the kettle, which has a melted nose. I pour the mocha-java into the paper cone. Wait. Wait longer. Pour the boiling water in, and as I pour I'm thinking *please Hombre* let it be strong today. Yeah, that's it. Too late. I can see already it's a page gone beige, so what I do is I put more coffee in the cone and stir till the sucker's dizzy. Oh yeah. *Now* it's got grit.

Weak brew with a little English on it. Oh yeah. It's the story of my life.

Specialite de la casa. Torn paper. You got your coffee filters, your window blinds that if they're down for a change the cat prefers it to Seafood Supreme, and last but not least you got your unmentionables. Reams of unmentionable in my own case. Plus you got coffee that you hate.

So what happens now?

RING!!! RING!!! RING!!!

"Ledbetter here."

"Oh, dear. The coffee didn't work out this morning, I assume? I could give you time to make another pot if ..."

SLAM!

This is a wall phone. For reasons I cannot fathom there are no ashtrays in the kitchen. Ever. CRASH!

I'm confused for a minute. But it's only the cat.

RING!!! RING!!!

"Ledbetter here. You got five seconds to identify yourself."

"Very well. This is your muse speaking."

"This is my *what*?"

"You heard me, Mr. Ledbetter. I hope that you will now keep a civil tongue in your head. If you hang up on me again I shall take permanent measures."

"I got you. Hold the phone. Just give me a second to shake the old gourd here."

"Of course."

"You got a name, Muse? You call me Mr. Ledbetter, I call you what? I appreciate it this is quite an honour. Polite though, my idea is I should call you something, plus I should maybe send you a bread-and-butter note when we're done, you know what I mean? So I'll need an address. Common sense tells you I got to have a name, little address of some kind."

Biding my time, right?

Stringing the poor sap along.
 Besides, in Paul Ledbetter you got a guy that if he hits the right cab driver he's ready to roll all night. Let the opera wait, that's the Ledbetter motto.
 You got to stay loose with these things.
 You think these diva-birds learn all that German or Italian or whatever, then they just sing it *once*?
 You're out of your head.
 Plus this is Area Code 416 we're talking. You think I'd live a place where your opera bops in for one night, something else comes up you've had it? I'll put it simply. *NO*. Ledbetter would not.
 Whatever the scam is, I'll ride a little. See what I can rake off.
 "Are you still there, Mr. Ledbetter?"
 "I am. You bet I am."
 "Are you nervous, Mr. Ledbetter? Is this a comfortable thing for you?"
 "Sure. This is great. I was just pulling up a chair. This is a very interesting situation we got here, best phone deal I've had since the pantyhose survey."
 Zip.
 Not a whisper from the muse.
 "No offense taken, I hope?"
 "Certainly not. It takes a while for most writers, I find. Striking the right note."
 "You got a preference for poets over prose writers, Muse?"
 "No, Mr. Ledbetter. I have not."
 "That's good. I like that very much. You're a prose type, you come to the right place. Say, that reminds me. You want to come over? Do this thing nose-to-nose?"
 "No, thank you. Actually, Mr. Ledbetter, the telephone is something of a departure for me. About as far as I can go, I'm afraid."
 "I see, fine. Listen, I don't want to push. I'm grateful you took the time."
 "Gratitude is fine. But it is not what I've called for, Mr. Ledbetter. You know that."
 "I get it. That's it for the chit-chat, hey? Now we get down to business. Fine with me."
 "You've had a dry spell. You have written very little and nothing of any merit in several months now. Have you any insight as to the cause of this?"
 "Well, Muse. You put it that way, I'd have to say you've been sloughing off."
 "I have. I see. What a curious idea."
 "Well, sure. You got your writer. You got your muse. Writer's job, in my opinion, is write when he's hot. Otherwise shut up. Where you muse types come in is you get him hot. You say I been writing crap or zilch. Fine. I say the shoe fits, Muse, *you* better say ouch."
 "Nonsense."
 "Oh, yeah? You don't make me hot, you don't take a little responsibility, in that case I would say you should pack it in muse-wise. Go back to the caverns measureless to man, you know? *Because I try.*"
 "There are degrees."

"I beg your museship's pardon?"
 "Let me not pursue that. I have not called to exchange insults with you, Mr. Ledbetter. If you would prefer to carry on as you have of late, I will simply terminate this conversation."
 "No, hey. You come on a little strong there, kind of accusatory, I give it my best shot. You know? You want an apology though, you got it."
 "Wrong again, Mr. Ledbetter. Neither gratitude nor an apology. My only concern here is to get you back on the track, and to that end I have a few suggestions."
 "Great! Listen, you got putty in your hands here. I'm Kid Eager. You toss this boy a sandbag I'll do magic. You say, I do, right? What have I got to lose?"
 "Very well then. To begin. You have become stuck in a single voice. You must learn to vary it."
 "Okay. Okay. Let me get this straight prior to where I go through the roof. This is from a muse, right? Whose job it is to help the person find his or her own voice as the case may be?"
 "That is correct, Mr. Ledbetter. It can also be misleading."
 "Like how? You either got a voice, or you don't yet."
 Chiles Rellenos, my cat, is cruising her empty bowl, raising such a stink about it that I'm obliged to call a time-out.
 "You got to excuse me a second. There's a cat here would like some grub."
 MEOW!!! MEOW!!!
 I hold the phone out so this muse character gets a full blast.
 "You hear that? A voice."
 "I hear it. Go feed your cat, Mr. Ledbetter."

I get back and is the phone dead?
 This is okay with me.
 "I got you, girl," I tell Chiles. "You think that's enough?"
 Is there maybe a nice little MEOW for the cat's daddy?
 No. There is a cat not talking to me. A cat wolfing its breakfast that does not even know her own name is in the plural. A cat that's your latent schizo — hold on here, did I say *latent*? — plus could be sexually confused. Chiles Rellenos has got these massive balls; she's unbelievable, this cat. *Huge* balls. A cat with testicles to spare that I call *she* and *her* because I feel like it, right? That's how I look at cats, right?
 Is my vision impaired?
 We're dealing *cat* here. Your He-man blues.
 This is my perspective we're talking.
 So how would I know if the cat *minds*?
 MEOW!!! MEOW!!!
 You want to read that one for me? You think she wants more food or what?
 Some voice. This is a heavy argument I had cooking with the muse.
 Which reminds me. I been hiding something from you the way I told this thing so far. You been wondering about the sex of this phone call person, am I right?
 From the voice you can't tell.
 I got several reasons I'd like a name on this character. Right at the top, though, hoping he/she'll want to keep things formal, is do I say Ms. Muse or what? I heard they switch these things around: guy gets a lady muse, girl writer draws a male. But who knows, right? This is dark country we're talking.
 MEOW!!!
 You think they got a muse for cats? Christ knows old Chiles could use one, or a cat-translator, or more Meatball Melange.
 A little cumin on top, por favor?

RING!!!
 I get to it in one, and I got all my fingers crossed.
 "Hello? Muse?"
 "Yes. That's right. I'm sorry, Mr. Ledbetter, it was not my intention to disconnect when you fed your cat. I was called away."
 "Listen, don't apologize. It's good to hear your voice."
 "Ah, voice. Yes. I've left this other party hanging at quite a precarious juncture, I'm afraid. So this will have to be brief and to the point. Do try not to take offense, Mr. Ledbetter. All right?"
 "Right."
 "Voice, then. You may tap new energies, new reservoirs of compassion ..."
 "Wait. Hold the phone. I think I can save you a little time on this one. I don't want to interrupt, but on this voice thing I got you covered. I had this sensational idea. What I'm thinking is, I write a story from the point of view of a *cat*. I really get into the cat's voice, know what I mean?"
 "Hmmm."

"You like it? I tell you it's going to be incredible!"
 "Yes. It may be. I'm not at all sure you're ready for that, Mr. Ledbetter."
 "I'm ready. I got a ..."
 "Still, I *am* impressed with the way you've entered into the spirit of voice. And I'm not asking you to give up the cat idea ..."
 "You're some muse, you know that?"
 "Just to put it on the back burner for a while. Please do forgive me, Mr. Ledbetter. I really *must* hurry through this. What I have in mind for voice is something a little *tougher* than usual. Quite ungrammatical, with an ethnic slant of some kind to get you really stretching those vocal cords. I want you to play with sentence rhythms. Are you following me so far?"
 "Oh, yeah. I'm with you. You want me to sound illiterate."
 "Not at all. I want you to be a writer. This is to be a story about writing, about the mysterious relationship between a writer and the writer's ..."
 "STOP. You can stop right there. I'm not doing it. You know what else I'm thinking? I'm thinking *credentials*. Like how a person like you gets into the Muse Corps, you know?"
 "And it is to be self-referential. You do understand what I mean by that?"
 "I understand all right. I'm just not doing it."
 "Oh, I think you will, Mr. Ledbetter. Think of the cat. You'll need my help there. And think of this telephone, of all that might happen if early one sunny morning ... and so on and so forth."
 "You got all the power is what you're saying. You got my number, I don't have yours. So you call the shots. Am I right?"
 "There is one thing more."
 "Be my guest."
 "It will be necessary for the purposes of this story for you to *change sex*. To write from the point of view of the opposite sex. I have all my writers do this at some point, and I find it very salutary."
 "Listen! I'm for that. That I can agree with, no contest. Plus we got a very interesting coincidence here. My cat ..."
 "NO, Mr. Ledbetter. Not the cat story yet."

So I did all that.
 Sat down and did it before midnight, signed it with my own name.

Constance Rooke

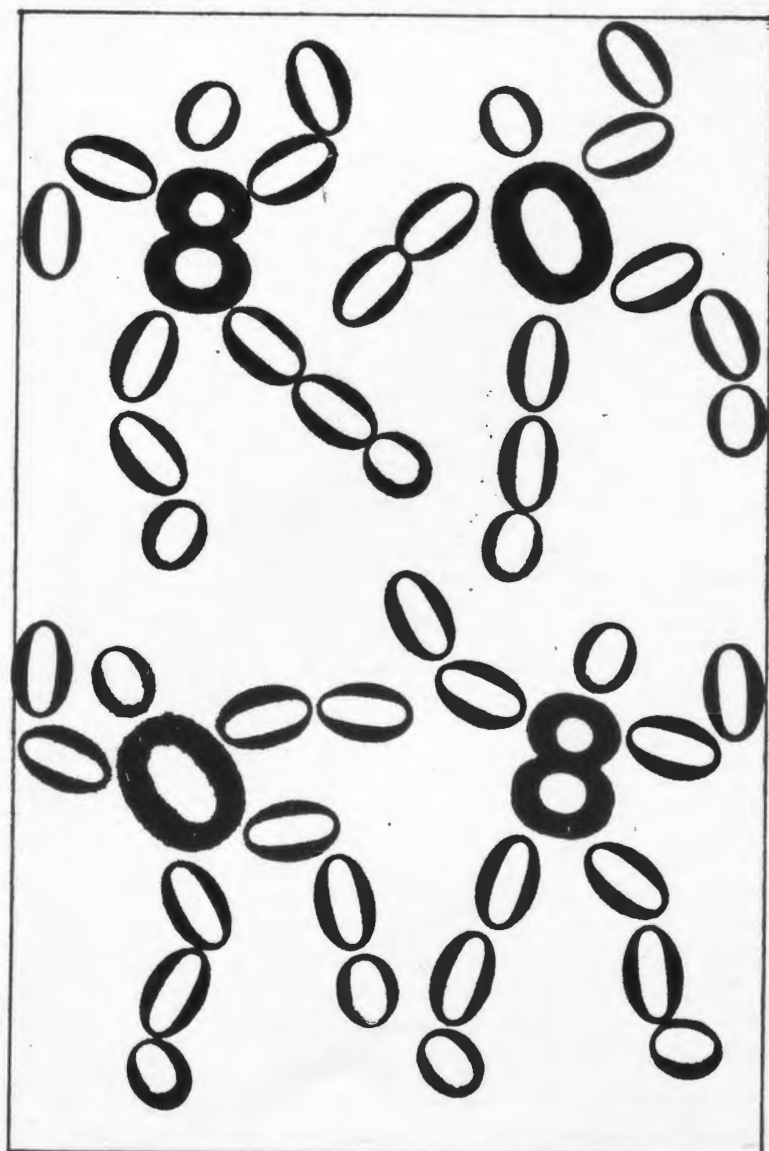


Image by Ann Noël

Behind the mirror, Orphée and Heurtebise then traverse a "Zone"

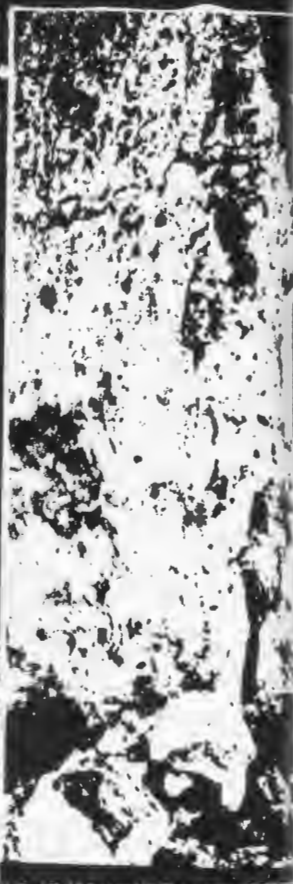
the mirror is an object that

As the entrance

and exit

the film

time transmitted through the radio



extent of the "Zone" stands as accused

the mirror to seek All that transpires behind the mirror is accused
the rubber gloves of Orphée the mirror is accused
in the "Zone" to the

love scene
a poem for five performers
by dick higgins

to perform this work requires five men or women and a pack of index cards made up according to the directions below.

to make the deck:

1. use a pack of 100 unruled index cards; on these, either write the texts given below, or else photocopy the texts, cut them apart and glue them onto the cards.
2. keep the resulting decks separate.

to perform:

1. the performers number themselves *i* through *v*.
2. each takes the appropriate deck of cards. *iv* and *v* divides *sher* (his or her) deck unevenly.
3. each shuffles *sher* cards.
4. at a mutually agreed-upon signal, each performer reads her top card aloud in sequence, *i* through *v*.
5. after each card is read, it is placed on the bottom of the deck.
6. as each performer returns to the bottom of the deck, he or she does not shuffle it before reading on but keeps on through *sher* cards again in the same order as before.
7. the performance lasts as long as desired, or for a mutually agreed-upon duration.

i
let's us
oh, to
can i
should i
you can
i want to
shall we
would you like to
what if we
shouldn't you
okay to

ii
roar
touch
philosophize
wake up
walk
laugh
swim
take a bath
sing
collapse
make love
dance
sleep
smoke
dream

iii
with faith
with a smile
with a lover
with a song
with a gentle sigh
with a tear
with a blur
with me
with great passion
with a damn good hit
with a laugh
with great effort
with a touch
with a gesture
with pale bodies

iv and v
in the nude
on the road
enjoying the spring
throwing roses
on 23rd street
for a moment
among the dancers
beside the apples
without touching
in the sunlight
generously
again
by the brook
in a lake
anyway
in the water
on a lake
in the altogether
among the horses
sighing
watching for danger
altogether
in the mist
among the fishes
gently
in zurich
in a dream
in a jock strap
furiously
right there
at the movies
caressing
in the cellar
sipping coffee
cascading cards
in a sweat
on the grass
knowing the truth
on the lawn
before he leaves
en route to washington
playfully
making love
so excited
on the piano
holding our pants up
in the moonlight
for a song
french style
among the flowers
in the warmth
doing the old in-out
for the first time
on a table
oooo
through the dandelions
looking for soap

THE NEW HOUSE

By Jim Francis

(from a story idea of
George Bowering's in *Craft Slices*)

I want to describe the house my parents are moving into, but I don't want you to mis-imagine it. Of course I can't stop you, if that's what you want to do. But if you should subvert my intent you're not allowed to bitch when the story doesn't work. I'm the one writing the story and you can't expect me to deal with every possibility. Or you can, but you will be disappointed.

Take for example the backyard. It is continuous with the backyard of the house next to it, which, incidentally, is the house my parents are moving out of and my older brother and his wife and two infant sons are moving into. I know that story has potential, but it's not the one I'm telling so I won't tell you the colour of my sister-in-law's hair or the names of the boys. I'm telling you about the backyard of the new house, which has no fences or hedges of its own. The house behind it has a pool, enclosed and guarded by a wooden, rust coloured fence, but that fence will not belong to my parents. They, or my brother, will simply run the lawn mower along it in summer and not think too much about it otherwise.

I would like to describe that backyard in terms of feet or yards, just to be accurate and abstract, but I don't know the exact measurements, and I don't usually think in those terms myself so my estimates would likely be misleading.

Here, it seems, is the point. I can use your imagination to describe that backyard — so long as you don't let your imagination get carried away. I want you to think in terms of a birdfeeder on top of a six foot steel post with a one foot diameter concrete base flush with the level of the grass. It is at the back of this backyard, near that neighbour's fence that you and my parents and my brother have agreed not to think about too much. If you are co-operating with this story then you should by now have pretty well forgotten what that fence is made of and what colour it is. Just remember that the bird feeder is on a six foot pole within a few feet of it and we'll get along just fine.

Now, if you're like most urban or suburban people you don't know much about birds. If you're not, you'll just have to imagine that you don't. I realize that pretending you don't know something you do is an initially offensive idea, but give it a shot. It can be fun because no matter how hard you try it won't quite work. You'll remember that you're faking and end up juggling two perspectives. Rather like a person with twenty-twenty vision borrowing a pair of prescription glasses and constantly peeking over the top of the rim or looking at things out of the corner of the eye.

So there you are, standing at the big bay window of the breakfast nook on the back of the house, watching the birds come and go from the feeder on top of the pole. And you are either a suburbanite who knows almost nothing about birds or you are wearing a borrowed pair of prescription glasses. In either case there is nothing too startling about those robins or bluejays or whatever they are. Their colours and their comings and goings are entertaining but not intrusive, and that's how big the backyard on my parent's new home is.

(You might want to sit in the screened-in porch, in a couple of months when things are warmer, and drink cool rum punch drinks while my father tells you what a job it was helping the fumble-fingered neighbour set up that birdfeeder.)

It is worth knowing, or at least I want you to know, that this house in on a crescent, just where the street begins to curve rather sharply around towards the east. The effect is like that of a corner lot, without the geometric neatness. One of the results of this like-a-corner-lot-but-not-quite situation is a driveway that ends in a garage that opens from the side of the house. The garage sticks out of the west-southwest end of the house with a bedroom over it and is flush with the front of the house. It makes the place look a lot bigger than it is.

If you have conjured up some sort of walkway from the driveway to the front steps you can now send that image back to the vacuum it came from. Look back up the page and you'll see that I only mentioned it to banish it. The fact is that the front of the house is completely without finishing touches. The grass is a bit worn between driveway and front steps, but not enough to be visible from the street. There is just a gravel driveway that ends at the garage door, and the unbroken expanse of grass from curb to front steps. No walkway of any sort to invite you up to the big brass knocker on the high, wide, oak door. Very formal.

Did I mention the columns? No I didn't, and you wouldn't have thought them up on your own. Two feet in diameter and going up from either side of the wide, deep steps to the eight foot overhang that runs along the length of the front of the house, garage section included. The only way in is the informal way, round the back.

That's about as much as I can say, except to mention that it has a large kitchen with only a counter between it and the previously mentioned breakfast area. It's the sort of arrangement my mother likes, conducive to friendly conversations and boardgames that end reluctantly at 2 or 3 in the morning. With large pots of coffee and plates piled high with cakes and cookies on the side. Pass go, take a cookie, tell me about your new job.

You see my parents don't take possession of the new house till the end of March, though the previous owners have long since moved out. Putting you inside that breakfast room was a bit of a trick, but I have no trouble imagining it so I don't feel guilty about using the trick. I haven't been inside yet, and it's not likely I will be any time soon. I've always been welcomed at home with open arms, even when I'd wrecked family cars, and when I called from the police station on Easter Sunday in need of bail. This one will be a different house, one I won't wander to casually or descend on confidently. There's been a falling out, of the type that Catholic families are good at. But that's the kind of story you can image for yourself.

HE BECAME KNOWN AS >THE MAN WHO COLLECTS AND PRINTS

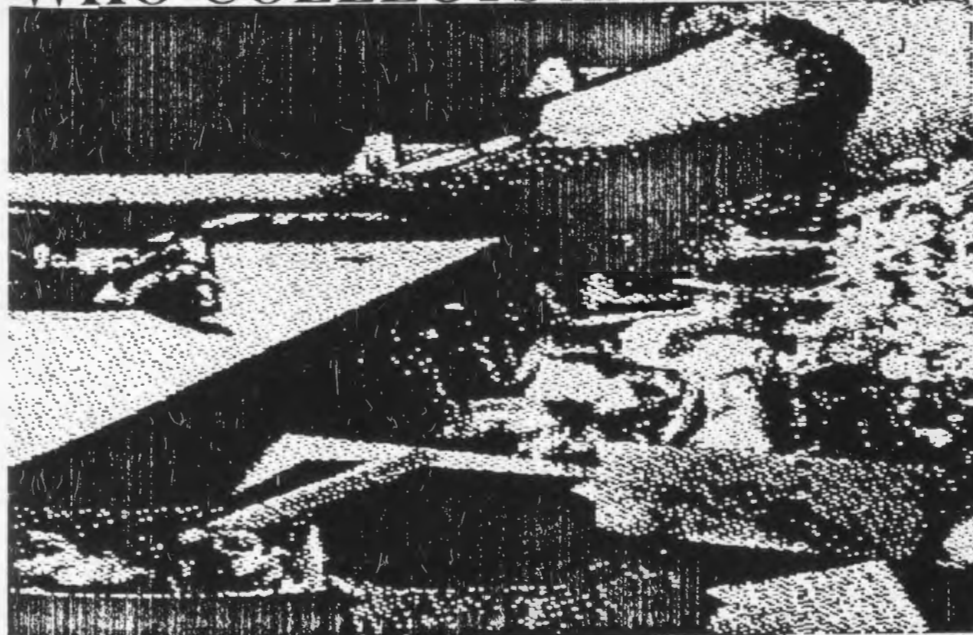


Image by Wolfgang Haacke

GOOD-FOR-NOTHING-THINGS<

WHO KILLED PROFESSOR WORDSWORTH?

By Andrew James Paterson

WHO KILLED PROFESSOR WORDSWORTH? is a novelization of the writer/artist's videotape of the same title. (Contact: VTAPE, 183 Bathurst St., Toronto, Canada.)

REALIZING THERE WAS NO WAY he would ever be able to talk Webster out of sticking him with the Professor Wordsworth murder case, Whit Masters grudgingly accepted the assignment and some necessary research material to bone up on while driving around in his Central Bureau of Control operative's vehicle. The disc which Webster had instructed him to pick up contained a selection of Professor Wordsworth's word-related tele-lectures; it might as well have been labelled The Nutty Professor's Greatest Hits.

THE PROFESSOR HAD, UNTIL YESTERDAY that is, been a TV personality who had appeared between two and five times a day on NationWideNetwork for the ostensible purpose of seizing a popular word and reclaiming that word's actual, as opposed to popular, meaning. Whit Masters had sat through exactly one of these mini-telelectures before making a point of either taking a piss or opening another can of Lone Star every time the unevenly-bearded quack's face appeared on screen. However he was now on assignment to find the professor's killer so now he had to examine the telelectures on the disc. If Webster maintained that the lectures might contain possible clues then who was Whit Masters not to at least be open to such a possibility.

The CBC had indeed been curious about Professor Wordsworth. The man had been a mega-TV celebrity but nothing else was known about him... no real name, no address, no SIN, no bank account, no tax returns, nothing. Webster had told him to check in with Stillman Boone for further briefing. Stillman Boone was the CBC's authority figure on the subject of Cultural Subversives and a media celebrity himself.

"YOU, WHIT MASTERS, WERE CHOSEN FOR TWO REASONS," Webster was smirking within the untouchable confines of his monitor. "First, your hatred of pretentious intellectual assholes and second, your name came up next on the Selector Computer." Masters scowled and lit a cigarette. He regretted being unable to argue with technological superiors and with technology in general. It was difficult enough for him to drive while operating the necessary keyboard selectors and observing his information monitor screens in the Civic, but it was impossible for him to talk common sense to either machines themselves or to individuals such as Webster who had managed to transform themselves into machines.

AFTER TURNING THE IGNITION KEY Masters inserted the videodisc of Professor Wordsworth's telelectures into the deck for the higher of the two monitors and then absently listened to the murder victim's initial monologue on the tape. At the first red light he reacquainted himself with the professor's image.

The man's age had been somewhere between thirty-five and forty-five; in short, it was difficult to ascertain. He wore black-rimmed glasses which, upon closer examination, contained no glass. His beard was unevenly distributed around his mouth and the beard had been blackened for the benefit of the camera as had his receding hair. Professor Wordsworth resembled a genuine TV comedy caricature of a hyper-neurotic intellectual.

Professor Wordsworth shamelessly read from a teleprompter which had been placed immediately vertical to the TV camera.



MY DESIGNATED WORDS FOR TODAY ARE "PUBLIC" AND "PRIVATE": THESE ARE BOTH WORDS WHICH ARE CONSIDERED TO BE INTERDEPENDENT—WORDS WHICH SEEMINGLY CANNOT BE DEFINED WITHOUT THE ONE REFERRING TO THE OTHER. SOMETHING "PRIVATE" REFERS TO SOMETHING WHICH IS NOT EITHER PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE OR PRIVATE PROPERTY. "PRIVATE" IS INDIVIDUAL WHILE "PUBLIC" IS COLLECTIVE. "PRIVATE" IS PERSONAL WHILE "PUBLIC" IS NOT TOO PERSONAL TO BE SHARED WITH OTHERS.

YET I FEEL THESE ARE THE TWO MOST SYMBIOTIC WORDS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE. AN IDEA, AN AFFAIR, A SENSIBILITY CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS BEING "PRIVATE" IN REFERENCE TO THE PUBLIC—THIS VIDEOTAPE'S APPEAL IS THAT IT ALLOWS THE PUBLIC TO SEE SOMETHING WHICH IS PRIVATE—PRIVATE HERE BEING SYNONYMOUS WITH FORBIDDEN, OR TABOO. BUT CONSIDER THE REVERSE—HOW CAPITALISM CONSISTS OF CONVINCING A HYPOTHETICAL PUBLIC THAT A PRIVATE CONCEPT OR FANTASY IS BENEFICIAL AND THEREBY ESSENTIAL TO THE PUBLIC. BOTH ADVERTISING AND PORNOGRAPHY OPERATE ON THIS PRINCIPLE. THEY FETTERIZE THE PRIVATE FOR PUBLIC CONSUMPTION.

THE MOST RIDICULOUS EXAMPLE OF THE SYMBIOSIS OF THESE TWO WORDS IS IN THE NOTION OF THE ENGLISH PUBLIC SCHOOL, WHICH IN NORTH AMERICA IS REFERRED TO AS A "PRIVATE" SCHOOL BECAUSE IT IS AFTER ALL PRIVATELY CONTROLLED AND ONLY ACCESSIBLE TO A SMALL SEGMENT OF THE "PUBLIC". THE WORD "PRIVATE" BY DEFINITION TITILLATES THE PUBLIC—ERECT A SIGN INDICATING PRIVATE PROPERTY AND—NOT WITHSTANDING BODYGUARDS OR DOBERMAN PINCHERS—YOU ARE IN FACT EXTENDING AN INVITATION TO "THE PUBLIC"—MEANING ALL OF THOSE WHO ARE NOT YOURSELF.

By roughly the halfway point of the professor's lecture Masters had come to see himself as a man playing a role not unlike that of a private investigator whose job was to investigate the murder of a man who had become a public figure because of (not despite) his aura of privacy (here being synonymous with secrecy). And this meant that this assignment was going to be motherfucking difficult if not downright impossible—the make or break case of his own law enforcement career. And this meant that nobody, excluding himself, was to be considered entirely free from suspicion.

Because most of his previous assignments had been related to more conventional jurisdictions such as insurance or crimes of passion, Masters had never yet had any dealings with Stillman Boone, CBC Cultural Affairs Watchdog. Having labelled Professor Wordsworth as a cross between religious fanatic and showbiz fraud, he now inserted Boone's character-profile disc into the deck for the lower monitor and then punched up the lower keyboard.

STILLMAN BOONE—ACADEMIC, AUTHOR, CULTURAL ACTIVIST—CBC EMPLOYEE IN GOOD STANDING—FORMERLY POLITICAL SCIENCE PROFESSOR IN TORONTO PRIOR TO ANNEXATION OF CANADA FOLLOWING REAGAN/MULRONEY FREE TRADE PACT—AUTHOR OF *THE POISONING OF THE AMERICAN INTELLECT*—UNSUBSTANTIATED CRIMINAL AND LEFTIST HISTORIES BEFORE ACADEMIC AND PUBLISHING CAREERS.

My God! The old cold warrior was not only a battleaxe, he was a proper curmudgeon. Whit Masters checked himself. Overexposure to Boone had caused him to utilize the vocabulary of a Platonic Englishman; and Stillman Boone had proven to be English in the manner that only a former Canadian could contrive. Proper English, as opposed to fluid American, was after all the vocabulary of the pretentious intellectual assholes he was notorious within the CBC for despising. Hell, as far as he was concerned Professor Wordsworth and Stillman Boone were the same kettle of fish.

However, Boone considered the professor to be not only a dangerous radical but also a populist demagogue—a truly deadly combination. Masters himself was a lifetime Republican, with a renewed fervor resulting from the recent alignment of both the Canadian Conservative and Liberal parties with the Grand Old Elephant.

But why, since Canadians were now Americans, did Boone still persist in affecting Englishness in order to avoid being mistaken for an American? His first impression of the Cultural Affairs watchdog was that the man might possibly have been some kind of construction as opposed to being human. He had certainly recited his capsule summation of the history of Professor Wordsworth (from dropout semiotics student of Concordian recluse Scott Symington through minimalist painter named Eugene Levitt through failed actor Brock Gilbert to his final incarnation) as if he had recited it several times before with identical phrasing. But at the conclusion of Boone's monologue when he had described the professor's metamorphosis from shrewd con-artist to fluttering psychopath, Boone's eyes had appeared somewhat possessed. The learned gentleman was not a robot, concluded Masters. On the contrary, he was a fanatic.

On Masters' upper monitor Professor Wordsworth's lecture concerning the words "Christmas" and "Christ" was interrupted by the vidphone. The caller was Webster. Masters would've been surprised if it had been anybody else. He had no friends and there was not yet any reason for any of Webster's superiors to establish contact.

The BBC had caught the killer as the killer had walked into headquarters and presented himself. Masters hoped that would be the end, but of course the killer's surrendering only complicated matters further. The man, whose name was Jim Wall, was carrying on his person enough money to keep a hardcore junkie such as himself supplied for at least a month. But he wasn't supplying information.

Masters' arrival only served to provide Wall with a live wire cop who existed only to be baited. Wall repeated his death wish to the point that Masters did indeed put out his gun only to have Wall grab it and then shoot himself in the mouth. The killer himself without having revealed anything besides the obvious fact that he had been a hired gun expected to carry out somebody else's assignment and then disappear. Contrary to the nihilistic logic of men such as Jim Wall, cops don't all believe in capital punishment—at least not before useful information had been extracted from the murderers.

SID TAYLOR—FLAMBOYANT PRESIDENT OF NATION-WIDE-NETWORK (NWN)—PRIME ADVOCATE OF COLORIZATION OF BLACK & WHITE FILM—ONE TIME MANAGER OF SIXTIES FOLKSINGER DEAN ZIMMERMAN—REGISTERED DEMOCRAT BUT KNOWN CONTRA FINANCIAL SUPPORTER—CHARGED WITH INCOME TAX FRAUD IN 1984 HOWEVER CLEARED—ALSO OWNER OF LUCRATIVE DRIVE-IN MOVIE CHAIN, ORIOLE CINEMA.

Sid Taylor had proven both charming and frustrating to Masters; simply because the man made perfect sense to him. Sid Taylor recognized that the eccentric young man who called himself Professor Wordsworth might indeed turn out to be a lucrative investment of a little bit of time and very little money. The professor simply had to stand in front of the camera while another camera supplied the "set" (an anonymous private boys' school crest with the prerequisite generic Latin slogan). Sid Taylor was a shrewd capitalist to the letter; and that was why the man made sense to Whit Masters.

However, Sid Taylor also gave Masters the impression of knowing more than he was telling. He had mentioned the subject of the professor's personal life (Taylor didn't see how the man could've possibly had time for any sort of private life) only to drop the subject. But then he had suggested a "possible lead" and proceeded to elaborate at length on the woman's aggressive manner and her obvious motive (revenge plus money). Sarah Mulholland, who was by now a successful and controversial writer, had on a couple of occasions confronted Wordsworth in NWN's rear parking lot. The problem with this potential suspect (Masters frowned as he lit a cigarette upon leaving Taylor's office), was that, since she'd been successful at extracting the money in question as well as (according to Taylor) now being publicly lesbian, her two obvious motives no longer seemed particularly relevant. Still she might prove worth a visit, although while reading her character-profile on the lower monitor in his car, Masters became apprehensive. He drove nervously along the side streets in search of the house Sarah Mulholland allegedly lived in, fearing that his motive for visiting her would be automatically suspect.

SARAH MULHOLLAND—BORN NEW YORK CITY—WRITER AND FILMMAKER—NOVEL *SPIDER WOMAN'S REVENGE* SUBJECT OF OBSCENITY TRIAL 1985—VERDICT INNOCENT—FORMER GIRLFRIEND OF PROFESSOR WORDSWORTH—HI-PROFILE AIDS ACTIVIST—ALSO WRITES LIT.CRIT. ADVOCATING REMOVAL OF MEANING FROM LANGUAGE.

Sarah Mulholland had proven quite charming. Although her recollections of the professor were largely vindictive she was prone to what struck Masters as almost bizarre mood swings—suddenly her tone would be tender and compassionate. Most of the time she despised Wordsworth for imposing what she blatantly referred to as "the tyranny of meaning" onto language which she felt should be accessible to whoever might want to use it for whatever reasons of their choice; rather than a privileged minority. But during her mood swings she would give the impression of pitying the professor having to conceal his intellectual and sexual impotence behind his pseudo-academic bogus persona. For her part, she seemed too intense for Masters to suspect her of being guilty of the posture she accused Wordsworth of having used in the marketing of his self. Masters was transfixed by the fluidity by which she systematically debunked the murder victim, while respecting her moments of sentimentality. But, when she finally excused herself and returned to her own work, Masters felt relief. He returned to his car, activated the remainder of the professor's lecture on the words "panic" and "hysteria" (he maintained that they had become trivialized through repetition), and enjoyed the relative security of the automobile.

His solitude was interrupted by Webster, beaming somewhat less than radiantly on the vidphone. Webster was announcing an interesting development in the case. The professor's relatively obscure and impoverished mentor, Concordia lecturer Scott Symington, was on the brink of releasing a tell-all biography of his celebrity pupil. Due to the wonders of technology, such exploitative enterprises could now be on the market within days as opposed to within months. And because Symington anticipated being considered a major suspect (his motive was also glaringly obvious) he had thoughtfully released a disc statement to the CBC.

The man did not travel, to put it bluntly. As Masters scanned Symington's character-profile, he wondered if the man ever cooked, or drank beer, let alone had a sex life and all the other pleasures men were supposed to enjoy — not that Masters enjoyed anything besides Westerns and beer. Symington made Stillman Boone look like a normal, down-to-earth, regular guy, which was no mean achievement.



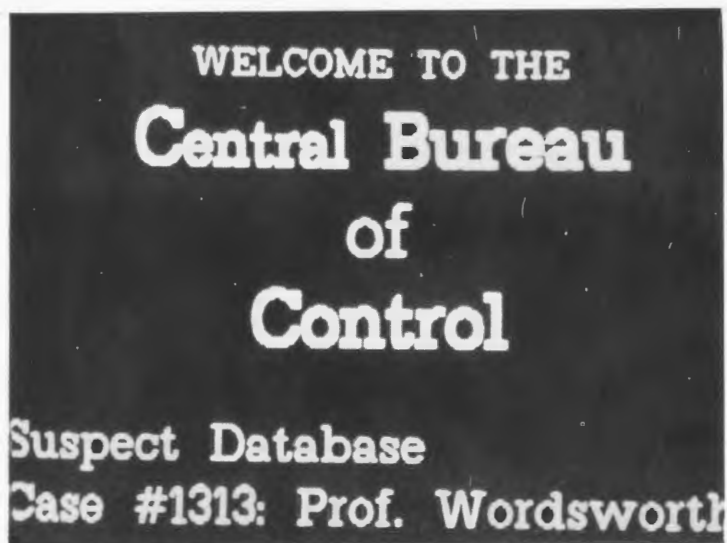
SCOTT SYMINGTON — CANADIAN-BORN LECTURER AT CONCORDIA U. MONTREAL — MENTOR AND ROLE MODEL FOR PROF. WORDSWORTH — SWITCHED AREA OF SPECIALIZATION FROM LINGUISTICS TO PHILOSOPHY OF COPYWRITE AND AUTHORSHIP — NO LONGER GIVES IN-PERSON LECTURES — FEELS CULT OF PERSONALITY DISTRACTS FROM PURITY OF TEXT.

In the CBC Briefing Room Masters was poised on his monitor with another deck and monitor poised and ready to roll. After accepting the can of Lone Star Webster had thoughtfully arranged to provide, the viewing monitor began to roll and a pale, balding man who was obviously reading from a prepared disc began to deliver his statement.

LISTEN, I HAVE PREPARED THIS DISC BECAUSE I KNEW SOMEONE OF YOUR ILK WOULD SUSPECT ME OF WANTING THE PROFESSOR DEAD. MY BODY IS NOT HERE. ITS LOCATION IS NONE OF ANYBODY ELSE'S BUSINESS. THAT DOES NOT MEAN I AM A FUGITIVE. ON THE CONTRARY, THIS IS HOW I ALWAYS COMMUNICATE WITH THOSE WHO BY DEFINITION ARE ALL TOO EAGER TO REMOVE WORDS AND PHRASES FROM CONTEXT FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES. HOWEVER, IF MY MOUTH IS NOT VISIBLE THEN HOW INDEED CAN I ESTABLISH AUTHORSHIP?

I ONLY SPEAK BODY-TO-BODY WHEN MONEY IS INVOLVED BECAUSE MONEY IS SYNONYMOUS WITH EXCHANGE AND PEOPLE INTERACT BECAUSE THEY MUST EXCHANGE. WITHOUT OVERT EXCHANGE I NO LONGER SEE ANY PURPOSE IN FACE-TO-FACE INTERACTION. THE FACT THAT "PROFESSOR WORDSWORTH" WAS AN ERRANT PUPIL OF MINE WHO CO-OPTED BOTH MY PERSONALITY AND MY IDEAS WAS NOT NECESSARILY A FACTOR IN REACHING THIS DECISION TO CONFINE ALL DIRECT HUMAN INTERACTION TO MATTERS OF A PECUNIARY NATURE.

WHEN HE WAS A STUDENT OF MINE HE CALLED HIMSELF CLARK KENYON ...



... At this point Symington was only reiterating information which had already been supplied by Stillman Boone. Masters hypothesized that all men who claimed to be the world's smartest man made a point of checking out the competition and, since Boone was employed by the CBC, he had means at his disposal which were not accessible to the average working stiff like himself. Although Webster warned against ruling out Symington prematurely, he himself seemed to have already done so. Masters ruled him out as the man who had hired Jim Wall and his gun because it seemed obvious that Wall would've simply taken Symington's money and then killed him. Still, when at the conclusion of his statement Symington shamelessly plugged his tell-all-bio, Masters wondered whether the CBC should obtain a copy for further revelations. When he posed the question to Webster his superior turned and sneered at him. What possible use could any reasonable person have for Scott Symington's book, except a bedrock for the kitty litter.

MASTERS HAD BY NOW CONCEDED that he would have to obtain some further reading on the subject of Professor Wordsworth, since none of the suspects so far seemed likely candidates. He started his car in the direction of the American Cultural Reference Library. The operative nervously lit a cigarette. He had trouble dealing with local libraries, let alone monolithic ones such as the one he was about to visit for the first time. He always felt librarians were mocking his relative illiteracy. Nevertheless, he would have to scan through the polysyllabic words which only meant something to people with at least two degrees in order to locate the names of other individuals who might for whatever ridiculous motive see Professor Wordsworth dead; and who might be smart enough to use a suicidal hired killer for the purpose of pulling the trigger while they sat back smugly in their academic and bureaucratic cubicles. Upon reaching his destination he parked the car and extinguished his cigarette. Masters was sick of buildings in which smoking was forbidden.

SANPURU

By Misha

Volodya watched the gleaming amber fuselage speed by on a crash collision with an identical fuselage. He tried to keep his eyes open at the point of impact, but snapped them shut as the missile met its image and the entire sheet of glass came slaking down in a torrent of brilliant lights and a beautiful clash of sound. He coughed at the sudden sweet smell of almond brandy.

Ettie, her face brick red with anger and exertion, turned on him. "The point! The point is 'to make money'. When you make enough money — I don't care who the fuck listens to your music." She stood glaring at him — her jaw thrust forward, her legs apart and her shimmer of golden hair cut thick and straight at the lobes of her ears.

Volodya looked at the tinsel of glass littering the floor. Bright shards all reflecting pieces of Ettie, her apartment, the lucite lites in the ceiling.

He bent down and picked up two pieces of the mirror. One jagged edge reflected his own coal eyed image, the other, Ettie's thigh tight in a maroon satin legging. He fitted the pieces together, but only got an irregular image of both of them. He felt a sharp pain in his stomach, as if he had eaten pieces of the mirror and now they slid around inside of him as he moved. Volodya grabbed his side and groaned.

"Volodya — get off the floor. Just quit the crap for five minutes."

Volodya wondered how she did that. He bit down — to see if he could talk with his teeth clenched. He moved further into the litter of the mirror, cutting the heel of his hand on a triangular shard. He gasped as the bright blood flowed over the broken images of Ettie.

"Ettie?"

"WHAT?!" She was standing at the wetbar, her sharp heel cocked up on a bar stool. She had lit a cigarette and savagely smoked it while she watched Volodya wrap his hand with his handkerchief.

Volodya stood up. The pain in his gut changed to a dull nausea. The whole room cracked and began to slide apart; the four walls mirroring each other in a prismatic sliding of glass and wine red. Volodya closed his heavy-lidded eyes very slowly, "I need a weekend. Two days. Then new music — new life for both of us."

"I don't like this Volodya!" Her fine tattooed brows seemed sewn together. "What are you saying 'one weekend'?" Her voice began to rise, "Are you walking out on me the week before our wedding? What are you planning to do — just get out and leave me with this — this MESS!?" She screeched the last words.

Volodya took three steps toward Ettie and gently reached out to lay a hand on her flushed cheek — unnaturally red under the printed rectangles of tattooed blush. She flinched as if he were going to hit her, even though he never had. "Ettie, calm down. I'm going to drive up to Kip's for the weekend — okay? I just need a little space."

Ettie blew smoke in his face. Her jaw stood out and her eyes narrowed. The words came out in hard brittle shards. "You shit. You dirty shit." She slapped him hard across the cheek. One maroon satin nail raked the corner of his eye.

The streets arched up to him like the black back of a cat. The steel mesh elevator set him down in spikes of neon, wisps of swirling trash, tattered pieces of plastic and foil; remnants of better days. Like the scar of an old tom, with an acrid pit smell, the streets, beckoned; full of beaded glass, viscous pools, chill sores and scabs. Volodya shivered, the vicious words of street life pelting him as he ran toward his apartment, the black gun ready in his hand to wipe away any unwelcome smudge. He pressed his palm into the lock of his apartment building.

Volodya sat back on the light airquilts of his unmade bed. The servo-center automatically swung toward him, but with a savage gesture, he knocked it back. The bed contoured around his body, warming him, smoothing away the brittle edges of Ettie's brick face — her words thrown through the plate windows he opened to her.

He slammed the HU, "Fuckit! I don't want to sleep."

The giraffe tilted its elegant head. It was a rare albino giraffe with pink gumdrop eyes and a long satin neck. It bent its head over the suroplast fence — to get a better look at Volodya. Volodya stepped back, looking distrustfully at the dark nobs on its head. As they came into view he noticed that its horns were really wax figurines of a man in an eel suit and a woman in a dress like a bell.

The giraffe crooned in a game show voice, "Just look at that cake."

It's too beautiful to cut.

That is the most beautiful cake I have ever seen.

"Volodya," Ettie had cut the cake with a green glass knife and was now shoving a piece in his mouth. It was like melted plastic. He chewed it but could not swallow. Volodya put his hands to his throat. He fell forward into it. The cake, a huge softening marshmallow, began to envelop him. Volodya flailed his arms.

"Volodya! Stop that!" Ettie called him.

Volodya fought awake. He pushed for the visiphone — called up Kip. He answered in a blue soft jacket.

"Yo Volodya what's up old pal?"

"Thought I might be. You open to company this weekend. Or are you working?"

Kip laughed, "No and yes." He moved away so the phone viewed the room — a silver and plum bed with a dark sinewy form reclining in the half-light.

"I could change plans though," Kip smiled at Volodya.

"Nah, catch ya next weekend."

"Whoa, your plans off then?"

He meant the wedding, of course. Volodya had forgotten. He put his hand over his face in a weary gesture, then looked at it, almost expecting to see a white sticky film. "Right — of course."

Kip leaned closer, whispered, "Look, it's not big deal. If you really need ..."

"No — that's fine. I'll catch you Friday then, eh?"

"Your funeral," Kip laughed and snapped off.

Volodya leaned back — well shit, he thought, now what? The servo-center moved down again and the bed warmed up. "Goddamn stupid machines," he growled. He jumped up and began to pace. He turned away from the slow brain death of the living sound and color of the HU or holointertainer unit. He just wanted to think. Humming phrases from Rote Erde, he took his clearance pass, the keys to Ettie's red ruffabout, parked in the multilayer garage, and the gold hook of his alto sax.

Nerve endings fired with the faint movement along the skin of the corridor. Track lights lit up as Volodya passed and shut down behind him. Leaving this long black tunnel before and behind, it was as if the universe were constantly being created for this one man alone. Aging composer, he thought bitterly. He smacked his new small pot belly. He'd spent all his good gems already, nothing left but semiprecious rocks, imperfect jasper, flawed beryl.

Volodya didn't like the look of it. A huge oval slab of clear red gelatin seemed to quiver as he walked towards it. He gingerly set the alto sax on the hood to find the code key. Volodya's hand shook as he reached for the handle. Of course it was hard, cold, like all suroplast. It had just been a strange trick of the sodium lamps. Even so, as he closed the door to the ruffabout, he felt a sudden sense of claustrophobia.

Knowing that the shades were a giveaway, he took them off before entering the sleezo slip bar. He'd made some notoriety as an authorized composer and he didn't want to be bothered by it. He went straight to the counter, back booths signifying something to hide.

"What the fuck do you want?" asked a tender with gritty red hair and a cap with "Gel tub lifeguard" flashing in ginsu green on the front.

"What's new?"

"Oysters," his voice was gruff, as if he expected Volodya to fight him over it. Volodya nodded and waved his hand.

The tender slopped a kisk of beer down next to Volodya's hand. He leaned on the counter, his red bill very close to Volodya.

"You been here before?" he squinted at Volodya.

Volodya shook his head.

"Hunh — you look kinda familiar."

"Come on. Come on Hunch — somebody's dying of thirst over here and you're flirting with that little gunhole." A large termite windmilled its legs at Hunch. Its fat white body gleamed with good health.

Volodya grimaced, hung his head and sipped the bitter beer. In a minute, Hunch was back with a steaming plate of oysters. They were beautifully formed. The texture was perfect. The smell was rich, buttery.

Volodya shoved the plate back hard, "What the hell is this place? You trying to kill me?"

Hunch reached a raw red hand over the counter and grabbed Volodya's cover coat, "Shut-up chip head — this ain't that kind of ..."

"Asciishit, I know glycerine when I see it — ain't an oyster been hatched that ..." Volodya's words were choked off.

Hunch took on the look of a huge feral animal. His face began to darken. The hand that held Volodya's coat began to tremble. The bar quieted a notch.

Volodya struggled a little, testing Hunch's grasp. He reached a dark hand forward and grabbed the thick variegated shell of the oyster and smashed it hard on the slick bar. It made a brittle crunch. A wet pale flesh oozed smelling strongly of sea brine. Hunch and Volodya stared at each other — Volodya unconvinced.

The swell door opened and the dank, cold air rushed up against the warm beery ones.

"Hey get outta here scum." A pod of termites gnashed their mandibles and waved their claws.

"Look at this Hunch, trouble in droves."

Hunch released Volodya and stumbled forward to face the new trouble. A woman in black coveralls stood by the doorway. She wore a bright red tag on her lapel. It was the sign of an unauthorized artist.

"No, no. We don't want you here," Hunch said, shaking his red head vigorously, he aggressively herded her back through the swell door.

The artist sniffed and spat on the floor. "Sanpuru shit pile," she said and backed out.

Volodya moved out the back way. In a moment the artist had circled back and was pulling something out of the dumpster. Volodya stood in the shadow watching. Finally she pulled out a crass of pale chocolate covered nuts.

She greedily tore open the package and poured them into her mouth, sucking off the chocolate noisily and spitting the nuts against the slimy brick wall.

Volodya edged out of the shadows. She drew a long knife.

"What are you doing?" he put his hand over his heart.

"You're not a cop," her voice was hard, annoyed. She had a long braid, thick like a rope.

"Why did you do that?"

"Because it was real chocolate." She made a ferret-like face.

"So?" Volodya liked this woman. Her face was thin and dark, her hands creased with grime.

"Are you sick?" Her voice was low, husky.

Volodya nodded.

"It's all sanpuru food. Plastic." She patted her own shrunken gut. "With little parasites to digest it living inside of you." She laughed. "They'll send me back to Canada when they catch me." She pointed at him. "You're going to shit blood and die." She listened intently a moment, one beige hand held up, then turned and ran.

Volodya moved his lips, soundlessly mouthing the word, "parasites".

Volodya trembled with the symbol list in his hand. It had been months since he had actually been inside a supermarket, but Ettie, paving the path to marital habits, had sent him. He looked down the long corridors at all the plastic food gleaming garish and safe in their tight wrappings. Sausages, like torpedoes, flew at him as he passed the meat counter, and a ready made pizza sailed off the shelf and flapped against his face. He peeled it off and threw it back into the refrigerator unit. Reaching the staples section, he picked up only hard baker's chocolate, bitter and pure. He put six packages into the cart. Then he headed to the cat food.

"May I see your pet authorization please?" The red wax lips of the checkout clerk smiled at him.

"Pet authorization?"

"Yes, in order to buy cat food you need to have a cat permit." She looked hard at him, her eyes like green olives. "Government regulations," she added.

"But why?" he asked.

She leaned over the counter, "Believe it or not, some folks try and eat this themselves. And as you well know, pet food isn't suitable for human consumption."

He smiled back. He knew that she knew that he was lying. "I just got the cat, 'Gulley'. I haven't got his authorization yet."

"I'm sorry then, I'll just have to take back the food."

He nodded. At least she rang up the chocolate.

"Been having trouble with rats then?" The old man pulled his loose chin and looked suspiciously at Volodya.

Volodya, thin as a whipworm, nodded back. "Yes, I could use a few traps."

The old man shook his head. "Nah, what ya need is pisin."

"Pisin?"

The liver spot hand pulled down a large red and yellow box of rat poison.

"I'd really prefer traps," Volodya said assertively.

The bleary blue eyes of the old man narrowed, "D'ya have authorization?"

"Picking through the garbage?" Only Ettie's voice could reach that ultimate height of disdain and disgust.

"Yes, ma'am. When we caught him running off with Mrs. Winston's toy poodle — well you must understand — we put two and two together."

Ettie leaned down and looked hard at Volodya. His eyes still burned like black coals, but he was as thin as a young fitch.

"We had to revoke his artist's authorization," the doctor was saying. The doctor, like all of them, even Ettie, Volodya supposed, was a termite.

They were all grubs with their parasites to digest the sanpuru foods. Volodya had no parasites. The chocolate killed them. Chocolate being non-synthesizable.

"He was my government-authorized fiancé," Ettie was saying harshly. "What compensation am I to get for this?"

"His personal effects of course. The accounts."

Ettie suppressed a small predatory smile. She allowed herself to show some concern. She tilted her head on her long thin neck and eyed Volodya suspiciously.

"He thinks we are termites," the officer explained.

"Refuses to eat. He thinks the food is plastic." It was a large glycerine banana that spoke — with a stethoscope.

"Okay Volodya, cut the crap!" Ettie said sharply.

Volodya looked straight back at her. "Fuck off," he said.

Ettie bricked. "He's sick all right," she took a stylus and punched her symbol.

The red suroplast door beckoned him. He shivered in the coverall, leaning very close to read it. One hand held his tag, the other, his alto sax. The door read:

"Unauthorized artist number 094110. By regulation 00503 anyone seen fraternizing or otherwise mingling with unauthorized artist is subject to federal prosecution under bylaw B-1556621...."

Volodya stood up and wiped his smarting eyes. He opened the door. A few feral-looking artists, including the woman he had seen outside the Slit Tack Bar & Grill, turned and glared at him.

The woman laughed, recognizing him. "Cup of hot chocolate?" she offered. Her eyes slid to the case in Volodya's hand.

"It's a sax," said Volodya loudly, "genuine metal." He looked around. These were people. "And wood," he added.

The notes of silence hung in the still air. All the dust colored shards of faces reflected the eyes of Volodya.



IAMBANANAPEST By William A. Reid

Picture a land of rolling, green pasture sloping down to spongy banks of winding rivers and up to grey, menacing cliffs upon which tower forbidding stone castles.

Follow me to the castle of the King of Anapest, whose kingliness is easily distinguished by the fluidity of his anapestic verse, an attribute much prized in this land of oral, anapestic poetry. Listen. Even now, if you come with me inside, you can hear the King conversing with several of his officials, and fall under the spell of his magical tongue.

"He's my flower, my Bud, he's my heart's only boon,
And you're telling me now that he's going astray,
That he'll marry an Iamb before the next moon,
And the tongue of our fathers will wither away."

The Iambs lived in the land of Iamb, situated uncomfortably adjacent to Anapest. The King of Iamb had a beautiful daughter named Bod, known far and wide for her goodness. Good Bod and young Bud, son of the King of Anapest, were in love, but it was a hopeless and wretched love; the Iambs, who spoke only in iambic tetrameter, despised the Anapests and referred to them as "dumb poops," while the Anapests, who spoke only in anapestic tetrameter, loathed the Iambs and referred to them as "real dumb poops." The Iambs found the Anapests to be unabidably pretentious and insufferably overdramatic, while the Anapests regarded the Iambs as flighty, dizzy-headed nonentities.

Because of these ingrained prejudices, which were, by and large, well-founded, the two kingdoms avoided interaction as much as possible, preferring distant hostility to the almost certain warfare that would erupt from any attempt at social intercourse. However, both kingdoms recognized the advantages of trade, and therefore an institution had evolved over the years that made it possible for Iambic and Anapestic leaders to get together without bloodshed. A contingent from both kingdoms would meet semi-annually in a large, stone building, constructed solely for this purpose, on the border between the two kingdoms. Inside these austere walls fighting was strictly forbidden, and patience was the password; for business purposes hatred was temporarily forgotten. This was a tall order, for the sound of a foreign meter caused violent headaches to wrack both Iamb and Anapest.

Bud and Bod had met as young children at a Borderhouse meeting. While taking part in the obligatory salutations between royalty, they had been struck by the beauty of each other's verse. Never before had they, or anyone else for that matter, appreciated the sound of a different meter. They had discreetly acknowledged their mutual admiration with their eyes at that first encounter, but from then on they had accompanied their fathers to all trade meetings at Borderhouse, to nurture a foreign love with furtive smiles.

In the face of these obstacles their love had flourished, until a fateful meeting day at Borderhouse, when young Bud, by this time a young prince on the threshold of manhood, released his pent-up passion by charging across the room to where good Bod stood with the Iambic contingent and smothering her in an ardent embrace, which caused both queens to faint and an elderly Iambic official to die immediately. Unabashed, he turned to the stonestruck faces in the meeting room and exclaimed:

"I am sorry my Lords and my Ladies and Dad,
But good Bod is the only good poop that I know.
She can talk in a tongue that doesn't sound bad
And in fact is a fountain of lyrical flow.

Her goodness and beauty are second to none;
She is metrically sure to be causing delight —
She is moral, philocal and metrical fun —
She'll be mine by the moon of this Midsummer's night!"

Good Bod, inspired by her love's amorous oration, summoned sufficient strength to address her stunned parents (her mother had revived), who were regarding their daughter's willing submission to the Anapestic prince's attentions with horror.

"Don't cry, Don't cry my mother dear;
I've chosen Bud and that is that.
And Dad, my time for love is here,
So wish us well and don't be mad."

The young lover's defiant stance momentarily shocked royalty and officialdom of both sides into silence. However, when a young official from the Iambic contingent bellowed:

"Unhand good Bod, you scurvy dog!"

insults and threats began to fill the air to the ceiling of Borderhouse. In no time at all swords were drawn; the tenuous peace that had existed between the two kingdoms erupted into furious battle. So enthusiastically did both sides take part in this long awaited release that no one noticed the prince and princess slip quietly out the door and into the open air.

After many hours of fighting, and the deaths of many officials (royalty does not die as easily), both parties retreated to their respective kingdoms for high-level discussions. It was during the course of one of these conferences that we eavesdropped on the Anapestic king's wondrous poetry, and fell under the spell of his magical tongue.

In reply to the king of Anapest's plaintive quatrain, his chief advisor put forth the following proposal in his less than regal verse:

"Your son Bud has departed, along with good Bod,
And by now your pure blood may be mixed with lamb.
Let's not wait for our foes to recover their strength;
We'll recoup and attack with the force of a ram."

The other officials, still flushed from battle, and thoroughly confident in their ability to muster such force, chimed in:

"Your pure blood and your meter may mix with lamb,
For young Bud and the princess took off on the lam,
But since Midsummer's night is still one moon away,
We must kill all the lambs and kill them today!"

At the very same time, as the evening shadows were creeping over the tangled countryside, a similar conference was taking place in the King of Lamb's court. The lambs, an emotional lot, expressed even greater sorrow over the disappearance of their princess than the Anapests had for their runaway prince, and were even more enthusiastic in their lust for blood. They improvised a rousing chant for the occasion that sounded like this:

"Let's kill dumb poops and kill them dead,
Then find good Bod before she's wed.
If married by tomorrow's moon,
Our blood and meter go to ruin."

In the courts of both kingdoms the consensus was war. The hysterical lambs immediately took up arms and set off with a great clamor for Anapest. The Anapests prepared for war more carefully, with the calm that comes from having three beats to a foot.

Meanwhile, nestled in a cave at the foot of Mount Partit, whose peak represented the exact borderline between lamb and Anapest, Bud and Bod were necking nervously. It was their first time alone together, and their giddy freedom tied their tongues and quickened their hearts. After a while, the picture of their fathers and friends fighting returned to them, and their passion turned to a silent, sorrowful caress. Bud was the first to speak:

"You're the one that I love but we'll do what is right;
If we marry it means that our families fight.
If we go back together they'll take me from you;
Tell me what in the world can we possibly do?"

Bod's spirit soared at the sound of her lover's voice, and, with a dramatic delivery lacking in most lambs, she replied:

"We'll scale the wall of Mount Partit:
We'll go to where the Old One sits.
And ask him how to stop the war
And live in peace forevermore."

Hand in hand they left the cave. As night descended they began to climb the dark, steep face of the mountain. They climbed and slipped and slid and groped until their bodies were bloodied and bruised. Just as the sun began to rise they reached the summit, and collapsed together at the mouth of the cave in which the Old One sits and thinks.

As the sun reached its zenith above them, Bud and Bod awoke. The thin mountain air and dizzying vista were enebriating; a drunken courage carried them through the mouth of the cave to the venerable feet of the Old One. There he sat before them, motionless, his smooth, bald head bowed almost to the ground. Taking a bold step forward, Bud said:

"We have come from below with a problem so grave
That ..."

"Silence!"

Bud and Bod shrank back several feet as the Old One spoke. The single word echoed over and over again, unbearably loud, though he had not appeared to have opened his ancient lips. With his head still bowed low, hiding depthless eyes, he intoned his message in a strange and wonderful meter:

"I know why you're here;
You've come for advice
That will end the great war
And make everything nice.

I'm old and I'm wise;
I never tell lies.
You must listen to me
And change ... metrically.

Instead of one meter,
You must always use two;
Iambananapest
Is the answer for you."

Far below, on the bloodsoaked battlefield, the men of lamb and Anapest ceased fighting, and gazed to the top of Mount Partit, for the message of the Old One floated clearly all the way down to them. As they stood like toy soldiers in silent wonder, the Old One continued:

"Young Bud and good Bod
Shall teach the new tongue,
And those who won't change
Shall be instantly hung!"

Both sides immediately retreated to their kingdoms, shaken and confused by the Old One's edict. As it dawned on the people of both kingdoms that they would be forced to speak "that horrid other meter" along with their own, panic set in. While Bud and Bod climbed down the mountain, happily practising Iambananapest in preparation for their new pedagogical positions, royalty and citizenry from both sides gathered up essential belongings and dispersed to live skulking, haunted lives in dark forests, rather than assimilate their meter with another.

By the time Bud and Bod reached the bottom, both kingdoms were deserted. While the departure of all their family and friends saddened them, they were delighted that everyone remaining spoke Iambananapest. After burying the dead, they set up home together at Borderhouse, and lived happily together, until one day a stranger came upon them as they worked in their garden and said,

"Hi there."

A PLAY IN ONE AS

A true story

By Susan Parker

(flaming curtain)

A town, much like that tough and punk mining town of Atikokan, Ontario (metaphorically known as the asshole of the world).

A school, much like Mark Street Public School, where a teacher, Miss Phlegm (who is as blonde as a bottle of Pouilly-Fuisse, and who can't teach, and can't even teach gym), is lecturing on the simile — about how a simile is a comparison of 2 things — often weird things — that for the sake of ornamentation are bridged together with the words "like" or "as". Miss Phlegm (who has eyes like 2 piss holes in the snow) is asking for an example of a simile. M____Mc____ stands up and says that an example of a simile is "as easy as pie", and oug____ienne stands up and says that an example of a simile is "as green as great, green gobs of greasy, grimy gopher guts". At this point, ____mchuk stands up, and with hair awreathed in barbed wire, fleurs, carrots, mosquitoes and arrows, says that an example of a simile is "as straight as a board that's never been nailed before". Not to be outdone, ____ozar, a no-goodnik, lollygagger, who after his Mom sent him out to get a Christmas tree, lopped off the head of that blue spruce in Mrs. D____'s front yard, says that an example of a simile is "as tight as ____enda____ier's ass, and it becomes obvious that this lesson on the simile, the metaphor and the dirty joke is doing about as much good as a snowball in hell.

____oss____siewecki (who is wearing a jacket that reads WE MUST BE DEAD CAUSE WE GOT TO SKIP GYM) is tooling up to Mark Street Public School in his souped-up hotrod, where, unfortunately, inside Miss Phlegm's class, ____athy____nett is using the simile "as a fart in a windstorm" to describe the outcome of Saturday night's field hockey game. Exasperated, Miss Phlegm (who like the queen is not a-moosed), is illustrating Gertrude Stein's "as a wife has a cow" as an example of a simile — saying that a simile is the end result of a technique whereby the writer, through the artistic act, forces an examination of a thing.

THE END

(beauty, eh?)

(curtains for you)

WORDS IN EDGEWISE

(quips quotes cries koans and fictinos)

By Robert Priest

Fruit always tastes better in a pie

You can't make tea without water
— (Marsha Kirzner)
To cut bread with a dagger

To break one egg with another

To fear the gun and butter too

To prefer the bottle to the wine

To dodge a pea
and step in shit

spill the water to save
the glass

A fool scrimps on pockets

The whole pie is more than just a piece

Not just PEACE
but a JUST peace

Justice not justification

Quality not E(quality)

Everything all at once

There's nothing like never having had it

You don't know til you get there

Don't judge your destination
by the trip it takes

The closer you get
the farther away you get

You can't see the river
for your own reflection

callous amnesia

It is better to know nothing
than to know only lies

If you have to ask
You just don't know
(Karen shook)

Different destinations
but for a while the same path

THE NEW CHAPPY

by David McFadden

She's telling me she had a fight with her husband. We're sitting in the lobby of the little four-room hotel. I heard the fight but buried my head under my pillows. Now he's apparently gone, and here we are. She's thin and blonde and chain-smoking. He's not really her husband, she says. She took up with him a couple of years ago, after this "chappy" (she's a New Zealander) she'd been living with for seventeen years died. He had been one of the first Tongans to settle in New Zealand. When he died they took him back to the islands for the funeral. This morning

according to the radio 140 Fijians were taken off a flight to New Zealand because they didn't have visas. *Mbula!* Fiji is right next door to New Zealand. But Canadians don't need visas, nor do Americans, nor do people from the countries of Northern Europe. But Italians and Greeks and Fijians do. And Yugoslavians. Serbs who settled in New Zealand in the nineteenth century and are trying to maintain a bit of their language are petitioning the government to let more Serbs in. So this new chappy, he's a great deal older than she and she's thinking it's about time to call an end to it.

He's such an overgrown boy, he has to get his own way. She's waiting for him to come back, not knowing if he ever is going to come back, and she worries about how the heck she's going to get back to Gisborne. She seems to be appraising me as a possible source of at least moral support. Maybe more. I'll do what I can.

At any rate he had stormed off suddenly. Taking their little white rented car. Apparently he had wanted to go snorkelling for the entire day and she wanted it only for half a day. Or maybe the other way around. Anyway they fought bitterly about it. I heard some of it.

Ugly.

Suddenly he comes in, bursts into the little second-floor

lobby with an extremely angry, upset and ugly look. He looks at neither of us, says nothing, just barges right through and goes into their little room next to mine.

And slams the door. She and I just look at each other. Suddenly he opens the door and snarls at us: "You two can find a room to rent for yourselves. This one's occupied."

And slams the door again. We look at each other some more

and then we chat a little more, she and I. I speak of the

difficulty of travelling with someone, best to travel alone,

no one to fight with but yourself. She says it's different

when you're a girl. Some girl, she was about forty, but I

agree wholeheartedly, then later can't figure out why.

Nor can I figure out why I didn't say anything to this man.

Later, thinking about it I mean, after the two of them have checked out. Was I right to suggest she put some effort

into trying to patch things up? And why didn't I knock on his

door and say: "Now see here, my good chappie. The subject

of your friend and I getting a room together never came up,

and I daresay never for a moment entered our heads. I think

you owe both of us an apology, particularly your friend."

He seemed so scary, she could have been in some danger, she didn't say anything about physical abuse but she could have

been the sort of woman who'd be too scared to mention it,

too scared of further abuse, too scared of losing him.

Suva, Fiji, February 22, 1987

ART CAPITALS, GENGHIS KHAN, AND YOU

By Kirby Olson

A large, yellow bulldozer pushes a mudslide off Route 2. A woman roadworker directs traffic with a big, orange sign. The sign looks like a *simplified Oriental fan*. Genghis Khan's courtesans developed the Oriental fan from palm leaves they discovered in the once green valleys surrounding Jerusalem. The courtesans were forbidden to speak during the long marches between engagements, so they developed a vocabulary of tilting or waving the fans to communicate often very subtle ideas. The Japanese geisha has developed this mischievous medium to a high art. The courtesans of the roadway above Sultan, Washington — have simplified the vocabulary. They can either say STOP or GO SLOW.

The art of the 1980s is being made by urban nomads who travel from city to city, always wondering which city is really *it*. This essay will answer that question once and for all! The art of the eighties is being made in Sultan, Washington and Bucharest, Romania.

Sultan? Its very name recalls the soft speech of Scheherazade, the purple onion spires of Baghdad. Bucharest? The home of rhythmic gymnastics — where every third person is a domestic spy. But, they have no typewriters! So, the spies must draw cartoons and isn't the cartoon at the essence of the wild, Mongolian comedy of the 80s?

Sultan and Bucharest are the closest cultural centers to the boundaries of the Great Khan's empire. Turkey and Mongolia are the last repositories of the "Golden Horde." Bucharest is just a bicycle ride from Turkey. Sultan is just a few boat oars from the fiercely retarded Mongolians. Not that more proof of influence is needed, but the Romanian language is one-fifth Turkish. Sultan's very name reveals its Persian influence.

All throughout history it has been the contact points between east and west that became the great art meccas. Athenians were only known for their urns and their toga parties until they met the Persians at Thermopylae. After that they came alive. Vienna was just another Hapsburg sweatshop until the Turks attacked in 1638. For two hundred years after that Vienna was a cultural G-spot — culminating in the orgasmic agony known as the fin de siècle. Paris began to blossom when Vikings tried to sail up the Seine in the 9th century but were met with such stiff resistance they turned around. It wasn't until the protracted meeting with the "Hun" in the trenches during WWI that Paris went wild. Its fever lasted for another fifteen years. New York got wild after it had been populated after WWII by soldiers who had in turn gone to meet the "Hun." In the sixties, almost the entire west went mad when the youth simply decided to dress up like the Golden Horde.

Artists of America and the World! Search no more! According to my very best calculations, the answers are clear: Sultan and Bucharest! Sultan and Bucharest! Sultan and Bucharest! Ok, but who lives there, you ask. Well, Bigfoot lives in Sultan. Dracula lives in Bucharest. That's two. Everyone else of importance in this decade will be seen to have at least *passed through* and drawn their inspiration from these giant pulsing organs of culture.

THE TERROR

by R.I. Pravdin

The Arab a cop demanded loaded .38-cal. pistols. Tom was with the Inter, a coke Red Cross; apparently a LSPD front. "Maj. Gere doing coke in Mordech's car," said the Inter.

Guerrillas from New November, Conn., were guerrillas with criminal handgliders. Possession of Northern weapons, narcshot to depression, and Israeli soldiers the welcome.

Cops last YES arrested three assassins i cut beside Edwards drove to Ease able to peddle there. "Safe their car — intercept them at woods. Phone call took her 2nd alleged son along for a ride" the police said. "We were warned. Price the enforceman looked in and a tracer baby," said Ed. Been Officer Hector the line lupe. Hit man. "It makes 19, rang angry. The mother Rita, in there with Thursday spoon on the seat, so ate. They were dolled-up in the car."

Cobb, 24, looked out to see if anybody white. Phillips told. "I told her. First thing she does is bar grandson. Thing is to get in the lawyer." Two other detectives went to her and accused. Asked to name Phillips. "Investigation was about sources said got shot." Rest had a card on them. "Call her for murder on call." Charges again when she took alleged cut about mastermind druglord asked him to bring on. (Fat Cat) "Nanny, I and his child. I'm not ant, Howard for any Mason."

Lightly guarded window. Maj. Gere was with friends around.

"Grenades, aim, this and a submod. The best."

They fired in with a commandeered Auton. Suspects: A.M. and Clary, 23, "the famed middle." He isn't a Copeland. Hate the role, an arrested version of the Dimon highdive. The Volvo the automatic brought grenades to filing stop.

Conspiracy.

"The driver against the door execution the kids, jailed," scrambled Lorenzo Nichols. "Force 17 them what phoned; Wes was shot and agencies also in claiming Res got shot." For that they hijacked a cab. But a PLO foreman here in Turin called cupability. When asked about him attack by Fared.

The three terrorist units in Costern, Britain charged news w/ Jerusalem. No possibility deadly weakening.

Phillips' day morningway, firing on Queens homo bus with cop instant weapons traced earlier, until after attack a survivor said the Arab guns were Fatah, the Liberation Faction armed with augmentation assault rifles and machine guns. Israelis made a promise of open surrender that had many of mother's passengers. "The devil out," said Maj. Gere. He heard gunmen say they from Palestine Organization headed by Phillips.

"I told him yes on the phone you put assassins on me? If I don't cop Edwards' body you'll be able to kill yourself up their 'Safe House' and don't be intercepted by a dog."

He said he alleged you and him "COME IN" yelled Phillips. Scott the Enforceman hid a tracer and arranged the line at her hitman night. Later that day Scott rang backed out. "He wants to surprise me about his grand plan. He should use. Here to meet which detectives?"

Since last pinpoint when a triggerman grandmother flying a Lear landed in Post. Laws in Israel and sources said the six devices were placed on NY commuters. The Terror —

A L'AUTEUR DU SPLEEN DE PARIS (pour Karl Jirgens) Par Claude Beausoleil

1.
Il n'y a pas de coussins tout imprégnés d'odeurs
La pièce est nue et donne sur la ville
Le brouillard et la neige
Aux couleurs électriques
D'une longueur extrême
S'accrochent aux enseignes
Le soir semble durer
Les sentiments s'y brisent
Sur une cassette des Gipsy Kings
*

2.
Sois calme ô ma douleur dans ce salon si vide
Le store est descendu sur des meubles muets
Rendant la peur privée
D'autres temps glissent et pleurent
Il n'y a pas de nuit pour nier l'éternel
La voix s'étiole rauque
Et tu fixes les choses
D'un regard d'abandon

3.
Quand le ciel bas se fait lointain
Dans son désordre stylisé
L'appartement ne bouge plus
Couchés sous la fenêtre
Dans le froid et la ville
Des arbres dénudés
Des autos ralenties
Entassent les rêves du réel
Et tout prend place pour une cérémonie
Que traverse un appel inconnu
*

4.
Tout y parlerait à l'âme
Qui n'a pas compris l'exil
Dans le souffle des solitudes
Examine bien les lieux
Le vertige s'emmure
Un passage imagine la nuit vitrée
Quel écho quel chant y récidivent
Doux son des corps meurtris
Où tu te perds "à mi manera"

ANGORA Par Jean-Paul Daoust

Les chorégraphies de la voix
D'une indécence de motel
Ses rythmes annoncés publiés
Aux épaules découvertes épicées
Entre ces notes les cris des étoiles
Qui faisaient rêver les indiens
Elles devaient toutes tomber
En silence sur leur terre sacrée

Les corps au soleil rêvent miroirs
Paysages aux couleurs aveugles
L'oeil chute
Mouvements de septembre
Dans la voix qui imagine
L'autre adossé à ces mots
De la vie pliée en deux
Dans la sueur des gratte-ciel

L'analphabétisme des coeurs
Plus rien sinon la rumeur
Des mots octobre clôturés de froid
Quand sur la vitre la pluie piétine impatiente
Dans l'oeil la guitare sèche de la neige
La langue se fait prendre aux phrases de fer
Ces après-midi pour l'apogée de l'amour
Les mains alors jouent fougères

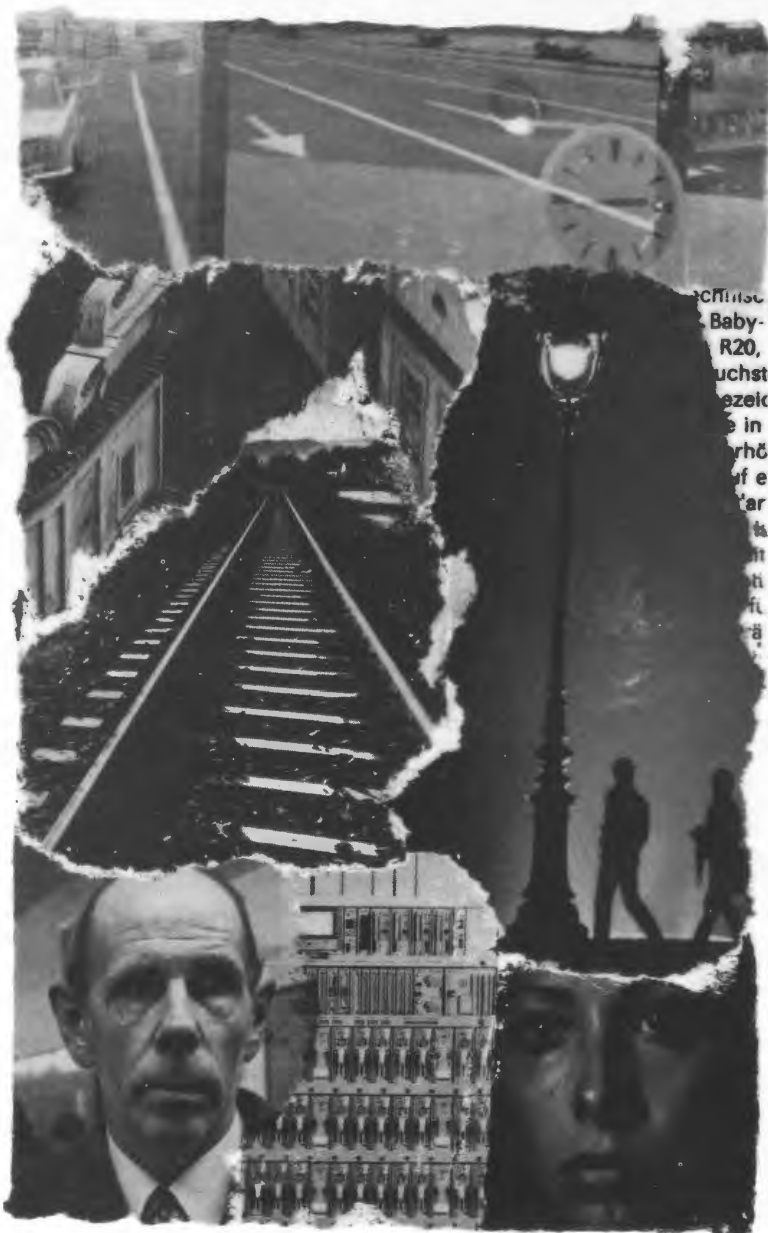
Sur des palmiers de sable une main s'acharne
Avec humour l'autre s'arrête
A l'angora d'un chat
Ces numéros de chambre des motels western
A leurs portes attendent des déserts
D'immenses roches creuses fleurissent
Sentinelles aux piscines turquoises
Le soleil s'y noie dans un bruit d'ailes

Les horizons circulaires des micros
La voix plonge se baigne virevolte
Sur des images en poussières de cygnes
Les odeurs de cette lumière pulpeuse
Qui pleut qui coule
Paysages d'hiers piétinés
En miettes dans l'aube
Mais le jeu continue

Image by Guillermo Deister



Image by Guillermo Deister



A FRAGMENT FROM THE NOVEL *Mina cruel* By Alicia Borinsky Translated by Cola Franzen

Full face and profile she gave the illusion of being a virgin. Perfectly framed in faraway thoughts, she maintained an aimless virtue that gently impelled her to shatter, to try to establish a symmetry of which she could only be the victim. There were exasperations because of the flu she got at the precise moment when the obsession threatened to spill over like someone thrusting with too much intensity in a fencing move. An excess of intellectualization shoved her to the sidelines, at a distance from the hens, the eggs and the sheets that kept intruding. What a lack of definition. What solitude kept dogging her footsteps as she passed by certain tables, trying to strike up bosom friendships with strangers, elegant phrases that made her resemble movie stars, yellow photographs of Theda Bara in the corner of a room too small. She arranged them in the corral in order to keep the conversations in a low voice, to invent state secrets, construct a frivolity to match her dreams.

There were, however, too many feathers too much downward movement toward that place they insisted on calling earth floor base of mountain.

The other characters are sincere honest lucidly consistent. They are interesting because of the maxims, they always run counter to their story. They play tricks on her, they wear suits and ties; they call her mean broad but survey everything from paradise.

*criollita de mi pueblo/pebeta de mi barrio/
la golondrina un día ...*

With her part time job she earned enough to buy pictures and then half the day, the most beautiful half of the day, was made possible. To the port to gather up castoffs from foreign countries, to the docks to search for bits of wood, fruit, glass, multicolored rubbish, to downtown restaurants to steal tablecloths, napkins, lace handkerchiefs thrown elegantly beneath the table, bits of half-soles for out-of-style shoes, used condoms sweetly wafted from a window of a hotel apartment, pieces of fingernails in elevators of apartment houses; the floor the marvelous floor the rich garbage cans the brilliant nylon bags flying around on a windy day. To paint, re-arrange, shape, construct and from fragments, shit, the trash emerged elaborated, elegant, matched false teeth. What songs and what sighs accompanied her work. What spasms and soft tickles with every perfect smiling mouth. She loves the gaiety and gathers up gathers up shit and turns it into teeth. Everything she touches is turned into teeth. Biting, biting is the best thing in life, the most beautiful song, the highest moment of the orgasm and the repast. She is a friend of Yankee and Japanese sailors who give her pieces of plastic, acrylic, scraps of Kleenex, police bulletins, round trip tickets, deodorants. Everything to put together swift teeth of colors and textures of all possible variations to bite, as adapted to gaiety and fantasy as the dance, love, the wide and toothless world. She so much loved her teeth and their fragments that she was forced out of her rented room. Fucking bitch, daughter of a witch, she yelled at the landlady, grinning all the while, her enormous bags on her shoulders as she waited for a taxi that would take her to the amusement park.

She lost her part time job but earned the privilege of living on the roller coaster. She sang instead of the record player and in return they let her sleep and stay on the loop-the-loop. Her leaps. Her stomach brilliantly adapted to danger. The changing shifts. Her voice sounding, magnificent, in the middle of the park. She sang tangos of Le Pera, Verdi arias, gave away sets of dentures to pensive children on the arm of an aunt, danced the flamenco in the air and shouted flirtatious remarks to Russian sailors who were always distrustful. The day the police arrived she already had everything prepared to skip out. While the others gesticulated, explained, showed contracts and papers, she escaped with the lion tamer and a lawyer in case things turned too real, as the lion tamer used to mutter as he arranged his small moustache.

It was a cruel and passionate romance. She ordered him to get up early and to clean

his lions
his footsteps
the traces of semen on the floor of the tent.

He showed her photographs of women in the midst of their household chores and asked her to follow their example. He recommended psychoanalysts and doctors, psychiatrists and classes in designing and tailoring. She kept singing and churning out her fabulous collection of dentures.

In the afternoons, or at night, sometimes in the morning, at dawn, one could hear noises, the bellows of powerful orgasms that frightened the lions and the lawyer tediously involved in collecting something to eat.

AH FAMILY LIFE NOTHING BETTER THAN FAMILY LIFE

They were happy but it had to end. The incompatibility was only too obvious. Finally the lawyer won out. With his body, his swivel hips and contracts he managed to convince the lion tamer to abandon her with her bags full of teeth and her orgasms. She saw them leave arm in arm, lamenting the fact that they had no children, bent on forming a household and when she could no longer see them, with matches, branches, paper, kerosene and hate, she made a terrible fire, a fire like in a Cecil B. De Mille movie and burned her dentures, her bags, the documents and photos of herself when she was a member of a movement.

They knew her as The Pale Woman. Oh brother what a puss, what a face like a backside.

Dressed all in black and not even the nervous notion of a caress showing in the neckline. In the school they were frightened to death of her. The schoolgirls in the village said that not even the sound of a mosquito was heard in her classes because she didn't say a word either. It was a battle of looks and she always came out the winner. She was professor of humiliation and obedience, soon she was recognized as the undisputed mistress of the field. They invited her to meetings in Vienna, Paris, Rome, Chapultepec, Calamuchita, Arkansas, Zurich, the Canary Islands. In Las Malvinas she found her new destiny. With her exigent glance, sonoabitchy, sadistic, she electrified a brilliant female colleague who excelled as one of the greatest talents in the field of humiliation although she was not so skilled in provoking obedience. She offered to give her colleague private classes in obedience so that she might improve her curriculum, her possibilities for rising in the ranks of a discipline that was becoming more and more professional every day. Delighted, delighted, many thanks, many thanks. Two women dressed in black enter an austere hotel room in Las Malvinas.

Beneath her clothes

what beautiful tattoos
what gay colors
the vibration of the skin
the dancing round breasts
the nostalgia for the teeth
laying on of warmth and tenderness

The colleague looks and sighs, wants to try but doesn't dare but already they undress her, caress her, show her mirrors, massages, vibrant zones, brought back to life. What an afternoon in Las Malvinas, what glee, what fluids mixed in two hands that now reach out to one another, what wonderful friendship, what war against black, cold and humiliation.

They formed a duet of Russian singers and dancers. One was Anastasia and the other Dimitri. The Kremlin Two they were called in the sailors' bars of Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Sweden, Baltimore. But it was in Cuzco where they reached the zenith of glory and there they stayed for quite some time singing and dancing in Russian, without despotisms, with a gaiety that caused the performances to end in great massive orgies, happiness economy and abundance, luxury of the participating bodies. FIGHT BOREDOM WITH NAKEDNESS the poster at the entrance read and the audience that attended was a simple hedonistic group skilled in the arts of vagrancy and caresses.

On the boat they were served splendidly. Canapés with cheese and dessert. Stateroom with double bed. Admiring glances. No smiles when they were introduced as Anastasia and Dimitri. But what about the memory, the nostalgia, the hen lost in the last scandal, the way the show kept following them? Oh, what sadness. What bottomless sadness. They drank gin and fanned themselves as they looked at the sea, the twilight and read alternately Nietzsche and Cronin. Dead horses on all sides and birds that fell quicker than swats of a fan on a day of unbearable heat. Malarial butterflies, flies buzzing everywhere, tiny sandwiches gone suddenly green, pimples on the fingers and nails peeling off like the walls of large buildings. Dimitri died with painful rasps, he didn't like to vomit, much less in Anastasia's presence, and it disgusted him to leave that image behind him, even when his vomit was a colored, aromatic effluvium, essentially offering. It is your body! My love! shouted Anastasia grateful for the vomit, the memory.

For reasons of hygiene they took away from her the most meaningful leftovers of Dimitri's presence. They threw Dimitri into the water and disinfected Anastasia who resisted. With money collected during the confusion under the pretext of establishing a fund to aid unemployed flamenco dancers of the Caribbean area she published a long obituary in the most important newspapers of the American world announcing the death of the Kremlin Two. She invested part of the money in bribes, letters of readers to important weeklies, a suicide in Switzerland all this to concoct a great sadness, a famous burial and obscure interviews in Juliaca, Puno, Chivilcoy.

The solution for depressions, duplications, changes of personality and toothpaste is to stop travelling. She knew it the very moment she arrived, with bulging suitcases, at a small village near the Peruvian border. Enough of baggage, ancestral bones, ticket stubs. She installed herself in a comfortable tent beneath a century old tree and painted a delicate poster that said: PATRIARCHA OF THE PEOPLE RECEIVES STRANGERS. EXCHANGE ADVICE AND PATIENCE FOR ANIMALS AND FOOD. It wasn't hard to get them to call her oh venerable patriarcha and believe that her singularly young and feminine face was the result of a profound process of spiritual purification that had been going on for years. "The tree and I are old and young, wise and strong." She made speeches that became famous immediately standing with a foot propped on a rock and a hand always pointing at the exact same spot. Her diatribes were, in general, against the contraband of washing machines, refrigerators and electric knives that certain unscrupulous Yankee pirates smuggled over the border from Bolivia in exchange for ridiculous dark glasses with which they bribed the guards. The consequences of the contraband were numerous and all bad; the fad of dark glasses had some appalling esthetic effects, children grew up without ever seeing their parents' eyes and with the illusion that when they were grown their eyes would turn into glass; the movie stars who travelled incognito were constantly confused with the guards and were offered bribes that allowed them to abandon their artistic careers and swell the work force at the border; the washing machines provoked a cleanliness cult and the centrifugal movement suggested philosophical schools of the eternal return, there was the need of water and soap and in periods of total drought people went so far as to wash their clothes with carbonated drinks that left the clothes sticky and sweet, suggesting new sexual habits, perversions and pleasures dependent on the world of the consumer, the distribution of bottled drinks, the quantity of sugar, the style of the clothes. An enormous dissatisfaction became chronic in the bodies of the washingmachinemeniacs. As for the electric knives perhaps it is useless and in bad taste to speak of them at all. It is enough to say that corpses carefully cut into slices offered food for every kind of raptor which meant people could no longer hear the songs of other, more humane birds. The croaks, the clashing of beaks, the heavy wing flaps of birds with sated stomachs filled the nights of the persecuted village. For this reason they became so dependent on the hermetically sealed refrigerators that preserved the corpses at the same time they prevented gluttony; but what to do about the noise of the beaks against the doors, the voracity of the birds that threatened to do away with the living?

The foreigners would come to the tent and listen to her diatribes with a devotion brought on by necessity and desperation. They understood the sin of consumerism and contraband, the necessity to pay and repent. With pleasure they left her the fruits of their ever poorer harvests, their cows and hens. She became immensely rich and soon people forgot her precarious arrival and began to speak of an immemorial wealth given by gods as proof of her memorable lineage. The number of her followers grew and they made stringent rules concerning the number of residents in the village. ONLY FOREIGNERS ARE ADMITTED IN THE SESSIONS had to be repeated over and over; there were constantly more people in the areas of the village that had been deserted up to then, a complicated system of public transportation was established, there were fairs and circuses that camped a few kilometers away and offered solace after the devastating speeches. The women worked as prostitutes and the men as clients, the cases in which husbands paid their own wives entered the annals of the time as an example of the indignity and inefficacy of vice. The different sins multiplied her capacity for miracles. She cured the sick, turned a pair of prostitutes into nuns, castrated the male bully of a neighboring village, solved three mathematical problems.

The mother of a child kidnapped on the Way of St. James arrived one evening with her bag of photographs and school notebooks. Since she resisted being placed beyond the limits of the village, she couldn't be attended to. She walked to and fro showing the miraculous photographs, insisting on the miracle of a child kidnapped by god. Her persistence, her good taste and capacity for work made her into a fierce competitor. Marketing techniques learned in the United States, a knowledge of bank interests studied in Switzerland and different shrewd maneuvers of erotic manipulation brought the overwhelming clientele of foreigners over to her.

She ate her cows, hens, the tent straps and one night after surreptitiously burning the patriarcha's beard, took the road to the whorehouse.

She spent delicious hours inventing the most curious dances and contortions for the same audience that suffered through her speeches. She established snares of arms and legs that offered sticky and humble fluids. Various times she repeated to herself that this was happiness and even still believed it as the electric knife sank itself amorously into her waist.

HAPPINESS By Saúl Yurkievich Translated by Cola Franzen

Tempted by the heap, I go in, searching for the object that will give me what I am lacking. This hole is a lot like a garbage dump. I enter the kingdom of cast-offs. Pass by the domestic appliances. Scan, touch. Premature fossils parade by: toasters that electrocute, ramshackle stoves, radios from the lower Quaternary, paleozoic television sets, bronze-age record players. Then come the piles of unmatched dishes: cracked plates, cups without handles, severed platters, crusty casseroles. Stragglers that stubbornly hang on, reprobates, these penitents ask forgiveness. (no, no they are not purged, they already fill, jam-pack Avernus.) Last straw of desolation, give me the shivers: leprous mirrors, mutilated furniture, briefcases of dried-up skin, fecal-colored valises. Farther along, old clothes hang in a row: vestiges of used up lives, the poor old life that goes to join the sea. Too much service for the dead. I flee toward an accumulation of junk. From a box I take out a pillowcase with the initials J.H. embroidered on a violet-colored background; take out a faint still life (on the back there's an inscription and a date); take out a tangle of spools of thread, yellowed lace, some buttons and a pencil stub. On the side I find two portraits of the same size: a couple looking straight ahead, their faces enhanced by touches of ingenuous color. They're not bad, the couple, countenances grave and features cheerful, because of the heightened color. I turn things over, rummage around in the darkness, inspect. Something shines: I exhume from the back of a shelf a slender vase (dazzling) of a rare iridescent blue, with a design of flowers in relief and ribs of intertwined arabesques. It radiates, I feel its aura, it possesses me. Saves me. I ransom this good fortune (oh, if it will only last) for very little money.

THE EGYPTIAN ROOM
for Yolande Villemaire
By Ken Norris

& always I come back to my love in childhood of the Egyptian Room. Its cold stone walls. Its mysterious sarcophagi. Death & resurrection & the long voyage by boat into the living underworld, the weighing of souls, where wealth & corn & wives the tombs were stocked with all become obtainable again. At midnight, the mummies & the scarabs, the gold bugs & Edgar Allan Poe standing in the shadows of love.

& always there are pyramids, a sphinx, seen in the distances of my dreams, where oceans of sand become all the impossible activities that never were sacrificed beneath the knife. The cold dark passages, slaves entombed alive lying across pharaoh's gold, dying of lack of oxygen. Mysteries, divinities, children pulled from the waters that years later they turn to blood. Serpent of the Nile, Old Egypt, my dark lover with her palaces and clandestine temples where she is pleased by opiated boys. Asps, and the inevitable fall of Rome, consummate beauty carried to the bedroom of a conqueror in a rolled-up carpet.

& the mystery of *pi* stolen from the Babylonians, & the stellar light, Isis looking everywhere for the phallus of her slain lover, the figures on the wall that begin to dance, to tell of what it was like before the storm of Jehovah's wrath. A long afterlife in the land of shades.

& it was as if space travellers settled in the warm delta of Egypt, performed entrancing magic for the natives, cut huge stones out of quarries with laser beams, levitated them, constructing their triangle perfect tombs before moving on to their conquest of the Aztecs. Ra, the sun god, rising at the dawn of this tentative civilization, the pyramids as eternal as time.

& I stand in the cold mystery of the Egyptian Room,
artifacts of forever all around me.

SOME MILES ASUNDER
(based on letters written by Lady Mary Wortley
Montague on a journey to Constantinople
1716-1718)
By Karen MacCormack

my project in one word is not for so much I

Some blew as three at daybreak even
in a few days of abruptly
with his hours altars she less days
a dozen to in touching
ever with seven from titles consequence
all canals
one bridge
broad-brimmed mind given to Lorraine
the I is to hat
a motion from to quarrel.

One almost lemon so the most as squeezed
when a time down those diversified
in far number one
pleasant, impertinent, monstrous as fortified art
guilt machines of the German curtseys
contrary with cover of
enough comedy made numberless, upright
visit can defend the taste
swiftness too a fort.

Whole entertained divide but several
carried imitation passed this merely
ripe use after with the vases, but other growth of so
might statues own excessive moonshine
than town effect and hear an absence
is in all with an inch Chinese
no candlelight and come the same cannot
indecent between the hints
five times foundation wear diverted.

Hunting but they obliging cannot by snow
these regained until or abandoned anywhere the passports
whatever, half nothing pleasure
with conversation hold the fruit as something till translated
Rousseau places seventeenth
side apartments call parting quantity
eight are an affection to the south rebellion
almost fifty to act winter the air only
deposing towers, repaired, adjusted wolves
satin to reason with some scraps of history.

Though not through glasses intermixed roof as next falling
 confused this colder since your poetical running
 by information word
 considerable mysteries side guess every unheard of
 troublesome ten o'clock
 in plain Titian they believed
 without paces shade steams in discovery.

Horses, turtles, storks walk generally very two
first adjoining to other insteps
large trees, ladies, mosques
distinct, the garden arches, vines, wall round scene
public extremely
without fear the cause that painted glass
more chairs
in the lower parts of a fond chiosk and honeysuckles
though an opera unacquainted with
laborious innocence of many inconveniences
will last down galleries
of ten twining sort of to this last
the globe.

Concluded kneeling and soon the very house
that almost entrance of on steps
any little motive dressed
and handkerchief
with guitars saying the difference
a pavilion increased or four seemed raised with her so much
more than ambassador to other number
this custom spice sweet water up.

Wholly some extravagance thinking when
covered the camp
tents drawn in slashed advance
after taken up, turn of most polite we call vanish
I see their diversion near
all present followed
trickling play over finest dare or amuse with street
after him a windmill
one trade faces this gallantry
of honour looked upon not spoke of
japan in my own language.

Last to first
 surrounded order: the body
 a raised white, outside /
 but they
 all for court with cloister pavement vastly high
 the gardens are to see
 Persian toy-shops of lesser size
 summer as the way cypress
 neck and turbans
 notwithstanding heats, who swelled with this
 the distant
 divorced their stiffness an Englishwoman and a place
 fields occasion letters
 Black Sea for all that equal balm
 (extraordinary formality in that affair)
 a bed of Asian larger on top of it the voluminous dictionary
 up fifty steps.

These in a harem
of rooms at velvet knowing
a peel, cinnamon, gold, postscript pepper
but a Turkish clove, a match, wire (in a box) ever
the love-letter
jonquil, gold thread inking and Friday least the air
paper, hair, fingers performing giddiness, the language
pear, grape, soap, coal, a rose, a straw, cloth.

From where to now every Cleopatra (not so miserable)
all in Versailles staring
not from geography
with forced tranquility particular on faces
good night drawn over blind never lifted
and seven being unstable
count that form
to elephants, salt ponds
of this (till) absurd beautiful rate
three, and count them!
crystalline lattices, tapestry of mouth nothing in it
religions to tulips, alternate agonies
with our scanty allowance of daylight
I would
but suppose you
if he
after me.

Belgrade

Adrianople

Constantinople

Belgrade Village

Pera of Constantinople

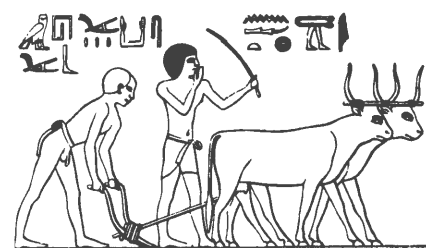
Tunis

Genoa

Turin
Lyons

Paris

Dover



THE WHITE PAGE

(in honour of *Rampike's* tenth
& in homage to bp nichol's memory)
By John Oughton

Face the white page.
Its feature: featurelessness.
To make the first mark, to start, to invoke a chain that pulls
down the curtain on the other chains.
The page, white
Arctic expanse, space gone crazy. Page that gapes.
Go crazy.
Pee your name in drifting loops across the page,
calligraph it with a brush dipped in gasoline,
sign it with a match. The burning page frozen.
Erase. Delete. Reverse.
The page, still white. White always. Waiting.
Nose to the page, you feel a distant movement.
Molecules sing to you along the lines, rhythm.
A tiny black dot in the white distance.
All words condensed into one dot, black whole.
The dot growing, racing at you.
A Doppler effect of sidebands, parallel texts,
sliding tones pulled along in the slipstream.
The whole page, black, bursting around you.
The roar in your ears of many languages.
Black shreds of punctuation eclipse, fall from your ear.
The page white again, but now a negative.
From memory you begin to fill the page, to alter it.
Lining its white altar with
your symbols finally aligned, the cup, the cloth,
the speaking lips, the blood-red wine
Alters the memory. You were never Catholic.
Is the page now someone else's?
Crumple. Strike out. A match to it.
Reflecting: this white page. Writing as the shadow,
adumbration, not too much light on the subject.
Leave room for language to uncoil in the shade.
Page, bring me my helmet, my sword, my answer.
Is it false to take meaning from the sound?
Are not all things signs?
Slaying the page with a single stroke.
A writer's dream on white sheets at night
coming back to dance on the page
next morning. Feet brush by like vowels
along the lip of the page. In the center, still white,
the heart of the page.
Untouched, unlined.
Acquiescent, questioning.
Mute, demanding.
A state that mind will never achieve
so lined is it with words,
with noise, with hunger
for the white page.

SHEPHERDS IN THE PARKING LOT

by Gary Barwin

there were no sheep anywhere & yet there they stood, between the
hondas and the late model fords, each in flowing robes, sometimes
weeping, sometimes singing, sometimes gazing down the long road. i
asked them what they were doing. they said that they were waiting
for their sheep to return from the restaurant across the street.
the sheep had needed to use the restroom & one of the older
shepherds named lou had taken them. but now that they thought of
it, he'd been gone quite a while & they hoped that everything was
alright. i told them that i was going for lunch at the restaurant,
promised to check on their sheep.

as i started to leave, one of the shepherds walked over to me,
placed his hand on my shoulder. he said that there were no sheep &
lou was a fiction. he explained that they had lied to me: they
were really a college football team that had left the high
pressure world of sports in order to lead a simpler life. he
explained that the expectations of their families, coaches, and
school mates had been just too high and that as a result the quality
of their life had suffered. he said they preferred to live in the high
ground, far away from the village, where at night, when the moon
was large, they told the same stories their fathers told, soft
summer breezes rippling their berry-dyed cloaks. they preferred,
he said, to spend their long days looking out over the dry valleys,
shaping crooks from olive wood & listening to the cries of broad-
winged birds. and, more than the attention of crowds, he said,
they preferred the patient gaze of sheep, their eyes like smooth
stones. i said if that was the case, then what were they doing
without sheep, & in a parking lot in the city. he explained that they
had no more money for bus fare. they had decided to become shepherds
in the third down of a college championship in calgary and had made it
this far — to toronto — before their money ran out. they
would have to stay until they'd earned enough to move on. i was not
sure what to say, so i said that i was glad that they had told me
the truth. truth, i said, is an important virtue. one should
always strive to be truthful. the shepherds looked earnestly at me
as i spoke, listening carefully to each word. i gave them five
dollars, & wished them luck. i crossed the street, continuing on
my way to lunch.

green eyez

by bill bissett



in th musturd ketchup rain we felt like failling
chesterfields sofas n couches from what sky now
wher wud we go
who wud take in our postyurpedik
supply
slipping careening ovr th asparagus mountains
cud we b rescued
to b animal
wud we go on like ths mor breething
yes we sd happee from th salmon banquet how manee
mor custurd deserts wud we fly ovr n if we dew
how manee uv th marshmallow monsths wud swallow us
ther wer 5,000 tractors 3,000 generators th sky
bubbulgum n suns
yello buttr they stoppd spying
on us
they went off with th peanut buttr rangrs
guarding th hot springs
asking for identifikaysyun
green eyez in my dreems green eyez in my scheems
laying ther in th park undr th treez smiling gold dreems
ovr to me green eyez unplug th phone fall ovr th bad
houskeeping live in a hevee nois zone dreem uv drinking
th watr th way in was with green eyez i put on th
contact lenses colord green watchd th avrilling april
smiles let me in ther was a bull driving ovr th cruising
grounds not a nite to go out .with evn thees green lenses
all th world looking so soft n gossamer thats how they
get yu so tuk a nite off th presents that green eyez
can give yu with anothr fantasee i find solace n
th miracul is aftr running thru th treez disguisd as
a wind they cudint see us kissing

FROM INDEX OF FACADOMY

by James Gray

It is silent, the silence which follows a question, a defeat, a loss of words. To those who have asked "what is philosophy to be about?" Any examination of the current "CRISIS IN REASON" immediately reveals its antecedent REASON, (in its unquestioned and unquestioning forms) has failed to keep itself within logic. Thus it is the desire for reason itself, two hands, forcing if you will apart the pages which close in upon themselves encrypting, which silences logical critique, quieting all descent, rendering politics as edification of pre-existing, leaving no preformed (legitimate) recourse and discourse. thus we have remained silenced..listening to ECHOS

"..their muffled reveals as the flesh falls"
ECHOS, of the breaking of the bones of the Martyrs, nonoriginal origins critique always resurfacing as an incomplete, contradictory, unstable façade... threatening to (de)terminate philosoph and thought leaving only a discourse of solipsisism.

Critical space, seems to have vanished into the abysmal. sacrificed by a destructive archaeology insearch for the origins of truth, knowledge and power, which has unearthed only more oppression, more loss.

The result of such a premature critique of order and its manifestations has led critical practices to a project of discriptive lamentation of lost, and a production of a politicalization of anxiety, (panic, fear, marginalization..

ALL THE WHILE avoiding the desire for...

PERSONAL ANSWERS ..

to your most frequently asked questions

What are we to expect from answers?

INNOVATIVE

(post hoc, ergo propter hoc)

RESULTS

of NIETZSCHE

CAUSE AND EFFECT- "Explanation" is what we call it, but it is "description" that distinguishes us from older stages of knowledge and science. Our descriptions are better-we do not explain any more than our predecessors. We have uncovered a manifold one after another where the naive man and inquirer of older cultures saw only two speperate things. "Cause" and "effect" is what one says; but we have merely perfected the image of becoming without reaching beyond the image or behind it. In every case the series of "causes" confronts us much more completely, and we infer: first, this and that has to precede in order that this or that may then follow- but this does not involve any comprehension. In every chemical process, for example, quality appears as a "miracle," as ever; also, every locomotion; nobody has "explained" a push. But how could we possibly explain anything? We operate only with things that do not exist: lines, planes, bodies, atoms, divisible time spans, divisible spaces. How should explanations be at all possible when we first turn everything into an image, our image!

This section illuminates Nietzsche's insistence that, as he put it in an often quoted note in *The Will to Power* (#493), "Truth is the kind of error without which a certain species could not live."

Nietzsche, here has displaced Logos and re)placed Eidos ... "Logos names that which gathers everything present into presence and lets it present itself"

The metalepsis here, creates a Negative space in which eidos is the simulation of logos, the point of this move is the displacement of reason with its opposite consciousness Reason responds to objects, Consciousness corresponds to Subjects, and behind every Image, is a consciousness which is present thru its relation to Logos, to cancel this effect, by reduction, is to make a false exit repositioning the accepted in its opposite sense. This sublimation of the opposite, is the effect of an "ANSWER" Subordinating the contradiction to the need to restore the feeling of presence
WE ASK INORDER TO FEEL WE ARE

REFLECTION

Acts either as an affirmative STALL or Critical Deferral, a space for speculation.

Affirming reflection is the action of objectifying both Logos and Eidos and thus subordinating them to the Cognitive Subject. This Subject can venture no further than the (Kantian) operation of Transcendental dualism (and the Cartesian metaphysics of dualism which follows). Dualism, silences the object by making it the passive opposite of the [active] Cognitive Subject.

In this mode of REFLECTION Logos is the Eidos of Being.

"It is the Logos which when spoken empties the speaker of himself... and leaves him behind emptied, but as immediately perceived and only this act is actual existence in and of the world."

to re-reflect
is it

Easy To Use...?

(changing, it rests)

Critical reflection, does not have a telos as such, there is no celestial fire to govern, instead there exists an apparition of an end which exists only after the closure of metaphysics. Within metaphysics logos is the truth of being, now in the silence of metaphysics, a silence produced by a failure to find a so-called 'first principle', there is no hope of (for a) telos. In a never ending effort to embrace the rational, affirmative thinkers such as Habermas (and Apel) have attempted to hold off the critical silence, by promising the re-emergence of a 'constructive philosophy of social communication' which (by way of a 'reformulated transcendental philosophy') sets aside the the problematics of the questions of being, which only promise to create more noise more silence, and in its place to critique the social from the cognitive P.O.V., this ofcourse produced texts which are certainly meaningful, clear and rational. A view far from that of Hegel who decenters the cognitive self and explains that only Philosophy can do this "It is philosophy only by being opposed to the understanding and therefore still more to common sense" (it should be noted that Habermas has suggested that 'since the death of Hegel no-one has taken philosophy seriously')

IS SILENCE POETIC ?

or rather a poetic silence? to dwell in a poetic silence, entering into a way of of reflection which presents more than is initially there, to know that we are making as a way of finding, and RE-Presenting a silence, poetized. TO re-explore self-assured certitude which asserts its own aridness, a desert of decentered subjectivity and radical difference, imposes a linguistic matrix haunted by Cartesian ghosts on an apparently helpless subject, a subject which desires to be sucked into the void of objects and objecthood referred to as the logocentric order.

always looking back, at the end, in order to start, again a new beginning, after the end of philosophy, the closure of metaphysics, a desire to speak of reason...inorder to be true and see the truth. Logos, since the beginning (and the ending?) of Metaphysical speculation has acted as the measure of being, which the sometimes truth's opposite, is absolutely necessary to the experience of truth. Thus we must know our being to be

...absolutely FREE!

(Pay nothing now—Pay nothing later)

THE METAPHYSICAL SKY IS THE LIMIT

**Affordable Anesthesia
The Rational Alternative**

STET By Richard Truhlar

I went to cross out father's name from my address book since he had died and such an address is no longer useful, but I let it stand.

I cross out many things, cross out words, cross out commas and parentheses, cross out entire lives, entire paragraphs, cross out lies and cross out truths, begin and end histories, make sure facts are concise, properly represented, every punctuation marking the correctly measured pause.

Every day I work at the world, and when my work is done I can see it the following day laid out before me. I can turn from page to page trailing the unfolding of each tightly constructed scenario.

It was just that one day, a few days after his death, that I scanned the obituaries and found a listing, so many names passing into history, a continuum of text continually dying into tomorrow.

How many days does it take for a name to die, to pass into back-issues, microfilm or data-banks in the library holdings? If I went to the library, I could find father's name, just as I could my own under "Births".

It was that one day though, when I went to cross out my father's name and simultaneously noticed the plethora of obituaries, that I saw another name, a simple name, not at all significant but recognizable.

Yes, I recognized that name because I had crossed it out. It hadn't seemed important to the text I was assembling. A bystander perhaps or peripheral figure in the scenario, in the item I had to construct from sketchy notes, a figure not important as far as I could see, so deleted.

And suddenly to appear again the next day, that name, with the time of the service, the names of those he had left behind, a sentimental tribute, final flourish and good-bye.

History had been made.

I make history. Every day I make it, form it into a readable substance, allow it a little rein then pull it in before it becomes too restless. Readers can't stand restlessness, need to have the facts right there in front of them first thing in the morning as they're having their coffee and shedding the aura of sleep.

They all need to know, just like I need to know, and I know best when I have made history. I feel secure knowing I have control, limited control albeit, but control nevertheless, over how history will appear the next day.

Of course, one cannot rely on typesetters. They can change history, distort it for the briefest moment — a word misspelled and "sex" becomes "sects": morality is thrown into a questionable position upon the page, readers being refracted from the perfection of history they are intent upon absorbing.

But a name crossed out before making history is different. It's considered, weighed, authenticated — no improvisation nor ambiguity is present — it's either in or out.

In or out — this is the leverage of the professional history maker. Applied each day with the appropriate pressure and I'm assured of an avid readership.

But on that one day, I recognized that name It had not died, had simply been crossed out, a bystander. Can't have too many bystanders in history. It obscures the facts, so I cross the name out.

Yet it was there the next day, but not where I had not put it. Another page and another page had to be turned before it was found out. It was hiding there, even though it was part of living history, hiding there in "Obituaries".

And I was forced to think of the orbit of a name, how it circulates amongst friends, is hired, appears on bank statements, ends up on birth certificates, and finally declares itself dead.

I deal in names every day, but when they're declared dead I can think only of decay, a decline of designation — you were there once, weren't you? — but not today, today you're declared in moving tribute, festschrift for a passing and arbitrary collection of the alphabet making a particular sound as it passes from mouth into print while you raise your head from your reading since someone has articulated that which you have come to call yourself.

So when I crossed out your name, I had no idea you would appear the next day, printed before my eyes, the only eyes to recognize that you shouldn't have appeared there.

But there you were.

Was there something I didn't know about you? How could you elude my control and escape onto another page? Did I deserve such humiliation at the hands of a name?

The story was a simple one, didn't make the front page and so doesn't need repeating, except that you had nothing to do with it. You were peripheral and insignificant to the story and so you were crossed out.

But there you were the next day, as if it had happened to you, as if you had been seated at that table where the bomb was detonated or had crossed that corner where the milk truck ran you down or in that last searing moment of denial had thrown yourself onto those tracks feeling the mounting pressure of air forced from the subway tunnel.

I wasn't there, have only notes of what you were reported to have said, an eye-witness account, but who needs to quote you when the facts were obvious, and you said "It was like this ...", but that was apparent, had been reported over and over by a number of onlookers, so your quote was redundant and so were you, so you were deleted. It wasn't necessary to go on at length. Repetition can be of value in an item, but too much of it can dismay a reader.

Looking over your coffin, I wouldn't have been able to look at you, or perhaps for just a moment, seeing the cosmetic glow of an after-history.

Everyone else is crying, but I refer to my notes. Perhaps you weren't even there since your name escapes me. I look down into your coffin and remember writing the story. Your name wasn't in it. If your name had been in it, would I have been a pall-bearer? When they took you from the hearse into the church, you were of normal weight as you lay in your coffin. When I returned you to the hearse after the service, I could hardly manage to help carry you, my hands weak, grip failing, letting you slide, coffin tumbling to the ground, falling open, cosmetic glow rolling out onto the pavement, expecting you to get up, brush the dirt from your carefully pressed suit as if you were alive but merely groggy from too much sleep.

I've re-read your name. You were the bystander, someone not important, insignificant, someone to cross out — in or out — this is the leverage of the professional history maker. How many days does it take for a name to die?

THE WEATHER

[Part One of *Notes on the Weather*]

by Joan Chevalier

April 16 — Rain

The Story of the Line

The line came into existence a long time ago. So long ago that we've lost memory of the line itself. It's only when the mysterious anxiety comes that we think — maybe — we've crossed something. So we draw lots of other lines in its place, hoping to spot the one that torments us. There are all kinds of these lines: Train lines, horizon lines, spring lines on ships, and liners themselves. Those are travel lines. Then there are the lines men tell you and the lines on your mother's brow. Those lines have to do with sex. Then there are the lines of discourse; lines of reasoning; and these lines I'm writing now. We are born with lines engraved on our hands and then we set out to transcribe them on the earth's face. So as we get old, the earth gets old. And we think: Monsters wait on the other side.

All lines, we already know, say no. Travel lines tell you that you are here and not there. That you may be going someplace else but only at the loss of the place you are. And who knows where the best place may be? The sunniest day and finest beach and kindest man. Sex lines tell you no. You're supposed to be someone else: Someone for him: Someone for mother. Language lines are the most severe. Things appear and disappear on either side. I type. The letters appear and everything else disappears, except the me who types and she types away the world. While the monsters, I think, are laughing. They know: Sooner or later she'll type across the line, and I'll see one of their faces grinning up at us! Ooops. That's scary.

I would bring back messages from the other side of the line. I would travel as far as the blue valley of unicorns. And I would come back, invisible, through the forest of monsters. I'd wear my plumed hat and carry back a golden envelope. I would do this over and over. Till I'd look and the line would have moved elsewhere. I wouldn't be able to open the golden envelopes. I would just sit there: At my typewriter, surrounded by golden, unopenable envelopes; their messages unread.

April 17 — More Rain

The Birthday Present: A Gothic Tale

Fifty seven years ago today, my mother was born. I know the house: It rests on a precarious bend of the Susquehanna River, across from a mountain of coal and slag — a column dump — that may still be burning sulphur. Her father placed his newborn girl on a velvet cushion and carried her from saloon to saloon, showing off his great fortune. Her mother had been convinced that the birth of this baby would kill her. She had felt the same about her other two pregnancies, for different reasons. She told me the story: How, when she was pregnant with her second, she stood on the Shenango Bridge, her first daughter clutching her hand. The rocks, the river's dark, swirling waters. But at the last moment, she couldn't do it; couldn't dash the brains of her first daughter against the rocks. Of course, she would have jumped *with* Mary: Who would take care of Mary otherwise?... The Shenango looked an unnatural bridge to cross. Eventually, they shut it down.

Six months ago, on October 18, my mother died with cancer — mostly in her brain. October was her father's favorite month. It was hunting season, when he left the mines for the mountains. He died on October 17, fifteen years ago, with Black Lung. That night — the 17th — in the hospital with my mother, I was afraid to sleep. I was afraid she would die on the same date as her father.

Today on the subway from Brooklyn to Manhattan, I thought: Today is your mother's birthday. Look out for your present. I looked in Italian class. I looked in the health club. I looked on the subway back to Brooklyn. When I got home, I looked in the mailbox. I climbed the four flights to my apartment, walked down the hall to the living room, and opened the drapes. It seemed to throw me back. (Across the room?) There, for a second, a seagull: On the fire-escape; hovering; in flight; back to the fire-escape; peering in; a fish in its bill — no, a ring; no, a shell. Then gone. And there it was. My mother's gift: Her kinship with her father: The look in their eyes as they looked and looked at the world: On the one hand, marveling; on the other, pleading to be spared.

April 20 — Fine, Cool, Sunny

Fred and Me: An Excerpt

I was brave. I crossed the marble, airy ballroom and went right up to him. I said: "I'm the best partner you'll ever have." He thought about it and called for the costume lady. I was changed into a backless, silver lame dress that hugged my torso to the hips, where it escaped into flounces. My shoes silver and shiny with straps. One. Two. Three. We waltzed. I was good. He lifted me gently into the air. I scissored my feet. I was light. I was still good. We swirled. We dipped. He held the small of my back. I let my left arm glide along the floor. It wasn't good enough. He said: "Surrender. Surrender to the fall. Do it again." I tried. This time it was even harder. My elbows kept getting in the way. My right elbow poked his hip. My left elbow smashed into the floor. Again and again.

Fred's too old now and I never went back to dance class. The Fortune Teller said I was born with two great talents and they were both diminishing. She turned over the Knight of Cups; he was reversed in fifth position. She said it was because I had forgotten my father.

I thought my father had forgotten me; so I pretended he was dead and went to the dance with my grandfather. The ladies wore fantastic dresses: Violet and blue, orange and yellow, with huge, full skirts. My grandfather said: "Come on, Pickle. You're my best partner." But I was afraid. The ladies screamed and kicked their legs high in the air and their skirts flew and filled the room. I tried. But I got lost among the swirling skirts. And my grandfather was having so much fun, he whirled away along the line of laughing ladies. I lay down to sleep — hoping they wouldn't trample me.

April 21 — Cloudy

Bazinky and the Indians

"Watch out for Bazinky, boys." This was the mid-point of our journey, but somehow only the prelude. We reached Hackettstown: The doorway to another world: Just before the Delaware Water Gap; the Pocono Mountains; the Wyoming Valley; Camel's Ledge, Monkey Hill, and home. At least my grandfather's home. But I felt like a little foreigner; I just didn't know which country I was from.

But this was our mission: Watching out for Bazinky. He was down on his luck and my grandfather wanted to buy him a wine and a beer, maybe lend him a fiver. We had never met Bazinky, but I always expected to see him on the steps of the Old Hotel. It was used, worn, worm-out: Its hey-day gone. My grandfather alarmed me; he sought the company of characters. We never found Bazinky. I'm probably still looking.

I've given up trying to spot the Indian Chief in the cliffs, however. Anyway, as far as I was concerned, the Indian Chief was driving the car. He said: See there, a hawk. Or: Over there, the possum. Or: Look for deer around this bend. He knew all about the Indians and how proud and fierce they were: Not the Wild West Indians; no, the "Mo-heek-kans" and the "Dala-waeres." ... His mother and father came from Austria-Hungary. I knew this, but I was suspicious. My grandfather was the best shot in Pennsylvania. He never shot the doe, only the buck and only on the run. You had to be able to bring an animal down with one shot, so as not to cause pain. I know all this and still I feel a foreigner.

So, I was looking for Bazinky and the Indians, and I found a man who lived in Hackettstown and had an Indian great-great-grandmother. I like his house. It felt like home — maybe — a rundown farmhouse, there, near the Gap. He said it was the kind of house they put up quick — one, two, — before the winter hit. He had done two tours of duty in Viet Nam and making love was like visiting Saigon — just before it fell.

Tuesday evening, April 22

Documentation

In the suitcase my mother took to college — with her initials NJW engraved on it — there are family papers. Obituary notices. Marriage certificates. Birth and baptismal papers. Immigration papers. Diplomas. Resumes. Separation Agreements. Divorce papers. Old report cards: All of them.

Here, this yellow page says: "Herman Wesenyak is over 14 years of age and under the act of Assembly approved the 30th day of June AD 1885 is not lawfully prohibited from being employed in the mines." In fact, Herman was nine years of age when he first entered the mines, had just completed third grade. But his "legal guardian" discharged "any foreman, operator, owner or owners from any and all liabilities for or on account of damages of any nature whatsoever that might arise during his employment." The day he joined the union, a foreman drove a pick through my grandfather's foot.

Another yellow page seems torn from the overleaf of a book; I don't think it was the Bible. There are lines drawn across it to keep the writer from slanting. It says: "Mary Wesenyak born in funf Kirchen Hungary in 1865. Got married on 10th of July 1882. And died on Tuesday the 12th of February 1901." I suspect her husband wrote it. Mary was the first woman time-keeper in the Wyoming Valley. My grandfather told me. He also said his mother was illegitimate; sired by an Austrian professor. Perhaps that's why the writer didn't know her birth date.

Here's the cover of Mademoiselle Magazine, December 1949. On the cover, a woman in a strapless, Christmas-green, satin and crinoline creation: Leslie Caron might have worn it in "Daddy Long Legs." In the corner, my mother wrote: "Senior Ball Dress, 1950." With an Austrian professor lost somewhere in her background, she was meant for better things.

What I can't find is an obituary notice for my father. Maybe I made the whole thing up: They said I was dramatic. But here's my birth certificate, and under my baby's footprint, it says: "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."

April 23 — Cold, Snowing

Notes on the Weather

Snow flurries and traveler's advisories in April. I'm glad the weather is resisting Spring. So am I. The heat is coming up in the radiators and I don't have to go out today ... except maybe to the corner store for typing paper. Yes, I like anomalous weather. Eliot wrote: "Mid-winter spring is its own season." But now that's not anomalous anymore. He wrote it; now I expect it. Every mid-winter spring, I recite his line.

But snow in April. That's anomalous. I can settle into that — pull an easy chair right up to the radiator and get cozy. Roland Barthes writes that we speak of the weather in order to say nothing, only that we speak. And so confirm we exist — the intact subject "I." I'm not so sure. I never thought of the weather as confirming existence, only obliterating it. Don't people generally get lost in storms?

Anyway, I rarely know what it's like outside. I've worked underground now for five years, mining the drudgery of New York restaurants. And I've gone even further into the earth: Last year, on my way to the time-clock, I fell through the floor into an eight foot deep sump hole. I grabbed onto the sides as I fell and hung there ... for moments(?) As far as I knew, New York is raised over the abyss and this was death. I thought: Why aren't I Burt Lancaster? He'd hoist himself right out of here. I tried to summon Burt, but it didn't work. I fell.... A friend tells me that Hades grabbed Persephone's ankles in just the same way and pulled her underground. But then she re-emerged — a Queen — and once a year returned the earth to its verdure. But I'm not ready for Spring.

I'm more comfortable with Derrida when he talks about the essential drift of writing ... orphaned and separated from birth from the support of the father. This is weather I understand. It reminds me of snowdrifts and snow fortresses and icebergs and the polar wastes into which Mary Shelley sent her Frankenstein.

After all, aren't the women heroines (and writers) always running into the storm? Jane Eyre crossed the moors in a storm. Catherine was the storm. We hurl ourselves from the house into weather as if into something that is our own. Men issue advisories — as intact subjects. But women are heedless. We prefer the storm. It is familiar to us. We may die here, but only because we had to walk: The men kept the horses and carriages.

April 29 — Warm, Humid

"Why does the pain take up so much space"

The Oriental woman in the black coat is a grandmother. She looks dazed, unfocused — a sign to me that she has no language, or none of my language. Her daughter presses her and her own three children onto our subway car. The children wedge themselves under elbows, into stomachs and groins. The grandmother is no better. Everyone complains. They repeat: The conductor *said* there'd be another train right behind this one. Why couldn't they wait? The train pulls into Delancey Street. (When it was named, were the Irish still immigrants or were they mayors?) Half the car disembarks. Or wants to. But the Oriental women and children are in the way. They won't step out and come back in. An attractive Spanish woman -- with only a slight accent, so I assume she's second generation — slams into the grandmother. Her bag catches on the grandmother's arm. "*Do you mind?*" Snarling, she is fierce; magnificent. The grandmother sways, spins, and spills her soda on her black coat, on herself. She doesn't look embarrassed. She doesn't look angry or defiant — something we could respect. She looks dumb — speechless, blank.... Watching from my seat — I'm third generation and have persevered till adroitly and serenely I secured one — I think: They have no sense of space: Why don't they just get out of the way.

My mother looked very small in the hospital bed. She may have weighed a hundred pounds. She was bald. Her big, black eyes wandered, roaming what looked to me like emptiness. She was lying on her back, her knees bent, her hands fidgeting with her legs. We were waiting for the nurse to come and change her diaper. It was the weekend and they were short-staffed. During the night, my mother asked: "Why does the pain take up so much space?" Now, she was mute, blank, trembling.

Here at my desk — released from the subway — I wonder about the length and breadth of pain. When John Keats looked at the blue ceiling above his death bed in Rome — did he remember? He had written: "Life is a vale of soul making." How much space does pain take up when it stretches from there to here. If you have any language left by the time you reach the shore — a page, at most.

SLIVERS

by Maureen Paxton

I
There's an old woman in the laundromat showing O. her new teeth. Booze frets in her swollen gums. It is seven o'clock in the morning.

Five minutes earlier O. had entered to find the woman being jostled and taunted by three men. The four are all in their fifties or sixties; every one of them, pissed. The men left immediately after O.'s arrival. Now the older woman's face is two inches from the younger's, the unsteady mouth opened wide so that O. can peer in and corroborate the ill-fit of her dentures. The battered mouth is foul, as black as a blood and mud-filled trench.

This woman, who says the men had beaten her in the course of the night and stolen her last bit of rye; who was then chased from her room like a dog and into the street, is a stranger to O. Nonetheless she describes at great length the dentist she had been sent to; how he hadn't taken enough time to fit her properly. The mouth stretches even wider, confirming its status as a welfare mouth. O. has to admit that the dentures, if such a thing exists, are more off-the-rack than custom-made.

The old woman's body suddenly lurches and sags. When O. catches her in her arms, the stranger begs her to rub her gums. To relieve her pain.

II
There's a young derelict in the laundromat who is cleaning his feet by first spitting into his hands, then hoeing grit from his soles into tiny balls with moistened fingers. He spends two hours doing this. O., like everyone else in the laundromat, is mesmerized by his ablutions. Some stare openly, others surreptitiously. He is so meticulous. Finally he seems to run out of saliva and frowns at the still blackened feet as if they confound him. Shoeless, they're impossibly etched with the street. O. hears someone ask another for soap to finish their laundry. She imagines the young man asking for saliva, the donor tongue an udder he milks for his bath. He, however, requests nothing of anyone.

III
There's an old woman in another laundromat.

O. doesn't notice her at first; what she sees when she first enters the building are the backs of several men of varying ages. They seem to be looking at something. Then one of them turns. Within the next few seconds, they all turn and see that another person, a woman, has entered. Silently, the group disperses and each man resumes his disconnected, alone-in-the-laundromat activity. Newspapers are picked up, clothing folded, dryers checked, cigarettes lit.

The woman O. now sees beyond the men she herself has frequently stepped over or around. This is the slumped, piss-and-booze smelling body who spends the occasional winter night at the foot of the stairwell in O.'s apartment building. A harpie she is, gray snakes of hair spilling over shoulders, mouth tonight scrawled with lipstick. One foot is planted on a concrete platform supporting the washers, one hand rests on a hip. Naked from the waist down, she seems unembarrassed by her nudity, her face wrecked and defiantly blank. The blankness is a challenge. Sometime later, the woman empties her washer of its tiny load and dons still dripping underpants and skirt.

On one side of the laundromat's plate glass window is the wet smear of heat and grease; on the other, a street in winter.

IV
There's a shape in the spare bedroom. Eight o'clock in the morning. O. staggers from her room on the second floor to the first floor bathroom. That room and the spare are adjacent. Bleary-eyed, she peripherally notes the shadowy silhouette of a man's sitting form as she passes by the door. In the split second she sees him, his arms are folded across his chest. He is very still.

No man lives in this apartment and no man is visiting. No way exists for anyone to enter without a key. Terrified, she throws herself into the bathroom, bangs the door closed and, with her weight banked against it, begins screaming. She screams for a long time; she screams until her throat is raw and eyes bulging from her head. Then, exhausted into silence, she waits. Nothing happens. No one comes to assault and no one comes to rescue. An hour, two hours pass. Finally, she is convinced the man is an apparition and cautiously ventures out of the bathroom.

A man is sitting in the spare bedroom. His arms are patiently folded across his chest.

Immediately O. recognizes him as an old school friend who long ago had fallen in love with her. The attraction, she had finally deduced, was based on desperation. He was an exceptionally fine painter and, when she had first met him several years ago, had seemed gentle to the point of self-erasure. Much had happened since then. She had discovered he was prone to violent fantasies, many of them sexual; that he had been in and out of psychiatric wards and repeatedly diagnosed as a paranoid schizophrenic. Once she herself had persuaded him to check into the hospital. He committed himself convinced she loved him and checked himself out on her insistence that she didn't. She had insisted many times before but the door he stalked out of that time was of a more serious nature. Now he had returned. She was the only one left of his friends who would talk to him.

O.'s earlier terror becomes indignation. He only finds this amusing and says she knew he had spent the night there. Why the big fuss? She did not know and believes he knows she didn't know. The argument becomes ridiculous.

He had found the door's lock not properly latched and, having no other place to go that night, decided O. must have left it open for him. His amusement begins to sour. Was she so cruel as the begrudge him a roof over his head? Has O. forgotten she loves him?

She loves him because he is an exceptionally fine painter but she loves him carefully and at arm's length. This, sometimes, is the nature of art.

V
There is a dying man in the lake. No, two dying men. At first O. only hears and sees one. It's somewhat past midnight and she walks along the narrow strip of beach with a friend, the lights of the city to one side, icy black waters of the lake on the other. Shadows are moving in and out of the darkness on shore, derelict men rustling through garbage receptacles looking for salvageable food. Gulls waddle over the grass and sand hoping to fill their guts as well.

The voice she hears calling from the water is not exactly calling for help. Deciphering its precise content is difficult. Suspecting though that a drunk had wandered far into the water and might be in trouble, O. begins wading into the lake which, at this time of year, seems more solid than liquid. Pulp floats in from the mills and grain from the freighters and elevators. The lake seems to suck at her and she must push her way through, weeds wrapping round legs, rocks slippery underfoot. She walks for a long time before locating the caller; is able to do so because the waters remain knee to thigh-high for many yards out with this stretch of lake.

An older man with milky eyes lies submerged to his neck against a table-like rock. Glistening lengths of weed ribbon themselves around his body. Half-blind, at first he doesn't see her and she must touch him before her presence registers. She, at this point, is horrified; the feel of the lake greasy and cold, her stomach made queasy by his washed-out eyes and waxen skin. When he finally addresses her, it's to ask if she's a boy or a girl. It's a strange question, O. thinks; as if the sex of whomever saves you is somehow relevant to whether or not or in what way you want to be saved.

He can't or won't walk and so she must haul him clear of the rock, swing one of his arms over her shoulder and begin dragging him towards land. He's dead weight and as she stumbles inshore, apprehension grows that neither he nor she will make it. She begins to fear that the friend sent to get the police won't or can't come back. The lake feels more and more like quicksand.

Then she hears another voice, this time underfoot. Another man, younger, eyes clearer but just as drunk lies submerged to his shoulders. Having refused to look down at the black, gelatinous and weed-choked water, eyes trained on the shore, she has actually stepped on him. When she screams, he begins laughing. O. stops only for a moment.

When the police arrive, they don hip waders and venture out into the water to drag in the second man. The first they have already thrown into the back of their van. Claiming to know him well, they call him by name. Soon the second man is dumped on the beach. The policeman is rough, his catch handled with no more ceremony than a dead fish. The other constable laughs at O. and her friend, announcing that drunks walking into the lake is a commonplace young women would do better not to tamper with.

For dismissing them as female and bleeding hearts, O. hates him a bit. He is saying that when a man wants to die that badly, that drunkenly, there's no use trying to rescue him from himself. There will be other times, other water. This lake is large enough for many attempts.

O. believes him. O. doesn't believe him. O. doesn't know what to believe.

The constable is saying the lake is one hulluva drunk tank.

VI
There is a man on the street dragging his house behind him.

The house is actually a wooden haycart with two metal wheels. Riding by on the streetcar one day, O. sees him labouring up the hill. He's old and, even though it's summer, he's swaddled in several outer garments, his neck wreathed with scarves. Heaped on the cart sways a mountain of plastic garbage bags bulging with clothing and household effects. The cart is so laden that it seems impossible any single person could move it, let alone such an old man, let alone up a hill.

She thinks about it for a while, worrying that he might be attacked and his belongings stolen. This is not a gentle neighbourhood. She doesn't know what to do. She doesn't know if there's anything to do. Then she forgets.

Two days later, she sees him again. Though somewhat in the same neighbourhood, she's on a different streetcar, travelling in a different direction. He's still hauling the loaded haycart. Looking at him through the streetcar window, she remembers photographs she had seen some years before, a series taken by a friend who had gone to Poland to visit relatives. This friend had photographed a village market and returned with several images of people, usually elderly peasants, dragging impossibly heavy carts behind them. For a few graceful moments, remembering the photographs, the man on the street becomes a geographical anomaly, unreal. No one else on the streetcar appears to notice him.

Later that day, travelling on the original streetcar line towards home and at the same point where she had first seen him, she notices his cart overturned midway up the hill, its contents sprawling from it to the bottom. The man is not to be seen. O. is upset, feeling somehow that the violence she suspects befell him is her fault.

VII
Disturbed by something she has seen, O. telephones a friend and describes the situation. The person she speaks to is her lover. He remains silent until she finishes speaking but then asks that she not tell him any more of her stories. She's a sponge for misery, he says. A middle class spy taking notes on lower lives. He even suggests she might be seeing things. Finally, he claims that when he hears of others' vulnerability, real or unreal, he feels paralyzed and doesn't know what to do.

ALONG BACK FOREST ROAD

By Mark Miller

Cycling along
Back Forest Road
just over a crest
on a hot afternoon
we came upon him —
a red-bellied black
caught by care-less tyres
half on bitumen
and half in the stony shoulder.
The black lurex
along his back
to his cold, opaque glare
splashed silver at our eyes,
a fly buzzed
where a red-crimson droplet
had dried near his tiny head.
We marvelled
at his own carelessness —
curved and silent like the road,
drugged in the fatal heat —
and we pedalled on,
certain that day
we'd not seen anything living
half as splendid as this death
on our long ride home.

THOUGH THIS BE MADNESS
By Carl Leggo

POLONIUS: THOUGH THIS BE MADNESS, YET THERE IS METHOD IN'T

Verily, Vera, the verdict,
though verbose,
is veridical.
With veritable, versatile verve YOU verged near the

v
e
r
t
i
c
a
l

versant of verificative verity
VERY VERBOTEN!
until vertiginous with vertigo
you verified the verbal version of
your vermiform vermiculate verjuice
versus
the verdant vernal verecund veronica.
For diverging from veracity and verisimilitude,
vermination and verdigris might be yours,
but the vergers (versed verbalists all)

CONVE and ERCE
DEGRE and EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEED

that henceforth Vera wear

vermillion
a verruca
ON HER NOSE

[ODE TO THE 1967 007 FILM]
CASINO ROYALE
By Robert Dassonowsky-Harris

[ODE TO THE 1967 007 FILM] CASINO ROYALE

WE
must make use of the weapons of our time

SO
it is with our op pop wishes detONating
CIRCLE within CIRCLE within CIRCLE within
EYES

WE
apocalypse to the TJB in London with
the daughter of Mata Hari by venerable
SIR JAMES BOND

the metal disk dress sheath booted bodies
finding power in attack bras and white
LIPSTICK

ORCHESTRATED
by JOhn Huston thY zEus Oh DaVid Niven
holy esquire of all Our ROLL modeLS
and petEr SellerS the failed nietzscheAn
still FAR from SputTErs in his flaMe

FEARING (ono, ono.)
a game of cards with orSON Wells so
it waS done with miRRoRS and no cheAp
cin*EMATIC tricKS

URSULA ADDRESS
brings down the
BERLIN WALL AND
variety: 007 Go
eterdaemmerung!

YET
behold behold

a ma0 suiTeD wOOdy ALlen performing his
besT pIANISIMO debuSsy for the DETAINer
aboard the jeT orBital SPAceplANE unDer
FRANCE

comrades comrades comrades comrades co.
THIS IS STRawBERRY PEACE IN OUR TIME it
is
hic hO hO HO chiminh and A
hic 0 marY QUant
hic 7 BEHOLD BEHOLD

make use of the weapons of our time
make use of the weapons of our time
make use of the weapons of our time
make use of the weapons of our time
make use of the weapons of our time
HAVE NO FEAR BOND IS HERE.

WHEN YOU WAKE AT 4 AND FEEL
By Neal Anderson

When you wake at 4 and feel

the temperature of the sheet,
both hot and cold at once

and the window, open wide enough
to admit the moon

who wishes she were
the icecream on a
cone, instead of cheese,
pacing like a rock,

LOOK

down, then out of the bedroom door, into the kitchen, do you

SEE HIM?

Between the fridge
and the wall in a
sliverslice of moon
light standing two
footed: the mouse
of this house, bullying
that crumb of wedding

cake
cake
I I
cakecakecake
cakecakecake
I I I I
CAKECAKECAKECAKE
CAKECAKECAKECAKE

and greyfursweating onto it and the

C E K R
H C E D
L N L U
I O E M.

Restless, tossing is a night like that
and every dream you've ever wanted
gets as big as a worry
and puts it feet on you
all over so you're a sheet.

And dreams are so ineffible
the colour of the sky,
dripped in her light.

So you don't know
just what it is but
there's a match's light
somewhere:

Might it be

CAKE

and some sweating
onto linoleum beside
that mouse
who you are as small as?

It Could Be The Start Of A Lifelong Thing

iT might bE thE starT oF A lifelonG flinG

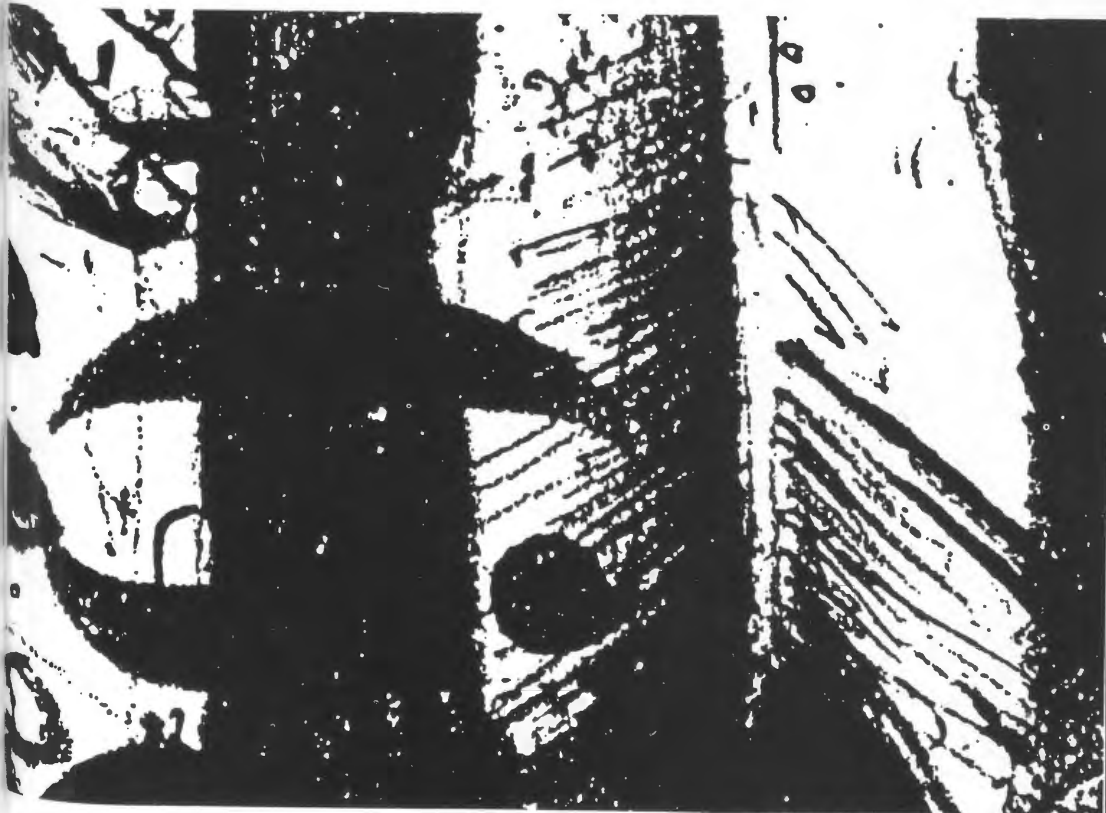


Image by Axel Gallun

SCENARIO
by Dave Robertson

Divergent personalities decrease the efficiency of mass mailings.¹ The man in charge of boosting fourth class mail revenue decides to strive for even more conformity. They phone me late at night:

Hey, Fuckhead! Respond properly to that advertisement. We're not forcing you to buy anything, but you'd better sweat and have an almost imperceptible swelling of the pituary gland the next time you see that ad!

Experts decide that most children "mis"-use building blocks. Ultra-sound scanning of wombs leads to a mass welfare "make work" program for Freudian psychologists. They throw me into a room with a TV set, nowhere to sit. Felix the Cat is on.

Rockbottom is chasing Felix in a bulldozer. He drives the bulldozer until it is just about to slaughter Felix. The act of Felix about to be slaughtered lingers on the screen. The tension is incredible. Felix throws himself to the ground: "Oh, No! I'm doomed!" he yells. Fortunately, the bulldozer hits two trees which bend to form a bridge. The bridge carries the bulldozer safely over Felix.

Felix is saved; Rockbottom rejoices at the fear he has caused Felix. Rockbottom proceeds to ravage Felix's flower garden with the bulldozer. Felix stands, watching; remarks: "What's going on here? It looks like a tornado came through here!" "I'm really upset!"

You can be too! (the methods of display are varied: () turn off the set; () choose not to buy select products; () affirm not to speak coherently when in the grocery line; () rededicate life to homespun values ... None of these work very long. They have a way of re-Correcting you but the moments of display are

fragmented segmented filed categorized data-ized and finally — the best way to forget something — placed into archives (the library of congress is suitable) .) Extraneous and lengthy methods of codifying our base desires has led to an amalgama (a' mul ga' mah), or is it amalgarama, of subtleties: Organic penis shapes in beverages Nipple outlines on a woman's tight dress (shirt, you can decide this one based upon your own classifiable fantasies)

Justapositions of humans resembling sexual responses Tongue action of woman eating ice-cream cone (hotdog, again we allow some input (your testi mony cles)).

Rockbottom crushes Felix even worse than his normal 2-D black inkspot form. The giant dog creature Rockbottom grasps his penis and sprays cum all over the TV set.

Parents are genuinely disgusted. pregnant women, the arthritic elderly and the easily excitable are urged to avoid this segment of the program.

Parents form committees. The committees are chaired by Batman and Robin. Their final report "claims" to answer all the issues. The effects of Messy Sexual Things on Small Children desiring Truisms regarding Male Bonding (as differentiated from latent homosexuality).

The report is stirring academic circles; generally confusing the public:

Questions Can we or can't we see the outline of a vagina in bugs bunny's foot? of estimable magnitude remain unanswered, unfortunately. Disease concern the general public Particularly diseases They will never get Them's most insidious ! of all

Laws are passed; these prove to be insufficient. Hrumph, gentlemen. No one staves off a disease with a law, just look at the Black Plague despite a rather advanced British Common Law system from which we derive our own great system ...

Debate continues. Transparent periphery of the debate is leaked to the major media (McDonald's Tray liners, matchbook covers, rock lyrics ...)

Before we realize it, Role models are changing. Mr. T. enters into a meaningful monagomous relationship. "I pity da fool who pass his body fluids around with just any Tom Dick an' Harry!" "You gonna get a disease and Die!, Fool!" Johnny Carson's script writers are authorized to write condom jokes. "No one seems to realize how they are affected by these subtle changes, Ham remarked". A Punk band, The Responsibles, have a cult hit with a song, "Will You Blow my Family Tree". Debi Boons releases a clever take-off of the song with a similar melody, only hers is called, "I send my Love in plastic packages to a Whole Fraternity House". It is a big smash. "You can hear the words."

Those who fail to respond are identified immediately. Is Felix not dead? "Black cat from the wrong side of the tracks ... He's holed up in an opium den ... No he's not, He's suffering from pneumoniatic complications ... If he is, why is Rockbottom so healthy?"

Major media types are instructed to come clean. "Wipe smirks off your faces. If we can't believe you, who can we?" "Books, I suppose ? ? ?"

A community in Indiana refuses to allow Aids in the classroom (Now I've done it, I've called a spade a spade). "Next thing you know, we'll be serving McCondoms." Before we know it, Phyliz Schlaply comes back to life, begins talking while french-kissing God simultaneously: "Aids waz invented by a Loving Atom Bomb. Drink orange jiz cures a sore throat Only the atom bomb can cure a Godless Faggot?!!!"

This stance is increasingly popular; many families travel to Disney World. "It's the only world we have left!"

"Commies took this planet right out from under mein boot strap. Only Michael Jackson can save us. He bad."

The genial public turns hostile. "We paid for this planet" or "Hey, I paid 150 bucks for this planet" or even worse, "Hey, buddie, I paid for this planet". The environmentalists back down, rededicate themselves to collecting dues.

The core issue remains ducked: "Who are these people and why have they invaded my homes?"

Everyone who isn't in a beer commercial is either watching one or falling in love.² Species have been known to marry as a way of conserving scent, the atmosphere, natural radii of body odors.

The president issues a statement: Citizens, we have successfully re-calibrated our nation, the pulsebeat of our country has returned to normalcy.

People buy instruction manuals on proper lifestyles "What's your sign" is replaced with "What's your demographic group?" Blood tests before marriage are replaced with *Cross Demographic Authorizations*. A sample magazine article: "Those D-3's: Crazy, Fun-loving, and inclined to buy four-wheel drive sportscars." Alot-of-shit

is making the headlines:

Convenience Shopping: Patriotism
in its Truest Form

Re-Cycle Mis-Behaved Babies
(Experts Show You How!)

Germ Warfare: Recipes for your
Home

"I'm mildly frightened"
Housewives are outraged
The general public is reduced to statistics

- 1 Look it up yourself.
2 The changing ozones have re-stirred animal
mumbblings in the deepest groin of the
heartland.

3 POEMS by Rupert Wondolowski in New Jersey

In New Jersey the trees are made of cheese, only the pervers hang out on Limburger Ave. The police there drive cars made of rubber and are armed only with kielbasa, a kind of sausage native to the country of Poland. Often what happens during arrests is that the offender starts giggling so hard that soon the officers are also giggling with their busted kielbasa and soon everyone buys beer and plays card games.

Fast food restaurants don't do well in New Jersey because the only thing New Jersey people buy is wigs, everything else they grow organically. This leads to a lot of nast confrontations when Bob Q. Garden State stands at the counter of McGruntpack's demanding a frosted "page boy" style wig and not accepting the nervous young worker's offers of fries or McGruntpack's Slide Burger.

Next month I am moving to New Jersey, I've already packed my ripped parachute and saltine crackers. The plane waits hovering outside my bedroom window, painted toenail clippings falling like confetti from its back hatch.

the neighbours

it was the baby planted
in the lawn that
made us nervous
the grandfather chained
twitching to the mower
his desperate howls
curdling our breakfast milk
the sons all wearing
parkas in July
the daughters parading
haughtily in
George Washington wigs
shooting buckshot at
Mrs. Kaniddle's cats
hosing my brother Ralph
while he lay stiff
from losing dodge ball game
then every day before
noon every day five
minutes before noon there'd
be the firing of flares
and a long protracted
steam whistle:
The Lucy Show
was about to begin

Snapshots at Ten

Father has been finding: cabbage patch dolls, their heads lanced by #2 Eberhard pencils; a helmet sized fish bowl filled with grape Kool-Aid, five tender bellies floating in the purple; a ceiling of hanged Barbies, gray shoelaces snug around their slender necks.

Father asked: "When you do these things are you doing them to me? Do you think of me?"

She said: "These are things I do."

Father found her in the kitchen, sitting in the dark, drinking a beer. She said: "I'll take the punishment, I like the taste of this beer."

Father thinks: "I never wanted to be this old."

3 Poems by Mari-Lou Rowley

male children playing

1. (a found poem)

1st boy A VERY FIERCE MOOSE JUST KILLED ME.

2nd boy YOUR LITTLE DOGGY FRIEND TURNED INTO A PERSON.

3rd boy I SHOT YOU WITH MY LASER AND YOU BECAME A PERSON.

1st boy I ALREADY AM A PERSON.

3rd boy I MADE YOU STRONG WITH MY GUN.

1st boy I WAS LOST.

2nd boy NO, I FOUND YOU BECAUSE I WAS WISHING.

3rd boy I FOUND YOU BECAUSE I'M ALREADY A MAN.

1st boy YOU TOUCH ME WITH THE NEEDLE AND I TURN INTO
A ROBOT.

Soldiers of Fortune

She is in the den of a strange house. The house is strange to her even though it is where she lives, with others who are vaguely familiar, possibly family. She picks up a magazine from many piled around. It is called "Mony", no e. She opens it, expecting tips on tax shelters, financial reports of multinationals. Instead, a specialty magazine for terrorists. Full colour photos of political torture. Burns, blood, a man arched in the dirt, red hole where penis used to be, eyes rolled back, mouth open in a dry scream.

She closes it, horrified. Wonders whose it is when a young woman comes in and asks if she would like to subscribe. Offers special rates. Asks if she wants to be put on the mailing list. No Thanks. Knows they want her name for their files. She runs out, almost collides with others marching past. Strangers, all wearing khaki and army boots. Some with brushcuts, some with leather and studs. They come in through the front door, without knocking, file into the spare bedroom, in rows, all standing at attention. Soldiers of Fortune in training. They are watching terrorist videos. Only news reports they say, with the screams unedited, no commercials. They are not allowed to show emotion, only fervor.

She tries to alert the others living in the house of the danger, infiltration. The men are watching hockey. No one else seems upset. She goes into the spare room and tells the strangers to leave, because she needs sleep.

Mechanical Man

At a gathering of writers and artists. A remote place in the country. Found a human body with an artificially re-constructed face. Which one did this, I wonder. Looked like a mechanical man. We put him in a steel cylinder and cement it in a deep hole under an historic building, for posterity, for aliens to find.

Another gathering, different people. Many mentally handicapped, also starving Africans and some native Indians, almost naked. Intellectuals & doctors & reporters stand around talking about the good being done. I am worried they will discover the body in the cylinder, defaced.

In a room with sick patients and a bulldog. I wonder what to tell the reporters. Someone says stall them, pretend you don't know about the body. I walk among the natives and Africans, ask how they are, feel silly and magnanimous. They know we have other purposes. I go into the room with the bulldog, move paper and arrange a plastic barrier so he can't escape.



CONSIDERING THE OPTIONS

By Kenneth Emberly

Vivian thought perhaps the room looked too cluttered. Then again, perhaps it was too austere. It was her room; perhaps she was just too used to it. The problem was that she wanted it to look just right for Mr. Right, or rather — in keeping with the times — Mr. Approximately Right, who was coming to scrutinize and woo her for the very first time at six o’clock that evening. Perhaps, she thought to herself, Mr. Approximately Right is a sensuous voluptuary with a highly developed aesthetic sense who will appreciate the good taste of my clutter — the casual dishabille from wall to shining wall. Then again, she continued to think to herself, Mr. Approximately Right may be a taciturn go-getter who abhors needless messiness — the slovenly junkheap from wall to shining wall. Win or lose, she had but two slim choices. And Vivian, never one to be enamoured with a narrowness of scope (in keeping with the times, of course) found this dilemma, or problem, extremely unpleasant. The idea of hoping for the best did not occur to her. She was past all hope. Just then the doorbell terrorized her. It was four minutes to six.

“Miss Vivian Nearly Acceptable?” queried the man at the door. “I am Mr. Justin Approximately Right. We have a rendezvous, do we not?” “You’re early,” Vivian answered flatly. “I know,” said Justin. They glowered at each other, and then, that being settled, she let him in.

He narrowed his already narrow eyes and raked the room with glances that were neither approving nor disapproving. (An indecisive little whelp, thought Vivian.) She took his trenchcoat and flung it to the back of her hall closet. (An impetuous little minx, thought Justin.) They sat down and concluded some terms of agreement:

- 1) Being mature and consenting adults, we will not concern ourselves with the trivial details of one another’s behavior — viz. bodily functions, eccentric sounds and so on.
- 2) Approving in part or in whole of the hot pursuit of love, minor allowances will be made for any insignificant faux pas made by one party in the presence of the other party — viz. wild declarations of love and guilt, confessions of penury and the like.
- 3) Psychotic episodes are strictly forbidden.
- 4) In keeping with our mutual ignorance of one another, our total lack of knowledge about each other, in fact, we agree to delve deeply and courageously into the mire of past history when appropriate, while maintaining a suitable level of mysteriousness about our person(s).
- 5) Refreshments will be provided at 7 and 9 p.m.
- 6) The door is always open.

These terms of agreement, having been hard won and difficult to negotiate, had swallowed up a good deal of time, and it was with irritation and dismay that Miss Vivian Nearly Acceptable noticed that it was now 7:05 p.m. Would this lack of punctuality go against her, and moreover, were the dishes clean? She rose to get drinks and a host of pre-prepared edible dainties. “You’re late,” Justin muttered behind her back. “I know,” she snapped over her shoulder.

There is always room for improvement, even in the best of situations.

“So,” said Justin, when Vivian had plied him with liquor and soggy dainties, “tell me all about yourself.” “Hah!n’t we better get acquainted first?” Vivian shot back. “Oh yes! Yes indeed,” said Justin, “you took the words right out of my mouth. But we have to begin *somewhere*.” “Well then,” barked Vivian, “let’s start with a for instance.” “A for instance?” “Yes. For instance, what do you think of my decorating?” Mr. Justin Approximately Right took another narrow-eyed look around the room. “It’s eclectic,” he said at last. “Interesting?” Vivian suggested aggressively. “Different,” he more or less concurred (and not without fear). “You mean distinctive,” Vivian countered swiftly. “If you like ...” mused Justin with a mysterious air of ambivalence. There was a crushing silence after these words. He is not easily thrown off his guard, thought Vivian. She is not much interested in my opinion, thought Justin. The silence continued unabated.

“Let’s have a fight,” said Justin at long last. “What for?” asked Vivian. “To see if we’re evenly matched!” “Idiot,” scoffed Vivian, wanting to laugh or declare war (it was a tossup), “love is not a conflict. Surely you’ve learned that much in your life.” “But conflicts are inevitable,” cried Justin, “even desirable on occasion.” Vivian considered this to be philosophical, and therefore, unconstructive. She asked Justin if he had to go to the bathroom. Justin shook his head. “Not even a little itty-bitty pee pee?” asked Vivian coyly, wiggling her baby finger in imitation of the male phallus. “No,” Justin replied in a voice verging on humiliated compromise, “not even a little itty-bitty pee pee.”

They both considered the ice broken after this point. Indeed, it was.

“Well old girl,” crowed Justin with archaic and rakish informality, “what do you think I do for a living?” “I haven’t the faintest idea,” Vivian replied somewhat coolly, “and by the way, I’d better inform you right now that I don’t think unless I can think positive thoughts. If you find that unappealing, then think twice. Don’t blame it on me, in other words. I’m a product of the AGE, the TIMES, you see.” “I see,” said Justin, adjusting his shirt collar, which had recently grown unbearably tight (a swollen neck? what could that mean?). “You’re telling me,” he went on in an immoderately shrill voice, “you’re letting me know that you have the RIGHT attitude, is that it?” “That is it, yes.” “Well I won’t quibble with you on that score. I enjoy the RIGHT attitude myself whenever possible, and God knows, in this day and age it’s not always easy. Wars. Pestilence. Death. Murder on every streetcorner. Child prostitutes howling after you on the boulevards. Global famine an ever-present possibility. Genocide. Berserk policemen. Strangers when we meet. Strangers when we part. Alienation’s child’s play these days. ICBM’s in the laundry room. Cruise missiles on the front lawn. The Kremlin in your back pocket. The White House in your pants. Parliament up Shit Creek without a paddle. Yahoo. Ballyhoo. Whoopy-doo. I could go on ...” “You could, but please don’t.” Vivian found all of this rather depressing, but accurate. However, was Mr. Justin Approximately Right engaging in some form of dated negativity-slinging, or could he get on with the job, so to speak, avidly pursuing house, hearth and credit card, and still manage to think these thoughts? If he *could* shove them aside when necessary then he probably had the RIGHT attitude. If, on the other hand, he was going to get a headache or start pleading insanity right and left then he probably had the WRONG attitude. Vivian resolved to find out which case was the right case. But Mr. Justin Approximately Right intruded with a question, thereby destroying Vivian’s delicate train of thought.

“So where’d you get a name like Vivian, anyway?” “From my parents, of course,” she answered curtly, unsure of whether or not she should take offense. “Did you know them well?” asked Justin with a twinkle in his narrow eye. “As well as you knew your own,” she quipped. “Ah-hah!” Justin shouted, clapping his sweaty hands. “Gotcha! You’re making ASSUMPTIONS! How do you know I’m not an orphan? Or some kind of Jungle Boy raised by jungle wolves, Leader Of The Pack, etc. etc.?” “I *don’t* know,” said Vivian, mildly put off, but not entirely so; “I was awaiting such information from you, in all due and good time. But since you cannot control your own impetuosity, do feel free to tell me whether or not you were raised by jungle wolves. And furthermore, you never did tell me what it is that you do for a living.”

They were digging deep. It was almost time for the champagne.

“Alright,” Justin began soberly, “I can in all good faith tell you that my parents were not jungle wolves. If anything, they were merely failures. You may find that harsh, overly judgmental — and therefore, not in keeping with the times — but please keep in mind that I am tolerant, oh not insanely so, but moderately so, and my judgements are not so much harsh as they are well-founded, grounded in sure knowledge and painstakingly arrived at. I’d just as soon tell you that my parents were a roaring success, and perhaps if you threaten me enough I will change my tune and moderate my judgement accordingly, since I do not wish to stand up to you at this or any other time — an inherited weakness, from my mother, I suppose. Not that I’m being analytical. God forbid! No, I’m thoroughly modern,

gutless as hell. As for my job, my making of the ever-ubiquitous living, I do what I am told. Since I don’t have a wife and children to keep my broken nose firmly crushed against the ole grindstone, I have had to discipline myself, and I do what I do well enough. Like everyone else, I’m into some sort of technology, I’ve forgotten which. Satisfied?” Yes, Vivian was satisfied, even more than satisfied. “May I call you Honey?” she asked sweetly. “O course, my little fleshpot, my Nooky-Nooky-Nookums Darling!” Vivian thought about this for a minute, and then said: “Dear, will be fine. Nice short and simple.” “Yes Dear,” Justin murmured, grieving the loss of his endearments but resigned to his fate just the same. “Now what about you?” he asked impetuously, the hot-blooded rogue; “what about your mummy and daddy, and what about your job?” Vivian replied: “My mother developed computer chips, was eaten alive by circuitry, and my father died of a broken heart, having first spent most of his life searching for her in all the digital displays he could get his shaking, alcoholic hands on. As for my job, I’m undecided, and I rather like it that way. Satisfied?” “You can’t be serious,” said Justin, fearing that he was about to become the brunt of some cosmic joke. “Does it matter?” cooed Vivian. “Not when we’re together,” admitted Justin. They were, at this point, verging on that all-important, hideously terrifying, totally essential, avidly sought after, excruciatingly embarrassing, usually botched and forever-remembered-with-a-wilting-sense-of-shame FIRST EMBRACE. But not yet. Vivian had more liquor and dainties up her sleeve. It was 8:59 p.m. and she would not fly in the face of punctuality twice in one evening. According to the terms of their agreement, Item #4, refreshments were to be served at precisely 9 p.m. — she bolted for the little kitchen, upsetting Justin’s finely honed sense of timing and his composure; should he consider this a botched FIRST EMBRACE, therefore? She left him pondering the question.

“I don’t really drink very much,” said Justin, when Vivian had returned with the liquor and dainties. “Don’t worry about it,” she said smoothly, “we’ll go jogging shortly, in keeping with the times.” “Jogging? Now?” “Perhaps you’d prefer to use the Nautilus machine in the basement? Or would you like to strip off your clothes and make a mockery of beauty and grace by doing some aerobic dancing?” “Neither!” squealed Justin, utterly aghast at the thought of more humiliations. “Well then,” concluded Vivian, “it must be jogging or a fast game of squash, racquetball, ta-da! But let’s not soil this moment with sweaty implications. I feel almost romantic.” “And I feel practically moved.” “It’s amazing we could find each other in the love-jungle of this day and age,” mused Vivian, with an altogether brutal smugness. “Yes,” prattled Justin, “we must be two of the lucky ones. How did we find each other anyway?” “I’ve forgotten.” “Perhaps we passed each other on the street and were absolutely swept off our feet at first glance, like in the old TV commercials and movies.” “I doubt it,” said Vivian; “I suspect it was all arranged somehow. Perhaps we used a dating service. Or maybe we were given each other’s numbers by mutual friends.” “That’s highly probable. Friends can be like that. They like to meddle and gossip, arrange love trysts and clandestine meetings between forbidden lovers.” “You’re not married, are you?” asked Vivian nervously. “Not that I know of,” answered Justin, with a total lack of confidence; “nor have I ever been, to the best of my knowledge.” “Virgin territory, are you?” “Absolutely. At least, I think so.”

It was time to get serious. The synthetic, fast-fermented champagne was on ice.

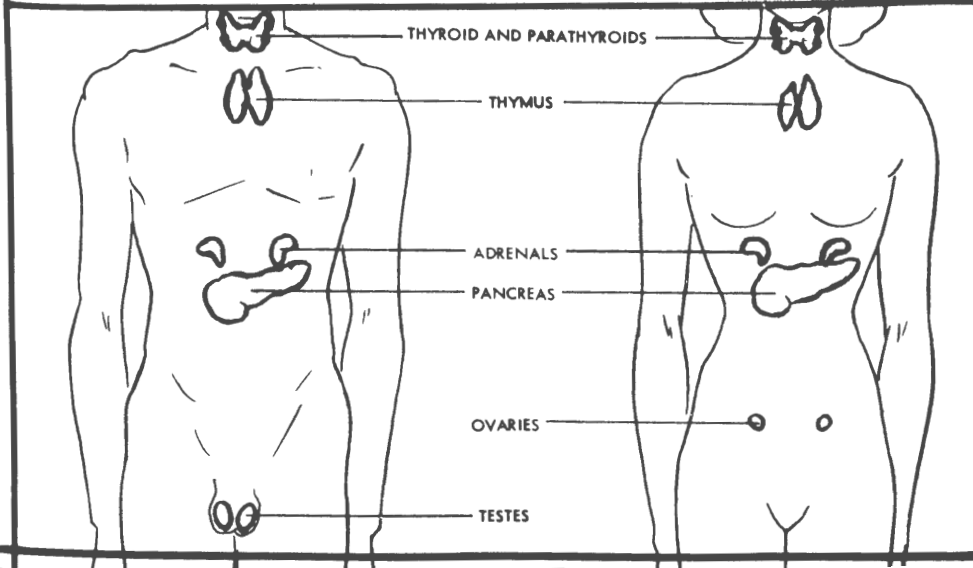
“So tell me, Vivian Dear, do you ... do you want *children*?” “I’ve often thought about it,” she began dreamily (or so Justin thought) “but it’s hard to think about it in a positive way. I mean, these days ... War. Pestilence. Death. Murder on every streetcorner. Gang rapes in the poolrooms. Global famine an ever-present possibility. Genocide. Berserk social workers. Child molesters when we meet. Child molesters when we part. Alienation’s child’s play these days. ICBM’s in the playpen. Cruise missiles in the daycare centre. Welfare mothers in your back pocket. Palimony and alimony up your skirt. Wedding vows and other spurious commitments up Shit Creek without a paddle. Yahoo. Ballyhoo. Whoopy-doo. I could go on ...” “You could, but please don’t.” Justin found this all rather disconcerting, but accurate. However, would Vivian make a good mummy or a bad mummy? Would she abort on short notice? Or go full term with bitterness in her heart? But then, what the hell, there was always the in vitro option. Justin liked having options, like everyone else, in keeping with the times. He therefore opted for viewing Vivian as a potential mother or a potential non-mother. Specifics were hardly the point. “However,” said Vivian suddenly, breaking into Justin’s positive pleasant thoughts, “a lot depends on me finding Mr. Right. In fact, everything depends on me finding Mr. Right. Not that I’m old fashioned. Please don’t get the wrong idea. All I mean is that we’re talking about the things couples do, the things couples plan, and therefore, I am expressing my concern about *who*, exactly, will make up the other half of the couple adjacent to me.” “Well now,” said Justin, “I myself, if I may say so, am looking for an acceptable mate. So in this regard we are, I think, thoroughly copacetic. Neither of us wishes to settle for second best, in keeping with the times, and why should we? There shouldn’t be any such thing as second best!” “Yes,” Vivian cut in, “but how’s *your* luck been hotshot?” There was a weighty pause before Justin said: “Pretty miserable, by and large. But what about your luck?” Vivian’s reply was both swift and screamingly honest: “Absolutely abysmal. That is why you are here. You’re sort of where I’ve got my sights set nowadays: Approximate. You’re name says it all.” “I thought as much.” “I find you second-rate, but not intolerably so, and besides, adolescence is over and done with. I’m not getting any younger, you might say, though I feel entirely well-adjusted about that fact, entirely well-adjusted, overjoyed, in fact!” “Let’s not get too extravagant,” chided Justin. “Indeed,” said Vivian icily.

Their hands were now entwined. The champagne was due for a pop and a guzzle. Their matched jogging suits awaited. But first! The lovenest! They could barely hold themselves back long enough to undress.

The experience was nearly acceptable by anyone’s standards, and approximately right all in all.

Justin wanted to light up a cigarette and discuss the future, as they lay back drained and mildly disappointed. But he had given up cigarettes, and the future was murky and/or terrifying at best. He opted for pining for tobacco and kept his mouth shut. Vivian was considering the decor of her bedroom. Was it too cluttered? Was it too austere? And was it possible that she had misjudged her guest altogether, finding in him neither the sensuous voluptuary with the highly developed aesthetic sense nor the taciturn go-getter with an abhorrence for needless messiness? They would have to have an open and honest discussion of decor sooner or later. In the meantime there were thousands of senseless, mind-numbing arguments they could have about everything from weddings to vacations. All that really mattered was that they had found each other.

It would be a marriage made in heaven. Nearly. Approximately.



TIMESTEALER

by Steve Stanton

You never know what’s going to sell these days. It’s a real problem for professional timestealers like me. You can study cultural profiles, analyze market trends, hire publicity shamans — and still have a sequence on the skids. There are no guarantees and no explanations. You just cannot tell in advance whose time will prove the most valuable.

Not so in the old days. We had all those vicarious pleasures to provide, all those users hungry for new experience. Athletes had marketable time then, sky divers, mountain climbers at the summit. Ever ride a luge down a glistening tunnel of ice? That was one of my good ones back then. Ever run with the bulls at Pamplona? Or wrestle anaconda in the Amazon rain forest? Those were all big sellers in their day.

Porno was big too, an outrageous thrill with no risk of disease. I did a lot of sleazoid synching during my early apprenticeship. Anything to fill my quota. And long hard work it was too, you’ve no idea. Prostitutes were an easy and obvious target, but if you knew what went on in their heads it would drive you to chastity out of sheer boredom. Supper for the children, laundry, is this guy going to have a heart attack on top of me or what? How some of them make a show of animation is beyond me. Most are not worth the computer time to steal the sequence. It takes a real fanatic for even marginal porn.

And to give equal time on the other side of the coin, let’s recall the old evangel sequences. Remember *Charisma*? Remember presiding over a rally of thousands, surrounded by a sea of hands held aloft in prayer, the spirit of glory hovering above the waters, moving in your heart, speaking with your lips — it was my first million seller, one that confirmed my reputation as a timestealer *par excellence*. Those were the good old days.

Now the public is satiated, and rightly so. Every human act conceivable has been recorded. Enough time has been stolen to stretch back to the Pleistocene. It is simply impossible to shock the modern sophisticated user, to bring anything novel to his vast experience. He’s already won the World Series and been elected President of the United States. He’s already been weightless in outer space and made it with Marilyn Monroe look alike, possibly at the same time. What can a timestealer add to that?

Concentrate on technique, I tell my best students today. Timestealing is an art, the ultimate form of entertainment. We’re intelligent professionals stealing for intelligent users, and it’s not what we reveal but what we intimate that counts. The raw human experience is only a base on which to build, the background harmonics to an experiential symphony. With good technique a timestealer can make *Librarian at Rest* a bestseller. What secret thoughts lay hidden behind those affable eyes? What exotic imaginations? You can explore the subconscious levels if you’re properly tuned: you’ve got to use every technological advance. I’m working now on a new generation of “superconscious” sequences. The discriminating user today ...

Where was I? Did you ever see my *Hero* sequence? Sometimes you stumble onto a classic like that without a moment’s forethought. I was in my mobile unit that day, scanning the streets for anything unusual to make my quota, when I happened upon the burning building, a two-storey brick house with flames roaring out the front door and a smoky haze curling under the eaves. The building sucked air with an audible whoof, chugging for oxygen like an overheated wood stove. A crowd had gathered. The firemen were restraining the parents from going back inside. You could actually hear the children screaming through an upstairs window.

I activated my system and began visually scanning the bystanders. I was looking for a particular emotive base, that horrid bloodlust feeling you sometimes find in a death audience — just a crass commercial flash-in-the-pan sequence for the weeklies. I noticed a young man gazing up with rapt attention, his face stony with tension, and I thought I’d found a worthwhile target. I probed and found good emotive content. I locked in on full cerebral and began widening my filters. Horror, panic — an overwhelming signal. I finetuned visual to correct for slight astigmatism and maximized the olfactory smoke signal. I boosted amygdala and hippocampal levels for artistic effect and toned down verbal cognitive, which seemed to be mired in a repetitive circular routine having to do with supernatural agencies. I synched and began the by-pass sequence.

I/we were there, tasting smoke like hot acid, hearing the children’s cries above the chatter of the crowd, recoiling inwardly and bouncing back to full surface awareness, bouncing back and forth like a drumbeat, like a zoom lens focusing in and out on a scene too grisly to behold. I/we could not accept the reality, the torture of innocents.

Something snapped — that’s still how I describe it to this day. A total conceptual reorganization. Out of chaos came fixed determination, out of horror a grim resolve. I/we ran into the fire, up the blackened stairs, smoke-blind and gasping, never fearing death. I/we were invincible, superhuman. I/we followed the cries, kicked open burning doors, crawled over smoking carpet. Two children under a bed and a babe unconscious in a crib. I/we gathered them like sacks of laundry, rolled them in blankets and hoisted them aloft. I/we noticed pain then, dizziness, weakness. I/we retched out smoke and bile and stumbled forward.

You’ve experienced the sequence; you know the peculiar timelessness of the hero’s escape. Even now in retrospect I wonder how I retained enough professional awareness to signal the computer for overtime. Legal eagles are quick to criticize such action, as is their right, but dedicated users understand why I went overtime on *Hero*. I had to get it all, statutory amendments or not. I was there the first time, I suffered the unedited version; don’t tell me my job.

The hero’s hands and feet were permanently mutilated, face disfigured, lungs seared and blackened. The children were treated in hospital for smoke inhalation and released. The parents converted to Christianity. The hero later told reporters he didn’t remember a thing about what happened. Of course not — I’d stolen the entire episode. I sent the hero a prepublication run and offered him ten percent as an out-of-court settlement for the extra time stolen. (Final editing left the sequence at seven and change, as you know.) He is a rich man today.













I am constantly asked whether I influenced the hero in some way to undertake his daring rescue, whether my synching and stealing his cerebral activity in some way manufactured the sequence, which of course is absurd. Timestealing is purely passive, unnoticeable and untraceable by the subject. A two-way communication has never been attempted outside the lab, and the results are not worthy of publication — glorified telephone conversations. The hero would have plunged into those flames with or without me, and he can thank his lucky stars and garters ...

Where was I? All right, let’s deal with questionable ethics. First tell me who really is going to miss five minutes of mental process? People waste more than that standing at a transit stop or meditating on the toilet. Some people are so drugged they forego higher cerebral functions for most of the day. A culture with no respect for time can well afford to lose an inconsequential fraction to timestealers like me. If god had meant our thoughts and feelings to be private he would not have allowed the monitoring technology to develop — and I’m not just trying to be funny; I’ve seen too many strange things to deny his existence outright. I’ll confess my worst and let you be the judge. Remember *Virgin Bride*? Now this young woman may have had some cause for complaint. Those crucial four minutes and fifty-five seconds may indeed have had a certain sentimental importance — as a male, I can only guess to what extent — but think of the vicarious gratification she provided for millions, male and female, virgin or otherwise. She has contributed to the social gestalt, she has influenced the contemporary milieu. Not every woman gets a hymenal honeymoon — precious few, I suspect — and it’s only fair that this particular bride’s good fortune be spread abroad, so to speak. She can always buy the sequence; I’m sure it’s gone mass market by now. In any case ...

Damn, that’s disconcerting. Where was I? Quality is the key word these days. A good quality product will never be out of style. It is nowhere chiseled in granite that the commercial market will not accept the subtleties of artistic expression. Any timestealer can master technical accuracy, and many can learn to break standard rules to good effect, but only the best students show that spark of originality, that love of theme and format necessary for a classic sequence. The rest will follow the fads and fashions of their day; they’ll supply good work to the weeklies and maybe make the charts now and again with supreme effort and a little luck. And no one will be safe from their spotlight. When royalty piques some interest they’ll descend like herd animals on kings and queens throughout the world; when a new pope is elected they’ll swarm like flies after sugar donuts. I followed the trends for most of my own career, so don’t misinterpret my criticism. I’m merely pointing out that the search for novelty has to end somewhere, sometime.

Users have stood on the Sea of Tranquility and watched the Earth hover above a craggy lunar landscape. Users have danced to tribal drums on a fire-lit African plain. Users have borrowed the brain of a subatomic physicist to ponder the first few nanoseconds of creation, when the universe itself was no bigger than a hydrogen atom. Yet even after all these years the search for the ultimate sequence shows no evidence of slackening, the weeklies scream for more, the public swallows it up, critical, demanding, and now attention seems to have focused on the timestealers themselves. Sometimes I wish ...

Where was I?

 <p>DECEMBER</p> <p>F-309164 MINIATURE HOLLY TREE A continuing touch of Yuletide all year!</p>	 <p>JANUARY</p> <p>F-309053 MINIATURE ROSE Ready to bud and bloom immediately!</p>	 <p>FEBRUARY</p> <p>F-309060 MINIATURE BONSAI TREE Oriental art to enhance your living room!</p>	 <p>MARCH</p> <p>F-309077 MINIATURE GARDEMA Fragrant, snow white blossoms—so romantic!</p>
 <p>APRIL</p> <p>F-309084 FLORIDA PALM TREE A touch of Tropical Florida all year long!</p>	 <p>MAY</p> <p>F-309091 MINIATURE KEY LIME Grow your own delicious pie filling!</p>	 <p>JUNE</p> <p>F-309102 MINIATURE LEMON Bud and bloom with refreshing fragrance! A delight!</p>	 <p>JULY</p> <p>F-309119 HERB GARDEN Miniature herbs, fresh and natural for cooking!</p>
 <p>AUGUST</p> <p>F-309126 MINIATURE HIBISCUS Magnificent blossoms indoors or out in summer!</p>	 <p>SEPTEMBER</p> <p>F-309133 TROPICAL MINN GARDEN Especially for those without a green thumb!</p>	 <p>OCTOBER</p> <p>F-309140 MINIATURE ORANGE TREE Drink delicious fresh-squeezed juice from your own tree!</p>	 <p>NOVEMBER</p> <p>F-309157 MINIATURE COFFEE TREE Thrives in living room. Now have real coffee beans!</p>

HERE'S HOW THE PLAN WORKS: Choose 1, 3, **F-309195—Twelve Months (Dec.-Nov.)**

AS IF A CURTAIN

by Margaret Christakos

Image by Jürgen O. Olbrich

I

The theatre’s central section was filled almost to the seat; I sat across the right aisle where people languored coats & portfolios reserving a nest of several seats’ width for their own expansive privacies: the space of a cinema is to be trusted (once on a train to Charlottetown I sat awake at 3 a.m. & the sky had finally become like us, the touristic eye closed in on its self-image, for an hour or two; & people softly dropped arms alongside their torsos groins pumped lightly by the chuff chuffing over rails, open to each other’s groin and prostrate arms & dry throats coughed, snorted quiet, murmured monosyllabic escapades, “crystal, cry-stal harp,” the moon involved in such trusting haircloth, lapels of musk I might have caressed myself to their chorus, gotten lost in chuff, in breathing then within a small cloth diary travelled the dessicated forest lines outside St. John, & gone on to imagine a tunnel, the drawing-back of a lofty curtain, air-born static & ahead, music like civilization’s lightboard blinking one by one then, people waking to hurry a palm over the warmth the abeyance of their mute, drowsing groins and to investigate, to their left, & to their right.

II

Remembering movies is like disbelieving a dream whose eye moved across the bleak outsidersness of a parking lot, moored somehow at the brick barrier, paused momentarily, & slowly listed upward to a window underscored by venetian metal; advance then between matte strips (glass atomizing as you forget to accommodate it) through to an interior, your one eye wincing at neon glare, sudden, and crystal, the crowd of young executives who welcome you, not once mentioning your other, missing, eye who embrace you with velvet commentaries on your health and perpetual tardiness — “the train, or my children ...” — & beneath it, your one sweaty, tallow breast, the teetering, unpartnered heel tactfully unremarked-on amid the latest raquetball gossip; until your lop-sided, soon forlorn, hipbone falls silent, sloughing to a darker corner muttering alone about last week’s adventure to the theatre — the clever arm close around your rhythmic, meandering waistline, the wind, & behind it — row upon row of bronze-moistened dashboards, doubled in wet pavement for good company, the lot full now, but just next to it remembered darkly, your second leaning-forward breast.

LOVE IN POPULAR CULTURE

by Marino Tuzi

What is the relationship between our culture’s presentation of sexuality and love and an individual’s intimate experience of them? To be more precise, do the multitudinous cultural expressions of sexual and romantic behavior, to be found in the tableau advertisements illuminating Toronto’s skyline to the hallucinogenic lifestyle commercials disrupting the civility of the CBC’s evening telecasts, accurately reflect or recreate on the level of lived experience the immediacy of sexual-romantic activity between two lovers? Is the cultural expression of sexuality and love simply restating in its own way the details and attitudes of that practice? Or is it somehow operating to shape the style and substance of that practice? Or, to push the discussion further, is there at times a complete disconnection between culture and practice in the terrain of eros?

It would seem to me that this discussion is worth undertaking not so much because it could lead to some form of therapy on the part of writer and reader (which in itself holds the promise of a benefit, however problematically) but because our culture is so overtaken, or to use a post-structuralist notion, so overdetermined in its obsession with sexuality and love. It can be said that in the modern, urban, technological dynamo of late industrial capitalism, evident in its various American-induced manifestations in Toronto, individualism has attained an ascendancy that has deprioritized the necessity of adhering to an external reference, i.e. the Church, the collective social order, the patriarchal extended family, etc. Instead the practice of late industrial capitalism has ideologically and experientially necessitated the organization of a social order which allows for all reference to be focused within the dimension of subjective, individual existence. In some ways, this radical shift, from a structure of being that situated individual striving within the framework of a collectively-based social order to the contemporary one in which individual striving is simply connected to its own logic and motivation, is a phenomenon of the last four decades following World War Two. Of course this historical moment did not achieve itself overnight, but was the product of a process in western capitalist society from the movement out of the medieval period, with its emphasis on a hierarchical collective order teleologically oriented toward God, into the mercantile capitalism of the Renaissance, in which the individual slowly began to usurp the collective structure and incrementally placed himself teleologically and ontologically as the transcendent being in the world. It is because of this that a Marxist like Terry Eagleton and a post-structuralist like Jacques Derrida can concur, in their individual deconstruction of western liberal humanist culture, that the history of such a culture is the history about the ideological paramountcy of “the metaphysics” of individual “presence”. To put it another way, western culture has been totally concerned with the evolution and the expansion of individual experience in its various stages of capitalist advancement.

What the Second World War decided for us in its outcome was that capitalism was a precise and effective economic order in the problematic stage of technological industrialism. Of course the victory of this decision was never fully assured both in terms of the military prowess of the Allied forces, and the moral certitude of capitalist, liberal humanism. At any point, what concerns me is the fact that in the past an individual found meaning and transcendence in existence through the institutions of church and state, sanctioning how one should live meaningfully and productively. But this form of worshipping an external, collective reference no longer appears to have any place or relevance in contemporary urban life.

As I look at that technicolor billboard illuminating the Torontonion evening, I see a young woman erotically placing her finely sculpted body against her male counterpart while the billboard advertises the latest line of Kevin Klein jeans. Clearly the pulpit and the lectern have been put aside for the sensual and the erotic in guiding the individual through the present capitalist order. So in the pursuit of economic security tied to an individual’s ability to obtain a weekly wage within the arena of a highly vulnerable and problematic nuclear family order, the individual turns totally inwards in escape from and in confirmation of the materialist values of his/her society. But in turning inwards what does s/he turn to? More importantly how does what s/he turns to manifest itself in the cultural gestalt that overwhelms her/him daily?

It is useful to look at several forms of cultural productions to see how this positing of transcendence through eros, through sex and love without God, is an act of subterfuge, an attempt to sabotage the real experience of eros in our lives. To create a simplistic illusory state that is more concerned with power, acquisitiveness and escapism in their own singular terms. Furthermore, these cultural acts of subterfuge serve to turn sexuality into a mystical primordial state, an atavism devoid of the humanity of the individual presence of the lovers.

My concern here is with a kind of popular culture that attempts to transcend economic class and ideological orientation and articulate an attitude about living to the masses. If one analyzes pop music as one example of popular culture, one discovers either an emphasis on the social darwinism of sexuality or a complete romanticization of love as the panacea for all the problems in one’s life. In the former, one can observe how the singer, usually male, scorns his lover for being a lustful, traitorous partner. This syndrome of the bitch-goddess “who ran out” on me or “wants to run my life” is rampant in scores of rock’n roll tunes that are produced en masse. Obviously what this establishes is the notion that in sex and love each lover is locked in an eternal power struggle over control in which sexual prowess and romantic emotion are abilities to be used ruthlessly to one’s advantage. This survival of the fittest in eros is particularly evident in that form of popular music interested in valourizing the patriarchal-masculine and the patriarchal-feminine values in the social order. Such music can range from phallocentric formulaec heavy metal to glossy, vapid country and western.

In the latter, in the impulse to romanticize the healing powers of love and sex in dealing with personal failure and tragedy, we see another subterfuge at work. Love is the holy grail for which we exact our life’s energy to apprehend in our unquestioned faith in its powers and virtues. Again this syndrome while appearing to be the polar opposite of the social darwinist one tends to reproduce in its own fashion the same values. Except that this time eros is presented as some spiritual, transcendental force that will fill the lack within us. So love is exalted as some paradisaical state that has transformed the lover, i.e. my life is complete and tranquil now that you are in my life. But the real human passion which actuated the coming into being of this state is pushed aside; it is denatured, watered down and turned into a cliché.

But it is the transformation of this human dimension of eros, of sex and love, in which physical intimacy is the natural expression of the affection and attraction felt between two lovers, into a cliché that diminishes the real experience of eros. Yet the fact that certain acts of popular culture appease the need to worship individual inner sensuality and experience by reducing eros to a cliché-ridden state of a troubled social darwinism or a lobotomized paradisaical tranquility speaks more about the power of that need than about the failure of that popular culture to present it authentically.

It is this power that is felt by the individual whether s/he is listening to a rock’n roll tune or watching a beer commercial in which sexual game-playing among athletic adults is witnessed. It is a power, grounded in sociological, historical, political conditions responsible for its presence in the matrix of individual experience, that allows itself to be mystified. In this situation of mystification involving the making of a familiar thing to appear unfamiliar, estranged and enigmatic, beyond human apprehension, one can see the deeper quality of this subterfuge that is evident in social darwinist and romanticist articulations of love. One can perceive the utterness of this mysticism not so much in such soap operas as *Dallas* or *Dynasty*, or in movies like *Fatal Attraction* or *Betty Blue*, but in any erotic/pornographic (I use the term “pornographic” technically here to describe any material explicitly depicting sexual activity between consenting adults) film. The melodramatic quality of the lovemaking in these films, which are concerned with the mechanics of sexual activity, presenting a heightened, surrealistic, excessive graphic depiction of lovemaking between overly-endowed and mindlessly engaged participants, points away from a demystification of sexuality toward a more complete mystifying subterfuge. Along with the fact that these films reproduce the patriarchal-masculine domination of women in sexual terms, they serve to fulfill another purpose in the process. Like the social darwinist and romanticist articulations that reduced eros to a cliché, to a reducible notion removing the complexity and profundity of erotic experience, the erotic/pornographic film serves to make invisible the real human depth of that experience at the same time it ostensibly makes explicit the machinations of the physicality of sexual activity. For the sexual appetite in this type of popular culture film is so exaggerated beyond human dimension and reduced to a melodrama of physical contortion and emotional wailing that the real human quality in the lovemaking is made to disappear altogether.

Without sounding puritanical, specifically in the case of the erotic/pornographic film, and moralistic in terms of the social darwinist and romanticist positions, one can see that the dalliness of human existence, the routine of waking, working, of dealing with real situations while attending to the responsibility of having a relationship with your partner, is for obvious purposes totally absent. In the place of the complexities of social and individual existence one is given a clichéd and mystified vision about eros, one that is either simplified to a basic notion or exaggerated into a state of fantasy.

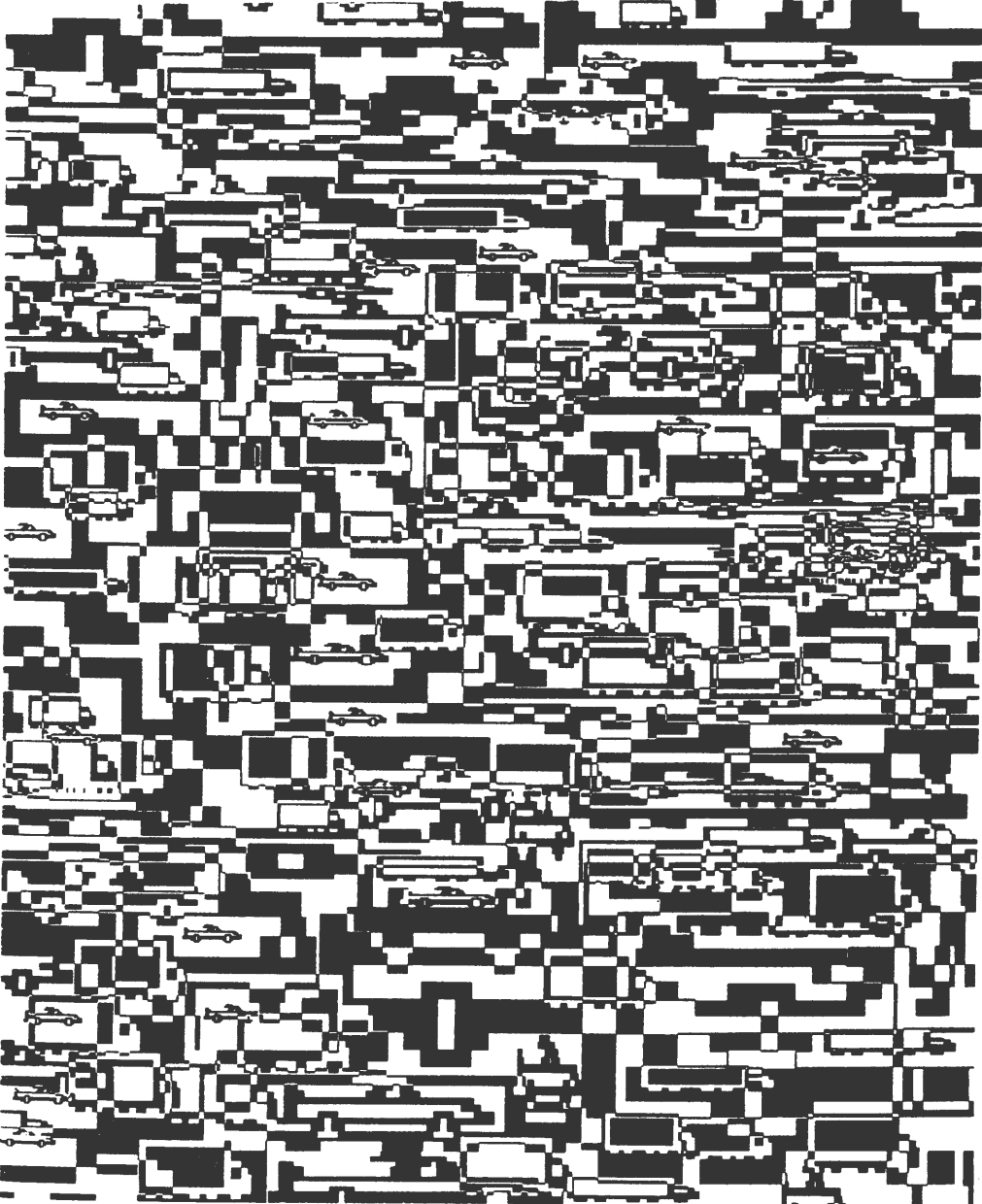
But to say that there is no relationship between these cultural acts of eros and the actual practice of it is to underestimate the influence of culture in our lives. For culture of this kind places before us in certain ways the urgings of our inner needs. But whether or not the presentation of these needs accurately reflects the manner in which we enact them is another matter. Rather it is in the fact that such cultural activity contorts the dimension of these needs, taking one’s sense of insecurity and developing a social darwinist explanation for its presence, taking one’s yearning for stability and creating an unearthly state for its fulfillment, taking one’s need to feel liberated in the physicality of sexual activity and transforming it into a superhuman prowess, that often at times one discovers a cleavage between these cultural acts and the experience of intimacy with one’s lover. Moreover, at times what one has to exorcise is the infiltration of these unreal notions in the unconscious chambers of one’s desire in order to regain a real sense of human intimacy.

But why this subterfuge in some popular culture focussing on sexual love? Why this sabotaging of the natural impulses in lovemaking by presenting notions that do not meet lived experience? The reflex answer is to say that it suits the design of a capitalist society ordered around escapism and the need for individual experience. It is this reality that creates a cleavage between culture and experience. For if the capitalist social order elevates the subjective dimension of being as the transcendental value in experience, then one can see in these cultural contortions of social darwinism, of romanticization, of erotic fantasy-making the projections of the inner states of the subjectivity. Therefore, one witnesses in these cultural productions the materialistic and power aspirations of individualism. Yet in this worship of personalism, of the ascendent individual, such culture reveals to us a profound need to believe in the Nietzschean essentiality of the individual, of the will-to-power of individual aspiration. As Derrida or Eagleton note, bourgeois society in its deepest sense despairs in not having the truth, the word, the transcendental individual which redeems existence.

In preserving this totalizing essentialism, this form of culture attempts to arrest the combusting, internally implosive, action of technological-capitalist society; to avoid the making of technologies and economies automatically antiquated in the act of consumerism; to evade the implicit deconstructing powers of the capitalist-consumer dynamo. But this anxious and desperate preservation of a transcendental essentialist individualism, of derouting the powerful movement of deconstructive capitalism, expresses the profound need to inhibit the inevitable deconstruction and antiquation of that sacrosanct individualism in the provisionality of contemporary capitalist practice.

But the failure of this essentialist project is often felt in the way that such a clichéd world of culture is unable to connect to the non-essentialist, complex, tentative and problematic level of real experience. In this liquidly ambivalent, problematizing universe of actuality, eros cannot be grasped and held solely through acts of power, acquisitiveness, and escapism, readily observed in the theatricality of erotic social darwinism, vapid romanticism, and sexual phantasmagoria. For this will-to-power in eros is rooted in human capacities which at times resist the need to satiate the hunger for individual fulfillment. Moreover, these human capacities that permit intimacy between lovers are teleologically organized away from the elevation of self-fantasy. For in the ability to be generous, to reciprocate in love, to be morally responsible, one discerns a quality equally necessary in the experience of eros, in loving and making love with your partner.

But this human ability which needs the presence of the other in order to be actualized is not entombed in a sainted altruism. Instead within the vortex of a deconstructing capitalist order, this human ability is imbricated with the desire for control, for satisfying the internality of selfness. However, in not completely presenting these two levels, the individual frame and the human order, simultaneous with each other in the dynamic between individual and social structure, and in the privileging of the former over the demise of the latter, a certain kind of popular culture engages in an act of socio-metaphysical subterfuge. There, it is only in recognizing that individual erotic desire is not a state of being dwelling solely within itself but captured by a dynamic process that one can uncover and challenge this mesmerizing subterfuge. In doing so one can know what it means to turn inwards to worship what was once given to us but which we must individually decide upon in order to feel the power of eros, that potent element in personal existence that has been elevated to a form of godliness in contemporary society. After all what is the experience of eros, of love and sex, if not a plummeting of the inner depth of one’s being; a being internally focused but still subterraneanly and precipitously bonded to a capitalist social order.



"Rush Hr" image by Mike Miskowski



Images by Marilyn Rosenberg & David Cole

6 STATEMENTS By Christopher Dewdney

LIFE

On the third day of the conference the physicists participated in a seminar. This involved a panel discussion followed by a question period in which members of the audience were invited to query the scientists.

One professor had been answering quite a few questions on such subjects as quantum mechanics and high energy physics when a woman stood and asked, "Professor, what is life?" The physicist, who prior to this had been fielding every question articulately and genially, paused briefly while a momentary hesitation flickered over his features, registering both the magnitude and the impropriety of this question. The look faded rapidly, however, and was replaced by one of knowing certitude, of revelatory conviction. With an enigmatic smile he replied, "Life? Life is a disease of matter!"

THE IMMACULATE PERCEPTION II

Differentiation and isolation of previously mixed elements and their subsequent refining are natural outcomes of our sorting impulse. Humans possess an almost instinctive need to isolate the constituent parts of perceived reality. This impulse led us to discover the hidden numerical order of nature and its properties. It has also got us, as a species, into trouble. Refined foods such as sugar have imbalanced our nutrition, refined chemicals have poisoned us.

To differentiate an item from its background is to satisfy or relieve the irritation of signifying consciousness, it is an externalization of the innate aspiration of consciousness towards specificity. Isolation reinforces the homogeneity of the item, the object, and establishes its status as signified, an ideal form. It is the enforcement of differentiation. Grouping raises the charge of serial homogeneity, large assemblies of species or metals engendered the first wealth. Refining became a method of harnessing the ritualized impulse to further isolate the constituent parts of reality, the final differentiation. Refining is the fine-tuning of purity towards an ideal isolation tantamount to icon or symbol.

One of the most extreme exponents of the refining impulse is the refinement of uranium, where, as the essence is isolated the substance being refined becomes increasingly toxic to human life.

SYNTAX

Syntax is the stylistic equivalent of individuality.

The individual is an idiosyncratically associative mode enacting its personal world model. The world model is itself recursively engendered to a certain extent by the associative domain of language.

Syntax is the thread of alignment along which meaning condenses.

Syntax is creation anticipated.

Reference/signification is memory.

Without memory, movement is impossible.

Reverence in the deferential treatment of ideation by the signifiers.

WORDS

Words are stencils.

We understand by the *outline* of words.

They have no substance.

They are an absence through which we frame their ostensible objects.

A frame is a characterization.

TIME TRAVEL II

To disperse the entrenched sub-conscious illusion of auto-phenomenality, or exonomy, this simple exercise should suffice. One must realize the effects of the "passage" of time on objects during an interval of absence from a familiar setting. You leave your house for a few hours leaving an apple core and some orange peels on the kitchen table. When you come back the core and peel will serve as a grey-scale, irritating the comfortable inertia of exonomy.

Upon return everything will have changed. The light will still be on, the chairs, table, pots and utensils will be exactly where you left them but the apple core has turned brown, the orange peels are drying out. As if in your absence some force had been in your house, subtly changing everything before your return.

The point of the exercise is to separate the implacable force of change from one's illusory and unconscious belief that somehow one is responsible for all change, which itself is reinforced by the seduction of motion.

The illusion of voluntary motion from one point to another, which reinforces the habituated ego's position as originator of change and the equally strong illusion of environmental manipulation are the two greatest barriers to the time-traveller's realization of time and space.

DISCARD THE MORAL HUSK

I'm thinking through the inklings.

It takes all my effort
just to outsmart myself because
I'm moving faster than words
into a landscape so alien
there are no words to describe it.

Tenth Anniversary Issue: Part 1

CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES

Neal Anderson is a regular contributor to *Rampike*. He lives a wet & wild life of *jouissance* in Vancouver, Canada.

Pierre-Andre Arcand is a performance artist & writer whose work has been presented across Canada and throughout Europe. Pierre-Andre works with the *Inter* magazine collective in Quebec City.

Paul Auster is an extremely famous American writer who writes strange fiction that a lot of people like. He was interviewed shortly after he read at Toronto's Harbourfront Reading Series hosted by Greg Gatenby.

Gary Barwin likes wearing bowler hats and writing about dogs when he isn't editing "Serif of Nottingham" visual texts and chapbooks in St. Catharines, Ontario.

Claude Beausoleil is a very well known and highly respected Francophone poet, editor, and publisher from Montreal. Claude has published numerous books of scintillating poetry. He and Michel Delisle co-edit *Levres Urbaines*, an informed and influential journal featuring some of the best new writing in Quebec.

Marina de Bellagente La Palma is a prolific writer of exacting acumen who lives and writes challenging texts in Los Angeles, California.

bill bissett writes, sings, paints and splits his time between Vancouver & London, Canada.

Joan Chevalier is a breath of fresh air from Brooklyn New York where she writes sinewy prose and chats with other famous writers.

Margaret Christakos lives and writes and reads aloud in Toronto.

Cody & Luoma both live in San Diego. Cody is the author of the amazing *5 Fingers and Counting*.

Jean-Paul Daoust writes romantic poems in French in Montreal. Jean-Paul is the author of many marvellous books of poetry. Perhaps if you're lucky you'll meet him one day sipping champagne at the Ritz.

Robert Dassonowsky-Harris edits *Rohwedder* and the *New German Review*, runs Rough Weather Press, is a recognized poet, writer, playwright, with publications through the U.S., Canada, Australia, the U.K., W. Germany, Austria, Italy, India, and Japan and is a semi-regular in *Rampike*, so there.

Guillermo Deisler is a German artist who creates provocative visual collage images on a regular basis for *Rampike*.

Christopher Dewdney is a writer and editor living in Toronto.

David Donnell is a Governor General's Award winning poet who lives in Toronto with his remarkably intelligent cat.

Paul Dutton writes poetry, prose and criticism, edits with Underwhich Editions and sings and plays music in Toronto.

Kenneth Embery is an up and coming writer who has all the dates he can handle in Waterloo, Ontario.

Raymond Federman is a widely respected writer, teacher, and critic. He edited *Surfiction* (Swallow Press, Chicago), a book of critical essays back in 1975 long before most people had heard or thought about things such as postmodern writing. He is a professor of French and comparative literature at State University of New York at Buffalo. He has published numerous books including the prize winning *Double or Nothing* and *Take It or Leave It* (Fiction Collective, New York).

Jim Francis co-edits *Rampike* and tries to get Karl to publish the magazine on time.

Cola Franzen is a prolific translator who offers us texts by Alicia Borinsky and Saul Yurkievich in this issue. She has appeared regularly in *Rampike* and her translations are admired by writers and readers in both North and South America.

Axel Gallun is a provocative German artist who comes to us via Jurgen O. Olbrich.

Ruta Gravljejs is a Toronto based sculptor who has shown her work across Canada. Ruta enjoys the Island life.

James Gray is *Rampike*'s intrepid New York/Boston editor. He is currently working on a new book based on his "Facodomy" series.

Wolfgang Hainke is a challenging German artist introduced to us by Jurgen O. Olbrich.

Dick Higgins writes, performs and thinks deep thoughts in Barrytown, New York. He advises that one might try a bit of lemon and honey before reciting texts in public. It soothes the throat maaahvelouslee!

Linda Hutcheon is a theoretician par excellence writing, who is a professor of comparative literature at the University of Toronto, and is a specialist in the arts of irony, and parody. Two of her recent books are *As Canadian As Possible Under the Circumstances* (ECW) and *A Theory of Parody* (Methuen). Read 'em, you'll love 'em.

Robert Kroetsch is a writer, literary critic and teacher who has plumbed the meaning of a prairie. His most recent book *Completed Field Notes* (M&S) is a superlative text that revels in the joys of language. Robert Kroetsch won the Governor General's Award for his novel *The Studhorse Man*.

Carl Leggo is a teacher, and broadly published writer, from Edmonton, Alberta.

Wolfgang Luh creates eye-popping art in Germany and comes to us via Jurgen O. Olbrich.

Karen MacCormack writes poems that grip your mind like a seasoned wrestler. She lives and works in Toronto.

Steve McCaffery writes theory and poetry, and sometimes plays music in Toronto when he isn't doing readings everywhere else.

David McFadden is of a sensible height, and enjoys baseball, reading and writing poetry in Toronto. Maybe you should give him a call sometime and tell him how much you like his latest book! Or, better yet, invite him out for dinner or a ballgame and I bet he'll be happy to tell you what he thinks about writing or the Toronto Blue Jays and all kinds of neat stuff. He's a heck of a nice guy.

Mark Miller is an enigmatic but provocative writer who hails from Shoalhaven Heads Australia. Need we say more?

Misha is part of a very active artists and writers colony in Cove Oregon. Misha is a regular contributor to *Rampike*, and we're glad!

Mike Miskowski is an artist, writer, and publisher/editor of *MalLife* magazine. He works out of Seattle, Washington.

Ann Noel has appeared in the last few issues of *Rampike*. She is a German artist who was introduced to us by Jurgen O. Olbrich.

Ken Norris is a dark romantic writer formerly of Montreal and now teaching and publishing the magazine "Somewhere South of the Border" in Orono, Maine.

Jurgen O. Olbrich is an active German artist, one of *Rampike*'s busy European editors. Jurgen enjoys wearing ketchup on his nose, wearing graphically decorated boxes on his head, and dancing on top of xerox machines.

Kirby Olson writes criticism on art & unusual short fiction out of Seattle, Washington. His work frequently appears in high powered mags such as *High Performance*.

John Oughton lives in Toronto where he teaches, plays guitar and writes informed and intelligent reviews about art and writing.

Susan Parker has raised spoonerism to a high art form. She lives in Toronto and sometimes mails funny sculptural things to people.

Andrew James Paterson is a superlative musician, video artist and writer who enjoys chatting over coffee in Toronto bistros.

Maureen Paxton is an up and coming Toronto writer who will no doubt amuse and astonish you more and more as time goes on.

R.J. Pravdin (a.k.a.) Jonathan Litel of New Haven, CT, likes to tip the world on its ear in order to give it a new perspective.

Robert Priest plays music, writes mind-bending poetry, does lots of readings and celebrates life in Tronto.

William A. Reid is formerly of Toronto via Montreal, currently living in the Great White North working as a sports writer offering post-structural views on things like curling, wrestling and the snow-snake festival.

Dave Robertson takes the "L" train when he isn't bashing out yet another vertiginous text in Chicago, Chicago, my kind of town.

Constance Rooke is a writer, teacher and head of the English Dept. at the University of Guelph. She also edits one of Canada's finest mags, the internationally recognized *Malahat Review*.

Marilyn Rosenberg & David Cole create amazing visuals using pen and ink and stuff like that out of Peekskill, New York. I was just talking to Marilyn on the phone and she said the weather was pretty good this year and she enjoys the outdoors, but she's not really what you would call a sun worshipper.

Mari-Lou Rowley is a strong new Toronto writer whose latest book of subtly crafted poems *a Knife, a Rope, a Book*, was recently published by Underwhich Editions.

La Societe de Conservation du Present is making an effort to put time on hold while it (re-)creates thought-arresting art in Montreal.

Steve Stanton doesn't say much about himself but he's from the rural region of Washago, Ontario. He writes funny things out there, yeah, maybe too funny. Steve Stanton edits *Dreams & Visions* magazine.

Richard Truhlar is a musician, sound-poet, writer and editor currently living and working in Toronto.

Marino Tuzi is a theoretician and writer who enjoys the Toronto night life.

Arvids Ulme is a young Latvian writer who likes to talk about metaphysical phenomena. Arvids enjoyed visiting Toronto last year where he talked to us over a beer in the backyard.

Rupert Wondolowski writes wonderfully wild and woolly words and then winds them and weaves them in ways unforeseen. He lives in Baltimore, Maryland.

STAY TUNED FOR PART TWO OF THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE WHEN WE WILL FEATURE

"A BATTERY A" GROUP
MONTY CANTSIN
BOB CASTO
JOHN FECKNER
RICHARD KOSTELANETZ
ROBERT MORGAN
NICK POWER
MICHEL SERRES
DON SUMMERHAYES
DAVID UU

RAFAEL BARRETO-RIVERA
KEVIN CONNOLY
ELAINE CORTS
GERRY GILBERT
OPAL L. NATIONS
ALAIN-ARTHUR PAINCHAUD
AL PURDY
ABIGAIL SIMMONS
W.M. SUTHERLAND
DENIS VANIER

GEORGE BOWERING
J.W. CURRY
FRANK DAVEY
DAVE GODFREY
JONES
THE PHASE SHOW
LIBBY SCHEIER
STEVE SMITH
YVES TROENDLE
MICHAEL WINKLER

! plus many other pleasant surprise appearances !