PRISM *international*

Autumn, 1967 $1.25

STAFF

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF *Jacob Zilber*

ASSOCIATE EDITORS *Robert Harlow*
Prose

Douglas Bankson
Drama

J. Michael Yates
Poetry

ART EDITOR *Clive Cope*

COVER PHOTO *Bob Flick*

ILLUSTRATIONS *by Vancouver School of Art Students:*
Mike Malcolm, p. 4
Norman Buchko, p. 54
Wendy Misisco, p. 102

PRINTED BY MORRISS PRINTING COMPANY LTD., VICTORIA, B.C.

PRISM *international* is a journal of contemporary writing, published three times a year by the University of British Columbia. Annual subscriptions are $3.50, single copies $1.25, obtainable by writing to PRISM, c/o Creative Writing, U.B.C., Vancouver 8, B.C.

MSS should be sent to the Editors at the same address and must be accompanied by a self-addressed envelope and Canadian or unattached U.S. stamps, or commonwealth or international reply coupons.

PRISM *international*

VOLUME SEVEN NUMBER TWO

CONTENTS

FICTION

The Duel of Two Horses	GEORG BRITTING (translated from the German by PETER PAUL FERSCH)	4
The Death of Don Quixote	GEORG BRITTING (translated from the German by PETER PAUL FERSCH)	9
Thobqueh's Tale	JACK MATTHEWS	18
The Entombed Man of Thule	GORDON WEAVER	34
The Betrayal	LUCY STEEDS	54
Will You Go Hunt, My Lord?	BRIAN SHEIN	72
Humbly, for Fyodor	ALDEN NOWLAN	88
The Yellow Umbrella	GERALDO SOBRAL (translated from the Portuguese by BARRY MUNN)	102

POETRY

Mr. Ginsberg Reads in London	DICK WILCOCKS	11
Five Poems	MICHAEL BULLOCK	12
Two Poems	ERIC FORRER	16
Estate of Reality	JAMES BOYER MAY	27
Two Poems	PETER STEVENS	28
Two Poems	ELIZABETH BARTLETT	30
Two Poems	MICHAEL ONDAATJE	32
Two Poems	C. J. NEWMAN	40

The Party	R. D. MATHEWS	43
Nights in the Caribbean	HENRY BEISSEL	46
Two Poems	IRVING LAYTON	48
Two Poems	THOMAS BRIDGE	50
The Skunk Under the Granary	ROBERT KROETSCH	52
Peace Is An Unknown Continent	HELENE ROSENTHAL	59
Three Poems	WALTER BENESCH	62
Two Poems	ELIZABETH GOURLAY	64
Two Poems	RICHARD DEUTCH	66
Two Poems	RALPH GUSTAFSON	68
Two Poems	JOS D. F. WOUTERS	71
Two Poems	KARL KROLOW (translated from the German by ROSEMARIE WALDROP)	81
Two Poems	GÜNTER GRASS (translated from the German by ROSEMARIE WALDROP)	84
Two Poems	GOTTFRIED BENN (translated from the German by HAROLD ENRICO)	86
Two Poems	JAC. VAN HATTUM (translated from the Dutch by JOS D. F. WOUTERS)	92
Two Poems	IVAN MALINOVSKI (translated from the Danish by HEATHER SPEARS)	94
Tais-Tois	PAUL VALERY (translated from the French by WILSON CLOUGH)	98
Untitled Poem	RAYMOND QUENEAU (translated from the French by HAROLD ENRICO)	100
Two Poems	DENNIS TRUDELL	108
Acknowledgements		110
Books and Periodicals Received		110

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS APPEAR BESIDE THEIR WORK

Malcolm

GEORG BRITTING (1891-1964) won international recognition in 1932 with his novel, *Der Lebenslauf eines dicken Mannes, der Hamlet hiess.* His poems, stories, and novels make a significant contribution to German literature. PETER PAUL FERSCH, translator of both the Britting stories in this issue, teaches at Ohio University.

The Duel of Two Horses

GEORG BRITTING

Translated from the German by Peter Paul Fersch

TWO HORSES, two stallions, fox-red, with large glittering eyes; and with their flaming tails they struck fiercely into a seething cloud of gnats that encircled them. Their tails lashed out like tongues of fire, almost reached their rib cages, then arched back in a wide fluttering curve and tickled the driver's nose in passing. He was seated on the bench of the wagon. Trees flew past and the country opened up. Scattered roofs and ponds flashed by like so many silver dollars tossed upon the pasture land carelessly.

The stallions had been a team for the past two years. Whenever they heard their master's commanding voice, they flung their heads up high and lunged forward, as if to out-race each other, but always the wagon's shaft remained between them. Then, full of mischief, they thrust their wet mouths against each other playfully and pounded the country road. In the stable their dreaming hoofs thundered against the wooden planks. A creaking door, a wisp of air entering and quickly their ears shot to a point like nervous little flames. They turned their heads and looked at one another with wide-open and delirious eyes. A scintillating brilliance, a round and deep lustre in an illimitable center, their eyes were bottomless shafts of glass. From their fathomless depth redness flashed to the surface, and like a spark it bridged the gap from eye to eye. Then they bucked away from each other and pressed tightly against the wooden wall, frightened, their blood full of madness.

The owner of the estate had about ten or more horses in the stables: work horses with shaggy tufts on their thick fetlocks, also stately riding horses; they were nervous creatures. But he devoted all his love to the two red stallions. It gave him pleasure to feel them tug at the reins. Because he was getting on in years, he didn't saddle up as often as he had in the past. Now he preferred the elevated bench of the wagon to roll down the flaming street into a darkly glowing summer evening. Often he went into the stable to be near the animals. Their nodding heads oscillated like pendulums of clocks, not fed with oil, but with blood.

When a cook cleans a big fish with her knife, then the scales fly. Strewn about the board they lie, glittering and silvery, many flat on top of other! Like this, a portfolio-map lay in front of Herr von M., the owner of the estate; it lay there like a dead fish with its belly slit open and, like the scales of a map-fish, white sheets of paper were scattered on the table surface. There were prints by Dürer, simple, artful and violent; there were reproductions of woodcuts by the masters of the German Middle Ages; and there were all the prints by Hans Baldung Grien. This artist must have gripped the knife with his fists, claws and nails and punctured and tortured the wooden plate like a murdering rapist attacking his victim in the dark underbrush of the forest. The glaring light of the table lamp flooded the white squares on which, framed by four black lines, the most horrible monstrosities twisted themselves. Trembling, Herr von M. looked at leaf after leaf, which he passed to his friends. Bent over they sat around the table and eavesdropped on this murdering rapist, the woodcutter.

The crashing din of pounding hooves hammered against the servant's head, but he did not awaken. It only seemed a rumble in his dream. But then a high, shrill, neighing sound pricked him like a needle, and he jerked up and turned on the light. He had stable-watch. Should he look after the horses? The pale and sickly-looking body of Saint Sebastian, a painted wooden figure hanging above the foot of the bed, was garnished with arrows; and each arrow had attached to its shaft a merrily dangling blue or red or yellow pennon. Only now he fully awakened. With his big toe he fished for his shoes and then departed. As he shut the door, the saint's little arrow-pennons fluttered up happily and cruelly.

Herr von M. was presently holding in his hands a print by Hans Baldung Grien. On it could be seen a herd of furiously raging horses. There were giant steeds and nags that had round, bullet-like human eyes which seemed cut from stone, and muscles pro-

truded from their taut thighs, like coiling snakes. Their bodies were not made of flesh, not of quivering horses' flesh. These bodies seemed made of white, metallic ore. Their faces were not horses' faces; they were human faces, or the grotesque masks of demons. Their rigid tails curved down hard like jets of water spewing from fountain pipes. Their long bodies wound themselves in play and strife, twisting and uncoiling like the frayed ends of a thick rope.

This is what had happened in the stable: both stallions had playfully rubbed their noses against one another. And playfully, carelessly pulsating his tail, the one with a circular blackish spot at the side near his ear started to trace teasingly up and down the other's neck, up and down, always up and down. Then he bared his teeth ever so lightly and playfully nipped into the taut hide. Indignant the other one raised his head and jerked back, so that the one with the spot almost lost this round piece, which he so lovingly held between his teeth. In trying to hang on to this slipping piece, almost losing it, he bit into it just a little harder. Just a little harder, but in such a way that the other one felt the pain. He snapped at the back of the one with the spot. The bite dug deep, sank so deep that the hide burst and the tooth penetrated into the flesh.

Now the stallions began their duel. The eyes of the one with the spot flared up from deep, deep down. He inverted his lips into a funnel, showing both half-arches of his teeth, and furiously bit into the flesh of the other, bit, ripped, and peeled off a strip of hide. Dripping and limp, a hand-wide strip dangled loosely. The one who had been bitten made this high and shrill sound which had awakened the servant. Already his teeth dug into the back of the one with the spot, and already an arm-long strip of skin smacked against the abdominal wall. Their heads were now masks of hatred, and their eyes reddened; they stood motionless for the duration of a heart beat. Then they continued their bloody business without much more than a moan rising from their throats.

Like a girl who has been raped, like a student who has been slapped in the face, this is how the one with the spot felt when his friend's tooth had dug into his flesh. And if the injured girl sought to revenge herself with a dagger or tears or both, or if the chastity of a child-nation is touched by the salacious and curious finger of the neighbor on the other side of the wagon-shaft (the shaft is here the quivering boundary line) and a hundred-thousand blue men raised up on this side and a hundred-thousand red men on the other and peeled the flesh from each other's bones — the two horses,

the two red stallions, the one with the spot and the other one, they obeyed the law, like the girl and the student and the frenzied nation.

The servant tore open the door; a wild stench leaped in his face; and he saw this dreadful scene in the uncertain light of the lamp, which dangled from the ceiling. He raised his arms as if to separate the two, but in his confusion he only stammered "Jesus Christ" and ran across the courtyard, leaving the door wide open. He looked back only once and saw the square door frame glistening in red and saw a black mass undulating in the space between. The moon danced yellow over the roof and a few puddles glimmered like dark satin. Inside the house he only yelled: "the stallions!", so that Herr von M. put down the print by Hans Baldung Grien, motioned his friends to remain, and followed the messenger.

Pools of blood had collected at the feet of the horses. The two of them were bewitched and no longer fought like combatants full of rage and fury. They acted as if they were doing their duty and doing it well down to the last. The one with the spot held still, and felt the crashing bite, felt the shredding rip detaching a blood-smeared strip from his ribs. Then he bit and peeled off a strip from the other as if he were removing a piece of bark from a tree. Then it was his turn again to hold still, and the long tatters dangled from their ribs. Like a blood-thirsty ceremonial of stamping gods, the action had come to an end when Herr von M. entered the stable. Streaming with blood, they stood with wobbly knees. The dangling strips covered their legs like a gleaming coat of blood, and they looked like horses in a tournament wearing covers and shabracks.

Naturally, not even the veterinarian could be of help to them now and the duelists had to be shot. The friends drove homeward through the night. They reached a crossing. Four roads pointed into all directions of the compass and each wagon rolled on its own pale band. A cheese-yellow moon ascended.

This ghostly-pale solitude depressed one of the homeward-bound, who was driving alone. He rejoiced at seeing the pointed church-steeple of his village appearing behind a hill, when he thought he heard a noise behind him. He looked back and saw two skeleton-horses with human faces and with fiendish tails trotting behind him; and between their naked ribs there gleamed their red hearts and blue lungs, there swayed the stinking knots of entrails.

Next morning the two lacerated corpses were still lying in the stable. Herr von M. tried to smile, to smile about the red stallions' code of honor, and almost slipped and fell in the slippery blood. Hurriedly, he went out into the open.

The Death of Don Quixote

GEORG BRITTING

Translated from the German by Peter Paul Fersch

Don Quixote sat in his death chair. His bald and birdlike head quivered on top of a thin neck, and his Adam's apple moved up and down restlessly. The pointed ends of his moustache were carefully waxed. Stiff and black like lances, they punctured the air and trembled helplessly whenever he twisted his upper lip. His dim eyes ran across the floor like poisoned mice. Half-dried mucus clung to the corners of his mouth. In the noisy kitchen, the landlady, Mrs. Avrikos, was making pastries. All through the room thundered the crackling of exploding grease. Don Quixote's chin had dropped onto his chest. His thin, unwashed hands rested on the arms of his easy chair. His thoughts were no longer with him. Like mutinous troops they had separated from his command, and now they waged their own field campaigns. They swayed to and fro, fought closed and opened file, pushed forward and back, fought close up, and shot arrows. He was but an impartial spectator. When he tried to issue orders to these insubordinates, it seemed for an instant as if they followed his directives and moved out according to plan But soon whole columns broke away again, and they executed movements that he had not prefigured. With golden reins he guided the black horse in Spanish gait. It rained flowers, and young maidens clutched his stirrups. As he rode through the country-side, the evening sky arched downward heavily. The sacred Virgin, blessed be her laughing eyes, bowed out of the clouds and threw a shiny cross to him. Mockery surged up all around him. People, people — he wiped off their mockery like the spittle of infidels. Archangels guided his sword. A fiery sphere, floating and glittering, his heart

was filled with love. His hands were blessed. Mrs. Avrikos came out of the kitchen. Doubled-over he sat in his chair with moist and coved-in temples. She looked at him with pity. He focused his eyes on her, but could no longer recognize her. His breath came in short thrusts and a severe cramp caused his brow to furrow. For six weeks now this gentleman had been lodging with her. Saint Barbara only knew if he would live for as many hours. Frightened, she crossed herself. Don Quixote seemed asleep; only his hands were alive. On a piece of rope, young John dragged Rocco, the mongrel, into the room. The dog had one sick and crossed eye that was bloodshot. John started to play with the animal, talked to it as if to a child, pulled at its tail, tugged at its ears; and then he cupped his hollow hands around its snout and blew into them as if into a trumpet. He took the tongue out of its muzzle and scratched it with his fingernails. He plucked hairs from its belly and by its legs he whirled it around his head. He straddled the dog, used its ears for reins, and flung it around the room in full gallop. He fetched water and poured it down its throat. This awakened the old man in his chair. He saw the frightfully writhing arms of the child, and he saw the monster, the fiery dragon, attacking. He raised his body up, and his trembling legs supported him. In front of his eyes flashed the spears of battle. Archangels guided his sword. His love erupted with sudden vehemence. A human being cried out, and through smoke and meanness, this single sound roared toward him. He swung his cane like a cudgel and advanced towards the snarling dog. They fought with exasperation. The raving animal was quicker than he, and with terrible blows he struck at the air. The beast circled him. Furiously hissing and frothing, it covered him with flakes of white slaver. It clenched its teeth into his hip and, like the sickle-sharp cord of a whip, it lashed itself around his legs. It attacked from behind and like lightning evaded his angry kicks, so that he pirouetted wildly on one leg. Then he marched forcefully against the animal, his cane lowered and fixed like a lance. Then slashing in circular motion, he used it like a scythe. He hurled it like a javelin, and he used it like a club. His hands were bleeding, and his coat hung in shreds. As the dog sat in a corner, it swelled threateningly to enormous size. Like an arrow it darted towards him and blew its ugly breath into his face. It drew back and prepared to jump. The old man swung back his arm so far that it seemed he wanted to splinter the world to pieces. The momentum of the blow sent him crashing to the floor, smashing his forehead. He remained motionless. Thin light-red blood seeped from his nose, which the dog licked up.

MR GINSBERG READS IN LONDON

DICK WILCOCKS

Mr Ginsberg comes rushing out of the Universe
smeared by a chromium lingam, brushed by an old lotus
blossom in the Polish Apocalypse
African morris-dancer, the Javanese Shalom
hunting the curried echoes of dead and dying lovers
like all the bouncing Bhikkus of Cambodia, high
on tea and uncanny mixtures, tabulating madly,
chanting mantras, the brown flesh falling in folds under
his eyes like a sad and untried clitoris, graved in
the venerated cunt of American twilight and
Kellogg's soggy cornflakes, weeping henry poems
to earth and padding over the enchanted concrete
a coal-black erection ten leagues long jammed
up the holy arsehole of rambling days
sitting there blocked on bardic ejaculations
so old they are beyond the tartan chirrups of decay and
putrefaction in the wonder-melancholy way of the magician
like a whole army of holes and romantics
eating a slow way through the doors in a porcelain
toilet, the last toilet, the biggest toilet of
the underworld
CHANG CHANG CHANG CHANG CHANG CHANG
pausing in a flickering instant for reflection,
a white narcissus between his teeth, crunching
hard till the spunk love-laden and murdered
runs in rivers down the black
forest of hairs on his chest

DICK WILCOCKS has published in various magazines, including *Transatlantic Review*, *Poetry & Audience*, *My Own Mag*, and others. He is now at the University of Leeds.

Five Poems by Michael Bullock

THOUGHTS OF GRASS

This evening I decided to record the thoughts of a blade of grass — the thoughts that traverse its cells along with the chlorophyll, the salts and minerals it draws from the soil together with the moisture that enables it to stand erect and green and to move with the wind like a beckoning finger seen round the corner of a street.

The thoughts of a blade of grass circulate slowly through its cells, so slowly that the images they form never become complete and self-contained. If the circulation of its sap could be so speeded up that its progress was as rapid as that of our blood the thoughts of a blade of grass would be the same as human thoughts, only greener and moister.

I went out into my garden, selected a blade of grass that was particularly thick and green and lay down beside it, my ear to its roots. I heard its thoughts like the gentle churning of a flesh-soft millstone grinding juicy berries. They moved with infinite slowness and were embedded in a green haze that prevented me from forming a clear mental image of their content.

As dusk fell, however, the thoughts of the grass began to grow firmer, more solid, less diaphanous and ephemeral. It became clear to me that the thoughts of the grass were memories, primeval recollections of earlier vegetation rooted in the same soil thousands of years ago — of tree ferns and all the luxuriant growths of a tropical forest.

With the appearance of the first star the thoughts of the grass seemed to be tuned to a new key, as though a change of speed had altered their pitch and with it their content. There was the echo of human flesh in the thoughts of the grass, as though lovers had lain on the soil and bodies had mingled where the roots of the grass now thrust down among stones and humus.

When the moon rose the thoughts of the grass seemed to take wing and flutter birdlike up above the ground and among the branches of the trees. Owls hooted as the thoughts of the grass brushed past their ears.

During the rest of the night the thoughts of the grass were like green and violet lights with occasional gleams of red flitting round my head and through the raspberry canes and blackcurrant bushes — ribbons and twisting bands of light that thought themselves into intricate, hypnotic, dazing patterns.

As day broke the thoughts of the grass became crystalline and static, patterns of slowly pulsating green like the sun seen from deep under water.

The blade of grass watched me with a green eye as I rose and left it, trying not to look back, green sap circulating slowly through my brain.

MORNING HOUR

Morning hour, Mystery. Black hands beating against the window pane and branches tapping on the roof. To wake is a risk. To sleep a crime. The water of the pond rocks with the stirring of a thousand frogs. The night is a black flag flapping in the sky, hauled slowly aloft to make way for day.

Hands crawl between the sheets like rats towards their hole. The walls crack with the hidden movement of bricks and timber tensed by the years. Shreds of darkness dangle from the eaves, moving in the morning wind.

RIVER AT NIGHT

The leaden path moves slowly between the wilted hills,
the trees droop like withered stalks, the birds
hang upside down like bats.

Mephitic vapours rise from the surrounding marsh,
bubbling through the cat-tailed grass
and stirring the mud with a subterranean gurgle.

Moon of midsummer, burn above my house,
let your rays engulf its rafters
in the flow of their orange light.

The barges sway like seals in the brown water,
brushed by strange objects drifting to the sea,
and their last lantern flickers into darkness.

The river and the moon divide the world between them;
the branches of the trees set their seal to the contract.

A SHORT-SIGHTED MAN

Before this tower he stands and reads
his future in the interlocking bricks.
They crumble and moss thrusts its roots
into the binding mortar.

Behind, the river runs cold, carrying a cargo of mist.
On the far bank the trees stand bare,
bleak branches outlined against a huge red sun,
dying like the day and vanishing like the years.

The fishermen's rods point upwards into an empty sky.
The birds are hurrying to escape
before night closes its cage.
He reads the bricks: their message is red dust and grit an inch
from his eyes.

THE RIVER THAT RUNS BENEATH THE BRIDGE OF YOUR THIGHS

The river that runs beneath the bridge of your thighs
washes away tears, linen and strawberries.
Great leaves float on its surface
carrying Japanese lanterns, hollyhocks and plum blossom.

Too frequently the slender reed sways
in the night-wind and the ropes of boats are taut.
Our boat rocks on the waves and darkness
holds us in its velvet hands.

The multicoloured night is a banner
fluttering over a castle of lichened laughter,
founded on sand that stirs as the water passes
and opens to release its turbulent monsters.

Upheaving, the whole earth parts, disclosing
tree roots writhing towards the river,
plunging like daggers into its soft groin,
drinking as they sink and twisting as they drown.

Your river is a moat and I its castle,
humped on a green mound and topped by a bell
that rings as the water rocks it like a wind
and casts its notes down to break the surface.

Your river is a Milky Way littered with stars.

MICHAEL BULLOCK lives in London, where he publishes and edits the poetry journal, *Expression*. He has translated over 70 books and plays, including the complete works of Max Frisch, many contemporary German and French poets, and poetry by Mao Tse-tung. He is also a playwright, fiction writer, and poet, with four volumes of poetry in print.

Two Poems by Eric Forrer

THE SEA ICE

An old man is walking on the sea ice, pushing a sled with no dogs. He has been walking for days and his head is bent, his eyes closed. He keeps his direction by the wind against his cheek. There is no point in looking up — the blowing snow seals him in a white room without shadows. The ice is flat, he does not bump into unseen pressure ridges. Were he to open his eyes, the old man would not be able to see his feet or the nose of his sled — such is the dark whiteness of the snow. He smells land and open water. It is warm, the wind, the old man knows it is the first Spring storm; it must come from the south. And so he walks eastward pushing his sled over the sea ice.

Above the sighing of the snow the old man hears a growl that comes from an invisible horizon. The noise approaches, growing through the storm until with a roaring crack it passes under his feet and fades toward another horizon beyond the whiteout. Bending down and opening his eyes, the old man sees dark water welling between the lips of a crack in the sea ice. He is standing on a fathom of solid ice grounded on the mud shoals of a shallow ocean. As the old man watches with squinting eyes, the endless crack begins slowly to widen.

And he cannot answer the question — from which side of the crack can I reach land?

NORTH WIND

Tonight the sky is as clear as steel and the cold is a knife leaving dead-white slices beneath my parka. The dimes of frozen skin floating in my cheeks grow before the north wind — islands of death reaching from the surface toward my bones. The pool of light cast by a lantern has no edges; I think upwind through night — the wind is reaching from beyond the light over icy miles of willow flats and frozen lakes, past no cabins, past no villages; beyond to the coastal flats where no grass shows above the crushed snow; beyond to the sea ice, churning, screaming in darkness and there is nothing beyond but spray freezing on the wind in an abyss of blackness. Out of the north the wind whips hissing ghosts of snow; and drifting, sighing on the frozen crust from the sea ice through the willow breaks into my pool of light where little drifts form in the lee of my moccasins; downwind to the Black River country a hundred miles south over the delta where one mountain looms above the frozen mud and in the wind casts a shadow of snow drifts pointing southward.

ERIC FORRER, a student at the University of British Columbia, has previously published in *Talon*.

JACK MATTHEWS, author of a book of short stories, a volume of poems, and of the novel, *Hanger Stout, Awake!*, is Director of Creative Writing at Ohio University.

Thobqueh's Tale

JACK MATTHEWS

"WHAT DID YOU DO with the horses?" Roberts asked when Elias came back.

" I tied them down near the river," Elias said.

The young preacher walked up to the fire and sat down on a nearby rock, shouldered deep in a shawl of moss. He was surprised at how quickly Roberts had made the fire.

"We'll get to Chillicothe tomorrow sometime?" he asked.

Roberts didn't even look up. "About noon, I figure. Did you give the horses plenty to drink?"

"I let them drink until they started swinging their heads like a gate, and looking all around."

"Maybe you gave them too much," Roberts said. But he didn't seem worried. He poked the fire with a stick and a great shower of sparks floated like a sky-full of stars up into the high limbs of the trees. As the sparks approached the underbellies of the leaves, pale as wavelets, they went out one by one.

Roberts continued poking the fire until it flamed brightly, warming Elias' face and hands.

"No danger of thieves or Indians?" Elias suggested. "I mean, with such a bright fire."

"No particular danger." Roberts laid the stick down and pulled the blackened nub of a clay pipe out of his coat pocket. He stared at the younger man as he thumbed tobacco from a greasy leather pouch into the bowl. Then he said, "I could have worn a footpath along the Scioto bottoms all by myself, I've come to Chillicothe so many times."

"All right, Mr. Roberts. But I've got a congregation waiting for me up there, as well as an empty church; and you know, there *are* plenty of stories."

"I know some of them stories," Roberts said. "But whatever Indians we might see now would be friendly . . . maybe some poor Mingo, a stray Shawnee or a family of Wyandots. The only thing they might do is steal our horses since you obliged them by tying them up so far from the fire. So why don't you get them horses and bring them up close?"

Elias nodded and walked into the night shadow of the trees.

When he returned, the two men lighted their pipes with brands from the fire. It had been a hard day's ride, and they sat there wrapped in their private thoughts and staring into the fire. Soon, the full moon — faintly lopsided like a white egg — arose, and they could look through the deep dark aisles of pawpaw, tulip and sycamore trees to the river, shining silver in the moonlight. A faint haze the color of their tobacco smoke lay on the far shore of the river.

As he sat there, Elias thought of the day's journey up the Scioto. If he had closed his eyes, he would have seen once more the black of Roberts as the guide's body nodded forward atop the horse . . . down steep paths into ironwood and locust swamps, and then high over the hard sugar maple ridges where huge mossy boulders loomed suddenly in the darkness like foundered ships.

However, the strangest sight of the day's journey had come only an hour earlier, when Roberts had turned his horse down a side path toward the river, and suddenly the two of them emerged in a vast weedy meadow. But there were more than weeds; throughout the briers and thistles, there were hundreds of bent and cranky cornstalks jutting like broken spears out of the tangled mat below.

Roberts reined his horse briefly, turned back toward Elias, and said, "This was a Shawnee cornfield four years ago. The village was over there." Roberts pointed his finger upriver, but Elias couldn't see anything but wilderness.

The insects made a high ringing noise as the two men rode their horses through the abandoned cornfield. The matting of weeds was thick and tough, and it was obvious that the horses found it hard to walk . . . so that they seemed to stumble slowly, and rock like boats; and the hypnotic motion, along with the sawing of the insects and the late-afternoon light blinding his eyes . . . all of these things had numbed Elias' mind.

Now even remembering affected him, and Elias was thinking of going to sleep, when he heard something like a prolonged animal

cry in the distance. He looked at Roberts, who gave no sign of noticing. There was silence for a few minutes, and then Elias heard the sound again, and this time recognized it as the voice of a man singing the hymn titled, "How Firm a Foundation!"

Roberts started into the darkness a minute, after which he turned to Elias and said, "If you've heard stories, then I'll bet you've heard of Hole-in-the-Day."

"What's that?"

"It's an old Shawnee. That fellow you hear singing. He's supposed to be a hundred years old, and his name is Thobqueh, which means Hole-in-the-Day."

"He's a Christian then?" Elias asked.

"About as much a Christian as a wolf or a garfish, I'd say. Knowing a few hymns don't make him a Christian."

Elias listened to the singing for a minute, and then he said, "What's he doing after dark out in the middle of nowhere, singing like that?"

"Well," Roberts said, "he's crazy. That's part of it. And he ain't just singing out in the middle of nowhere, because old Thobqueh knows we're here. He's probably figuring on coming up for a visit."

"Right now?" Elias said.

"Maybe. He usually wants to tell his story. He's crazy, like I say, but he ain't dangerous. Everybody up north of the Ohio knows about Thobqueh, but nobody ever kicks him away from a warm fire. He tells an awful good story; I'll say that for him. I don't get tired of hearing it, and I suppose I've heard it ten or eleven times."

"He isn't singing no more," Elias said.

"No," Roberts said. "He's looking us over."

Saying this, Roberts got to his feet and said something in Shawnee. Elias peered all around the dim and shaggy clearing of light made by their campfire, trying to see even into the moon glow between the thick pillars of the trees, but he couldn't see anything. Until suddenly, he saw an old Indian standing there, much closer than he had dreamed possible.

Roberts motioned once with his open hand. "We don't have no whiskey with us, Thobqueh," he said, "but we got tobacco. Come and set a spell."

Thobqueh moved slowly forward, leaning heavily on a cane, and sat down next to the fire. He was a sturdy old Indian, dressed in deerskins that were darkened by age and wearing an old tri-cornered hat that had belonged to a militia general during the Revolution. Under the hat, Thobqueh's long hair shone like silver against the

wrinkled, horse-hide darkness of his face. But the most surprising thing about him was his right-eye, which was blind and shrivelled to the size of a snowflake.

When Thobqueh had learned who they were and where they were going, he sat for a long time in silence, smoking his pipe. Finally Roberts turned to the Indian and, like a man reciting, said, "Grandfather, Thobqueh is not happy in this land. The Scioto bottoms are not his home. Why don't he go back to live with the Shawnee?"

The old Indian raised his head and stared at Roberts. "Thobqueh don't do this thing," he said after a pause. "Why? Because Thobqueh is your Father. Thobqueh is Father to all the Long Rifles."

"What can he mean by that?" Elias said, addressing Roberts.

"Just hang on," Roberts said. "He'll tell you."

But Thobqueh didn't begin right away. He sat silently for a few minutes, puffing deeply on his pipe and staring into the depth of the yellow flames before him. Roberts jabbed the fire once more with a stick, and again a volley of sparks shot upwards into the leaves.

Then the Indian began his story: "In those days Thobqueh was a young man, and he lived in the old time village of Picawillma. There was a big sickness and a lot of people died, and the ones that lived were weak and full of sleep for a long time after they got well.

"The sickness went away, but one day the old king stood up in council and told us that now no woman had a big belly or showed she was about to grow a child. The king said he had asked his wives about this and they told him it was so. There was an awful medicine in the Shawnee, and the king said if it didn't leave, the Shawnee would someday all be dead."

Thobqueh stopped speaking, and when Elias looked up, he saw the old man sitting with his eyes closed and his head turned halfway to the side. Was he listening for something? Was he waiting for Roberts or Elias to speak?

"Maybe he's gone to sleep," Elias whispered to Roberts. But Roberts pulled his pipe out of his mouth, and shook his head no.

And then the old man said, "It was Thobqueh who saved his people. Birth spirit came to Thobqueh in a dream that same night, and said, 'Thobqueh must make a little man out of clay and bury it in the ground. Why was he named "Hole in the Day" if he was not meant for great medicine? Just as the sun turned black in the

middle of the day Thobqueh was born, so Thobqueh is still supposed to live in night. Men come out of night, and they go back to night; but Thobqueh always carries part of night with him from the time he was born and the sun turned black in the middle of the day.'

"So Thobqueh did this thing, went to a hillside and dug up the clay with his fingers, and made a little man no bigger than an ear of corn. And all this time, birth spirit was in Thobqueh's head, and everything Thobqueh did was dark like sleep. That night it was full moon, and Thobqueh went out in the cornfield and buried clay man.

"And then the women had babies again. The Shawnee were the big warriors along the Scioto, and no other people came here unless the Shawnee wanted them. But all this time, Thobqueh had dreams. Sometimes it was birth spirit. Thobqueh would say to birth spirit, 'Why do you come in Thobqueh's sleep like this? Why don't you leave Thobqueh alone?' and birth spirit said, 'Are you not Hole-in-the-day? Do you think you go anywhere and don't have night with you?'

"Clay man came too. This same clay man Thobqueh himself had made came into dreams and walked up and down, but he never said a word. Soon, Thobqueh got to know clay man well, because Thobqueh tracked him in the dark sleep, and he learned all about him, like a hunter learns about a deer or a lynx.

"Clay man was not a Shawnee. Thobqueh saw this. Sometimes clay man wore hair on his face. Once Thobqueh saw him with a stick in his hand, and the stick shot fire. Thobqueh saw this happen when he was still a young man, and the Shawnee were kings of all the Scioto bottoms.

"Many years later, Thobqueh was hunting on the big river, the one the Seneca call Ohah-oh, and he saw two boatloads of Long Rifles on the river. When Thobqueh saw this, he knew they were the same clay men he had seen in his sleep. Thobqueh fell down on the ground and buried him head in his arms and cried without making a noise. Thobqueh saw that he had created them. Thobqueh saw he was the Father of these men."

The Indian stopped talking, and Roberts once more took a stick and stabbed the fire to make it burn brighter. Thobqueh picked up a burning twig and touched it to his pipe, which had gone out. For several minutes he sat there smoking.

Elias was tired from the long, hard ride, and suddenly he wanted nothing more than to go to sleep. Roberts, too, seemed to be half

dozing into the fire. Even the old Indian's eyelids were heavy. The blind eye remained unchanged, but his good eye was glistening, as if it were half-flooded by sleep. Without saying anything, Roberts got up and banked the fire, and in a few minutes, they all wrapped themselves up in their blankets and went to sleep.

Elias dozed off immediately, but he came awake again in the night.

He lay there in his blanket, while Roberts snored from his place beyond the fire, and the night insects chittered and screamed as loud as distant birds. Thobqueh was sleeping in the shadows, out of sight.

For a long time, Elias couldn't go back to sleep. He kept thinking about the cornfield where, over fifty years ago, Thobqueh had buried the clay man. Of course it had been like that cornfield Roberts and he had ridden through late that day. Maybe that very field where the insects sang and the horses stumbled. And the night must have been very much like this night, when Thobqueh had gone out into the field with the clay man no bigger than an ear of corn.

Elias thought that he might dream, and for a long while he resisted sleep. But then the fatigue of the hard day's ride rose up once more in his body, and he settled down into a deep and dreamless silence.

The three men awoke early in the morning. A wet mist had risen from the river, and they paced about as silent as shadows as they prepared to leave. Elias fetched the horses, and when he returned, Thobqueh was saying good-by. He stood there for a moment, leaning heavily on his cane and holding his other hand up; then he turned and moved off into the milky vapor. Soon, Elias heard him start to sing, "How Firm a Foundation!" The fog made his voice seem to come from all directions, as if it had soaked into the air itself. Then he and Roberts mounted and started off in the other direction.

"Where did he learn that hymn?" Elias asked Roberts an hour later, when they had ridden out of the bottoms. The fog had lifted, but there were dark clouds to the north.

"Oh, he's learned a lot of hymns from preachers here and there," Roberts said.

"It's strange, but he didn't finish his story last night," Elias said. "There must have been more to tell."

"Yes. I've heard more, but he's old and forgetful. He don't always tell things the same way; but generally they're the same."

"What did he do after he saw those first white men?" Elias said.

Roberts remained silent while his horse scrambled a little, climbing up a sharp turn in the path. Then he said, "Most Indians believe that if you save a man's life, you're responsible for that man from then on. I once saw three Mingoes stand on a river bank in flood time while they watched one of their tribesmen drown because they were afraid of what he might do afterwards if they saved him. We all sat down and had a pipeful of tobacco after the thing happened, and they told me they had weighed the chances and had decided against it. Because the fellow that had drowned had once killed a man when he was drunk, and these three friends of his didn't want another murder on their conscience if they saved this fellow and he killed somebody else. It makes sense to an Indian."

"But what does this have to do with Thobqueh?"

"That's one of the craziest parts of his story," Roberts said. "According to Thobqueh, he did more than save a man's life. He created a whole race of men — us, you and me, and all the people they call Long Rifles. This was way back before the War for Independence, remember, and even before the French and Indian War. Way before them times. Thobqueh's supposed to be a hundred years old."

"You mean he really thinks he's our Creator, and he can't bear the thought of leaving us alone? Of abandoning us?"

"That's about the size of it," Roberts said. By now, the two men were on a kind of road running north and south, and they were able to ride comfortably side by side, so that talk was a little easier.

"Back in civilization," Elias said, "they'd have him in a mad house. We have people like that who think they're John the Baptist or even Jesus Christ."

"Sure," Roberts said. "But out here, there's plenty of wilderness for Thobqueh to roam around in, and I don't reckon he does any harm."

"Do the Indians believe him?"

Roberts thought a minute; then he said, "No, I don't think many of them do. If they did, they'd kill him, I think. Because the Long Rifles are devils, so far as the Shawnee can figure. Still, I don't know. I've heard some of them speak of old Thobqueh as a kind of witch. He has led what you might call a charmed life, from all I've heard."

"Like what?"

"Well, once he nearly froze to death in a blizzard down near Marietta, and an ironsmith brought him around with gin. Another

time, Thobqueh was blind drunk and fell off a raft in the Ohio. He got ashore by some kind of miracle, but he was so drunk that all he could do was flop down in a mud-flat and snore. He was too drunk to get up and walk. Then another time he was standing on a parade ground when lightning struck a tree he was standing under. It killed three people outright, but all it did to Thobqueh was burn his arm and shoulder."

"So the Indians think he's some kind of saint, is that it?" Elias asked.

"That's part of it, although it ain't that simple. If they *had* to come to some decision about Thobqueh, I reckon they'd either kill him or treat him like a god. Part of it's his name. I was talking once with a surveyor in a tavern up in Chillicothe, and he wrote some figures down on a piece of paper, and then he told me that right about the time Thobqueh was born, the moon got in front of the sun. I don't know what he called it."

"An eclipse," Elias said.

"Sounded like that," Roberts said. "Anyway, the Indians have funny ideas about madness. They think it's kind of sacred. They just don't look at it the way we do."

"I guess not," Elias said. They rode on in silence for a while, and then Elias said, "I can't get over the way he stopped in the middle of his story. I was surprised at that."

"I wasn't," Roberts said. "Thobqueh does things like that. I've seen him stop right in the middle of a word, and get a faraway look on his face, like he hears footsteps. Only there ain't no footsteps, except maybe in the old man's head. He's awful old, as well as crazy."

"It was kind of like that last night," Elias said.

"Yes, kind of. Sometimes he has fits. I ain't seen him have any; but I've heard of them. There is something I *have* seen, though, and that's old Thobqueh sitting cross-legged on the ground and not moving a muscle, only with tears running down his cheeks. When he's like that, you don't know whether he's drunk or sad or just plain simple-minded, the way old people get."

"Strange," Elias said. Then they came around a bend in the road and Elias saw three columns of white smoke standing in the distant sky.

"Chillicothe," Roberts said, and both men spurred their horses into a trot.

A few minutes later they rounded another bend, and came into view of a cabin in the middle of a small clearing. Somewhere in the

woods there was the sound of an ax ringing against hard wood, but other than that there was no sign of life about the cabin.

Beyond the clearing, they came into deep woods again, and Roberts was saying they were going to have rain. Then Elias saw something that looked like a smooth brown boulder in the weeds beside the road. When they came closer, Roberts said, "Lookee there," and pointed as a thick gust of flies blew away from the bloated belly of a dead horse.

Elias slowed a little, to look, but Roberts kept moving ahead. When he spurred his horse forward, Elias said, "I wonder what he died of."

"Didn't you see that hole in his neck?" Roberts asked. "Somebody shot him."

"Why would they shoot a horse?"

"I don't know. Maybe one of his legs was broken. I couldn't see his legs because of the weeds. It's a wonder the wolves haven't gotten to him."

When they came out of the woods, the town of Chillicothe lay before them, and the Scioto River lay beyond a line of sycamores and poplars to their left. The air had gotten dark and glassy, and a long sleepy rumble of thunder came echoing back from the hills. The slate-colored sky beyond the hills pulsed with sheet lightning, and three or four cold drops fell against Elias' hands.

The thunder came again, louder this time; and by the time the two men had dismounted from their horses, a slow heavy rain covered the town, and the day had turned as dark as twilight.

Inside the tavern, candles and oil lamps were already lit. Elias and Roberts each had a glass of rum and a dish of venison pie before Roberts left.

Elias spent the rest of the day meeting people and getting his church business in order. That night he dreamed of a dead horse standing as still as a tree in the ragged weeds of an abandoned cornfield. He could hear the insects singing so loud they sounded like birds, and he saw a hundred bent cornstalks glowing silver, like bearded lances in the darkness. Somewhere in the distance a man was calling out or possibly singing the hymn, "How Firm a Foundation!" Even in the dream, Elias wondered if it was Thobqueh, but there was no way of finding out, because the man who was singing did not come out of the darkness, and eventually even his singing stopped and there was nothing but silence. Not even the insects, now; not even the wind rustling in the cornstalks.

ESTATE OF REALITY

JAMES BOYER MAY

in an age of free venture
(raged full of fuel,
for an hep-cage indenture)
unroming, toga-less leaders:
generalstars, lately relighted
by flickers from stumps . . .
their last then removed
as descendant
incumbents from tanks.
Palled corps of wax pedlars
are bearing Old Forest-
ers long-dunked-up corpse:
all chewing on pined scrubble-gum.
One, up to five-stars
jeticate uniform
vastness of bungles:
islands of aisles between
long bedded files
of plaster-fright sheds —
each plotted for nookylized
needed and gooseless-
ly legal-egged PROlifetariat.

JAMES BOYER MAY has published two books of poetry, and had poems in countless magazines, anthologies, and on record. He is also well-known for his editorship of *Trace*.

Two Poems by Peter Stevens

SELIPUK LAMASERY

sailing across the rocks,
plateaux and sliding screes
beaches high and dry,
its pennants bristling
with magic words,
propitiations falling
not on stony ground
but flying over the earth
to the gods who steer
this holy ship
through the desolation.

In the blown cold
the prayer-flags clap,
cracking the stiff colours,
fluttering prayers
above the waste,
whirling invisible words
over the peaked snow
from the prayer wheels.

In the mountains
the thrust of flesh
is soft as snow.
Peaks purify the soul;
ice mortifies
the body's warmth.

The temple dogs huddle
outside the walls.
Buzzards batter their wings,
stretch their scrawny necks
against the streaming prayers,
where a purified soul
leaps from body's pull
and floats into the wind.

Now lying stiff
on the hard ground

outside the lamasery
the body belongs
to the buzzards
to the temple dogs
in the great solitude
howling with prayers
under the blank sky.

PARADISE LOST — HINDU STYLE

The snow-capped Himalayas have become objects of pilgrimage; and some Hindus, in their hysteria, look beyond that to the North Pole, of which modern mapmakers have made them aware. There, someone will tell you in all the blaze of Madras, there at the North Pole lies the true home of the Hindus.

V. S.NAIPAUL.

Falling into India
the Hindus glowing with guilt
sit weeping by brown rivers
darkening under the sun,
and look to the cool mountains
to contemplate redemption.

Beaten by heat they gibber
their hysterical prayers
wailing to sharp-stringed sitars.
They lull their loss with rhythm
from dholaks and the tablas,
playing fingers thinned to bone.

They hope their cows will ride them
to the range of ice and calm,
plodding slopes beyond the peaks
until they reach the tundra,
plains of frozen innocence,
and build a pilgrim's city.

But now, sad by the Ganges,
they picture gurus sitting
naked by the fishing holes
growing pale in the blizzards
but warmed by the fires of faith
the blazing fate of Hindus.

PETER STEVENS has appeared frequently in *Prism international* and other journals. He lives in Saskatoon.

Two Poems by Elizabeth Bartlett

THE IMITATOR

Always off key,
always the voice as its sounds
in somebody else's mouth,
the habit-lie
that inherits its past
and has no legacy
for the future.

An amateur
apprenticed to a parrot
and suffering from amnesia,
who has no ear
for his own vibration,
no eye for the mirror
mimicking him.

With hydra grin
he wears his wide resemblance
to many things not himself:
the chameleon,
ape, cuckoo: the counter-
part of any and all whims
suit his nature.

Mostly vulture
he collects plumes, horns, whale bones,
and photostats the carbons
of signatures
with the finest forgery;
his shadow echoes far,
his splash is seen.

THE FIRST TIME TOOK NINE MONTHS

He watched her cutting the rose tree,
wanting to run out
and shout *No, stop!*

The fuchsia was next — the dry twigs
fell beneath her clippers,
leaving a trail behind her.

It won't reach, he told himself,
there aren't enough
in the whole world!

The acanthus simply let go,
they had bloomed too long and tall;
the ripe seeds burst from their pods.

The ache in his throat made his neck
tingle, his hands cold.
Not yet, please don't!
During his last week at home,
she pruned and pared and stripped
every vine, tree, plant and shrub.

Then wiping the sweat from her face,
she smiled in relief:
now they can grow.

ELIZABETH BARTLETT is poetry editor for *Etc.* and author of four books of poems.

Two Poems by Michael Ondaatje

THE DIVERSE CAUSES

for than all erbys and treys renewyth a man and woman, and in lyke wyse lovers callyth to their mynde olde jantylnes and olde servyse, and many kynde dedes that was forgotyn by neclygence.

Three clouds and a tree
reflect themselves on a toaster.
The kitchen window hangs scarred,
shattered by winter hunters.

We are in a cell of civilised magic.
Stravinsky roars at breakfast,
our coffee and milk is powdered.

Outside the world is a whisper.
A May god somewhere
moves his paws to alter wind
to redden the breasts of flowers
to scatter shadows of tree and cloud.
The minute birds walk confident
jostling the cold grass.
The wind stutters all day
beneath a shatterproof sky.
The world not yet of men.

We clean buckets of their sand
to fetch water in the morning,
reach for winter cobwebs,
sweep up moths who have forgotten to waken.
When the children sleep angled
behind their bottles, you can hear mice prowl.
I turn a page
careful not to break the rhythms
of your sleeping head on my hip,
watch the moving under your eyelid
that turns like the fire

and we have love and the god outside
until ice starts to limp
in the brown hidden waterfalls,
or my daughter burns the lake
by reflecting her red shoes in it.

FOR JOHN, FALLING:

Men stopped in the heel of sun,
the hum of engines evaporated;
the Cat displayed itself bellied with mud,
balancing; immense.

No one ran to where
the tensed muscles curled unusually,
where jaws collected blood,
the hole in his chest the size of fists,
hands clutched to his eyes like a blindness.

Arched there he made
ridiculous requests for air.
And twelve construction workers
what should they do but surround
or examine the path of falling.

And the press in bright shirts,
a doctor, the foreman scuffing a mound,
men removing helmets,
the machine above him
shielding out the sun
while he drowned
in the beautiful dark orgasm of his mouth.

MICHAEL ONDAATJE's book of poems, *The Dainty Monsters*, was published this year by The Coach House Press, Toronto. He is one of the editors of *Quarry*, at Queen's University, Kingston.

GORDON WEAVER's stories have appeared in *Minnesota Review, Epoch, Perspective,* and others. He teaches at Marietta College in Ohio.

The Entombed Man of Thule

GORDON WEAVER

IT IS OVER AND I admit it, yet certainly that is not enough. There has to be, should be, something more. I insist on it. More. Listen.

There is a man in the ice in Thule. No one knows who he was or how long he has been there. The glacier creeps down from the Greenland ice cap, and one day someone saw his body there deep in the ice. Servicemen, tourists, curious and morbid, go to see him with their cameras. He cannot be clearly seen. He wears winter clothes, perhaps the skin of animals he trapped before he was trapped himself. His face is tan and his eyes are open. His arms and legs are stretched out; he looks more astonished than dead.

Now this is useless information, grotesque information, but I want to repeat it. I thought of this, of him, as I lay awake past midnight in my empty house, listening to the rain, as patient and persistent against the window near my bed as the soft tears my pretty young wife used to cry into her handkerchief while I pretended to be asleep beside her. Oh yes, she's gone: if I knew why then I might have prevented it. Suffice it to say I am capable of cruelty, not stupid enough to escape my guilt for it. But this night in December it rained when it should have snowed in this climate, and the rain froze as it fell, and I thought of the man in the ice at Thule.

I already had the facts from LaZotte, the local television an-

nouncer, on the eleven o'clock news. Poor LaZotte stood at an outline map and traced the causes of this Friday night's weather. Colliding fronts of air, he said, stratas of conflicting temperature, peculiarly positioned centers of high and low pressure. He was earnest, but the tip of his pointer quivered, and he gave way to a commercial.

Poor LaZotte. My pretty wife and I used to laugh at him together, ridiculing his pretentious solemnity as he awkwardly ticked off the day's events in the world, scoffing at his stammers and mispronunciations. Without my wife I felt pity and remorse as he came back, seated at a desk to recap and conclude. He tries. He explains. But his eyes, set in dark hollows, were vacant with ignorance. His receding hairline fails to make him look intelligent, only harried, and the studio lights betrayed the swath of incipient beard around his small mouth. He forgets to glance at the dummy script in his hands until it is time to pencil in artificial marginalia, and the program's credits are superimposed across his deeply lined forehead.

It is thus and so in the world today, LaZotte shakily insists, and if I could have touched him I would have patted his pale cheek and said, yes, yes, I understand, it's all right now, sleep. But it did rain all night, and froze as it fell. LaZotte gave warnings.

The roads are precarious, fifty thousand homes are without power (reinforcements, trucks and men, are on the way from nearby cities to repair damage), fuel, food, and shelter are available at fire stations. Live wires menace pedestrians and autos, industry is halted, police are alerted. There will be no basketball games tomorrow, testimonial luncheons and rummage sales are cancelled, examinations for civil service positions are postponed. Mothers, keep your children indoors!

But my house escaped. In the morning, when I wake grateful that I have not dreamed, or if I have, grateful that I cannot remember it, my coffee perks and my orange juice is cold. My bath is hot. My silent mercury switches break the curtained gloom, and the telephone buzzes reassuringly in my ear when I lift the receiver from its cradle. Order prevails, and I take heart.

Bi-weekly, my hair is trimmed, just as bi-weekly my wife rose early on Saturdays to keep her appointments with her psychotherapist. The barbershop is close, so I walked because the lock on the overhead garage door is frozen fast, its coat of ice going opaque with tiny networks of cracks like veins when I hammer on it with my gloved fist. The ice covers everything. Winter-stunted shrubs

bend double, each twig changed to a sharp spine. Lawns ripple and reflect the sun. Tree limbs droop, and the branch of a large oak lies heavily across the wires carrying power to my house like a crippled leg in a sling. My neighbor's house looked as empty as mine. From my house to the road on my drive I shuffled like a skater, afraid to pick up my feet. The road is easier, cindered and salted because our taxes are ample. Autos left out overnight are glazed, as if a bowl of clear sugar frosting had been dumped over them and allowed to harden.

Halfway down, two strands of wire had fallen across the road, and as I approached them a woman came toward me in her car. She stopped at the wires and stretched to see over her fenders, afraid. Of course they weren't live, and if they were her tires insulated her, but until I smiled to encourage her she sat there, then smiled back, closed her eyes, and inched her car across. And I was afraid to step on them, hopped over, like a child sparing his mother's back.

In the yard of the small Episcopal church whose Sunday bell used to wake my wife and me in time to be at the drugstore before the newspapers sold out, there is a small tree, tied with a rag to a stake for support. One shrunken brown leaf remained, hanging like a jewel in its ice jacket, an insect preserved centuries in amber, my man of Thule again.

The barbershop was dark, but I made blinders of my hands and put my face close to the window. They wore coats and gloves, staring dully back at me. Inside I was snowblind for a moment. "Can I get a haircut?" I asked, because they seemed to wait for me to speak first.

"How the hell cut hair without power?" the owner said. He began to pace angrily, perhaps only to keep warm. "The busiest day supposed to be and no damn power," he said. He has only cut my hair once. "I called and says how about a rebate on the bill this month for this, but that's a joke you know," he said. Because he blusters with confidence I didn't tell him how I liked my hair cut. He is a racing fan, a bettor, has a picture of a horse and jockey in the winner's circle at Saratoga behind his chair, and I know only the obvious (Man O' War, Eddie Arcaro, the Derby), so we had no conversation. He bets, operates pools, laughs viciously when he collects, believes in luck.

"I can give you a haircut if you don't mind the handclippers," the other barber, a young man, said. He unfolded the apron for me and pumped up the chair a notch.

"Leave your coat on," the owner said to both of us, "you freeze your wazoo off otherwise," and he left, to phone the power company again, perhaps to rage at the sky and ice for this turn in his fortune.

"I didn't use the handclippers since I was in the navy," my barber said. I know his life: his barber's license bears an unpronounceable Polish name; he is twenty-five or six, considers his life over since he left the navy. He laments. "You should see the forearms on those Italian barbers from using a handclippers all their life," he said. He is nostalgic over his Mediterranean cruises, played soccer in high school, wishes he could continue to play, but admits sadly that he is too far out of shape now, drinks beer and plays darts in taverns on his nights out. "I learned to cut hair first on a ship in the navy you know," he said.

"I think I remember you telling me that." The owner returned.

"Hold off paying the bill for a month and see how they kick," he said, "but they got no time for complaints now." He sat in his chair and smoked, flipped savagely through the pages of a tattered girlie magazine, and we spoke no more until I left. I sat in the chair and watched their reflections in the mirrors, each framed in a separate panel, the borders etched with an ornate wreath of some impossible plant, like asymmetrical fingers of frost on a window.

The jaws of the clippers were cold against my neck, my barber sniffled, the shaving cream had to come from an aerosol can because the black dispenser could not now hum and ooze warm foam into his palm, and little cuttings itched in my collar because the vacuum was powerless on its hook, like a dead snake hung over a stick. I paid and tipped what I always tip and left them to nostalgia and regret, to puzzle over the bitter twists of chance. On the walk back to my house the wind rose, and branches began to fall.

My neighbor telephoned me from a hardware store; his house was without power. With my permission he would enter my basement and tap my electricity somehow, start his oil furnace. "I called a little before but you were out," he said, "then I remembered you get your hair cut on Saturdays."

"Every other Saturday." He is a fixer, eminently practical and efficient. At ease in flannel shirts and old trousers, laced boots, he rolls and seeds his lawn, paints, repairs storm windows, cleans gutters, putties, plasters, connects.

He arrived with his purchase, a long-handled chopper, and unable to resist the challenge, worked away with both hands like a post-hole digger while I watched from my window. Half an hour,

forty-five minutes, nearly an hour, and at last he ceased, looked out across the broad expanse of his iced driveway, looked at the small circle of broken blocks and chips he had cleared himself, then looked up at the umbrella of drooping ice-laden elm branches, like the ribs of a dome over his head. He shrugged, sighed (I imagine), and went inside depressed with the magnitude of his own foolish ambition.

He came later though, refreshed, while I watched still from my picture window, wearing a belt with holsters and loops for his tools, trailing a heavy electrical cord, and I listened to him work in my basement. I think he distrusts me; I hire repairmen, I allowed my wife to wash our windows last spring, I have an alien look with a pliers or screwdriver in my hand, I cannot change a flat tire or start a power mower.

The branches fell all through the afternoon and into the night. For long minutes there was a silence, the ring of tire chains as one of the telephone company's olive trucks passed on the road; silence again. It began with a very high-pitched creaking, almost a scream, then deepened to a grinding, a wrenching like the bones of a giant being torn loose from their muscles, a loud popping and snapping as the branch broke free, a rush and crackle as it fell, a crash. Silence. One fell in my drive, its sleeve of ice shattered into tiny sparkling bits, as though a chandelier had smashed on a polished ballroom floor.

My neighbor came out to survey, already seeing the thaw when he would drag the branches into piles, section them into kindling for his fireplace with the roar of his chain saw. I watched him study the straining wires to my house, shake his head doubtfully, surely cluck his tongue. I should have called someone, the telephone company, power company, to come and brace the wires, but I did nothing.

When the sun was high the ice went from white to crystal, and as it sank, shaded blue, then blackish as dusk fell. I could make the bound trunk of the large oak turn fluid by moving my eyes across an imperfection in the glass of my picture window, but this was all. I sat, I watched, my coffee perked and my house was warm. Eleven o'clock came and there was only the headlights of cars on the road, my neighbor's windows, the groaning of straining limbs in the wind. I could not face LaZotte again, so went to bed and slept without dreaming.

Or if I dreamed I do not remember it, but woke suddenly, not thrashing, not frightened, but supine, surprised simply to be awake,

aware, thinking. The house was very cold. The power lines had broken, there was a pink-white glow in my window, and then I was afraid. Electrocution, fire, explosion, I thought, but this passed. I sat up in my bed and cried out, "More!"

"Listen!" I cried. LaZotte, I said, your facts fall short; you believe no more than I do. I am too tired to lament, to hear weeping. Luck has a stone face. You will not fix me with gadgets! I huddled under my blankets, no pretty young wife there to warm my bed. And the man of Thule? When the glacier has moved far enough toward the coast of Greenland, it will melt, and someone will bury him.

There ought to be more.

Two Poems by C. J. Newman

NOTES ON A CANADIAN JOURNEY:
The Decency of a Neutral People

Sped the Canadian landscape through
saw
nothing to detain the eye
nothing belonged to me
could claim me, nothing
CN three days two nights
an unbelievably small land
for all the big press it has received
the NFB Canadian anthem cartoon
Oh Canada winging us across a papier-mâché mock-up land
was much bigger — an idea of bigness at least

(But then I am a Jew
6,000,000 deaths more real
a continent more vast and varied
red rivers of blood mountains
of bodies ore to be mined
from the fillings of teeth communal
graves deeper than any ocean bed
histories of death volumes of rich
dense tangled fact more real more real
infinitely more real than the pallid
Canadian fact Is a fact
more real for being imbued with pain
or stolen joy Why yes I think it is
I am a Jew Is it possible to be a Canadian

without being first Jew Scot
French-Canadian Do I digress
Perhaps to be a Jew is to be unable
to do otherwise but at least there is tension
between the end to be achieved
and the irresistible digression To be Canadian
on the other hand
is to be an historical aside)

Such poverty of existence
such thinness borrowed artifacts
hand-me-down ideas a quiver of
reaction now and then We all stand
shivering
in the garments of our non-existence
exposed to perhaps the single Canadian fact
the wind blows cold from the North
Can art be rooted in non-being
In the desire to be yes in
the inability to be perhaps
but in mere paucity of being — the decency
of a neutral people?

CN: the Canadian National Railway. NFB: the National Film Board. Oh Canada: one of Canada's two national anthems.

GUILT IS THE THIRST

Who deserves innocence:
The child? Adam in the Garden?
The dead? It is a thing
Known only when it's gone:
The fire's absence when it
Burns and does not burn:
A fiction of the guilty.
It is the wish not to be;
But who has not wished that?

In nothing, perhaps, are we
So unique and yet so commonplace
As in our guilt. And yet innocence
Is much the same. In innocence
We are as discrete
As the waters of a river waiting to serve:
Who scoops a handful
To quench his thirst
Separates that handful
From the waters amongst which
It was content to flow; his thirst
Distinguishes it: this thirst,
This water — a ritual act, a service
To life.

But guilt is the thirst
that feeds on itself, contributing
Nothing, secret and ashamed.
It is the uniqueness of the mirrored
Self, a closed system that admits
No light: death. A kind of innocence.

C. J. NEWMAN'S *We Always Take Care of Our Own* won the Beta Sigma Phi First Novel Award and the H. M. Caiserman Award. He lives in Montreal.

THE PARTY

R. D. MATHEWS

We know a lot about death now
about what we tell each other happens
and how keeping alive is the great victory
the superabundant joy
and how sex whateverelse it is
is life and liberty and freedom
from the black manipulations
of the human soul
and how the new freedom
the new joyous superabundant
communication tolerance and understanding
opens and opens the heart
the tiny puny human heart
to love
to fresh experience
to everything that lives
and everything that lives is highly
if not totally
beautiful and holy

I was thinking that
going up the elevator to the party
feeling loose and open.
At the door I saw someone
was blowing a trumpet
and some were talking
and a few were making drinks
conversation
overtures
until a heavy girl wandered in
looking pregnant sunken overfed
splattered green and gray and blonde

She didn't say much or seem
as if she thought much
except she kept staring and staring
at a blonde Swedish-looking boy
who may have been queer
or just more refined than everybody else
until the trumpet stopped
and all the conversation stopped
and she stepped across the room
and said something I couldn't understand

And then she spat in his face
And everybody moved around him
and spat too
and when he got up to go they pushed him down
and tore his clothes
until he was naked
yelling at him: "Nigger," "Dirty Jew,"
"Mick," "Communist"
and they continued spitting
until the pregnant dirty bitch
undid a black belt
slowly
from round her sort-of waist
and handed it to the host
who was the first to draw blood

There was noise and blood
especially
I remember the wet red blood
in the blonde Swedish-looking hair

and everyone seemed very high
in fact hypnotized
even to the point of a hot general
ejaculation
in the cold frenzy of the going-on
the happening
but the body didn't smell
and the blood stopped running pretty soon
except to ooze and bubble for awhile
if you looked at it close up

And the heavy pregnant-looking girl
put a record on
a slow moaning record
and everyone got hold of partners
for dancing
until she threw back her head and sang
and everybody sang with the record
because it was a party

And the dancers moved in the room
with the moaning music
everyone together
everyone dancing together
and singing with whatever voice
they had to sing with
and I remember thinking
this is funny I never expected this
I probably wouldn't even have come here
if I'd known this was going to happen.

R. D. Mathews' fiction, poetry, and criticism have appeared in a variety of Canadian journals.

NIGHTS IN THE CARIBBEAN

HENRY BEISSEL

A beast growls black
puffs up
from the jungle sleek and tumid
leaps like dusk
from shadow distends in a rush
hot over hills
over the sea takes
fills to the air
the sky hovers breathless
light lancing
myriad and clean as stars
his outstretched wings
and he watches one-eyed his prey.

The island lies prostrate
in her bats vomited
from cockroach caves after
the whiplash sun
dogs lick her wounds
bark in terror
the night-jar calls her pulse
and pans reply.

The white of eyes
marks men till they shut
out the dark
pried open for a pearl
for a penny swamp
oysters mark women
hot pepper
sauce in the ramshackle town
by country roads
every pearl has an oyster
in the fields of sweat
packs of dogs
nose bitches fuck
the stars bark
to keep the dark at bay.

Night watches his prey
behind bars
of palm-leaves through cracks
in a ceiling of creepers
down pillars of cyp
saman immortelle
thunder all the instincts
that master the bush
the snake fangs the mongoose
snarls the opossum
no need to feign in the dark
waiting stalking
to sting strike bite
prey and be
prey for life is blood
in black fur
the tarantula stifles the moon
trapped in a web
frantic fire-flies
their pulse of light
dying hard gently
like night.

A bell tolls for matins
alien and unheeded
here hours go by
craving swamp
oysters squelch shut
lids on eyeballs
bloodshot pearls found
and lost mating
done darkly the beast
had his way
prey and labour in the sugar
estate of his whims
cocks roads shacks
bark at his retreat
westward into the one-eyed sea.

HENRY BEISSEL teaches English at Sir George Williams University and edits *Edge*; Coach House Press published his *New Wings for Icarus*, a volume of poetry. He is presently translating selected poems from the German of Walter Bauer.

Two Poems by Irving Layton

LIKE A MOTHER DEMENTED

Like a mother demented nature caresses
her children before she chokes them to death;
she raises tall palmtrees and whirlwinds to crack them:
only by continually devouring herself does she endure.

Out of her immemorial dung come flowers and stars,
come gracious ladies with tiny troutbones between their teeth
or goose-fat on the tips of flirtatious tongues
— with animal perfumes on their cool adulterous wrists.

At a later hour, the gracious ladies fall into the earth
where graveworms nibble all day long on their delicate parts,
unaware how fallen breasts and vaginas once gave birth
to mediocre poetry, to ecstasies and sighs.

For you, my sweet, you and me, the human race entire
she invented to watch this tragic and strange affair
for who wishes to play Hamlet when the gallery is bare?
Mind, Mind was in the mind of that performer!

Now when lightning splits the high arrogant oaks
and mountains rise and fall; or lions and tigers prowl
or crippled poets run and win the coveted laurel:
man, her darling pervert, sees and notes it all.

But the cost, the cost of this ghastly privilege
is unendurable guilt that we dredge and dredge
as horrorstruck we find our condemned selves on the stage
beside her, nature's most murderous tool and accomplice.

Love, I kiss your navel and my X-ray eyes see
fisheyes wink in your dissolving entrails
and when I write my lying poems know I am using
an anodyne from which the fastidious man recoils.

THE NEXT TIME DOES IT

I

The old taboos
are falling
Eins
Zwei
Drei

There's a lot
of good food
running around
on
two legs

II

Don't worry, darling
I won't let them
eat you

I want you
for myself

III

If you're starving, mister,
see the mayor;
he had a large family
and might have
some food
to spare

IRVING LAYTON has published many books of poetry. He continues to be one of Canada's best writers.

Two Poems by Thomas Bridge

music maker

My old man loved music but to quote his own
words he "never had time to learn"
what with bringing up children and earning
and weeping in his beer on weekends
he was right he never had time for learning
or living or loving or laughing
except when he was sober and then too much and
from the outside only like the
cheshire cat all grin in front of worse than nothing
stoned oblivious to the world
he would sit all night alone at the upright old piano yearning
turning aspiration into act by will
staring at the still keys like some master mystic
performing the old rope trick gazing
at the wavering ivory hooding his misty eyes to
tune the outer world to his inner ear
while pumping up his psychic pressure waiting for the
crescendo of his confidence to
drumroll out his fingertips held hooked and hyped
high above the board higher
now leaning back eyebrows raised eyelids shut
arms straight out almost doubting
yet sure his fingers fell to a cacophonous *chu-u-ung* . . .
then he ran them rippling up the keys
or just an inch or so above the keys that the mystic
music of his mind would not be dis-
concerted by the real: feeling the foolish silence
full of people he poked a slow note
or two with his thumb "to see if the instrument were
properly working" which it always was
then up away and sucking on another beer outer equanimity
with his ulcer stabbing stab stabbing
until he hollered at his kids who leapt like marionettes
while he played his banjo like it was a drum
(at far five in the morning rang out the click of his percussive spoons
as his wife's tired fingers punched out the piano's old time country
tunes)

the new realism

in poetry would be prose, wouldn't it.
But of course a different kind of prose, a prose seen from an
odd angle, like seeing someone sitting in a chair
but seeing it from the bottom through a glass floor
for instance. But seeing it, I mean really, the manufacturer's trade
mark on the underside of the seat and the rough unfinished
        plywood bolted
to the chrome pipes that make up the legs of the chair and
        the scuffed
rubber tips covering the tubes and the scuffed rubber soles
        of the sitter's
shoes, with the hair on her legs, the dim underskirt
        and slipedge showing
with perhaps two scuffed elbows showing at the sides of the sharp
        chair
from nowhere which isn't falling

you are

THOMAS BRIDGE teaches English at Western Washington State College. These poems are his first publications.

THE SKUNK UNDER THE GRANARY

ROBERT KROETSCH

1.

My daughter wants to know,
Where does the dark go,
daddy? She flicks on the light
and laughs at her invention.

I ponder in the night,
Where does the dark go?
We had a skunk back home,
I tell her in my clumsy way

seeing too late the answer:
that skunk slept all day
under the granary: then at night
came out: he found the dark bright.

2.

A student just this morning
asked: How account for evil
after a good God's warning?
I was stuck most of the day,

poured through Blake and Aristotle
(I even, briefly, tried to pray),
poured a message from a bottle —
then I recalled the friendly skunk

that lived for years on dad's wheat:
aristocratic nose and feet
he had, a white stripe down his back:
the rest, unless I'm wrong, was black.

3.

A critic having read my books
announced to me to him it looks
as if I've read a lot of books.

I pondered that one in the dark.
It looks as if he cannot lose:
I labor, leaving him to choose
which is better, which is bunk —
and now recall my family skunk.

Up to the granary came a pup,
the pup began to play and bark.
The skunk unwilling he should fail
did turn and raise his lovely tail.

Robert Kroetsch teaches at Harpur College in New York State. He is a widely-published poet and the author of two novels.

BUCHTKO

LUCY STEEDS is Peruvian. This is her first publication.

the betrayal

LUCY STEEDS

HE WATCHED Mary light one candle, two, three to start the vigil, even before the sun had drawn its inevitable curve.

It was the last night of their annual fast. And he watched her light the candles and dim the lights that their bodies might be lost in the illusion of vagueness and the suctioning eyes stopped by the languishing pressure of a million particles of dark, against the desire for clinging and loss, against sex, that common palliative of doom.

They had willed it, together, arrived at the creation of a habit against habit. They had extracted days from each grinding year and set them jealously apart, as children do in corners, for the advent of the spirit, days to be spent in contemplation, alone.

And yet, each year, at the end of the fast, he was more aware, more conscious of a growing eagerness on Mary's part, restlessness in this woman, his wife, who had also desired (or accepted the need) to chastise, to temper, to refine the body, that bundle of appetites, hunger summoning the mind to the stomach, thirst to the throat, sex to the genitals. Sex.

And yet, each year he found the need for revision, and brought his points to trial, he the prosecutor and the advocate, finding no alternative to austerity and discipline. No alternative, sex beginning, where?, beginning unpredictably, unlike the other appetites, and its satisfaction involving more than the consumption of an object, more than the object, more than the subject, its satisfaction locked in some elusive sphere of harmony, beyond the object, beyond the subject, eliminating both, and space, and awareness, suddenly fixed, pointing like one dumb inflexible finger to one and the other, ab-

sorbing with promises. And promising, and promising, merely inducing loss.

And he had one potato chip, understanding, for an instant, that she was slow in smoothing these fleshly differences and in cleansing the space between them of the dinner oils. And he had some muscles marinated in a bitter sauce, remembering the withdrawals of previous nights, before dusk, before silence. And looking into her pain-stricken eyes, he wondered about the strength of the woman, and looking at her hard, he thought, hard, "Mary, the end is near."

Then there was a voice at the porch, a cheerful greeting, and then, "Hiding again? Such a mournful couple! A smile. A smile. You can hide, yes, but for how long?"

"You can hide," "But not for long," and he was right. He could hide and fast with Mary, feeding only on the memory of throbbing flesh. And raising a trembling hand, he could touch her and not touch her, finding pride in the sparing of their bodies. But while renewing each year the intent, each year the fast, he could never forget, not for a second, that the end always came; the end when she was made prisoner of the chamber; the end, when the cry was issued; the end, always enacted by him, when he pierced her with electricity and watched her die. This man was right. There could be no lasting subjection of their bodies, one in habit with all bodies; no lasting fast for the sake of the spirit. But nothing could stop them from rising, occasionally, above weakness, nothing from dashing like winged ants, from the rain-soaked earth, towards dryness and the pure light.

This is a bouncing man, he thought. And he gives us advice? He praises Mary's cooking and Mary, "the perfect lady," and then, "Beauty should not be spent in household chores," and, yes, we "ought to travel a little, smile a little, dance a little," yes, "a change of scene, of pace."

Let's ignore, Mary. Mary, let's ignore.

The visitor left to follow, as he always did, those liver-spoiling cocktail appointments of weekend afternoons. And what a man, this man, for a drink, and a laugh, and his question, and their answer, question answer, question-answer, forming a string of gaudy beads for the fiddlings of a bore.

Still, Mary. Mary, still. From my silence and your darkness we shall draw.

They fingered their cocktail glasses, she with a certain lightness and he, pressing his eyes against hers, seeking to calm the woman. Woman, patience, the end is near.

There would be others. There always were. And Mary knew how to keep the wait, proud memories rekindling this passive vigour of her flesh. And waxing the pointed chin.

Not many woman could play Mary's part, he thought, that the gift of contemplation was difficult to keep. And he wondered what other woman in the memory of his past could have sat Mary's peaceful wait, and rested her resting for him and stilled her body thus. And he wondered to what other woman in the already woven fabric of his dreams, or in fantasies to be he would not say day after day, "Woman, woman, look how many cares and troubles you add on to mine," or "Woman how shall I ever learn to quench your thirst?" Not Mary who was frugal.

As they approached the wooden platter of their meal, the sun made a sudden twist. And the splintering pigments of its side thrust a bleeding light. Then again, he wondered about her endurance. The purge.

And neighbor John came at this time, and smiled a bit too softly for the strictness of the hour. He met John's eyes on Mary's face, and was conscious of the quivering of her lips, for John, into a smile for the flowers he brought her, to be replaced then by the knowledge of the vigil in keeping. Flowers, mellowing smiles: men of loving hearts. Ah, tenderly, as John could have her, but never enough and never well, he did not want her. Neither did he want her in a chaos of starched sheets, sweat and little moans. He did not want her. And he saw majesty in their severity. For too many nights he had been priest, and she, priestess and a little more, placed on a pedestal, wedded with lilies, his insistence steadying the indecision of her foot.

He straightened a weary back and claimed his course. And John, dropping his flowers at the foot of the centerpiece cross, left them as they had to be, alone.

As they went back to their bread, he saw, under the steep smooth forehead, Mary's eyes, deep and silence-black. And when they finished their meal she did not say, "Go, you must leave me now." He suspected her courage was waning, that she might not make the last turn. And he had seen the danger, accepting, that even though her womb had been engendered by his insisting spirit, she did not rejoice in austerity as much as he, that even though he had sought to inject in her a real love for the artistry of mortification she was still too much a prisoner of her appetite, she, only a woman.

And the sun dropped, and it was black. And nothing yet accomplished, the vinegar vessel full, and mouth closed to the moistening

sponge, closed to the words "It is ended," refusing to give up the ghost. And only the candles discharged, quivering yet unbroken, threads of light gambling through the darkness, for the rigid vestments of the man, quivering, of the woman.

He moved away from her slowly, repeating to himself, "We are strong, and sleepless for the sorrows of our flesh; two swords, and enough, to split the mournful vessel of this fast, in time." In time, and one more time, "Let us insist."

For a while he could hear the sighing of Mary's feet. Then, he threw himself upon nail-thoughts, the brow still hot from a too-heavy afternoon, and the throbbing temples refusing him sleep. Tonight, he could not disentangle this day's web of indecisions, and nothing made sense. "Gently," he whispered, "Gently," to himself.

Though he did not want her, he felt the need to see her, perhaps in want, and he left his bed, walking past the dying candles, slowly into Mary's room and found her sleeping, and heard her whisper, "No."

He went away again, more alone this second time and closed his eyes to the murmurs of this last heavy night, and said, "Let us insist." He felt his body sinking back into a cushioned blackness, further away from the woman he'd learned to love, from the woman who, tonight, was oblivious to his cares. He fell back into the sources of his vagueness, mortification, discipline, balance not being possible, discipline, discipline, aching to return.

And the candles, one, two, three, molten into shapelessness after so much toil, the candles, exhausted; and once again he found her sleeping, and once again, "No."

PEACE IS AN UNKNOWN CONTINENT

HELENE ROSENTHAL

By degrees
configuration
of the heat-hazed land
subsided
at the zero
parallel.

It was a plotting time for her
a spacing time but slow . . .
pajamas didn't fit well
and she slept poorly.

It is my seasonable job
she said
to navigate
a mutinous crew.

The trouble was her dreams
which charted by old instinct,
while she held a compass
learning how to read
small, faceless digits
that shivered
ever north past alien forms
to magnet icecaps.

Moby Dick
makes exiles of us all
she said.
My brain is a white monster.

Sometimes the sea grew multiform
remembered shapes,
sargassos of vegetal nets
she had to cut through
to hold course.

The days kept keel
trimmed to the steel point
of the north star's gleam.

Necessity
is a good tool
she said.
Always it is contemporary.

At Cancer
she cut the tropic cord,
pulled with an even knot
to secure the cyclone latitudes
and went below.
The current warmed
a green pocket of sleep
wedged
between advancing
arctic
floes.

. . .

Snow logged the days.
Wind thinned the hours.

Late in a solstice twilight,
the watch on deck
sighted the polar tree —
its rigid limbs
hung with expectancy
of mirrored clocks.

Time ends with me
she said aroused,

the hull shuddering wood
of hoar-rigged crosses
to a stop.
The yards
were jagged combs of icicles.
Up on the bridge
the met meridians
clove to her tongue.

All ends begin
here where there is
no parallel
she thought —

then drew
out of her body's hold
a pulsing plum-shaped thing,
its bloodbeat hot
within a crystal cage
of breath.

Plump on the ridge
of tundra curve it fell,
drained to a disc
of speechless sun
and then heat gone —
the humped white world
rolled back its age
to stream red wounds
across great circle routes
of time
's triumphant underside.

HELENE ROSENTHAL's work has appeared in Canadian journals, including *Prism international*. She lives in Vancouver.

Three Poems by Walter Benesch

ELIJAH

Elijah plucked an eye — his, they thought —
offending, "seeing" said Elijah.

The hole entertains friends
astounds
and often singularly impresses,

The eye held between his coarse fingers
glares red into the unkind night
where Elijah seeks — to slay — rooms of black hair
from chests of corpses
(moths, most of them,
who laid their eggs
after the sun went down.)

Elijah's friends praise his courage.
What have they to do with hair?
or chests?
or night?
to them shadows are sugared wisps
served at breakfast tables
when moths are asleep. . . .

WALTER BENESCH teaches philosophy at the University of Alaska. His poems have appeared in many North American journals.

FRAVASHI

Fravashi,
along sharp streaks of wind the pane is cracked,
words blown in split glass cloud my reflection . . .
or is it yours?
Why is escaping:
too cold to keep warm with fog,
too lonely in broken mirrors.

Fravashi,
look back — once — through the crack and I won't hold,
listen — once — while I shave on the edge of never.

AUTUMN

Rain-worms devoured old Mrs. Dodson the summer past
"the drought" said the coroner
"aided and abetted by rheumatism" (hers)
"and vitamin deficiency" (theirs)

Dripping September leaves disclosed the bones
. . . out of place in the sharp color . . .

Sing a short but early mass
under flying ducks
squabbling heirs
and a more optimistic weather forecast.

Two Poems by Elizabeth Gourlay

PICTURE

I

Like the umbrella bird
the fuchsia droops its fall of rosy petals —
the Pekinese too has feathery foliage
gold with black edges.

II

In the azure space
beside the reaching clematis
the poet floats
no butterflies
only
a rosy octopus
small in size
                the mind too
                has tiny feet
                tentacles of a kind

III

Between the barbed wire
the distant black mountains
a field of tall hay
in bright streakings of sunshine

IV

all summer long
only
the whispers of swallows
the cooing of wood doves

now
in this dawning
the scream of the jay
                sharp as the north wind
                ragged as icicles

v

long shadows in the sun
the woman guides the puppy
on a leash
        not noticing
                the grizzled dog
                who limps
                persistently
                behind

TRAUMA AND TREATMENT

She did not have an inch of skin left anywhere
and yet they kept flaying her with knotted ropes
looking round the world of her peopled room
at length she realised there was no hope
she could not beg a transfusion from anyone
she commanded her blood to stop dripping

ELIZABETH GOURLAY's poems have appeared in various Canadian journals, including *Prism international*. She is in the M.A. programme in Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia.

Two Poems by Richard Deutch

A NOTE

Since it is pretty well settled that we
are not going to sleep together,
and we have seen our separateness bloom
between us like a flower,

let us retire from the garden
and kneel down together without touching:
let us invoke the goddess
of diamond apples.

Then let us meet in a year
and speak of the sun going down
behind the fir trees;
of the ark of our self-possession,

how it possessed us.

A MINOR SACRAMENT

Walking last night in the woods,
I smelled your body. It was unmistakable,

And I stood in one of your presences
Surrounded by secret rituals

Of trees, rocks, weeds, dead
Snow. The evening

Paused for that moment,
An old priest forgetting his prayers:

The trees held their leafless postures,
Altar boys carrying candles,

And winter stood hushed in the vestibule.
This happened, and then it was gone.

Walking last night in the woods,
I smelled your body. Then evening started

To turn again, and I started for home,
The moon hung low in my path, like a flare.

RICHARD DEUTCH edited *Secant*, and more recently *The Lampeter Muse* at Bard College.

Two Poems by Ralph Gustafson

AT WILL'S GRAVE AGAIN

I never noticed before, Will,
your monument
above the stone that lies on you,
is marked by a skull.
Why, man,
what's death to do wi' ye,
that quill in that paw
too close to the belly to scribe properly?
Well, death's above
all of us.
And yet
that ugly memorial to you
doesn't fit.
Rather by far, as my wife says,
(my Love)
rest your pate
out of doors
where the bees bloom
and the flowers buzz
with the sound of them.
The reply to that is
when you die you're placed
where you're put.
Perhaps you didn't mind
what Anne had to say about it
seeing you'd fooled death anyway,
the way you lived.

Here's my
skull, again,
(with the hair on it)
in tribute to you, Will.
A third time!
(of writing it down).

I've pulled the wool over his eyes still, eh?
God restrain him.
And she is by my side —
reading misericordes over there,
the underside of it,
God save us,
lifting the seats for the brackets
that rested the asses of clergy:
carved flowers, vines, Reynard, Eve
with her Adam with his prick,
monkeys & angels & death's-heads.
Which reminds me.
So.
Death and I,
we both love her . . .
Farewell.

CASA GUIDI: FIRENZE

We've followed you nearly, Robert, my
Elisabeth, myself;
first, Venice,
your window married to the sea,
now Florence, proud of you,
you happy
until that swiftening day
you sold all your furniture
clearing up death.
We stand on your balcony,
Hippity-hop,
Master of the Accents
and of life too
(the same!
Not one without the other
though some think so nowadays
who haven't the exacerbation
to know different).
That, you had in full measure,

the thing we've lost,
personality,
except (to speak of poems)
the other Robert,
old crackerbarrel who fooled them all,
and Ezra, of course, Uncle Ez,
Pound,
who got his lever under the world
and Yanked.

Well, here you were,
Elizabeth dead in your arms,
the Pitti grim
and the Arno a stone's throw
down the street
magnificent in history.
So are you.

Where again?
Not the Abbey —
you're too rambunctious, lively,
for graveplates.
The devil is
how you got in the pages of a book.
You strode through time
too strong for monuments.

We turn to our own window,
the Arno gold with light,
and tomorrow, Ravenna,
forget you,
verses and palimpsests
(literature).
You'd commend that.

RALPH GUSTAFSON's new book of poems, *Sift in an Hourglass*, has been published by McClelland & Stewart, Toronto. His revised *Penguin Book of Canadian Verse* appeared in England and Canada early this year.

Two Poems by Jos D. F. Wouters

TEETH

Per se you wanted
your sainthood to be known.
Ostentatiously.
Yet, while you talked on
you turned to vainness.

You may surprise yourself
and scratch on mirrors of the soul
'cause your enraptured orgasm
is sarcasm; and once again: sarcasm.

CONFESSION IN A PORTUGUESE CHURCH

Medieval trellis-work;
archaic prevalence;
sacred darkness . . .
Arranged good intentions;
penance hatched.

Mistaken the whispers
of a burdened soldier
for the voice of God . . .
Curious like a priest.

Much later a conversation
in garbled french:
Foreign language —
alien sins.

Jos D. F. Wouters came to Vancouver from Holland in 1963. A book of his poems will be published soon by Talonbooks. This year he won the Dutch national prize for best novella by a younger author. He has also had drama performed by leading theatre companies in the Netherlands.

This is BRIAN SHEIN's first publication; another of his stories will appear in a future *Prism international.* He is a student at the University of British Columbia.

Will You Go Hunt, My Lord?

BRIAN SHEIN

So I HAD ALREADY HEARD a lot about Martie before I met the one and only at her brother Harvey's wedding reception — yes indeed, she knew what side her bed was buttered on — where she conveniently dropped in, black sheep style, but what the hell: forgive and forget and her mother was so drunk she never noticed the wayward kid back for a visit. There we were at this smoky Polish wedding with all these grim old females — not much for pretty but pretty much for strong — and their doublebreasted blue serge men in a wild round of polkas, sausages and wine, pardon me; I dropped my glass on the floor; it smashed; I danced with everyone including once — all lost in the middle of the raucous room, how I love ya baby — myself. And when I danced with Martie she told me, "Relax, baby, relax . . ." I nibbled her ear and slobbered a bit. "If you wanna neck, okay, but no biting," she said. So I stopped biting and sucked instead.

"I like that kid," I told Harvey, her proud brother, old pal old buddy, as we stood on the sidelines swishing our drinks. "Yeah," he said, "She's sort of cute — look, I could fix you up with her for a night if you want." Dragged on his big cigar, Mr. Puffedup Pettybourgeois Fatfaced Groom himself. So I said okay and flashed my rings elegant in the light, I said, "Yes that is a very good idea. And I will make love to her right and proper because she is a woman and I love them all. God help me." Next thing, Harvey slams me on the back and, "Claire always did say would could really lay it in," he laughed. Claire being my sweet separated old lady. But I just chuckled suavely and extended the finger where I used to wear my wedding ring before I took it out with the garbage.

Martie smiled at me across the floor, she was all sewed up in this glittery drag — utterly vulgar my dear, you cannot imagine — but she was with a boyfriend at the time, chiseled-face German with greasy blond hair and a ten-inch pig-iron whang, etc. so it was no good for that night.

Well, it was a good party, pretty fair show. The idiots, I thought, they will be divorced in a couple of years. And if not, should be. These goddam early marriages. Martie laughed, crazy kid.

It was like this: Harvey Frankowski had just started teaching public school. Lived on a rundown farm outside Hamilton — and if there are tumbleweeds in Ontario, man there were tumbleweeds on that farm and even if not, a hell of a lot of tin cans growing in the thistles — lived there with his wife Marsha, his mother and little sister Sharon, this last a weird ten-year-old, pale blonde, so different from the rest she thought she was a changeling child.

Martie: she kept running away from home to everywhere and anywhere not excluding the Salvation Army, until she was seventeen when the old woman said to hell with her, they let her stay in the city — how you gonna keep them down on the farm once they seen Hamilton? She had lots of boyfriends, Harvey told me she only took on guys who were bachelor-apartment rich or particularly well-hung, and some of them were real gems. Like this one bald Armenian who got her to engage in a gigantic transcontinental hit-and-run LSD swindle at a time when the old sugar-cube con paid off; that was very profitable but he took the profit and now he is in Mexico, lovely weather wish you were here.

Finally, for her nineteenth birthday, she got some guys to set her up in a room and she started the HAMILTON FINE IMPORTS business on the side or vice versa, kind of a mail-order clearing center offering 100% human hair wigs from Bombay and other fine import goods. She never went home except that time for the wedding and sometimes to see Sharon, but Harvey dropped a word in her ear and she said, why certainly lover, he looks like a very nice guy, quite sophisticated, maybe he has some continental tricks. She never said when, though. Because she was Martie. I liked that.

Meanwhile my apartment was dark and empty, it echoed. A huge hot summer, I was hitting the bottle a lot in those dog-days and one fine evening as I drunk-walked to the corner store the newspaper boy looked at me and shook his head, dumb pal style. "You've been drinking, poor guy," he said so I gave him a tip. Claimed he could smell it all over me.

When I got back, there was Martie on the porch, very smart in

a red coat with matching red umbrella and a chic overnight bag.

"Hiya kid!" I put my arm around her, "Come to stay?"

"It's an overnight bag."

"You've been drinking, poor kid." Gin and cheap perfume go together nice sometimes.

"Thought I'd come and see how monsieur lives."

We went into the kitchen and all of a sudden it started to rain outside, lucky us, how cozy. I produced my last two bottles of beer.

"Is that all you got? Come on, lover, we're going to my place. This kid is very thirsty. I can see I was not expected."

But, but, etc. — fumbling comicstrip husband dialogue — we took the bus downtown to her room, this real scummy place, only Martie could live in a set-up like that with all those cheap movie mags and bottles all over the bed and Martie-type clothes everywhere, sequins, slits, sweaty silks like a whore from Jacarta. And that heavy summer rain outside in the trees, against the windows, it was so stuffy. Also in the kitchen and generally lying around the place were John and the boys, pockmarked mechanics and so on, drinking her beer.

"Come on ya buncha bastards. . . !"

"Hey Martie when ya comin back we gonna have a party."

"You can wait willya, and lay off my supply!"

I pinched her bum to make them all laugh, then handed out menthol cigarettes to everyone — "Hey, ya smoke these, huh?" — even lit them with my Zippo. Martie picked up two cases of beer and John got out the old Buick and drove us back to my place. He was a solemn trucker, said, "You oughta get out Martie, those guys like they're going nowhere, they got no future." So I put my arm around her with the radio chanting angel-songs all the time.

"Yeah," she said, "Now this guy is interesting."

"Sure is," muttered John, swerved the car to avoid the accident of the year. And let us off in the rain in the dark, we ran across the street and were back in my kitchen again. It was waiting for us, all chrome and aluminum, the scene was set.

Martie opened her overnight bag and this is what was inside — I didn't say anything, just stood and stared:

Three hardboiled eggs, rolling around loose
One bottle banana peppers, she loved them
One bottle some kind of Hungarian wine
One mess of smelts, wrapped in tinfoil
One gigantic Kotex box, she didn't need it
One copy *Whisper Gazette*

One record, *South American Moods*, very old
Most amusing. "You crazy kid," I said, "You're beautiful!"

"You know what, no offence, but you sound just like Chris this fairy I know," she started to laugh, "He's a great guy always so polite and everything, got long hands like you, always make me shiver."

I grabbed for her sloppy bazoom.

"Watch it lover," she said, "I want my beer. When I wanna drink, I wanna drink."

"And only nineteen too. You'd better be careful. Lover." I mean the blouse had come half-unbuttoned, there they were.

Amazing! She fixed her blouse, crossed her legs, donned this pair of thick glasses and started — studiously, you better believe it — to read her *Whisper Gazette* or whatever that damn thing was called. "Blind Couple Forced To Perform For His Sick Camera," I ad-libbed, she didn't notice, "Stupid Rapist Strikes Again."

"Have a drink," she said, "Cigarettes?"

So finally I got up, went and changed to better clothes, my green tweed slacks, Verde boots, fine fresh mauve shirt.

"Get this," she was laughing when I made my entrance. She read from the Personal's column: "Aristocratic Southern Lady, 250 lbs. of buxom sensuality, wishes to meet well-mannered gent . . ." and chugalugged her beer. "Whoops! Vulgar, eh what?"

"Let's listen to that record of yours." Honest to god, I tried not to leer, it was such a lovely line.

I put on *South American Moods* in the living room, got it really blasting so we could hear it in the kitchen, but it was all scratched up and made her think about the Armenian c/o Dante Hotel Mexico City who had sent her a money order, $100 for old time's sake. She took it out of the Kotex box to show me, said she was going to rip it up before the night was over. We sat and sat in the kitchen — "Listen to the rain outside," I said — didn't bother to turn the lights on. Just the tips of our cigarettes and we were killing that case of beer, she was telling me the story of her life while the music went round and round one two three.

It was all about how her old lady was always so mean to her. But Harvey was a real momma's boy, he'd have a nervous breakdown if the old bitch ever died. Yessir, he's ganged up with the mother, always treated good old Martie like a slut even when she was thirteen and went out with the Italian boys from Stelco, all name and no game: one time he was watering the lawn and she got all prettied up for the guys, so Harvey turned the hose on her, big

joke. He chased them off with a shotgun once, too. Because he was jealous. Because he used to screw her when they were kids. "Did he ever tell you that? No, I bet he didn't. And hit me. He loses his temper so nasty. I really feel sorry for those kids in his class . . . and Sharon, little princess, she's gonna get hurt — but does he care?"

I told her all about how I sponged free liquor at her brother's cheap bar in the rec room, his pride and joy, and nodded my head approvingly, good year that. And he liked me because I said I was a writer, free spirit wow, and because he figured I could double-talk ficky-fick out of that sluggish sow of a wife of his at a drop of my belt. Now the wife *respected* me because I could pronounce words like "chaos," she thought I was tres sophisticated and I bet she wet her pants every time I crossed my legs faggot-style and promised to bring her some pot one of these days. Spring the old catnip trick on her. I mean, these were my very good friends whenever I felt like slumming a bit in that domestic scene.

Martie loved it, she really ate it up. But now she could look after herself, here she was set up in business, did what she damn well wanted, never went home — just for Sharon to take her out on the town, poor little princess, and yeah for the wedding. And that was one marriage that was going to break up, who the hell wants to get tied down so soon, no you gotta get your fun and run.

I drank to that. I told her she was a tough little kid and I liked her spunk, man that's what it's all about. I turned off the record player — we had moved to the living room now, sprawled on the rug and dumb drunk — and began to remove my shirt. You know, like why don't we take some clothes off. Be more comfortable.

Martie didn't hear anything, she got up and put the record back on. *South American Moods,* I ask you! She wanted to dance for me.

"You gotta treat a man right," and off went her clothes, all of them. I drank to that. I dispensed with the shirt and lay back of the sofa nursing a beer, nodding a la Maharaja. If we were going to take time, we were going to take time. So I appreciated the finer things.

"You're built nice," I murmured, "A Rubens girl . . ." counting on the fact that John and those other pockmarked brutes could never have dug that line out of their repertoire. And she kept on and on, she was so drunk, swaying in the halflight and the streetlight and the darkness. And slow. Until she wasn't moving at all, just stood there in a rainforest stupor. So I changed the record to the Rolling Stones, my specialty, and did my dirty blues strut with the belly roll and hip switch never equalled by man woman or child.

"Sexy . . . ," she moaned, but I teased her, just brushing up against her back or playing a bit with her hair.

"Martie's bed time . . . ?" real low, then "Come on, kid."

"I'm (yawn) getting tired now . . . I like dancing . . . John and me can dance for hours with our clothes off, never think about sex . . ."

I stripped down. "Hey," I said, "It's me." The record was over. It was still raining outside, heavy. The beer was heavy. My nerves were tied up something awful now like I was all tied up and I couldn't even touch her. She was tired. I was tired.

She came to me like a ghost across the room, now she was going to give me a backrub, it was that simple. Sure, I lay down on the floor and she squatted on top of me, started to rub nice and easy.

"Hey," she whispered in my ear, "Relax, baby, relax, you're all tensed up . . . ," this was amazing — here she was squarely on top of me like some weird kind of torture and all she wanted was for me to relax. I had my pride and a hardon I was trying desperately to keep up.

And then, "You bastard," she whispered, "You bastard, you like it don't you? Just like the rest of them." I was going to say there was something I'd like a hell of a lot better, but what was the use. She jumped up and staggered off, she looked like a little kid going for a glass of water in the middle of the night.

"Aw Martie," I said, "I didn't mean it like that," figuring it was a good thing to say — nothing made sense, except like some old paperback story shuffled up every which way.

"Well what the hell do you think I'm here for? To get my beauty sleep?" she called back.

So I was cruel, I went and stroked her hair where she was crouched in a kitchen corner, dried her tears with a Kotex and told her she could sleep in the bedroom and I'd sleep in the living room on the couch. Then I left her, very cool and business-like, and flopped out on the sofa where I pretended to fall asleep and giggled a lot to myself. Sure enough, you might have known, a half-hour later in she came and lay down on the floor beside the couch. I felt sorry for her but I wasn't giving in without a fight so I kept on sleeping and kept on and kept on until lo and behold I realized that she was asleep and no fake. I mean, there she was out cold.

I neglected to mention that Martie was about 5′6″, black hair, big hips, small tits, with the start of a beer-belly, she was a Rubens girl in her Hamilton farm-broad way. She smelled too, beer and sweat, she snored long and loud, she snored all night and I couldn't

sleep. It was hot, the damn streetlight was right outside the window. I tried the floor where it was cooler but all the time she was snoring. Grunt, snort, wheeze. Finally I went to my bed and tossed around a bit there until Martie appeared in the doorway, I thought she was sleep-walking. She got into bed and passed out again with a good big belch of a snore and I decided that come morning I'd pretend to be asleep and let her get up, pack her crud and exit stage right, so long honey nice knowing you. Lover. So I really did fall asleep finally, it was dawn and going to be a nice day, I breathed easy and drifted.

When there was this awful commotion, it was pillows and blankets all over the place and Martie shrieking and giggling like a wild old jackass, her little nipples swinging crazy all around me — she pushed me right out of bed, the nutty bimbo, she dropped the pillows on my head, then took off for the bathroom where she locked herself in and I could hear the tub filling up. I banged on the door, let me in I gotta go, it was really funny but I guess she would not let me in until the last minute. I charged into the john, it was filled with steam and hot. Martie got back in the tub while I did the necessary, then, "Come on in," she laughed, "The water's nice." So I calmly proceeded to shave, that meant one stroke of the razor, two swipes of the hand to get the steam off the mirror and so on. There is nothing worse than a steamed-up mirror.

"Hey!" she shouted. "See what the funny lady can do . . . !

So I saw what the funny lady could do, what the funny lady could do was she could stick my best saffron guest soap up her twat and then schlup! heave her belly and out it flew.

"You got good muscle control," I said.

That wasn't the best, the best was when she did three pieces at once, three, count 'em — there she blows! It was a pretty fair show, I guess I broke down and laughed, after all she was a crazy kid and I liked that.

"Guess what?" she said. "I decided to stay for the rest of the day . . . wouldn't want to leave without fulfilling my obligations."

Well, she made breakfast: hardboiled eggs chopped up for sandwiches with some of the shell still sticking and some fried smelt thrown in for good measure, plus her own favorite banana peppers. Also beer, warm beer for Martie with a healthy good-morning belch and cold beer for me thank you. It was still raining, it was so damp and dull outside if you ever bothered to notice and we were off on another drunk. I mean this babe could really put the stuff away, started in so early drinking her hops, no wonder she snored like that.

She was sorry about last night, she didn't mean to be bitchy. God, she hated chicks like that, cock-teasers, but you gotta treat a man right. Once again, I drank to that. After all, it was another good-bye day.

"I got small tits," she said. "You like them? John thinks they're cute, Chris says I should get an operation — they put wax in or something — but he's a fairy, I told you about him."

Of course I pooh-poohed that, not being breast-fixated or anything. "You're a real woman," I said. She drank to that.

We lounged around all morning in the nude — "You gotta be natural" — and told dirty jokes, all the old ones heard in public school. Some of them were new but it was nice to hear her telling the old ones, Martie told them very well indeed. Then there was more about her boyfriends, the rat in Mexico — where I always wanted to go and I'm on my way now, maybe I should look him up — and how she learned in the school of hard knocks, only nineteen too. That was just like the jokes, I didn't mind hearing it over and over again like the *South American Moods* that was playing over and over, scratches and all. Relax, baby, relax, I was relaxed, after all it was okay for a day and the back of my mind was working up to a good little tussle with her legs, as they say, going wild around me.

Martie in the kitchen, sticking her butt out to poke around in the fridge for more beer. I remember that, I guess I goosed her too. We tried mixing the beer and the Hungarian wine, it was homemade, Laszlo made it. Wow. Martie in the bedroom, jumping up and down on the bed, we had a wild pillow fight with a couple of magazines and a smelt mixed up in it too. Martie running around naked looking for something she just had to find, maybe it was her maidenhead for all I know. Martie and me in the living room, we piled up the furniture to make a castle and put the T.V. set in the middle of it, watched cartoons for an hour or so, good way to spend a rainy afternoon. We had more of those godawful smelt sandwiches but who the hell cares. Feats of strength: we chinned ourselves, touched our toes, touched each others' toes, invented yoga positions. We laughed and laughed and laughed. Until at last, standing in the middle of the table in the middle of the living room with the T.V. set blaring beneath me — I think it was Captain Kangaroo, I'm not sure about that — I clicked my heels which is a damn hard trick to pull when you're naked, gave a good old Storm Trooper *Sieg Heil*! and almost, almost puked my guts out, but not quite because I swallowed quick and held it down, that spoiled the effect.

"Come on baby," she gave me her hand, helped me down and took me to the can where she held my head down — me being too weak to protest — she forced my mouth open, stuck her finger up my throat and out it came, I really got cleaned out. Martie had to wipe up the floor, my aim wasn't too good under these circumstances. I guess she was a good kid at heart — "with a heart of gold," they call the phenomenon.

We went back to the bedroom, made love. She came twice, kept on working after I went limp. Thought she was going to chomp me off down there. By this time it was evening.

We lay there in bed for a while and then there was a car honking its horn out front, that was John come to pick her up. Martie went and got all her things together, came back to the bedroom, very smart in the red coat with matching red umbrella and the overnight bag.

"I gotta go now, John and I have to go out tonight."

It was okay, she pulled a blanket over me, asked would I be all right, told me to get some sleep, she was gone and I never heard the car drive off. So I lay there half-asleep half-awake, the rain had stopped of course and maybe there was a wind, I was imagining this weird telephone conversation where little sister Sharon calls me up:

"Is Martie still there?"

"Hello Princess. She left."

"Oh. I guess she wouldn't anyways."

"What?"

"Babysit me."

The last I heard of Martie, the imports business collapsed like I figured it would and she married some guy who had enough money to take them to Argentina. Speaking of money, she never did rip up the money order from Mexico City, what she did is she cashed it and believe it or not sent me the cash. For old time's sake, crazy kid. So I decided to blow it in one wild fell swoop and bought me some fantastic clothes, lovely lemon-yellow slacks with soft leather cuffs pockets and side-stripes, a Moroccan puzzle ring, a pair of fawn-colored suede boots, very good uppers and sturdy heels, a pair of cufflinks that reflect whatever lighting you happen to be in, also some excellent Lebanese hash, the best I've ever gotten. That left $2 over which bought me some Canadian sherry grown in our own Vineland not 30 miles from Hamilton and let me tell you, lover, it left much to be desired.

Two Poems by Karl Krolow

Translated from the German by Rosemarie Waldrop

CRUSOE

i

Again and again I stretch my hands out
for a ship.
With my bare fists I try
to take hold of its sail.
At first I caught
several craft just on
the horizon.
(I catch trout this way.)
But the monsoon
kept his eye on me
and helped them escape;
or rudder and compass
broke. You have
to be careful with ships.
That's why I called them by a name.
It always sounded
like mine.

Now I live
in the company of a few words'
disobedience.

ii

I've stopped counting
although I still have fingers
I can dip into the salt water
one by one.

Insects and tobacco leaves
don't know the time
I used to waste.

My last neighbor
who played the waldhorn
(he had cleverly
filched it from a folk song)
died at sea.

Sometimes a bit of sunshine
falls on the table I stretch
my legs under.
No more need
for nostalgia.

iii

This habit of sitting for a long time
somewhere on a chair
and listening whether
it's raining inside you
or whether the scorpion is still moving
in your liver.

You've counted each lightning,
all the matches that are left.

Until you grow tired
and sink the last flag
into the sea.

THE ISLANDS

They are formed from the hulls
of long-boats, white
like the wool of poplar seeds
on the water.

No rower will reach them.
No black sail at noon.
They stand in the current
with high women's thighs and blink offhandish
into the light
that tolerates no voices.

Only the waning moon
rides them for a few nights.
His lust
they can't resist.
From afar, you can hear them singing
until he sets.

Soon after, usually,
some sailors' corpses are
thrown onto the shore
like big fish.

KARL KROLOW is one of Germany's leading poets. ROSEMARIE WALDROP's poems and translations have appeared in United States journals. Her translations of Günter Grass are also in this issue.

Two Poems by Günter Grass

Translated from the German by Rosemarie Waldrop

FLOODS

We're waiting for the rain to stop
although we've gotten used
to standing behind the drapes, invisible.
Spoon turned sieve, nobody dares
stretch out his hand.
In the streets there are things swimming around
that used to be hidden away carefully in the dry days.
Pretty embarrassing the neighbor's old beds.
Often we stand before the water gauge
comparing our worries like watches.
Some things can be regulated.
But when the reservoirs run over, when the inherited cup is full,
we'll have to pray.
The basement is flooded, we've brought up the boxes
and checked the contents.
Nothing's lost yet. —
The water will surely go down soon
so we've started sowing dainty parasols.
It will be hard to go across the square again,
distinctly, with leaden shadow.
At first we'll miss the drapes
and often go down to the basement
to look at the mark
the water left us.

PUNCTUALLY

In the apartment below
a young woman
beats her child
every half-hour.
Therefore
I've sold my watch
and rely entirely
on the strict hand
below me,
the counted cigarettes
beside me;
my time is measured.

GÜNTER GRASS is Germany's best-known contemporary writer.

Two Poems by Gottfried Benn

Translated from the German by Harold Enrico

THREAT

But know this:
I live animal days. I am an hour of water.
In the evenings my eyelid feels sleepy like wood
and sky.
My sweetheart knows only a few words.
It is so beautiful near your blood.

A LIST OF SOME THINGS THAT ARE BAD

When you don't know any English
to hear someone read from a good English detective story
that hasn't been translated into German.

In the summer heat to look at a beer
that you can't pay for.

To have a new idea
that no one can swaddle in something like a stanza by Hölderlin,
the way the professors can.

At night on a trip to hear the waves crash
and to tell yourself that's what they always do.

Very bad: to be invited out
when there is more peace at home,
the café is more comfortable
and you don't feel like talk.

The worst thing of all:
not to die in summer
when everything is bright
and the earth is easy for the spade to turn over.

DROHUNG

Aber wisse:
Ich lebe Tiertage. Ich bin eine Wasserstunde.
Des Abends schläfert mein Lid wie Wald
und Himmel.
Meine Liebe weiss nur wenig Worte:
Es ist so schön an deinem Blut.

WAS SCHLIMM IST

Wenn man kein Englisch kann,
von einem guten englischen Kriminalroman zu hören,
der nicht ins Deutsche übersetzt ist.

Bei Hitze ein Bier sehn,
das man nicht bezahlen kann.

Einen neuen Gedanken haben
den man nicht in einen Hölderlinvers einwickeln kann,
wie es die Professoren tun.

Nachts auf Reisen Wellen schlagen hören
und sich sagen, dass sie das immer tun.

Sehr schlimm: eingeladen sein,
wenn zu Hause die Räume stiller,
der Café besser
und keine Unterhaltung nötig ist.

Am schlimmsten:
nicht im Sommer sterben,
wenn alles hell ist
und die Erde für Spaten leicht.

GOTTFRIED BENN's first book of poetry was published in 1912, and his collected works in 1959. He is one of Europe's greatest poets.

ALDEN NOWLAN is news editor of *The Telegraph-Journal* in Saint John, New Brunswick. He has published five books of poetry and a number of short stories.

Humbly, for Fyodor

ALDEN NOWLAN

THERE WERE TIMES when he could not believe he would die until he was so old it wouldn't matter. As a child, he had decided for reasons he could no longer remember that his death would occur on August 4, 2004, seven months after his seventy-first birthday. He had written obituaries for the great man he then dreamed of becoming.

CANNES, FRANCE *(AP — Reuters) — Nobel Prize-winning Canadian author and world-famous adventurer Kevin Michael O'Brien died here yesterday. Tributes poured in —*

And in many ways his attitude toward death at thirty-three was no different than it had been at fourteen. Occasionally, like an eclipse of the sun, the shadow of imminent oblivion would cross his consciousness. He would realize suddenly that, in truth, he was going to die, be obliterated, erased, made nothing. And, should the cell madness erupt in another province of his body, his death would come comparatively soon. Yes, he would die and, as his intellect well knew, in the cosmic scheme of things his death would be no more important than the withering of a flower.

Twice in the months since he had learned the nature of his disease, he had wept: once from sheer physical, mental and spiritual exhaustion after his third operation, and once from cowardice. Coming out from under the anesthetic after the final operation on his throat, he had been so unmanned by pain and exhaustion that he had reverted to childhood. He had clung to his wife and pleaded with her not to let them hurt him again. *You won't let them hurt me*

anymore, Terry? Promise me you won't, Terry. She had called him *baby* and kissed his forehead and they had given him drugs and, finally, he had slept.

And he had wept when he was returned to hospital for post-operative radiotherapy. He had roamed through hospital corridors half the night, debating whether he should throw himself from a window into the concrete parking lot or steal out of the institution and drown himself in the harbour. What a strange creature is man that the fear of death should provoke thoughts of suicide! He had even contemplated escaping from the hospital, buying a quart of liquor and driving toward Quebec or the United States border — as though in Boston or Montreal he could elude death.

He had wandered all over the hospital and the few nurses and technicians he had met had ignored him; perhaps because he was fully-clothed they mistook him for an employee. At last he had hidden in a closet and wept with self-pity — and the tears had purged him so that next day he was joking with his fellow patients and by the end of the week his reputation as a comedian was so well-established that he felt obligated to be amusing even while suffering through the artificial sunstroke caused by the radiation.

What, after all, was the difference between courage and cowardice? Once in an argument over Ernest Hemingway he had maintained that courage was an artificial virtue, most esteemed in neurotic societies. The man who ran, he had argued, was no worse than the man who stood and fought and chances were he was a good deal wiser. But he had never really believed this. He was so pitifully anxious to appear brave that on the night prior to his operation he had mentally rehearsed how he would behave, even what he would say, in the operating room. *I feel like a bit player on the Dr. Kildare Show*, he had grinned as he sank into the drugged sleep that might end in death. And he had been overjoyed to hear one of the nurses saying: *He's a cool customer; looks as though he could perform the surgery himself.*

It was better to be brave than cowardly (how he loathed the phoney connotations that had accrued to the word *brave*) simply because the brave man suffered less than the coward. He was a little proud that he could view the question so pragmatically. *Every man owes God a death.* But it would be insane to run forward to meet death — and that, paradoxically, was what the coward did, what he had done when he had contemplated suicide and an escape that was only suicide prolonged and disguised.

He had learned, also, that such fear was a luxury. Immediately

after an operation, when there was danger of internal hemorrhaging and shock and a nurse checked his blood pressure every thirty minutes he hardly thought of such human matters as death. All his wants were animal. There was thirst, for instance. They refused him water. And he realized that never before in his life had he been really thirsty. Hungry, perhaps, but this thirst was worse than any hunger he had known. Afterwards he understood for the first time why the Biblical writers, surrounded by desert, used the thirst for water to represent the ferocity of their desire for God. He understood with shattering clarity what Christ had meant when he said: *I thirst.* Until then, this had been a casual statement like that of a man who goes into a diner and buys a cup of coffee so he'll have a place to sit while he waits for a bus. Now it was as terrible in its pathos as that other cry: *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* But the latter cry was human; the former reached beyond humanity: a dog no less than a man can go mad with thirst. If he was egotistical enough to identify himself with Christ, he was humble enough to identify himself with his sister's ugly white dog that had to be shot after it was accidentally locked in an unused barn and left there, unfed and unwatered, for weeks. Although, he reflected, that was probably not humility but another form of egotism.

And when he walked for the first time after the first operation, staggering, clutching at the backs of chairs, sliding along the wall like a drunkard, he experienced a sense of triumph that dispelled all fears, as when a man stamps his foot to drive the mice back into their holes. This was one of the most joyously triumphant moments of his life. Gone was the frustration of dropping things and not being able to pick them up; the indignity of being fed and bathed like an infant; the anguish of being unable to raise his hand to drink when, using both hands, he finally succeeded in bringing the glass within inches of his mouth. Had he met death during that walk he'd have spat in his face. He was as contemptuous of death as was Lazarus rising from the tomb.

But now he was out of the vacuum flask that was the hospital. He was at home with his wife and son. In a week or so, the doctor said, he could return to work. There would be tests, of course, endless tests during the next five years. X-rays, blood tests, tests with radioactive iodine. And if he were still alive at the end of five years he would be classified as a five-year survivor, which would mean he had a fair chance of living long enough to die in his sleep of hardening of the arteries. For now, he took books like drugs, watched

television, drank beer, smoked cigarettes guiltily, played with his young son, scribbled, went for walks, took drives in the country, even began fooling with watercolours.

On the surface, his life was not very different from what it had always been.

As was suggested in the beginning, a merciful stupidity partially insulated him against the fear of death. He had nightmares every night but he had grown so used to them that they hardly frightened him. He could even smile sardonically at the naïvete of their imagery: as when he dreamt of a gigantic white worm which, upon waking, he assumed to be the Conqueror Worm of Edgar Allan Poe.

Terry wrote to a friend: *Kevin's courage is so great that many people find it disconcerting, even a bit frightening.* Poor, sweet Terry! Never had he loved her more; never had he been less of a lover. Since his discharge from the hospital, they slept in separate beds. When she kissed him he made lame excuses and gently pushed her away. Once when she embraced him she accidentally touched the incisions in his neck and he yelled with pain. *Don't you know better than that, for God's sake?*

He did not want to touch her. Not yet. Because he knew that if life became too sweet he could not maintain his armistice with death.

Two Poems by Jac. van Hattum

Translated from the Dutch by Jos D. F. Wouters

POST COITUM ANIMAL TRISTE EST

Burning, my glance nestles
in the curve of bliss;
the insatiable me
glides after it with hands;
every sense sharpens,
feels and looks at and tastes the miracle,
and the night never tires
of this dizzying on and under.
Then — "by day not so tender" —
asleep next to one another
in dream that vague sorrow returns
sobbing and tumble-drunk.

DOOMWORTHY SEED; DOOMWORTHY, FOOLISH ACTION

Doomworthy seed; doomworthy foolish action;
perishability and continuation;
the silly hankering for the other body;
fatal fraction of most fatal time.
What am I doing here? What are they doing here?
Presently I'll cut off what was from the beginning;
my smile was aimed at the beam in the blazon
and the skull in the waving grass.
Show me the threatened child of the castrate;
'God be praised', says he and laughs scornfully at your progeny;
wisdom hides in dissolute celibate
and I sing out loud: 'Oh, dearest, be comforted . . .'
Degenerate of my — already old — lineage,
have I brought the axe on my own tree.

POST COITUM ANIMAL TRISTE EST

Brandend nestelt zich mijn blik
in de bocht der zaligheden;
't onverzadigbare ik
komt met handen nagegleden;
ieder zintuig spitst zich toe,
tast en schouwt en proeft het wonder,
en de nacht wordt nimmer moe
van dit duizlend op en onder.
Dan — "bij dag zo innig niet" —
naast elkaar in slaap gezonken,
keert in droom dat vaag verdriet
snikkende en tuimeldronken.

DOEMWAARDIG ZAAD; DOEMWAARDIG, ZOT BEDRIJF

Doemwaardig zaad; doemwaardig zot bedrijf;
vergank'lijkheid en continuiteit:
de dwaze hunk'ring naar het and're lijf;
fatale fractie van fataalste tijd.
Wat kwan ik doen? Wat kwamen zij hier doen?
Straks snijd ik af wat van de aanvang was;
mijn glimlach gold de balk in het blazoen
en gold de schedel in het wuivend gras.
Wijs mij 't bedreigde kind van de castraat;
'God lof', zegt hij en hoonlacht om Uw kroost;
de wijsheid schuilt in ontuchts celibaat
en ik zing luid: 'Ach, liefste, wees getroost . . .'
Degeneree van mijn al-oud geslacht,
heb ik de bijl aan eigen stam gebracht.

JAC. VAN HATTUM is the celebrated Dutch poet and author of short fiction. Though his work has been translated throughout Europe, this is its first English appearance. A note on Mr. Wouters accompanies his own poems on page 71.

Two Poems by Ivan Malinovski

Translated from the Danish by Heather Spears

FALL SUITE III

just so
the odour of fall in the room: green apples
just so
while the sky brims with mournful wet
the leaf weeps

just so outdoors
the light: a column over the earth's fatness
just so and just so the mouse's confidence
the stubble with the dew's filigree
and the little earway of the snail
listening knit to an echo's salt

consumptus est the pudding
the beer stock at the kiosk
the lobster we brought home from the landing for
Midsummer day

long since the larks are rusted
tinder and birchwood gone up in smoke
nivea jar empty

our country of summer duly made over
to mushroom mite and mouse

endure
closed like the snail around an echo
to protect against frost form yourself a membrane
feed on lost salt
just so

* * *

overhead it blackens in panic:
ten thousand wings of birds

my dream my haste

EFTERARSSUITE III

sådan
den lugt af efterår i stuen: gronne æbler
sådan
mens himlen mættes med tungsindig væde
lovet græder

sådan derude
lyset: en sojle over jordens fedme
sådan sådan musens fortrostning
stubbene med duggens filigran
og sneglens lille oregang
lyttende knyttet om et ekkos salt

consumptus est rodgroden
kioskens ollager
hummeren vi hjemforte fra lejet til sankthans
forlængst er lærkerne rustet
fyrsvamp og birkebrænde gået op i rog
niveadåsen tom

vort sommeland behotigt overdraget
til svampe myg og mus

til tåls
at lukke sig som sneglen om et ekko
til værn mod rimfrost danne sig en hinde
og tære på et mistet salt
sådan

* * *

da sortner rummet i panik:
titusind fuglevinger

min drom mit hastværk

IT'S FINISHED

A rough daybreak gotten over. Bike still lying there killed on the sidewalk the sky's pain not yet cracked apart. The bruise, and the room's oppression after a headache that has eased, these are all our meek traveller has left behind.

We keep it up, handing out white tickets to customers in the confectionery, inside, behind smudged panes.

And now it begins in earnest: every year the birdsong just as hard to stomach, the wall of light with its bulletholes and scaling chalk (you can't avoid passing that way once in a while).

Despair is going to force you to its own, logical conclusions; time, too, its paths never deviate: you wake up with a word in your mouth and die with a stone on your chest and you can't do a thing about it.

Little by little it grows lighter on the stairs, windows open, someone's singing in the yard.

A kiss brighter than your self leads straight down: a black gap in the earth. Sometimes a chance remark can hold the whole truth — it's what you aren't looking at that you see clearest.

What changes first, the stone or your idea of it? The trees have forgotten her and the houses look the other way. There isn't a thing more to be done here.

DET ER SKET

Et svært daggry er overstået. Cyklen ligger endnu dræbt på fortovet og himlens smerte er stadig ikke splittet. En blodunderloben plet og det knugende lof efter en hovedpine der er lettet er alt hvad den fordringslose rejsende har efterladt.

Vi vedbliver at uddele hvide strimler til damerne bag konditoriets gasfedtede ruder.

Nu begynder opgaverne for alvor; hvert år er fuglesangen lige sværat fordoje og lysets mur med skudhuller og afskallet kalk (man kan næsten ikke undgå at komme forbi engang imellem)

Fortvivlesen har sin stærke logik og tiden arbejder ad ufravigelige baner; man vågner med et ord på læben og dor med en sten på brystet, der er ikke noget at gore ved det.

Lidt efter lidt lysner det på trapperne, vinduer åbnes og nogen synger i gården.

Et kys lysere end du selv forer lukt ned i et sort hul i jorden. En bibemærkning kan ofte rumme den fulde sandhed, og hvad De ikke ser på ser De tydeligst.

Hvad ændrer sig lettest, stenen eller din mening om den? Træerne har glemt hende og husene ser den anden vej. Her er ikke mere at gore.

IVAN MALINOVSKI has published several volumes of poems and a book of short stories. He is among Denmark's leading writers. HEATHER SPEARS' book of poems, *The Danish Portraits,* was published this year by Ryerson Press.

TAIS-TOIS

PAUL VALÉRY

Translated from the French by Wilson Clough

Voilà un excellent titre . . .
Un excellent Tout . . .
Mieux qu'une "œuvre" . . .
Et pourtant — une œuvre: — "Car"
Si tu énumères — chacun des cas
où la forme et le mouvement
d'une parole, comme une onde,
se soulèvent, se dessinent —
A partir d'une sensation,
d'une surprise, d'un souvenir,
d'une présence ou d'une lacune, . . .
d'un bien, d'un mal, — d'un rien et de Tout,
Et que tu observes, et que tu cherches,
que tu ressentes, que tu mesures
l'obstacle à mettre à cette puissance,
le poids du poids à mettre sur ta langue
et l'effort du frein de ta volonté,
Tu connaîtras sagesse et puissance
et *Te Taire* sera plus beau
que l'armée de souris et que les ruisseaux de perles
dont prodigue est la bouche des hommes.

BE SILENT

Here is an excellent title . . .
An excellent sum of the Whole . . .
Surpassing an "opus" . . .
And yet — an opus: — "For"
If you enumerate — each of the occasions
when the form and the movement
of a word, like a wave,
swells, and defines itself —
Beginning with a sensation,
a surprise, a remembrance,
a presence or an emptiness . . .
a good, an evil — a nothing and a Whole,
And if you but observe, if you seek,
if you feel, and weigh
the means to oppose this dominion,
the weights of weights to put on your tongue
and the trial of restraint on your will,
You will know wisdom and power
and to *Be Silent* will be more beautiful
than the hosts of smiles and the rivulets of pearls
whereof the mouth of men is most lavish.

PAUL VALERY (1871-1945) is the greatest of modern French poets. WILSON CLOUGH, professor emeritus of American Studies and of English at the University of Utah, is the author of several books and numerous poems, articles, stories, and reviews. His translation of Arthur Honneger's *I am a Composer* appeared in 1966.

UNTITLED POEM

RAYMOND QUENEAU

Translated from the French by Harold Enrico

Sourde est la nuit l'ombre la brume
Sourd est l'arbre sourd le caillou
Sourd est le marteau sur l'enclume
Sourde est la mer sourd le hibou

Aveugles la nuit et la pierre
Aveugles l'herbe et les épis
Aveugle est la taupe sous terre
Aveugle un noyau dans le fruit

Muettes la nuit et la misère
Muets sont les chants et la prairie
Muette est la clarté de l'air
Muet le bois le lac le cri

Infirme est toute la nature
Infirmes sont bêtes et rocs
Infirme est la caricature
Infirme l'idiot qui débloque

Mais qui voit? qui entend? qui parle?

UNTITLED POEM

The night is deaf the shadow the fog
The tree is deaf the pebble
The hammer on the anvil is deaf
The sea is deaf the owl

The night is blind and the stone
The grass is blind and the ears of corn
The mole under the ground is blind
And the pit in the fruit

The night is mute and misery
The songs are mute and the prairie
The sunlight is mute in the air
The wood is mute the lake the scream

All nature is crippled with disease
Animals are crippled and rocks
The caricature is crippled
And the idiot shooting off his mouth

But who sees? who hears? who speaks?

RAYMOND QUENEAU is the distinguished French novelist and poet. Among his novels are *Le Chiendent* and *Le Dimanche de la vie*; his verse collections include *L'Instant Fatal* and *Si tu t'imagines*. HAROLD ENRICO's work has appeared earlier in *Prism international*. His translations of Gottfried Benn are also in this issue.

W.MISCIRCO

GERALDO SOBRAL is a young Brazilian whose work has appeared in North and Latin American reviews. He is also South American editor for *Dustbooks*. "The Yellow Umbrella" will serve as the title story of a book awaiting publication. BARRY MUNN teaches at the University of British Columbia.

The Yellow Umbrella

GERALDO SOBRAL

Translated from the Portuguese by Barry Munn

WHEN THE OLD MAN CAME HOME in the late afternoon with a yellow umbrella in his hand, his daughter, who was standing in the window tending the pots of flowering geraniums, gave him a surprised look. So he explained that as he got out of the train at the Central Station his umbrella had rolled to the ground. As he stooped to pick it up, there, in front of his very eyes the black cover, punished by many years of rain, changed into a vivid yellow. He stressed bitterly that as Fate was pursuing him, he hung it on his arm and went for his stroll around the Institute. His son-in-law, out of work and drinking a lot at that stage, muttered that the old man was a liar, and set off for the corner store.

Early the next day the neighbours started dropping in to examine the umbrella with their own eyes. Nobody believed the story, which had soon gone around the village. Only dona Zéfinha gave it any special meaning:

— Yellow is the colour of gold, dearie — she said in her north-eastern drawl. It's a sign of money, she added enviously.

But the mulatto woman from No. 4, who told cards, read palms, lived with the Portuguese who ran the store, and was afraid of the strange world of the god Exu, had this advice — perhaps it was a spell, and no half-breed would break it. The old man's daughter listened to her, thought very deeply, and finally agreed.

In a corner, sucking at his cigarette, the old man spied on the people coming into his house and listened in silence to the comments they made. If they asked him anything he would reply curtly,

but his daughter always added details. It amazed him how readily she could invent them. And what to him seemed simple and clear — the fact that when the umbrella fell down it was black and that when he picked it up it was yellow — became complicated for everyone else. He hadn't changed the cover, and in any case, why a yellow umbrella if he wasn't a street pedlar or a circus act?

His resistance was useless. His daughter talked so much, implored him so much that he became annoyed, and finally agreed to go down to the yard where Maezinha, the black sorceress, practised her rites. He argued a lot before going, and then, muttering and spitting, asked for the umbrella (they hadn't even thought of taking it), three wax candles, seven guinea fowl feathers (plucked at full moon and in a house where the woman wasn't menstruating, otherwise they were of no use), and a 500 mil réis bill.

When the woman at No. 4 heard about the consultation she was very offended, for she wanted so much to meet Maezinha. The son-in-law was furious when he heard talk of money. He called his wife ignorant and his father-in-law a perfect idiot. She had an answer for him, and they would have come to blows if the old man had not arrived in time. The husband stood scowling in a corner, and she changed the subject so that her father would not suspect anything. Slyly she slipped him some money.

The umbrella, at first placed on view in the little front room where the old man slept and cooked his meals, was moved into the bedroom. The line of people coming to see it gradually dwindled. If a latecomer did happen to arrive, it would be brought out, but the daughter was no longer as attentive to detail. The old man, however, would secretly take it from behind the cupboard, and when the others weren't there he would admire it for hours on end. Sometimes he was caught by his son-in-law:

— I think there are a lot of madmen here in Rio — he would say.

The old man didn't get annoyed at this. But he thought about it, for it was as if he had been caught unawares while doing something private. So he took to admiring it only in the early morning, while the young couple slowly broke from their sleep and silence spread between the walls.

The constant fights between the daughter and the son-in-law redoubled. She complained because he was living in the bars and drinking rum instead of looking for work; he threatened to leave because he couldn't stand the sort of life he was leading in the house. He would refer ironically to the umbrella, and at bottom had no respect for the old man:

— Silly old idiot, where is the money from your yellow umbrella? Where's the money, crackpot? — he would ask hysterically, with his shirt hanging out of his pants.

Their three-year-old son, with sunken eyes and a misshapen head, would peep at his mother and wet himself with fear when his father shouted. The old man didn't get involved in the fights, and would take him out into the street, dragging him by the hand. The kid could hardly stand up on his little legs, and had to be carried. The old man would show him the tram, the cars, the trees, but the grandson wasn't interested. His little hands, thin and white, would smooth down his grandfather's hair, and the heavy, misshapen head would sag on his shoulder. They would go for long walks and return only when things had quietened down.

The whole community soon started to take advantage of the old man, even after a reporter from *Combat* had been there. Still sore, the mulatto woman told the young fellow that the old man had painted the umbrella. Even dona Zéfinha had gone back on her own prediction. The old man took it all but didn't change. What did annoy him, though, was that the boys, as soon as they saw him in the street, would run at his heels shouting:

— Yellow umbrella! Yellow umbrella!

For a long time he stifled a desire to jump on the little urchins; but one day he exploded and chased insanely after the kids romping in the fields. So with time the situation worsened. As soon as he stepped out of the house the gang would get together at any street corner or in the most unexpected places.

His daughter tried to give him advice, but the old man was stubborn. Soon she began to buy his cigarettes for him, and subtly did everything she could to stop his going out. She would ask him to help in the house, watch the beans on the stove, mend the wicker chairs, look after the boy. But the old man noticed nothing but his grandson, who ran his thin white hands through his hair. Seeing this, she arranged some sewing, and pedalled furiously at the old machine from morning to night. But this didn't last very long. One day the husband came home drunk, tore up a dress she had finished, and she had to pay the damage.

After he had taken to sleeping with the umbrella, and the yellow began to fade, the old man became very sullen. He no longer put the boy around his neck nor did he wash; his beard grew white and ragged over his wrinkled face; and his black nails curled like great claws. However much his daughter insisted, he took no care of himself. His collars were crumpled through weeks of wear. He

never took things off his broken and dirty body. His trousers were threadbare and his jacket torn at the elbows. And he began to hate the son-in-law, who as a first gesture would throw him out of bed on arriving home drunk.

— Old crackpot! Old idiot!

One morning, after he had had a long fight with the daughter over changing his shirt and had been shut in for weeks, the old man decided to go out, with the umbrella this time. The daughter had a premonition of some tragedy and begged him on her knees, grabbed his legs, with tears streaming down her hollow cheeks. She implored him to stay with the grandson, and went to fetch him from the cradle. But not even the child's tiny, sad face moved him. Then she told him about the terrible dream, the agonizing nightmare that had shaken her from her bed the night before. But it was useless. The old man was stubborn. Pushing the daughter aside — he was very strong for his age — and thrusting her away from the door, he went out grasping his yellow umbrella, without even looking round.

In the street he spied the son-in-law propping up a post, his head sagging, his arms hanging limply at his side, his stomach bare, and blurting out incomprehensible phrases. He felt compelled to go and join him, but then he seemed quickly surrounded by the street urchins.

— Yellow umbrella! Yellow umbrella!

He went on and suddenly, brandishing the umbrella in short and incisive thrusts, he ran after one of the boys. But in the middle of the street he hesitated, gasping for breath, while the excited urchins surrounded him, running back and forth almost within his reach. From time to time he seemed to start to throw away the umbrella, but he didn't complete the action because, frankly, he didn't know which way to turn. He could go down to the square and sit on one of the benches, or he could rush headlong up one of the streets facing him.

Waking out of the drowsiness caused by the rum, the son-in-law could make out the dim figure of the old man. He muttered a few words and, tripping on the cobble stones, went towards him. He raised his arms, his mouth chewing on slurred words he couldn't get out despite his efforts. One of the urchins ran nimbly between them, and once out of reach of the yellow umbrella uttered a piercing shriek:

— Yellow umbrella!

The old man stood still, his eyes on the son-in-law. The urchins

closed in, this time around the two men. It was a timid circle, capable of breaking up at the slightest movement of the old man. Meanwhile the son-in-law was moving, shaky and loose-limbed, lurching forward until, with the whiff of rum filling the old man's trembling nostrils, he stopped, steadied his body, held his right arm out listlessly in front of him, and through half-closed eyes looked right around with a slow movement of the head.

— Yellow umbrella! — he managed to force out, a grimace of a smile on his bony face.

The hand closed on the silver handle of the umbrella, and in a flash lunged at the son-in-law swifter than a sword, with a deadly thrust at the exposed stomach. The iron tip pierced the skin, tore deep, and almost squealed with anguish. He cried out in pain, doubled up, and fell to the ground. The boys fled, terrified. The old man returned desperately to the attack, and let fly more thrusts. Curled up with both his hands clasped to his stomach, the son-in-law rolled on the ground now tinged with red, trembled, and foamed thick and bloody at the mouth. Despite the fury of the old man he managed to get up. The umbrella beat at him, and he tottered off clutching at the now silent walls. He reached the house with great difficulty, propped himself up against the door, looked at his bloodstained hands, and bellowed inside with all his strength:

— Woman, your yellow umbrella has killed me!

He slipped downwards and fell heavily, his eyes glassing over as death approached.

The heavy, misshapen head held over a book of comic strips gave a shudder; and the little boy wet himself through and through.

Two Poems by Dennis Trudell

DINING IN MISSISSIPPI

OK, man,
keep grinning
at how the waitress
won't take our order,
hoping we'll give up
and go away. And while
you sip that Dr. Pepper,
keep nudging your pink wife
and telling her how last week
they served one of us
a steak covered with
a quarter-inch
of garlic salt.
Keep thinking
that my son will never cross
a crepe-papered gymnasium
carrying a cupful of punch,
some salami and olives
on a toothpick,
and a little napkin
to your daughter.
What I mean is,
you keep right on
whistling Dixie
and having a good time,
fat guts,
because some midnight
I may just come calling
on you
and your ugly
pink wife.

(And besides,
from where I'm sitting
I can see that the hands
shaping the sausage
to use for your pizza
are black.)

LIZZIE EDWARDS,

78,
sits on a wooden porch
on Persimmons Street
in Greenville, Mississippi.

Lizzie Edwards, 78,
widow, arthritic, Negroid,
sits and rocks.

Persimmons St.
has no streetlamps, has
an open gutter. Lizzie

wears a ragged dress, she wears
a pair of cotton stockings
her legs no longer fill.

(Greenville in August:
dogs stagger in the heat.)

Lizzie rocks, the rocker
creaks, she slices
bruised potatoes, sometimes hums
a Bible song, and sometimes

Lizzie's grandson stops
to pick her up, he drives
her to his home
on Sunflower Street,

where Lizzie sits,
watches television,
hears that she
is in the Pepsi generation.

DENNIS TRUDELL's poetry and fiction have appeared before in *Prism international*. He teaches at the University of Hawaii.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Acknowledgments are due to the following publishers and copyright owners for permission to reprint some of the material appearing in this issue.

Gottfried Benn's poems are from his *Gesammelte Werke* in 4 Bänden, Bd. 3, 1966, Limes Verlag, Wiesbaden.

George Britting's "The Death of Don Quixote" and "The Duel of Two Horses" originally appeared in German in his *Gesamtausgabe in Einzelbänden*, Bd. 5, ERZAHLUNGEN III, Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung GmbH, Munich.

Raymond Queneau's untitled poem is from his collection, *L'Instant Fatal*, Editions Gallimard, Paris.

Paul Valéry's "Tais-Tois" is from his *Mélange*, 1941, Librarie Gallimard, Paris.

BOOKS AND PERIODICALS RECEIVED

AQUIN, HUBERT, *Prochain Episode.* McClelland & Stewart. Novel. 125 pp. $5.00.

BALL, NELSON, *Beaufort's Scale.* Weed/Flower Press, 501 Markham Street, Apt. 1, Toronto 4. Poems. 31 pp. $1.25.

BORESTONE MOUNTAIN POETRY AWARDS 1967: Best Poems of 1966. Pacific Books, Palo Alto, California. 145 pp. $3.50.

BOWERING, GEORGE, *Mirror On The Floor.* McClelland & Stewart. Novel. 160 pp. $2.50.

BROWER & MINER, *Fujiwara Teika's "Superior Poems Of Our Time."* Stanford University Press, Stanford University, California. 148 pp. $5.00.

BURI, S. G., *Elephant Girl.* Weed/Flower Press, 501 Markham Street, Apt. 1, Toronto 4. Collected poems. 47 pp. $1.25.

COLOMBO, JOHN ROBERT, *Abracadabra.* McClelland & Stewart. Collected Poems. 127 pp. $2.50.

COOPERMAN, STANLEY, *World War I And The American Novel.* Johns Hopkins. 273 pp. $6.50.

DAVIES, ROBERTSON, *Marchbank's Almanack.* McClelland & Stewart. 205 pp. $6.50.

DE PIETRO, ALBERT, *Moments In Passing.* J. R. D. Publishing Co. Inc., Central Islip, New York. Collected poems. 45 pp.

DE PRESLES, CLAUDE, *Le Bal.* Les Nouveaux Cahier de Jeunesse, Bordeaux, France. Short descriptive sketches.

DUNLOP, WILLIAM, *Tiger Dunlop's Upper Canada.* McClelland & Stewart. 189 pp. $1.75.

FARMILOE, DOROTHY; GASPARINI, LEN; MC NAMARA, EUGENE, *21 x 3.* poems. The Gryphon Press. Windsor, Ontario. $1.00.

FRASER, RAYMOND, *Waiting for God's Angel.* Poverty Press, Box 513, Stn. B, Montreal 2. 48 pp. $1.50. 54 poems.

HARRIS, WILSON, *Tradition The Writer and Society* — Critical Essays. New Beacon Publications, 95 Hornsey Lane, London N.6. 8/-. 75 pp.

HIERBERT, PAUL, *Willows Revisited.* M. and S. $5.95. 176 pp. Humorous novel.

HUFF, ROBERT, *The Course: One, Two, Three, Now!* Wayne State University Press, Detroit, Michigan. poems. 94 pp. $4.95.

JONES, D. G., *Phrases From Orpheus.* Oxford University Press. $4.50. 80 pp.

LA ROSE, ANTONY, *Foundations.* New Beacon Publications, 95 Hornsey Lane, London N.6. 6/-. 51 pp.

LEACOCK, STEPHEN, *Short Circuits.* M. and S. $1.65. 220 pp. Humorous sketches.

LEVERTOV, DENISE, *With Eyes at the Back of Our Heads.* New Directions. $1.45. 45 pp.

LIVESAY, DOROTHY, *The Unquiet Bed.* Ryerson. $4.95. Poems. 65 pp.

LORD, BARRY, *subject/object.* Weed/Flower Press, 501 Markham Street, Apt. 1, Toronto 4. $1.25. Poems. 39 pp.

MC COURT, EDWARD, *Remember Butler.* McClelland & Stewart. $6.50. 276 pp. Biography of Sir William Butler.

MC FADDEN, DAVID, *The Poem Poem.* Weed/Flower Press. c/o Nelson Ball, Apt. 4, 22 Young Street, Kitchener, Ont., $1.25. 36 pp. One long poem.

NEWLOVE, JOHN, *What They Say.* Weed/Flower Press, c/o Nelson Ball, Apt. 4, 22 Young Street, Kitchener, Ont., $1.25. 23 pp. Collected poems.

PURDY, ALFRED, *North of Summer.* McClelland & Stewart, Toronto. $5.00. 87 pp. Poems from Baffin Island.

RIBMAN, RONALD, 2 Plays — *The Journey of the Fifth Horse* and *Harry, Noon and Night.* $3.20 pa. 252 pp.

RICHARDSON, JOHN, *Wacousta.* M. and S. $2.50. 298 pp. Historical novel.

ROY, GABRIELLE, *Street of Riches.* McClelland & Stewart. $1.50. 158 pp. A novel.

SOUSTER, RAYMOND, *As Is.* Oxford University Press. 70 Wynford Drive, Don Mills, Ont. Poems $4.75. 102 pp.

SMITH, A. J. M. (Editor), *Modern Canadian Verse.* Oxford University Press. 70 Wynford Drive, Don Mills, Ont. $6.50. 426 pp.

SMITH, A. J. M., *Poems New and Collected.* Oxford University Press. $2.25. 160 pp.

WATMOUGH, DAVID, *Names For The Numbered Years.* Three plays, illustrated by Claude Breeze. The Bau-Xi Gallery, 55 Hamilton Street, Vancouver.

WILSON, MILTON (Editor), *Poets Between The Wars.* McClelland & Stewart. $2.95. Poems by Pratt, Scott, Smith, Livesay, Klein. 194 pp.

Hanging Loose 3, Box 398 Cooper Stn. New York, N.Y. 10003. $1.75 a year. quarterly. Poems, songs, short fiction, art work.

International Anthology, Published by the International Polyglot League, 24 Frinis Street, Athens (506), Greece. Poetry and writings.

Partisan Review, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey. Ed.: William Phillips. Published quarterly. $5.00 a year.

Prospetti, Via Palestro, 11, Roma, Italy. Italian literary magazine with poetry short stories, essays.

BOOKS

for almost every
taste and purpose
can be found,
easily, at

DUTHIE BOOKS

and PAPERBACK CELLAR

514 Hornby — MUtual 4-4496
670 Seymour — MUtual 5-3627
Also 4560 W. 10th Avenue — CAstle 4-7012

University of British Columbia Bookstore

TEXTBOOKS
REFERENCE BOOKS
PAPERBACKS
STATIONERY

Hours: Weekdays 8:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

A funny thing happened on the way to the Great Canadian Novel

Canadian publishing has come of age. And we've found a great many *good* Canadian novels. And *good* Canadian books of poetry. More than enough for an exciting list.

More than enough to make 1967 a very good year. Consider a list that saw in one year, new work from *Irving Layton, John Robert Colombo* and *Alfred Purdy.*

Scott Symons, David Lewis Stein and *Peter Taylor.*

George Bowering, Paul Hiebert, Michael Sheldon and *Hubert Aquin.*

And in the fall alone *Robertson Davies, P. K. Page, Sandra Kolber, Edward McCourt,* and *Jacques Godbout.*

The future promises more surprises — and more exciting books — from old names and new. They're what's happening and they're what's important. Why not join a select group? Look into what's new in Canadian Publishing.

McCLELLAND & STEWART
The Canadian Publishers

PRISM *international*

PAST Malcolm Lowry, Cesar Pavese, Uggo Betti, Yoshiaki Sasazawa, Maria Kuncewicz, Eric Lindegren, Margaret Laurence, Margaret Atwood, Amiya Chakravarty, William Stafford, Buddhadeva Bose, Earle Birney, Antonio de Undurraga, Alexandr Pis'mennyi, and many others.

PRESENT This issue contains prose and poetry by Günter Grass, Paul Valéry, Raymond Queneau, Michael Bullock, Jack Matthews, Ivan Malinovski, Geraldo Sobral, Irving Layton, Georg Britting, and more.

FUTURE First appearance in English of Ernst Barlach's play, *The Poor Relation.* First appearance of the free-swinging *Daddy Violet*, a play by George Birimisa. Fiction and Poetry by Michael Bullock, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, John Roberts, Henry H. Roth, Peter Sandelin, Robin Skelton, etc., etc.

One-year subscriptions are $3.50. Write to *PRISM international*, Department of Creative Writing, University of British Columbia, Vancouver 8, Canada.