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CONTENTS

VOLUME TWENTY-ONE NUMBER TWO WINTER 1982

Miklós Radnóti	*Four Poems*	7
Norberto Luis Romero	*The Birth of Fernando María*	13
Daniel Moyano	*Swallows*	18
Miguel Hernandez	*Poem*	24
Raymond Carver	*Three Poems*	26
Phil Hall	*Poem*	29
Alden Nowlan	*Morning Flight To Red Deer*	31
Bertolt Brecht/Ernst Ottwald	*Kuhle Wampe and Two Essays*	37
George Bowering	*Four California Deaths*	51
Robert Rankin	*Two Poems*	58
Peter Sanger	*Two Poems*	61
Jan E. Conn	*Poem*	64
Martin Anderson	*Two Poems*	65
Draga Djulgerova	*Poem*	68
Joan Aiken	*The Gift-Giving*	70

PEACE, HORROR

As I stepped out the door it was ten o'clock,
a baker singing glided by on glinting wheels,
a plane droned overhead, the sun shining, ten o'clock,
my dead aunt came to mind and suddenly on wings
all those I'd loved, none of them among the living,
a host of the mute dead all floating dark
and then some shadow slithering down the building's wall.
Silence dropped, morning was suspended at ten o'clock,
peace wafted through the street, and also horror's pall.

1938

translated from the Hungarian by Jascha Kessler

THURSDAY

In New York, T. hung a halter
round his neck in some place he was rooming,
stateless through all those years, a drifter,
how much longer could he go on roaming?

In Prague, JM took his life,
in his own land left with no homestead,
not one word a year does PR write,
dead maybe under a root that's dead.

To Hispania he went, the poet,
where sorrow struck his eyes like a mist;
wanting to be free, and a poet,
could he cry against the bright dagger's thrust?

Could he cry to the infinite
when his finite journey is done;
could he cry out for his life,
the one in chains, or the homeless one?

When the lamb begins to bite
and the cooing dove eats bloody meat,
when the snake on the path whistles
and the blowing wind begins to scream.

26 May 1939

translated from the Hungarian by Jascha Kessler

FOAMING SKY

The moon's rocked by a foaming sky,
miraculously I'm still living.
Hardworking death hunts this time
and those he comes across are livid.

Sometimes the year looks round and screams,
looks round, and then faints.
Behind me what an autumn skulks
and what a winter, blunt as sorrow's pain!

The forest bled and in the turning
time each hour's blood dribbled.
Great numbers and grim ones
that the wind on the snow scribbled.

I've lived to witness both this and that,
I feel the air as dense
as before I was born—that tepid
menacing silence is what I sense.

I stop here at the foot of the tree,
which roars its foliage furiously.
A branch snakes down. To throttle me?
I'm neither weak nor cowardly,

just tired. I stand still. And the branch, scared,
fumbles dumbly at my hair.
One ought to forget, but I've never
forgotten anything whatever.

Foam rages over the moon, anger
strikes a dark green streak across the sky.
Slowly, carefully, I roll myself
a cigarette. I'm alive.

8 June 1940

translated from the Hungarian by Jascha Kessler

PARIS

There's a tilt to the pavement where Boulevard
St. Michel intersects the Rue Cujas.
I've not deserted you, my wayward,
beautiful youth, even now in my heart
like an echo down a mine there's your humming voice.
The baker lived at the corner of Rue Monsieur le Prince.

And on the left, one of those great trees
in the park turned yellow against the skies
as though Autumn were something it could foresee.
Freedom, darling nymph with long thighs,
dressed in the gold of evening,
are you there yet among the veiled trees, hiding?

Summer marched along like an army,
raising dust from the road and pounding sweating,
now a cool mist followed floating by
and fragrance wafting left and right, spreading.
Through midday Summer stayed and sweet Autumn came
calling in the afternoon, a forehead wet with rain.

What a child's life I lived then,
just as I pleased, like some old pedant too,
who says, The earth is round. Such sapience.
I was still green, with a beard white as snow.
Who gave a damn if I went strolling round?
I descended later below the hot ground.

Where are you, O singing stations:
CHATELET-CITÉ-ST. MICHEL-ODEON!
and DENFERT-ROCHERAU — you sound like a damnation.
The great stained wall a map blossomed on.
O where are you! I cry. I listen. Fetor
of bodies and ozone beginning to roar.

And the nights! And the pilgrimage each night
from the outlying fringe towards the Quarter!
Will that weird overcast shed its grey light
over Paris yet again at the dawn's hour
as, sodden with the writing of verse
and half-asleep, I turn towards bed and undress?

O to return! Will I find strength once more
in the deep current of my passing life?
The stinking hashhouse on the ground floor
has a tom, and he's mating on the roof.
What screeching! Will I hear that once more?
It was then I learned what a brawling uproar
Noah must have drifted through the moonlight with in days of yore.

14 August 1943

translated from the Hungarian by Jascha Kessler

Miklós Radnóti was killed on a forced march from Heidenau Concentration Camp. His body, with last poems, was recovered in 1947.

Norberto Luis Romero

The Birth of Fernando María

On the thirtieth of July Doña Roberta made the most unusual delivery in her forty years as a midwife. "That child's coming out wrong," the grandmother had said, "badly placed, but it will be an exceptional child." Sure enough, Doña Roberta had only to touch Marina's enormous belly to affirm and swear by all the patron saints of parturition that the baby was badly placed. After terrible pains and great efforts, Marina, whose first time it was, gave birth to an enormous white egg, which they named Fernando after its paternal grandfather and María in memory of its maternal great-grandmother, who had been much loved and who had devoted all her life to making Easter eggs.

The grandmother was the first to observe that the boy, or girl, was different from other children born in the town. This served as an argument to strengthen her prophecy: "I told you the child would be exceptional!" But she took no time to find a resemblance to her late husband, who had had very smooth white skin, and to accept and love the child more than anyone.

Marina, the mother, gave it all the care any child deserves, though it required nothing greater than constant attention so it would not roll out of bed and fall to the floor.

The grandmother hastened to rummage through drawers stuffed with useless objects for old balls of wool, twisted from so many uses, numerous unravellings and transformations. "This will make a little robe," she said as she wound it in a ball. "I'll make the front and back pink with white sides. Right now there are plenty of booties." And she sought among the socks shoved one inside the other a wrinkled, dirty bill, almost worthless, to buy pink and baby blue buttons for her little grandson.

Marina, the mother, had drawn her son a little boy's face, Fernandito's, because she had always wanted a little boy. On the opposite side, the father drew with careful lines an enchanting little girl's face, with brown eyes like its grandmother's, the one who had made chocolate eggs. But he unbefittingly added a neat, slight woman's sex.

They bathed and changed the infant every day; and with soap and water in each bath Fernando María lost the enchanting faces and doll's sex. Then they painted it again, and on each new face they added different features, slightly changed, to create varying states of mind so that the child would be growing; and so they made her hair grow, and her first teeth; they made her cry when she was hungry or laugh when they made faces at her.

"Even if she is your mother, I don't want her to put those ridiculous little dresses on him. We'd agreed that one day I'd dress him, and she the next, but she insists on knitting those horrible little outfits decked out with old-fashioned flounces which frill out all around."

Fernando María was so round that the little clothes slipped up or down and rubbed off the faces which they painted with such care. They worked things out equitably: mornings until noon the baby was Fernandito, dressed in baby blue with starched bows near the curve of its face and buttons along the narrower contour; and afternoons María was dressed to the hilt with her fancy dresses trimmed with pink lace which made her look like candied fruit.

Fernando María stayed healthy and hard and in time became a beautiful child whom all the neighbors fondled. The child was passed from hand to hand, from house to house. Marina always advised, "Be careful you don't let him fall for he'd break." And the creature was spoiled in one arm after the other between the fleshy bosoms of the most affectionate matrons.

"You must give me money for yarn," was the grandmother's refrain. "Red wool, green wool, sky blue wool for my adored grandchild. Knit one, pearl one, drop one, two, three—" was heard at all hours from the windows of the house, and the grandmother showed all her friends the tiny clothes she knitted with her own hands, the fancy knitting she invented for her heavenly grandson.

The child was kept blooming and healthy, with its cheeks well painted, but its parents were losing, little by little, enthusiasm for their child. The only one who grew more and more affectionate was the grandmother. "I must hurry," she sighed. "Drop one, two, three. Knit one. Pearl one." Marina hardly understood the excessive desire with which the grandmother constantly knitted and filled drawers with absurd little clothes—"because the child wears out very little, mother. Why so many clothes?"

"I know what I'm doing," the grandmother answered without raising her eyes from her knitting. "I certainly do."

Nor was there any more shortage of gossip and mean thoughts than affection among the neighbors who claimed that the child would be a dull white egg all its life. Others spread the word that it wouldn't be long before the parents found, the day they least suspected it, an enormous ugly bird in Fernando María's cradle. The boldest passed around that it

would be a basilisk and that the best thing would be to get rid of it. These rumors, inevitably, reached the parents' ears and they became infuriated. As for the grandmother, she paid no attention and laughed at the impertinences, maintaining that her grandchild was the best in the world and that it wouldn't be long before they would see him with their own eyes.

Some of these comments must have been made in the presence of Fernando María since in time, and about then, the creature began to change color slightly; not even its parents had noticed it until the grandmother, when undressing him, perceived some tiny blue and green spots, like small clustered moons, over the child's entire surface and called them to their attention. The doctor diagnosed measles, but the grandmother didn't believe him and, pretending to go out to buy wool, she returned that afternoon with a package hidden in her bag. In secret she opened it and began to read the book she had bought, *Mimicry*. So she confirmed what she feared, that her grandson Fernando María was terrified by the comments made about him and tried to go unnoticed by mimicking the color of the sheets or his own clothes. The grandmother told the parents what was happening so they would stop making comments in front of the child, especially about the basilisk, and stop rubbing him down with useless unguents. They paid little attention. Then the grandmother made up the crib with sheets of brightly colored flowers and after a few hours called the parents in and showed them Fernando María's surface covered with big flowers with colors exactly like those of the sheets.

Since they stopped mentioning the basilisk, Fernando María gradually left off camouflaging himself, but nonetheless trusted in his grandmother more than in anyone. She spent hours inventing songs, stories about eggs and children, while she knitted a kind of tunic with openings in the back. Gradually the parents gave up all care of Fernando María; they entertained him little, given their sometimes apathetic, sometimes ecstatic character, and stopped painting its face and girl's sex, in that way converting it into a simple white egg to which no one paid any attention. But the grandmother had already perceived slight movements, light rockings which passed unnoticed by the others and which were increasing and becoming turns completely around and over himself. Fernando María had passed to the end phase, so the grandmother thought, and that was a good symptom. So it began to move and shift itself about the room, and to hide under furniture to play tricks on his grandmother or simply to entertain himself investigating the topography of the house. At times he managed to drive the family to its wits' end when he disappeared and the grandmother couldn't find him. Everyone had to pitch in to search for Fernando María, looking under furniture, in closets, and behind curtains.

Every afternoon the grandmother went for a walk. She said she went to visit an old friend of hers who had been the town stationmaster. Marina thought it was a senile romance, but soon discarded the idea because the grandmother's only love was clearly for Fernando María.

One day a neighbor arrived carrying Fernando María in his arms, saying he had found him in his garden hidden under the jasmines. They surrounded the house with a picket fence, which they painted green, and the child could roll through the entire house and the garden with complete freedom, but always under the vigilant eye of the grandmother, who was careful that it did not slip from a great height or that the children did not throw stones to break it. The first few days some neighbors came to see how Fernando María rolled through the garden, but they were soon bored and paid no further attention, and the child was brought up freely under its grandmother's watchful attention.

The latter had long since learned from her friend the ex-stationmaster enough of the Morse code to be able to talk with her grandson, giving him a few little taps on the shell with one of her needles, with which she was constantly knitting, and awaiting the response by gluing her ear to her grandchild's surface. When he answered with similar taps from within, she smiled and tapped again with the tip of her needle. At times the dialogues were very long and the grandmother seemed quite uneasy, knitted more rapidly than usual, and readied all the little clothes, going over them and counting them each day.

One night when the women were alone in the house, in the dark corridor Marina surprised her mother, who was tiptoeing toward the room where the child was sleeping, with a hammer in her hand. She believed her mother had gone mad and ran to protect her son, locking herself in with him. From outside, the grandmother tried to persuade Marina to open the door and let her in. She said the moment had come and her presence was very necessary. Marina let her in on condition that she get rid of that hammer and explain what she intended to do. The grandmother agreed but was careful not to discard the hammer, which she hid under her clothes. She gave Marina a long explanation of what would happen that night, but the latter did not believe her; rather, she thought it was another of the grandmother's dementias, a craze much like knitting tunics with openings in the back or visiting that old friend to learn the Morse code. When her husband came home, she told him everything and assured him that there wasn't a thing to worry about, that the grandmother loved the child too much to do it any harm, that they were doubtless imaginings which would soon pass.

On the following morning Marina and her husband had to surrender before the evidence: first, when they saw the floor covered with scattered white shell and then a gentle sound of fluttering made them raise their eyes to the ceiling. Fernando María, with its fragile little body, still wet,

protected by one of the cute shirts knitted by the grandmother, was flapping awkwardly about the room. They could not avoid shedding tears of happiness; they made signs to the child to come down to them and called it by name:

"Fernando María."

But the child did not seem to hear them. His little blond head tilted, he gazed fixedly at his grandmother, telling her things with his eyes, and he seemed to obey a deeper, more urgent call. The grandmother smiled at him and her hands made signs to show him the open window. Then the three, crying, leaning on the windowsill, waved goodbye to their son, who, flapping with greater strength, rose and disappeared forever in the infinite.

Madrid
October 1980

translated from the Spanish by H.E. Francis

Daniel Moyano

Swallows

What finally brought me here? Practically nothing: a man on the wing, a paper woman, a D flat *re,* and a few other things. Perhaps a cock which crows too early. The more I turn it over, that's the only thing left. The rest the wind's blowing away there. The old man stacked bricks all day, swarmed all day around things he was piling up and which finally were a house, and one could look at that house, it was there with its doors and windows. Live people one can also see for a decent spell of time, or write if they're far away, somewhere they're breathing. That old swallow on the wing and the paper woman are more difficult, I can't see them, I have only words. Words too the wind carries off. Generally the wind carries away a heap of things. It can carry a word as well as a person. To the wind it's all the same, to the wind there's neither weight nor substance. Of course, words have some advantages: they almost don't exist. It's hard to hide a house or a living person so that the wind won't carry them off: they have too much volume. Words, though, can be hidden, they fit anywhere, and on some occasions they serve to reconstruct the house or the people who were lost, even the wind which carries them off.

Urgently, one must reconstruct the old man, above all because he did exist, had a real existence in that little room nine by nine where I myself lived with him for quite a while, beds against the wall, a wicker chair, a Primus stove on the floor (I believe there was no table), the guitar and, outside, the dirt patio with the mulberry tree, and the street door possessed by the rain, always wet and rotting, absurd to have a wooden door exposed to bad weather. In the other rooms there are men from Tucumán recently come to Cordoba, they all work for the railroad from six to two straight, they get up before we do. Those who don't have a heater boil the water for maté on the little brazier which burns outside, there are three or four black braziers with almost red flames in the middle of the patio when it isn't raining, and if it is raining the braziers are against the wall beside each door smudging the walls. It's a shame how these Tucumanos are ruining my house, the manager said when he came to collect the rents for the tiny rooms.

We, with the Primus, had no problems. I think it was the best kerosene heater in Argentina. Of course there were other makes. But like the Primus none, my father said, straining the kerosene through a woman's stocking before pouring it into the heater, in it lay the dregs, that's why our Primus was never stopped up. He had to take good care of the stockings, nylon stockings were expensive, and in the tiny room there was no woman to leave us old stockings to strain the kerosene.

The woman we did have was made of paper, she was on the musical score, on the D flat *re* which my father liked so much. The only feminine thing in the room was that old stocking which one day the wind brought flying. The Tucumanos had no women either. They had left them in Tucumán, they would send for their families when they earned a few pesos, that's what they said drinking wine on the patio weekends before becoming sad from the alcohol and beating each other up, arguing whether the railroads should belong to the English or to us. The Primus has its three legs soldered to gleaming brass. A little fuel alcohol heated the coil, and the legs chattered against the tile floor when my father pumped it, and at once the blue flame appeared in the Primus which began to hum, half-asleep my father washed his face in the basin, half-asleep I heard the sound of his sucks at the maté straw, he always drank it in one long suck, I don't know how he kept from burning himself with the almost boiling water, he would give me one—Get up because the Tucumanos already left, I mean it's after six—all this while half-asleep, and we went to work, I handed him the mortar, he laid the brick balancing himself on the scaffolding.

It was very real pumping up the Primus in the morning, but it was very hard for me to get used to him being my father. I had seen him over a good bit of time, but I was very young then. As if half-asleep, I'd seen him. And just when I'd almost forgotten him, a letter arrives: If you want to, come to me in the city, I have a pretty steady job now, I'm going to teach you music, you'll see how beautiful music is. My false parents I had in town were glad, they gave me money for the bus, about three hours to the city, and I get there with my little suitcase and knock on the door of the room and it happens he's not there, a Tucumano comes out, I don't know from what room, and tells me He'll be here soon, but anyway go look for him at Don Elias's tavern, it's on the next corner, and I go into the tavern where there's a crowd of types drinking, leaning against the counter, let's see which one can be my father. There are five or six who could be. Any one, I think. Besides they all look alike. There's a smell of lime and putty in the tavern. There's one who looks at me hard, I can't take his gaze, I try to reconstruct something of him that stayed with me, but nothing. There must be someone who has a face that looks like mine, only old now, with lots of wrinkles and white hair, that's what I'm thinking when the bartender makes a sign to me I don't understand and since I don't understand he says Get lost, kid, the laws

are very strict, you can't stay here. Then one of the Tucumanos who sees me standing beside my father's door and it's already night and it's turning pretty cold says Come on, kid, if you want to have some soup with us, and I say Sure. There are three Tucumanos in the room (in the others are more), they have a big mirror and at least two parrots. They're not in cages, they perch on some wire supports. I've seen these faces and these parrots in trains which come down from Bolivia and pass through my town, they're people who go looking for work in Córdoba or Buenos Aires, the parrots are for their good luck. They're very talkative, say the Tucumanos, pointing their spoons at the creatures. Everyone who has a parrot says this, but it's a lie. I've seen only one parrot in my life which says more than two or three words, and always the same ones, the potato for the parrot or something like that. The Tucumanos talk about their province, I eat my soup without understanding a thing, I stare at the blackened pot in the middle of the table, the parrots' eyes, which are not birds' eyes, and the brazier outside where the water for maté is hissing. Then the Tucumanos drink maté, playing truco, and suddenly one of them says now that you've come your father's not going to drink anymore, you're going to make him very happy, for some time he's been wanting to send for you but he couldn't find steady work. And at that moment the sound of the always swollen street door, the door which never fits the frame, and my father, who arrives and sticks his head into the Tucumano's room, his eyes sparkling; it's going to be hard for me to get used to.

No, I never saw an alhelí. It's the first time I've heard the word. Or maybe I've seen the flower without knowing it was an alhelí. So you've never seen an alhelí? my father says, laughing. Never—I swear it—never. Look, there are gillyflowers everywhere. I've seen them on fences. Every garden has them, alhelíes. No, never. Well, perhaps there in town there are none, but it's a flower which grows everywhere. How could you help knowing an alhelí, I've seen them in the north and in the south, I know this country like the palm of my hand, and it's true what the tango says, the humility of the alhelí. But haven't you at least heard the word? Maybe I know the flower without the name, sure.

Hard to get used to my father, to his forever new things, to music learned note by note, you have to play the scales moving a measured hand. He doesn't look anything like what I imagined. Besides, I'd never imagined a thing about him. I knew he was somewhere here, that's all. And always talking about things that don't concern me or that I've never seen. I've hardly learned the notes, and already he comes bringing the score to "Flor de alhelí," study it carefully, you'll soon see what a beautiful tango it is. The notes, the guitar and my father, all are so new to me, all so alhelí. I saw you come into the tavern that day, but I didn't take heart, the last time I saw you you pissed the bed and now you're a man,

and besides that day I was half-lit, that's why I held back, I waited till the dizziness went, and don't be so formal with me, don't be an idiot. I expected something else, to tell the truth, that's why reconstruction is so difficult, brick after brick, note after note to see the "Flor de alhelí" girl who's going through the meadow of the tango among little morning flowers with the humility of the alhelí *I saw you go by* say the words on the way from church with tulle covering your hair and with a prayerbook, spring in the tango, in the notes, but in the little room a terrible cold in the middle of August, the old man on the scaffolding and me in the little room Be sure you practice your scale, careful with the arpeggio, they're the church bells of the place where she goes tripping through the field with tulle covering her hair, she must be wearing stockings because the morning air is pretty cool, stockings to catch the dregs from the kerosene so as not to clog the Primus, the feet of the stove chatter against the tile, my father whistling gives me the first maté, stay home today, learn the tango well, this weekend you'll be able to play it, you don't know how that thrills me, he keeps whistling trowel in hand on the scaffolding, me in the little room with the notes, from the notes she comes rising, the words of the tango don't say what the girl's name is but she keeps coming, I'm thrilled with her who runs with her tulle covering her hair, Flor de alhelí I said to you in a confident tone and soon afterwards for the two of us love was born, the bells re re *re* then began to ring madly, Flor de alhelí, now you'll never again go out of my life. My father's eyes shone as if they were sparkling from wine that weekend when I played the tango without a mistake, Say, those re re *res* are a wonder, he says, and we're both thinking of the woman we don't have.

Sure, she was a paper woman, and everything happened in a very very small town and as pretty as you according to the phony bourgeois tango heard afterward on the radio of the neighbors opposite. But in my town there were neither alhelíes nor meadows, but pure hills and thorn, plenty of weeds piquillén and chanar and tala, how can alhelíes grow in the weeds? She goes timidly with her little book through the meadow in the little town, it must be a town on the damp pampa, useless to look for her around here, and besides people from Buenos Aires write the tangos, all the fields and all the women are theirs, and my father and I dreaming of her, how's love going to be born for the two of us and especially so near the men from Tucumán who beat each other up amid a screaming of parrots.

And how can he be my father that old man who pumps up the Primus, who each day comes home tighter, we leave work at six in the afternoon and when we're close to our neighborhood he says you go on, go practice the tango, I'll stick around here, if you need me I'm (and he hesitates) next door to Elías's, beside Elías's tavern there's an empty lot, my father goes to drink with the Tucumanos, he gets home late and mumbles softly

not to wake me, the next day he gets up whistling, If you want, stay home today, it's cold, say, how beautiful those re be*mol*es sound, forgive me, son, I can't stop drinking, one of these days I'll clear out.

Then there's almost nothing. Months. Time. The wind has begun to blow some things away. She always runs through the meadow but never looks at us, besides she has her face slightly hidden under the notes, it's sketched on the staff. We don't know her name or what town she's from. My father was too certain for me to get used to him, and she too much alhelí, too much meadow, too much leaping, looking for a normal guy to make her nest with and stay in the town forever. And to top it off me always making mistakes, at times I missed the re be*mol*, and I mistook the day too, Pa, I think it's six o'clock, the cock crowed, and he waking up laughs and says how can it be six? don't you see the Tucumanos still haven't stirred? It must be a crazy cock that's crowing too early. And he was right, in a while the last trolley on Bulnes Street went by, it was one o'clock. And nothing else, time and Tucumanos and railroads and the girls who never came to the town church, and just when I'm getting used to my father, when I look into his face cut into by the lime and see that my face, as it also begins to be lined, resembles his, him who tells me something I'd never heard, one of those words like alhelí, so strange to me. He says this to me: swallow laborer. I never saw a *swallow* laborer. What? You never saw a laborer on the wing? No, cross my heart. In summer, on the train? No, never. It's the first time I've ever heard the word. Almost all trains carry swallow laborers. Maybe you've seen them without knowing the word. Maybe I have seen them. Look, in summer, at harvest time, the roofs of freight trains are covered with swallows. Of course you've seen them.

I'm leaving you the guitar but I'm taking the Primus. You can get one anytime. Say, don't be thrown off by the cocks crowing. There's always some jerk cock who crows too early. And learn that tango well. It's fantastic! Look, the train whistle's blowing. But his father doesn't board yet, he waits till the train begins to move, if he didn't they'd make him get off. He climbs the last car, which is moving now, he drags that great big leather bag which was under the bed and I never saw. My field bag he says from up there, it's a long thing like a coffin but made of leather. On the train roof there are more swallows, each with his leather bag. And there goes my father on the freight train to pick the harvest on the damp pampas, maybe the train will go through the little town of the musical score and he'll meet the girl. My father is lost in the other swallows, now any one of them could be my father beside Elías's, but it seems to me he's the one who raises his hand losing himself in the meadow of the musical score, he really knows the palm of his hand very well.

Finally my father comes to be the same as the girl. Finally the two come to be the same thing; although my father, no doubt about it, had a real existence and she didn't, both seem made of paper. And then almost

nothing is left, only time, the wind has blown the Tucumanos away, the potato for the parrot. There's only the re be*mol* (accidental alteration), a D from the fourth line touching the bells of the town church, finally the re re *re* is the only thing I have left. My father lived without a woman, I'm far away without a woman. He took the Primus and here there's no Primus, probably there never was. And now there's no Primus there either, they're gone out of style, and here there are many things to see while one is forgetting. Madrid is a big city, ouf, how rotten living is, as the manager said when I told him I was leaving the room and going away, and he hung out the little sign which said room for rent, he hung it on that forever swollen door which never fit in the frame. I don't know why he said that to *me*. What did that stupid cock crowing too early have to say to *me*?

translated from the Spanish by H.E. Francis

Miguel Hernandez

SONG

Our house is a dovecot
and the bed, one of jasmine.
The doors are both open,
and in back is the whole world.
Our son is your heart,
mother that has been exalted.
Within your habitation
everything flowered.
Our son made you a garden,
and you made of our son,
my wife, the habitation of jasmine,
the dovecot of the rose.
All around your skin
I tie and untie mine.
A midday of honey
you exude: a midday.
Who has entered this house
and left it deserted?
In order to be remembered I
must be someone who is already dead.
Come the roundest light
and the whitest almond trees!
Life and light deepen themselves
between deaths and ravines.

Lucky is your future husband,
like those horizons
of pure porphyry and marble,
where the mountains breathe.
Our kindled house burns
from lovely kisses and shadows.
You cannot pass through life
deeper, more movingly.
Overflowingly deaf,
the milk illumines your bones.
And the house overflows itself
with you, our son and the kisses.
You, your abundant womb,
our son and the dovecot.
Wife, over your husband
dream the steps of the sea.

translated from the Spanish by Gerry Tiffany

WITH A TELESCOPE ROD ON COWICHE CREEK

Here my assurance drops away. I lose
all direction. Gray Lady
onto moving waters. My thoughts
stir like ruffed grouse
in the clearing across the creek.

Suddenly, as at a signal, the birds
pass silently back into pine trees.

TORTURE

for Stephen Dobyns

You are falling in love again. This time
it is a South American general's daughter.
You want to be stretched on the rack again.
You want to hear awful things said to you
and to admit these things are true.
You want to have unspeakable acts
committed against your person, things
nice people don't talk about in classrooms.
You want to tell everything you know
on Simon Bolivar, on Jorge Luis Borges,
on yourself most of all.
You want to implicate everyone in this!
Even when it's four o'clock in the morning
and the lights are burning still—
those lights that have been burning night and day
in your eyes and brain for two weeks—
and you are dying for a smoke and a lemonade,
but she won't turn off the lights that woman
with the green eyes and little ways about her,
even then you want to be her gaucho.
Dance with me, you imagine hearing her say
as you reach for the empty beaker of water.
Dance with me, she says again and no mistake.
She picks this minute to ask you, hombre,
to get up and dance with her in the nude.
No, you don't have the strength of a fallen leaf,
not the strength of a little reed basket
battered by waves on Lake Titicaca.
But you bound out of bed
just the same, amigo, you dance
across wide open spaces.

CHEERS

Vodka chased with coffee. Each morning
I hang the sign on the door:
OUT TO LUNCH
but no one pays attention; my friends
look at the sign and
sometimes leave little notes,
or else they call — *Come out and play,*
Ray-mond.

Once my son, that bastard,
slipped in and left me a colored egg
and a walking stick.
I think he drank some of my vodka.
And last week my wife dropped by
with a can of beef soup
and a carton of tears.
She drank some of my vodka, too, I think,
then left hurriedly in a strange car
with a man I'd never seen before.
They don't understand; I'm fine,
just fine where I am, for any day now
I shall be, I shall be, I shall be. . .

I intend to take all the time in this world,
consider everything, even miracles,
yet remain on guard, ever
more careful, more watchful,
against those who would sin against me,
against those who would steal vodka,
against those who would do me harm.

Phil Hall

GOODBYE TO A STATUE

Problem is I also admired my father

although in his wallet
he had a picture of a naked woman
bent over
grinning back between her legs
at a camera.

Thanks.

I know instinctively when to look
sideways at manikins.

There is only one moment, one vector
attached to it, rod & cone, in which
to see the clay breast—

and I know it.

The chalk nipple could be offered to me
like the blind eye of a horse;

I would be as impressed
as a boy.

I made women out of sleeping kittens
dogs, trees, flies

a can of Drano and a warm cloth

the ends of doors, friends sleeping
who slept over

a machine for peeling potatoes.

I am afraid
of what I could do
as a grown man
without love.

Problem is: jamming at dryness
with eyes shut is news; it sells
paper.

Women in wallets
are the lives of the party.

I was pulled from the woman
in my father's wallet

his last five

that he spent in my mother

who nearly died—when she did
it was like saying "goodbye
to a statue"

as Hemingway or my father said.

A wonder I care about anything.

Amazing how you trust me now
how you sleep hot on me each night
like a plaster.

Alden Nowlan

Morning Flight to Red Deer

On the bus to the Calgary airport, he sat across the aisle from a woman who had no matches. He liked her because she smiled with him at the country-western song on the driver's portable radio, "Please, God, don't let my divorce be granted," wailed, hollered, communicated by Miss Kitty Wells of the Grand Ole Opry with such absolute conviction that, for the moment, he loved everybody who did not know that it was ridiculous. There were permanent frown lines in the forehead of the woman who had no matches, which meant that she probably came from the working-class, as he had. The middle-classes are not necessarily happier, but smiling is habitual with them, a polite gesture. So, by the age of thirty, when the lines are there even when the expression is not, it is usually easy to distinguish the members of one class from the other, or so he believed.

"Could I have a light, please?" she said, holding up her cigarette as people do when they ask for a light, as if to bear witness that they are not pyromaniacs. Her cigarette lit, they exchanged the meaningless phrases that sometimes, not often, open the way for a genuine conversation. "It looks like a good day for flying," he said. And she said that 7 a.m. was one hell of an hour at which to schedule a flight.

He learned, somewhat to his disappointment, that she had not been smiling with him, after all, but at something which he had not noticed and which would not have amused him. "That nutty driver scared that old dude with the dog almost to death." When they boarded the plane for Red Deer, he found that they had been assigned neighbouring seats. "Do you live in Red Deer?" he asked, unable to think of anything else.

"God, no, I'm from Calgary." It was obvious that she too thought his question stupid. Well, most Calgarians were extraordinarily self-conscious about being city-dwellers, doubtless because so many of them had escaped there from a countryside where billboards warned motorists that The Steps of the Fornicator Lead Down to Hell. During his visit there, he had come to suspect that nothing would make them prouder than more traffic jams, more muggings, more pollution—anything that reminded them that, by God, they had got out of Buffalo Wallow.

They were in flight. Her hair smelled of lime-scented shampoo. "Could I borrow your lighter again, please?" She was a deliberate chain smoker, he had observed, not the nervous kind. This time when he reached into his jacket pocket he found a book of Travel Lodge matches. "M'lady," he said, with a little bow, "may I present you with your very own matches?"

"Thanks." He was startled by the anger in her voice and the finality with which she turned away from him. Should he apologize for having thought that she might come from a hick town? When he brushed against her, while reaching for a magazine—air travel causes strangers to touch in a way that our ancestors would have deemed unseemly in a couple engaged to be married—he felt little electric shocks of hostility. Suddenly, he realized that it was not Red Deer; it was the matches.

"Look," he would have liked to say to her. "I wasn't being sarcastic. I don't begrudge you the use of my lighter, for God's sake. I was merely trying to be mildly amusing." But he was not the kind of person who could offer such explanations and have them accepted.

"Excuse me," she said. He stood up as best he could to let her pass. Her buttocks pressed hard against his groin. There was a mole on the back of her neck. Her earlobes had been pierced. She did not come back.

"Would you care for tea or coffee, sir?" The stewardess was smiling, of course, but in her eyes, as in the eyes of many stewardesses, there was the glint of cruelty that comes from belonging to a sorority which works in an environment that throws the sense of reality slightly askew. It was funny how the airlines had dressed their stewardesses in shorter and shorter dresses and then, just before their panties would have become visible, had decided that the dresses were in fact jackets, to be worn with slacks. He had three ways of entertaining himself on planes, aside from reading or drinking. One of them was creating erotic fantasies.

Was it possible that the woman without matches felt that he had rejected her as a woman? Shutting his eyes, he willed time to run backwards, willed the woman back into the seat beside him, willed her to resemble Lauren Bacall.

It didn't work. It was too early in the day. And he wasn't in the right mood to make up limericks, which was another way he had of passing the time on planes and in dentists' waiting rooms. He raised the arm-rest on the vacant seat beside him, drank his coffee and began to play his third form of mental solitaire, which was eavesdropping.

It was much more preferable to conversing with strangers. He could turn the dial in his head toward the seats to his right, the seats ahead, or the seats behind him. He could tune in and tune out whenever he liked. It was like using a scanner radio, he supposed, except that no desk sergeant or cab despatcher was ever likely to sound as passionate as the man in front of him now, who was saying:

"Wait a minute. . . . What it happened to be. . . . Can I finish? When

Dad passed away—. I more than willingly—. He did a good job of administering things—very little direct control. The only kind of feedback—. The prime agitator, for want of a better word, was Phyllis. At times I questioned Phyll's loyalty—. I was still suffering from some kind of kid brother complex. For example—."

Had there been a quarrel over a will? As often happened, two people were talking, but only one voice was distinguishable. The man who had once suffered from a kid brother complex was playing a trumpet solo; his companion was merely his accompanist.

The trumpet kept shifting back and forth between whine and bluster. Anyone who said, "Can I finish?" was a boor as well as a bore. Perhaps something less depressing was happening elsewhere. He gave his empty coffee cup and plastic spoon to the stewardess and tuned in the seats behind him.

This time it was a duet. "How long has he been with us?" one voice said. It was a very confident, masculine voice. A boardroom voice. This was the kind of passenger who carried an attachè case and, normally, spent the flight leafing through sheets of xeroxed paper.

"I have his file with me," another voice said. This one was much like the other, but younger and a shade less confident. Yes, there was the click of an attachè case being opened, the rustle of papers being gone through. "Here it is. Yes I thought so. He came to us straight out of law school. Fifteen years ago."

"Fifteen years—and never in a bigger town than Red Deer?"

"Right."

"I would have thought he'd have got the message long ago."

"I'm sure he would have if he had ever asked for something better and been turned down. The man's no fool. The thing is, he's never applied for a promotion—at least not in my time."

"No ambition."

"He's a funny guy. I wouldn't call him lazy exactly. But he never *does* anything. Doesn't golf, doesn't play tennis, doesn't even jog as far as I know. Won't get involved in the community—"

"I know the type. Married?"

"Very much so. That's a big part of the problem."

"Ah. What is it? Her tongue, her bladder, her belly or her crotch?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"Does she talk too much, drink too much, eat too much, or screw too much?"

"Oh!" followed by laughter that said the younger man would be careful, when they came to a door, to see that the older man passed through first. "Nothing like that. It's just that she—. Well, let me put it this way, she doesn't chew gum but she always looks as if she's about to pop a stick in her mouth."

"I think I get the picture."

"Don't get me wrong. It's not just the wife. And it's not just his lack of drive—."

"Balls."

"Pardon?"

"You call it drive, I call it balls."

"Right. Well, it's not just his lack of balls. There's a helluva lot more to it than that. There's what happened at the office party, for instance—"

"SIT DOWN, MICHAEL!" This was the woman across the aisle, knocking all other stations off the air. The child whom she had rebuked burst into tears. "I'm sorry, darling." The woman reached out to comfort the child; the child pulled away, his sobs of hurt changing to sobs of anger. "I said, I was sorry, darling." The child sobbed louder. "Here. See what Mummy's got for you." She had taken candy from her purse. The child continued to cry, but now his sobs were purely physical; his mind was on another matter: how to satisfy greed without relinquishing anger. After a moment of indecision, he snatched the candy and stuffed it into his mouth.

"I had to do a lot of explaining after that one," the younger executive was saying.

"I'll just bet you did. My God!" Then a pause, after which the older executive said, "My God!" again.

They both laughed. The older man's amusement sounded genuine. "Of course you could get your own ass burnt on this one," he said.

"I don't see—".

"If you really don't see, then you deserve to get your ass burnt. Good God, man, you've been working with the guy for—how long?"

"Three years," the younger man admitted, miserably.

"Three years," the older man repeated mercilessly. "That means that when our boy gets the chop, the boys in Winnipeg will be asking a helluva lot of questions—and some of them will be about you."

"I suppose you're right."

"You know damn well I'm right. It's not going to look too damn good for me, either. Jesus, I'm supposed to be on top of these things." A pause. "It would solve a lot of problems if he'd do it himself. Do you think there's any chance of that?"

"If you had asked me that a year ago, I wouldn't have had to think about it for an instant. He'd have taken the hint then. Now, I don't know."

"It's that bad?"

"It's that bad."

"Does he know I'm coming?"

"No."

"Well, he'll know that something's up as soon as he sees me." Another pause. "Maybe I ought to surprise him."

"That just might work." The younger man sounded almost desperately relieved.

"It's worth a try," the older man said.

"The best time would be at lunch," said the younger man. "After he's got a couple of martinis into him."

"Enough rope," said the older man.

"Enough rope," the younger man repeated. It was as if they were toasting each other.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we are beginning our descent," said the loudspeaker.

"Poor bastard," thought the eavesdropper, whom we will henceforth call Smith, which is as good a name as any.

As they disembarked—"deplaned," the stewardess would have said—Smith tried not to look at the two executives. He knew perfectly well that he was being absurd; but he couldn't help thinking that if their eyes met his and they saw the dislike in his face, they would know immediately that he had been spying on them.

It was impossible to shut them out completely, of course; as they brushed past him on the tarmac—such men were always in a hurry—he saw that one wore eye-glasses, the other a moustache.

"Phyll, darling! You didn't have to meet me at this outrageous hour; I could have taken a cab." This from the man who had once suffered from a kid brother complex to a woman with badly dyed hair.

"My God," said the younger executive, the one with the moustache.

"What is it?" said the one in eye-glasses. Like Smith, they were waiting at the baggage carousel.

"It's the wife. Heading toward the exit. The woman with the cigarette. I thought that face was familiar, but I couldn't place it until now."

It was the woman whom Smith had offended with his offer of matches, the woman who had refused to admit that she lived in Red Deer.

"You don't think—."

"Not a chance. Just after we took off, she went to the back of the plane."

"Funny you didn't recognize her then."

"I've only seen her a couple of times before. And she looks like every waitress in every greasy spoon in the country."

"Yes, I see what you mean."

Smith snatched up his suitcase and hurried after her.

She had boarded the bus. Good. The executives were certain to hire a cab. Smith, too, boarded the bus. Fate had provided an empty seat beside her. He sat down in it. "Hello," he said.

"Hi."

"Look, I wasn't being sarcastic. About the matches, I mean."

"What?"

"Back there on the plane, I wasn't being sarcastic when I offered you the matches. You thought I was, but I wasn't."

"I don't know what in hell you're talking about."

"It's not important. The important thing is—" He knew by now that he was making an absolute fool of himself; the woman eyed him with that shrivelling female contempt which created the legends of Circe and Medusa; but it was too late for him to stop, "—the important thing is that your husband's boss is out to get him. I overheard them talking about it on the plane—."

"Get lost, you creep."

"But—."

"Driver!"

"This guy bothering you, lady?"

"He's some kind of nut. Just make him go away."

"You heard the lady, Mac. Beat it."

Smith stood up unsteadily, half-blinded by the stares of the other passengers. When he took his suitcase from the overhead rack, it seemed twice as heavy as before. He got off the bus, colliding with a passenger who was getting on—"Hey! Watch what you're doing, Buddy."—and looked around him for a cab that would take him to the merciful sanctuary of an hotel.

"That's what would have happened," he told himself as he unpacked his shirts and underwear. "That, or something very much like it." But perhaps he could have telephoned to the intended victim. "You don't know me. But listen carefully. They're out to get you."

"Who is this?"

"That doesn't matter. Let's just say I'm a friend. I flew up from Calgary on the same plane as—."

"Who is this?"

"Please stop asking, 'Who is this?' and listen to me. I flew up from Calgary on the same plane as—"

CLICK!

That was even sillier than thinking he ought to tell the woman on the bus. How could he telephone the poor sod when he didn't know his name, or even the name of the company he worked for?

There was nothing at all he could have done. Anyway, the fellow probably deserved to be fired; and if he didn't deserve it, it could turn out to be the best thing that had ever happened to him.

Smith telephoned room service and ordered coffee and a sandwich. He tried to force the conversation which he had overheard on the plane out of his mind, tried even harder to stop himself from thinking, "What if somewhere out there, they're making plans to get me?"

Bertolt Brecht
Ernst Ottwald

Kuhle Wampe
(or Who Owns the World?)

FADE IN

TITLE: "ONE FEWER OUT OF WORK"

FADE OUT

A SERIES OF SHOTS...

...as agitated MUSIC PLAYS, showing LOW ANGLES on buildings, factories, apartment houses and streets. A locomotive pulls into an industrial station. More LOW ANGLE shots of housing complexes and blocks of rental flats. All of this establishes Berlin in 1931.

CUT TO:

A MONTAGE OF NEWSPAPER HEADLINES

Seventeen headlines, one after the other, outline the economic depression in Germany. Millions are out of work and the ranks of the unemployed grow daily.

DISSOLVE TO:

A CLOSE ANGLE ON A LISTING OF AVAILABLE JOBS

The listing is posted on a public bulletin board in Berlin.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: BERLIN CITY STREET – DAY

PEDESTRIANS and BICYCLE RIDERS move along the street and on a sidewalk parapet overlooking the industrial section of the city.

A horse-drawn cart passes by, and more and more riders arrive, park their bikes and begin to congregate on the street and around the public bulletin posting column. YOUNG BÖNIKE arrives and stands near his parked bike. These are the jobless, and they assemble awaiting the arrival of a new job list.

A BIKER rides up, carrying an armload of papers. He dismounts and begins distributing the new job list to the crowd of unemployed people. They cluster around him, reaching, straining to get hold of a copy of the jobs list, and once having done so, step off to themselves to quickly scan it.

YOUNG BÖNIKE gets his copy of the list and hurriedly but carefully reads through it. THE BIKER gives out the last few papers, then gestures to those who have not received a copy that there are no more.

The crowd disperses, YOUNG BÖNIKE finishes reading the listings, puts away the paper, gets on his bicycle and rides off. Others mount their bicycles and ride off in the same direction after him.

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF ANGLES ON THE BICYCLE RIDERS – MOVING

The Bicycle Riders ride in packs, their bike wheels spinning, wobbling, pedals pumping relentlessly as they are off in search of work.

CUT TO:

EXT: A FACTORY FRONT – DAY

The Bicycle Riders, including Young Bönike, arrive in front of the factory just as A MAN hangs out a sign in the front window.

INSERT OF SIGN

Reads: "NOT HIRING WORKERS."

The Bicycle Riders mount up and ride away.

ANOTHER SERIES OF ANGLES – MOVING

The Bicycle Riders continue on as before, searching for work.

CUT TO:

EXT: AN ENCLOSED COURTYARD OUTSIDE A FACTORY ENTRANCE—DAY

A group of Bicycle Riders, including Young Bönike, arrives and rides out of sight through the gate behind the courtyard walls. They reappear, having been turned away, a moment later walking their bikes. Young Bönike crumples up the job list he has been carrying and pitches it away in disgust. They mount their bicycles and ride off again. The agitated MUSIC STOPS.

CUT TO:

EXT: STREET IN FRONT OF THE BÖNIKES' APARTMENT—DAY

Young Bönike rides up in front of the apartment building, dismounts and walks his bike through the open front door.

MUSIC comes from somewhere in the building. In the hallway, Young Bönike, still walking his bike, passes TWO STREET MUSICIANS, one of whom is playing a HARMONIUM and the other a SAW.

CUT TO:

INT: THE BÖNIKES' APARTMENT—DAY

FATHER BÖNIKE lies on the lace-trimmed livingroom sofa, reading a newspaper. A particular item catches his interest, and he sits up, putting the newspaper down on the dining table. From his vest pocket he takes a stubby pencil with which he marks a note on the newspaper.

FATHER BÖNIKE
The boy won't be drawing any more unemployment according to this.

This is directed to MOTHER BÖNIKE, who is setting the table for dinner. Receiving no answer from her, Father Bönike puts his pencil back into his vest pocket and returns to reading his newspaper.

FATHER BÖNIKE
You just don't care about anything, do you.

Young Bönike enters the apartment, hangs his bicycle up on a hook on the wall, takes off his hat and goes into the livingroom. He sits at the table next to Father Bönike, looks at his father briefly, then turns his head and stares vacantly down at the table.

Mother Bönike sets a large casserole dish down on the table and begins dishing out its contents for Father and Young Bönike. ANNI enters the apartment through a door out in the kitchen.

ANNI
Hi.

She removes her cap and puts it down, takes a comb from her handbag and goes to the dinner table.

ANNI
The welfare agency is going to pay Schulz's back rent.

Mother Bönike sets dishes out for herself and Anni.

MOTHER BÖNIKE
They won't give us any help.

She puts the serving bowl aside and sits down at the table. Anni comes and sits down next to her and they eat.

FATHER BÖNIKE
You can never tell. The welfare people do what they want to.

MOTHER BÖNIKE
There is always work for a really good worker.
(then, to Young Bönike)
But when a person doesn't even bother trying to find work, there's no need wondering why things have gotten so bad.

CUT TO:

ANGLE ON BICYCLE RIDERS – MOVING

Pedalling their bicycles, as before, in search of work.

CUT TO:

INT: THE BÖNIKES' APARTMENT – AS BEFORE

FATHER BÖNIKE
And this boy doesn't even bother to greet our landlord.

ANNI
Greeting him doesn't help much when you're six months behind on rent.

FATHER BÖNIKE
(angrily)
He could still greet him! A person can't afford to be unemployed and rude both.

MOTHER BÖNIKE
(sternly to Young Bönike)
So you can't find work anywhere?

FATHER BÖNIKE
Of course not! Not by being rude!

ANNI
Or by being polite, either. There are no jobs!

CUT TO:

ANGLE ON BICYCLE RIDERS—MOVING

As before, out looking for jobs.

CUT TO:

INT: THE BÖNIKES' APARTMENT—AS BEFORE

Father Bönike gestures at Anni with his spoon as he speaks:

FATHER BÖNIKE
The boy may be poor and he may be unlucky. But no one could possibly be that unlucky for seven months running now!

ANNI
Are you trying to say that he's just good-for-nothing?

FATHER BÖNIKE
Yes, that's what I'm trying to say!

ANNI
And you? How are you getting on? I suppose you've got a time card right there in plain sight in your pocket? You're out of work, too!

FATHER BÖNIKE
Just because you spend your whole day out stamping your time card doesn't mean you can come home here and act snooty!

He stands up angrily and leaves the table. Mother Bönike stands and calls after him:

MOTHER BÖNIKE
For goodness' sakes, quiet down! What will the neighbors think!

Father Bönike goes to the kitchen door, slips on his jacket and cap and looks back at his family, scornfully. Young Bönike sits demoralized, a blank look on his face. Mother Bönike scrapes the last spoonfuls of food from the bottom of the serving dish.

MOTHER BÖNIKE
Every day, the same squabble.

Father Bönike leaves through the kitchen door and walks down the staircase from the apartment. Anni sits looking at Young Bönike, still with his blank stare. Mother Bönike cleans the dishes off the table, removes the table cloth, puts the centerpiece in place and goes to the kitchen.

Anni goes to a mirror hanging on the wall and applies her lipstick. Outside, someone WHISTLES sharply, and she turns around, goes to an open window and leans out.

ANNI
I'm coming!

She goes back to the mirror, primps some more and puts her lipstick back into her handbag, which she slips under her arm as she turns to leave.

CUT TO:

INSERT OF A WALL PLAQUE IN THE KITCHEN

It reads: "Lament not the morning that toil and labor brings. It is so nice to care for people that one loves."

CUT TO:

ANGLE FAVORING YOUNG BÖNIKE

He looks after Anni as she goes out and sits silently for several seconds. Then, he gets up slowly and deliberately, walks to the window and swings back wide open the two hinged sashes.

As he holds the sashes open, his attention focuses on the wristwatch on his left wrist. He lowers his arm, carefully unbuckles his watch and places it gently on a dresser top. He turns back to the window, moves a flowerpot to one side and climbs up onto the window sill.

CUT TO:

HIGH ANGLE ON MOTHER BÖNIKE

She walks up the staircase outside the apartment, carrying a heavy handbag.

CUT TO:

A CLOSE ANGLE ON YOUNG BÖNIKE'S HAND...

...gripping the top post of the window frame. The hand lets go and disappears from the frame. There is a brief silence, and then from far below a short CRY.

CUT TO:

A CLOSE ANGLE ON THE FLOWERPOT IN THE WINDOW SILL

CUT TO:

A CLOSE ANGLE ON YOUNG BÖNIKE'S WRISTWATCH

It lies on the dresser, showing exactly six o'clock.

CUT TO:

ANGLE ON THE BICYCLE RIDERS

As before, out looking for work.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER ANGLE ON YOUNG BÖNIKE'S BICYCLE...

...hanging just inside the door on the hook on the wall.

CUT TO:

OVERHEAD ANGLE

A crowd gathers around Young Bönike's body, lying on the street below, covered by a tarpaulin.

CUT TO:

EXT: AT STREET LEVEL

Several WOMEN, CHILDREN, WORKERS and A POLICEMAN make up the crowd. Anni and her boyfriend FRITZ approach the crowd. Fritz glances

down at the covered body on the street and then at the Policeman. In the b.g. VOICES OF CHILDREN PLAYING can be heard.

FRITZ
(to the Policeman)
What's going on here?

WOMAN NEAR THE POLICEMAN
Jumped out of the window.

Fritz and Anni look at each other and then down at the covered body.

CUT TO:

LOW ANGLE ON TWO WOMEN

They are standing on a stairway landing in the apartment building. A THIRD WOMAN climbs the steps toward them.

FIRST WOMAN
And before he jumped, he took his wristwatch off and laid it on the table.

SECOND WOMAN
Naturally. The fall would have broken it.

CUT TO:

ANGLE ON THREE CHILDREN DOWN ON THE STREET

FIRST CHILD
Which window is it then?

THIRD CHILD
(pointing)
That one there!

SECOND CHILD
No, not that one. That one there!

All three of them stand looking up at the window.

CUT TO:

ANGLE ON WOMAN ON STAIRCASE LANDING

WOMEN
One fewer out of work.

There are FOUR OTHER WOMEN standing on the landing with her.

FIRST OTHER WOMAN
Such a young man.

SECOND OTHER WOMAN
And his father doesn't know yet.

CUT TO:

INT: A TAVERN—DAY

Father Bönike and A MAN stand at the bar drinking schnaps and smoking.

FATHER BÖNIKE
In America they already have seven million people out of work.

MAN
Aw, well. They used to drive to work in cars. Now they're demonstrating against unemployment.

FATHER BÖNIKE
But on foot!

The Man nods his agreement.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE STREET IN FRONT OF THE BÖNIKE'S APARTMENT—DAY

In the crowd standing around the body of Young Bönike are the Policeman and ANOTHER OFFICER.

OFFICER
What was the motive?

POLICEMAN
Unknown!

CUT TO:

ANGLE ON OLD WOMAN . . .

. . . standing on the staircase of an apartment building.

OLD WOMAN
Such a young man. He had the best years of his life ahead of him.

CUT TO:

EXT: STREET IN FRONT OF THE APARTMENT—
AS BEFORE

A police ambulance is parked on the street. An attendant closes and latches the double doors on the back of the vehicle, goes up front, gets in behind the wheel and drives away.

CUT TO:

TITLE: "THE BEST YEARS OF A YOUNG MAN'S LIFE"

FADE OUT

SOUND FILM: KUHLE WAMPE or WHO OWNS THE WORLD?

In the summer of 1931, by taking advantage of especially propitious circumstances (the dissolving of a film company, willingness of an unnamed individual to invest a modest sum of money together with his theatrical abilities in a film, etc.), we had the opportunity to produce a short film. With the impression left by the *Three Penny Opera* case fresh in our minds, we drew up a contract which, for the first time in the history of motion pictures we are told, made us legally both the producers and the authors of the film. Though this cost us our claim to the usual guaranteed fee payments, it secured for us almost unlimited control over our work.

Our small company consisted of two screenwriters, a director, a musical scorewriter, a production manager and, last but not least, an attorney. Understandably, organizing the company and planning the details put us to much more trouble than the artistic work itself, that is to say, we came more and more to regard the organizing as being a significant aspect of the artistic work. That was only possible because the nature of the work was as a whole political.

Yet, at the last moment before completion of all work in progress with nearly nineteen-twentieths of the film shot and considerable funds used up, our credit was withdrawn. A firm that had loaned us money and which had a monopoly on certain equipment that we needed explained to us that it no longer had any interest in the release of our film and was canceling funds which had been promised to make further work on it possible. They claimed that though the film might be highly lauded by the press, the press did not reflect the opinions of the paying public, and that the film could not possibly turn a profit, in as much as communism no longer posed any danger for Germany.

Other firms refused to extend credit because they feared censorship of

the film, not so much government censorship, though, as censorship by the theatre owners themselves. Indeed the former is just the mouthpiece of the latter, and the government censors generally don't act just as an impartial third party, but rather as executors of the wishes of the existing administration and economic system.

DESCRIPTION OF THE FILM

The sound film *Kuhle Wampe or Who Owns the World?* consists of four self-sufficient sequences which are separated by musical pieces which accompany montages of tenaments, factories and landscapes. The first sequence, based on a true event, shows the suicide of a young man out of work during the best years of his life. His troubles have accumulated layer by layer until, on top of all this, the final unbearable misery is laid: the young man's unemployment benefit is canceled. Before hurling himself out of a window, the aforementioned young man takes off his wrist watch and lays it aside so that it will not be broken. The beginning of this sequence in the film shows the search for work as work itself.

The second sequence shows the eviction of the family as the result of a court judgment (which refers to the unfortunate family's inability to keep up its rent as being "brought about through their own fault.")

The family moves out of the city to a tent colony called Kuhle Wampe and takes shelter in the tent of their daughter's boyfriend. (The film was for some time supposed to have been titled *Ante Portas*.) The daughter becomes pregnant, and because of the narrow-minded attitudes about relations prevalent with those in the colony, (a type of "possession" of land and property plus the acquisition of a little income create peculiar social forms) the young couple is pressured into an engagement. It is the daughter's decision, though, to break off the engagement.

In the third sequence, a workers' Sports Rally is shown. The rally is well attended and excellently organized. It's purpose is thoroughly political; the recreation and competition of the masses is merely a symbol for revolutionary activity. In this sequence, over 300 worker-athletes were involved. The young couple from the second sequence are shown among the athletes and the workers: the girl has, with the help of her girlfriends, raised the money for an abortion, and the couple have put aside all thoughts of marriage.

The fourth sequence shows the trip home from the rally in a railroad car in which takes place a discussion over a newspaper article which tells of the destruction of Brazilian coffee for the purpose of price-fixing.

CONCERNING THE POETRY

The "Song of the Homeless" was omitted because of apprehension over censorship, and "Roll Call" because of technical problems.

The "Solidarity Song" was sung by some 3000 worker-athletes. The "Sporting Song" was sung by a soloist during the motorcycle and boat races.

The poem "On Nature in the Spring," done in solo voice, accompanies and connects three walks taken by the young lovers. During production, this part of the film was screened for worker-athletes who objected to the nudity in it.

Brecht, Dudow, Höllering,
Kaspar, Ottwald, Scharfenberg

A SMALL CONTRIBUTION ON THE SUBJECT OF REALISM

Only seldom is it possible to test the actual effectiveness of artistic methods. Most often, one meets with, at the very best, agreement ("Yes, the way you have showed it is the way it is with us"), or that one has had an impact in some measure or another. What follows is a little test of a more fortunate sort.

With Slatan Dudow and Hanns Eisler, I produced a film called *Kuhle Wampe* which depicted the desperate condition of the unemployed in Berlin. It was a unified montage of relatively self-sufficient sequences. The first of these showed the suicide of a young man unable to find work. The censor took exception to this sequence, and the result was a meeting with the censor and the attorney for our firm.

The censor proved himself to be an intelligent man.

"No one denies you the right to portray suicide," he said. "Suicides happen. It is furthermore acceptable to show the suicide of a man out of work. This happens, too. I see no grounds for concealing any of that, gentlemen. I raise objection however to the manner in which you have depicted the suicide of your jobless man. It goes against the interest of the general public, which I am empowered to protect. I am sorry gentlemen that here I must give you an artistic reprimand."

Eisler, Dudow and I sat silently insulted.

"Indeed, you will be surprised that I fault your depiction in that it does not seem *human* enough. All you have shown us is a man whom we can safely say is a stereotype. Your jobless man is not a real individual, not a flesh and blood man, unique from all other men, with particular sorrows and particular joys and, in the final analysis, with a particular destiny. His characterization is totally superficial, and you will excuse me as artists for stating strongly that we are told too little about him. His actions are merely used to make a political statement, which compels me to protest the film being approved. Your film tends to represent suicide as typical, not merely as the measure of one abnormally disposed char-

acter, but rather as the fate of an entire social class! You contend that society drives young men to suicide in that it denies them the opportunity to earn a living. And you certainly don't go to the trouble at all to point out moreover what the unemployed might be advised to do in order to bring about change. No, gentlemen, you have not behaved as artists, not here. No one would have been able to prevent you from showing the shocking destiny of one single individual, but that was not what you were concerned with."

We sat perplexed with the unpleasant feeling of having been seen through. Eisler wiped dejectedly at his glasses, Dudow writhed as if in pain. I stood and, despite my aversion to speeches, I gave one.

I relied strictly upon falsehood. I brought up certain characteristics that we had given our jobless young man, for instance that before hurling himself out the window to his death, he removed and put aside his wristwatch. I stressed that it was this pure human trait alone which had inspired the entire scene, and that we had indeed shown other people out of work who had not committed suicide—4000 of them filmed at a huge workers' Sports Rally. I defended myself against the outrageous accusation that we had not proceeded as artists and hinted at the possibility of a press campaign against such a claim. I did not hesitate to assert that my artistic honor was at stake.

The censor showed no timidity about going into the particulars of the matter. Our attorneys were astonished to see that a proper and orderly debate on art was shaping up. The censor emphasized that we had given the suicide incident a decidedly demonstrative tone. He used the expression "a mechanical sort of thing." Dudow stood up and irritatedly demanded that we get the opinion of some psychiatrists. They would testify that actions of this type often bear a marked mechanical quality. The censor shook his head.

"That may be," he said stubbornly, "But you must after all concede that your suicide was hardly an impulsive action. The viewer doesn't at all want to stop it, as it were, which certainly would be the case with an artistic, warm-hearted human portrayal. Good god, the actor plays the scene as if he were demonstrating how to peel cucumbers!"

We had a rough time of it getting our film approved. As we left the meeting, we could not conceal our regard for this shrewd censor. He had penetrated far deeper into the essence of our artistic intentions than had our kindest critics. He had delivered a small seminar on realism. From the policeman's point of view.

Bertolt Brecht

SCREEN CREDITS

Screenplay ..... Bertolt Brecht and Ernst Ottwald
Music ..... Hanns Eisler
Director ..... Slatan Th. Dudow
Production Managers ..... George M. Höllering
and Robert Scharfenberg
Cameraman ..... Günther Krampf
Sound ..... Tobis Melofilm/System
Tobis-Klangfilm
Sound Engineer ..... Kroschke Michelis
Sound Cutter ..... Peter Meyrowitz
Scene Architecture ..... Robert Scharfenberg
and C.P. Haacker
Musical Director ..... Josef Schmid
Orchestration ..... Lewis Ruth
Leading Players ..... Herta Thiele ..... Anni
Martha Wolter ..... Gerda
Lilli Schönborn ... Mother Bönike
Ernst Busch ..... Fritz
Adolf Fischer ..... Kurt
Max Sablotzki .... Father Bönike
Alfred Schäfer ..... Man
with Mustache
Ballads Performed by ..... Helene Weigel and Ernst Busch
Distributed by ..... Praesens Film GmbH Berlin SW 48

translated from the German by E.J. Campfield

George Bowering

Four California Deaths

"Why is it," she asked, "that you never write about anything but death?"

I had been asking myself that question for, oh, it must have been three years. I chose to lean back on her enviable tilt-a-bed, and peer at her through hooded eyes as the smoke from my new cigarette snaked its way toward the blue ceiling.

"I mean, even when you are writing a story that seems to be all jokes or a nice moment between a father and his son, you have to finish it off with a completely, oh you know what I'm talking about."

"Gratuitous killing," I offered as lightly as I could manage, as free of arrogance.

"Gratuitous. Also stupid. I mean, really," she said. I loved the way she drank tea, out of a handle-less mug she had made herself, the fingers of both hands wrapped around it, her hair hanging down both sides of the cup as she bent forward to sip in the middle of a seemingly interrogative sentence. "Really, dont you think that's kind of juvenile, I mean, isnt that what teenage authors do, throw in some blood and some suicide or a little insanity to make it seem all so significant?"

"Give it emotional impact?" I added.

She did not take up my suggestion, but put down her cup and stood up, her hair falling in front of her bony shoulders. Then without speaking, she started to put on her clothes. She looked as wonderful putting on her clothes as she did taking them off. Not just death, I thought, but sex, too. Sex and death.

"Sex *and* death," I said.

"I have always wondered about that combination," she said while pulling her hair out from inside her turtle neck sweater. "I would have thought sex and life. Or maybe just life, for a change?"

I swung my legs out and sat on the side of the bed, and I felt just fine being naked in front of all her clothes. So much so that I wanted to stand up straight, and so I did.

"Life, if I may say so, is a mystery," I said. "People are not much interested in a mystery, because it cant be solved. Death, on the other hand, is a puzzle. If you give your readers a choice between a mystery and a puzzle, they will go for the puzzle every time. They might like to

call it a mystery, but they want to solve it, so of course it is a puzzle. But they wouldnt feel right buying and reading a murder puzzle. It's not alliterative enough, for one thing."

"Sheh! what a dummy," she said. "Put your clothes on."

"Why?"

"I'm hungry."

I sort of felt like having a shower, but I had had a shower before we went back to bed. She liked that, and I had read an article that explained that European women thought men were more sensitive to women if they had a shower beforehand instead of afterward. That made sense to me, and I did want to be thought of as sensitive. Still, after a little death you did feel like standing under the source of all life. The latter was something you learned when you were a youngster, when death was just something awful but justified in the Bible. Well, I didnt really think all that stuff.

"I am going to brush my teeth and get dressed," I said. "Would you like to read what I wrote this week?"

"Who dies?"

"Here, read it. It doesnt prove anything, but it might suggest something about people and their hangups about puzzles."

"Why cant you have a cigarette and turn over and go to sleep, like a normal man," she said, but she reached out for the pages I was offering. There was a smile on her large mouth, and no lip gloss.

"It's only thirteen and a half minutes long," I said, smiling back. "If you add ten or twelve seconds of music between the sections, fourteen minutes. By the time you have finished I will be all cleaned up, sorry, brushed up, and dressed, and then I will buy you a salad."

FOUR CALIFORNIA DEATHS

1. The Death of Jean Harlow

When D'arcy Keyserling killed Jean Harlow, she was holding in her left hand a British clothbound copy of Joseph Conrad's *The Nigger of the Narcissus*. Keyserling strangled her on the paper-strewn floor of a San Diego tattoo parlour. The SDPD felt constrained to look on everything as a clue: Conrad, of course, & the half-finished tattoo on the back of the victim's thigh. It consisted of a red heart & the incomplete name, Jozef Pils——. At least the police assumed it to be incomplete, as there was room for a couple more syllables inside the heart. It was possible, observed the coroner, though graphology was not strictly speaking within his authority, that the tattooist, Albert Sephora, was not very good at planning ahead.

Sephora was, in fact, a suspect for nearly a week, but got off with a shutdown of his business. The police had little choice but to proceed on the basis of his story. He said that Keyserling posed for a while as a waiting customer, though to Sephora's eye he did not look like the kind of man who likes to be decorated. In fact he looked rather like the writer-type: frameless octagonal eyeglasses, unfashionable haircut, unpressed suit trousers.

Sephora went out of the shop after the letter "l" for a moment, to chase down a roving newspaper boy, got into an argument with a drunk sailor on the way back, & found the nude Miss Harlow sprawled on his floor, the book in her hand opened to page forty & forty-one, & an "s" added to her heart. Keyserling had disappeared. Sephora was certain that he had not written the "s", but said that it was virtually indistinguishable from his own work.

Apparently Keyserling had not assaulted Miss Harlow sexually, but only choked her to death. The newspapers seemed mollified by that detail. When Keyserling's confession reached the SDPD, along with directions on how to locate his rented houseboat, forensic psychiatrists went over his handwritten letter for signs of pathological motivation & found only neatness & order. When the police arrived at the yacht basin, the killer was waiting for them on the dock, dressed in suit & tie, & the European eyeglasses.

The San Diego police & the Federal Bureau of Investigation were puzzled by one detail of the slaying, glad as they were that they had not had to work very hard on the case. On a page of the Conrad book, read perhaps earlier that morning by the slain actress, these words were underlined: *"Wish you Dutchmen were all dead—'stead comin' takin' our money inter your starvin' country."*

D'arcy Keyserling denied having read the book, claiming an antipathy toward Black people & anything to do with them.

2. The Death of Babe Ruth

No one ever thought they would see Babe Ruth in the Pacific Coast League, but there he was, six months after Pearl Harbour, living in San Diego & playing left field for the Padres. Two weeks after opening day he was dead. Just past midway in his life's journey he went, as always, astray from the straight road, & this time he did not, as usual, wake up in a strange bed. He went stiff there.

The investigating officers from the SDPD thought at first that he had died from alcohol poisoning & an untoward mixture of tequila & drugs, but any baseball fanatic could have told them that you could not kill the Babe that way, & then the county coroner did.

The Sultan of Swat, who was hitting .212 at the time of the tragedy, died in the white oceanside apartment of Emmaline Kurtz, a recently widowed Navy bride. Mrs Kurtz, a European of uncertain origin, told the police that when she had gone to work at six a.m. at the Navy PX, the baseball player was still alive, though he had been out cold for several hours.

The Padres had not been alarmed by the non-appearance of their left fielder for batting practice before the game against the San Francisco Seals, because the Babe often showed up a minute before the first inning. But Emmaline Kurtz was pretty upset when she entered her reeking flat & found the rigid behemoth naked atop her counterpane. She immediately called, she said, the major crimes division.

The coroner eventually laid the cause of death to asphixiation by unknown means, & left the question of misfortune or murder open. So the record stands today. Babe Ruth, a two-hundred hitter in the minors.

There are those, however, who are bothered by two curious details of the unhappy incident. Mrs Kurtz, a few years before her marriage, had been a companion of D'arcy Keyserling, who was to become a locally notorious convicted killer. Also, though George Herman Ruth was not known to be a reader of anything more serious than the funny papers, there was a cheap clothbound copy of *Lord Jim* open face-downward on the bed beside his body. Mrs Kurtz said that she had never noticed the book around the apartment before that fateful day. The book was opened to a page that bore these underscored words: *"There must have been confidences, not so much of fact, I suppose, as of innermost feelings—regrets——fears—warnings, no doubt: warnings that the younger did not fully understand till the elder was dead—and Jim came along."*

Conspiracy buffs have been wondering for decades who "Jim" might have been, & whether either of the rookie Padre outfielders by that first name might be immersed somehow in the dangerous element of this mystery.

3. The Death of Albert Einstein

The most famous scientist of our century was found gassed to death in a high school chemistry laboratory in San Diego, California, shortly after the United States' entry into the second world war.

Ruling out suicide for undisclosed reasons, the SDPD at first theorized that the atrocity was the result of a campus prank gone bad. But forensic study revealed that the father of modern physics did not meet his end at the downtown high school. He had apparently been killed & transported to the laboratory during the weekend.

The Federal authorities were summoned to the case when the tattoo

was discovered on the inside of the victim's right arm. It was not yet healed, an angry welt that took the form of a number: 47471, & the letters DK.

The men from Washington proceeded on the assumption that the murder was the work of Nazi spies or their anti-semitic sympathizers in the United States. It was reasoned that the letters stood for Dakau, the little-known Bavarian concentration camp, rumours of whose horrors had penetrated the most secret sections of the Army intelligence branch. But that theory was dropped when a University of California professor of German literature & philology informed the agents that the town's name was generally spelled without a k. The academic did, however, propose that the crime might be the work of a literary sadist who was interested in the writings of the Czechoslovakian novelist, Franz Kafka, whose nightmare visions in German include punitive tattooing & a predilection for the letter K.

Though they were animated by such obvious considerations as the Jewishness of the victim & his knowledge of physical forces that could be turned to the invention of futuristic weapons, the investigators decided to re-examine all their findings from a literary angle.

It would have been too tidy, one must judge, to find a copy of Kafka among Dr Einstein's effects at the waterfront hotel where he had been staying during this stop on a patriotic lecture tour. What the detectives & G-men did find was a copy of *The Secret Agent* by Joseph Conrad (spelled Konrad in many European countries). It was the 1921 Doubleday edition; & a piece of Dutch currency, used as a bookmark, was resting in the middle of chapter VIII, where these words were asterixed in pencil: *"Like the rest of mankind, perplexed by the mystery of the universe, he had his moments of consoling trust in the organized powers of the earth."*

Stories persist that an office in the Pentagon or in the CIA holds a number of nearly connected facts pertinent to the puzzling murder of the western world's greatest scientist, but the public knows no more now than they knew during that fateful spring in the early forties.

4. The Death of Tom Mix

A horse named Tony lay for two days on his side, behind some bougainvillea bushes that lined the highway leading west out of San Diego toward the Salton Sea. Thirst agonized the creature, but hunger did not visit. As the hours of daylight transpired he grew accustomed to the continual passage of automobile engines, & during the hours of darkness the more individual roars of great trucks followed the wash of lights as the insects quit talking for a few seconds. Then they would start again, &

many of them were speechless in his ear & around the rims of his eyes, which he never closed.

Tony felt sure that during the second day several of the people inside the autos saw his great body stretched like no hale horse on the slope of grass between the last filling station & the first onion field. But he knew that none could see the man lying under him.

Tony had been hit from behind by a green 1937 De Soto, struck on the haunches & sent in a pebble cloud of dancing broken legs through the purple flowers, across the ditch, on top of the man. A white hat lay beside his own head, but from the road, through the rent in the bushes, it would look like any rag because it was not now sitting high & round on the head of Tom Mix.

In the late thirties on the then outskirts of San Diego, there were still people who walked along the edges of the highway, looking for soda pop bottles & copper wiring, & already people who were strongly affected by the discovery of a dead or dying horse. One such man, an unemployed printer born in Byelorussia, bore the unamericanized name, Andrey Filippovitch. It was he who found the great white horse in the last hour of its life, & on closer examination, the crushed cowboy lying beneath him.

The SDPD and the California Highway Patrol argued for a while about jurisdiction & the publicity & the newspaper photographs that would attend the "tragic" death of the popular cowboy. But Filippovitch, declaring a long-held emotion against agencies of governments with wide areas of interest, opted to tell his story to the city police. That story was one of the oldest in the annals of the Southern California constabulary.

Filippovitch said that when he first came upon the dying horse, the animal looked at him significantly with his near eye, & began to paw the sloping ground. Having haunted the movie houses because that was the "quickest way to learn American," the immigrant guessed immediately what the horse was up to. Noticing the pauses, he assumed that Tony was counting, that he was intent on leaving a number as his last communication.

The first figure was paw paw paw paw, pause; a four. The whole number was 47472. The police, used to thinking in such terms, lost little time in guessing that the number might have been seen on a rear licence plate, presumably on the departing auto that had knocked the horse, & its soon-to-die rider, off the side of the road.

The SDPD made a telephone call to Sacramento, & within an hour knew the licence plate to be registered in the name of one D'arcy Keyserling. Fifteen minutes later four patrolmen were in Keyserling's bungalow on Sephora Street. But they were to wait there fruitlessly for days—Mr Keyserling never showed up, not even to gather some of his household possessions.

To kill time, one of the policemen read some stories in a book that had been left on the plywood coffee table in the small parlour. There was a leather bookmark tooled with a design of an Indian chief in war-bonnet inserted at the end of a story called "The Secret Sharer." Constable Kerr saw that on the adjacent page this portion of a sentence had been underscored with the purple of an indelible pencil: *"I was in time to catch an evanescent glimpse of my white hat left behind to mark the spot."*

Of course it takes me about two minutes or less to brush my teeth, and give me another minute to comb my hair and look closely at the pores in my nose. You've done the same thing. So when I came back out and started getting dressed, she was just getting into the story, but of course it isnt properly a story; and one wonders whether this is.

I sat around unobtrusively with another cigarette, perhaps a little glamorous in the light from the patio doors. When she had finished she put the pages on the foot of the bed.

"Did you get it?" I asked. I had learned long ago not to ask her or anyone else whether they liked it.

"Yes, I think I got it," she said, picking up her purse and starting out. I caught up with her. "I suppose that makes me one of your readers," she added.

"Puzzled?"

We were out in the bright early-afternoon sun now, side by side across the lawn, beginning our two-mile walk to the restaurant.

"Actually," she said, those gorgeous long legs as important to me as the air now filling my lungs, "the only thing that puzzled me was why you decided to use my initials."

MENAGE-A-TROIS

I can hear them moving
the furniture below, the rhythm
of thrusts as steady
as my clock.
No fights tonight
so they must have run out
of beer,
just the thudding of flesh
as they rise to meet each other
in a need they'll attempt
to understand at some other time.
Soon the silence, then
desire spinning from their
window and coming to rest
in my groin.
I hover above them both
and curse the poor construction
that allows such things
in our lives.

PATTERNS.

Perhaps the greatest miracle is that which enables man to tolerate life, which enables him to embrace its illusions and translate its monstrous incoherence into delightful, edifying patterns. It is the miracle of sanity.

Ben Hecht

Why have i followed the breath of daylight
to cliff edge, watch boats settle into it?
Not for the silence descending or the swinging
eye of a lighthouse carving up the eve.
When i sat in a field filled with summer
and watched birds weave patterns between songs
no light called—not once above the heat—
no hand to guide or prod.

The length of highways and memorized maps
seemed a small price to pay.
Questions stained my hands,
under the nails stars break through
and gather in this throbbing time,
all the things that i have left behind. Why
have i ignored everything i did not want
to carry? The woman bent in her garden
tills neat rows as roots ease into cool soil.
Why have i carried it all to this place?

Across the miles of mute water
lies another inch of hunched land.
I will carry these patterns with me.
Yes, the steady drumming of leather on pavement
as we wait for lights to change.
Or a furrier, arranging the carcasses
of dead mink in rows on a table.
Or myself, at some future moment, opening
the cover of a new novel with a delightful crack,
and smiling.

JEROME
(Sandy Cove—St. Alphonse, N.S.)
1864-1912

One must have taken its mouth to the light
as you'd lift up a horse's hoof, felt
in for the tongue while Albrite told over
and over how he'd found whatever
it was propped by a beach rock with tide almost
reached where feet should have been.

It was stub, hooded over, blunt carcass,
but dry, unslickened, and as he'd got closer
turned human, legs cut off trim at the knee,
stumps sewn tight, beside it
a tin box of biscuits, a can filled
with water clamped into a heelmark.

This lay on the couch where Albrite and Gidney
had brought it, watched them and slowly
became what they knew, as much in those minutes
as they'd ever know of what he had been,
done, endured, almost nothing
and silence, no more than the pain a nerve has

After what it existed to service
is severed. He ate what was given
and slept and after some weeks chose a sound
or was chosen to say it that gave him
the name which was needed to tend him,
Jerome, as they heard it, or agony

Working out through to something they took,
which he let them keep. They moved him
along the French shore where he lived for fifty-
eight years and spoke only twice with anyone
near to report it: one year he whispered
Trieste, as his homeland, then later

A third name, *Colombo,*
the ship which had judged him for innocence,
guilt, betrayed or betraying, as murderer,
victim of what he'd committed
or kept from witnessed inside
by his implicate silence and ours.

THE TUBERCULOSIS HOUSE

Whoever lived up here where earth
and air are both too thin is said
to have died of it. Even in summer,
wind jumps across the fields
like a cat in the snow. A freestone
chimney left won't stand as some
assuaging monument.
It's still the same flue of wind,
not warm enough for broken lungs
and those who hadn't the money
to go somewhere else and die.

This is no naming of places.
Places are always named,
forgotten, remembered
by an old man who
dies one year before I find him.
This is to see a place
among hips and haws and wild run
raspberries and the cast iron cooking pot
that seemed intact, rim up, until
I dug loose and found it eaten back
containing what earth contains.

Jan E. Conn

ORANGE LIGHT IN APRIL

sunlight spills down like
crates of mandarins upended,
bruising my arms and sending
points of orange light
into my eyes. The wind today
is an April wind.

flocks of newspapers sail
over brown grass, collect
at streetcorners and in soggy parks
as though they were on their way
somewhere, their black & white lungs
fluttering vainly, trying to fly or run.

you appear in the crowd
like a blue fragment of sky,
walking toward me, thinking
I can't ever know what.
it is always these times when
maples and beech lean greyly
into the afternoon that I wish
I could tell you
how much the sight of you
simply striding in an element
you have made yours amazes me.

even inside the warm panelled room,
surrounded by stained glass,
attended by white linen,
I can barely look at you.
I think you would see straight
through me, an x-ray of the heart,
perceive desire & need,
and turn away from it.

THE OPIUM SMOKER

In his small
nostrils the
powder burns

He heaves
and snores his
ribcage rising

to enclose it
On the
window the hot

sun whitens
like a coal
Squeezed from

his lips
a frayed grey
plume drifts

in it
As they tremble
above his

trunk's thin
folds of
skin his rattling

throat the
incubus passes
blown through

a small ring
a tightening circle
of silence

OLD AMAHS

At corners on
winter mornings the
amahs come out

for haw fun
Their eyes are
full of summer

evenings Their min-laps
are buttoned tight
In their pockets

the tram-car tickets
are faded and
curled up Lodged

there since summer
the balls of
camphor have melted

away Moths have
ravaged the sleeves
and linings entering

them like explosions
leaving white puffs
of cotton behind

Draga Djulgerova

GYPSY PONIES

Moon-maned ponies neigh
beyond the river's far shore.
No rope you knot
will keep me in your bed.
I'm going to the river,
passing through the reeds
silent as a lost breeze—
the gypsies are singing there.
Blacker than a gypsy's eye
my rope,
and who can blame me
when I toss it in the stream?
I'll dance in my white gown
to the subtle silver tones
of flutes and tambourines,
whiter than the river.
If I can charm
the youngest one,
I'll make him steal
that neighing colt.

I'll knit my thirsty fingers
swiftly into that moon-mane,
and call that youngest
of them all to me.
The tall grass beside the road
will hide the riders,
and they will never tell
what it is they know.
Ah, the moon-maned ponies
are neighing beyond the river,
and you cannot tie me
to your bed.

translated from the Bulgarian by Jascha Kessler

Joan Aiken

The Gift-Giving

The weeks leading up to Christmas were always full of excitement, and tremendous anxiety too, as the family waited in suspense for the Uncles, who had set off in the spring of the year, to return from their summer's travelling and trading: Uncle Emer, Uncle Acraud, Uncle Gonfil, and Uncle Mark. They always started off together, down the steep mountainside, but then, at the bottom, they took different routes along the deep narrow valley, Uncle Mark and Uncle Acraud riding eastwards, towards the great plains, while Uncle Emer and Uncle Gonfil turned west, towards the towns and rivers and the western sea.

Before they were clear of the mountains, they would separate once more, Uncle Acraud turning south, Uncle Emer taking his course northwards, so that, the children occasionally thought, their family was scattered over the whole world, netted out like a spider's web.

Spring, summer would go by, in the usual occupations, digging and sowing the steep hillside garden beds, fishing, hunting for hares, picking wild strawberries, making hay. Then, towards St. Drimma's Day, when the winds begin to blow and the snow crept down, lower and lower, from the high peaks, Grandmother would begin to grow restless.

Silent and calm all summer long she sat in her rocking-chair on the wide wooden porch, wrapped in a patchwork comforter, with her blind eyes turned eastwards towards the lands where Mark, her dearest and firstborn, had gone. But when the winds of Michaelmas began to blow, and the wolves grew bolder, and the children dragged in sacks of logs day after day, and the cattle were brought down to the stable under the house, then Grandmother grew agitated indeed.

When Sammle, the eldest granddaughter, brought her hot milk, she would grip the girl's slender brown wrist and demand: "Tell me, child, how many days now to St. Froida's day?" (which was the first of December).

"Eighteen, Grandmother," Sammle would answer, stooping to kiss the wrinkled cheek.

"So many, still? So many till we may hope to see them?"

"Don't worry, Granny, the Uncles are *certain* to return safely. Perhaps they will be early this year. Perhaps we may see them before the feast of St. Melin" (which was December the fourteenth).

And then, sure enough, some time during the middle weeks of December, their great carts would come jingling and trampling along the winding valleys. Young Mark (son of Uncle Emer), from his watch-point up a tall pine over a high cliff, would catch the flash of a baggage-mule's brass brow-medal, or the sun glancing on the barrel of a carbine, and would come joyfully dashing back to report.

"Granny! Granny! The Uncles are almost here!"

Then the whole household, the whole village, would be filled with as much agitation and turmoil as that of a kingdom of ants when the spade breaks open their hummock; wives would build the fires higher, and fetch out the best linen, wine, dried meat, pickled eggs; set dough to rising, mix cakes of honey and oats, bring up stone jars of preserved strawberries from the cellars; and the children, with the servants and half the village, would go racing down the perilous zigzag track to meet the cavalcade at the bottom.

The track was far too steep for the heavy carts, which would be dismissed, and the carters paid off to go about their business; then with laughter and shouting, amid a million questions from the children, the loads would be divided and carried up the mountainside on muleback, or on human shoulders. Sometimes the Uncles came home at night, through falling snow, by the smoky light of torches; but the children and the household always knew of their arrival beforehand, and were always there to meet them.

"Did you bring Granny's Chinese shawl, Uncle Mark? Uncle Emer, have you the enamelled box for her snuff that Aunt Grippa begged you to get? Uncle Acraud, did you find the glass candlesticks? Uncle Gonfil, did you bring the books?"

"Yes, yes, keep calm, don't deafen us! Poor tired travellers that we are, leave us in peace to climb this devilish hill! Everything is there, set your minds at rest—the shawl, the box, the books—besides a few other odds and ends, pins and needles and fruit and a bottle or two of wine, and a few trifles for the village. Now, just give us a few minutes to get our breath, will you, kindly—" as the children danced round them, helping each other with the smaller bundles, never ceasing to pour out questions: "Did you see the Grand Cham? The Akond of Swat? The Fon of Bikom? The Seljik of Rum? Did you go to Cathay? To Muskovy? To Dalai? Did you travel by ship, by camel, by llama, by elephant?"

And, at the top of the hill, Grandmother would be waiting for them, out on her roofed porch, no matter how wild the weather or how late the time, seated in majesty with her furs and patchwork quilt around her, while the Aunts ran to and fro with hot stones to place under her feet.

And the Uncles always embraced her first, very fondly and respectfully, before turning to hug their wives and sisters-in-law.

Then the goods they had brought would be distributed through the village—the scissors, tools, medicines, plants, bales of cloth, ingots of metal, cordials, firearms, and musical instruments; then there would be a great feast.

Not until Christmas morning did Grandmother and the children receive the special gifts which had been brought for them by the Uncles; and this giving always took the same ceremonial form.

Uncle Mark stood behind Grandmother's chair, playing on a small pipe that he had acquired somewhere during his travels; it was made from hard black polished wood, with silver stops, and it had a mouthpiece made of amber. Uncle Mark invariably played the same tune on it at these times, very softly. It was a tune which he had heard for the first time, he said, when he was much younger, once when he had narrowly escaped falling into a crevasse on the hillside, and a voice had spoken to him, as it seemed, out of the mountain itself, bidding him watch where he set his feet and have a care, for the family depended on him. It was a gentle, thoughtful tune, which reminded Sandri, the middle granddaughter, of springtime sounds, warm wind, water from melted snow dripping off the gabled roofs, birds trying out their mating calls.

While Uncle Mark played on his pipe, Uncle Emer would hand each gift to Grandmother. And she—here was the strange thing—she, who was stone-blind all the year long, could not see her own hand in front of her face, she would take the object in her fingers and instantly identify it.

"A mother-of-pearl comb, with silver studs, for Tassy. . . it comes from Babylon; a silk shawl, blue and rose, from Hind, for Argilla; a wooden game, with ivory pegs, for young Emer, from Damascus; a gold brooch, from Hangku, for Grippa; a book of rhymes, from Paris, for Sammle, bound in a scarlet leather cover."

Grandmother, who lived all the year round in darkness, could, by stroking each gift with her old, blotched, clawlike fingers, frail as quills, discover not only what the thing was and where it came from, but also the colour of it, and that in the most precise and particular manner, correct to a shade.

"It is a jacket of stitched and pleated cotton, printed over with leaves and flowers; it comes from the island of Haranati, in the eastern ocean; the colours are leaf-brown and gold and a dark, dark blue, darker than mountain gentians—" for Grandmother had not always been blind; when she was a young girl she had been able to see as well as anybody else.

"And this is for you, Mother, from your son Mark," Uncle Emer would say, handing her a tissue-wrapped bundle, and she would exclaim:

"Ah, how beautiful! A coat of tribute silk, of the very palest green, so that the colour shows only in the folds, like shadows on snow; the buttons and the button-toggles are of worked silk, lavender-grey, like pearl, and the stiff collar is embroidered with white roses."

"Put it on, Mother!" her sons and daughters-in-law would urge her, and the children, dancing round her chair, clutching their own treasures, would chorus,

"Yes, put it on, put it on! Ah, you look like a Queen, Granny, in that beautiful coat! The highest queen in the world! The queen of the mountain!"

Those months after Christmas were Grandmother's happiest time. Secure, thankful, with her sons safe at home, she would sit in a warm fireside corner of the big wooden family room. The wind might shriek, the snow gather higher and higher out of doors, but that did not concern her, for her family, and all the village, were well supplied with flour, oil, firewood, meat, herbs, and roots; the children had their books and toys; they learned lessons with the old priest, or made looms and spinning-wheels, carved stools and chairs and chests, with the tools their uncles had brought them. The Uncles rested, and told tales of their travels; Uncle Mark played his pipe for hours together, Uncle Acraud drew pictures in charcoal of the places he had seen, and Granny, laying her hand on the paper covered with lines, would expound while Uncle Mark played:

"A huge range of mountains, like wrinkled brown linen across the horizon; a wide plain of sand, silvery blond in colour, with patches of pale, pale blue; I think it is not water but air the colour of water; here are strange lines across the sand where men once ploughed it, long, long ago, and a great patch of crystal green, with what seems like a road crossing it; now here is a smaller region of plum-pink, bordered by an area of rusty red; I think these are the colours of the earth in these territories; it is very high up, dry from height, and the soil glittering with little particles of metal."

"You have described it better than I could myself!" Uncle Acraud would exclaim, while the children, breathless with wonder and curiosity, sat cross-legged round her chair. And she would answer,

"Yes, but I cannot see it all, Acraud, unless your eyes have seen it first, and I cannot see it without Mark's music to help me."

"How does Grandmother *do* it?" the children would demand of their mothers, and Argilla, or Grippa, or Tassy, would answer,

"Nobody knows. It is Grandmother's gift. She alone can do it."

The people of the village might come in, whenever they chose, and on many evenings thirty or forty would be there, silently listening, and when Grandmother retired to bed, which she did early, for the seeing

made her weary, the audience would turn to one another with deep sighs, and murmur, "The world is indeed a wide place."

But with the first signs of spring the Uncles would become restless again, and begin looking over their equipment, discussing maps and routes, mending saddle-bags and boots, gazing up at the high peaks for signs that the snow was in retreat.

Then Granny would grow very silent. She never asked them to stay longer, she never disputed their going, but her face seemed to shrivel, she grew smaller, wizened and huddled inside her quilted patchwork.

And on St Petrag's day, when they set off, when the farewells were said and they clattered off down the mountain, through the melting snow and the trees with pink luminous buds, Grandmother would fall into a silence that lasted, sometimes, for as much as five or six weeks; all day she would sit with her face turned to the east, wordless, motionless, and would drink her milk and go to her bed-place at night still silent and dejected; it took the warm sun and sweet wild hyacinths of May to raise her spirits.

Then, by degrees, she would grow animated, and begin to say, "Only six months, now, till they come back."

But young Mark observed to his cousin Sammle, "It takes longer, every year, for Grandmother to grow accustomed."

And Sammle said, shivering, though it was warm May weather, "Perhaps one year, when they come back, she will not be here. She is becoming so tiny and thin; you can see right through her hands, as if they were leaves." And Sammle held up her own thin brown young hand against the sunlight, to see the blood glow under the translucent skin.

"I don't know how they would bear it," said Mark thoughtfully, "if when they came back we had to tell them that she had died."

But that was not what happened.

One December the Uncles arrived much later than usual. They did not climb the mountain until St. Mishan's day, and when they reached the house it was in silence. There was none of the usual joyful commotion.

Grandmother knew instantly that there was something wrong.

"Where is my son Mark?" she demanded. "Why do I not hear him among you?"

And Uncle Acraud had to tell her: "Mother, he is dead. Your son Mark will not come home, ever again."

"How do you *know*? How can you be *sure*? You were not there when he died?"

"I waited and waited at our meeting place, and a messenger came to tell me. His caravan had been attacked by wild tribesmen, riding north

from the Lark mountains. Mark was killed, and all his people. Only this one man escaped and came to bring me the story."

"But how can you be *sure*? How do you know he told the *truth*?"

"He brought Mark's ring."

Emer put it into her hand. As she turned it about in her thin fingers, a long moan went through her.

"Yes, he is dead. My son Mark is dead."

"The man gave me this little box," Acraud said, "which Mark was bringing for you."

Emer put it into her hand, opening the box for her. Inside lay an ivory fan. On it, when it was spread out, you could see a bird, with eyes made of sapphire, flying across a valley, but Grandmother held it listlessly, as if her hands were numb.

"What is it?" she said. "I do not know what it is. Help me to bed, Argilla. I do not know what it is. I do not wish to know. My son Mark is dead."

Her grief infected the whole village. It was as if the keystone of an arch had been knocked out; there was nothing to hold the people together.

That year spring came early, and the three remaining Uncles, melancholy and restless, were glad to leave on their travels. Grandmother hardly noticed their going.

Sammle said to Mark: "You are clever with your hands. Could you not make a pipe—like the one my father had?"

"*I?*" he said. "Make a pipe? Like Uncle Mark's pipe? Why? What would be the point of doing so?"

"Perhaps you might learn to play on it. As he did."

"*I*? Play on a pipe?"

"I think you could," she said. "I have heard you whistle tunes of your own."

"But where would I find the right kind of wood?"

"There is a chest, in which Uncle Gonfil once brought books and music from Leiden. I think it is the same kind of wood. I think you could make a pipe from it."

"But how can I remember the shape?"

"I will make a drawing," Sammle said, and she drew with a stick of charcoal on the whitewashed wall of the cowshed. As soon as Mark looked at her drawing he began to contradict.

"No! I remember now. It was not like that. The stops came here—and the mouthpiece was like this."

Now the other children flocked round to help and advise.

"The stops were further apart," said Creusie. "And there were more of them and they were bigger."

"The pipe was longer than that," said Sandri. "I have held it. It was as long as my arm."

"How will you ever make the stops?" said young Emer.

"You can have my silver bracelets that Father gave me," said Sammle.

"I'll ask Finn the smith to help me," said Mark.

Once he had got the notion of making a pipe into his head, he was eager to begin. But it took him several weeks of difficult carving; the black wood of the chest proved hard as iron. And when the pipe was made, and the stops fitted, it would not play; try as he would, not a note could he fetch out of it.

Mark was dogged, though, once he had set himself to a task; he took another piece of the black chest, and began again. Only Sammle stayed to help him now; the other children had lost hope, or interest, and gone back to their summer occupations.

The second pipe was much better than the first. By September, Mark was able to play a few notes on it; by October he was playing simple tunes, made up out of his head.

"But," he said, "if I am to play so that Grandmother can see with her fingers—if I am to do *that*—I must remember your father's special tune. Can *you* remember it, Sammle?"

She thought and thought.

"Sometimes," she said, "it seems as if it is just beyond the edge of my hearing—as if somebody were playing it, far, far away, in the woods. Oh, if only I could stretch my hearing a little further!"

"Oh, Sammle! Try!"

For days and days she sat silent, or wandered in the woods, frowning, knotting her forehead, willing her ears to hear the tune again; and the women of the household said, "That girl is not doing her fair share of the tasks."

They scolded her, and set her to spin, weave, milk the goats, throw grain to the hens. But all the while she continued silent, listening, listening, to a sound she could not hear. At night, in her dreams, she sometimes thought she could hear the tune, and she would wake with tears on her cheeks, wordlessly calling her father to come back and play his music to her, so that she could remember it.

In September the autumn winds blew cold and fierce; by October snow was piled around the walls and up to the windowsills. On St. Felin's Day the three Uncles returned, but sadly and silently, without the former festivities, although, as usual, they brought many bales and boxes of gifts and merchandise. The children went down as usual, to help carry the bundles up the mountain. The joy had gone of this tradition, though; they toiled silently up the track with their loads.

It was a wild, windy evening, the sun set in fire, the wind moaned among the fir-trees, and gusts of sleet every now and then dashed in their faces.

"Take care, children!" called Uncle Emer, as they skirted along the side of a deep gully, and his words were caught by an echo and flung back and forth between the rocky walls: "Take care - care - care - care - care. . . ."

"*Oh!*" cried Sammle, stopping precipitately and clutching the bag that she was carrying. "I have it! I can remember it! *Now* I know how it went!"

And, as they stumbled on up the snowy hillside, she hummed the melody to her cousin Mark, who was just ahead of her.

"Yes, that is it, yes!" he said. "Or, no, wait a minute, that is not *quite* right—but it is close, it is very nearly the way it went. Only the notes were a little faster, and there were more of them—they went up, not down—before the ending tied them in a knot—"

"No, no, they went down at the end, I am almost sure—"

Arguing, interrupting each other, disputing, agreeing, they dropped their bundles in the family room and ran away to the cowhouse, where Mark kept his pipe hidden.

For three days they discussed and argued and tried a hundred different versions; they were so occupied that they hardly took the trouble to eat. But at last, by Christmas morning, they had reached agreement.

"I *think* it is right," said Sammle. "And if it is not, I do not believe there is anything more that we can do about it."

"Perhaps it will not work in any case," said Mark sadly. He was tired out with arguing and practising.

Sammle was equally tired, but she said, "Oh, it *must* work. Oh, let it work! Please let it work! For otherwise I don't think I can bear the sadness. Go now, Mark, quietly and quickly, go and stand behind Granny's chair."

The family had gathered, according to Christmas habit, around Grandmother's rocking-chair, but the faces of the Uncles were glum and reluctant, their wives dejected and hopeless. Only the children showed eagerness, as the cloth-wrapped bundles were brought and laid at Grandmother's feet.

She herself looked wholly dispirited and cast down. When Uncle Emer handed her a slender, soft package, she received it apathetically, almost with dislike as if she would prefer not to be bothered by this tiresome gift ceremony.

Then Mark, who had slipped through the crowd without being noticed, began to play on his pipe just behind Grandmother's chair.

The Uncles looked angry and scandalised; Aunt Tassy cried out in horror: "Oh, Mark, wicked boy, how *dare* you?" but Grandmother lifted her head, more alertly than she had done for months past, and began to listen.

Mark played on. His mouth was quivering so badly that it was hard to

grip the amber mouthpiece, but he played with all the breath that was in him. Meanwhile Sammle, kneeling by her grandmother, held, with her own warm young hands, the old, brittle ones against the fabric of the gift. And, as she did so, she began to feel what Grandmother felt.

Grandmother said softly and distinctly: "It is a muslin shawl, embroidered in gold thread, from Lebanon. It is coloured a soft brick red, with pale roses of sunset pink, and thorns of silver-green. It is for Sammle. . . ."

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

JOAN AIKEN lives in Sussex, England, and has published numerous books for both adults and children.

MARTIN ANDERSON has had a chapbook published by Blue Guitar Books, *The Kneeling Room*. He appeared previously in *PRISM international* Volume 20:4.

GEORGE BOWERING will have a book of stories entitled, *A Place To Die* published by Oberon in 1983. A reprint of his Governor-General's Award winning book *Burning Water* will be released in February 1983, from New Press.

BERTOLT BRECHT authored a number of film scenarios and several screenplays, including an adaptation of his play *The Three Penny Opera.*

E.J. CAMPFIELD is a freelance writer and photographer living in Pensacola, Florida. His translations work appeared earlier in issue 19:2.

DERRICK CLINTON CARTER recently won an Award of Excellence from the Graphic Designers of Canada for his series of covers on issues 20:2, 20:3, and 20:4.

RAYMOND CARVER will have a new collection of short stories published by Knopf in 1983. A new volume of poetry is also scheduled to appear in 1983. Previous books include *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?* (fiction), and *At Night The Salmon Move* (poetry).

JAN. E. CONN is a graduate student in entomology at the University of Toronto. A book of poems, *Road of Smoke*, will appear from Colophon Press in April, 1983.

DRAGA DJULGEROVA is a young Bulgarian poet. *Gypsy Ponies* is from her first book.

H.E. FRANCIS is a professor of English at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. A new collection will be published by Braziller in 1983. His stories have appeared in the *O. Henry, Best American,* and *Pushcart Prize* volumes.

PHIL HALL lives in Vancouver and has appeared previously in *Grain* and *Toronto Life.*

MIGUAL HERNANDEZ was arrested after the Spanish Civil War and died in prison, March 28, 1942.

JASCHA KESSLER has appeared in numerous issues of *PRISM international*, as translator and short fiction writer; most recently in volume 21:1.

DANIEL MOYANO is a prizewinning novelist and short writer from Argentina. Born in Buenos Aires, he now lives, in exile, in Madrid, Spain.

ALDEN NOWLAN's most recent collection of poems is *I Might Not Tell Everybody This*, Clarke, Irwin.

MIKLÓS RADNÓTI was killed on a forced march back from Heidenau Concentration Camp.

ROBERT RANKIN is a teacher. His work has appeared in many literary magazines, and he is West Coast correspondent for *Poetry Canada Review*.

NOBERTO LUIS ROMERO lives in Madrid, Spain. He was born in Cordoba, Argentina. His stories are just beginning to appear in English and Spanish.

PETER SANGER teaches at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in Truro. His poems have appeared in *Tributaries, The Fiddlehead, The Malahat Review,* and *Poetry Canada Review*.

GERRY TIFFANY has recently had a chapbook published by Copula Press in Spokane, Washington, *Now Wind Takes the News*.

Kamo no Chomei's poem *Hojoki*, translated by William Marsh, appeared in issue 20:4. It was translated from the Japanese and not the Chinese as stated.

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Fiction by: *George Bowering, Alden Nowlan, Joan Aiken, Daniel Moyano, Norberto Luis Romero.*

In Translation: *A screenplay and two essays on film, by Bertolt Brecht.*

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Cyril Dabydeen, Susan Glickman, Joseph Bruchac III, Elizabeth Bartlett . . . .

BACK ISSUES

Award-winning translation of Claude Gauvreau, by Ray Ellenwood 20:3*; Voices from The Maritimes* 19:1; *Gabriel Garcia Marquez* 11:2

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