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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS APPEAR BESIDE THEIR WORK

The front cover drawing is by the Dutch poet and painter, LUCEBERT, and is taken from a book published by the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. Lucebert's paintings have been exhibited at many major museums and he has published 20 books of poetry. In 1968 he was awarded Holland's most prestigious literary prize, the P.C. Hooftprijs. Several of his poems will appear in a future issue of *Prism international.*

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FOUR STORIES BY JACQUES FERRON

Translated from the French by Susan Gordon

JACQUES FERRON is a French-Canadian playwright, essayist, novelist, and above all, *conteur*. Born in 1921, he practised medicine for several years in the Gaspé and, since 1949, in the Montreal suburb of Ville Jacques-Cartier. His writing is marked by a fine sense of irony and by a profound understanding of his country Québec and its people, around whom he creates a mythical universe independent of historical time. Ferron is the author of two collections of stories, four novels, a collection of historical sketches, and about a dozen plays of which the most well-known is *Les Grands Soleils*, which deals with the Patriotes of 1837. The stories presented here are taken from *Contes du Pays Incertain*, originally published by Editions d'Orphée, Montreal in 1962, and with the rest of Ferron's stories in an *Edition intégrale* (1968) by Editions HMH, Montreal.

SUSAN GORDON is a linguistics student at the University of British Columbia and a member of the creative writing translation workshop. She spent a year (1969-70) in Quebec, studying at Université de Montréal, working, learning French, talking to people.

The Old Man's Death

HE HAD A BONE OUT OF KILTER above his stomach; he wasn't sick, only the bone was irksome, sticking into him with every breath he took; he had to stay quiet until the bone had moved back into place. After three or four weeks the damned bone hadn't budged; the fellow was going from bad to worse; they called in the fixer, but the fixer, after poking around, refused to fix him, for he would, at the same time as replacing the bone, have unhooked the cardial nerve. The man was finished. They sent for the curé.

"My friend," said the old woman to her husband, "perhaps you are not very ill, but you are so old that you're dying."

"I'm dying?"

"Yes, you're dying, Lord pity me!"

"And what about me . . . ?" asked the old man.

"You, there's nothing sad about it," answered the old woman, "you need only lie back and the curé will handle everything. Only you'll have to be polite: you'll join your hands, look up in the air,

and think of the good Lord if you can; if you can't, pretend. And no joking, eh, you hear me!"

The man was having trouble breathing; he promised to be serious. The arrival of his sons, however, with the look on their faces of false apostles, shook his resolution. He already had his hands joined; he attempted to separate them without being seen but the old lady was on the watch; she tied his wrists with a big rosary. The curé, who had arrived in the meantime, felt that the man was finished, and so hastened to administer extreme unction; and then he didn't know what to do; it wasn't time yet to recite the prayer for the dying.

"How are you feeling," he asked the old fellow.

"Poorly thank you," replied the latter.

Poorly, of course, but not enough to capsize; now higher, now lower, still riding the waves. The curé, subject to nausea, retired to the kitchen, accompanied by the women. The boys, who had stayed with their father, didn't waste a second: the handcuffs they stripped off him. The man gave them a wave:

"Hi, boys!"

"Hi, pa," they answered.

The short waves shook the old man; this lasted an hour more, then after the last wave, the last hour; the man is finally at rest in his bed; the bone no longer bothers him; he is cured, he is going to die. The women have come back to his side crying like gulls into their handkerchiefs. The curé is reciting the prayer. Things are going well, going well, going too well to last.

"The pot," cries the dying man.

The curé stops. They bring the chamber-pot, but the man thrusts it aside.

"Too late, I'll go on the other side."

And dies.

When they had put him in his coffin, freshly shaven, nicely dressed, he looked quite distinguished. The old woman never got tired of looking at him and all in tears would say:

"Ah, old man, my old man, if you had always been like this, serious, clean, quiet, how I would have loved you, how happy we would have been!"

She could talk as much as she liked, poor woman! The old man wasn't listening: he was out in the kitchen laughing with the boys — as much as propriety would allow at a death-watch.

Servitude

THE FIRST TIME, Mister No-Thumb had put his hand on the table; the second time, he kept it in his pocket. The first time, the *habitant* had said to himself: "Here is a hand which has known the axe and the saw, a rough, frank hand, come just in time, to succour me." And he had signed here and there on the papers without much looking at them. The second time, no more fraternal hand, but a golden chain, a pompous belly: Mister No-Thumb, merchant, seed and hay exporter, demanding money. Now, as for money, it's really a shame, but the poor *habitant* doesn't have any.

"I'll call again next week," says the merchant.

"Call again then, Mister No-Thumb, you're always welcome."

The next week, the *habitant* doesn't have a penny more. He's just plain hard up. Anyway, he is more often in the farm-buildings than in the house. How he loves his animal, his cows, his horses! And his pigs, and his sheep, and his whimpering dog, who does laugh all the same! If he were to do as he wanted, nothing could be simpler, he would undo the moorings of his barns and sail them away on the very first flood.

When the merchant came around again, the pompous belly, the hand jammed in the pocket, it was Armande who said to him:

"Do sit down, Mister No-Thumb. My father is out in the buildings. I will make you a cup of tea while you're waiting."

Mister No-Thumb — his hand comes out, four stiff fingers — can't get over it: a girl of fourteen, neat and pretty, who wasn't on the inventory! Well, that changes everything! He puts his hand on the table, offers it, gives it, his big common hand. The *habitant*, who arrives in the meanwhile, sees him and says:

"I knew, Mister No-Thumb, that we would finally come to an understanding."

Mister No-Thumb took the girl away. He kept her four or five years. After which, ennobled by his service, she found a good match.

"Go ahead," he told her, "I won't forget you."

Does she doubt it? Here are some names: Angèle, Marie, Laure, Valéda, his former servants established here and there in the county, whose homes he never passes by without stopping, in the winter, when the men are up at the logging-camps.

"And do you know what? Well then, I'll come to your wedding."

Mister No-Thumb kept his word. He went to Armande's wed-

ding, with his pompous belly and his hand on the table. It was a great honour for the family. The bridegroom kept close by him, straight as a taper, burning with gratitude. The women fluttered as soon as he looked at them. He was lord of the feast. As for the *habitant*, he had yielded his place, not quite sure whether he was still Armande's father. His absence was not noticed. Sitting on the straw, amidst the taciturn animals, he listened to the dry sound of the strings and the drawing of the bow but did not hear the music. They danced until dawn. Then Mister No-Thumb, closing up the four fingers of his hand, put the wedding in his pocket and went away. Everything lost its luster. The fiddler stopped in the middle of a jig; it was intolerable the way he grated on the nerves. Armande began to weep. A little misery-cock on the grey fence sang matins.

Back to Val-D'Or

ONE NIGHT THE HUSBAND AWOKE; his wife was watching him, propped up at his side. He asked, "What are you doing?" She replied, "You are beautiful, I love you." The next day at daybreak, she was fast asleep. He shook her, he was hungry. She said, "Go back to sleep; I will make you dinner."

"And who will go to work?"

"Tomorrow, you will go. Today, stay with me. You are beautiful, I love you."

So he, who was above all ugly, almost stayed home from work. It was good in the house; his children, awakened, looked at him with their does' eyes; he would have liked to take them in his arms and rock them. But it was autumn; he thought of the cost of living; he remembered the other children, three or four, perhaps five, dead in Abitibi, that notorious land. And he left without breakfast.

That evening he hurried home; only to find the house cold. His wife and children had spent the day in bed under a pile of blankets. He relit the fire. When the house was warm, the children slid out of bed. Then the wife got up, full of joy. She held in her hand a little vial of perfume, bought a few years before — such an agreeable folly that she had preserved it intact. The vial she now uncapped, the perfume she poured on her husband's head, her own, the children's;

and it was holiday night. Only the husband brooded. But during the night he awoke; his wife, leaning over him, said: "You are beautiful, I love you." So he gave in.

The next day he did not go to work, nor the following days. After a week, his stock of wood exhausted, he set about demolishing a shed adjoining the house. Along came the landlord, furious. However, when he had seen what was going on, he calmed down. The wife was as beautiful as her husband was ugly. He lectured her gently. He spoke well, this landlord: She would have liked him never to stop. He explained that man was created to labour and other such nonsense. She began to acquiesce; everything he said was so nice! When he had dried his saliva, he asked her: "Now, will you let your husband work?"

"No," she replied, "I love him too much."

"This woman must be mad," cried the landlord.

The husband was not so sure. Priests were brought in, doctors, sheriffs. Each one launched into a speech. Oh, they spoke well! The wife would have liked them never to stop, would have liked them to talk at least all night. Only when they had finished, she would say, "No, I love him too much." They all thought she was mad. The husband was not sure.

One night, the snow began to fall. The wife who, since their arrival in Montreal, had not dared to go out, terrified of the city, cried out: "It's snowing! Come, we will go to Senneterre."

And began to dress in great haste.

"But what about the children?" asked the husband.

"They will wait for us; the Blessed Virgin will watch over them. Come, my husband, I can stay here no longer."

And so he decided himself that his wife was mad and took the children in his arms. She had gone out to wait for him on the street. He watched from the window. She was running around in circles outside the door, then she stopped, no longer able to wait.

"We will go to Malartic," she cried, "we will go to Val-d'Or!"

A taxi passed. She got in.

The Grey Dog

PETER BEZEAU, seigneur of Grand-Etang, having been left a widower soon after his marriage, had replaced his wife with the bottle of rum that he drank every evening. From one year to the next, he emptied it quicker and went to bed earlier; thus he declined. But in the morning, always up at the same time, he became hard and fierce again. He went accompanied by four big black dogs, over which he spoke to his men; as the beasts were reputed to be ferocious, his conversation intimidated. Landworkers and fishermen, whom he had in his service, all feared him; some respected him; none thought of liking him.

With evening Peter Bezeau aged abruptly; his face became covered with wrinkles, his eyes grew haggard and waxy; the approach of night distressed him. It was then that he drank his bottle. When he had finished, he would shout to his daughter to call the dogs, then throwing himself drunk on his bed, would sink into a deep sleep. Nelly would let the dogs in and go to bed herself.

One morning the seigneur notices among his dogs a grey dog that he doesn't know, whose nervous bearing and red eyes amaze him; when the door is opened for him, the intruder slips outside, supple as a shadow. A month later he is in the place again; this time the seigneur turns him out with a kick to dissuade him from returning. But the beast is stubborn, it comes back a month later. So the seigneur takes a shotgun, pushes the door open; the animal flees; nevertheless, as he aims, it stops and looks back; its eyes shoot such flames that the seigneur lowers his weapon; the beast sets off again and disappears. "Next month, flames or no flames, I shoot," said Seigneur Peter Bezeau. He did indeed shoot, but at the instant the shot went off the grey dog wasn't there to receive it.

"It must be a werewolf," he thought.

That evening after drinking his rum, when he shouted to Nelly to let in the dogs, he insisted:

"The dogs, not the werewolf!"

Nelly thought her father was drunk. A while ago she would not have thought that. She had changed lately. The next day, when she brought him his bottle, he remarked on it: she shrugged; he did the the same and returned to his bottle.

Another month passes. The fateful day arrives; Peter Bezeau gets up with apprehension. He goes down to the kitchen: his four black

dogs are there, but no trace of a grey dog! He breathes: the nightmare is over. It is then that Nelly appears in the place. She isn't usually up so early. Peter Bezeau observes her: her fine face seems smaller that it was; her shoulders slope back and her stomach . . .

"Nelly!"

Nelly doesn't move.

"Do you have any idea what's happening to you?"

She ignores him. Peter Bezeau doesn't want to learn anything more; he rushes outside, followed by his big black dogs. To Madame Marie's he is going. At the door he leaves his animals and enters.

"Peter Bezeau," says the old woman, "you seem worried; are you sick?"

The seigneur without his dogs is a poor man, an old man of sixty or more.

"I'm not sick," he replies, "I'm worried about my daughter: come to the house and tell me what's the matter with her."

Madame Marie sees Nelly.

"Your daughter, Peter Bezeau, is in a family way and pretty far gone at that."

"Listen, Madame Marie," says the seigneur (and this time he is talking to her over his four big black dogs), "listen: if anything happens to Nelly you will be salted and dried like an old cod."

"Indeed, Peter Bezeau, that's about all I'm worth. Come and see me tomorrow all the same: I'll give you an answer then."

The next day the seigneur is at her place at the break of day. He has left his dogs outside; he is once more a poor man, an old man of sixty or more.

"Who has gotten Nelly in this condition, Peter Bezeau?"

"I have no idea."

The old woman watches him intently.

"Are you sure?"

Peter Bezeau is disconcerted; he admits what he knows.

"A grey dog with red eyes? a werewolf, then?"

"I thought so, too."

"Peter Bezeau, are you serious? You want me to deliver your daughter when we don't even know what she has in her belly! I'm not that anxious to be salted and dried like an old cod."

The seigneur doesn't have his dogs; he is a poor man, an old man of sixty or more, in despair over his daughter's trouble. He begs pity.

"I'll have pity on you, Peter Bezeau, but you must do what I tell you: bring me Madame Rose, Thomette Tardif, the Popess of

Gros-Morne and Madame Germaine. With their help I shall make myself strong to deliver Nelly though she be big with a unicorn."

The seigneur has no sooner been told this than he is running toward the bay, preceded by his four big black dogs, who bark in the wind; gulls escape from their mouths to fly towards the quay and be lost in the foam of the waves. In no time four boats weigh anchor and put out to sea.

The first will bring back from Cloridorme Madame Rose, thin and cunning, who knows the art of deceiving young women about their pains, making them believe that these are passing cramps and that the labour pains will not come for nine days; who denies childbirth in the beginning, the better to confirm it later, when it is on the point of ending; she is a very useful old woman. The second boat will return from Gros-Morne with Jane Ardicotte, called the Popess because she owns a fat English Bible; from this Bible she draws a mysterious incantatory speech that seizes the soul and raises it two feet above the bed, thus allowing the belly stupidly and faithfully to do its work. The third will have on board Madame Germaine of l'Echourie, who takes care of your child as if it were a fine piece of satin. Finally Thomette Tardif will arrive from Mont-Louis on the fourth boat, bringing the hooks which he makes himself, that will be required in case the child (or the monster) gets stuck in Nelly's loins.

When the boats had come back, the three midwives, the Popess and the man with the hooks shut themselves up with the seigneur's daughter. He, sent out of the house, stayed outside. From time to time a young man came to tell him how it was going. Thus he learned that, Madame Rose having finished her deceptions, the Popess had replaced her and was busy reading from her great book. The hours seemed long; finally the day came to its close. The young man came back out, radiant.

"The women have sent away Thomette," he announced.

The seigneur looked at him over his four big black dogs.

"Who are you, young man," he asked, "to know so much?"

"I'm your clerk. Don't you recognize me?"

"I don't like my clerks; they're all ambitious, they think of nothing but stealing my seigneurie."

The young man didn't answer. Evening was falling.

"Monsieur Bezeau," he said, "come to the store; we will be more comfortable waiting there."

The seigneur followed him. They got settled in the store. At once the four big black dogs began sniffing at the cellar door.

"What are they sniffing for?"

"I don't know."

"Open the door, we'll see."

The clerk opened the door and the seigneur saw a grey dog with red eyes that he knew well.

"Whose is that beast?"

"Mine," answered the clerk.

At that moment someone comes to inform them that Nelly has borne a son in the most felicitous manner. The two men go over to the house, which is all lit up. When the lamps were blown out, "Who will bring me my rum?" asked the seigneur. It was the able clerk. Peter Bezeau emptied his bottle and, throwing himself drunk on his bed, fell asleep as usual. In the days that followed, however, he looked strange; one realized that he was a poor man, an old man of sixty or more. He died soon after.

His four big black dogs searched for a while around his tomb, then, finding nothing, in turn disappeared from Grand-Etang. The grey dog took their place.

JOHN AND JEAN

YVES BONNEFOY

Translated from the French by Dora Pettinella

You ask the name
Of this low dilapidated house.
It is John and Jean in another country.

When mighty winds cross
The wide threshold where nothing sings or appears.

It is John and Jean from whose gray faces
The plaster of day falls, and again I see
The glass of ancient summers. Do you remember?
Brightest in the distance, the arch, daughter of shadow.

Today, this evening, we will build a fire
In the great hall;
Then we will walk away
That it may live for the dead.

YVES BONNEFOY (1923-) was immediately recognized as a major French poet on the publication of *Du Mouvement et de l'Immobilité de Douve*. He lives in Paris.

DORA PETTINELLA's poems and translations have appeared frequently in North American and Italian journals. She lives in New York.

the shooter

while dribbling the ball
he realized
that inside his head
everything was silent
and relaxed —
peaceful

the noise of the crowd
was far away, rather
on the outer fringes
of his perceptions
twice removed,
inside a hollow shell
folding and unfolding
on a beach
completely relaxed
and with the score tied
he turned, jumped, shot
the ball through the shell
and into the ocean.

he never missed

the knife man

is that what you are sticking in
the back of summer

announcing yourself at the door
is that what you are when I finish
mowing

before the full moon I know
you come
in quiet elegance
I've seen you

feeling the change is a part
of the change
of you
there you are in the parlor
drawn on a curtain
of air

coming inside you are
the next house

we have all been here before

JOHN STUPP is a student at the University of Notre Dame; in addition to writing verse, he makes films.

SESTINA OF THE ARCHITECT

City, my bride, I came to you
With a life long dream and a civil tongue,
With an open laugh and ringing words,
With a certain pride in the work to be done:
For you move in the light as the mountains move,
Robed in clouds, with the colours of grace.

You came to me shining in dreams with such grace
That a rainbow breaks from my lips. And now you,
In your absence, your quiet, still make me move
In my habit of bones and my long quick tongue
To a place in the heart where the dreaming's done,
Where light has flesh and the stones are words.

As a block of stone cut clean, the words;
As a river of lines, the designs that grace
Landscapes that dance until dark is done.
Then, through the gates of the body dreaming, you
Float, up from the depths of sleep, to the tongue:
As you nudge me awake, the skilled hands move.

City, my bride, these hands you move
Are the hands of an artist not given to words:
Circles and squares are his native tongue,
The texture of metals, the technical grace
Of bridges, wide boulevards, artifacts you
Know of in part when the whole is done.

But, listen, now that the dreams and plans are done:
Your name is Foursquare. Where your sky-born plazas move,
Where sunlight rings its driven nails to legend, you
House the good thief kissed across all dying: if words
Are not enough to feed the nations or to grace
The children of the world, still words live on the tongue.

And on my tongue, as on the tongue
Of every honest man, the will of God is done:
City I love, give me the strength to grace
Your streets with laughing faces, children who move
The world to joy, whose stones are words,
Their bodies full of light whose light is part of you:

In every human tongue, peace on the move
Until the wars are done. City I love, your words
Had the colours of grace, and I came to you.

VILLANELLE

For Ezra Pound

Rough troubadours with clumsy songs
Are not so mad or fitful to recall as
Lyrics in this turning air are delicate.

When we began to sing we did
Exact a tribute and evoke the primitive
Rough troubadours with clumsy songs

Who jammed the outworn corridors of sound
With contrapuntal noises to disguise
That lyrics in this turning air are delicate.

And delicate as relics, thin with antiquity,
The flutes across the olive trees of France
Became rough troubadours with clumsy songs

Who in the turning air would turn again and
Tune themselves their instruments only to recall
That lyrics in this turning air are delicate.

If Chinese lanterns should inspect the graves
Of makeshift fitful tunes, they will uplift
Rough troubadours with clumsy songs whose
Lyrics in this turning air are delicate.

H. Lee Heagy's writing has appeared in numerous magazines in the United States, and his poems and short plays have received several awards. Midnight Press (New York) published his first poetry book, *Tendrils*, in 1965. He is the editor of White Lion Press, which he has brought with him to his new home in Halifax.

GRIEF IN SPRING

WILLIAM BEYER

Leaving you
In the narrow room
Of dying,
An extended mood
Of waiting,
I move out,
Hurry on
Past the large oak,
Down
a deceptive path;
Against a sad,
Dry wind.

Returning to you
Later,
In the small,
Dark room,
I leave
The heavy door
Deliberately open,
To let you see
The season does not know.

WILLIAM BEYER's poems have appeared in such magazines and newspapers as *The New York Times, The Saturday Evening Post, Colorado Quarterly, The Christian Science Monitor, The Writer, The Lyric* and many others. He lives in Ft. Pierce, Florida.

DAWNING IN FJAERLAND

At daybreak
the level of silence
rises to our loft.

The sun like a drop
from an oar
on a drifting boat
makes a circle in my head.

I uncurl from the small
of your back and watch
my arm's white crease
rise pink into your skin.

With the sun's waterline
rippling at the sill,
I run aground in myself
and stand at the door.

No oar has started a circle
in our fjord;
only pine
make their breezy reflection.

Shall I run my shadow
through the turquoise wood,
shatter a mountain
with my dive?

No, the path winds up;
I run beneath the pine
sinking at my back;
in the current of the sun,

I climb to breakwater silence
and hear a faint hiss rise
to boulders
gorging on a roar.

Breathless,
I belly down
and mouth the shot cascade.

AMPUTEE

Two stumps,
he's here again:
his knees are his feet;
he wades in slack
flapping pant-legs
pinned to his thighs.
His face is a peach
thrown against a post.

My calves bulge;
I have run the hundred
in ten flat;
my wife kissed me this morning.

Equally unsightly
in each other's eyes,
we stare at impasse
of impotent hate
and impotent compassion.

Must I bring you proof
of something worse
than anything you have ever known —
eyes more hurt than your own
to stare you down?

HAWAII '49 AGAIN

Mom pulls down the screen —
glittering mica white.

Dad opens the mouth
of the sprocket
and sets its tooth
on a strip
of film . . .

turns out the light.

Now you sit back to catch
a few frames of yourselves
playing hide-and-seek
in the rising sun:

you, Mom, hibiscus in your hair,
come-hither behind a palm,
smile at Dad
who king-kongs his chest,
jumps,
and takes up the chase.

But there's never time to close the gap
before that stain
edging along wave,
beach, gold hibiscus
catches up
with two
flickering blistered
silhouettes . . .
at the end of a film on fire.

SAN FRANCISCO

Downpour
of headlights
on Potrero hill

gull
lost in the blue
eucalyptus fog

dash of salt
wave, dill
pickled wharf

Alcatraz
the glum horn.

On a grate
above the venting street
a ghost is red
in neon steam

lobster
sourdough
odor of fog:

the Golden Gate is an orange gong

ADRIFT ON THE EDGE

With oars limp
I slouch in the gunwales
of my boat
and glide through slick water.

Above me a climber —
his jack-knife spine
locked to the face
of a mountain.

I can crane my neck
for the man or the cloud
above him or look over
the edge of my boat and see

pine quiver in the still fjord.
Above the timberline he pauses
to hook his ax on a crag,
gazing at granite.

His whole body is a rucksack
slung over the shoulder
of a cliff, overtaken
by a weightless, agile mind

risen to the peak.
There a waterfall spills
over the edge,
hissing past his grip,

ropecoil, ax — a groove
on the loose,
foamy in the notches,
shocking pools.

I drift waiting beneath
fall and climber
as my last line hangs
on his next safe move.

GARY SANGE's poetry has appeared in *Prism international* before; these poems were written in Fjaerland, Norway and California.

FLOATING AWAY

URSULA ZANDMER

I am walking along a street
in this town which is
just a town anywhere.

I am here no doubt.
I know I am here.
I am expected to be here.

I ought to be here, if I am not.

If I am not
where am I?
Where do I float around?
Where will I land?
When?

Dogs are barking. I hear them
through my solitude.

In the expanding vacuum
a division takes place.
It contracts at one point
and narrows and twists
and separates and floats away.

What? For heavens sake
what floats away?

An amoeba!

In it
securely packed
is:
My youth.

Independent
as of now.
Independent
of me.

URSULA ZANDMER is best-known as an artist. Born in Berlin, she studied painting there at the Academy of Arts, in Jerusalem and in Los Angeles. Now a resident of Calgary, she has had several one-man shows and many exhibitions of her portraits and abstracts in the United States and Canada.

TOM GENTLE graduated from the University of Oregon with an M.F.A. in Creative Writing, and now teaches at the community college in Astoria. This is his first publication.

The Man No One Knew

T. H. GENTLE

RENTZLER WAS A CERTAIN TYPE of American. Life weighed on him, made him do things he didn't want to do. He found it practically unbearable because people always assumed things about him that weren't true and neither the presence of truth nor his denials could make them change their minds. Throughout his childhood his mother had told him that he was a genius, and she told the neighbors, too. Now it didn't take Rentzler long to find out that he was no such thing; that he was, in fact, just barely average as a student, but it made no difference to his mother. "How's my little genius," she said to him when he came home from school. And he often heard her telling Mrs. Schwartz in the apartment next door how smart he was. "Walter's such a smart boy. His teachers want to have him skip a grade." That was a lie. Most of his teachers didn't even know his name. She explained his average grades by saying he was bored. "The school work is so dull for Walter it just bores him to death. We're thinking about sending him to college next year. University of Chicago maybe. They take a lot of kids too smart for high school." Rentzler wished he were invisible. Mrs. Schwartz just smiled because her son Myron was in Rentzler's class and he gave her the truth about him. Where'd his mother get that University of Chicago stuff anyway? They'd never been west of the Hudson.

Fate inevitably led him to marry a girl who, like his mother, assigned certain characteristics and actions to him and clung to her beliefs doggedly. On their first date at a Pace College dance Daphne, her body pasted to his during a slow song, whispered into his ear, "I'll bet you're a great lover." Rentzler, thinking she meant suave and sophisticated around women, let the remark pass because he liked to think of himself that way, too, although he really wasn't sure if he was or not. Girls giggled a lot when he talked with them.

He found out what she meant later when they were on their way back to Queens in a taxi. Rentzler got in and before he could tell the driver where to go Daphne squeezed herself next to him and threw her arms around his neck. Her breath smelled of peanuts and cigarettes. Naturally her closeness aroused him. The taxi was just leaving the Brooklyn Bridge and maneuvering for the expressway to Queens when Daphne accidentally brushed her hand against his erect instrument. Anyway he thought it was accidental. He was glad it was dark because he blushed so hard he felt like he had a fever, or had just come in from the first really sunny day at Jones Beach. Then she said out loud, "You know, I don't really care that you've slept with so many women. I think I'm falling in love with you anyway."

"Huh." Rentzler groaned silently and in a panic turned to see if the driver had heard. The driver, an old Italian with flapping cheeks and a huge belly, gave no indication that he was listening.

"I mean," Daphne continued, "your conquests are in the past and I think I can make you forget them." She grabbed him a little closer and put her lips very close to his. Now Rentzler could smell her lipstick as well as the peanuts and cigarettes on her breath. He kind of liked it. But where in hell, he wondered, did she get the idea that he was sexually experienced?

The sad reality was that Rentzler at age 20 remained a virgin. He'd kissed a few girls at parties. Maybe even necked once or twice. But he'd never taken a girl to bed. His only sexual outlets had been self-administered. The blissful feeling accompanying an actual sexual union with a girl — various friends had described their experiences to him and the descriptions caused Rentzler to become short of breath and go, "huh, huh, huh," gasping for air, which he tried to pass off as a sneeze by pinching his nose — had so far eluded him.

Rentzler felt a "huh, huh, huh," coming on and pinched his nose before it happened. He wondered if Daphne felt the quickened pounding of his heart. The taxi stopped in front of Daphne's apartment house. The cabbie waited for Daphne to extricate herself from Rentzler before he turned on the overhead light. Rentzler gave him a good tip hoping it would silence him. As he was getting out of the taxi, however, the cabbie leaned his head toward Rentzler, crooked his jowly mouth open, winked, and in a raspy voice said: "don' go wadin' widd out cha rubbas, Don Juan."

Rentzler's mother approved of Daphne. She took her by the arm

when he brought her home for family inspection and as they walked arm in arm down the apartment hallway told her, "Walter's such a smart boy."

"That's not all," Daphne replied.

Daphne wouldn't cooperate with Rentzler's attempts to widen his sexual experience other than to let him put his hand inside her bra once or twice. "I know how you feel, Walter, and I know you've had plenty of other girls, but since we're engaged to be married I want to save it for our wedding night. You wouldn't respect me if I let you. You don't respect all those other girls, do you?"

"Huh, huh, huh," gasped Rentzler as he reached up to pinch his nose.

After graduation from Pace, Rentzler took a job selling auto repair tools, including wrenches of all types, dollys, screwdrivers, and other assorted gadgets of the trade. When he went for the job interview the company personnel director shook his hand, looked him quickly in the eye and said, "I'll bet you're really aggressive. You have that look about you. Just what we need in the sales force." He gave Rentzler a starting salary of $10,000 a year and took him to the president of the firm, a man named Crimshaw. Crimshaw was very old and his hands shook as if he had palsy. When they were introduced Rentzler had to grab for his hand several times before he got hold of it. He felt funny stabbing at the air, but the two men smiled and seemed not to notice. "Yes, he looks just like what we need," Crimshaw agreed with the personnel director. Rentzler conceived of himself at that moment as a cow up for auction. "An aggressive man is what we want at this time," Crimshaw continued, not letting go of Rentzler's hand. For a man who hesitated to tell the subway token agent how many tokens he wanted and who never asked for black coffee when served coffee with cream at Chock Full O' Nuts, Rentzler was amazed to find these two characterizing him as aggressive.

Soon after starting work as an auto repair tool salesman he and Daphne were married. Rentzler finally lost his virginity and was convinced that he was the instrument of Daphne losing hers. They moved into a one-bedroom apartment in Woodside where they had grown up. Lithe and beautiful Daphne settled into the role of housewife and Rentzler went off every day in search of auto mechanics who needed tools.

Rentzler discovered that sex wasn't really as great as his friends had told him. At least, he didn't think so. It didn't occur to him

that perhaps it was just Daphne, though had he been more experienced the possibility would definitely have come to him. There was something about Daphne's body that bothered him anyway. She was very thin and her elbows and knees were bony and he kept running into them or getting jabbed by them — Daphne was a very restless sleeper. It hurt. Why, he wondered, hadn't this happened before they were married? Some days he had a difficult time getting through work because of the sore spots on his body that released stabbing pains all day. He no longer found himself short of breath and grabbing for his nose to stifle the "Huh, huh, huh," at the height of passion. Part of the maturing process, he assumed, was losing some of the habits and idiosyncracies of youth. However, even though he could philosophically accept the loss of many things, he really regretted losing his shortness of breath and "huh, huh, huh."

After eight years with Crimshaw Tools Rentzler looked around him and realized that he was their head salesman. He didn't feel any more aggressive at 29 than he did at 21 when he took the job, but somehow the mechanics liked him on sight and bought large amounts of tools from him. They even washed the grease off their hands before shaking hands with him. His success made his mother happy. She insisted on his giving her a sample of some of his tools and even though she knew nothing at all about automobiles — had never, in fact, owned one — she took the various tools over to Mrs. Schwartz and told her about them. "This," she said, waving an open-ended wrench in front of Mrs. Schwartz's skeptical face, "is for taking off bolts." Daphne was also happy with his success. Financially secure, she did not have to take a job as did many other young wives and could spend all her time with the two children, a girl named Daphne after her mother and a boy named Walter after his father.

Crimshaw, too, of course, was elated by Rentzler's success. He gave his personnel director a substantial raise for having the foresight to hire Rentzler. And Rentzler he treated like a son, often inviting him into his office and discussing developments in the tool trade, slipping in a question now and then about Rentzler's family and then continuing on about developing new sales territory. Crimshaw liked to have Rentzler be the first salesman to go into new territory. For Rentzler it meant being away from home much of the time; however, he didn't mind because it gave his sore spots from Daphne's boniness time to heal. On the other hand, Daphne accused him, albeit playfully, of having women in the various towns who

were slaves to his sexual prowess. "But I don't mind," she told him once when he had come home after five days, "I know you're really mine." And she hugged him. Rentzler didn't like Daphne's accusations because they were completely untrue. But protest as he might, Daphne continued to insist on his sexual attractiveness to other women.

"This area here. Right here," Crimshaw said, tapping his finger authoritatively on the large map of New Jersey that hung on the wall. His finger tapped on Trenton. "We've got competition here, but I think you can do it, Walter. We're all counting on you. By the way, how's the family?"

"Fine, thank you," Rentzler replied as he watched Crimshaw's finger shake uncontrollably on the map.

Rentzler set out through Brooklyn and across the Verrazanno Bridge for the Jersey Turnpike and Trenton the next morning. He had an unusually large number of welts after an exceptionally bony night with Daphne. He was thankful for the straightness of the turnpike because his welts sent stabbing pains through his body when he had to turn the steering wheel. He took the first exit to Trenton and drove until he came to the first large auto repair business. It had the unlikely name of Beatrice's Garage, Body Fender & Engine Repair. In smaller letters at the botttom of the sign it announced: Beatrice Hansen, Prop. He parked his car so that it wouldn't interfere with the business and walked over to the nearest mechanic.

"Excuse me," he said politely, "can you direct me to the manager?"

The mechanic, who was leaning into the hood of an old Packard, didn't respond so Rentzler asked again more loudly. Startled, the mechanic raised up too quickly and banged his head on the hood of the auto. His wrench clattered through to the concrete floor and dust from the hood filled the engine cavity. "Huh?" the mechanic asked. Rentzler again requested the manager. "Oh, dere, over dere workin' on da Chevy." He pointed across the garage where a huge rounded lump of overalls overpowered a helpless Chevy coupe. Rentzler thanked the mechanic and walked over to the manager.

"Excuse me," he said to the back of the mountainous overalls. The manager was a fat one, Rentzler could tell; the overalls looked gorged; the seams, like the before picture in a sanforized ad, were ready to split.

"Watcha need, bub?" the manager asked, turning around. It was

then Rentzler realized this bulk was a woman. She had a piggish face, though her skin was surprisingly smooth and soft-looking, and stringy blonde hair that hung in frizzy curls from under her mechanic hat. Rentzler estimated that she grossed over 200 pounds. She appeared to be sub-intelligent except for a ruthless gleam in her steel-blue eyes that cautioned him that he was in the presence of superior cunning or cruelty, or both. Rentzler introduced himself again.

"I'm Beatrice. Name's on the sign outside." She shook his hand firmly and left a smudge of grease. Rentzler winced at the pressure of her grip. She kept staring straight into his eyes and he had to look away. He then tried to look around her to see what type of tools she used, but he couldn't navigate her girth.

"Don't get nosy, bub, just state your business."

Rentzler told her who he was and why he was there. She seemed to be listening carefully and Rentzler found he was still unable to look her in the eye. He felt overpowered. He began explaining about a special line of wrenches when she grabbed his arm and squeezed it. Rentzler almost screamed at the pain and his eyes began to water.

"Why should I buy anything from you, pipsqueak?" he heard Beatrice saying through his mist of pain and tears. He felt himself being pushed into a small office and heard the door close. He was being lifted on to a table. No, it was a desk. Rentzler was unable to resist the woman, she was too strong for him. Amidst her groans and grunts he felt his coat being ripped off, then his pants and jacket. My God, he panicked, what's happening to me? Yet he was afraid to cry out for help. Then he was naked. He caught a glimpse of her huge rounded hips as she approached, blotting out the light as she got closer, picked him up like a straw doll and set him to her own uses. The last thing he remembered was losing his breath and going, "huh, huh, huh," but this time he couldn't reach and pinch his nose.

When Rentzler failed to return, his mother and his wife contacted old Crimshaw who dispatched another salesman to Trenton to see what had happened and the salesman finally located him. Rentzler was living with Beatrice and told the salesman that he was happy and would remain there. He was no longer concerned about his job or his wife and family. The amazed salesman hurried back to New York and reported to Crimshaw.

First Crimshaw called in Rentzler's wife and told her what had happened. He left out the physical description of the woman who had stolen her husband when he saw how beautiful Daphne was.

Crimshaw did not want to heap insult on to the pile of misery this young woman already had to bear. He was surprised at her calm reaction. As she left she said quietly to him: "I have always known how other women have been attracted to him and have prepared myself for this moment for a long time."

Rentzler's mother was another matter. When told what had happened and given a description of the other woman, his mother sat quietly with a quizzical look on her face as if she were pondering very weighty matters. She looked up at Crimshaw and said, "I don't know why he did it, but I'll tell you this, there's more to it than meets the eye. My son is no dummy."

Crimshaw was inclined to go along with Rentzler's mother. After all, Rentzler was too shrewd and aggressive not to have some fantastic scheme that would account for his actions. To forestall any such contingencies, Crimshaw decided not to market his tools in the Trenton area.

As for Rentzler, well, there is no adequate way to describe the thrill that ran through him when he heard Beatrice yelling at him from across the garage, "Hey, you stupid little jerk, get over here and vacuum out this car!"

OPEN FACES, SHUT FACES

NIKOLAY ZABOLOTSKY

Translated from the Russian by Sam Bradley and Marianne Bogojavlensky.

Great, splendid doors — there are faces
like that, and greatness imagined where really
all is small. Then, other faces
are hovels where liver's cooked and you see
rennet soaking.
Some are dead, coldkraut
faces — behind fenders, as if in prison.
Others, towers wherein no one
has lived for a long, long time, or looked out
of a window.
Well I know
once-upon-a-place. I suppose
it was a rude cabin, plain in its poverty.
But from every one of its windows
Spring's breath streamed
toward me.
Yes, a met world, a fine one
for faces. Some, unbeaten, bright
as songs, their music full-flowing as the sun
— from here to heaven, heaven's delight.

NIKOLAY ZABOLOTSKY (1903-1958) is a modern Russian poet whose work has not yet been widely translated into English.

SAM BRADLEY and MARIANNE BOGOJAVLENSKY recently translated a volume of contemporary Russian poetry by Evtushenko, Martynov and Vinokurov.

POEMS FOR PSYCHOANALYSIS

ELIZABETH BREWSTER

Psychoanalyst

The psychoanalyst has a German accent,
Is over sixty but has dyed her hair,
Wears an ornate brooch
To fasten her ruffled blouse.

She loses her temper easily,
Yet her patients love her
Days when they don't hate her.
The alcoholic, the drug addict, the homosexual,
The woman who never wears any colour but white
And never takes her gloves off
For fear of germs on her fingers —
They all love her indiscriminately
And hate her indiscriminately
With a love and a hate which is not really for her.

Is the psychoanalyst herself neurotic
To need all this love and hate?
I don't know; it is hard for a patient to tell.

Diaries

The patient dreams
Of standing in water
On which diaries are floating.
He pushes them under
The layers of water
But they rise again
Floating like cork
And will not be submerged.

Explorer

He dreams
Of discovering a large egg
Labeled "Newfoundland."

When he cracks the shell
He will be able to walk in
And find himself at the centre.

Childhood Innocence

When the analyst's nephew died
The patients all said they were sorry
But were really glad
Because there was one less person
To share her with.
Little children dance
(Even though they love him)
At the thought of their brother's funeral.

Recurrent Nightmare

Her commonest dream is one
Of being smothered or else strangled.
Stiff in her bed,
She hears footsteps approach.
A stealthy, violent figure
Bends above her,
Othello or the Boston Strangler.
She struggles for life
As though, waking and finding it not a dream,
She must turn her own fingers against
The foreign throat;
Then finds the strangler is her mother,
Screams "I must live," and this time really wakes
In the knotted sheets
Wondering if anyone heard
Her screamed whispered cry.

ELIZABETH BREWSTER's *Passage of Summer; Selected Poems* was published by Ryerson Press in 1969. She teaches Creative Writing in the English Department at the University of Alberta, Edmonton.

OGOPOGO TIME*

Something pregnant
comes to squat
in shadows,
and its presence is supposed to mean
a poignant heat,
a restless fear
and irritation,
culminating in inspiration.
The something pregnant
is then to crawl away,
satisfied and glorified,
on an oozing trail
towards the lake shore.
But as it squats,
pulling a black bough
in front of its face for mystery,
it is unaware
of ten thousand other figures,
all squatting in the same hot night,
and all
with bellies just as round
and faces just as dark.

What did it have for supper?
When did it last eat? Does it?
Men? Kill it! Fish? It might survive.
It chews around the corners of hunger.
Perhaps its food has been dead
ten million years.
The leviathan survives
by sucking the rocks
clean of their fossils.
It picks its teeth
with a drowned pine
soft enough
to massage the gums.

Biting its tail
with great difficulty,
the creature rolls its blubber
through the dark waters,
trying to
make me believe
it is time itself
and the ghost of Confucius,
Li Po roaring from the lake's depths,
and all the pale ponies of war
dressed red.
I believe it is a whale
caught
in its own cesspool
But still wanting
to be a gentleman.

Classified "remote among our fears,"
it has rest and rotting.
The yellow teeth fall
one by one
into the lake sludge.
The monster dies, sinking
quickly, to fertilize
its own seed,
to disappear,
until little cracks form
on the sides of the hills.
The sage falls out,
its roots broken off.
The sand slides
on the lips of the mountains,
and a hundred clanking skeletons
march from the dragon's teeth.

*Ogopogo is the legendary monster of Okanagan Lake, British Columbia.

GIRAFFE

What shall I do
with my giraffe
but run my fingertips
thumping down its sides
and scratch its bony shoulders
with the ends of my nails
(in this action they will wear
off to the extent of perhaps
one millimeter but it is
proportionate even in its
magnitude of selfness
to the giraffe's pleasures
on its bristly skin)
It will stand still for the scratching
and close its eyes in satisfaction
Then I will put it down
on the ground where it will
jump and play like a little dog
being almost that clumsy
in all its meatless limbs
It will be excited and leap
at passing pant-legs in hope
of more shoulder-nails
I will pick up my giraffe
again in my hand
where it will dance
in some sort of happiness
and I will wonder why
it can never look young
for all its playing

My giraffe looks like painted bones
with the marrow drained out
It is these bones that play
like castinettes
It is from these bones that
brown eyes look out
above brown age-stains
and at me
The eyes are anxious
to play until the whole skeleton
has fallen apart
from dancing in the palm of my hand

WALRUS TUSK

They laid the walrus tusk on the snow
and it magically disappeared
taking with it the bleached sun
and all we could see
We thought we were all gone
different ways in the wind
but it was not until six months later
when daylight refused to come back
that we knew we were blind

WITCHES

Witches burn like candles
Fire does not differentiate
Wax from fingers
The black hollow of the witch's womb
Dries and cracks open like a pod
But snaps out no seeds
Only small skulls of miscarried loves
I tried to fill one of the skulls
With seeds and make a magic rattle
To call back the dead
They would not come

PARADISE

All I want is
paradise

All I see is
my fingers breaking off
one
by
one

God has more power
than I have
to shatter the roses
like panes of glass
to glue them together again
in the shape of flames

LINDA WIKENE JOHNSON has had a story broadcast on the CBC radio program, *Anthology*; these are her first poetry publications. She is an undergraduate at the University of British Columbia.

FOUR POEMS BY ROBERT KROETSCH

BIRTHDAY

Winter is
not the crow's
season, is

not the sun's
defeat
: I heard
a crow in the frost

hard dawn, I saw
a crow riding the
slant sun.

ACADEMIC QUESTION

The shark,
the conch diver
said, with one
motion cutting
the meat out
of the pink
shell,
he won't
bother you most
of the time; and

if he change his mind,
what

is

there
to

say?

CONSERVATIVE STREAK

Your small and secret
breasts blush
to the question
mark of my tongue

I have taught this woman
.my
doom.

The labyrinth of
my soul
is her soul's body;
I follow my lost mouth . . .

And yet the old
position is best;
the woman flat
on her back the man
his belly
on hers remains
my first choice
for the long haul (my

poet's metaphor neatly
inserted like a weasel's whiskers
like a new-hooked rainbow trout
like a cockatoo's beak
like the hard white
tooth of an aging but horny
anarchist
in her right ear) .

SENTENCE

Not to recover but
simply to face/force
the past to discover:

e.g., that time

is

space

e.g., that the language
itself isa

word

e.g., that the poet
was the morning of
man and

the sun setting.

ROBERT KROETSCH's poems have appeared frequently in North American journals, including *Prism international.* The most recent of his novels, *The Stud-Horse Man* (McClelland & Stewart), won the Canadian Governor-General's Award for Fiction in 1969, and will soon be produced as a film. He teaches in the English Department at Harpur College, Binghamton, New York.

Vision: THE HOUSE ON THE RIVIERA

ELIZABETH WOODS

I see
the corner of a house,
a white wall stained blue-
shadowed,
slow crimson poppies nodding,
under the sun's fist the lucent air
quivers
sustained, sublimal and shrill
cicadas singing.

Why am I afraid to enter?
The door thrown open, brown,
the soft brown shadows of the doorway, brown,
the table formed from worn brown timbers, yes,
but the blood
is red
and the fat flies blue and booming
clustered on the crusted stain
are full.

I am from a cold country
where wounds congeal
behind the blade
pale scars
fade . . .

I want to enter,
taste the sweet blood set before me
but before the blood-
letting my eager throat find
my ready teeth.

It is cool inside.
Looking back I see
the crumpled cliff
beyond, the valley in wide duns and greys,
beyond, the pale ocean.

All that is behind me,
now
I see
the corner of the house,
the white wall . . .

ELIZABETH WOODS has been writing poetry for 2½ years and also "working on some novels."

dwarf, raven and the Great White Horse

WAYNE FIPKE

island.
near the north pole
a fat
green
dwarf
picks his nose.

*

raven was the trickster
raven chief in lore
his medicine power
guided the magic canoe
to the island of the dead
he recaptured lost souls
and poured them back
into their owner's heads.

who sees the island in his trance?
who has a dugout canoe?
who dares that journey now?

*

vision
of the raven
lying on the earth's back
— an abrupt chime tingle
shakes the sky his eye
flash of golden bells
there on the holy hips of a bengal saddle blanket
tiger eyes crow spies cast on that indian design.
a mountain horse
of foreign breed
all the king's horses
all the queen's men
this beast
gallops up.

shaman speaks
crow tongue

excuse me m'am
please don't trot on the grass
red blood turns pale
under our family tree
slop flop plop
english tongue

raven listens
magic sings

I've evidence at last
here on the grass
proof-positive of your false skin
here
in the garden
horseshit all over the place.

the Great White Horse farts
the Great Snow Horse starts
she stops
nostrils flare
forefeet flicker
she rears angrily
raven dies
vision flies

hear those horses hooves
hear the old mare calling
come my children
come my centaur colts.

*

racetrack.
near the equator
a delirious greyhound
rolls in raven blood
masking his scent
feathers
tickle his neck
as
three billion wild centaurs
led by a giant albino
head down the home stretch
tailspin
raven rides whiskey
their shadows the shimmering flights
the northern lights
beating towards ascending heights
a windswept iceberg
island

*

yawn
our green
arctic dwarf
has the race
fixed.

WAYNE FIPKE is a graduate student in the Department of Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia; one of his plays was produced last year.

FOUR POEMS BY SUSAN WONG

BAD DREAM

There is a nightmare growing here.
If you meet my eyes
you'll find it.
A dream gone bad,
I am allowed
the freedom of the grounds.
Feet slipping in the mud
I take my turn.

There are others here.
I recognize the shapes
heads are hanging
hands which chalked desires
and fears
on subway walls
are tied together.

This nightmare depends on all of us
staying in line.

PUNCTUATION

Punctuation
marks your breathing.
I hear each pause
clearer even
than the slow pulse of you.
I know you.
You are the keeper
of my breath.
Very few I'm told
have rested in the tiny palm
that closes around
each pocket
between gasps.

And you and I
see through each other
into the next night.

POSSIBLE ENDINGS

I have explored various avenues.
Gas, for example,
makes me nauseous.
I don't imagine I could swallow
great mounds of pills.
I am afraid of heights
and most windows
do not respond to my touch.
There is no one waiting to tie me
to railroad tracks
although that would be
dramatic.
The coldness of guns
appalls me.
I want to go
a warmer way.

And then the notes.
I'd have to leave one
for each of you.
It is a lot of writing
you must admit.

It is so simple really.
I will conspire with time.
Together
we will solve my problem
even if it takes
a lifetime.

TAKE ME HOME

The powdered sugar
ring around my moon
is wet as water colors.
Each time you turn a corner
it shifts
my right and then my left
I do not want to
lose it.
You're racing now
against others
and me and time
taking me back.

If I thought it would matter
I'd tell you
powdered sugar songs
sweet rhythms
I have seen and even
given in to
but time is
up
and our dawns
come at different
hours
our suns even
set
on different worlds.

SUSAN WONG is a Research Associate for the Institute for Educational Development and also an editorial assistant for *Chelsea* magazine. She has published in *The Smith, Epos* and *Chelsea.*

THE LIGHT SWARM

WILLIAM L. FOX

I doubt the light that lifts smoke
the fine-grain way it goes,
that shines with human eyes,
but also guides an insect.
There are many suns that light
on buildings and trees, casting
their shadows around corners.

The visible limits of our skin
have become thin to me,
and I watch for a sign that air and water
are not our only elements.

I am sure the explosions of unseen novas
are coming for our skins, to lift and stretch it
between our arms and legs into flying-squirrel wings.
That solar pressure may push us
off this world and into space
(our mass shadow growing, eclipsing,
then breaking from the ground).

We could find ourselves
racing through the spectrum,
several billion of us loose in the galaxy,
locust-like and hungry.

WILLIAM L. FOX attends the Claremont Colleges in California. He has had poems in *Abraxas, Dragonfly* and *Tennessee Poetry Journal.* Sono Nis Press recently published a volume of poems, *The Iron Wind.*

THREE POEMS BY PETER E. WALDRON

MY FIRST

my first had
breasts like rolled socks
hair slept on her shoulders

she stood as a deer
captured by the light

her hand opened:
sarge shouted

I closed one eye
and squeezed

she dropped
like a handkerchief

MY FOLKS

I look for Pa
dressed in dungarees
chasing my batted ball,
and Ma follows him
like string
after a balloon.

From the hospital
between faded curtains
I watch trucks
wash leaves
and cigarette butts
down a drain.

BUDDY

I can't leave,
they need me here
to watch for movement
in the brush
above your head.

I'll write your parents
and tell them you were brave,
and liked by the men
now numb with your death.

I would go to you
but to see your blood
soaking through the sand
would make me cry.

PETER E. WALDRON served in the U.S. Army, 1965-68. He now attends the poetry workshop at the University of Washington.

COLUMBUS

Columbus sits on a dusty hill in Spain.
It is yellow.
He looks at his belly.
Taking the knife from his belt he slices his belly to the breast-bone, which he cannot cut.
Inside his belly: the sea.
Columbus reaches into the sea and, in error, withdraws his liver.

Later, a goatherd and a queen name this America, saying it took Columbus three ships and four months to find it.
They did this in Spain to account for the man they found covered with blood and flies who had spread his guts on the dusty hillside and who, before he died, cried, "Look. I have torn out my heart."

GEORGE PAYERLE recently completed a Master's Degree in Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia and now resides in Vancouver. His poetry, fiction and translations have appeared in a number of journals such as *Poetry Australia*, *Expression* and *Contemporary Literature in Translation*, as well as on CBC Radio's *Anthology*. *The Afterpeople*, a first novel, was published in 1970 by the House of Anansi.

THE MAN IN THE MEADOWS

(for Maria and Ian)

These women inhabiting my house are strange animals with broken thighs. Not even cats are as strange as the breasts of these women, nor lions as strange as the memory of something more peculiar than meadows behind their eyes. They have curled up in my house as though it were a warm meadow hidden by thickets of fog. No one is more beautiful, not even the she-lions at midday. They make my house more strange than the brown plains of lions.

The meadow opens an iris in the eye of the forest. From the thicket a man watches the doe in the meadow feeding like an image reflected in a single eye. The man walks carefully, as though through his own rooms in stockinged feet, until he stands beside the feeding doe. He feels as though he had entered the image in his own eyes. He touches the doe. The doe vanishes. He can feel her in his fingertips. He stands at the centre of the clearing, an image reflected in a single eye. He looks at his fingertips. He touches his eyes with his fingertips. He covers his eyes with his hands. He feels like an animal with broken thighs who is threatened by nothing. He feels like a man who has touched his own eyes and found them covered with warm fur. He feels like a man who has become his eyes. He touches the instruments of his own groin and finds there a woman with delicate teeth, whom he cannot see.

These women have hidden in thickets of fog. They make my own house like the eyes of an animal that suspects nothing. Their eyes are like the eyes of an animal that suspects nothing. I come to them in my own house like a strange animal about to be seen.

FOUR POEMS BY LARY H. GIBSON

NEW YORK TO L.A. IS 3000 MILES

Everything behind now —
the old lies husked and bedded
for perhaps another spring,
extrude yourself
naked as pigment;
assume such shapes
as earth and air might justify.
That bitch-goddess
who sucked you dry
a hundred sleepness nights
and left your fly unzipped
for even god to see
may blossom in the Park
or, subtler still,
engrave her secret messages
on empty restroom walls
BUT
you are free again —
Swaddled in time's window,
formaldehyde of space,
rehearse each aisle of eyes
until love drags you screaming
into bloom.

MEANWHILE UNDERGROUND

I have become pennypinched
and hunched as a turtle's tooth;
let snow pelt or rain descend,
amend all blasted hopes,
I shall not believe.

I shall lurk always —
just beyond the door,
around corners,
in the strobe-lit pauses
between you and your life —
and pounce like summer thunder in your glass:
lover, friend, yourself.

LOCAL STOP

Awesome as a passing waterfall,
it hurtles like a death-wish into night
leaving you to contemplate
sudden electric blossoms at your feet.
Recalling the light that streamed
from gaping window-wounds;
its iron passage so deftly to the dark,
you misconstrue, like cattle in their pen,
the impervious necessities of use.

ORPHEUS' NIGHTMARE

There were cunts everywhere
that laughed like tunnels never taken
or mouths to mouth
the undubbed anguish
of a sightless season's rage.

There was also sun,
and flowers like a promise overhead
but she had fled beyond all songs
back to her groined and battened hutch
where echoes answer
as laughter at the edge of grief —
did I turn or did she call?

Finally safe by fire
this poem dancing on its page
(perhaps an ultimate fuel)
I must render up that god
who lives like love
between each pair of undiscovered thighs.

LARY GIBSON's poems have appeared in *Niobe I*, *Inscape* and others. He teaches English at San Fernando State College in Northridge, California.

TWO POEMS BY JOHN BITONTI

THE GARDEN

Yesterday I walked in the garden alone
It seemed just a garden

— Last night death was half way across my room —

Today
The garden walks on me.

AUTUMN

A leaf clatters through the twilight of the eye

JOHN BITONTI, a young Vancouver poet born and raised in Italy, translates the poetry of Giuseppe Ungaretti.

TWO POEMS BY NIKEPHOROS VRETTAKOS

AN ALMOND TREE

Translated from the Greek by M. Byron Raizis

An almond tree with you beside it.
But when did you two blossom?
Standing by the window
I look at you and weep.

My eyes can't bear such
mirth. God, give me
all the cisterns of heaven
and I'll fill them for you.

PEACE

Love is in my heart like an almond tree branch
in a glass of water. The sun caresses it
and is filled with birds.
The best nightingale utters your name.

NIKEPHOROS VRETTAKOS, born near Sparta in 1911, is one of Greece's foremost lyric poets. He has published close to thirty books of verse, prose, and criticism and won State Prizes in 1941 and 1956. Many of his lyrics have been translated into most European languages.

M. BYRON RAIZIS teaches English and Comparative Literature at Southern Illinois University. He has appeared previously in our 9:3.

FIRING AT NIGHT

HARALD WYNDHAM

for dan engelke

the poem turns to glaze
inside my head
is a round pot
full of bluegold glaze

when fired full tilt
it sparks freight
trains on moon
lit nights when no one is

awake it glows silently
beneath my eyes
like an urn filled
with my ashes after two

thousand years my wife
opens the lid
and pulls me out crisp
white and blueboned with

silver eyeballs and red
toes i am valuable
she sells me to museums
you can view me on saturdays

in a glass case i am from
pompeii a small town
south of toledo twenty
miles touch me and i'll break

HARALD WYNDHAM is a 24-year-old M.F.A. creative writing candidate in Bowling Green, Ohio.

THE TENDERLOIN

ELLEN COONEY

On the street between prisons
our queen
comes
out invading the parades of flesh
a certain yellow-boy has fixed
himself inside her mind
already they have coupled in secret
beneath her tongue
a woman with blue legs has tried
to envelop her head
a faggot in leather with a green guitar
passes leering this way and that
a beer-soaked businessman stares
emerging from a cheap hotel
he is not alone
all-silver hands graze her hair
in transience these
sweet flowers of flesh
our queen
enters and
comes
into

ELLEN COONEY has several loves, including the tenderloin district of San Francisco, where she has lived, and Jean Genet.

4 Songs by 3 + 2

The following songs are part of the work being done by Valerie Hennell, Richard Ouzounian and Fred Cawsey in their graduate programmes at the University of British Columbia.

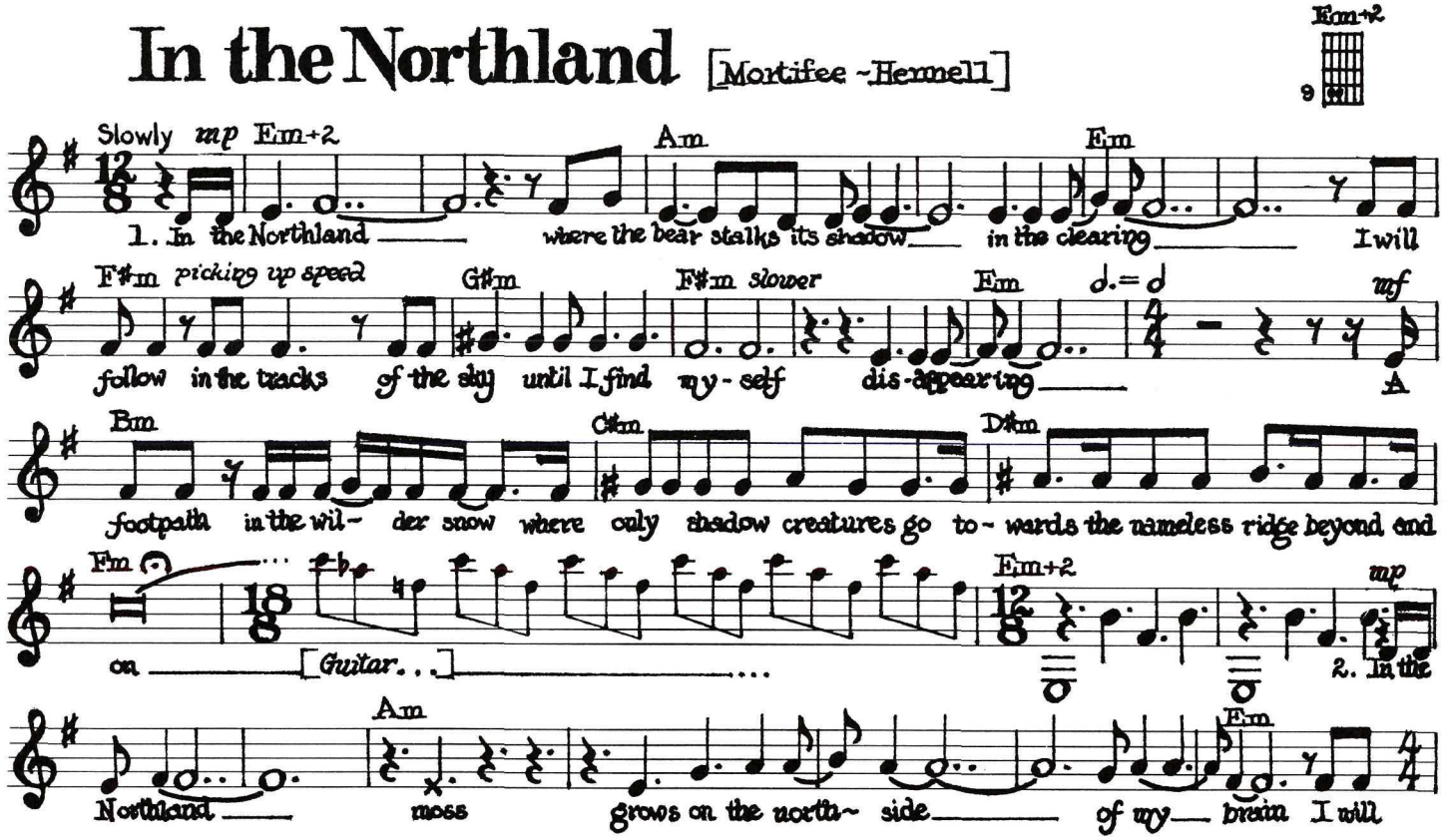
Valerie Hennell is studying media in the Department of Creative Writing. Her documentaries and interviews are broadcast regularly on CBC radio. The songs which appear here are two of the many she has written in collaboration with singer-composer Ann Mortifee, who recently composed the musical score for the Royal Winnipeg Ballet's adaptation of the play The Ecstacy of Rita Joe.

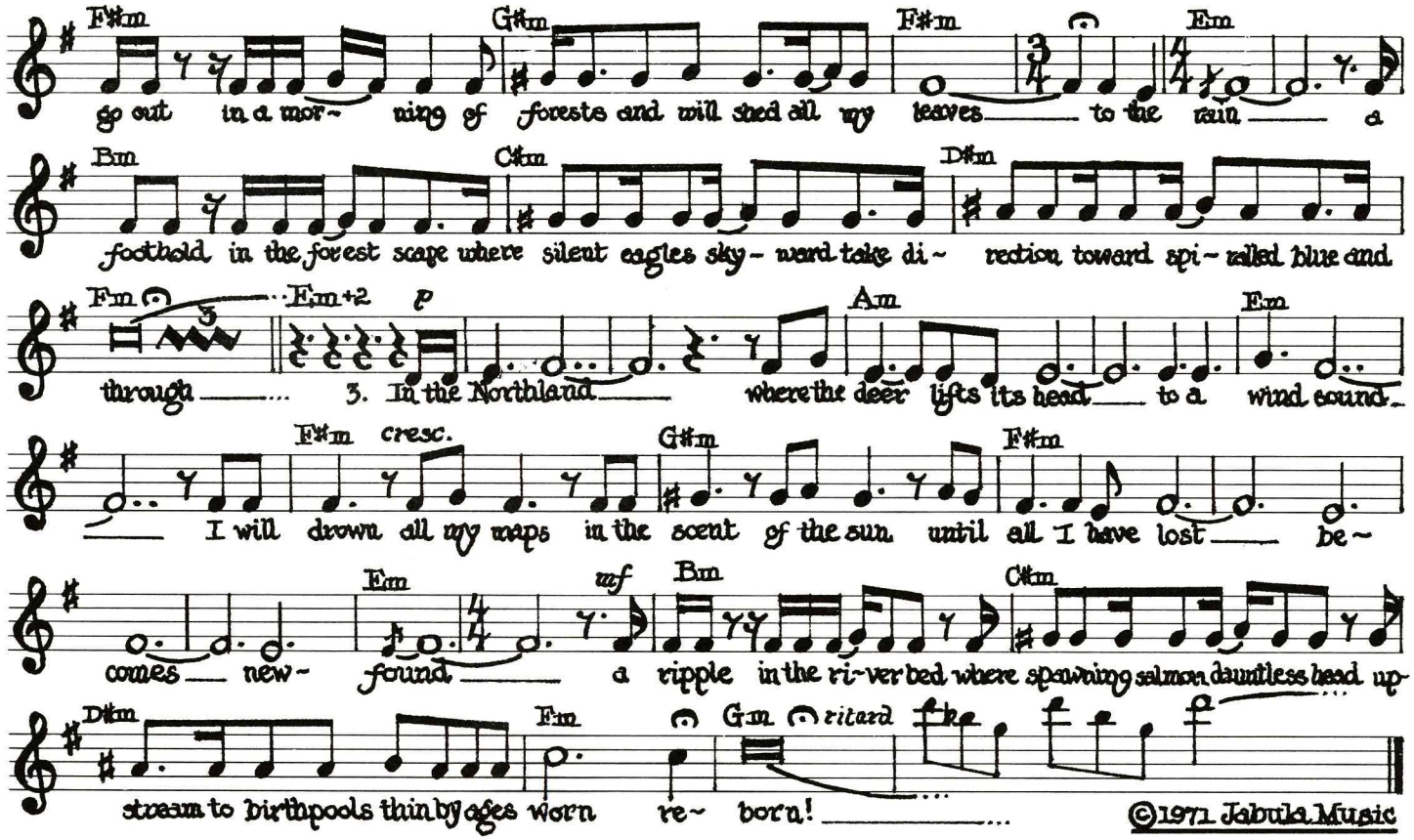
Richard Ouzounian is working for an interdepartmental M.A. in playwriting at U.B.C. He has written, directed and produced a number of plays in Vancouver and New York. He has sold one of his songs, "Kent", to folk-singer Pete Seeger.

Fred Cawsey is also studying media in the Department of Creative Writing. He is a reporter for The Vancouver Sun, and has had documentaries aired on CBC radio and Vancouver's Channel 10 television. He wrote "Grey Song" in collaboration with José, his wife.

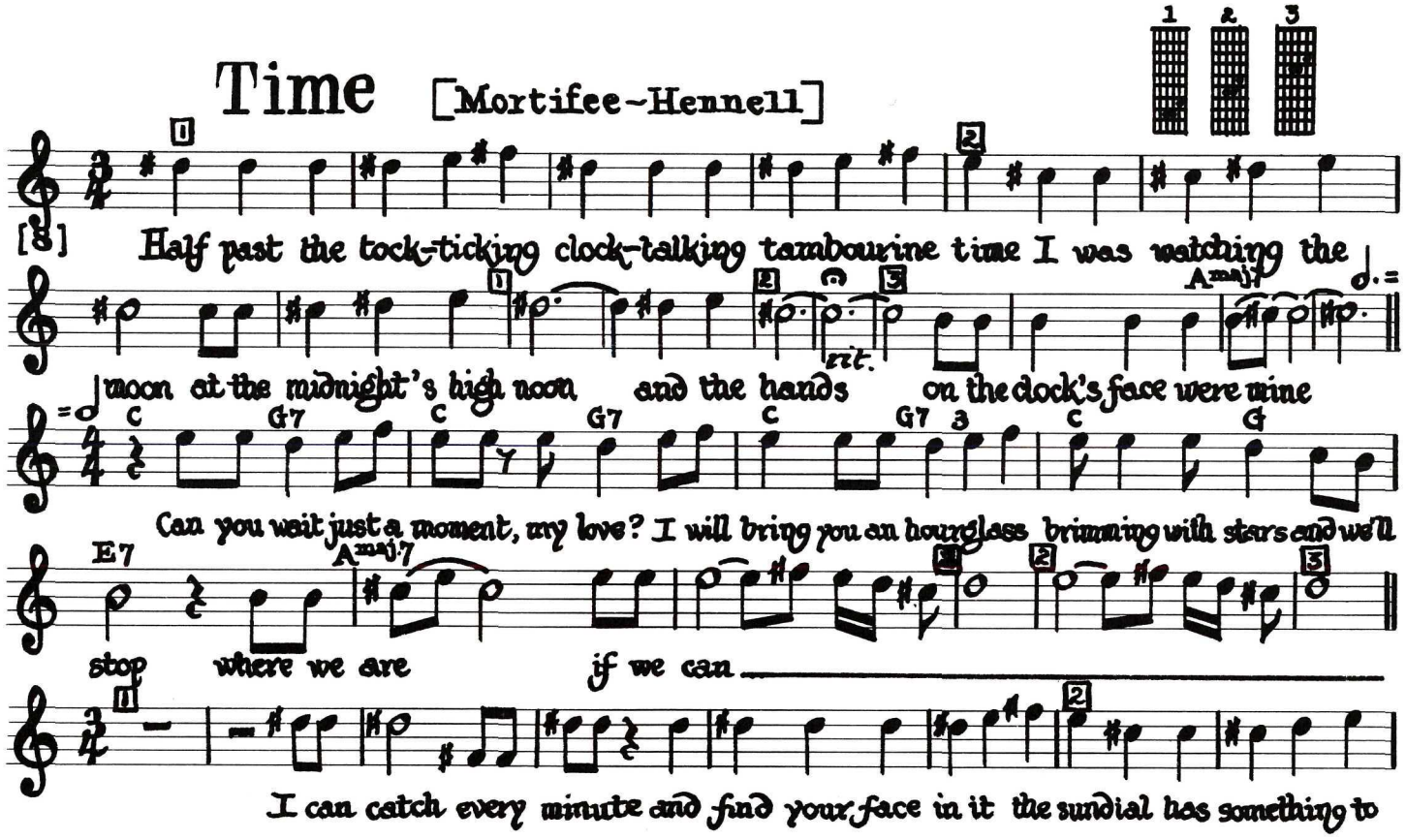
Transcription is by Gary Vics, a composition student in the Music Department at U.B.C.

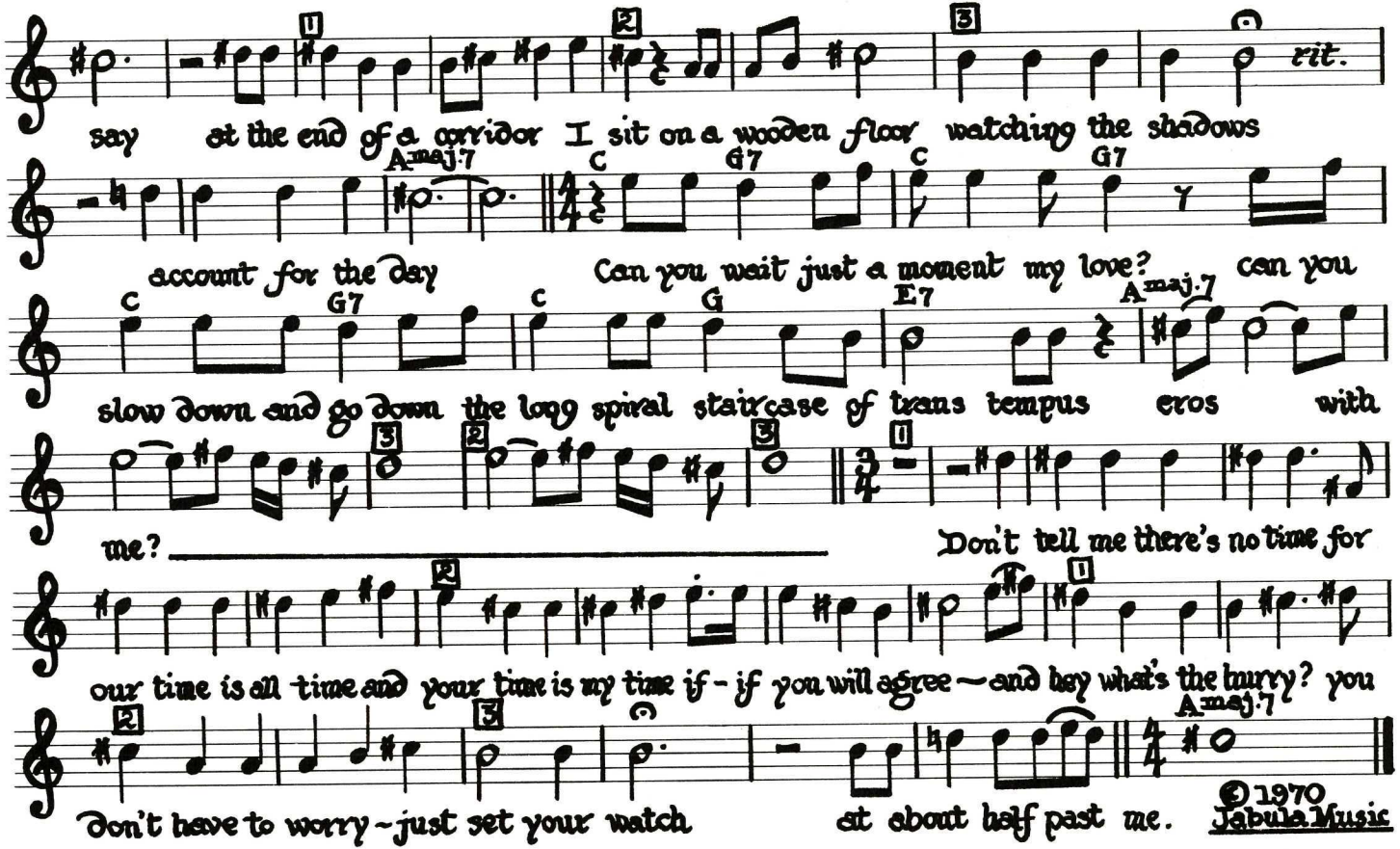
In the Northland [Mortifee ~Hennell]



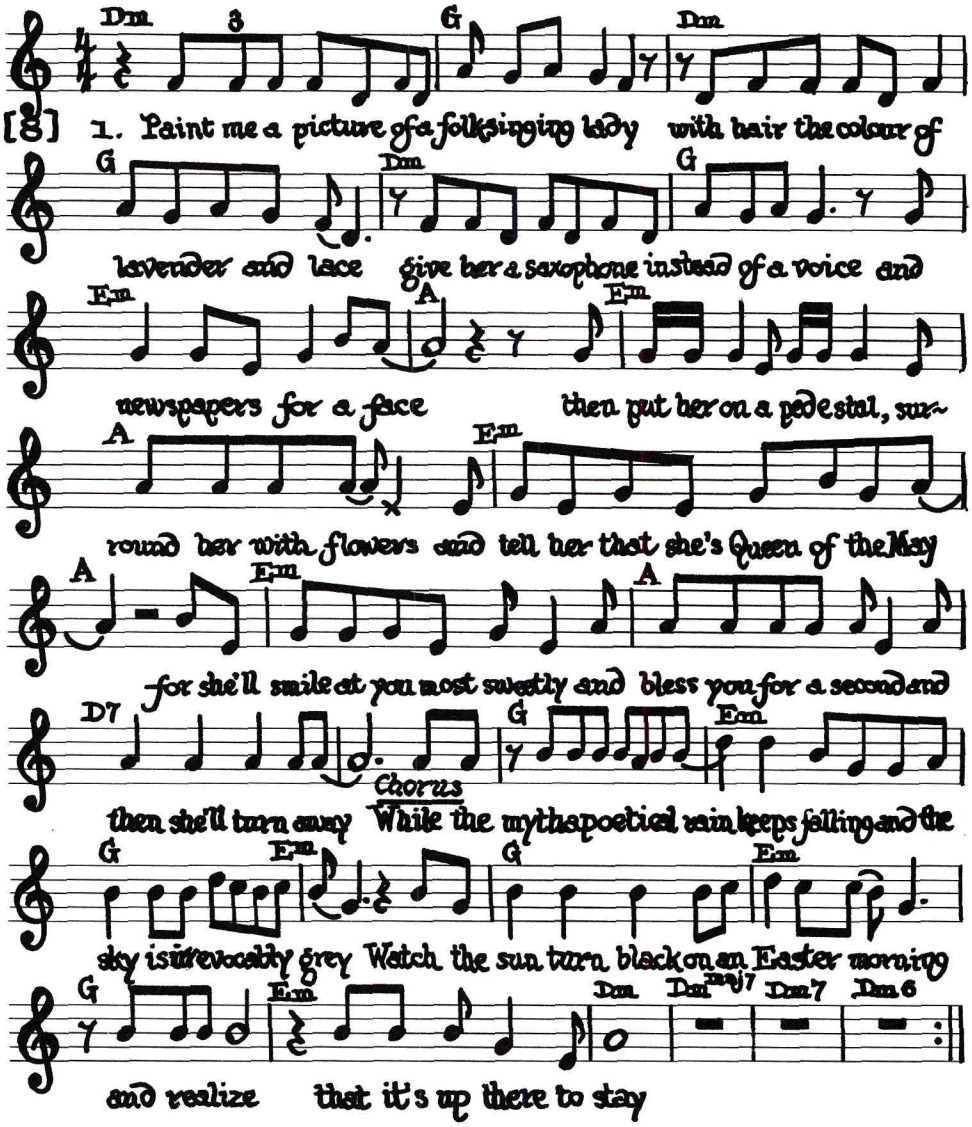

F#m
G#m
F#m
Em
go out in a mor~ ning of forests and will shed all my leaves to the rain a
Bm
C#m
D#m
foothold in the forest scape where silent eagles sky~ ward take di~ rection toward spi~ ralled blue and
Fm
Em+2
p
Am
Em
through 3. In the Northland where the deer lifts its head to a wind sound.
F#m
cresc.
G#m
F#m
I will drown all my maps in the scent of the sun until all I have lost be~
Em
mf
Bm
C#m
comes new~ found a ripple in the ri~ver bed where spawning salmon dauntless head up~
D#m
Em
G#m
ritard
stream to birthpools thin by ages worn re~ born!
©1971 Jabula Music

Time [Mortifee-Hennell]




rit.
say at the end of a corridor I sit on a wooden floor watching the shadows
Amaj.7 C G7 C G7
account for the day Can you wait just a moment my love? can you
C G7 C G E7 Amaj.7
slow down and go down the long spiral staircase of trans tempus eros with
me?
Don't tell me there's no time for
our time is all time and your time is my time if - if you will agree — and hey what's the hurry? you
Amaj.7
don't have to worry - just set your watch at about half past me.
© 1970
Jabula Music

The Folk-Singing Lady [R. Ouzounian]



©R. Ouzounian 1971

2. Grant me a vision of a Saturday sidewalk
where the streets split open and the people slid away
then I was asked to join the College of Cardinals
and teach everyone to pray

so clothe me in my chasuble and bring me my chalice
and tell me that I'm King of the Jews
for that misbegotten relic they discovered in Nazareth
ain't fit to shine my shoes

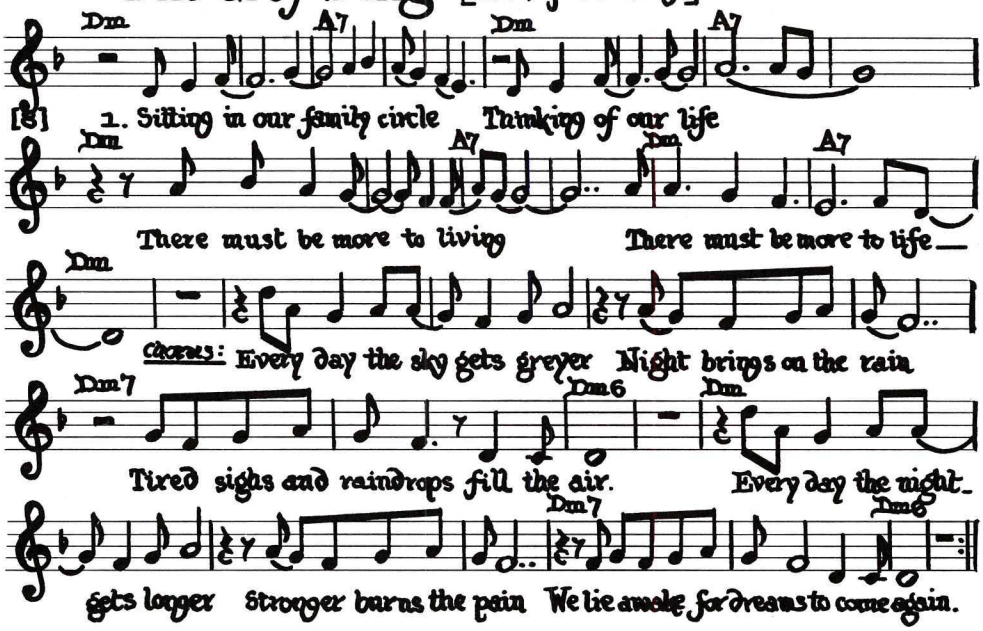
Chorus: as above

3. Save me a ticket for the last resurrection
when Christ and the folk-singing lady do a set
as they smile into each other's eyes and sing major 7ths
that nobody else can get

and after Armageddon they'll have God for a groupie
and Mary as the Mother of Sin
but let me learn another song that gives me no answers
and Lord let me begin

Chorus

The Grey Song [f. & j cawsey]



2. Sitting in our family circle
Humming our sad song
There must be more than waiting
Or are our dreams all wrong?

Chorus

3. Turning in our endless circle
Future never comes
We spend our workdays waiting
Our weekends leave us numb—

Chorus

© fred & josé cawsey 1971

JACQUES HAMELINK was born in 1939 in the Dutch province of Zeeland, close to the Belgian border. His first collection of stories, from which "Delayed Thunder" is taken, appeared in 1964. Since then he has written three books of poetry, two more story collections and *Ranunculus*, a first novel which was praised by Dutch critics as the major literary event of 1969. The story here marks his first appearance in English translation.

MARTHA VEERMAN is a native of Holland and a student of contemporary European literature. She lives in West Vancouver with her geologist-husband and three children.

Delayed Thunder

JACQUES HAMELINK

Translated from the Dutch by Martha Veerman

MARSH I knew René was subject to migraine headaches; his mother had warned us often enough to be careful with him, for instance not to beat him up or to anger him unnecessarily. And that happened often enough because, except for his knowledge of the marshlands beyond the village, René was not held in much esteem among us boys.

He could be stubborn and authoritarian, while often displaying a remarkable dullness in things we caught on to right away. At school he was quite a mediocre student, excelling only in botany and biology. Anyway, those were probably the only subjects he worked hard at. It should be said, however, that you couldn't show him a plant but he would know its name (even the Latin one, although in this we often suspected him of fooling us) and the kind of soil on which it would grow.

At home he had a herbarium, on which he must have spent a lot of his spare time; at least you didn't see him around much after school. In a way he was a boaster, but one who, strangely enough, only bragged about things he didn't know anything about, or things he didn't possess himself. You never heard him talk about the marshlands he often roamed, alone or with a vague figure, an old

man who lived outside the village — nor about his collection of plants and the tropical aquarium he had at home.

About things that really mattered to him, he never uttered a word. If you did mention them, he talked about those things in a contemptuous sort of way. You always got the feeling with him that he was only revealing half of his personality, that in his own hidden world he must be a quite different boy from the one who sometimes played with us, or made a fuss about a piece of kite string or about a small unpaid debt left over from carnival time, and whom we were not supposed to irritate because then he'd be sick for three days; after that he'd come slouching back to the school grounds, his face even more masklike, the movements of his skinny body even more ungainly than usual.

So he was a strange kind of boy — but that his abnormality would lead to such catastrophic events nobody would have foreseen — and anyway, one cannot be sure whether it was indeed his malady that caused him to act as queerly as he did.

Of course one could say: all this would not have happened if, on the morning of that fatal day, towards the end of the summer holidays when we had already been bored stiff for weeks, Marc Kanoffel had not suggested that after breakfast we should all go for a hike to the marshlands. But that is hindsight: and besides I know for sure, even though I cannot explain it, that it would have happened anyway for the simple reason that it had to happen, it was in the air; I am beginning to realize now that I knew it all that afternoon.

Marc Kanoffel was the leader of our gang. He was big and strong for his fourteen years. If it had been one of us boys who had suggested going to the marshlands, the suggestion would have met with very little enthusiasm. But since it was Marc, the fairhaired daredevil, the self-assured leader who wanted it, we forgot our own fears that our trip would leak out and that we would not get a very friendly reception at home — eager to make an impression of courage and manliness on Marc; now, it was a great adventure full of forbidden enjoyments and nerve-racking, delicious fears.

It must have been about eleven o'clock, and we were leaning against a wall at the milkman's who lived right across from the school, in the only street that our village boasted. During the school year we, the older boys, used to hang around there — telling each other jokes or making remarks to the girls of our school who were walking by, arm in arm. When Marc suggested that, this same afternoon, we should all go "beyond the village" (this is how we

euphemistically referred to the area strictly forbidden by parents and teacher), René, whom we secretly observed, looked aside indifferently, as if he had not heard; his somewhat wizened face which winter and summer was the same shade of dirty brown, remained inscrutable. If he did not come along, the plan would fall through. Marc was our undisputed leader and it would be ridiculous to replace him with a boy like René Dooms, who ranked among the lowest in dexterity, intelligence, and muscle power. But we knew: if René doesn't come, even rebellious Marc will not go through with it (even though he had stolen the doorbell of the teacher's house, and switched around the handlebars and seat of his bike, so that the teacher must have thought he had gone crazy when he wanted to go on a bicycle trip . . .). After all, Marc doesn't know the marshlands any more than we do. He is just as afraid of them. Only perhaps, being the leader, he is more strongly attracted by them: a leader is supposed to have courage, to be reckless so that others can respect him.

René, I can see him before me, with that typical little jerk of his head whenever he started talking, a nervous tic, then turned around suddenly, as if bored by the whole issue, and giving in to our silent questioning, just to be rid of it, said "I'll come."

It sounded somewhat faltering, he never talked fluently. Something had once happened to his tongue; he had been in the hospital for it quite a long time ago. But with those three words at that moment he decided his fate, and to me the question remains whether a greater decision had already been made concerning this fate beforehand, and whether that little sentence of his own was nothing but a subconscious assent to it.

After his promise he turned away from us and looked in the other direction, down the street which was empty, and uneven, and sunny, and behind which lay — invisible but not too far away — the strange, vaporous swamps, stinking of flowering and death, which were the cause of the restlessness in our blood during those last days of the summer.

The sky started to become somewhat overcast when, that afternoon, about ten of us boys, all provided with sticks and canteens, left the village behind. The flat land was stretched out before us. The sun was standing over the marshes, a great disk of burning yellow, with a blurred rim. There was little or no wind, and the sleepy landscape was quietly preparing itself for the approaching

autumn, which was already becoming noticeable by the close-cropped fields and by an indefinable rarified quality around things in the atmosphere.

For a while we followed a narrow bumpy road, we passed a farm where in the yard two men were inspecting a tractor, and turned on to a path where there was a luxuriant growth of high grass and stinging nettles among old bricks, which probably came from a demolished farmhouse nearby. On the empty potato-patch which stretched on either side of the path, an old man was looking for any potatoes that might have been left behind. We waved and called to him exuberantly. He straightened himself from his bent position and looked back at us for a moment, one hand groping for his back: a stiff scarecrow come to life.

After about half an hour we came to a low meadow bordering on the marshlands, and Marc said we should wait.

Some of us didn't feel much like doing that, but Marc said immediately that in that case they could take care of themselves, and they obviously didn't want that. We sat down in the grass, drank from our canteens, and deliberated.

In the distance, cows grazed in the meadow. A green beetle was crawling over my bare arm among the hairs, as through a thinly-planted forest. I held a blade of grass out to the little creature and it transferred itself on to it. Then I shook it into the opening between René's shirt and his neck.

"Damn," he said when he felt the tickling on his skin.

Marc said we had to cut out the nonsense.

René, having at last fished the beetle out of his shirt, began only now, it seemed to me, to get interested in our expedition. (I remember that he had not waved and called along with us to the lonely potato-gatherer.) He was chewing on a grass blade and, leaning on his elbows, his eyes half shut against the sun, he lay listening to the others talking rapidly and confusedly. It already struck me at that moment that, although generally speaking he was in no way more mature or more sensible than we were, nevertheless he could show a certain calm which was foreign to us and which made him seem older than he really was. This nervous, withdrawn boy was obviously feeling at ease, less than usually afraid of taunts and blows.

Marc, on his knees in the circle, explained the game we were going to play in a brief and businesslike way. With a certain measure of respect I looked at this boy, who was the same age as I was. His

shirt was open at the neck; he wasn't wearing anything under it. I looked at his supple and long body, his straight yellow-blonde hair which now and again he would nonchalantly sweep out of his eyes with a rapid gesture of his hand.

One of us was to hide in the marsh, not necessarily remaining in the same place, though. He would represent a fugitive criminal; the others were to search for him. If the boy was not captured within half an hour the group would have lost, and the game would start again with somebody else.

One of us did not agree with the plan. He was a rather big fellow with fat lips and black curly hair. I don't remember his name, any more than those of the others. He proposed that we would form a line across the marsh. One boy would then try to sneak through unnoticed. But Marc stuck to his own plan, which according to him would provide more adventure for everyone.

Somebody else, a rather timid boy anyway, who began to feel insecure so close to the forbidden territory, asked if the fugitive was also allowed to hide in the Pickcreek — the most treacherous part of the swamps.

"Why not?" René said suddenly, aggressively. "It's really nice there; there are high rushes; I've often been there with Theo." Theo was the marsh watchman, an elderly unsuccessful farmer who had been given this job and who roamed the marshes for days on end.

"What if we meet him?" another boy said.

"So what if we do," said René tauntingly, "you didn't think he'd drown you, did you?"

"My father says that once two boys drowned in the Pickcreek; they had gone out to cut bulrushes," the boy said again.

A certain uneasiness began to take hold of us: we knew the story. It was true. Later those two had been pulled out with their faces all black. The carpenter had had to put them in coffins right away. They were swollen like balloons.

But rather than confess our secret fears to each other, we shouted that he was crazy, that he'd better shut up with his old wives' tales. Marc remained silently superior, aware of his responsibility and resolved to push on.

René said that cowards had better get lost. He jumped up, seemingly quicker and more agile than usual. Here he began to be in his element. The fact that all of us were thinking of the Pickcreek with a certain revulsion — even Marc, who probably only pretended to

be brave — filled him with a sharp joy. You could see it by his eyes which looked harder and clearer than usual, and by a certain decisiveness around his mouth. As if this boys' expedition was something very important — and maybe it was, at that.

We felt at that moment that he was stronger than Marc, who in our minds moved to second place. Marc realized this, and confirmed the rightness of our feeling by asking René if we were going to start now, and what he thought of it.

"He is not coming along," René answered, pointing at the boy who had been afraid to get too close to Pickcreek. That was the condition he set for his job as a guide.

We all resigned ourselves to that. Nobody spoke up for the boy. Although probably everybody shared his feelings, except René, who was growing more and more superior to us.

If we had all been free of shame in front of the others, he, and maybe Marc too, would by now have been the only one to venture into the marshes. The haunting picture of the two drowned boys with their tongues bitten off, and their monstrous bodies, threw a shadow over our fun. But we were ashamed to admit our fear — toward each other, and especially toward them — and so the hunt would begin.

The only honest funk was booed. He was told to give our regards to our parents, just in case he wanted to betray us too, the jerk.

EXPLOSION René tells us to take off our shoes and socks. We obey. The canteens, too, are left behind. René, who is not thirsty, unscrews the top of his and empties it: a dark brown jet of cold tea.

Then, armed with our sticks, we quickly cross the meadow. A single dangling piece of barbed wire, attached to posts of uneven length and to branches of bordering trees, protects the cows against the treacherous terrain. We step over the wire.

Here the ground starts to become swampy. The grass, which seems longer and greener, does not grow so close together now, but more in tufts, between which we can see the brown, porous soil, becoming black where we set our feet. Mud.

Before us a dense belt of rushes, half-cut on this side. Farmers must have taken straw here for their potato-piles. Waterfowl are calling behind this impenetrable rampart.

Careful not to step on the occasional short stubbles with our feet, we proceed. René leads the way. He doesn't say anything any more, neither do we. The oppression weighing on us is tangible. A strange

feeling pervades us. So this is the forbidden territory. Then we are surrounded by rushes standing dead still, and find ourselves before a small pond, about six or seven inches deep maybe. Much rotten vegetation is lying on the bottom. René, careful but confident, is picking his way.

Suddenly I notice the still menace hanging over us. The sky is grey, shot through with lighter blurs. The sun is a thin impotent circle in it. There is no more wind. The rushes are standing together motionless. A single birdcall. Only the sound of our feet, slushing in the soft mushy soil.

In an immense sea of silence, the bottom still visible, we are faint-heartedly wading on, a row of geese.

Then we have reached the zone of reeds on the other side of the pond; the ground rises higher and becomes more solid again. And in the stillness which encloses us, as in a glass sphere of silence, suddenly René utters a wild cry. "Oohoo," he calls, like a madman.

Suddenly set free, we join in his shouting. The uproar sends dozens of birds flying up with flapping wings, they rush away low over the reed plumes. Waterfowl (or rats? or what other mysterious invisible creatures?) beat the water with their wings or paws.

The sky has become even darker; it is threatening to rain. But René won't hear of postponing. The play is set.

We walk into the fusty depths of vegetation, farther and farther. There are forests of dark green foliage, higher than ourselves, with yellow flowers exhaling stifling odours. And broadleaved plants spreading low over the ground. Once in a while a brown muskrat skips away right in front of our feet. Then there is a pollard willow, with bare roots and a trunk split lengthwise, from which the rotted center has fallen out. How did that tree get here? Buzzing of insects.

We all feel how the atmosphere of approaching calamity is being charged, is sucking itself full. This is forbidden territory, we can smell it. I am licking my dry lips. The canteens are way behind us.

René does not seem to be troubled by any feeling of constraint. He calls and is busy, claps his hands. We all sense it as something indecent. He has brought us here. *If something happens it will be his fault.*

What could happen? Suddenly I remember the night on the beach, where we were camping last summer.

We have made a campfire. In front of a tree-trunk washed ashore, drenched with kerosene, we are singing and shouting pagan warlike songs. Late beachwalkers are coming over to have a look at

our spectacle. The fiery glow in the hollow trunk is extinguished and René, bent over the last glimmer of light, cries and utters hoarse throaty sounds: a medicine man trying to exorcise the fire, somehow at this moment possessing a force unknown to us. I am shivering with discomfort because of what our playmate is recklessly doing with the great dark forces of sea and night and fire. Because of an alliance of which he seems a part and which leaves us out. And now, again.

I know the others sense it, too. This time it must be the approaching rain, the threatening thunderstorm which excite him thus. At least he is standing there yelling at the sky, his arms held up high toward it. Has be become insane now? But the game is going to begin.

The tree is our point of departure. We must wait there until René has hidden in the deeper part of the marshes, which we do not know. He disappears with hurried steps, across a breathtaking silence in which we stay behind, small and constrained. Some time later his oohoo-cry sounds again, in the distance. The sign that we can proceed to the attack.

Soon we have mastered our earlier fear, and our group breaks up. In several places of the marsh oohoo-sounds are heard. This way we keep in contact with each other. Judging from the sounds we are moving ahead in a wide circle. Alone I struggle through dense depths of thorny leaves.

"Oohoo," I hear beside me, very close. "Oohoo," I yell back. "Oohoo" is being shouted everywhere with long drawn-out voices.

I am pushing ahead rather fast, but it seems as if something else than the unruly vegetation, the muddy ground, and the branches of plants impedes my advance. It seems as if I am penetrating painfully into a tough elastic silence which closes in on me more and more with each new step. With a strangling feeling in my throat I call "Oohoo." I hear the answer "Oohoo," and for a while I am all right again.

If I were alone, I would run back in panic, without paying attention to safe or unsafe, straight to where I guess the safe, open meadow to be. Does the meadow now lie before me or behind me, though? To the right or to the left? I cannot find my bearings any more. The hunt goes on. Of space and time I do not know any more than of reed, water, the smells of the marsh, of unknown flowers and the silence in which you hear the pounding of your own

blood. Your own space, an inner time which has become eternal and is standing still.

I realize that I have ended up on the extreme left wing. The cries of the others are coming from the right; most of them from quite a distance; I recognize Marc's voice, firmer and stronger than those of the other boys, whose voices now seem to me one indistinguishable chorus.

Suddenly I am running with muddy feet across short velvety moss. Leaves again, fluffy seed of flowers flying about; I spit their spinnings out of my mouth. My shirt is sticking to my back. By accident I bite my tongue in my speed. A sweet taste.

Like a young wild animal I have broken through the forbidding plant wall, sometimes sideways, pushing away branches and foliage with both hands, sometimes lashed by plantvines bouncing back at me. I have lost my stick a long time ago.

Then I am standing before a mirror of perfectly still water, thick and shiny like oil, on which bubbles like small marbles are floating around.

A sort of riverlet, about eighty feet wide, is losing itself on either side of me, meandering away into the growth of reed and yellow flag. The Pickcreek, I know for sure.

And at the same moment I see René.

He is leaning against the other bank, which is rising high like a kind of natural dike. His feet are in the water which forms a wrinkled circle around his ankles, thus keeping him enchained. He is not looking around. He has forgotten about the game.

Everything has the sharpness of a hallucination. If eyes could look for a long time like this, one would become blind.

He leans over forward, his elbows on his knees. He has something in his hands. A little box. Matches. He pushes the box out of its cover and lights a match. He leans over even more and holds the match very close over the black surface.

Then the world becomes light and dark, heavy basalt blue, so fast that the colours are falling together in reality. A reddish glow is running low over the water, is eating itself into waves.

An immense balloon is bursting. The pressure throws me against the ground. Clouds. Blue. Black. I am standing almost straight at the moment I fall down. I see, breathe, feel. Only the sound exists no more.

LIE DOWN René is standing upright on the other bank. Or is it not René? I am watching so intently that first I cannot see. A small dark human body, thin. The figures formed out of steel wire which I saw in the museum in town are like that. Primitive, but somehow alive, mobile. His arms are hanging awkwardly, limply alongside his body.

Yes, it is René, but a different one from before, a living dummy, a puppet, making automatic movements learned previously. He is looking at the water; his eyes are huge and bulging in a head that is far too big. The body underneath seems to have shrunk. He is looking steadily straight in front of him into the water and tries to take a step forward. One of his legs goes up. But what immeasurable weariness has come over him? He seems to shrink under the invisible weight of a world of sleep resting on him.

He hesitates, wavers. The hands are groping for a hold above his head. Like a sleepwalker he is swaying on his legs.

Then he takes a step forward. The mirror of water is shattered. With a tremendous effort he drags himself forward, as if the weight of iron chains is attached to his feet.

I am watching, eyes only, without any feeling in my body.

In the bulging eyes there is no pain, no despair. Only a tremendous thinking, a fathoming attention in which the thoughts of generations have been gathered together. A thinking which effortlessly penetrates into the muddy roots of the aquatic plants, deep into the spongy ground, but which can hardly compel its own body into moving any more. He fights on as if at each step he sinks a foot deeper into the ground (but I see it is sand).

Then he falls forward. I think he is losing consciousness. Slowly, with painful jerks, he is sinking onto his knees. The water is maybe a foot deep. Has he received burns that I cannot see, during that indivisible moment a while ago? For a little while he stays in this position: a priest in his strange ritual. The eyelids have now moved over the bulges.

For the last time, in utter concentration, he tries to think of something that will not come into his mind any more, and then he leans forward further. The stiff hands are groping for the smooth ground; then find it. The fingers spread themselves out under the water. The legs are stretched backwards.

For one moment he is resting on hands and feet. A bizarre gymnastic exercise, the purpose of which is to keep trunk and head dry.

Then the body is gliding too. The head last: a fixed mask, eyes

closed, around the mouth a mixture of satisfaction and pain; however, satisfaction seems to prevail. The twitching around the corners of his mouth, I see it with something like horror, could even be a smile.

The greasy water is smoothing out the spot where it was broken, without haste. Two, three air bubbles rise up: large, and like eyes, which afterwards snap closed.

And then I can shout again.

I yell the air into pieces, as if I myself am being pushed out from a mother's womb of warmth and silence. It is cold. But I see that the storm is blowing over. The sky, though still full of thunderclouds, is becoming clearer.

On the water, bubbles are floating.

Through the reed patches a light wind is rising.

My yelling is being answered everywhere.

A FOAM RUBBER DOLL Marc, who further on has broken through the wall of bushes surrounding Pickcreek, runs toward me along the edge of the water. He is deathly pale, and I myself cannot control the trembling of my legs. An electric current runs through my muscles.

"An explosion," he cries, "somebody stepped on a piece of war material, there are still some land-mines lying around here, they say."

It leaves me cold. I don't even believe that.

"René," I say flatly, pointing to the water. The name will hardly pass my lips.

"What?" Marc asks, gasping.

"He fell," I say, "in the water." How can I explain to him what happened.

"Forward," I still say, idiotically, "he did not come up again, there, on the other side."

Marc is as terrified as I am, he looks around him wildly.

"We have to do something," he says, and then he calls his "Oohoo" out again to the others, who call back close by.

A little after that, a small, muddy, ragged bunch, with torn shirts, some with scratches and bloody noses (the explosion has thrown them with their faces into roots and stumps), we are standing close together, pale and shivering, looking at the other side. The first moment nobody knows what to do. We would prefer to take

flight as quickly as possible, but René is lying there in the swamp. Perhaps he is still alive. Although none of us really believes that.

"It's only a few minutes since he went down," I say, "if we act right away . . . "

Marc now has partly regained his self-control.

"We'll form a line," he says, "we'll hold on to each other; I'll go ahead."

Resolutely he steps into the stinking water where small white flowers float along the shore. Carefully, testing the firmness of the soil with his stick, he moves ahead. We follow. It works out. The sand bottom remains firm. There is no mud. This pond does not seem to be a part of the actual marshes we have crossed; it is clearly more like a creek.

Cautiously we first put our toes on the bottom, then the full foot. Now we are in the center of the pond. I am overwhelmed by a kind of loathing fear of being pulled down. But the pond does not get much deeper than a foot or so, and already the water reaches lower around our legs.

Underwater lies a yellowish oblong figure.

There we come to a halt.

Some, still with the utmost caution, wade to the shore; the others remain standing. As if by previous arrangement, Marc and I bend down and lift the light coloured shape, which hardly weighs anything anymore, out of the water; he by the head, I by the feet. And at the same time we see the monstrous transformation that has taken place. The other boys are frightened and are suddenly on the shore, where things seem safer than here in the secret trembling water, containing that gruesome thing.

We carry the body over to the narrow strip of sand at the foot of the high bank, and lay it down there. "I want to go home," one boy says suddenly, half-crying.

But Marc's fierce "Goddammit" silences him.

It is too much, for all of us. Our thoughts gather themselves closely together. What lies there is outside our alliance. It is hostile to us because it horrifies us.

On the white sand lies a strange, light greyish colourless something, with a streamlined shape like a fish. The legs are getting thinner towards the feet, the feet themselves are small unrecognizable stumps.

The skin is spongy, with wide pores, and liver-red stripes run lengthwise at the sides. A foam rubber doll, whose head moves

slowly to and fro on a neck which has shrunk to the thickness of a thumb. Appalled, we look at this grotesquely negating head: an indescribably deformed clump of congealed flesh, green and yellow; a flat round melon, a slanted spongy moon, without eyes, the nose sunken away; from the hole that has been a mouth protrudes a white tongue, brownish and curling at the edges.

And the worst part is that this creature in spite of everything appears to show a certain cheerfulness. The head is rocking gently in the rising wind and around the seaweed-like mouth floats a kind of invisible vegetative jeering little smile which makes me break out in a sweat.

The boys stand as if paralyzed; in an effort to say something even Marc's voice is failing.

One has to throw up. He almost chokes on his own vomit.

I look at the thing on the ground; a terrifying image which at any moment could unexpectedly and horribly come to life.

Should we apply artificial respiration, one boy asks desperately. Nobody swears at him. Marc, breaking out of the grip of horror, is able to talk again.

"That is not necessary," he says in a flat voice.

His thoughts, too, are trying to understand, I know, but it doesn't work, it cannot — Shall we ever be able to understand? Shall we ever be sensible and old and mature enough for that?

Maybe we were chosen to be there, as the minister tries to explain to us during confirmation class, rather than it being an accident.

Once we have lifted this being out of the water, we do not dare touch it any more. A fear of poisoning, of contamination with unmentionable germs, holds us back.

We have to leave for the village now. Where nobody will ever understand — not the doctor, not our parents, nobody. And to think the teacher will believe it: "Insanity!" "But we didn't kill him." . . .

Not one person in the whole world will be able to understand. We are sharing together a horrible secret, of which we don't even know the solution.

I realize suddenly that I have to urinate. It relieves me. With my water, which is instantly sucked up by the wet sand, a pent-up feeling of discomfort leaves my belly. It hurts because it's been so long. On the sand bubbles of foam stay behind.

The doll which, I imagine, is lying there secretly looking forward to our return, will in a while put out its monstrous tongue even

farther, behind our backs; it is nodding continually on its rubber neck.

Then Marc tells us to hurry up. We leave.

In the marshes the frogs are croaking contemptuously. An owl utters its monotonous cry. Invisible aquatic animals behind the rushes. The chilly vapours rising from the mud wrap us in a fog, numb our continuous thoughts of that one same thing.

My head is dizzy as if I have a fever.

PEACE What do I know. What else can I do but make guesses. What else do I have to say.

A notion has struck root in me that this thing is not entirely dead; it is in the ordinary daily sense of the word, but in another sense it is not. I know that, in an almost appallingly peaceful way, it continues to exist, in a strange manner which is closer to the rhythm of earth and night and water, and that at this moment perhaps it is laughing at me with a laugh that is in no way different from crying because such differences do not exist any more.

A strange frenzy makes me write on.

Today went by differently from other days. In the vicinity of this house bulldozers are devouring the earth to make the bed of a new canal. There, between the piles of earth, I have found fossil remains of plants and animals. Primeval tree trunks were piled high. I seemed to descend into a prehistoric world, which is lost but has remained intact, and which received me with silence and hostility. I spent long hours with the old black earth, with strangely formed rocks and pieces of wood. The cranes high against the sky become the heads of mammoths moving sluggishly along the horizon through a lowland of mud and vegetation, plumping clumsily along on their cumbrous gigantic paws.

High clouds were blowing over, hurriedly travelling to unknown destinations. What am I looking for here? A stillness that does not exist anywhere else, a vegetative breathing which strikes fear into me and attracts me irresistibly.

Across my life lies an inhuman cadaver which infects earth and growth with decay, but which continues to exist: a terrifying omen.

Perhaps this is what I am looking for in this eruption of the earth's skin, and what I want to rediscover in spite of myself, in order to observe its mystery in the flesh, and to resist it again now that I have grown up, and thus to break the spell in which it has held me. Perhaps what I am looking for is the same thing that

dwells in boils and scabs, in cancerous tumours and plague blotches and pus. In people with open, jelly-like flesh, deformed, with plant feet, suddenly rooted in their front yard, still smiling with amazement.

Perhaps this is why people with skin diseases covered with silvery flakes, and lepers with decaying hands and feet frighten me, because by and by they will be fish, covered with scales, or seals, vacuously lying in the sun on sandbanks at the mouth of the river.

What I am looking for is perhaps the germ of all this, the unidentifiable cause, the virus that cannot in any way be localized in medical laboratories.

Did René give in to an urge which he was not able to master any more, and which deluded him? Or did it suddenly overpower him? I don't know.

And suddenly I am overwhelmed by a feeling that I am struggling through the marsh, as he did then.

A desperate presentiment is taking possession of my brain. I can hardly move my feet. Chilly with sweat I sit down on a treetrunk that has been lying buried for several thousands of years.

Time has moved on. It is afternoon.

At last I have recovered enough to go home.

There are white eternal blow-holes in the sky.

Has that, which began years ago, that for which time had stood still so long, come to a final completion for me? And is that why, at the moment when I am writing this, thunder is beginning to rumble suddenly, without any portent of black sky or of lull in the wind; as if, only now, the unbearable absence of sound that afternoon, long ago, is going to be lifted, and an original balance is going to be restored?

SOLDIERS

GIUSEPPE UNGARETTI

Translated from the Italian by Charles Guenther

They remain
like the leaves
on the trees
in autumn

Courton Woods, July 1918

GIUSEPPE UNGARETTI (1881-) was born of Tuscan parents in Alexandria, Egypt. He has been an editor and a professor of Italian literature at the universities of Sao Paolo and Rome, where he now lives. In 1958 New Directions published a translation of his *Life of a Man.*

CHARLES GUENTHER has published poems, articles and translations in more than 200 American and international magazines and anthologies. He translated with Samuel Beckett and two other translators a volume of Alain Bosquet's *Selected Poems.* His latest volume of poems, *Phrase/Paraphrase,* was published recently by the Prairie Press.

CRY

CARLO GALASSO

Translated from the Italian by Charles Guenther

Sometimes they help,
bitter tears
on a pale face.
A cry of joy or pain,
nameless ecstasy,
heart's victory
over all.
Only cold statuary
of metal or marble
hasn't known
your warmth, crying,
as in fevered eyes
of sleepless artisans.
Human life:
bread and tears.
Tears on the hard bread
of the poor.
Crying, horizon beyond which
men's short flight
doesn't pass immune,
you're holy on the stone tombs
if you purify the last chrysanthemum,
you're holy on the open tombs
of our spirits
if you purify the first good.

CARLO GALASSO is a Florentine poet of international distinction. He has published several volumes of poetry and a novel. His work has been translated into English, Greek and Japanese. In 1956 he won the Adriatic International Poetry Prize.

THE HEROES ARE DEAD

MAURICIO FERNANDEZ

Translated from the Spanish by Charles Guenther

The heroes are dead.
Marble hides the remains
of their last brilliance.

The bronze is melted.
Offices are sold
to the highest bidder.

Books are thrown
to the flames.
While the pedestals fall
and truth
means nothing,
man scorns
the possibility of fighting.

He finds only the void
that the fire leaves.
New images don't exist,
the molds were destroyed.
Heroes of clay
grow like weeds.
They don't last
before the proof of hell.
They all get worse
and hide behind tears.
The heroes are dead.

MAURICIO FERNANDEZ was born in Havana in 1938. After taking his bachelor's degree he studied diplomatic law at the university there. He left Cuba in 1961. In 1964, in Miami, he founded the review *Cuadernos del Hombre Libre* which turned into a verse publication titled *Punto Cardinal*. He writes stories and poems and is now working on a novel.

THERE'S NO PLACE HERE

GERARDO GARCIA ROSALES

Translated from the Spanish by Charles Guenther

There's no place here
to shelter gods
for they fell
from their dark reign
the night when the moon
was higher than daylight.

There's no place.
There are fables
crimes
perversions.

We haven't lost
the dream we work for
yet we can speak
of what must be done
when the clubbings come.

The suicides at dawn
haven't come true
as in other years.

The place is untouched
but there's no room
to shelter gods.

GERARDO GARCIA ROSALES was born in Jauja, department of Junín, Peru, in 1945. He is now studying at the University of Juliaca (Peru).

RESURRECTION

CIRO MOLINA

Translated from the Spanish by Charles Guenther

Each of us
is obliged to die
and rise again on the third day
as a fine blade of wheat

But before dying
we perform the pure rite
of pruning the virgin blades
that will never rise again as men

These virgins
(touch them)
are the ones who carry a sign on their rear end
saying
"Keep your distance"

CIRO MOLINA ORTIZ was born in 1945 in La Trinidad, department of Estelí, Nicaragua. He is co-editor of the bimonthly paper *Hombre y Jaguar*.

SOMETHING ALWAYS REMAINS

PIERRE REVERDY

Translated from the French by Charles Guenther

The torn curtains swing
It's the wind playing
It runs over your hand enters the window
Leaves again and goes out to die anywhere
The strong dismal wind sweeps away everything

Words rose with the whirlwind
But they stayed voiceless
Lovers despondent at seeing each other no more
Letting their prayer rise
They went away each in his own direction
And the wind
The wind dividing them
Lets them hear each other

The empty house cries
In the hall its chimneys wail
The fatigue of those who left
Never to see each other again
The chimneys of soulless houses
Cry on winter nights

They go farther away
Night delays falling
The walls are tired of waiting
And the house sleeps
Empty in the wind

Above a sound of steps skips at intervals

PIERRE REVERDY (1889-1960) has gained international recognition with his *poésie brute*. He was co-founder with Apollinaire of the short-lived surrealist journal *Nord-Sud*. He has been called a realist, surrealist, cubist, and mystic poet. All apply.

SEVEN POEMS BY LEOPOLD SEDAR SENGHOR

Translated from the French by Charles Guenther

YOUR FACE BEAUTY . . .

(*for khalam*)

Your face beauty of old times! Let's shed the perfumed loincloths
of old ways.
Memory of time without history! It was before our birth

We were returning from Dyônewâr, our thoughts lingered on the
bolongs*
Where the wings of rhythmic praises flashed, a slight echo of silk
The animals in the mangroves watched them ecstatically in their
passing
And the stars over the concave sea were another divine echo
And the slow, melodious oars streamed with falling stars.
Like a statue, a mask on the prow bent over the sonorous gulf
In a deep tender voice you sang the glory of the standing Champion.
The animals in the mangroves delightfully drank your liquid breath!

We were returning in a rambling voyage from Dyônewâr by the
bolongs.
Then your face today under the patina had the black beauty of the
Eternal.

*A channel or sea inlet frequently lined with mangroves.

From PRAYER FOR PEACE

(for full organs)

II

Lord God, pardon white man's Europe!
And it's true, Lord, that during four centuries of light she threw
her slobber and the barks of her dogs on my lands
And Christians, renouncing Your light and Your heart's gentleness
Lit up their tents with my parchments, tortured my *talbés*, deported
my doctors and masters of science.
Their powder crumbled the proud hills and fortresses in lightning
And their bullets penetrated the loins of empires wide as the bright
day, from the Western Horn to the Oriental horizon
And for hunting grounds they burned the untouchable woods,
dragging Ancestors and spirits by their peaceful beards.
And out of their mystery they made a Sunday amusement for
sleepwalking townsmen.
Lord, forgive those who made guerrillas out of the Askias, sergeants
out of my princes
Boys out of my servants and wage-earners out of my countrymen, a
people of proletarians out of my people.
For You must indeed forgive those who hunted my children like
wild elephants.
And they trained them with whip lashes, and they made black hands
for those whose hands were white.
For indeed You must forget those who exported ten million of
my sons in the leper colonies of their ships
Who suppressed two hundred million of them.
And they made a lonely old age for me in the forest of my nights
and the savanna of my days.
Lord, the glass of my sight turns hazy
And now the snake of hate lifts its head in my heart, this snake
I had believed dead . . .

III

Kill him, Lord, for I must go on my way and I want to pray
especially for France.
Lord, among the white nations put France at the right hand of the
Father.
Oh I know that she too is Europe, that she carried off my
children as a plunderer of the North steals oxen, to fatten
her lands of cotton and cane, for Negro sweat is dung.
That she too brought death and cannons into my blue villages, that
she pitted some of my people against others as dogs fight over a
bone
That she treated the holdouts like bandits, and spit on heads with
big ideas.
Yes, Lord, pardon France who eloquently points out the right way
and walks by devious paths
Who invites me to her table and tells me to bring my bread, who
gives me something with her right hand and takes away half
of it with her left.
Yes, Lord, pardon France who hates occupants and so grievously
imposes occupation on me.
Who opens triumphant ways for heroes and treats her Senegalese
as mercenaries, making black dogs of the Empire out
of them
Who is the Republic and free lands to the Great Concessionaries
And out of my Mesopotamia, out of my Congo they made a great
cemetery under the white sun.

V

O bless this people, Lord, who look for their own face under the
mask and can hardly recognize it
Who look for You in the cold and hunger which gnaws their bones
and bowels
And the engaged girl mourns her widowhood, and the young man
sees his youth burglarized
And oh the woman laments the absent gaze of her husband and
the mother looks for the dream of her child in the dung.
O bless this people who break their bonds, bless this people at
bay who face the bulimic pack of powerful murderers.
And with it all peoples of Europe, all peoples of Asia, all peoples
of Africa and all peoples of America
Who sweat blood and pain. And in the midst of these millions of
waves, see the turbulent heads of my people.
And make their warm hands embrace the earth with a circle of
brotherly hands
UNDER THE RAINBOW OF YOUR PEACE.

Paris, January 1945.

JOAL

Joal!
I remember.

I remember the elegant ladies in the green shade of the verandas
The elegant ladies with eyes surreal as moonlight on the beach.

I remember the pageants of Sunset
Where Koumba N'Dofène wanted to have his royal mantle cut up.

I remember the funeral feasts smoking with the blood of slaughtered
flocks
With the noise of brawls, the rhapsodies of second helpings.

I remember the pagan voices chanting the *Tantum Ergo*,
And the processions and palms and triumphal arches.
I remember the dance of the nubile girls
The choruses of struggle — and oh, the last dance of the young men,
slender
Busts bent over, and the girls' clear love cry
— *Kor Siga!*

I remember, I remember . . .
My head nods in rhythm
To that slow march all through the European days where sometimes
A jazz orphan appears, sobbing sobbing sobbing.

From THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON

VIII

Elephant of Mbissel, hear my pious prayer.
Give me the fervent science of the great doctors of Timbuktu
Give me the will of Soni Ali; the son of the Lion's drivel —
    there's a tide rushing towards the conquest of a continent.
Breathe the wisdom of the Keitas on me.
Give me the Guelwar's courage and gird my loins with strength like
    a tyedo.*
Cause me to die for my people's quarrel, and if need be in the smell
    of gunpowder and cannon.
Keep and implant in my freed heart the first love of this same
    people.
Make me your Language Master; on second thought, appoint me
    his ambassador.

*A mercenary in the royal armies.

IX

Bless you, my Fathers, who bless the Prodigal Son!
I want to see the gynaeceum again without need of sanction; I
used to play there with the doves and with my brothers,
the sons of the Lion.
Oh to sleep again in the cool bed of my childhood
Oh the dear black hands tuck me to sleep again
And my mother's white smile again.
Tomorrow I'll go the way of Europe again, the way of the
embassy
Missing my Black Land.

LEOPOLD SEDAR SENGHOR was born in Senegal in 1906. In 1959 he was named President of the Legislative Assembly of the Federation of Mali, which included the Republic of Senegal and the Sudanese Republic. Senegal withdrew from the Federation on August 20, 1960. On September 5 of the same year Mr. Senghor was elected President of the Republic of Senegal. In addition to being a well-known statesman, Léopold Sédar Senghor is a distinguished intellectual and the author of numerous volumes of poetry and essays.

CABIN 45 LOOKING NORTH-WEST

DREW ROSE

I have been keeping a careful watch
on the telescope
that watches me from
the horizon.

Watches me eat breakfast.
Watches me take buckets to the well.

I imagine a slow man
with green eyes which
he uses to conceal himself in his forest.

A slow man or a pretty lady,
Eve-naked in the feather forest
telescope in hand she runs
and daydreams treasure
by the cove.

I have been clinging to that
life-raft of hope
for three days now
as I light the seventeenth
signal fire

on my island
in the sky.

DREW ROSE is studying Mathematics and Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia. This is his first publication.

TWO POEMS BY IAN ADAM

EVOLUTION

maybe it's all disappearing
old party politics like the buffalo
in a hole in the ground
the old Indian legend

only here the Indians do the shooting
on the big pelt hunt
tribal youths naked and painted
trying to bag another stuffed shirt
for the trophy room
to brag about over a joint at the club.

when the buffalo went
it was something good off the earth
also Diefenbaker performing
like an extravagant sharp-jointed puppet
with blue-glow battery eyes
squelching a heckler with surprising gentleness
while defending the monarch
with ominous references to "they".

VISITOR

He was a very friendly fellow.
"Hi" he said, "I've got some tricks for you."
He took out his dice and rolled them.
Snake eyes.
"That's for you" he said.

Then he tried the old pea under the walnut shell thing.
I missed it every time.
Finally he turned them all up.
No pea. "The way it goes" says he.

"I tell you what" he said, "a bargain,
put it all down, lay it on the line,
here, an honest deck, you and me, three times lucky."

He pulled out the pack.
Man, he could shuffle.
Played it like an accordian.
"Pick a card," He flashed a big grin.
"Go on."

He looked at his watch.
"But hurry" he said,
"They're waiting."

IAN ADAM has had poetry in several Canadian journals, including *Prism international*. He edits the new poetry magazine, *Vigilante*, in Calgary.

PREDICTION

JOAN STONE

To help in Desperate Times (the coming depression)
the church had said to PRESERVE THINGS, he had been told.

His mother wanted the apple that hung
(of course) like salvation farthest out on the limb.

The tree, being rotten, and he weighing two hundred pounds,
they broke, the tree and his arm in that order.

His mother, hell bent on preserving that apple that hung
of course farthest (like salvation) out on the limb,

sent his sister, being lighter than his mother said,
up the creaking tree to save them all.

He, being broken, lay where he had fallen
and watched his sister inch out to Glory

on the limb that led him farthest from salvation.

JOAN STONE, a graduate student at the University of Washington, has won the Academy of American Poets Award twice, and has published in many North American journals.

MENISCUS

ALBERT GOLDBARTH

I

after a bath
her vaginal hair
shines with light
reflects my face
coming closer
shimmers goldly
— Why do I always think of myself?
like any mirror
she wants to hold me

/comic? I enter you
glasses still dangling at chin;
my passage into; your passage
way; the muscles warming
to lead me; sight is unnecessary;
only visions
/afternoon,
I start to write this. The smudge
of your thumb on my glasses; I see
the world through a bit of you
hazily; we must be careful, must
not go blind from anybody's touch.

II

In the next room, you are crying.
How can I be myself? The poem
will be about surface tension

as of semen, which joyfully comes
out of a world, into a world,
strong and slippery for travel;
as of tears, which must be soft,
they are extinct so soon
after leaving shelter. Your tears

are for me. My sperm is for you.
But at the tub, your reflection in water
startles you as mine would startle me;
you want to plunge inside, breaking
into yourself.

III

"A more commonplace example of the role of emotion in our body chemistry is the finding that tears secreted during emotion have more albumen in them than tears induced by an onion"

— Flloyd L. Ruch

This morning I towelled your warm breasts
dry of bath; I'd like to dry your cheeks now.
I'd like to run into your room, glasses dangling
like a clown and shouting something silly:
"O my darling, the lachrymal gland
lies in a depression in the upper
outer wall of the eye orbit. Only when
its secretion is greatly increased
or the passage of the nose is obstructed
do the tears flow over the lids and down
the cheeks (epiphora)!" You would laugh,
you would see how you've been inside
yourself too long, or inside me
even longer, till you couldn't see,
blinded with your produce.
I would hold you, you would not cry
away the nourishment
of our unborn daughter.

But now I will not
run to you. I don't know how
to walk on water.

IV

The proteins actin and myosin,
by themselves, are useless.

the atoms of everything
are constantly in motion,

Combined, actomyosin; contracts
muscle: I breathe
even in sleep, heart beats
within myself; muscles
shaping me, filled
with the marvellous watts
and volts of human power.
Breaking into the world: I touch,
am touched, in and out,
the friction of contemporary
bodies.

thus constantly
producing heat.
If I sat here
by myself until
August; if you held
me in your warmths
all night — if I
reached any extreme:
would my biceps,
my brain, my chest's
weight suddenly boil?

V

What could I be
without you?
With you, how do I see
myself?
How could I say, for everyone,
how the energetics of treading

water freezes water boils
water seeks its own level
water takes the shape
of its container

water overheats us, sometimes
and we drown, up
or down
from the meniscus

VI

Hush. Look in my eyes and smile.
An idea in my mind:
I will call my poem Meniscus.
I will dry your tears
then work on it.
I will leave the poem
for you;
then return —
in, out
again.

ALBERT GOLDBARTH's poems will soon appear in several U.S. journals. He lives in Chicago.

BENEATH THIS LABYRINTH

DAVID FRITH

a thin claw, of lightning,
dissolves on the tongue.
sound echoes
in the vaporized word

lips curl and suck
on the smooth barrel
of argument:
pull against grip,
of unwilling submission.

a rip, of thunder,
claps against this contour
of casual desperation.
in one instant of counterpoint,
I am all things
which fall from the eye.

DAVID FRITH is a Vancouver free-lance writer.

G. P. VIMAL teaches Hindi literature at Delhi University, New Delhi. He began the anti-story movement in Hindi, and is one of the controversial young writers in that language. His stories have been translated variously, and he has published seven books of poetry, fiction and criticism.

K. P. SARADHI teaches English literature at the post-graduate teaching centre of Osmania University. He has published two books of criticism and translated many articles and stories from the Hindi and Telgu into English.

THE SHOW

G. P. VIMAL

Translated from the Hindi by K. P. Saradhi

There were hospital buildings just opposite our flats. The buildings were under construction for four years, and we had watched them grow brick by brick. Because of this, we felt as much involved as were the workers who built them. Before the buildings were constructed, that entire stretch of land had been a sprawling jungle of green herbage. Off to the south of the area, there was a meandering, dry river bed filled with only patches of sand. And to the north of it, there stood barren, rocky mountains that occasionally permitted a small plant to sprout during the rainy season.

Now that the hospital has been built, the sprawling jungle has disappeared, the dry river bed has been obscured from view, and the barren, rocky mountains are no longer visible. The structure of the hospital dominates the landscape. Much further away than the barren, rocky mountains, there is another mountain range which constantly seems to be in the shadow of the hospital buildings, and because of this, that mountain range seems to be hanging in rows like ruffled curtains. You can only see this second group of mountains by going to the roof of a very tall house. The hospital's presence has brought into being an entirely new aesthetic in the environment. One used to be able to perceive the scene of the sprawling jungle, the meandering river bed, and the rocky mountains as a painting, a painting that would have been created by a master artist; but now

the scene was one of a calendar poster that might have been composed for a cement company. The fourteen storey structure in that calendar poster had become the abode of many people. And to think that this happened right before our eyes, but we really hadn't noticed what was actually happening.

As I think back on it, when the buildings were being constructed, we all became too familiar and too accepting of the sounds of the construction machines. For some reason, I thought that the buildings would fit nicely into the landscape, like the jungle, the river bed, and the mountains. But now, with the sidewalks, the crowds of people, the shops, the ambulances, I am distressed and aware of how unnatural it all looks. Yet, what is stranger still is the fact that I miss the sound of the construction machinery. We had become used to hearing it. Without that noise and bustle, there was a sense of nothingness about the crowds of people, the shops, the ambulances. Even if we walked along the lanes that separated the buildings, taking notice of the nurses and patients, it all seemed to be out of place and artificial.

The topic of conversation in our flats was often that sense of artificiality. Always, at some point in our gossiping, the buildings would suddenly cease to be a hospital, and become instead something of a mysterious mansion. This undoubtedly would lead to certain weird talk.

The construction had seemed to have gone on forever, but then one day the hospital was ready for business. The activity of the place grew like a plague. The increased activity was most noticeable in the lines of people seeking attention, the patients in bandages, the stretcher cases, the sorrowful faces of the family. But what was even more poignant were the untimely deaths that occurred in the hospital, deaths that were always accompanied by the crying and wailing of the bereaved relatives. The crying and wailing would always seem to be more severe at night, and it would make it impossible to sleep.

This one evening, the group of us had been gossiping for a long time. Much of the conversation was an attempt to cheer up Minocha who wasn't feeling well. He had not been feeling well for a while. Minocha's room had been the gathering place for most of our evening meetings, and with him sick, they had become less frequent. Of late, when we gathered, the routine had been to stay with Minocha until he drifted off to sleep, which was usually about

midnight and then we would leave. But this night, Minocha developed a bad stomach-ache, and he began to act very giddy.

"We should send for a doctor from the hospital," Sarin said. He was the youngest of our group, and he could get panicky over the smallest matters.

No one gave Sarin a reply. Minocha was twisting and turning in the bed like a snake. It was obvious that he was feeling intense pain.

"Why are you all quiet?" Minocha asked, for the moment arresting his pain. "Isn't someone going to tell a story?" He got up from the bed and stretched himself out on the floor. "If you can't beat it one way," he added, "you try another."

The others were all for getting the doctor now, but I signaled them that I would go. I beckoned to Sarin to join me, and we left the room, heading for the hospital.

When we reached the hospital, we went directly to the outpatient ward, but there was no one in attendance. We then made straight for the casualty ward. Arriving at the casualty ward, we found about ten or fifteen people waiting outside the closed doors to the ward. Off to one side of the ward doors, stood a group of policemen.

"Can we get in?" we asked the ward boy.

"For what business?" he barked.

"A friend in a nearby flat is sick. We have to get a doctor."

But at that moment, the ward doors came open and two doctors with white coats on stepped out. One of the doctors had a newspaper under his arm. As he moved off from the building, he took the paper from under his arm and began to read it. Suddenly, someone in the crowd that was gathered outside of the casualty ward began to cry.

The doctor, reading the paper, stopped walking, spun around on his heels and said, "You, over there. You don't have permission to cry here. Look, that is the law and it is very clear on this point. If you're crying over a dead body, it will be handed over to you in time. And then you can leave here and do all the crying you want. This is a hospital, and crying here will affect the patients. If a heart patient happens to hear you crying, it could cause him to have an attack. And if that happened, it might be difficult for us to cure him."

"But doctor . . . " the man who had been crying started to say, but he never got the chance to complete his sentence.

"No, do not say anything. We don't want to hear it," the other

doctor interjected. "All of you have been standing around here crying for the last three hours, and this is not good. You should not be crying near the hospital."

"Then we . . . ," another person tried to speak.

Cutting the woman off, the doctor without the newspaper said, "If all of you do not move away from here, I will have the police remove you."

In just a few minutes, all the people had left the casualty ward area. Sarin moved forward and touched the doctor with the newspaper on the arm. The doctor was just then going back into the hospital. Sarin and I stepped inside the ward corridor with him.

"A friend of mine in a nearby flat is sick," Sarin said.

"Oh excuse me," the doctor said. "I am now engaged with an emergency case. We have to give blood to a patient. If you will bring your friend here, the doctor in charge of the casualty ward would attend to him immediately." Then he strode off down the corridor, with his coattails that had been doing the talking.

"Why can't a doctor come with us now?" Sarin said in his usual low tone. His voice dies out at the least disappointment.

"A doctor will not go with you," the fluttering coattails spoke as they walked ahead down the corridor.

The doctor disappeared down that corridor and we had to decide what to do. I was trying to decide whether Minocha had dozed off or was still lying on that floor, writhing in pain, but I couldn't come to a decision either way.

As I looked around, I realized that we were standing in front of an eye-examining chart, and sitting on a bench below it was a blind man. He raised his head and pointed it in my direction, and I had the strangest feeling that he was asking me to give him an eye.

"Do you see that old man over there?" I said to Sarin.

Sarin did not acknowledge my question, but said, "I was frightened about this right from the start," and then became quiet as would a shy, young boy.

Eventually I spoke up. "Minocha will have to be brought here."

"Will have to be brought here," Sarin repeated my words. "Will have to be brought here," he said again, his voice dropping to a very low tone, as though someone was pulling his voice down.

I took him by the arm and started back to the flats. As we wandered through the lanes between the hospital buildings, we found ourselves among many people. It was the time for the hospital staff's shift change. At some point we found ourselves walking

parallel to two of the hospital's employees. They were in conversation.

"A man died in my ward today," one said. "And he had blue eyes." The woman was a nurse. "You know, you could not have guessed that the man had died, that is you couldn't tell by looking at his eyes. It was even difficult to tell by taking his pulse. I held his wrist so long that I sneezed. That made me believe he was dead because his body was cold."

The other nurse said, "You know, people die in there sometimes because they don't get a simple injection when they need it."

"I should think so. The man with the blue eyes hadn't been able to get the proper medicine. In just two days he became so weak, he aged many a year."

We had come to a turn in the lane. It led up to the nurses' hostel. The nurses started up the lane to the hostel, but we could still hear them talking.

"Have you seen a blue lotus?"

"Like the sky."

"Oh forget about the sky. I was thinking of the man with those blue eyes."

The nurses were too far away to be heard, and we were now quietly walking to the flats. Then all of a sudden, I felt creepy all over. Minocha's eyes were blue, a clear perfect blue.

"What have you been thinking about?" I asked Sarin.

"You heard the nurses' words," he said. "I'm frightened. Minocha's eyes are blue."

"Just a coincidence," I said. "Minocha must be feeling much better by now."

On reaching the flats, we went straight to Minocha's room. It was packed with people. Minocha was still lying on the floor.

"Is the doctor coming?" asked Anand.

"Minocha will have to be taken out of here," I replied. "It is no use trying to get a doctor to come over here."

Minocha looked as though he were much worse. It made me think that we should have taken him to the hospital sooner.

We took Minocha to the hospital in someone's car. He was admitted to the casualty ward. The doctor said that only one person could stay in the ward with him. Sarin chose to stay. It was decided that about eleven o'clock some one of us would come to relieve Sarin. That way, he would be able to go home and get some rest.

As the group of us came out of the hospital, we encountered ten

or twelve people who were standing near a dead body. They were standing there as if they had no awareness of the dead body being near. As we approached them, a man came running up to the people. Suddenly there was a commotion among them, and they began to cry. They began to sneeze and blow their noses. As we passed them, they started wailing loudly.

The sudden, loud wailing startled me. And as I looked back at the crying people, I saw policemen arriving. They were trying to quiet the people down. I heard a very harsh voice say, "You were told earlier not to cry around here. If you all don't stop this crying, I shall take you off to prison." The policemen then began to curse at them.

I was shocked and ashamed. I was certain that the policeman had insulted the people. He had had no pity, no sympathy, no reverence for the deceased.

"That policeman makes death seem disgraceful," Anand said. "To the heartless, the death of others is just a headache, a bother."

As we walked along the lanes on the hospital grounds, the lights from the buildings trickled down on us. We noticed people in the shadows of the buildings, and they were looking at us, at the light trickling over our bodies. And for some reason, I thought of those shadowy figures as being playthings.

We couldn't hear the people wailing any longer. The policemen had silenced them. Now it was so quiet, any sound would have been meaningless. Silence prevailed.

No words passed between us until we reached the flats. Perhaps it was the dead body back there that was causing us all to be silent. Stepping inside our building, we all separated to go to our rooms. Mine was on the third floor. I walked up to it without lighting the stairs.

On any other night like this, we would have been in Minocha's room gossiping or sipping tea. With that thought in mind, my room seemed so dull and quiet as I opened my door. I went over to my bed and sat down, but I did not want to lie down. After a time, I heard sounds of loud weeping. It grew into a chorus of weeping voices, the sound crowded into my room. The chorus of voices became like stabbing, piercing pieces of glass that dug into my flesh.

I put the light on. For some reason, I thought the wailing sounds were destroying everything in my room. But all my things were in their right place. As I turned around, surveying everything, I felt myself being pulled towards the balcony. I stepped up to the balcony

doors and opened them, and then I moved out onto the platform. Looking down into the street, I saw a group of people sitting under the electric street light, over on the side of the main road. It was the same group of people who had not been allowed to cry on the hospital premises. As I was listening to them crying and moaning, I kept thinking about Minocha.

Just then, Salni came out onto the next balcony. "We're not going to get any sleep tonight," he said. "These people are going to cry for the dead all night."

I didn't say anything. At that moment, I was thinking of Minocha.

"You were sleeping a little while ago," Salni went on. "Anand came over to say that he would relieve Sarin and stay with Minocha for the rest of the night. He said he would send a message if anything goes wrong there."

"I wasn't sleeping."

"But your room was dark," Salni said. "I tried to look in from out here on the balcony."

"I wasn't asleep."

The wailing people were now spreading blankets under the street light, and squatting on top of them. It appeared as though the dead body was there too, right in the center of them. Their gathering was near a bus stand. And as the buses rolled up, they would stop crying.

"The last bus has come," Salni said, as we watched the actions of the people. All of a sudden they began to cry again as the bus left. A couple of them were standing up now, beating their breasts.

Salni went into his room. Through the window, I could see him sitting down at the table, holding his hands over his ears. People in nearby rooms were closing their shutters, their doors and their windows. This was very unusual, I thought. It occurred to me that maybe I should go to see Sarin. He should have returned by now.

As I was about to go to Sarin's room, the people down below began laughing out loud. They were giggling a lot too, as though they had been told a very funny joke. And what should they do next, but divide themselves into smaller groups, and begin to play cards.

"Deal the cards," someone said. It came up to me so clearly, I felt as though I was in the game. "If you don't know how to play, get out of the game."

"Guy, it's a four-hand deal," screeched another voice. "Oh, you d — d . . . who has eaten my chocolate," someone else said. The

people in still another small card party began to kick up a row. Then a car horn honked in the distance. "Hide your cards," came a voice. As the car came nearer the people began to cry again, and it was as loud as it had ever been. They seemed to have been refreshed by the card playing. The car stopped and some others got out and joined in the weeping.

This went on for a short while before Salni came back out onto the balcony. "Those rogues are playing cards and crying too."

The card games began in earnest again. "You haven't brought anything from Delhi?" someone asked.

"We had a few bottles of beer, but we drank them on the way, and bringing them here would have been buying us a bad name."

"You bloody rogues. We've also been dying of thirst."

"Die," the word stopped their card game for a moment, but then the game continued.

"Do you feel like sleeping?" Salni asked, and without waiting for my reply, he added, "Come, let us go out for a stroll."

We went downstairs. Most of the lights in the flats were off. As we walked, we could see that all the lawns were empty. We went over to the cement bench near the bus stand and sat down. We were now quite near the card-playing people under the street light.

They were chattering away at each other as they played the card games. "The nurse was quite good, and if he had died on another day, she could have been won over."

"Really!"

"Everytime she saw me, she smiled at me. In the afternoon, she began to tell me to see her in the duty room."

"Have you gone there yet?"

"Yes, I did. 'You're very nervous,' she said. Then she said a few more soft words. After that she said, 'This night we have our second duty, we'll meet again then'."

"Why don't you go now?"

"She might be waiting for me, but how could I go now?"

"Why do you cheat, guy?" came the voice from another group.

The lights of another car showed up on the road. The crying-card-playing people pushed their cards underneath their blankets and began to weep again.

We got up from the bench, Salni and I, before the weeping became wailing. "We're not getting any sleep tonight," Salni said.

When I got back to my room, I felt like sleeping, but I couldn't sleep.

Sarin knocked at my door at five in the morning. I had just fallen into a sound sleep. It had been difficult for me to get to sleep. The wailing had kept me up. Getting up this early wasn't unusual for me. Sarin and I would take a walk at this time every morning.

"Want to go for a walk?" Sarin said.

"Where have you been the whole night?" I asked.

"When I got back from the hospital, I became so frightened by the crying and wailing of those people in the street, I closed all the doors and windows to my room. But that didn't stop those sounds from coming in. I kept thinking of the two people that had died while I was in the hospital with Minocha. And do you know what came to me, that I should go out and play cards with those crying, wailing people. I've been playing cards with them all night. About four o'clock this morning, most of them fell asleep."

As Sarin and I walked, a cool sweet-smelling breeze touched our face. There was a light overcast in the sky, and there was a shiny freshness on the leaves. When we passed by the crying-wailing-card-playing people, they were all asleep. There were six or seven cars parked along the road near them. In the middle of the sleeping brood was the dead body wrapped up in a white sheet. I noticed that part of the white sheet that had been covering the feet of the dead body had been torn away. The ends of the ragged sheet were blowing in the wind. Then I noticed that the white sheets that were covering the bodies of those sleeping, crying-wailing-card-playing people did not cover their feet either. And within the sheets, the sleeping, crying-wailing-card-playing people were shivering. They were shivering, all in the same rhythm.

Was this happening because of the wind? I began to wonder.

TWO POEMS BY ARTHUR OBERG

GETTING THROUGH SUNDAYS

Night comes on. I write one
Of nine letters I owe. My wife
Rolls an orange across the wood
Floor, without a word. Monday,
I will walk out at eight, with an
Umbrella in mind, against the rain.

ADEQUACIES

I

after so many nights of looking
away, imperceptible, used to things,
going to sleep in its face

wild flowers, we've stopped picking
them, now. I feel walls, hands that
care not enough to hurt

II

hysteria blooms under the bedroom
eaves; the beds lie empty, white

whatever was it
I came into this room for?

III

once, the dance of bright flesh
in the big bed; on the tongue,
sweet taste of salt weed, tufty

beaches of glass and steel, apparent
in kind light, unlike tonight's moon,

moon of another mind. "Begin with
blood," she intones, "on the morning roses."

ARTHUR OBERG's poems have appeared in a number of journals, including *The Yale Review* and *The Transatlantic Review*. He is in the English Department at the University of Washington.

TWO POEMS BY MAUREEN MALLETT

CONVERGENCE

At the back of your throat
The memory of metal rises,
Then shatters along the fine edge of teeth.
The porcelain backdrop
Of the room
Has clicked solidly into place.
Above you, the brilliant fluid convulses
Against the glass,
And begins to navigate the long tube
Which leads down to the mouth
Of your vein.
Your lungs flick off seconds
With each indrawn breath.
There is no sound left
To scrape the surface of this air
Pulled taut as an old wound.
In the inner ear,
Only an echo
As, one by one,
Your nerves unfasten themselves
From their exact connection.

NIGHT WITCH

Your presence rustles along the tile.
In the high country of my room, this growth
Of windows, mirrors and chairs
Becomes implanted in my eyes,
Spreading backward.
The roots crowd through my brain
Like cattle.
You come closer, now.
My touch hisses
Down the brittle circuit
Of your spine.
At the careful rim of my mouth,
Your words dissolve.

When you leave, I peel the silence
From the wall.
Along the edges of my nails,
The echo of your skin.

MAUREEN MALLETT is a Nursing student at the University of British Columbia.

TIRESIAS IN SLOEGIN COUNTY

STEPHEN ZEIFMAN

a place where
life and death
the past and future
the high and low
cease
to appear contradictory

Sometime Sahara
in green today
the sacrificial robin's red breast tacked
neatly behind her ear
walks down to visit Sister Rouge
county priestess
Tralala of the black habit
once the soldiers' favorite nun
no Catherine she dreams of the night
and the spire
while sitting in Ned's wicker rocker
Ned Bottleneck ex-army bugler
stumbled into SloeGin by way of Strum Hollow and the Dead Sea
    Scrolls
up pops Jack the Cab
retired fisherman
his daughter died a quiet death a while back
which left him rootless

they walk down together
across the stream
along the left bank
past the grave of Montessori Slim
through the rotting timbers of an abandoned schoolhouse
soon to arrive at Ned's

they see a stranger vomiting up ahead
blood and flesh
a few wrinkled fingers and a silver band
mumbling
things are getting bad
when you can't eat them that's on the streets
all are cancerous
seeing Sahara and Jack
he flees into the glade
the next day he was killed
by a red cross jeep
three nurses quickly devoured his remains
at Ned's
now
Sister Rouge standing on her hands
Ned kneeling in confession
speaking to her naked thighs
Forgive me our sins
one day from Duchamp's fountain we drank
and began praying
give peace a chance
to dance upon the buttress of the Pentagon Fort
in a land who in God trusted
who in Christ's bank saved
there lived a vice man named GaZunt Ta Heit!
who laughed at our song
said play My Song
some did in 45 calibre time
'We were just following orders
'We were just
a sympathetic vibration was set off by a forgotten note

i blew my bugle to help weaken the walls
systematically we murdered him and his
you were more sinned against than sinning
now fuck and your sin will be absolved
hail merry mother of Hieronymous
creator of this garden

later
the four sit naked
in the grass
drinking tea from the horn of a unicorn
celebrating the death of summer
as the sun sets
no sound but the dark sound
of dying flowers

Sometime Sahara
performs a ritual self-consummation
Ned Jack and Sister Rouge
watch patiently and think
that is not the answer

Sahara says
there are no answers
only questions

STEPHEN ZEIFMAN is a young Canadian poet who is now living in France. This is his first publication.

JOSEPH

RON MILES

It's a problem for sure.
Years we were married and no kids.
I got jellies and waxes, different fluids
I took salts and powders, chewed roots
I read about it, took everyone's advice
(and that was plenty)
I went to four different doctors, she went too
I even prayed.

Nothing. Not even one.
So finally I decided, Be honest with yourself
You just don't have it Lots of people got the
same problem You're too old now for kids anyway
She loves you anyway it doesn't mean you're
not a good husband Save your money for
your old age you're not getting any younger
You could have adopted if you really wanted
kids even though it's not the same she loves
you anyway. I came to terms with the
problem, I was happy.

And NOW!

RON MILES teaches English at Cariboo College, British Columbia. His poems have appeared in several magazines in the U.S. and Canada. This is his first appearance in *Prism international.*

FIVE POEMS BY LYNN THORNE

PURPLE

Frostwolves heaved outward
And froze again.

Beaver had abandoned drinking pools
Of their obsidian hunter:

Then the darkness crossed like a tundra
Shedding the nightdog,
The possible fire,

And the veteran one-eye wolverine
Mouthed a planet madness
In the flickering half-life of another skull.

PINK

When the tree-faller
Tells his chainsaw
Into an evening of children and fairytales.

When the homosexual enters your door,
Familiar as an axe.

When Simon and Garfunkel
Are buried in the cottonwood marsh.

When the mayor of the universe
Finally consents
To wash his broken hands under the moon.

When the earth is quiet again,
And solid sailors
Row the land
In a carborundum boat.

GREY

Bug blossoms in the leech bush.

The night came as a volume in a storage box,
The rivermen stood on their heads in the snow,
The river hermit rowed a square boat;
In the water darkness, he was a sky.

There were no river birds,
Only children with kettles to fill,
Olympic swimmers in the tossing waterdread,
And farthest out on the log-rivered surface,
The handgreed of mothers.

And the river city was a citizen
Drawing hydrogen bombs from the heavy water,
And the river calmly absorbed the people's applause
Along with the soft ice of hockey games:
And often,
Weather ate the river.

But that was 1954.
Now it is all snowflakes over The Northwest Territories.

BROWN

The adrenalin landbear
Murmuring over the shell-less hunter;
Daylight of mouth and gunhole,
This colour waited for a godly cameraman.

Big fish,
Sidewound in the current:
You felt him like a throat

And cast your line into the overhanging willow;
This colour had no shoulders
And arms only threw it away.

Then,
The paranoiac rockdog,
The moraine-caverned animal,
The logger and the weekend camper:
Where,
Below the 2000 foot level
This colour was a lake only
In a government surveyor's brain.

COLOURLESS

Brain rising above rooftops
Where it is not yet evening:
The startled cries of the man below
Who lost his brain.

In the still wet cranium
Of the not quite dead man,
Burn a microfilm, a photograph, a marble.
Place a bowler over the burn,
Then look up:

The brain is already gone.

You look hard into the sky
And try to remember what the brain looked like.

LYNN THORNE, a graduate student in Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia, has had stories in *Prism international* and on CBC Radio's *Anthology*.

THREE POEMS BY MIODRAG PAVLOVICH

Translated from the Yugoslavian by Joachim Neugroschel

TESTIMONY OF STATUES

It's not easy for us to endure either.
From the bottomless skull of stone
we passed into the trembling network of vision;
creation crosses itself in us, and pain burns.

Night after night, the stone-quarries
call to us like wolves, asking us to return
to native hardness.

Mornings, men pull us by our ankles
to climb from the temple-roof back into flesh
like distant relatives
who help in misfortune.

Yet for us, all metamorphosis has stopped;
above the contrary slopes of being
we stand with eyes transfixed
and the sun before blinking
always touches our shapes
to recall the true face
of the world it regales with light.

NOCTURNE

Spend this night on the sleepless block
while faded masks gather above your head,
the fields of cheerful lore are sunken
a few stars bore into the black boards.

Lightning soundlessly cuts through the eye-sockets,
and the burning air bubbles and prickles;
a dog has been barking at the start of its torment,
and its throat hums like an empty corridor.

Spend this night on the sweaty bier
gazing at roofs that cringe ominously;
and at daybreak place your blue hand
on the head of the sleeping child.

LAMENT FOR SMEDEREVO

We live without city or law,
our city has fallen.

We cannot tell where our earth begins,
the ends are everywhere.

The walls that bore our names have collapsed,
the river swept them away.

Armies and travelers pass above,
but no one comes to us.

There will be no more lovely cities
on our earth.

We wish for long nights and deep forests
where sight was created long before eyes.

We want to sing and remember ourselves,
the others have forgotten us.

Let the law of the steadfast heart prevail,
for the written letter always fades
at the ruins of the fortress.

MIODRAG PAVLOVICH, an editor of a Beograd publishing house, is considered one of the most important poets behind the Iron Curtain. He has had several collections of poetry and essays in print, and his work has been translated in many languages.

JOACHIM NEUGROSCHEL's translations and poems have appeared widely, including *Prism international.* Both his first English-language collection of Paul Celan's verse and his edition of Jean Arp's complete French works are due next spring from Dutton and Viking respectively. He co-edits *Extensions* in New York.

An Untitled Poem by Georges Badin

Translated from the French by Joachim Neugroschel

a color in eyes that change
is never the same blue

gentle the forehead enlarged

it barely knows what it bears off

GEORGE BADIN is a curatorial consultant at the Musee d'Art Moderne in Ceret, where he organizes poetry and contemporary art shows. Mercure de France has published two collections of his work.

TWO POEMS BY OLIVER EVERETTE

DIE UBERMENSCHEN

I

A lizard bridged a gulf. We crossed
the stream of ebony upon his back.
Here mounted on their oaken plaques
are heads of hitlers, herods, caesars.
Il duces sigh:
"They hung me by the heels."

Upon a throne of ebony, an underlord,
fool's cap pushed slightly back.
He lifts his hand; the doors fly back
and spill out adders, lice, and bats.

Halls open on a room without an edge;
the roof grows low
and crumbling walls have eyes
the nerves forget, and eyes
turn inward in their sockets.
The vermin run without a sound.

I hear the furies in the rain at romes
where caesars fell: "Jove has a son."
Black widows
with the hungry eyes reply:
"God must be evil
to mock the incests of the devil."

2

The metal falcons dart across the sun
with thunderings and lightnings flung
across the sky, while dark and light
are marshalling the heights and depths
to fight the battle of the steppes.

Poor Horus, wheeling with the stars,
has seen and paused;
falls screaming toward the night
with wings swept back and open claws.
Yet creaking bells still tell of love
while cattle jostle at the feed-ricks.

3

I've seen a massive figure with a bison head
reclining as a man against a rock.
The chocolate curls between the polished horns
were covered with a frost
and in those wrinkled brows
a wisdom lay. Sad eyes looked out unto a void
across a world of salt.
An earthy beard; two atlas shoulders, white;
the paps were gold; the belly, lead.
Between huge human thighs
the penis had an infant head
of one long drowned: its silvery hair
waved fitfully; its eyes were closed.

The figure spoke. "The parable is yours."
The voice was gentleness.
And in the deepening mists of arctic night
the figure faded and was gone.

THE PROSPECTORS

I never thought I would be periscoped,
but I was. I had my bottom up to the sky,
my knees doubled up, my crotch spread,
and a tube up my penis
through which Doc's eyebeam entered
attended by a small lantern.

An interesting conversation ensued
as Doc and the nurse
played peekaboo with my prostate.
"You see it?" — "Yeah, I see it."
"Lodes growing together
  and blocking the channel."
When it was over, Nurse patted my thigh
and said: "You've been a good patient."

I don't know if any of the angels
were looking, but I do know
the peeping prophets have predicted
that the subterranean channels
of my watershed
are going to be gouged out.
Their claim has been staked out;
a specialist will engineer the diggings.
If "thar's gold in them thar hills,"
it won't be going
into my savings deposits.

THE PASSAGE

MICHAEL ARVEY

To Oliver Everette, Poet-Teacher

From inside the window
I watch dark snails
crawl across the sky
unloading heavy tears.

A smile and slip
of tongue
inform me of your death,
a mountain that leans
against my shoulders.
I buckle,
but do not believe.

I buy a paper
and read black print
that is like a clown
laughing at me
as if from inside
the circus of a dream.
I become strengthened
with the only truth
I know: your heart
failed you once.

OLIVER EVERETTE suffered a fatal heart attack on May 8th at his home in College, Alaska. He had published seven books of poetry, and individual poems in many journals, including *Prism international.* In addition to his own writing, he instructed creative writing classes at the University of Alaska and had planned to begin a poetry magazine there. MICHAEL ARVEY, whose tribute follows two of Mr. Everette's poems, wrote to say, "The first poem I ever wrote was in his class, and I doubt I would have ever attempted to publish except for his encouragement. Now I think that in those eight months I had him as teacher, he gave me quite a long ride as a poor hitch-hiker on the road of poetry. Above all, he was a kind man. As one of his poetry students, I know I represent the others in trying to do this last thing for him, with him."

FERNANDES is the pseudonym of a writer who lives in Lisbon, does translations himself and received part of his education in the United States some years ago. This story is from a group entitled *Azulejos*; other translations which JOYCE CAROL OATES has done of his work are forthcoming in *Massachusetts Review*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Literary Review*. Miss Oates, whose novel *Them* won the 1970 National Book Award and whose fiction and poetry have been published widely, will have a new novel entitled *Wonderland* published soon. She is in the English Department at the University of Windsor, where she helps edit *The Windsor Review*.

Our Lady of the Easy Death of Alferce

FERNANDES

Translated from the Portugese by Joyce Carol Oates

. . . the warm glimmering shadows like breaths and the whispering beneath me, the whispering, my glazed eyes darker than the shadows ever get . . . I am adored, and I hold the Child in the crook of my right arm . . . his sweet face stares out across the bent heads to the heavy closed doors . . . beyond their carvings the square, the fountain, the roadway . . . the orchards of fig and apricot . . . the hollow sound of the windmills, the *clunking*, *clunking* of the gourds across the miles . . . golden, golden fields. . . . Green that deepens with rain every spring; the pastures brimming with sunlight and burning and the rotting of wood and the creaking of the carts, the liquid odour of the manure on the wind. . . . *Blessed art Thou amongst women.* . . . Whispering to me, muttering to me, only me. Small candles beneath me in cups of red glass, transparent red glass. The swaying of flames. Breaths. In the crook of my right arm I hold the Child for them to adore: but I have not gazed upon his sweet face for centuries. Staring out at the bent heads, the bent shoulders . . . the shadowy pews where women pray to me. . . . I see their thin white hands, their massive sunburned hands, their fingers, the dip of their brows and noses, the movement of their lips . . . eyes lowered with love, with awe, panting to get inside me across the distance of a few

yards. . . . I am adored, a bright tinsel crown has been placed carefully around my wooden crown, which has become dull, and in the cavity of my left thumb and forefinger they have placed a large bouquet of plastic lilies of the valley.. . . stark white against the dusty blue of my cloak. . . . Of course the rains, the burning sun, the windmills' arms and shadows, and of course the Child in my arms, the singing of the priest, I am adored, I sleep and wake to my own adoration, my eyes fix themselves upon a solitary man at the back of the church, his hair frizzy from the warm dampness, shoulders scrawny, humped, eyes black across the distance, staring, staring. . . . Love, he is loving me, adoring me, I feel his love and it is a surprise to me, this trembling hot love . . . I yearn to step down from this wooden platform and back away from him, from that look, my long black shiny eyebrows strain to raise themselves in surprise . . . my lips, which are firm and pursed, painted a fleshly pink many years ago and very bright against my face of dull gold, my lips yearn to open and cry out in surprise, in torment. . . . Endless showers fall behind this man, and roads that lead off straight into the sky, the air filled with the creaking of carts, centuries of carts, golden fields broken with rain, the man stares at me through this tumult and I would raise the Child to him, to shield my own face, but I cannot move. I have not looked upon the Child's face for centuries. I know that it is broad as a man's face, painted the same dull golden yellow as my own face, broad as if swollen, and the Child's body is too angular and narrow at the torso and hips for an infant, and his arms are too long, out of proportion, not like the soft plump shapeless babies brought to me for my blessing, yet the man is staring at us and a film seems to pass over his face, his features shrink inward with desire, there are fences of prickly pear and straight roads rushing across the land and into the sky behind him and yet he kneels there, a man, a solitary man, fixed and staring. . . . He staggers to his feet. He is whispering something. . . . *blessed art Thou amongst women*. . . . He is loving me, I feel his love stirring in him, his eyes film over with the panicked rage of his love, he stumbles against something and rights himself and continues toward me like a sleepwalker . . . and now I see the pale sweat of his forehead and the lines of his face, which are too sharp for such a young man, for he is only a boy, he is not even a man, and the Child in the crook of my arm stares down upon him and would free his arm from mine to ward this boy away, but my fingers are glued fast to his and we have not moved apart for centuries, my fingers

hold the Child's small squarish hand firm. . . . How fierce the boy's love for me! — how terrible his sorrow! . . . A searing at the edge of my eye . . . something is happening . . . out of my wide, blank eye something is moving, forcing itself, squeezing out . . . I would bring my hand up to my face to hide it, but I cannot move, and I cannot turn aside because my feet are glued to this platform and my robes are fixed, fixed like stone. . . . The boy whispers, *Mary*. . . . The sudden torment of his love pierces me. The tear forces itself out of my eye: it slides hotly, heavily along the coarse golden curve of my cheek, onto one of the lilies of the valley, it slides along the bright plastic stem and onto my left hand, which is slightly misshapen, too large for a woman's hand, and to the edge of my hand and off, off into the air, into the candles, into one of the cups. . . . The flame flickers and dies. A short hissing sound. The boy jumps forward, seems to fall forward. What is he saying? With one finger he touches the rim of the cup, he moves his finger around and around the rim, staring down at the blackened wick, and then he lifts his face to me and stares *and I see again the leaves dying and coming to life again, and again the spiky bushes we must endure, I see the boy living, dying, I see the madness white-rimmed in his eyes, I would shriek with pity and turn from him but I cannot move, the burden of his love has turned me to stone*. . . . He falls to his knees and hides his face. *For me, for me*, he is murmuring. Rocks back and forth on his knees . . . *For me* . . . he cannot bring his hands away from his face to look at me, he dares not show his face to me, he whispers . . . *For me*? *For me* . . . ? He stumbles to his feet, swaying. Backs away with his hands still pressed against his face. Backs along the wall, and now he peers at me again and his eyes grab at mine, he puts out his hand to me in love, in terror, and I yearn to break out of my silence. . . . I yearn to reach up to straighten the tinsel crown on my head, which is a little crooked, and to touch my face, to finger the faint streak down the curve of my cheek from the tear's path, a small rivulet in the grainy wood. . . . I shudder in my long heavy cloak, in the folds of my robe, and I wake to see how they are upon me, crowding upon me, staring, whispering, a jumble of words. . . . *Mary*? a young woman cries. *Mary*? *Mary*? *Mary*? *Mary*? *Mary*? Her voice is shrill and tremulous. An old woman, her mother, tries to comfort her. But another girl takes up the cry: *Mary*? The young man stands on the edge of the little crowd, near the centre aisle of the church, his mother stands beside him humped in black, the priest with him, I hold the Child up for their love but they stare

past him to my face, to my cheeks, my eyes, they are raging with love for me, only me. . . . Prayers rush upon me, rocking my body, my legs and trunk, my face, bewildering my head, a jumble, centuries of prayers, a tide of prayers, the earth would rock with the passion of their love but I cannot move, my legs would be broad and swift as swords and massive with energy but they are fixed, fixed in place, my robes hang heavily upon me like a winding cloth, I am a small tower inside the granite of the church. . . . Upon my head they are placing a crown of yellow daisies, their fingers are light and adoring and nimble, I can feel the smallest whorls of their fingertips, the secret identities of each of my adorers, ah, how they love me and how piercing, how furious, how terrible is their love! . . . They lift me up onto their shoulders and march up the big aisle to the doors, which are flung back, and the air is bright with moisture . . . all about me are children with flowers and the priest and his altar boys lead us into the glazed light, I see now the outer wall of the church where vines have grown wildly since last spring, and the square is turbulent with people, priests I have never seen before, strangers with cameras, I see the young man staring at me, gaping at me, he tries to rush forward but his mother grips his arm, her fingers close tightly about his wrist, she is a heavy, stooped woman with reddened, sullen cheeks, a forehead like wax, so pale, pale with confusion, fear, I see that she was once a beautiful young girl and my eyes cannot bear her gaze, her love and fear. . . . The tear burns like acid in the boy's heart. *Hail Mary, full of grace. . . .* Murmuring all about me, a tide of murmurs, there is the odour of manure in the air, moist and acrid . . . in the cemetery the crosses tilt gray with centuries of weather and there are bright red plastic flowers on the graves . . . strangers approach with their cameras, in the procession behind me a boy is playing the trombone, *Don't love me, don't love* . . . my lips want to open in a shriek, *Don't love me.* . . . My eyes dart in fear from face to face and I see everywhere their love for me, their eyes brimming with love, with wonder, even at the edge of the cemetery a woman in the dress of a foreign country stares and I can see the snarls of her heart, her love for me in spite of her stiff face, I can see the way my great blue robe and my crown of flowers and the Child in my arms snatches at her heart, *Mary, Mary,* she is pleading silently, and beside her stands a man from the city, studying me and my adorers. . . . Eyeglasses, sharp lines on his cheeks made from grimacing, a long nose, he stares and stares and cannot back away and cannot run forward to kneel, his

lips yearn to twist into a sneer and yet they are paralyzed, like mine, his heart is dense with bitter love for me, I would reach out across the mob of heads and shoulders to press my fingers against his lips but I cannot move, I can only hold the Child up to him to be adored. . . . Yes, I am named Mary. I am the Mother of God, I am the Virgin with the Child in my arms, in my safekeeping. I am Mary of the Easy Death. I am the Virgin Mary, Mother of God. Everywhere there are patches of sky above me, archways that are pocked from weather; rainwashed granite and iron that is flecked with rust; the fountain by the church wall does not work any longer and is encrusted with the droppings of birds, moss, a green slime that is beautiful against the wall and the dying green of the ivy; flowers of the palest yellow bloom everywhere light as tear-drops, light as the touch of thousands of adoring fingers. . . . Now I ride upon a river, a winter of silence. Rain-splotched air, the silence of nights, dark mornings, the murmur of the Mass, the singing, music that twines and rushes around my head, the eyes of my adorers beneath their furrowed brows, so dark and keen with love. . . . What do they see? What do they love? . . . A woman pushes through the small crowd kneeling before me. Like them she wears black but her face is coarse and reddened. I remember her: she is the young man's mother. Her eyes flicker like the flames in the candles beneath me, maddened, furious, *You are not Mary! You are a thief, a murderer!* she screams. *My son is gone, stolen, you have stolen him!* She pushes her way through the women and runs right to me, with a sweep of her hand she knocks the burning candles down, she screams and grabs at the folds of my robe, she climbs up, her face ruddy with anger, and now someone is trying to pull her down and there are cries and screams that make the church quake. . . . *My son and not yours! Thief! Murderer! Where did they take him, what did you do with him? I want him back. I want him back* — She tugs at the Child in my arms and something breaks, gives way, the Child breaks off — The women are screaming. A man seizes the woman from behind, pulling her down. The Child has broken off, His head and the upper part of his torso, the woman screams and falls backward like a weight and the Child falls with her, heavily onto the floor, I have left only half of the Child's body . . . two of my fingers have been torn off . . . the Child's broad flat yellowish face stares up toward me from the floor, no look to it at all, no recognition, it is a doll's wooden face staring up at me. . . . The woman is taken away, the church is closed, I stare at the heavy carved doors with my

rounded, blank, black-painted eyes, and now someone is repairing me, workmen, the Child is fixed back in the crook of my right arm . . . my fingers are glued back in place . . . the priest supervises my washing, I am scrubbed with small brushes. . . . Now they are gluing a wooden doll into the crook of my arm, now they are painting him and my large, clumsy hand, so that the crack will not show. . . . But the woman has run away with him, I saw her take him beneath her arm. They are gluing a wooden doll in his place, I must stand like a column with my legs and arms still, a wooden doll with a Moorish cast to his face in my arms, in place of the Son of God. . . . My motherhood flashed out of me and into her: she weeps and mumbles somewhere, hidden from me, tormented to madness by her own motherhood, and I stand here like a column overlooking the warm glimmering shadows like breaths and the whispering beneath me, the whispering that begins again, my glazed black-painted eyes are firm and rounded and blank, darker than the shadows ever get. . . .

BOOKS RECEIVED

LLOYD ABBEY and JOHN FERNS, *The Antlered Boy*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1970, $2.00.

TOM ARDIES, *Their Man in the White House*, McClelland & Stewart, 1971, novel, 190 pps., $4.95.

JAMES BACQUE, *Big Lonely*, New Press, novel, 189 pps., $1.50. Originally published in 1969 in hardcover by McClelland & Stewart under the title *The Lonely Ones*.

MARIE-CLAIRE BLAIS, *Mad Shadows*, McClelland & Stewart, New Canadian Library, 122 pps., $1.75.

DAVID BROMIGE, *Threads*, Black Sparrow Press, 1971, poetry, 101 pps., $4.00.

ANDRZEJ BUSZA, *Astrologer in the Underground*, translated by Michael Bullock and Jagna Boraks from the Polish, poetry, Ohio University Press, 1970, 61 pps., $4.25.

CAROL CLARK, *Zone*, Mondiale Publishers, Montreal, 1970, poetry.

M. M. COADY, *The Man from Margaree*, edited and with commentary by Alexander F. Laidlaw. Writings and speeches. McClelland & Stewart, 1971, 218 pps., $7.95.

JEROME CH'EN and MICHAEL BULLOCK (translators), *Poems of Solitude*, Chinese poetry, Charles Tuttle, Rutland, Vermont, 118 pps., $7.20.

RAYMOND DIPALMA, *The Gallery Goers*, Ithaca House, poetry, 21 pps., $1.50.

HARLEY ELLIOTT, *Dark Country*, The Crossing Press, R.D. 3, Trumansburg, N.Y., 1971, poetry, illustrated, $2.00.

ELAINE FREEMAN, *Poems from Hope*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, $0.50, 1970.

C. H. GERVAIS, *A Sympathy Orchestra*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1970, $0.50.

FREDERICK PHILIP GROVE, *A Search for America*, McClelland & Stewart, New Canadian Library, 392 pps., $2.95.

REGINA KEAR, JOHN WOODS and VERNON WARD, *Tar River Poets*, East Carolina University Poetry Series, no. 9, East Carolina University Poetry Forum Press, 23 pps., $1.00.

HENRY KREISEL, *The Betrayal*, McClelland & Stewart, New Canadian Library, 218 pps., $2.50.

ROBERT KROETSCH, JAMES BACQUE and PIERRE GRAVEL, *Creation*, ed. Robert Kroetsch, New Press, essays, 213 pps., $3.50.

IRVING LAYTON, *Nail Polish*, McClelland & Stewart, 1971, poetry, 87 pps., $5.95 cloth, $2.95 paper.

STEPHEN LEACOCK, *Winnowed Wisdom*, McClelland & Stewart, New Canadian Library, 139 pps., $2.35.

CORNEL LENGYEL, *The Lookout's Letter*, Dragon's Teeth Press, 1971, poetry, 60 pps., $2.50.

NORMAN MAILER, *Of A Fire on the Moon*, Little, Brown and Co. (Canada) Ltd., 472 pps., $8.95.

GILBERT PARKER, *The Seats of the Mighty*, McClelland & Stewart, New Canadian Library, 210 pps., $2.95.

MARC PLOURDE, *Touchings*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1970, $1.50.

AL PURDY, ed., *Storm Warning, The New Canadian Poets*, McClelland & Stewart, 1971, 152 pps., $2.95.

MORDECAI RICHLER, *The Incomparable Atuk*, McClelland & Stewart, New Canadian Library, 178 pps., $1.95.

ANNE SCOTT, *The Lovers*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, $0.50, 1970.

LAWRENCE SPINGARN, *Freeway Problems and Others*, Perrivale Press, 1970, poetry, 40 pps., $2.00, paper, $4.00, cloth.

PIERRE VALLIERES, *White Niggers of America*, McClelland & Stewart, 1971, 278 pps., $7.95.

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Doubleday & Co. will soon publish a novel by Eric Forrer containing two poems which first appeared in our Autumn 1967 issue.

Two poems by Margaret Atwood from our Spring 1970 issue will appear in the forthcoming Borestone Mountain Poetry Anthology.

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