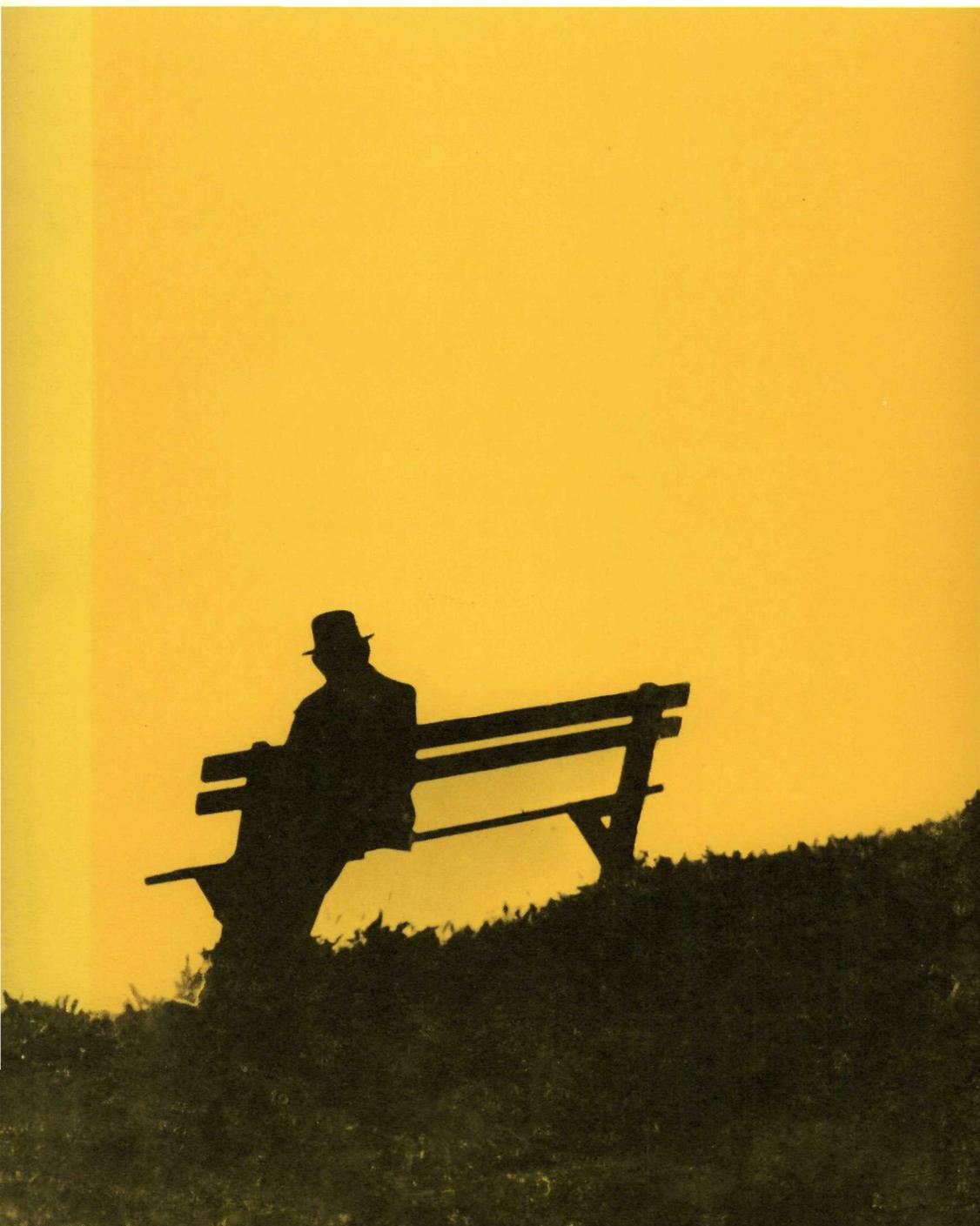
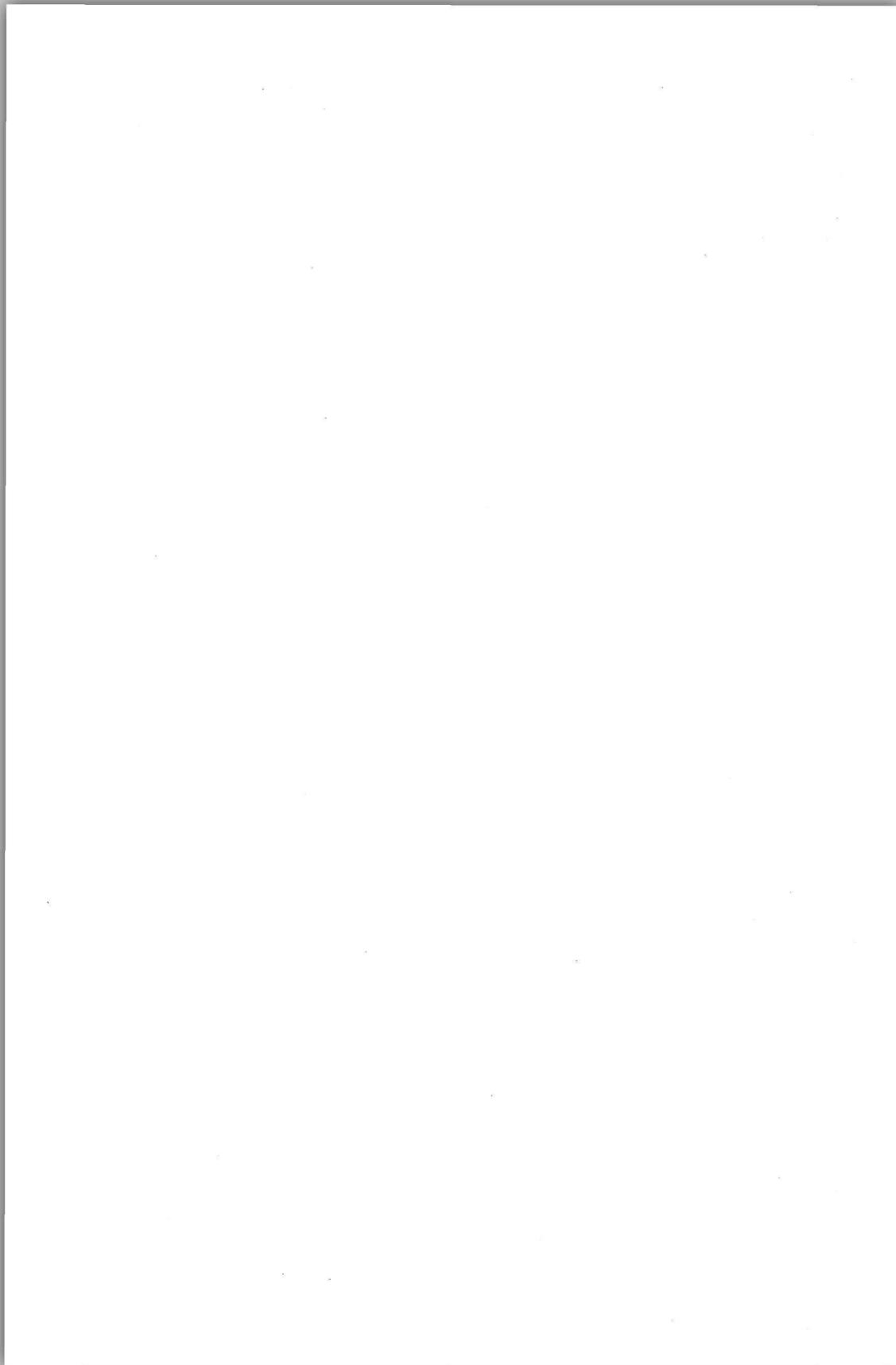


PRISM

international

winter 1965 / one dollar





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

PRISM *international* is a journal of contemporary writing, published quarterly by the University of British Columbia. Annual subscriptions are \$3.50, single copies \$1.00, obtainable by writing to PRISM, c/o Creative Writing, U.B.C., Vancouver 8, Canada.

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 FOUR NUMBER THREE

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ALASKA REVIEW

The *Alaska Review* is the first serious literary journal to be published in the State of Alaska. The *Alaska Review* is edited by Robert O. Bowen and published by Alaska Methodist University as a voice for Alaskan scholars, thinkers, poets, and others of intellectual bent. It is also a sounding board within the State for intellectuals from outside Alaska whose writing concerns Alaskans.

Since Alaskans are a highly cosmopolitan people, the subject matter appearing in the *Alaska Review* will be broad indeed, as its first issue indicated: a scholarly study on Jack London by Professor Shivers of Colorado State University; Alaska Indian materials by Mr. Vaudrin, lately a resident of an Indian village; a poem by Earle Birney, Canadian writer; and fine work by other hands. At the moment a London correspondent is researching a forthcoming essay on the British position toward the Alaska Purchase. The *Alaska Review* will contain in each issue some significant material on Literature, History, Anthropology, Art, or general culture.

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the world of seymour rottenberg



BY WILLIAM KREDA

Evelyn has run off with a pickpocket from Kansas City. She mistook him for a delegate to the Kitchen Utensil Salesmen's Convention, he pinched her buttocks, and she tried to hustle him. He was so flattered that he said, let me take you away from all this, or something. She's always been a sucker for the romantic approach.

I feel like jumping off the Michigan Avenue bridge or throwing myself in front of a C.T.A. bus. I really can't blame her for leaving me though; I got fired again.

"They've built a machine that can do your job," the foreman had said, handing me a pay envelope.

Inside it, along with the check, was a mimeographed letter of reference. The president's signature was blurred — a careless secretary had slipped with the rubber stamp.

I feel like turning on the gas or swallowing every pill in my medicine chest because I know Evelyn will be back. I can tolerate her with practice, but when she leaves me and I'm free of her, the thought of her return makes me miserable and I can't enjoy my freedom.

All at once she's there.

"I'm in space, dig? I'm up there, flying high, are you hip? grooving on the other side of the moon, wiggled!"

She doesn't have to ask; I reach into my pocket and hand her all the change I have. She dashes out, and in an hour or so she comes back, turns on her Charlie Parker album and sits in the overstuffed chair that faces the wall, humming to herself and gazing at the travel poster that hangs there.

Perhaps the reason she always comes back and, for that matter, the reason I always take her in is that she's my sister. Maybe it's

more than that. Sometimes I think we're tied together in ways I don't understand — like Father and the servant, Pablo.

On the day I was fired I came home and tacked the reference letter on the wall beside the travel poster. I pulled the overstuffed chair quite close and read the letter like an eye chart; the poster was a garish blur of blue and yellow. When I had read the letter through completely, I edged the chair backwards a fraction of an inch and read it through again. I repeated this process until I could no longer make out the individual letters; unfortunately the poster remained an obscure smudge, for I had strained my eyes severely. Therefore I drew no conclusions from my work and contribute nothing to science or the general body of knowledge.

Though I can't see the poster clearly now, I can call it up to my mind's eye for it has always hung on the wall. On it two tanned people are skipping across a golden beach, thick with palm trees, toward a brilliant blue surf. The legend at the bottom reads: Visit a Vacation Paradise — Miami Beach, Florida. It looks delightful.

Yesterday Mrs. Emilfarb, my landlady, brought me a bowl of chicken soup.

"So it'll give you strength," she said, ignoring my protests. "Then maybe you can find a job."

Being very strict about rent, she handed me an eviction notice. She was saving to retire to Miami Beach. She planned to have the deceased Mr. Emilfarb, whose remains she kept in a Pan Am flight bag, buried there.

"He'll be so much more comfortable in a warm climate," she'd always say, gazing wistfully at the travel poster and forcing out one tiny, glistening tear from her left eye.

I was in the bathroom when she brought the soup and as the door closed behind her I returned to the tub where I often spent long hours marveling at the tiny whirlpool that eddies around the drain, spinning hairs and foam round and round until they disappear. When the tub is clean I bunch up wads of toilet paper or simply spit into it and gaze, fascinated, as the debris is sucked down.

Kneeling on a magazine beside the tub, I thought about myself and Evelyn and Father and Pablo.

The four of us lived alone on a Florida key. Our only visitors were Italian hoodlums who came during the night and left before dawn. I watched them from my window while they loaded the marijuana-filled boxes into their dark limousines. Sometimes I stayed at the window until their tail lights shrunk out of sight on the causeway. At other times I left my room and crept along the

corridor to the staircase and watched, unobserved, my Father count and recount the money they had left him. He stacked the bills in piles and arranged the piles in different patterns.

I remember him standing with his weight on his crutches, his bathrobe fluttering around his ankles and the sea breeze whipping through his hair. The servant lay in a heap at his feet, bleeding and unconscious on the gravel drive. Evelyn shivered, fumbled with the buttons of her dress, and stumbled as we passed out of the gate onto the highway. I could have put my arm around her, comforted her, but I didn't.

"What will we do . . . where . . .," she sobbed and began to shake.

I took her arm and steered her to the side of the road where she collapsed against a tree and slid to the ground with her face in her hands. Sunlight shifted and danced in the pale strands of her hair.

I had been asleep in the den when she returned from her walk. She breathed rapidly as though she had been running and she hopped impatiently from one foot to the other while I rubbed my eyes and yawned myself awake.

"What's got into you?" I asked.

"I've got some of Father's tobacco."

"But, Father said . . ."

"Never mind that. If he can smoke it so can we."

"Where did you ever get an idea like . . ."

"From Pablo and he showed me how to smoke it."

She opened the cabinet behind the desk, reached up inside, and brought down a pipe.

I rose, crossed to the desk where she had placed the humidor, and stirred my finger through the green slivers and hard brown pods. Evelyn sprinkled a thin layer of tobacco in the bottom of the pipe, placed it in her mouth and, striking a match, lit it. She inhaled, gulped and closed her mouth.

I took the pipe, it smelled sweet, hesitated for a moment and then drew deeply. The smoke burned down my throat and into my lungs where it mushroomed like a fist unclenching and my heart beat faster and I was dizzy for a moment. I coughed and gasped air.

"Hold . . . it . . . as . . . long . . . as . . . you . . . can," she said.

Her voice was thin and distant and her face seemed fuller, all at once, sensual. I inhaled again and the smoke flowed into my lungs and lifted me until I was floating above the floor. The light in the room became painfully bright and as I drifted past the light switch I flicked it off. It clicked as loudly as a pistol shot.

Evelyn sat on the floor, holding the pipe and watching its smoke

curl and turn back upon itself in lazy tendrils and teasing eddies. She lay back, stretching, and her dress bunched up on her thighs. She giggled, laughed loudly, stopped and giggled again. I laughed, surprised, for I could think of nothing funny. I shook and my eyes teared and my mouth seemed full of chalk dust.

"If Father can then so can we," Evelyn said.

Her voice was a hand that reached out and drew me to her.

When Father found us in the den, we tried to cover ourselves.

"Was this your idea?" he asked.

I giggled. Evelyn giggled, dropping the dress which she clutched in front of her.

"Pablo, Gablo, Dablo . . .," she mumbled.

Father looked like a child who had fashioned an elaborate castle in beach sand and then discovered that the plastic soldiers were imperfect and wouldn't stand up. He called to Pablo and when the man entered the room, Father lurched toward him and, raising one crutch, struck him on the side of the head, knocking him to his knees. He swung a second time and blood gushed from Pablo's broken mouth as he slumped to the floor.

Sometimes I laugh, and then I suddenly feel sorry for Father. He sent me away, never knowing I would have left anyway. I think of him, alone but for Pablo, whom he won't fire and who won't quit, hating him and yet unable to do without him.

When Evelyn returned she told me that the pickpocket had, in truth, been half-owner of an A&W rootbeer stand in Ames, Iowa. As she talked she dissolved a pinch of white powder in a teaspoon of water over the stove. After filling a syringe with the liquid, she cinched a belt around her arm, above the elbow, and injected herself in the vein that rose like blue string beneath her skin.

"As I get farther away I come closer," she said, slipping into some sort of trance.

We got a postcard from Mrs. Emilfarb, who had gone to Miami Beach to marry a mature Spanish gentleman — seeking pleasant companionship.

"Pablo has disgusting habits," she wrote, "but he's fond of chicken soup. I have second degree sunburns and yesterday while I was swimming in the ocean I was attacked by a school of jelly-fish. Returning to Chicago when I'm released from the hospital."

I haven't found another job so I go to Grant Park and roll drunks to pay for Evelyn's shots. I have begun a scientific paper I call *The Variability of Optical Perception When Observing the Big and the Little*. In it I describe my personal sight experiences in warmly

human terms and go on to outline my moral philosophy in detail. When I finish, I intend to condense it, serialize it and submit it to the *Reader's Digest*.

Last week the newspapers reported the mysterious disappearance of a Florida key. Apparently it sank into the ocean with all hands aboard and, according to the local sheriff, foul play is suspected.

The bathtub drain requires more and more of my time, for recently, obscure sounds have been rising through the pipes, sounds grouped in a vaguely familiar way that calls to mind Beethoven's Ninth Symphony.

交 流

私達はくさりを両端からたくり寄せて歩いて行ってヘタとそこで出会ったのであった。

小さなベンチの上であつた。

私達は新しい歴史を始めるために黙って右手を出し合つてアップリッジを作つた。

アップリッジの向こうにはなだらかな丘が弧がついて、桜色をした小道が天までも続いていた。

私達のアップリッジは傾斜が大きかつたので

赤い血がどくどく流れ始めた。

歴史の長さをはかるためにも

心を脈打たせる必要があつた。

小さなベンチの上で手をさしのべ合うと

私の呼吸器にあなたの心臓がつながり

あなたの胸はそのまま

私の腸につながつたようであつた。

二人は全く別の方向からやつて来てヘタとそこで出会つたのであった。

見わたすなまり広々とした丘であつた。

春になると赤い桜が咲き又春になると新しく小道がはり交えられるように

どくどく時を刻みながら

私達もアップリッジを通していつのまにか

自然の循環をしていたのである。

それからいつもあなたは私の脈とともに存在した。

新しい桜が咲き始めても不思議にあなたはとどまつてこうして私の右手と交差するのである。

(INTERCHANGE)

Two Poems by Ikuko Atsumi

Translated by the author

1. INTERCHANGE

And we met there on the tiny bench
after hauling in the clue of fate,
raised each a hand
without speech
afresh to begin our momentous life

Beyond the bridge made of arms
the gentle hills stretched to heaven
encompassed by cherry blossoms
drifting, the breath of this time.

Our heart pulsated on the little bench
as if the blood were interchanged
through the steep bridge of our arms
to fulfill the length of the history we trace

Since we came over the open hill
from groping our separate ways
thousands of cherries have altered their colour
but you stay with me
in the cycle of the earth.

2. PLATFORM

Strangers know never to touch
A woman plays unconscious beauty
A man tries to brush her on the shoulder
with the slightest expectation
Shoulder after shoulder
coats beyond coats red blue yellow
utter strangers they stand so close
each hears the other's breathing
Men and women who will never quite come in contact
stand anxious to be joined
— if something miraculous would happen —
looking at their feet
How long the platform seems
with human beings!

Mornings and evenings we climb
on this suspended oblong with some anticipation still
A short time waiting for the train
but long enough to turn the platform to a stage
Wait! Drop the curtain!
It's not going as planned.
Isn't redcoat woman
due to graze blacksuit man today?
Nobody pays attention; we all pretend
to look in the direction of the coming train
Knowing he will never catch the other's eye
each passes to hide himself behind the rest
Soon he will disappear from the stage
to his separate destiny
leaving only a slight sigh.

One day somebody will invent a secret coat
transparent
There will be struggles to acquire it
and get on the platform
Suddenly the redcoat shrieks, embraced at last
moves airily without being touched
The stage falls into confusion
and a long tragedy on monogamy
seems to come to an end.

Two Poems by Yoshiaki Sasazawa

Translated by Ikuko Atsumi

1. A WHITE BANK

A white bank
on a corner of the town.
It is your —

Every word has fallen into discredit with me,
of the statesman, of the meteorologist,
of the doctor and the teacher,
as words are more wayward than dead leaves
which are lost only by fulfilling
their responsibility to the season.

I have come not to believe in my own image.
My intuition seems to have been useless.
Every letter of the alphabet
impresses us in vain
for they will soon be lost on a corner
of the time which never returns
like the stranger walking
a few feet ahead of me.

A white bank
on a corner of the town.
It is your —

I was attracted by its beautiful image
and put a thousand yen in the bank.
Several years have passed.
It was forgettable money.
I deposited it pretending
to believe unbelievable words.

A white bank
on a corner of the town
is standing like an apparition.
It is still four o'clock in the afternoon
but whose ghost is it?

源始

世が
淨く
平ら
なり

首狩族と大して変らな

理念と持つ青年たちの

街を歩かぬて森へ向う

ルンに教えられた物へのはな

森へ入つたら

偉大をパンが更えり

森せんたいが粗野な祭で揺れ

鼓や香油の匂いに酔う夢を見たのかうた

中くらの文書の川へへりに出

単純で興味のある流水を眺め

そこに牧童のような少年がいて

水魚に何つて石を投げている

親しくなつたばかりの少年が

石を投げた

川が白い手をあげて

笑つて行つたよ

と私に何つて言う

互動のよきにその言葉と

少年もろとも引つかんで

さつと抱き締めぬ

2. PRIMITIVE

Leaving the town where youth has ideas
not so different from head-hunters,
I make my way to the woods,
not because Rousseau enlightened me
but I have the dream that
the moment I enter, a great Pan revives,
the whole woods quake with a wild festival
and I become drunk with the essence
of myrrh or of perfumed oil.
I turn to the edge of the simple, pleasant river.
There stands a boy like a shepherd,
throwing stones into the surface.
He becomes friendly with me soon, says
 When I threw stones
 the River flew away laughing
 with its white hands raised.
Reactive, I seize at the words
and the boy together,
and embrace them tightly.

MEMORIES OF WARTIME CHINA

I

After many hours' hard march
on the dry flat land scorching
under the midsummer sun
my platoon made a halt
at a gate of a silent village
with willow leaves glittering
against white walls
and a little lake of clear water.

We had all believed
the village to be completely deserted
until in a street we met
a company of Chinese soldiers naked
and just beginning to decompose.

2

Raising his pistol to eye level,
my senior officer mumbled to himself,
"I haven't practiced for weeks, have I?"
and fired.

The dark target tumbled down the slope
of the weedy river-bank like a bundle
and was stopped by a thick stubble
on the yellow river-bed.

I had never before noticed
that the young prisoner was so young,
lying motionless, eyes still open.

3

In a village near Yonang
a Japanese officer took over a house
and furnished its rooms with tatami
and all the knick-knacks imported from home,
purchased next a pretty native girl
with breasts like a couple of green plums,
and was extremely happy.

It was three nights after her arrival
that the girl drew the pistol
from her sleeping master's holster
and fired a bullet into his hairless chest,
causing a tiny blood-pool to spoil
the brand new tatami.

4

One of my men shot
from fear a harm-
less Chinese coming
to us to surrender.

I saw the man fall
to the ground slow-
ly as if try-
ing to sit proper-
ly on the floor.

HISAO KANESEKI

Three Poems by Yoko Danno

RUSH

I saw what I shouldn't have seen,
A crowd of mummies,
Dark and dry,
Like chocolate-bars,
Loosely packed, on the platform.

And a piece of frozen wood
Shattered by the passing train.
My eyes turned the wrong way,
To the far-end of the onward rush.

The worn-out stone-steps as usual
Descending to the ground,
The same wind
That ruffled my hair
Rubbed against the blades of grass.

AUTUMN

I expected it, during the summer-time,
Rather warm to the feel, yet
Autumn proves a treacherous season
With a touch of the rat's skin in the air.

Thousands and millions of
Particles of dust sink
Onto the ground at night,
Charged full with cold.

Rice, ripe and aware, rests
In the storehouses, satisfied
With its share of the sun.

SOOTHING

She approached
Shining
With a big smile on

Her rouged lips
Frozen
On her false teeth —

Stood beside me
Asking
If she could kiss that

Plaster bust of mine
(So white
From loss of blood after

Amputation) — assured me
She could turn
Those pale cheeks red.



TO BAUDELAIRE, DEBUSSY AND BASHŌ

In the long, pale approach of evening
the incessant water caresses the black earth;
so close to silence.
as my long hair flows into your lap,
we watch the horizon devour the sun.

CYNTHIA MACDONALD

Two Poems by Edith Shiffert

FROM HERACLITUS

No visibles are permanent but fire.
Out of that heat they come, and there return,
changing utterly while into the air
more smoke and steam ascend to disappear.
The ever-living flame, this flaring world
keeps somewhere kindling, somewhere going out,
transforming seas, half earth, half whirlwind,
through burning phases where we blaze, blaze not.

THE AVENUES WHERE I MAY GO

Peculiar to the ways I move,
my shadow goes where I propose:
it turns the way my turning does
while joints perform and sinews give.
The shape presumed, I have to drive
the single being I embrace
peculiar to the ways I move;
my shadow goes where I propose.
The image in the mind may thrive
but still the one the eyes must face,
neither for triumph nor disgrace,
remains the self which I now have,
peculiar to the ways I move.

Three Poems by M. Lakshi Gill



Rain falls on the morning's dust
and our discussion ends.
Evening birds begin their chant
with temple bells.
I open the shutters; you, the wine;
and we release our ghost.



A white bull
ties to its belly
black wings of a fly
to defy gravity.



This is the way a
pink heron eats a green carabao:
it spits on the rice-fields
perches on the dumbbeast's neck
and pecks;

the pink heron, it's stubborn.
It will peck until it reaches the bone.

Two Poems from the Kuruntokai

Translated from the Tamil by A. K. Ramanujan

தலைவி கூர்ந்து

எழும்பி யனையிற் குழும்பல் சீனைய
உலைக்க லன்ன பாறை யேறிக்
கொடுவி லையினர் பகழி மாய்க்கும்
கவலைக் கென்பவவர் சென்று வாரே
அதுமற் றுவலங் கொள்ளாது
நொதுமற் கழியுமிவ் வழுங்க லாரே

- ஓதலாந் தையார்

WHAT SHE SAID (POEM 12)

They who know the way he went
say: where he goes now,
he crosses water-passes in the mountain
which are like passages in an ant-hill.
He has to climb rocks
hot as a blacksmith's anvil.
Where his road branches,
that's where the clansman
with the bent bow
whets the point of his arrow.
But this loud-mouthed town
knows nothing of my fears
for the hardship of his ways,
and taunts me
for being lovesick.

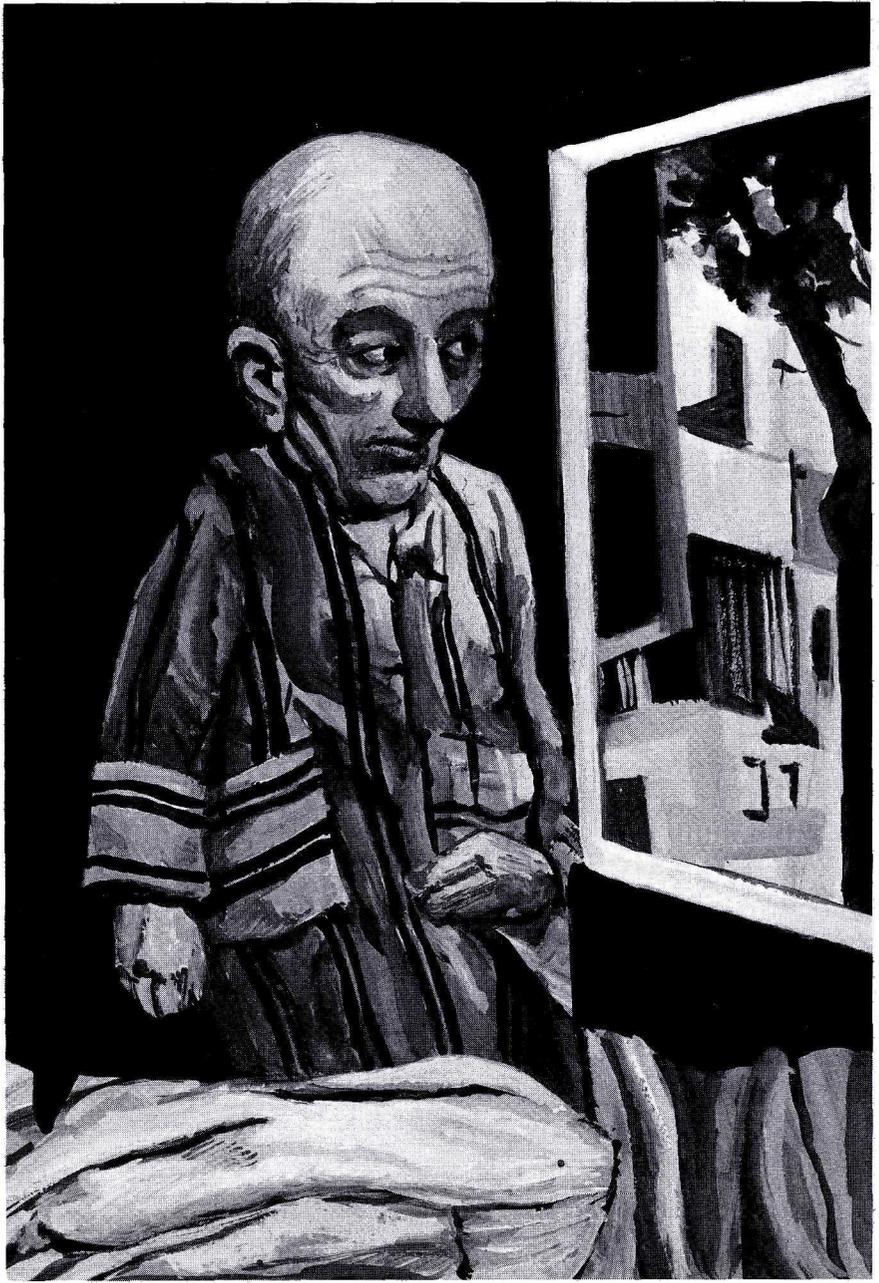
தேவன் கூற்று

மாவளை மடலு மூர்ப புவளை க்
குவி முகி ஷ்டுக்கங் கண்ணியுஞ் சூடுப
மறுகி னூர்க்கவும் படுப
பிந்தி மாடுப காமஞ் காழ்க் கொளினே

- பேரையின் முயுவலார்

WHAT HE SAID (POEM 17)

When love is ripe beyond bearing
and goes to seed,
men will ride even palmyra stems
like horses; will wear on their heads
the reeking dense blossom of the erukkam
for emblems; will lie in streets
in the midst of onlookers' gossip;
and will do worse.



THE TANGLES OF NEAERA'S HAIR

RALPH GUSTAFSON

SOMEWHERE IN THE CASINGS of his heart, the slight shocks, like added soft cushions, came persistently. Now he was dying. Die? Why shouldn't he? He was an old man.

The conclusions were without irony. What claim, finally, has he on irony who has loved? With love there is failure, certain and only. One wishes to give so much! But with that failure comes never indignity and scorn. How scanty had been his accomplishment! The fruit was small and lean of substance and scuffed. Where one fruit leans against another, there, they say, are scars. To the tradesman, the scars are a provision of scorn; to those who love, protection of the meaning within.

The sweetness came on the air from the garden below his window. He smiled. Other years, in his youth, there had been time for scorn; there was time for perfection, for tomorrow, for the luxury that claimed the world insufficient. Philosophy is not for young men. There is time for self-deception . . .

He sat by the half-open bedroom window overlooking the garden which mounted away from him upward to the grassy hill. The birds came and disported themselves in their bath on its cement pedestal; preening and ducking, showing off the glints of colour caught by the water and the sun; leaving in a sudden instinctive acceptance of danger, and returning to the rim, cautious then forgetting, flinging the waterdrops from the surface from under their wings. Beyond them, apart from the foliage, stood the square sundial stuck with its acute-angle iron stylus. Around the metal was written the motto, *I alone am constant*. The truth was otherwise! There were

many things as constant as Time, as the message of those letters engraved around the fiery dial. The need for love. The acknowledgment of pain. The acceptance of joy. For the matter of that, night which obliterated that shadowed signal of death-in-life. He summed it up. Without love, the carved letters did not matter. The significance of it all was to love; to have loved.

To have loved! How far in the past he was! He was elegiac. What other mood so accurately construes the world?

The broken bones of his hip had mended, he moved in his chair. The suppressed flash of the bluebird returned to the shallow basin of water. He observed it only long enough to establish its existence. His regard lasted briefly now. The fracture of the bones in his hip had defeated his confidence. Outward affections engaged him little — the garden and the disporting of the birds and the sun and the water. He preferred the elegy. Outward simplicities could not hold him for long. In youth, a life was made of these things. A flash of blue on the air filled the heart. The blossoming of a tree was a wonder and a promise. One hid them — the intimacy and the privacy of these transforming simplicities. Youth regarded them as embarrassing — swore that fraudulent cynicism was maturity. Yet by the flash of a wing was it known that Neaera could be brought to bed.

He looked about him. The receptacle into which he urinated lay lodged near him on the radiator under the window. The glass caught the sun. Indignity arose in him. He put the towelling less crudely over the object. He was becoming used to himself. Age obscured Neaera's always lovely hair.

The sun scarcely moved in two hours. Midsummer was deceptive. The globes of the peonies below him stood caught in eternal opulence, ready for the first stripping shower. Earlier, that morning, he had noted that the perfume no longer reached over the sill on the air that came from the garden. All things at generation moved toward death. To the extravagance nature was indifferent. The blossoming redundant preceded the perennial root. He would miss the perfume. The lilac first had given him the awareness of the pulse of blood in him. Now, the peony. How old was he? Eighty! 'Even at the turning o' the tide, a' babbled of green fields,' he derided himself, understandingly, with regret, acknowledging the quiet unchangeable catastrophe of nature. Once a man made love he set up perilous futures! All youth was error! When was the rose not tribulation? 'Aging sets in at adolescence,' he remembered. So it did — and no more and no less than death inhabits the cradle. With

what nonsense wisdom knocks its head on wood! The Furies are lovers of old men. He knew the moment exactly. Aging set in when, as the blossom of peony, he was redundant.

Now he was dying. His hold on life was going. And yet he rejoiced at the hedge of April lilac. And the scent of the peonies at the sill. For all his elegies, man answered the flash of the wing. He had taken the blanket from his legs and got down the hall to the bathroom. He had squatted on the lowered lid like a woman, resting for five minutes after, breathing heavily, and had got back to his chair at the window, bearing fastidiously on the silver pin that hinged his hip. With what disreputable, with what trivial matters man illuminates his soul! He had not fallen. He realized that for a lifetime he had lived magnificently.

Now the scent of the peony was gone. "Thwarted by swagger and love's lavish, what Do we remember of the thousandth rose?" Without irony, without bafflement, he remembered, he remembered.

The blossoming of the lilacs was over when they had climbed the hill . . . She wore a white blouse with a lace jabot down the front, a grey serge skirt down to her ankles and high buttoned boots, fashionable in those years, the heels better for impromptu lovers' walking. They had climbed above the pasture to the brow of the meadow, the town out of sight, the great separate clouds meeting the line of the hill, the sky blue and a goldfinch up from its nest in the tree they sat under. She was seventeen and he twenty. He knew that he had always loved her; they had just met. Love omniscient! Girls wore bolts of cloth in those days; morality had to be defended. He must say that he on his part wore a celluloid collar — but he did take off his jacket and sit in his shirt sleeves.

The problem of being extraordinary, if not immortal, bothered him.

She was sure he would be.

"What? Immortal?"

Her laugh was unopposable. The laughter of all girls seventeen is unopposable. Hers was different. She sat with her legs straight out. She bent the top of her body forward with laughter. "No, silly." The fresh summer was in her; and in her eyes, the promising worry of his overwhelming love. "Nothing is immortal," she told him.

He worked for a grocer but was a prospective architect — a builder of bridges, of towns, of cathedrals. He had built one boat-house. It had stood the winter. On his drawing board, in his bedroom in his boarding house, was the draughting, done on his own time, of a Natural House; the ideas were advanced. In ten years,

he was to draught ten Natural Houses. All remained on his drawing board. His theory of building to the contour of nature, rather than removing nature, was thought insecure. He then, at twenty, was refusing to believe that nothing was immortal. "Isn't it?" he said. "Perhaps not."

She looked at him to judge the extent of the hurt she inflicted. He lay propped on one elbow, staring at the depth of the colour of her hair. "In a materialistic sense," she softened the blow, aware of him inevitable, and how he was unable to help being inevitable.

He loved her.

"But you *are* extraordinary," she said to him.

He thought of the bitterness of the price. He had \$7.41 in his pocket. "Yes," he said, with hemlock in it.

She looked down at her skirt, vanquished. "Can't you draw kitchens that work and houses that don't stumble?"

She was trying to help him. He did not want help. He wanted money and to sleep with her. Later, for how long after? she would tell him that his failures did not matter. And he? he would trouble her, never able completely to believe that he actually could have her. All his life he was not to prove that he was a failure. "I love you," he told her.

"You see? I know you can."

She had not heard what he said.

The line of flight of a canary flashed. It came up over the edge of the grassy slope and went to the tree on their left behind them. She leaned over in excitement, following the colour in discovery. The sunlight was gold and the wind moved the grass. She turned to him . . .

He turned his eyes from the window. White clouds banked the brow of the hill. Nearer, the phlox was white against the fence. A wind moved the blossoms.

She had died in continuous pain, years ago. Her hair lay spread on the pillow. He had denied death. And for forty years there had not been mortality. She had died with honesty, and he had grown old. Extinction was prepared for by nature, he had learned. By a withdrawal. A snuffing-out of the receptions, the great holds of life loosened . . . He was old. Yes, he was old. He caught himself increasingly interested in the repeating pattern of the blanket, the arrangement of the utensils he ate with, the exact repetition of location — of his cane, of his newspaper, more engaged by these than by the great containments in his newspaper of greed, election, and magnitude. But he was aware of it. His dying would pull deep

out of life. He was still profoundly alive enough crazily to hate death: its obscenity, its discourtesy, its anonymity, its rouge . . .

He reached for his bell. His fingers touched the handle. Then he withdrew his hand . . . The gesture had been quite fierce! He had not rung a bell before to achieve self-identity.

He did not want to die, he saw.

And he knew he would — as he knew when he had begun to live.

He had been in his room — a room of books. In the legends of the caves and the Mediterranean, the Siren comes from the blue water to fill the silence and the loneliness of the world with song. *She* came, O magnificent and crazy circumstance, dancing with a mop, from the kitchen. An o'cedar mop, upside down, as a partner. He had known, that day, that day of a final judgment which comes to each man sooner or later, that he would never have either money or achievement. He had put, as a contrary verdict, Schubert's Quintet, the Trout, on the gramophone. As the blue Siren came, she came. She danced improvisatorially. With, just occasionally, a kicked heel. So content with humility, perfectly was the final, last, comic star inserted into the chaos of darkness, that, as those in jeopardy of perfection will, he wished release from the joy. In her vaults and flying buttresses and communications, was no need of cathedrals . . . That was fifty years ago when it occurred to him — that she was ridiculously happy.

He raised his weight. A buttock was dramatic. He watched the pattern of a swallow through the near sky. Yes, all things are understood too late — except through love, the whittling down of the tremendous, the tangles of Neaera's hair.

The kitchen cat stalked the bird on the grass near the sundial. The cat stayed, not moving, at the edge of the bush. The leap would not be made. The bird understood. The cat understood. The space of grass between was more than enough for the stroke of the wing down, before the claw. The pretence nevertheless was made. One must have the reassurance.

He reached for his cane. He would make his way once more with dignity on his silver pin, down the hall.

IN MEMORIAM: RED LANE

WORDS SAID SITTING ON A ROCK SITTING ON A SAINT

I

He had a way of stopping the light
, making it mark his darkness,
and a depth like with a sounding line
played out, swinging its futile
weight far above bottom
, drank all his surfaces.

WARNING . . . Don't tempt the gods
with too much patience, for he poked
for poems as in the sand for stones
— round firm things, with no entrances

: and would wait for the end
of the time he was in, for
that discovery, the moment of vision
that for him was hard, like a stone

: and I reached out tendrils of thought
towards him . . . If he told me what a flower
was to him, I'd tell him what a flower
was to me. Thus we worked on each other,
patiently, as if each was immortal.

His dying is like an infinite grey sphere
of nothingness to the left hand of my sun,
and sometimes I draw the nothingness down
to wrap about me, like a cloak with a hood.

II

The saint of stone silences
is dead. The miracle is
that he does not speak,
even as when he made his sparing
moves in our game, his speakings
were flint fragments of no language,
harder silences.

The miracle is that the Earth still traces
all the circles of her whirling dance,
and those yo-yos of the sun, the comets
still comb their white curly hair
across the heavens, while he
as in life consents to all their courses.

Doomed to his time, he accepted it
and made a gnostic utterance of it. Caught on it
across, like a bow on a fiddle string
he drew the one note it was meant to say
by his agency, and concluded it
with the quietness that was its continuation.

MILTON ACORN

A CONVERSION

Then we had a wood stove
that we called God.
When we banged it
it was like saying God damn it.
In bitter winters it kept us warm
and its mass gave gravity to the room.
We were astonished when the anonymous workmen
dismantled it, trucked it out,
and installed the present electric.

D. DRAKE

ITINERARY: SEA-WALK AND HOME

The crooked winds
file at my arteries
and the waves hiss
as they meld the beach.
My fears radiate
off the sands
and the weatherman predicts
wolves below the timberline.

The waves redouble
so that the agonies themselves
are transparent
green
the crested tantrums of an anger
submarine and cool.
Rising upon the occasion,
caressed by the arc of lightning,
her face is beautiful.

Today, death came to my door
but I told him
we never bought
from travelling salesmen.

RANDY ENOMOTO

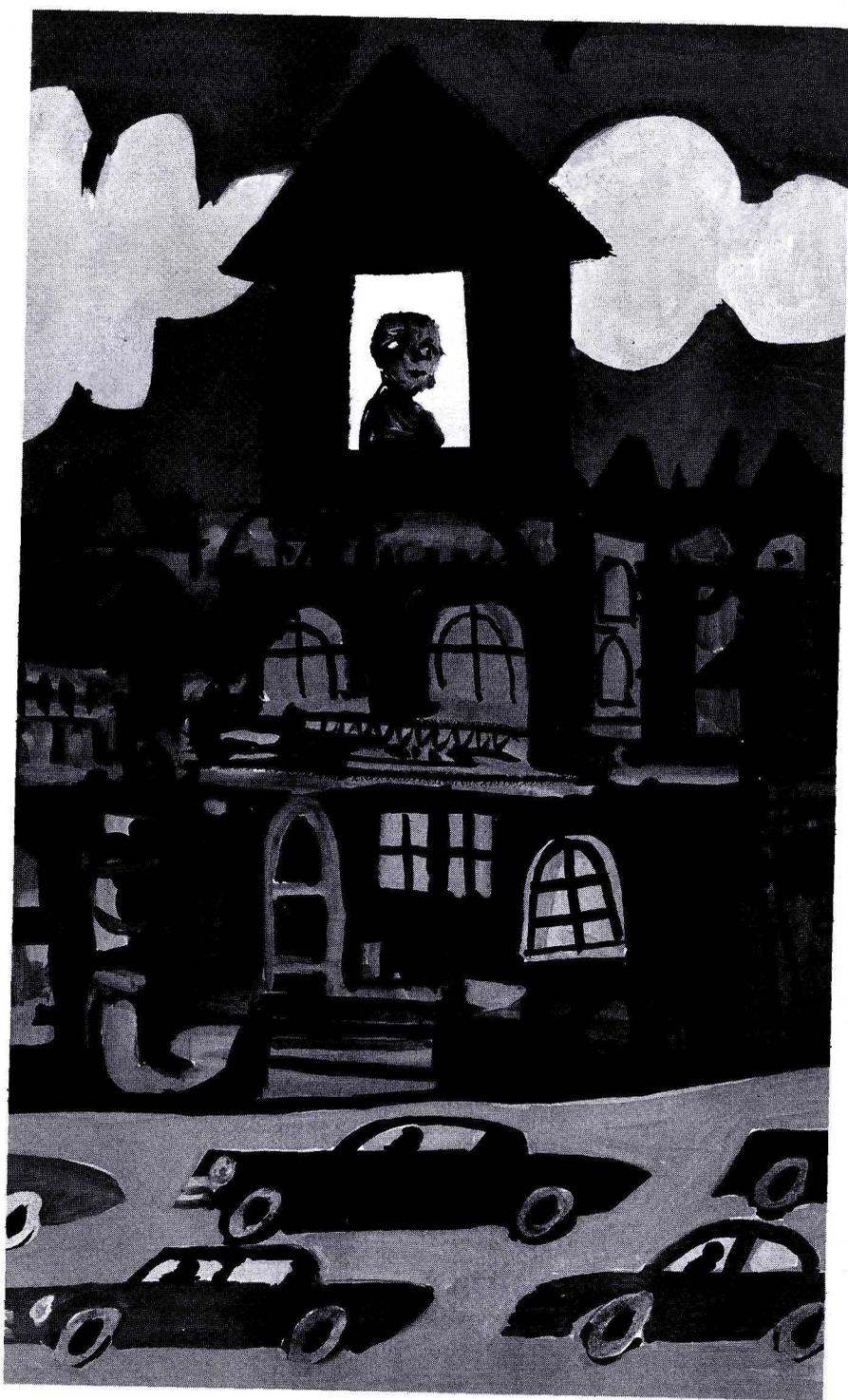
ALICE IN BLUEBEARDLAND

And for years afterwards
she was afraid of mirrors,
flinched
from the simplest door,
had visions of spiders, red-spotted,
hiding in coiled ropes,
and maggots on bodies of fowl.

All keys spoke traps
opening to unknown horror: perhaps
a Thing, naked,
caught between void and meaning
scratching its skin,
counting the creatures on webs
of zigzag walls.

How could she then
hand on the yielding door, tell
what lay in wait in the garden?
whether the apricots were poisoned?
whether the blue flowers smiled truly?
or if the sunlit stones would suddenly
crack as she moved with the door?

G. V. DOWNES



THE ACTION TONIGHT

A Drama in One Act

BY TOM GRAINGER

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Cast of Characters GOLDEN ECHO LOVEJOY
DOLORES
GEORGE G. GRAHAM
BINKY
FIRST POLICEMAN
SECOND POLICEMAN

TIME: Now.

PLACE: A city loft.

Two divan beds MID STAGE CENTRE a yard apart facing directly DOWN STAGE. STAGE RIGHT bed is piled high with books. The other bed is made and covered with a bedspread. There is a lamp standard on a strip of carpet between the beds. Directly DOWN STAGE of the beds, placed centrally, there is an old wooden box. On top of the box there is a bit of white lace and a large hand bell.

A platform raised five feet from the floor covers the whole UP STAGE area for about one quarter of the depth of the stage. A narrow catwalk extends from this along the STAGE LEFT wall to a landing and doorway. There is no door. Wide steps lead from the landing to the lower playing area. A small ladder leans against

the platform a little right of centre. Shelves, hooks, etc. along the walls of the lower playing area have a few pots and pans and cans of food on them. A small portion of the stage under the catwalk is curtained off.

Two hammocks are slung on hooks from the platform supports, one STAGE LEFT and one STAGE RIGHT. There are hooks, but no hammock, on the inside edges of the two centre supports. There is a small wooden kitchen table with two chairs DOWN STAGE RIGHT. On the platform exactly STAGE CENTRE there is an old wooden rocking chair. STAGE RIGHT of this a wooden box. On top of the box a pencil and pad, a bit of white lace and a telephone. No other furniture.

As the auditorium darkens, but before the curtain rises, there is at first the low hum of distant traffic. This is quickly increased in volume and held for a second or two at the top pitch. There is then the sudden squeal of brakes, followed immediately by the varied sounds of a major highway smash-up. The big crash, followed by lesser ones, with underneath them still the squealing of brakes. As these sounds fade out a woman's mindless sobbing is heard, together with the first distant sound of police sirens. The volume of the siren sound is increased rapidly. When it reaches an almost unbearable pitch it is switched off abruptly, the curtain rises and GOLDEN ECHO LOVEJOY is discovered in the rocking chair. He rocks slowly and gazes unblinkingly into the auditorium. He is near middle age, very thin, with a small head and close-cropped hair. He is dressed in jeans, sweatshirt and sneakers, all very clean.

GOLDEN ECHO: Going home time. . . . Watch 'em go. . . . Wham. . . . All crazy to get home.

(The telephone rings. A harsh, summoning note. He snaps to attention, his hand on the receiver. He controls himself with a visible effort, waits for it to ring again, then lifts receiver very slowly).

Hello. . . . Yes, this is Eastside 3-1963. *(pause)* A what? *(pause)* A free twenty dollar portrait? . . . Who is this? *(pause)* Valance Studio? Hello, Valance Studio. This is Golden Echo Lovejoy. My friend calls me Goldy. *(pause)* I don't know why you're laughing. *(pause)* *(proudly)* My friend Mr. George G. Graham. *(pause)* Who is the free twenty dollar portrait of? *(pause)* Me or anyone I wish to substitute in my place? *(pause)* No, I wouldn't want it of me. I'd be honoured to have one of my friend, Mr. George G. Graham, though. I know just where I would put it.

We have a lot of bare walls here, but I know just where I would put it so I could look at it when Gee-Gee isn't here. (*pause*) Gee-Gee is my friend, Mr. George G. Graham. He gave me my name which is Golden Echo Lovejoy, so I gave him the name Gee-Gee (*pause*) I admit it is not poetical, like Golden Echo, but it's not funny, either. It's just his initials. (*pause*) I just have to answer one simple question? (*pause*) (*shouts*) No, I'm not ready for the question! I must compose myself. This is important. (*pause*) The question may seem simple to you, lady, but you know the answer.

(*He puts the receiver on the box, breathes deeply and picks up the receiver*)

(*In a strained voice*)

O.K. I'm ready. (*pause*) Forty-ninth State of what? (*pause*) Oh, the United States. Of America? (*pause*) (*loudly*) Well, it could have been a trick question, couldn't it? (*pause*) O.K. . . . O.K. . . . I'm going to guess at this. I'm going to guess the name of the forty-ninth State of the United States of America.

(*He breathes deeply several times and holds the receiver expectantly*)

(*shouts*) Well, aren't you going to give me a clue? (*pause*) North of here! (*pause*) North of here! Miss, are you sure? We are north (*pause*) O.K. . . . O.K. . . . I'll guess. . . . Is it . . . is it . . .

(*He closes his eyes*)

Is it Siberia? (*pause*) I'm not joking. That was a serious guess. I was wrong, uh. (*pause*) Alaska, uh? Well, I was near. Siberia's not far from Alaska. Went a bit too far north, that's all. (*pause*) Yeh, too bad. I sure would have liked that free twenty dollar portrait of Gee-Gee. I know just where I would have put it so that I could look at it when he isn't here. (*pause*) Hello . . . hello . . . ah.

(*He puts receiver on to the cradle and stares dejectedly into the auditorium. He rocks very slowly*)

(*After a moment or two*)

Going home time. . . . Watch 'em go. . . . Wham. . . . All crazy to get home.

(*A girl's voice is heard singing a gay song. DOLORES enters. She is about twenty. She is dressed in a bright red skirt, black tights, sneakers and sweater. She is very pretty and her dark hair is long and a little untidy. She stops singing and stands on the landing, looking around in delight. GOLDEN ECHO stops rocking and watches her without moving*)

DOLORES: Boy, what a set up. . . . Who dreamed this one up? (*She looks across at GOLDEN ECHO*) Hey, where is everybody?

GOLDEN ECHO: Gee-Gee is out. I'm watching the freeway and answering the telephone till he gets back. You an acquaintance of Gee-Gee's?

DOLORES: (*as she trips down the steps*) Who's Gee-Gee? I never heard of Gee-Gee. (*She stands DOWN STAGE CENTRE facing UP STAGE*) Boy, what a set up. This place belong to Gee-Gee?

GOLDEN ECHO: He's got squatter's rights, same as me. Only he was here first, so he's got right of possession, too. That section there, with the beds and the lamp, that's his. That's private. Nobody's allowed in there without Gee-Gee says O.K. That's his loving room.

DOLORES: Loving room! (*She moves slowly towards the beds*) My name's Dolores. . . . Why don't you come down from there?

GOLDEN ECHO: I'm watching the freeway. It's going home time. Gee-Gee says if I don't watch over them then they'll all smash up. Especially at going home time. . . . Wham. . . . All crazy to get home.

DOLORES: (*Turns DOWN STAGE and gazes into auditorium*) You can see the freeway from here. (*Turns UP STAGE*) Hey, you can see the freeway from down here.

GOLDEN ECHO: It's not the same. This is my watching place. Anyway, I have to sit by the telephone. Gee-Gee says there'll be good news one of these days. Good news travels awful slow he says, but it'll get here. I have to be here to write it down, he says.

DOLORES: (*Moves quickly to box and picks up the hand bell*) What's this for? What's the bell for? (*She rings the bell again and again*) Ice Cream. . . . Ice Cream. . . . Tuttsi-Fruttsi Ice Cream. . . . (*With laughter in her voice*) There was this old movie on television. It was about New York. . . . This old Italian guy sold ice cream. He had a bell like this. . . . Tuttsi-Fruttsi Ice Cream. (*She stops ringing the bell*) What's it for?

GOLDEN ECHO: Put that bell down. It's Gee-Gee's.

DOLORES: (*Rings bell again*) Ice Cream. . . . Tuttsi-Fruttsi Ice Cream.

GOLDEN ECHO: (*He leaps off the chair, scrambles down the ladder, grapples with DOLORES and takes the bell from her. He puts it back on the box*) Don't ever touch anything of Gee-Gee's again without he says O.K. (*He indicates the beds, books, etc.*) These are his personal possessions.

DOLORES: Where is everybody?

GOLDEN ECHO: I don't know where everybody is. . . . I don't even know where Gee-Gee is.

DOLORES: There's just the two of you live here? Just you and Gee-Gee?

GOLDEN ECHO: That's all. Just Gee-Gee and me. Gee-Gee takes care of me and I watch over the freeway and answer the telephone. It doesn't ring very often. Gee-Gee says something good must come out of it one day. Otherwise, it wouldn't be there, he says.

DOLORES: Two beds and two hammocks and there's only two of you?

GOLDEN ECHO: Gee-Gee says there'll be others. He says first we'll get a third, then later on there'll be more. We've got everything ready for when we get a third. The wine, the hammock and everything. Are you going to be the third? You're the first person ever came here.

DOLORES: Hi. I'm Dolores.

GOLDEN ECHO: I am Golden Echo Lovejoy. You going to be our third, Dolores?

DOLORES: (*With amazed delight*) Golden Echo! Crazy. . . . What a night this is gonna be! What a place for the action! How did they ever find it?

GOLDEN ECHO: You like my name?

DOLORES: Love it. . . . Golden Echo. . . . How'd you get it? You an Indian or something?

GOLDEN ECHO: (*With shy pride*) Gee-Gee gave it to me.

DOLORES: (*Quickly*) What's the bell for?

GOLDEN ECHO: Well, we'll say Gee-Gee is lying on his bed and I want to talk to him. First I would ring the bell. If Gee-Gee says "Come in" that means I can talk. Otherwise, Gee-Gee says, to start talking to him would be an invasion of his privacy.

DOLORES: What do you talk about?

GOLDEN ECHO: All kinds. . . . Gee-Gee knows everything — What things have been like — What they're like now. . . . Mostly, though, we talk about what it'll be like after we get the good news and I've got it all written down. . . . There's two things he won't talk about, though. Religion — and God. He claims them two subjects are about wore out.

DOLORES: And if he doesn't say "Come in"? If he doesn't answer what do you do?

GOLDEN ECHO: Go away for a while. He always calls me before very long.

DOLORES: Show me. You lie on his bed and I'll ring the bell.

GOLDEN ECHO: Gee-Gee wouldn't like that.

DOLORES: What a dope. Gee-Gee won't know if we don't tell him.
Go lie down.

GOLDEN ECHO: O.K. But ring the bell straight away. Gee-Gee might come in. (*He lies on the bed. He keeps one arm under him so that his full weight is not on the bed and lets his feet hang over the side. As he does this* GEORGE G. GRAHAM enters. *He is a short, slender man who moves with rare grace. He could pass for thirty-five or so, but is several years older than he appears. He is dressed in a dark pin-striped suit, clean and well pressed, but out of fashion. The jacket is double-breasted with wide lapels. He wears a wide, striped tie, white shirt and black, highly polished shoes. The edge of a white handkerchief peeps out of his breast pocket. He carries a small paper bag in one hand and a can of food in the other. He stands on the landing and throws the can gently and catches it and throws it again as he watches*)

DOLORES: (*Eagerly*) You want me to ring the bell now?

GOLDEN ECHO: Of course, yes. (*DOLORES picks the bell up. She holds it at arm's length, stands on tiptoe and rings it softly*)

GOLDEN ECHO: Come in. (*He leaps off the bed, takes the bell from her and puts it back on the box*) You see. Then I could go in and sit on his bed and talk.

DOLORES: Crazy. . . . Boy, what a night this is gonna be. . . . What a place for the action. (*She dances gaily around, sees GEORGE and stops, facing him*) (*to GOLDEN ECHO*) Who's this?

GOLDEN ECHO: (*proudly*) That's Gee-Gee. That's my friend Mr. George G. Graham.

DOLORES: Hi Gee-Gee. I'm Dolores.

GEORGE: Goldy, you should be watching the freeway. (*He walks quickly down the steps*) Here. (*He gives him the bag and the can*)

GOLDEN ECHO: I was watching, Gee-Gee. Only Dolores came.

GEORGE: Take your sandwich and watch over the freeway. You want they should smash up?

GOLDEN ECHO: I was watching, Gee-Gee. Only for just this minute. (*He takes the bag and the can, crosses to one of the shelves and puts the can alongside others which are there*) You know I always watch at going home time. (*He crosses again and goes up the ladder. He sits in the rocking chair and eats his sandwich as he gazes unblinkingly into the auditorium*)

DOLORES: Hi, Gee-Gee. I'm Dolores.

GEORGE: My name is George. Only Goldy is allowed to call me Gee-Gee. Any 'phone calls, Goldy?

GOLDEN ECHO: Just one from some studio. I'd've won a free twenty dollar portrait if I'd known the right answer.

GEORGE: What was the question?

GOLDEN ECHO: What is the forty-ninth State?

GEORGE: Forty-ninth State of what?

GOLDEN ECHO: (*delightfully*) That's what I said, Gee-Gee. It could have been a trick question, couldn't it, Gee-Gee?

GOLDEN ECHO: Sure could. Wasn't it?

GOLDEN ECHO: No, they were serious, all right.

DOLORES: Hi, George. I'm Dolores.

GEORGE: Hi. . . . You'd think those hucksters would pick a question about Canada, wouldn't you? Not them. You know what I think? I think they're ashamed of Canada. It's not American enough for them. What this city needs is another mountain. (*He takes a book off the pile, switches the lamp on, lies on the bed and opens the book*)

DOLORES: (*Picks a book up and leafs through it*) I like it here. I like this city. I think it's got the right number of mountains. They're just the right height and everything. . . . Hey. . . . You know what Henry the Fourth died of?

GEORGE: A surfeit of surgeons?

DOLORES: He died of prolosy, venereal disease and prolapse of the rectum. It says so right here. The things you read in books.

GEORGE: Was that Henry the Fourth, part one, or Henry the Fourth, part two?

DOLORES: (*Laughs and throws the book down*) Cr-r-razy. (*She dances around*) What a night this is gonna be. What a place for the action. (*She stops* DOWN STAGE CENTRE *facing UP STAGE*)

DOLORES: Hey, where is everybody? (*GEORGE turns a page very slowly*) Where is everybody? (*She picks up the hand bell and rings it sharply and loudly. GEORGE puts his book down and sits up on the bed*) Where is everybody?

GEORGE: (*Calmly*) Everybody is here. Goldy is watching over the freeway and I'm right here. We're the only everybody that's ever been here. Except for you.

DOLORES: Can I come in?

GEORGE: Sure.

DOLORES: Oh, no. We're gonna do this right. First I ring the bell. Then you say "Come in." (*pause*) That's the routine, isn't it?

GEORGE: (*calmly*) That's the routine.

DOLORES: O.K.?

GEORGE: O.K. (*She rings the bell softly and briefly*) Come in.

DOLORES: Cr-r-razy. (*She makes a production number of moving the two or three feet that brings her on to the strip of carpet*) I'm in his loving room (*loudly*) I'm in the loving room of Mr. George G. Gee-Gee Graham. (*GEORGE gets up. He moves some of the books so that there is room for him to sit on the other bed. He points to the bed he has vacated*)

GEORGE: Sit.

DOLORES: (*Sits Yoga fashion on UP STAGE end of bed*) Why does Golden Echo watch the freeway?

GEORGE: He isn't watching it. He's watching over it. There's a difference.

DOLORES: (*quickly*) Why is he watching over it?

GEORGE: Because if he didn't watch over it they'd all smash up.

DOLORES: You telling me that Golden Echo believes that by sitting in that old chair getting bug-eyed looking at the freeway he stops accidents?

GEORGE: That's what he believes.

DOLORES: Crazy. . . . You don't believe it, do you?

GEORGE: I do. Because that's what he's doing. Sitting up there watching over the freeway and stopping accidents.

DOLORES: You a junky?

GEORGE: (*smiles*) No, I'm not a junky.

DOLORES: Then what makes you talk like that?

GEORGE: (*Stands and crosses DOWN STAGE RIGHT. He stares out for a moment, then turns*) Come here. I'll show you something.

DOLORES: I couldn't see it from here?

GEORGE: No, you can't see it from there.

DOLORES: (*Unwinds herself, crosses with long ballet dancer's strides to STAGE LEFT of GEORGE. She makes a low curtsey*) What does your lordship want me to see?

GEORGE: Stop fooling around. You want to know why Goldy is watching over the freeway? I'll tell you if you'll stop fooling around.

DOLORES: (*seriously*) O.K.

GEORGE: See that patch on the retaining wall over there? A little lighter than the rest of it? That's where Goldy's station wagon knocked a lump out.

DOLORES: (*She turns and looks at GOLDEN ECHO*) And he wasn't hurt?

GEORGE: He was thrown clear somehow. He was wandering around

on the freeway when I got there. I brought him up here before the police and ambulance got through. . . . Goldy's wife was driving. She was killed, and their two children . . . and the driver of the car behind her. He swerved into the next lane. . . . There were seventeen cars piled up within a few seconds. You must have read about it.

DOLORES: Could be. Accidents all the time.

GEORGE: Not like that one. Not on this freeway.

DOLORES: So why did you bring Golden Echo up here? And why, for God's sake, do you call him Golden Echo?

GEORGE: I brought him here because he didn't know who he was. He'd lost his memory.

DOLORES: But they could bring it back, Association . . . another shock. I read about it in my psychology course. Ah . . . psychology 211. I flunked it.

GEORGE: They could. And they would have. That's why I brought him up here. He's happy enough. (*He turns UP STAGE and looks at GOLDEN ECHO. He waves*) Hi.

GOLDEN ECHO: Hi. . . . I'm watching, Gee-Gee.

GEORGE: That's fine. Watch over them, Goldy. (*He crosses to beds and sits on the STAGE RIGHT bed, DOLORES crosses and sits Yoga fashion again on UP STAGE end of other bed*)

DOLORES: You know something. You still haven't told me why he's watching the freeway.

GEORGE: Over. He's watching over the freeway. . . . Because as long as he's there I won't cause any more accidents.

DOLORES: *You* won't cause any more. . . . (*she points over her shoulder at GOLDEN ECHO*) You cause that one? How?

GEORGE: I lay on that bed and willed it to happen.

DOLORES: Ha-ha. (*She jumps up and waltzes DOWN STAGE*) He willed it . . . Big deal. (*turns*) What are you? A witch doctor or something? That crazy suit. Where'd you get it? Out of a museum? (*GEORGE shrugs his shoulders and picks a book up*) Where is everybody? How come I'm the only one here?

GEORGE: What do you mean, the only one? There's Goldy . . . and there's me.

DOLORES: The gang . . . Where are they? Where's Binky? Binky always gets there first.

GEORGE: I never heard of Binky.

DOLORES: This is 711 East Fourteenth, isn't it?

GEORGE: I believe so. I'd have to check, though.

DOLORES: (*crosses to GEORGE, stands over him*) You mean you

don't know where you live? You don't know your street number?
GEORGE: This is where I live. If I didn't know where I lived I wouldn't be here. These are my books and my beds. So. . . This is where I live.

DOLORIS: Well, for your information, Mr. George G. Gee-Gee Graham, these beds and these books will soon be bouncing. The action is here tonight. Binky will trot through that doorway with a fistful of cigarettes, custom made. They'll smoke good, like pot should, and we'll all be up there, looking down on the angels and on Golden Echo Lovejoy.

GEORGE: (*stands, grabs her by the hair and holds her*) You've got the wrong place. Nobody comes here. Nobody knows I live here.

DOLORIS: Oh, no. I came, didn't I?

GEORGE: Yes, you came. (*releases her*) But you came to the wrong place. Nobody knows I live here. You came to the wrong place. Goldy and me, we don't have parties.

DOLORIS: No, you two have your work cut out. You causing accidents and . . . and Golden Echo there stopping them. (*looks up at GOLDEN ECHO*) Look at him. He's really working. He's really concentrating.

GEORGE: Sit down. (*She sits on STAGE LEFT bed. GEORGE walks across and back DOWN STAGE of the beds*) Golden Echo told you that's my loving room?

DOLORIS: That's what he said. (*She pats the bed*) This is Gee-Gee's loving room.

GEORGE: I don't sleep on the bed. I sleep in one of the hammocks.

DOLORIS: That's nice.

GEORGE: It's not what you think. You're the first girl ever came up here. I call it my loving room for two reasons. (*He sits on the STAGE RIGHT bed*) One . . . I do things here that I love to do. Like reading . . . all these books are mine. I paid for most of them, too. I stole only the most expensive ones. There's a few fine books in here. Most of them cost about two bits, though. . . . And thinking . . . just plain thinking and meditating. I love to meditate. I'll pick a book up and before I know it I'll have spent half a day meditating on just one line. But the main reason I call it my loving room is because I sometimes lie here and concentrate and send love out into the world. The old fashioned kind. The love of life. Have you noticed that when people talk about love now they mean sex?

DOLORIS: No, can't say that I have. The gang, when they mean sex, that's what they talk about, sex.

GEORGE: How old are you?

DOLORES: My age is nineteen point seven five years. I'll soon be an old, old lady. (*She leaps up*) The way things are going I'll be an old lady before Binky gets here. (*She runs up the steps on to the landing*) (*shouts*) Hey, Binky, where are you? (*She runs down the steps*) I can't understand it. At least Binky should be here.

GEORGE: (*calmly*) Nobody's coming here. You're at the wrong place.

DOLORES: Ah, nuts. You're as nutty as a five cent candy bar. You and Golden Echo both. (*She crosses and stands over him*) (*shouts*) Why do you call him Golden Echo?

GEORGE: Because he's pure. The smash-up wiped his mind clean. I see kindness in his eyes and I hear the Golden Echo of hope when he talks to me. (*He stands, holds DOLORES' face and looks into her eyes*) He has no ambition. All he needs is a little food. And shelter. He trusts me to provide them for him. (*He looks up at GOLDEN ECHO and waves his hand*) Hi, Goldy. Sandwich O.K.?

GOLDEN ECHO: (*looks down*) Sure was, Gee-Gee. (*He looks out into auditorium again*) Say, Gee-Gee, there's a man standing on the corner under the freeway. He's got a gun.

GEORGE: (*crosses quickly to ladder and joins GOLDEN ECHO on the platform*) Where?

GOLDEN ECHO: See him there, Gee-Gee? Near the intersection?

GEORGE: A cop. What would a cop be standing there for? How long has he been there?

GOLDEN ECHO: About five minutes, Gee-Gee. Leastways, I didn't notice him till about five minutes ago.

GEORGE: O.K. Keep watching, Goldy. Let me know when he moves. Or if anybody else shows up.

GOLDEN ECHO: I'll watch him, Gee-Gee. (*GEORGE moves quickly down the steps and across to DOLORES*)

GEORGE: There's a cop down there on the corner.

DOLORES: Some cops are paid to do just that. Stand on corners.

GEORGE: I can't stand cops. Or soldiers. Or hunters. Anybody with a gun.

DOLORES: So lie on your bed and send some love out to him. Maybe it'll scare him and he'll go away.

GEORGE: Why would he be there? I've never seen a cop around here outside of an automobile before.

DOLORES: Maybe he's trying to figure out why there's been no accidents on the freeway lately.

GEORGE: And maybe he's heard that your gang is coming. Maybe somebody tipped them off.

DOLORES: (*listlessly*) I thought you said I was at the wrong place.

GEORGE: You were told the wrong address. Couldn't they have been?

DOLORES: I don't see what difference it makes so long as the action isn't going to be here.

GEORGE: If the cops come up here there'll be action all right. What about Golden Echo? (*He crosses DOWN STAGE RIGHT and sits at the table*) Them and their stinking guns. They'll come up here asking questions. Pushing me around, for Christ's sake. I'll get mad and that'll be the end of it.

DOLORES: What makes you think he's watching this place? He's just standing there, isn't he?

GEORGE: No cop ever stood there before.

DOLORES: (*crosses and sits at table*) And I'm the first girl who ever came up here. Two firsts in one day. You know what I think? I think I'm at the wrong place. Why would Binky tell me the wrong place? I didn't make a mistake. I wrote it down. (*She fumbles in her handbag and brings out a slip of paper*) 711 East Fourteenth, top floor. (*She puts the slip of paper back into her handbag*) Hi... I'm Dolores... I was named for Dolores Costello.

GEORGE: Dolores who?

DOLORES: Costello. My father was in love with her for his entire life. He organized a film society so he could see *The Magnificent Ambersons*. He showed it three times in one season. Crazy... My mother was a ballet dancer. She made me take lessons. Six years. I took ballet lessons for six years. I was going to be a prima ballerina. My mother, she never advanced out of the corps de ballet, but I was going to be a prima ballerina... At age fourteen point five it became apparent that I too would not advance out of the corps de ballet. At that I would be fortunate to get a job with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet Company of Winnipeg, Man... .

GEORGE: I passed through there once. It must have been cold because the inhabitants wore fur. The train was warm, so I stayed aboard.

DOLORES: Very wise. You made a wise non-move. As I was not to be a prima ballerina I had to take singing lessons, so I could become a musical comedy star. At exactly age eighteen my father died and my mother married the local mortician. She said she did it so I could continue my singing lessons. (*She rises suddenly*

and pirouettes to DOWN STAGE CENTRE) So I left home. I'll need a mortician maybe once, and then I don't want to see him.
(*She turns UP STAGE*) Hi, Golden Echo.

GOLDEN ECHO: Hi, Dolores.

DOLORES: (*dances to table*) That was one point seven five years ago. (*She sits at table again*) I left home one point seven five years ago. How long is it since you left home?

GEORGE: This is my home. (*He looks up at GOLDEN ECHO*) That goddamn gunman still there, Goldy?

GOLDEN ECHO: I'll tell you when he goes, Gee-Gee. He don't move much. He keeps hitching up his belt and looking down the street.

DOLORES: So I came to the big city. I had a little money and I enrolled at the University. I took English Lit., Creative Writing, Psychology, French and, for God's sake, Medieval History. I was going to be a journalist or a teacher or something. You know what? I was really keen. I really wanted to learn. I'd have taken every course in the book if they'd've let me. So how did I get mixed up with Binky and that crowd?

GEORGE: I used to have a notice leaning on the bell. It said. . .
HUMAN PEOPLE PLEASE RING BELL. OTHERS GO AWAY. Nobody came, so I threw the notice out.

DOLORES: (*rises, crosses to centre and turns*) It's not just pot. Binky's a pusher. A real pusher.

GEORGE: (*rises, crosses to DOLORES*) This suit was made for me. Hand made.

DOLORES: He pushes heroin. What a way to make a living. The pot is just a side line.

GEORGE: I had three made back in '41. All exactly the same. This is the last one.

DOLORES: You took good care of it. I wasn't even born then and look at me.

GEORGE: I'm looking.

DOLORES: '41 must have been a good year.

GEORGE: It was. So was '42 and '43. Right clear through to maybe '47. They were all good years. (*He fastens his jacket and smooths his lapels*) The double-breasted years. The years of hope.

DOLORES: Maybe I should have taken Modern History. So what happened in '47?

GEORGE: The single-breasted bastards took over.

DOLORES: I don't know what you're talking about. The way things are now, that's the way they've always been.

GEORGE: I wear this suit in honour of the years nineteen forty-one

to nineteen forty-seven, which were slightly different.

DOLORES: (*runs and jumps on to STAGE LEFT bed*) What am I doing here, talking to a nut like you. (*She sits Yoga fashion again*) Every man I've ever known was a nut . . . My father . . . in love with Dolores Costello for his entire life. How can you fall in love with someone you've never met?

GEORGE: It's easy enough. (*he crosses and sits at table*) If you're lonely you just have to see her, that's all.

DOLORES: (*matter of factly*) Binky's my lover, but I don't love him.

GEORGE: He love you?

DOLORES: Binky! He loves Miss Green. Miss Green from Chi-cago.

He's a nut too. Let me tell you about Binky. He's a gentleman of the Negro persuasion, but only slightly. He was tarred with a fine brush. He looks like an Othello who's done a poor make-up job, or a captain of industry just back from Miami or some place.

GEORGE: So how did you meet him? How did he become your lover?

DOLORES: Some jazz place, I forget the name of it. I only went there once. It must have been three in the ack emma and I was there all alone. There were three of us at first but the other two had split. As usual there had been much talk of sex. It had just occurred to me that I was probably the oldest virgin in town when Binky came and sat at my table. He said, "When was you born? You're an Aquarius. It's no use denyin' it. I can spot an Aquarius chick a mile away. What day of which month was you born on?" "February twelfth," I said. "Ah knew it," he said. "Ah'm a Leo. Ah got an infinitive with Aquarius chicks." Crazy. He meant affinity, but he said infinitive.

GEORGE: Hilarious. How could you possibly resist him?

DOLORES: I was just playing him along. I thought I could draw back at any time. Binky is in a different league, though. He makes his own rules.

GEORGE: So he got you as easily as that? He snapped his fingers and you followed him?

DOLORES: Something like that. First, though, he rolled a couple of cigarettes.

GEORGE: And you smoked. Just for kicks.

DOLORES: Just for kicks. Things looked different after that. . . . Did you ever smoke?

GEORGE: No, I never did.

DOLORES: It's difficult to explain what happens. For instance, time . . . it seems to slow and slow until it's almost —

GOLDEN ECHO: (*rises suddenly and shouts*) There's a police car on

the corner, Gee-Gee.

DOLORES: So I go with Binky. And I find he's got a score of girls. All working for him. He wants to set me up. "You got something to sell," he says, "go sell it. Peddle it," he says. "Peddle it now. You won't have it long."

GOLDEN ECHO: They're getting out. Three of them.

GEORGE: (*dashes up ladder and stands on platform*) What the hell are they after? What are they doing here? Keep watching them, Goldy. Let me know if they head this way. (*He goes down the ladder and crosses to DOLORES*) Four cops now. Four armed bandits. What's going on? What have you and Binky cooked up?

DOLORES: (*stands*) Me and Binky! You're crazy . . . Look, I came here because Binky said the action was going to be here tonight.

GEORGE: (*grabs her*) Listen, if anything happens to Goldy . . . if they take him to one of their nut-houses he'll have company. I'll see to it they take you and your goddamn Binky as well.

DOLORES: Ha. Ha. You're the head case around here, not Goldy.

GEORGE: I'm telling you so you can tell the cops when they come.

The minute Goldy is harmed or taken to the loony bin I'll cause the biggest goddamn smash up since the wheel was invented. And you'll be right here watching it. . . . Then we'll count the head cases.

DOLORES: I'm getting out of here. Let go of me. (*She breaks away*)

What am I *doing* here? (*shouts*) Hey, Binky, where are you?

(*She runs up the steps on to the landing*) Binky . . . Binky, where are you? (*BINKY enters, he grabs DOLORES' arm and holds her. He is tall and thin. He wears a short silk one-button jacket with narrow red and black vertical stripes, close fitting black slacks, white button-down shirt, narrow black tie, white socks and dark brown suede shoes. He wears a red beret on the back of his head in such a fashion that it appears to be a cross between a skull cap and a fez. He carries a light raincoat over his arm. His skin is a rich tan colour. Apart from a certain thickness of his lips his features are not negroid and he could be played by a white actor in "brown face." He wears an exquisitely trimmed goatee beard which gives his mobile features a saturnine cast on the rare occasions when they are in repose. His gestures and movements are so expressive and smoothly mobile he appears to talk with his whole body. He holds DOLORES without looking at her and gazes down at GEORGE. He shudders delicately.*)

BINKY: Man, where'd you get that suit? (*He lets go of DOLORES' arm and grins broadly*) Did you call, honey? (*He looks down at*

GEORGE *again*) Miss Aquarius 1963. That's who she is. (*He moves down the steps slowly, talking as he goes*) Case she didn't tell you, that's who she is. Miss Aquarius of the year Anno Domicele one nine six three. (*He stops a little left of the table*) She's one sick chick. You know that? One sick chick. (*He sits at table and looks up at DOLORES*) Ain't you gonna join us, honey?

DOLORES: I was on my way out. I think I'll —

BINKY: Oh, you on your way out, that's for sure. You'll never guess how far out you going to go. Way, way out. You might as well come down, honey. This place is sur-rounded.

GEORGE: (*shouts*) Them goddamn stinking bandits still there, Goldy?

GOLDEN ECHO: They're still there, Gee-Gee. They keep looking this way, though.

BINKY: (*looks up at GOLDEN ECHO*) Man, it takes all kinds, don't it? He looks real comfortable up there. (*to DOLORES*) Why'n't you come down? (*DOLORES walks slowly down the steps. BINKY starts to roll a cigarette. DOLORES sits Yoga fashion on STAGE LEFT bed*) Why'n't you introduce me to your friend?

DOLORES: (*tonelessly*) George. . . Binky. . . Binky. . . George.

BINKY: An' who's the watchdog in that ol' rockin' chair?

DOLORES: He claims his name is Golden Echo Lovejoy.

BINKY: Alias who? Man, that ain't a name. That's a alibi.

DOLORES: Is anybody else coming?

BINKY: Nobody you know. Jes' a few strangers. (*He lights his cigarette, does the double inhalation of the marijuana smoker and relaxes contentedly in the chair*) Man, that's good. (*to DOLORES*) You want a smoke, honey?

DOLORES: Not right now.

BINKY: Suit yourself. Might be your last chance for a long, long time.

GEORGE: What's going on? Why are the cops outside? What the hell are you doing here in my place?

BINKY: This ain't your place. This ain't nobody's place.

GEORGE: What's going on?

BINKY: Permit me to diverge a little. An' don't shout. Shoutin' an' Miss Green, they don't go together. (*He does a double inhalation and holds the smoke in. He exhales loudly*) When was you born?

GEORGE: What the hell's going on here?

BINKY: Ah asked you not to shout. Ah also asked a simple question. When was you born?

GEORGE: August. August 12th.

BINKY: (*excitedly*) A Leo! Ah'm a Leo, too. The Lion is King of beasts. An' the man born under the sign of the Lion he a leader of men. Yes sir, a leader of men. (*he leans closer to GEORGE. Confidentially*) It too late now, but if Ah'd known you was a Leo Ah wouldn't have done it. If Ah'd known Ah'd never have given this address. It too late now, though.

GEORGE: What's too late? What the hell's going on?

BINKY: First time in my life Ah ever did this to a Leo. Ah'll walk in sorrow an' shame for forty days an' forty nights. Ain't nothin' Ah can do about it now. The place is sur-rounded.

GEORGE: Did what? What's going on?

BINKY: You never saw me before, did you? Ah'll ask you a straight question, you'll give me a straight answer, right? You'll do that?

GEORGE: Sure.

BINKY: Mister, what Ah do for a livin'?

GEORGE: Why, you're a pusher. You sell dope.

BINKY: That's right. . . . There's somethin' derogative about that word pusher, though. Ah don't like that word. Ah prefer the word peddler, 'cause that's what Ah do, Ah peddle it. Ah don't push it. Mister, there ain't no need to push it. My customers, they come lookin' for me, Ah don't go lookin' for them. Ah peddles it, like some chicks they peddle their ass. (*He looks across at DOLORES*) Miss Aquarius, from now on you're goin' to think yourself lucky when you *allowed* to peddle your ass. (*to GEORGE*) You a complete stranger, you never seen me before in all your born days. Ah ask you what Ah do for a livin' an' you come right back you a pusher. You know Ah'm a pusher (*He points up at GOLDEN ECHO*) *He* knows Ah'm a pusher. Driver of the bus brings her here, he knows Ah'm a pusher. . . . She tells him that Binky he's a pusher. Mister, that the most unsecretive chick ever was hatched. Everybody an' his dog knows Ah sell dope. You think the cops don't know?

GEORGE: I don't know and I don't care. I just want to know why the cops are out there.

BINKY: Mister, they out there 'cause they goin' to raid this place.

GEORGE: Why the hell should they raid this place? There's nothing here. . . .

BINKY: They goin' to find somethin'. They goin' to find dope an' they goin' to find a few addicts.

GEORGE: Where are the addicts? Who else is coming?

BINKY: Ain't nobody else is comin'. Just the cops. Anybody they find here, they addicts. For instance, Miss Aquarius. For instance,

old rockin' chair yonder. . . . An', for instance, you.

GEORGE: You're crazy. Nobody's going to believe that Goldy and me take dope.

BINKY: Who're you? You tell me who you are? You ain't on no voters' list. You got no property so you ain't on no jurors' list. You ain't got a job, so you don't pay income tax. You don't pay city tax. How you live? Man, Ah'll tell you how you live. You live on handouts. Put your picture in the papers only the Sisters of Mercy an' the preacher at the City Mission would recognize you. They'll believe you an addic. That's their job. If they didn't believe the bad things people say what they have to forgive?

DOLORES: Binky, if you wanted to get rid of me all you had to do was say so. I'd've split.

GEORGE: What about her? A young, pretty girl like her. A University student. She'll get someone to fight for her. You won't get away with it.

BINKY: Mister, didn't she tell you? She's my trump card. She's an addic.

DOLORES: I can kick it whenever I want to.

BINKY: Sure you can, honey. Can't we all? Only, you goin' to get the chance. You goin' to jail. Miss Green, she's gentle. You don't use her, she don't complain.

GEORGE: I don't understand. What do you get out of it? And who the hell's Miss Green?

BINKY: Miss Green? You don't know Miss Green? Man, where you been? (*He pinches the end off his cigarette and breaks the butt into his tobacco pouch*) That's Miss Green. Miss Green from Chi-cago. Miss Green is pot. Tea. Marijuana. . . . Ah been usin' Miss Green for sixteen years. . . . When Ah was fifteen, workin' in St. Louis, man gave me a cigarette, said "That's the best girl friend you'll ever have. Name of Green. Chicago Green." Ah took that reefer to my room an' hid it in a drawer. You stay there, Miss Green. Ah don't need you. . . . Ah'd come home at night, open the drawer an' look at her . . . Every night. . . . You stay there. Ah don't need you . . . This went on for a month. Finally, one night, Ah'd lost my job an' Ah was feelin' low, Ah lit that cigarette. Mister, after a little while Ah *fondled* what was left of it. . . . Who needs a job? Miss Green, why Ah wait a month? . . . Ah been usin' her ever since. Sixteen years. Ah been peddlin' her for ten. Make a good livin' at it. Ah use her, she don't use me. . . . Mister, durin' that sixteen years of smokin' an' ten years of peddlin' Ah never once been inside. Somebody got

to go inside. It's against the law to smoke pot. The cops, they got to show they're doin' their job. So every now an' again Ah fingers a few addicts just to keep the books straight.

GEORGE: We're not addicts. You're crazy.

BINKY: Ah'd be crazy if Ah fingered my payin' customers. Ah'd soon be out of business, wouldn't Ah? What Ah do Ah finger the beginners an' chicks Ah'm tired of, like Miss Aquarius here. An' when things are real hard Ah fingers complete strangers like you. The real addicts, long as they pay on time, they're safe. Mister, all kinds have to be sweetened to keep 'em safe. All kinds from the high to the low. The supply an' distribution of illegal narcotics is a big an' mighty convex business.

DOLORES: Complex. Christ, he means complex.

BINKY: That right? That what Ah mean? Complex? Honey, you been to college. You must be right.

GEORGE: (*shouts as he rises from his chair*) Let me know the minute them goddamn bandits move, Goldy. (*He stands threateningly over BINKY*) So you've got it all fixed. The cops are going to take us away and that will be that.

BINKY: That's right. That's the way it's fixed. Jes' a small item in the paper, that's what you are.

GEORGE: (*rises and grabs BINKY by the lapels of his jacket*) You won't get away with it. I'll have you deported. Why did you come to Canada anyway? Couldn't you get hired as a pusher in St. Louis?

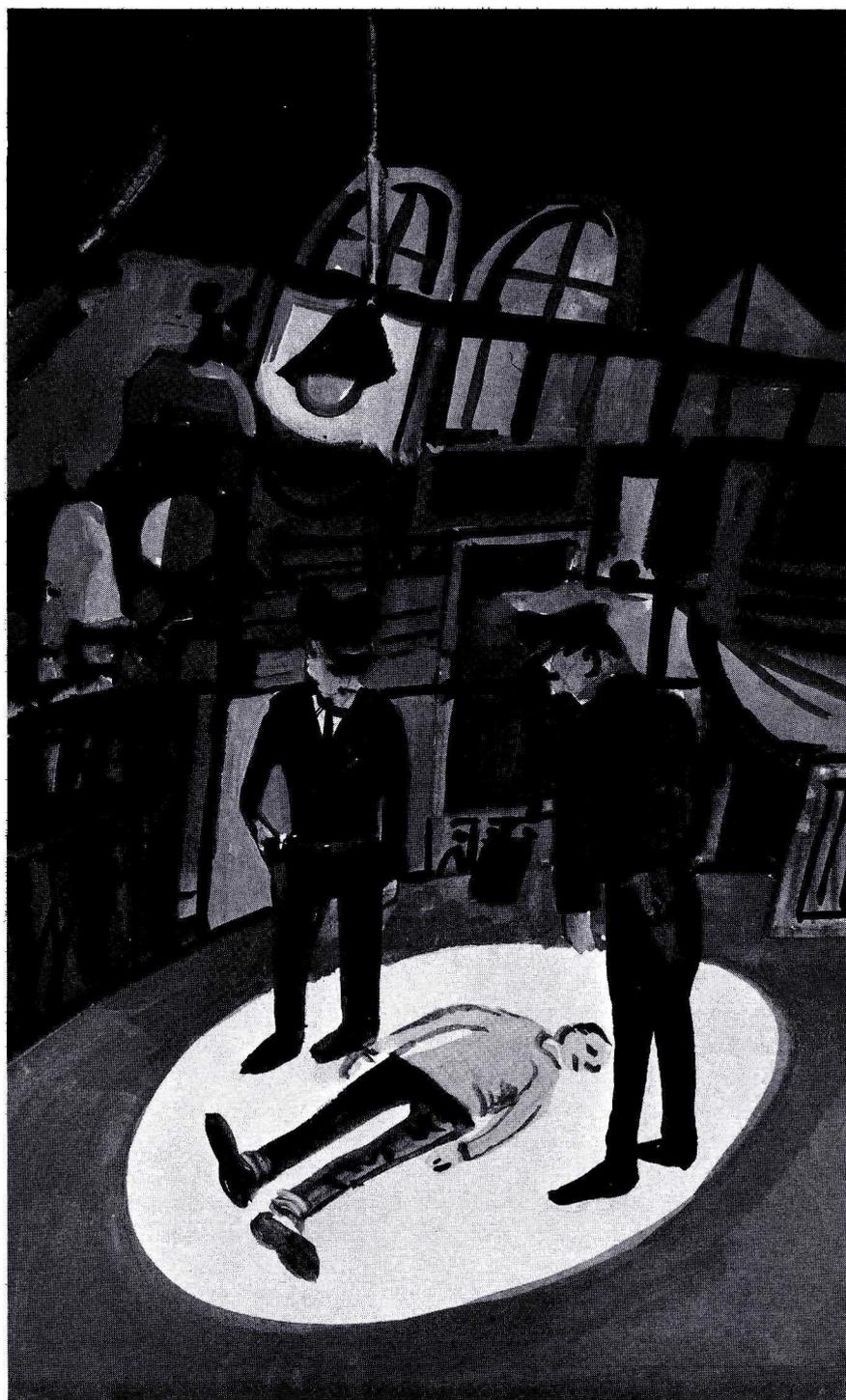
BINKY: White man got it all sewed up in St. Louis. What they call the Syndicate. That Syndicate, it's restricted. Here I got a hot line direct to Tíjuano. . . . Now kindly let go of me. This jacket cost . . .

GEORGE: (*lets go of his lapels and pushes BINKY back into the chair*) Why'd they let you in? Why do they let you stay?

BINKY: (*relaxes in the chair and smooths his lapels*) I got connections. . . . They don't like me, but they just love a quick tax-free profit. Man. . . . I'm just the retailer. The wholesalers, they're un-reproachable. They're snow white.

GEORGE: There are laws, for Christ's sake. Bring the cops up here and it'll be the last thing you do in this city. I'll get you deported so fast you'll. . . .

BINKY: You think I don't know about laws? Most everythin' Ah do, it's against the law. You know what the law is? It's just an old money-makin' machine. Every law has its price tag right on it. What do Ah do that's so bad? Worst thing Ah do is finger some-



body now an' then. You think Ah enjoy doin' this? Mister, I do it 'cos there's a law says a certain number of addics got to go inside. Did Ah make that law? Was Ah ever asked would it be O.K.? Them cops are coming up here, but Ah'm not responsible.

That little old law did it. That law made a scrapegoat outa you.

GOLDEN ECHO: (*excitedly*) They're moving, Gee-Gee. They're heading this way. They're walking real slow, though.

BINKY: (*starts to get up from the chair*) That my signal to go.

GEORGE: (*grabs BINKY and pulls him up from the chair*) You think I'm going to let you get out of here?

BINKY: (*breaks free and pulls gun from his overcoat pocket*) I think you will. I'm bigger than you are . . . This piece of hardware on loan from the morality squad. You know that? They made me sign for it. They don't give much away. (*He moves back a little so he can cover both GEORGE and DOLORES*) You got time to think up a few things to say to the cops before they get here. (*He crosses to steps keeping GEORGE and DOLORES covered as he does so. He stops at the first step*) Miss Aquarius, you awful quiet. If you'd been quiet the whole time you wouldn't be waitin' to go to jail now.

DOLORES: (*tonelessly*) Go join your friends from the morality squad, Binky. Tell them to wash their hands before they come up.

BINKY: (*goes up the steps and stops on the landing*) Mister, if Ah'd known you was a Leo Ah wouldn't have fingered you. Man born under the sign of Leo he a leader of men. Yes sir, a leader of men. Ah'll walk in sorrow an' shame for forty days an' forty nights. (*He turns, stops, and turns again*) This place might look better if you put the books on the shelves and the cans of pork on the bed. It too late now, though. The place is sur-rounded. (*exits*)

DOLORES: (*jumps up from bed and runs up the steps, screams*) Binky . . . Binky . . . Take me with you. Take me with you. (*softly*) Take me with you, Binky.

GEORGE: (*savagely*) After all he's done you still want to go with him?

DOLORES: I don't want to go to jail. He can stop them from taking me to jail.

GEORGE: How could you go with a man like that? Foul . . . rotten. His words have slime on them.

DOLORES: (*runs down steps, crosses to GEORGE*) What other kind of words do they understand? He could keep me out of jail with his words. Have you any words that could keep me out of jail?

GEORGE: I don't know . . . maybe not. (*shouts*) Them goddamn bandits still on the move, Goldy?

GOLDEN ECHO: I can't see them any more, Gee-Gee. They must be awful close.

DOLORES: (*wails*) Binky . . . Binky, come back. Take me with you, Binky.

GEORGE: Stop your goddamn wailing. You're not in jail yet.

DOLORES: No? How long have I got? Five minutes? Ten minutes?

GEORGE: They can't put you in jail just on Binky's say so. They have to prove the charge.

DOLORES: Any charge they want to prove they'll prove.

GEORGE: No. I won't let them get away with it.

DOLORES: You . . . won't . . . What can you do? You're crazy. You have two beds and you sleep in a hammock . . . you pile books on one bed and use the other one for thinking. You call this your loving room and you've never done any loving in it. You claim you can cause accidents and that Golden Echo can stop them. You're crazy. They'll put you both in the nut house. But me . . . they'll put me in jail.

GEORGE: No . . . No, they won't.

DOLORES: What are you going to do? Read to them from the Rights of Man?

GEORGE: Do? First we'll have a drink. (*He crosses to curtained off section and brings out a bottle of wine*) I've been saving this for a long time. (*He takes three glasses from one of the shelves. DOLORES sits Yoga fashion on the STAGE LEFT bed. He crosses, hands her a glass and fills it*) I was saving it till we got a third.

DOLORES: A third? A third for here?

GEORGE: A third for here. (*He goes up the ladder and hands a glass to GOLDEN ECHO*) Have some wine, Goldy.

GOLDEN ECHO: (*joyfully*) We've got a third? Dolores is going to stay?

GEORGE: Maybe. Maybe she'll stay.

GOLDEN ECHO: I'd sure like that. It sure would be nice if she stayed.

GEORGE: It would, Goldy. It would at that. (*He goes down the ladder, sits on STAGE RIGHT bed and fills his glass*) To the future.

DOLORES: We who are about to go to jail salute you. (*drinks*) A third for here?

GEORGE: We have another hammock.

DOLORES: (*turns and looks UP STAGE*) So?

GEORGE: Goldy and me, we'd be honoured if you'd move in with us.

DOLORES: I'll ask the cops about it. Why do you want me to live here?

GEORGE: We need a third. Goldy likes you. This place needs a woman's touch.

DOLORES: It sure needs something. It would be a great place for the action, but it must be a helluva place to live in.

GEORGE: It's not bad. There's a hot plate and a sink behind the curtain there.

DOLORES: Sounds real good. I'm not used to high living, though. My glass is empty.

GEORGE: (*fills her glass*) It could be fixed up.

DOLORES: First fix the cops. They're on their way up, remember.

GEORGE: Maybe I will. Maybe I will fix them. If I do will you stay?

DOLORES: You fix them, George, and I'll be your handmaiden for a term not exceeding ninety-nine years. I've a toothbrush in my bag. What else would I need, except money? What would we live on? Handouts for three, instead of for two?

GEORGE: It's better to live on handouts than to gnaw on the big bone with the slobbering rats.

DOLORES: The handouts come from the rats. Apart from piling books on the bed and hiding behind them what have you done about the rats?

GEORGE: I caused an accident once. Right there on the freeway.

DOLORES: Here we go again. . . . My glass is empty.

GEORGE: (*fills their glasses*) (*shouts*) You want some more wine, Goldy?

GOLDEN ECHO: Sure do, Gee-Gee.

GEORGE: There's not much left. You'd better come and get it.

(GOLDEN ECHO goes down the ladder and joins GEORGE and DOLORES. GEORGE fills his glass)

GOLDEN ECHO: (*eagerly*) You going to stay, Dolores? You going to make a third?

DOLORES: (*harshly*) No, I'm not going to stay. If I stayed I'd soon be as crazy as you and Gee-Gee.

GOLDEN ECHO: Don't talk like that. Gee-Gee is my true friend. He takes care of me. Does that make him crazy? Because he takes care of me?

DOLORES: I'm not going to stay.

GOLDEN ECHO: It's just I get lonely sometimes when Gee-Gee's out.

(*He crosses UP STAGE to ladder and turns*) It would be nice with you here, Dolores. It would be real nice. (*He goes up on the platform, sits on the chair, drinks and gazes out into the auditorium*)

DOLORES: So you caused an accident once, right there on the freeway. Why did you cause an accident?

GEORGE: Because I didn't have a bomb. . . . If I'd had a bomb that day I'd've gone to the nearest conclave, gathering or nest of slaving smoothies. . . . Here, catch. It's just an old-fashioned type exploding bomb. It won't atomize you like that big new one you're busy smoothing out of people's minds. It'll just pulverize you, is all. Watch you don't drop it. That one'll damage the building. . . . Can you imagine? A bomb that can wipe out all the people in a city and leave, for Christ's sake, the *buildings* standing. And the goddamn scientists who dreamed it up and the goddamn bullet-headed, thick-necked generals and politicians who ordered it don't get marched to the loony bin. Oh no . . . They bring in the smoothies.

DOLORES: So you didn't have a bomb. Though I don't see what good throwing a bomb would do. Why throw a bomb?

GEORGE: Because I want it to go on record that I wish to deter those democratically elected bandits from inventing, testing or otherwise exploding any more of their goddamn deterrents.

DOLORES: And throwing little bombs would scare them away from the big ones?

GEORGE: They're not expecting little bombs. All they can think of is big bombs.

DOLORES: You didn't have a bomb that day. So what did you do?

GEORGE: What do I ever do? I lay on the bed. . . . I saw the whole pattern clear. How easily the smoothies had taken over. . . . And how, instead of fighting, I ran away from the stink of it all. I stood and watched the wheel-cuddlers go home, each in his ton of steel. Each alone with the voice of a smoothie oozing from a little box on the dashboard. Going home to switch on a bigger box and a different smoothie. . . . Divide and conquer. Christ, they've divided us all.

DOLORES: The accident, remember? You were telling me about the accident.

GEORGE: I came back here to the books like I always do. I picked up this little book of Lorca's poems. . . . He knew what was coming, all right. And he knew the only way out. (*reads from book*)

Let there be no quarter! Death
flows from their eyes
and clusters grey flowers on the shores.
Let there be no quarter! Take heed!
Let the perplexed, the pure,

the classicists, the noted, the supplicants,
close the gates of the Bacchanalia.

(He throws the book down) How can we close the gates? We don't know where they are anymore. . . . No quarter! Christ, we gave them the whole set up, with bells on. I lay on the bed and listened to the zip of the freeway traffic. And I thought maybe in the city of the future there'll be nothing but freeways and jails and loony bins. . . . If only they'd stop and leave their toys so I could talk to them. Maybe together we could find the gates and shut out the smoothies. . . . I remember lying there shouting STOP! STOP! . . . The next thing I knew I was out on the freeway. . . . They'd stopped all right. Goldy's family and some harmless longshoreman had stopped for keeps.

(During the above speech TWO POLICEMEN enter and stand on the landing. The FIRST POLICEMAN is about fifty; big, flabby and tired. His round, once good-natured face is creased and cynical. His uniform fits him badly. He has unfastened the collar button of his shirt and loosened his tie. He sweats easily and is sweating now. The long climb up the stairs has winded him. He tries to hide this as he tucks his stick under one arm and almost casually pulls out a large handkerchief and wipes his face and neck. The SECOND POLICEMAN is quite young; smart, almost dashing in appearance. His uniform is well pressed, his tie is knotted perfectly. He wears his hat at a slight angle. Although his entire outfit is standard issue it is as though it had been designed expressly to show off his arrogant, youthful figure. He stands and twirls his stick: a small, anticipatory smile enlivens a face that is stolidly handsome.)

DOLORES: It was a coincidence, that's all. Just a coincidence. You're not responsible. How could you be responsible?

GEORGE: I'm responsible, all right. *(He jumps to his feet)* Will somebody please, before it's too late, invent a bomb that will destroy the buildings and leave, for Christ's sake, the people standing. *(He sees the policemen)* What the hell do you want? *(DOLORES stands, GOLDEN ECHO becomes aware of the policemen and watches wide-eyed.)*

FIRST POLICEMAN: *(His voice is tired and heavy)* A routine check.

SECOND POLICEMAN: *(brightly)* We're investigating a complaint.

FIRST POLICEMAN: Yeh. . . . A neighbour complained.

GEORGE: A neighbour? . . . What neighbour? We don't have any neighbours.

SECOND POLICEMAN: *(His smile widens. He is enjoying himself.)*

This was a neighbour from a long way off. (*He whacks his jackboot with his stick and moves as though to go down the steps.*)

FIRST POLICEMAN: Yeh. (*Without looking at the SECOND POLICEMAN his hand has stopped him. He nods at GOLDEN ECHO.*) Take a closer look at that character. He looks like a junky. (*The SECOND POLICEMAN shrugs his shoulders and moves along the catwalk. The FIRST POLICEMAN moves slowly down the steps.*) This neighbour, he don't live anywhere near here. Yet he was neighbourly to complain. . . . Ain't that nice? (*He crosses up STAGE of GEORGE and DOLORES to just STAGE RIGHT of the beds. He turns, picks up a book and ruffles through it.*)

SECOND POLICEMAN: Show me your arm. (*GOLDEN ECHO sticks out an arm. The SECOND POLICEMAN examines it closely.*)

FIRST POLICEMAN: (*Throws the book down and sighs*) Helluva place to keep books. . . . Why'n't you put them on the shelves? Or make a bookcase. Friend of mine made a dandy bookcase. Didn't cost him more'n a few dollars. He reads a lot. Any book club you can name he's in it.

SECOND POLICEMAN: The other one. (*GOLDEN ECHO sticks out his other arm*)

GEORGE: What do you want? What are you doing here?

FIRST POLICEMAN: This neighbour complained.

SECOND POLICEMAN: He don't use a needle, that's for sure.

GEORGE: Shouldn't you have a warrant? Where's your warrant? (*The FIRST POLICEMAN clambers up the ladder. He passes his hand back and forth in front of GOLDEN ECHO's unblinking eyes.*)

FIRST POLICEMAN: He's a junky. Far gone. Harmless as hell. (*He straightens up*) Go stand on the landing. Them two birds might make a run for it. (*The FIRST POLICEMAN goes down the ladder as the SECOND POLICEMAN makes his way along the catwalk to the landing. The FIRST POLICEMAN goes DOWN STAGE. He picks up a wine glass.*) I haven't got a warrant.

GEORGE: You should have a warrant. Go back and get a warrant.

FIRST POLICEMAN: (*shouts up to SECOND POLICEMAN*) He wants us to go back and get a warrant.

SECOND POLICEMAN: (*His smile widens again*) You mean right away? Or shall we rest up for a few minutes first?

FIRST POLICEMAN: (*He puts the glass down and examines the bottle*) I think we'll take five. I couldn't face them stairs again. Like to have killed me. (*He puts the bottle down.*) Do me a favour. Next time you set up housekeeping do it in a basement. . . . You know we don't need a warrant. You know you got no right to be here.

(to DOLORES) How old are you?

DOLORES: (*sullenly*) Twenty-two.

FIRST POLICEMAN: If she's twenty I'll turn in my badge. And me only five years to go for my pension. (*He wanders around, picking up cans, etc. He turns and approaches*

GEORGE) O.K. Turn out your pockets.

GEORGE: What for? What the hell do you expect to find?

FIRST POLICEMAN: You want me to take you to the station so the boys can give you a going over? That what you want? Turn out your pockets. (GEORGE *empties his pockets on to the bed. Handkerchief, small change, comb, nail file, wallet, etc. including two marbles.*) Marbles! Jesus . . . He's got marbles.

SECOND POLICEMAN: Ain't that surprisin'? I'd've sworn he didn't have any.

FIRST POLICEMAN: O.K. Put it away. (*He wanders around again and turns*) Where did you hide it? You might as well tell us. We'll find it.

GEORGE: Find what? I don't know what you're looking for.

FIRST POLICEMAN: You think I can't smell it? P.O.T. Pot. You've been smoking pot.

GEORGE: You're crazy. I wouldn't know how to.

FIRST POLICEMAN: (*lifts curtain on STAGE LEFT and peers inside*) There ain't much of a trick to it. You just inhale it. (*He squeezes his bulk into the recess. After a moment or two he crawls back. He has a small tobacco sack in his hand. He dangles it in front of him.*) Well, well. Look what I found. (*Disbelievingly to*

SECOND POLICEMAN) You know where it was? In a packet of tea. Real tea. Like from China!

SECOND POLICEMAN: Smart. Who'd expect to find tea in a tea packet? Last place I would look.

FIRST POLICEMAN: (*down to GEORGE and DOLORES*) O.K. Let's go to the station. (*He takes hold of GEORGE's arm*)

GEORGE: Take your hand off me.

FIRST POLICEMAN: So come quietly.

GEORGE: I'm not going anywhere. (*He breaks free and sits on the bed*) You'll have to shoot me first.

FIRST POLICEMAN: That would be messy, wouldn't it? (*He grabs hold of George*) Come on. (GEORGE *breaks free and leaps to the other bed. He picks up a heavy book. The FIRST POLICEMAN raises his stick warily. He moves in and aims a blow at GEORGE's arm. GEORGE brings the book down sharply. The FIRST POLICEMAN grunts with pain and drops his stick. GEORGE throws the book at*

him. The FIRST POLICEMAN staggers back. The SECOND POLICEMAN runs down the steps, stick raised. Both policemen move in on GEORGE. He picks up the first policeman's stick, throws it at the SECOND POLICEMAN, and misses. The FIRST POLICEMAN connects with a glancing blow on GEORGE's face. The SECOND POLICEMAN hits GEORGE on the shoulder with his stick. GOLDEN ECHO runs along the catwalk and down the steps. He picks up the first policeman's stick as both policemen hit GEORGE. The SECOND POLICEMAN raises his stick again.)

GOLDEN ECHO: (*aims a wild blow which somehow hits the SECOND POLICEMAN and makes him drop his stick.*) Leave Gee-Gee alone. What did he ever do to you? Gee-Gee never harmed anybody. (*The SECOND POLICEMAN knocks GEORGE back across the books with a back-handed swipe across the face. He turns and draws his gun.*)

SECOND POLICEMAN: (*smiles*) Throw it away, little man.

FIRST POLICEMAN: (*harshly*) Put that goddamn gun away. Leave this to me.

DOLORES: Drop the stick, Goldy. Please drop it.

SECOND POLICEMAN: Do like the lady says, little man. Drop it.

GOLDEN ECHO: You shouldn't have hit Gee-Gee.

FIRST POLICEMAN: (*starts edging round to get to the rear of GOLDEN ECHO.*) Put that goddamn gun away. I'll handle this.

SECOND POLICEMAN: You think I'm gonna come off second best to a guy that size? I'll handle it. (*He moves towards GOLDEN ECHO*) Drop the stick, little man.

DOLORES: (*sobs*) Goldy . . . Goldy, drop it. (*GOLDEN ECHO stands his ground. The SECOND POLICEMAN is very near. He reaches for the stick with his left hand. It seems as though GOLDEN ECHO is going to allow him to take the stick when he suddenly brings it down sharply on the policeman's wrist. The SECOND POLICEMAN drops the gun and jumps back involuntarily. DOLORES screams. GOLDEN ECHO drops the stick and picks the gun up.*)

GOLDEN ECHO: Gee-Gee's my true friend. He takes care of me. (*The FIRST POLICEMAN has moved quietly to the rear of GOLDEN ECHO. He signals to the SECOND POLICEMAN. They both jump on GOLDEN ECHO. DOLORES screams again. The SECOND POLICEMAN grabs the gun. It goes off. The policemen stand motionless for a second or two. They let go of GOLDEN ECHO. He slumps to the floor. The FIRST POLICEMAN bends over him.*)

FIRST POLICEMAN: I think he's a goner . . . (*He lifts him up, then gently lets him go back*) He don't weigh more than a hundred

pounds or so. (*The SECOND POLICEMAN puts his gun back into the holster. He crosses to GEORGE. He drags him to his feet, then slams him back across the books again.*)

SECOND POLICEMAN: You bastard. You goddamn pot-smoking bastard.

FIRST POLICEMAN: (*straightens up*) Who'll believe a puny guy like that would resist arrest.

SECOND POLICEMAN: The hell with it. They'll have to believe it. It's the truth, isn't it? (*The FIRST POLICEMAN looks down at GOLDEN ECHO. He sighs.*) Well, isn't it?

FIRST POLICEMAN: Yeah, it's the truth. (*He crosses to GEORGE and pulls him to his feet.*) O.K. Let's go. (*GEORGE, only half-conscious and unaware of what has happened to GOLDEN ECHO, is pulled towards the steps by the policemen. He trips over GOLDEN ECHO's feet and stops.*)

GEORGE: Goldy? They hit you too, Goldy?

SECOND POLICEMAN: We hit him.

GEORGE: (*kneels*) Goldy? (*he looks up*) You shot him? Goldy?

SECOND POLICEMAN: (*pulls him to his feet*) It was an accident.

GEORGE: Accident? You bring guns... you come here and you bring guns...

FIRST POLICEMAN: O.K. Let's go. (*He takes hold of GEORGE*)

SECOND POLICEMAN: What about the girl?

FIRST POLICEMAN: What about her?

SECOND POLICEMAN: Aren't we going to take her in?

FIRST POLICEMAN: No, we're not going to take her in.

SECOND POLICEMAN: Why not? We should take her in.

FIRST POLICEMAN: I say we're not going to take her in. That's why not.

SECOND POLICEMAN: (*crosses to DOLORES and takes her arm*) And I say we take her in.

FIRST POLICEMAN: Let go of her. You want to keep on wearing that nice uniform let go of her.

SECOND POLICEMAN: Just what do you mean by that?

FIRST POLICEMAN: I'll spell it out. When they hold the enquiry into that little junkie's sudden demise I'll break you.

SECOND POLICEMAN: (*smiles as he lets go of her*) It would only be your word against mine, anyway.

FIRST POLICEMAN: They'd take my word. (*to DOLORES*) You got a home?

DOLORES: Yes, I've got a home. Over on West Seventieth. I have a room over on West Seventieth.

FIRST POLICEMAN: That's not what I mean. I mean a real home, with parents . . . If you have you'd better go to it. After we go through the door wait two minutes, then beat it . . . Go home. If I see you again I'll put you inside.

DOLORES: (*sits on the bed as they drag GEORGE up the steps*) I'll go. I'll go home. (*The low zip of freeway traffic is heard. As they get to the landing GEORGE breaks free and runs back down the steps. As he crosses to DOWN STAGE CENTRE the SECOND POLICEMAN draws his revolver. The FIRST POLICEMAN grabs his arm.*)

FIRST POLICEMAN: What the hell's the matter with you? He can't get away. (*The SECOND POLICEMAN puts his revolver back into the holster. GEORGE stops DOWN STAGE CENTRE and looks directly out into the auditorium. He speaks softly and pleadingly. The two policemen move unhurriedly down the steps and across to him.*)

GEORGE: Listen. . . Listen. . . stop. . . (*The zip of the freeway is increased in volume now*) Stop . . . Please stop . . . I want to tell you something important. Stop . . . stop. . . please stop. (*The freeway zip is now very loud. He holds his hand to his head and screams.*) STOP! . . . STOP! . . . STOP! (*As the policemen grab him there is heard the sudden squeal of brakes, followed immediately by the varied sounds of a major highway smash up. The big crash, followed by lesser ones, with underneath them still the squealing of brakes. As these sounds fade out a woman's mindless sobbing is heard.*)

FIRST POLICEMAN: Jee-sus!

SECOND POLICEMAN: Holy cow!

FIRST POLICEMAN: Come on, let's go. (*They hustle GEORGE, unresisting now, across and up the steps*) (*As they pass DOLORES*) As soon as we're clear of the building you beat it. (*They exit hurriedly*) (*The woman's sobbing fades out as the first distant sound of police sirens is heard. DOLORES rises and slowly approaches GOLDEN ECHO. She kneels by him and lifts his head.*)

DOLORES: Goldy? . . . Goldy, I'd've stayed. I'd've made a third . . . Why, it would have been a great honour. (*She lowers his head*) Goldy? (*She rocks herself slowly and gazes out into the auditorium.*) (*softly*) Hey, where is everybody? . . . Where is everybody? . . . Where is everybody? (*The volume of the siren sound is increased rapidly. When it reaches an almost unbearable pitch it is switched off abruptly.*)

THE CURTAIN FALLS

CONTRIBUTORS

MILTON ACORN, who appeared in PRISM 4:1, is represented in this issue by a double memorial poem to RED LANE, a Vancouver poet who died suddenly at the age of 29, in December of last year.

IKUKO ATSUMI, presently enrolled in the Senior Poetry Workshop at the University of British Columbia, is a graduate of Aoyama University, Tokyo, and a member of two important groups in contemporary Japanese writing, the Modern Poem and the Comparative Literature Associations. Her two poems in this issue are her first translations of her own works. Her first original poem in English is appearing shortly in the *Alaska Review*. She is the author of two books of poetry in Japanese, *The Ninth Electron* and *Soaring*, published in Tokyo by the Japanese Modern Poem Association and by Shichosha Co., respectively.

YOKO DANNO is the pen name of a young Japanese woman, graduate of Kobe College. Since 1962 she has been writing poetry in English. She lives in Kobe.

D. DRAKE is an instructor in mathematics at the University of British Columbia. This is his first published poem.

G. V. DOWNES. Apologies are offered to this writer for the defective printing of her poem "Alice in Bluebeardland" in the previous issue, and for a further mistake in the reference to her book, *Lost Diver*. The book's publisher was the University of New Brunswick (Fiddlehead Poetry Series), Fredericton, N.B. The correct text of the poem is printed in this issue.

RANDY ENOMOTO is an undergraduate in the Creative Writing programme at the University of British Columbia. This is his first appearance outside of student publications.

M. LAKSHI GILL's first book of poetry, *Rape of the Spirit* (1962), was published in the Philippines, her native country. She is writing her second in the Senior Poetry Workshop at the University of British Columbia.

TOM GRAINGER, born in Lancashire, at present runs an offset press for a Vancouver insurance company. At various times he has been associated with the theatre and the B.B.C., as actor, stock company manager, playwright. An earlier PRISM published his first short story. Today's PRISM is happy to present his first published play, the first-prize winner in the Canadian Playwriting Competition sponsored by the Ottawa Little Theatre. The play won both the Birks Medal and the Solange Karsh Award of \$250 and medal (given by Yousuf Karsh). It is being presented at the National Drama Festival in Ottawa in May.

RALPH GUSTAFSON, who is now on the staff of Bishop's University, Lennoxville, Qué., appeared in PRISM 4:2.

HISAO KANASEKI is a professor of American literature at Kobe University. He has written a number of poems in English, including those appearing in this issue, based on his experiences as a Japanese soldier in Central China in 1944.

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PROFESSOR A. K. RAMANUJAN is attached to the South Asia Language Center of the University of Chicago. His translations in this number are from the classical (Sangam) Tamil of the *Kuruntokai*, an anthology of love poetry compiled during the first three centuries A.D. We are indebted for both originals and translations to the Asia Society of New York, which is sponsoring a book publication of the Tamil lyrics.

YOSHIKI SASAZAWA, born 1898, has been for many years a leading Japanese poet and an authority on Rilke. Miss Atsumi's translation marks the first appearance of his work in Canada. For the text of "Primitive" acknowledgements are made to the Japanese magazine, *Orpheus*, n. 11 (Kawasaki, 1963).

EDITH SHIFFERT is the author of two books of poetry published by Alan Swallow, including the current *For a Return to Kona* (1964). A third one, *Kyoto Poems*, is ready for publication. She is presently teaching at Doshisha University, Kyoto, and is Visiting Editor of its *East-West Review*.

We are especially indebted to EDITH SHIFFERT and IKUKO ATSUMI for serving as our Foreign Editors for this issue.

BOOKS AND PERIODICALS RECEIVED

- BERGREN, MYRTLE. *A Bough of Needles*. Toronto, Progress Books, 98 pp. \$1.00.
- GLASSCO, JOHN. *A Point of Sky*. Toronto, Oxford University Press, 78 pp. \$4.00.
- GOODELL, LARRY. *Thoughts Have Wings*. Placitas, N.M., Duende Press, Broadside n.1, 4 pp.
- KEKES, ANNE. *The Suspended Landscape*. Fredericton, N.B., Fiddlehead, 48 pp. \$1.00.
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- December* VI:1. Quarterly. "Magazine of the arts and opinion." Box 274, Western Springs, Ill.
- Duende* 5 and 6, Placitas, N.M. Poems by Margaret Randall and Larry Eigner. \$1.50 per issue.
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- The Minority of One*, 5th anniversary issue, December 1964. P.O. Box 544, Passaic, N.J. "Independent monthly for an American alternative." Includes poetry. Yearly \$6.00.
- Overland*, no. 30. GPO Box 98A, Melbourne, Australia. A quarterly of poetry, stories, etc. 58 pp.
- Tamarack Review*, no. 33. Literary quarterly. Box 157, Postal Station K, Toronto. Per annum \$4.00.
- Trace*, no. 53. Ed. Jas. B. May, Box 1068, Hollywood, Calif. 90028. A quarterly of poetry, stories, criticism, and magazine listings. 112 pp. \$1.25.
- Western Humanities Review*, XVIII:4. Literary quarterly. University of Utah, Salt Lake City, 93 pp. 75¢.

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