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The photo on the front and back covers is by PETER ZOELLER, a professional photographer, graphic artist and landscape architect in Tacoma. MICHAEL DE COURCY has contributed the photographic section inside this issue. He lives in Vancouver and has had work exhibited and published widely.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS APPEAR BESIDE THEIR WORK

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PHILIP GALLO has been published in *The Far Point, Quartet* and *North American Review*. This is his first published story and is part of a book in progress, *Flagging on the Celestial Railroad*.

The Confidante: *or* Constable Meersholm and the Case of the Thousand and Second Suspect

PHILIP GALLO

CONSTABLE MEERSHOLM was eating alphabet soup, peered deep within the broth where a carrot obscured a clue. He swirled the soup; the carrots, the celery, the alphabet noodles spun around, his spoon chinking against the bowl. His wife grew peevish as he dawdled at his soup, asked if something was wrong, and without waiting for an answer said there was nothing wrong, that the soup was neither too salty, nor too peppery.

Meersholm glowered at her, turned to the soup tureen, where now a celery was camouflaging a clue. He spooned it aside, revealing a name, or part of a name. *SO. OS.* Or perhaps they were initials. Or meant what they meant: *therefore, bone.* Bone as in Broken Bone, or Soup Bone. If only alphabet soup weren't all upper case. He turned to his wife: Isn't there a brand makes both upper and lower case?

She opened the oven; the rolls were almost ready, and still, insult upon insult. She bought what she bought and on his salary he was lucky to get celery. She pronounced the two words alike: *celery.*

The Constable was not amused. The soup was cold. How could a man think on cold soup? Even the broth was viscous, and further obscuring the task were globules of fat which were massing near the center of the bowl. Tomorrow, he told her, his tone mindful that This Was The Constable Speaking, She was to please make potato or lentil soup and to omit the celery and the carrot. Or for a change, onion soup, which he had not had in a long time. For all he knew The Phantom had a penchant for onion soup. Nevertheless these

suspects were to be added to his chalkboard. Already he had 999. There was no end to his job.

His wife served the butterflake rolls; and he took one, his fingers delicately stripping the fragile outer layers, revealing the doughy, the still steaming interior. He added some more butter, squeezed the roll shut, butter ran down the sides, and ate it whole. He turned to his wife and told her that everything he did was part of his job. From eating rolls to kissing her it was part of his job.

It was this commitment to his calling — for truly was it not a calling? Had not Le Coeur described it as such in The Letter? And he, no mere Gumshoe . . . he could not finish the sentence. Still it was clear: it was as if he had seen God in a tree. He buttered another roll, squeezed it shut, but before swallowing it, said, in a tone befitting a bishop at the moment of transubstantiation: Even without pay I would be a detective. He swallowed the roll.

His wife who pressed his uniform, polished the brass buttons, and on special occasions sewed on the braid — The Constable when he was fixed up was a hunk of a man — grunted; and on her way to the ice-box added, If instead of God in a tree it had been money.

She had canned the peaches last year, along with the raspberries and blueberries. The peaches, golden brown and reddish around the pit, were suspended in a rich syrup, and as she carried the jar, the peach halves slowly turned. She served him two halves. He played with the strands of skin that still clung, and before biting into the one he had worked onto his spoon, asked for his Drambuie.

She clomped out to the study, opened the escritoire and beside the diary bound in red Moroccan leather she located the Drambuie and rose glass. The Constable in a move of economy had decided one day the glass could do double duty as both what it was and what it resembled, a snifter.

She poured a healthy draught, passed the cork under his nose, and corked the bottle.

He putsied with the peach, tempted the gods and the French Academy with "Vive Le Botulisme," and swallowed the peach whole, like an oyster on the half shell.

The Drambuie went slowly, and he imagined what it might be like to be The Phantom and to drink Drambuie. He remembered the girl's body. Axed in the back, she had looked like a starfish. The image was too strong, and he quaffed the Drambuie, choking as it caught in his throat. The scene always brought tears to his eyes. No. There was no question about it, whoever The Phantom was, he did

not drink Drambuie. Guinness, perhaps, but not Drambuie. Still, the world was a maze of contradictions.

Wistfully he remembered The Case of The Idiot Boy. The coroner had affixed the time of death between eight and nine. Toby had found her naked and bruised amid marigolds, the axe wiped clean on her school dress. There was no motive, but plenty of opportunity. The area was secluded, inhabited by rabbits and squirrels, an occasional troll.

The solution had amazed the press. The tabloids lived off it for weeks, giving him undesired notoriety. People of the world had written to him: a guru from New Hampshire wrote explaining that it might have been the conjunction of Jupiter and Mars; an American living in Canada wrote asking him to speak out against the War; yet Le Coeur had written complimenting his perspicacity and inquiring of his inspiration. There was no explaining it. Except the sun had shone through the leaves of the aspen tree, outlining the veins. He remembered the veins, stiff, crooked; they were like webbed hands. Like the hands of the Widow Thompkins' idiot boy.

Sure enough he found the axe, still stained. I couldn't help it, I couldn't help it blundered the boy. Duty called, but first the Widow Thompkins had served elderberry wine. The goblets were of an exquisite crystal glass. Still in a pinch, the rose glass. Meersholm inquired of the secret of her wine, but she declined the gambit; he made advances, she deferred. Toward the dinner hour, they bicycled to town.

That night he suggested the Mrs. send sweetmeats to the Widow Thompkins. The amenities had been observed. The boy sat in jail, clucking of apple pie and elderberry wine. Constable Meersholm sat in his easy chair, his breath blurring the window pane.

Outside the study window the wind swirled the grass and the aspen leaves. He discerned the windbreak of pine, imagined animal eyes watching The Phantom at work. If only foxes and wolves could be made to talk; but as the makers of metaphor knew, the criminals of this world were all foxes and wolves. This was a world without hope, and Meersholm switched on the light, illuminating the blackboard.

With the addition of these two names, whether they were initials or names or aliases, he now had a thousand and one suspects, and some were duplicates. Some bore an asterisk, indicating their ambiguity, that they might be given-names, or surnames, or confirmation names, or names of maiden aunts, or names of stillborn babes. The

Phantom could be anyone, and Meersholm did not overlook the possibility.

An urge to sweep the names off in one grand erasure gripped him. Over the weeks the urge had been growing and growing. If only he had a confidant, if only someone to share the burden of the world's crimes. In the kitchen the Mrs. was banging the pots and pans.

Le Coeur had been amazed at his fortitude. Few people knew of René, but without the services of sweet, lovable, steadfast René, Le Coeur had revealed in The Letter, he long ago would have failed. Meersholm was alone. Holmes had his Watson; Father Brown, his Flambeau, and when Flambeau was not there, he had Chesterton. Good old G. K. And when Chesterton was not there, there was God. God? Where was He these days? Meersholm trembled before his blackboard, the rows of names harsh, unrelenting as the begats; and Meersholm still without sons, not even a daughter. There must be a pattern, he thought to himself; Dupin would look for a pattern.

There was no pattern. Names like Smith and Jones had reappeared the expected number of times. Yet names like Palucci and Galliano hadn't shown up at all, though a Finn by name of Saarinen, a tourist perhaps, had been found.

For some weeks the hypothesis that Saarinen was The Phantom occupied his mind that one day he took a room at the inn. Having discovered the *modus operandi* of The Phantom, Meersholm would penetrate his mind.

He had unpacked the duffle bag, change of shorts, fresh stockings, toothbrush and toothpaste. He slept like a lamb. Nothing happened, not even an hallucinatory dream. He awoke at 6:15, took breakfast (two chocolate eclairs and coffee) and took a tramp in the woods. The flowers were awakening. Blue bells, sunbursts, buttercups. In the shadows grew psychedelic blue and red mushrooms, or else they were toadstools. The morning atmosphere was redolent of creeping life. He traced a circuitous route. At ten he returned. The innkeeper gave him the news. Another little girl had been murdered. This time some half-day's journey from his home. Unless he had walked in his sleep, Saarinen was cleared.

The girl lay hunched near a tree. The axe had caught her between the shoulder blades, and she had folded around the gash. The blood coated the underbrush; and the tree trunk — strangely — was coated to the height of five feet.

Sometimes visions of the crimes would come to him at night and

he would wake with a start, hug his wife, if she were in bed, which she sometimes wasn't: a longtime insomniac she took walks in the woods, sometimes she didn't return for hours. It was an eccentricity he had long since learned to tolerate, when on their wedding night he had turned to her and found her not at all. He had run through the cottage, finally outdoors; on the moor he saw her, her negligee trailing over burrs and thigh-tall grass, fire-flies flitting about her, bats scree-ing in the air. She was several hundred yards downfield. He had screamed. She had screamed. They ran toward each other, collapsed, made love in the open field. Ever since he had understood, and besides she made fine soups, especially lentil and leek.

The blackboard was no use. He sat at the escritoire, gift from Le Coeur on his solving The Idiot Boy. There were sliding drawers, secret compartments. A veritable Chinese box. But Meersholm was strictly Occidental: bell, book, and candle, and then not often. His was a direct union with God. None of this hanky-panky of an intercessor, no passion-ridden priest for him. There were times he could scarcely forgive Father Brown his Catholicism. It was Meersholm and God, and he imagined it the same with The Phantom. In a way they were counterparts.

He was so moved by his metaphor that he felt obliged to contribute it to his diary. He extracted the key from his pocket, fitted it in the lock, and opened the volume to the present date, September 3, The Year Of Our Lord, he inscribed his thoughts.

> As in Meersholm & God so be it Meersholm & The Phantom
>
> * * *
>
> Confess unto the Turner of Stones as You would have Him confess unto You that He is moved as You

A touch Catholic, he thought, but the turn of his mind was such tonight. An exorcism of leek and parsnip was in order. The yellow vegetable in profusion cleared the alimentary canal and thereby the Mind.

He paged through earlier entries. That of June 9 stopped him.

> A return to the scene of the crime is in order;
> if need be, two hundred times. Or re-enactment
> of the crime, if need be, two hundred times.
>
> * * *

As the snail leaves behind a silvery trail so too
the criminal whose trail, translucent in the moon-
light, is aspected of the fallen star.

He was bemused by his mystical flight. Tonight's entry pleased him all the more. How much more satisfying was the hard, incisive flow of the rational than these strained images, smacking of the haiku. Yet the initial idea stirred him, and he saw the multiplicity of dramas in their geometric progression. The intensity of the vision overwhelmed him. He *would* re-enact the crimes. That is he and his wife would. He called to her.

The Mrs. looked up from her crocheting, finishing a half-stitch, set down the oval with its hatchings of gold and green, red and blue, describing a little Dutch girl alone in a field, behind her a windmill pummeling the air as if with giant hammers. The girl whose face was yet incomplete might well have looked frightened. The Mrs. asked what was going on and why had he slammed his diary, and why was he racing to the blackboard, going over the list of names, and why was he drawing the shades, pulling the curtains shut, dimming the lamp, and how was she to continue her sewing.

"You are The Phantom," he said.

There was such a look of fright on her face that it seemed as if indeed she were and had been found out. Even the Constable was taken aback.

"I mean to say that you will play the part of The Phantom. I, the victim. We are going to re-enact the crimes. All five of them."

For the first time in a long time the Mrs. looked interested.

"How will I know what to do?" she asked.

"Do what comes naturally," he said. "Look at the names and imagine the kind of people they are."

She looked confused and started to return to her sewing.

"It will be easy as duck soup," he said. "Which by the way you haven't made in some time."

"What will I wear?"

"Nothing," the Constable replied. "Take off your clothes. It is best we bare the body so better to bare the spirit."

And at that he began to remove his clothes, the soup-stained shirt, the striped pants, the purple and white boxer shorts. When he finished he began to pull his wife from her housedress, fumbled with her brassiere. She was wriggling out of her silk panties (her one extravagance) and they were ready.

"What do I do?" she asked.

"Nothing yet. We need an axe."

He picked up the fountain pen; discarded it at once; scanned the room. The Mrs. bestirred herself, went into the kitchen and came back with her ladle, a gleaming copper affair with a bulbous cup and long handle. The ideal bludgeon or axe, or in a word — blunt instrument. She began to make long sweeping motions in the air, her pendulous breasts following the motions of the ladle. The Constable was excited now. He was reading The Phantom.

Their shadows mixed on the walls, her shadow superimposed on his. The light from the desk and kitchen gave a double exposure, giving each of them two shadows, like alter egos in a life and death struggle. First she was on top of him. Then he on top of her. Then all the shadows mixed. The ladle on top, on bottom. It occurred to the Mrs. first.

"But who am I?" she asked. "How did we get started? Aren't I supposed to be someone?"

"You're absolutely correct," he said. "You're . . . let's see now . . . You're MacIntyre. I'm the little girl."

The Mrs. giggled.

"Pretend," he said. "This bookcase is the tree. This rug is the grass. I am alone."

They began. She was sitting under the shade of the tree, a collection of Richardson shadowing her crown. In the shadows behind the escritoire a figure moved. It was The Phantom. He struck. The axe came crashing and crashing. The little girl jerked forward in one violent spasm, knocking over The Phantom. The axe crashed cold on her back, cold copper, like ice water, raising welts and goose flesh.

The Constable's face was buried in his wife's breasts, her one free hand pummeling his back, the other lodged in his crotch. The ladle fell to the floor. He grabbed her; she grabbed him. In the cold fields, blood all around them, the grass damp with dew.

The sun illuminated the curtains. The room was a shambles, the Richardson collection spilled on top of them, the grass crumpled in a pile. They awoke heavy with sleep, stiff. For a long time they looked at the room, then both leapt up, feverishly began to dress. The Constable spoke first.

"Well I guess that clears MacIntyre."

The Mrs. said nothing.

"I said: 'I guess that clears MacIntyre.' "

Still she said nothing.

"MacIntyre couldn't have done it. I overpowered him too easily. The lucky bugger. I thought I had cooked his goose."

Meersholm erased the name from the blackboard. A gray smudge remained. He spat on his hand and rubbed it over the board. The board came cleaner but there was still a smudge.

"That will have to do for now."

His wife had straightened up, put the books back, closed the escritoire, rinsed out the ladle. Already she was preparing the lentil soup. She poured the hard brown beans into the measuring cup, swished them with water, spilling off the rocks and twigs, and then threw the beans in the pot. On a low heat. By tonight the lentils would have softened, giving the broth a soft brown tint redolent of the lentil, and in suspension would be tiny brown specks and the bean itself. Once this stage had been reached the Constable simply swirled the soup. The lentils spread out, slowed, came together and formed images, not unlike a newspaper half-tone. The Mrs. marvelled at his ability to enjoy the soup and at the same time keep an eye peeled for faces. Someday she would ask him how it had occurred to him.

The Constable was in full dress uniform. His epaulettes shone, his boots shone, his belt buckle shone, his face shone. He wasted no words.

"Come along," he said. "A return to the scene of the crime is in order." He referred to a piece of butcher paper. "To the little girl axed between the shoulder blades."

"But I'm not dressed."

"That will do. We'll bicycle, it's some ways. I give you five minutes to freshen up."

She took six. But they were off, he peddling away, she sitting on the cross-bars, the Constable's legs describing great circles as he strove to keep his legs from bumping hers, her great bosom pressed against his chest and face, her thigh sometimes rubbing his on the downstroke of the pedal. She had doused herself with cologne in the vital pulse areas: her bosom, behind her ears, behind her knees in the soft part of the leg, her inner thigh, and on her most secret possession.

It was a heady trip for the Constable, especially pushing the bicycle uphill, while the Mrs. still on the cross-bars leaned backwards, her hair falling in his face, whispering sweet nothings and

pointing to the cerulean sky in which gamboled white lions and tigers.

It took half the day, and when they arrived hungry, they realized they had forgotten the lunch. The Constable apologized.

"It is my fault for rushing off like so."

"No, it is mine. I shouldn't have wasted so much time dressing."

"No. The fault is all mine."

She saw the look in his eye and let him take the blame. He wanted it that way.

They were at the scene of the crime now, just off the road from where they had left the bicycle.

"See," he said, "There is still an impression in the ground. Or so it seems. Yet the crime was some time ago. Strange. Very strange."

"What do you think?" he asked.

"I am thinking it is a beautiful day. That I should have packed us a lunch. Tongue and rye bread. And red wine. And pigs feet. How you love pickled pigs feet."

"The crime," he said, "What do you think of the crime?"

"Was it here?"

"Yes." And he grabbed her by the hair, twisting her neck back as if to slit her throat. Her bosom was thrust into his face. The cologne drugged him as he dragged her to the tree.

"What am I thinking of?" he said. "It was with an axe."

He dropped her to the ground and ran to the bicycle. He came back swinging the bicycle pump by its hose.

"Here is the axe."

She was rearranging her hair.

"This time," he said, "You be the little girl." And he made as if to cleave her in half.

"No," she said. "It wasn't like that. It was like this."

She got to her feet, wrestled with him for the bicycle pump. They struggled, came together, parted, came together, straining under the hot sun. They fell to the ground, the Constable on top of her, his hand tight in her crotch, hers jammed under him.

They lay together, the stars twinkling on as if someone were switching on lights. Soon there was a constellation of sky. A myriad shining dots. The Mrs. saw it first.

"The lentils," she cried, "They'll have burned."

They ran to the bicycle. The constable peddled rapidly homeward, their voices trailing off in the night, a midnight ramble.

"How many more have been killed?" she asked.

"There have been five altogether."

"And tomorrow?"

"Tomorrow we will investigate the murder at Six-Mile-Creek."

"And after that?"

"There are the others."

"And after those?" And she wafted her hair in the breeze, her locks blowing back like crimson trails of blood. "And after those?"

They were within yards of the house. The redolent smell of lentils was in the field and air, hung in the bushes, merged with the animal scents, gleamed in the owls' eyes.

"There will be others," he said.

FOUR POEMS BY BOGDAN CZAYKOWSKI

Translated from the Polish by Michael Bullock and Catherine Leach

THE SHORE

I

We will gather stones
common and semi-precious
shells and a crab preserved intact
dry armour of an heroic age
whose ebb
I watched from a low shore

We shall tie them up
in a bundle
and sit down
on the tarry stump of a pine
the masts bend with their sails over the water

When we glided down in an avalanche of snow
through the shadows of peaks, down, down,
in a blaze of frenzied hosannas —
what does the desolate shore relate
plumes of pines bristle like eagle raising
the sharpness of these contours on the darkening glaze of light

The logs, stumps and masts beached by the sea
someone has already stacked for us in pyres
and the incendiary hand steals up
figures come running out of the night

We would have seen the tribe
but for the guilt
although we feel a ghostly vengeance
and the flames leap at our faces
like carcasses of angry dogs

II

And so we sit on the shore
sucked out slowly by the violet fingers of dusk
gnawed to skeletons by the grey light
murmuring mounds of sand

pyramids of mountains sailing off into the dark

RACE TO THE LIMITS

rousing him
a pack of hounds rushed by
and after them hunters with ancient guns
dry powder in the pans
crack of shots

suddenly
they halted by the lake
their gaze lost in the dreamy surface
mountain vistas before their eyes
the sun rolling out over the mists of the valley
the crosses of birds in the sky

the valley expanded
its limits sounded by echoes

time past emerged like a vast forest
piled drift upon drift in a flashing blizzard
ignited bullets of fire in the muzzles of flying foxes
raised up wrought-gold leaves on the antlers of stags
trickled into golden crowns
with a star, a humid diamond
in those corridors of images, in the half-lit tunnels,
slashed with the blaze of the monstrance
where the pursuer hurried — shouts, and then the shots

for the echoes were recorded
bird-quills were scratching
wind overturned hen-houses, knocked down shacks
buried the commonalty beneath the leaves,
unshrouded the rebirth of winter-corn, hotbeds of fire,
fanned the mica-rock to a white glow

he would have allied himself with anyone,
was in and out of revolutions, had a global strategy
lit up the shades vanished in childhood
in the globe of the lighthouse, on archipelagoes,
when the pursuer's steps resounded on the trail
and nets were dragged out on the fishing boats,
he extinguished his cyclopean eye and in darkness
awaited the star

suddenly they had mountain vistas before their eyes
the sun rolling out over the mists of the valley,
a boy in crosses of birds, in his hands a sphere
within the sphere, as in a fish-bowl, on glistening screens
ran the hounds, and behind them the hunters
dry powder obscured the view
and out of the sound of shots
came the boy,
a dream open in his palm

(and he bounced off the glassy limit like a fish shimmering
at the edge of the water)

THE CONQUEST OF BERDYCZOV

On their speartips they carried out the moon's ember
And slipped through the ravine by the river toward the bastion;
In the secret detachment caught by sleep on horseback
The knights of Berdyczov turn to stone in their vigil.

They who, while growing, were conquering the city
Lulled by their dreams — with its morning rooster,
The Jewish street, the tavern and the white ghosts
Gliding down to the river
Over steps of polished bones.

The town was theirs as they grew,
A mirror of earth, sky and water
Beneath the bushel of its isolation;
Within these walls the dove of tongues descended upon them
Through the narrow-arched gates of paradise.

They were seizing it even as they left it
Carrying out the moon on spikes
Month after month. A mosaic was taking shape
From stones brought to them by the toil of time.
They did not build, yet they had a home;
They did not weave — lilies of the field,
Birds of the air.

Even in the storm, as they were scattered,
They mastered with their Berdyczovian heel
The slippery foot of Europe.
Without leaving the place which they had left,
Rooted
In a needle in the haystack —
In a pole of polished bones.

He draws up his forces, rolls out cannon,
Lays siege, pounds streets with hooves;
And in the camp seething beside the river
He broods whether the Rubicon has passed him by.

From excavations he raises the structure of cities
Where people fell asleep beneath lava.
By night blizzards of roosters wake him with a shout.
Shameless, he carries mocking stigmata on his forehead
Spying after the secret detachment.

That is the crux. Bone of their bones.
You must build, like an artist —
From the air of the times, from the reed of your fingers,
Cracked outside the walls —
Earthworks against the city.

FUTURISM

Whoever looked closely at the world,
extricated his fingers, greased,
is a witness, shuts his mouth,
gives his head to the hangman.

The hangman, immortal, restores
the head to posterity;
the perfidious heart, too,
and the bones have their assignment.

The reborn cannibal
does not see with his own eye.
The reconstituted Cyclops
he fumbles, on the side.

The poet, who pierces
the reeds, faint-hearted music-maker,
urban idyllist,
also belongs to the masses.

He will be deep-frozen. The poet
is entitled to his posterity;
unfrozen, he will appear
where he has never been.

With a violet from a block of ice,
an alien nose or kidney,
he will greet other poets
musical like a box,
in which when you lift the lid
an eye appears to wink.

Let us mutually transplant
our eyes and limbs,
let everyone wear an alien heart
like a gardenia in his button-hole.

BOGDAN CZAYKOWSKI was born in 1932 in eastern Poland, was deported to northern Russia in 1940 and spent the war years in Russia, Persia and India. After the war he came to England. Since 1962 he has been teaching East European history and Polish literature at the University of British Columbia. He has had four books of poetry published, and poems in many anthologies.

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TWO POEMS BY DENNIS TRUDELL

YOU DON'T TRUST ME WHEN I'M QUIET AND DENY ME WHEN I ROISTER

and you hard-eye me
when I buy you short pajamas

And baby you're startin
to fist up my insides
when you ain't even around,
when I pass a ballgame at dusk,
a cop at seventy

And girlie I'm beginnin
to be not overfond of how
you don't primp for my arrivals,
don't by latest count
flick strand one of hair
back where hair goes

And you been hidin TV Guide
nights they choose Miss Somethin
and you been fryin weaselshit,
and you got me goose-steppin
on my impulses

And them things are sacred.
I mean you been cold-cuttin
a pork chop man,
and sweetles you been squirtin
some mean acid
in your daddy's hair

But you ain't doin no more
squirtin. Fact you ain't doin nothin,
just sittin there
And I'm
startin to not exactly
dislike that slow smile
crossin your marquee . .

ISOMETRIC

Phone an insurance company and say you would like
to talk to one of their agents about a large
policy. Monday afternoon at 2:30, your place.
At 2:25 stand at one of the front windows of
your apartment, facing the porch. Watch the man
with the wing-tipped shoes and attache case ascend
from the sidewalk, but do not wave or nod. Stand
there while the bell rings and rings again. Stare
ahead as it rings a third and fourth time and as the
man reappears from the vestibule and says something.
Do not acknowledge the event as he moves toward
the window and raises his voice. Focus on the knot
in his tie as he gently raps the pane and do not
flinch as he strikes it harder or begins stamping.
Simply stand there and slowly think of your name,
of what you would like your life to contain. Ignore all
gestures and judgements, however many passers-by join
in. Stand there on your feet. Good for the cells.

DENNIS TRUDELL lives in Buffalo, New York; his poetry appeared in the Anchor anthology, *Quickly Aging Here*, and his fiction has been in many journals.

WATLING STREET

JAMES McGINNISS

1

Up. each day wades
through waist deep snow.
Up. the street widens
vaguely into sleep, vision blurs.
only a few wild cats nestle
in the forest
where the wind howls wider
than the street that leads to them.
a lone swan dares to draw near,
so near, the prickly wild cat dreams
dare to touch his feathers.

2

swans fare well in the snow,
more will come & their black eyes
will blink above the slim jets
of swan mist streaming out
from carven nostrils. their wings
will fold on their plump breasts:

black eyes in the snow
filled with black wine

the swans will sit with their smooth necks
bent in the ornamental night.

3

a fireman comes to put out the lights.
the swans hold their breath & the wild cats
sleep. the fireman has forgotten the brass key
to the nozzle on his woven hose

so he tosses a curse into the snow
that melts like the ice-cube in his hand.
the fireman fades back down the narrow street.
one swan is filled with soundless glee
& the lights keep burning, about to freeze.

4

stick figures dance among the barren trees
leaping from limb to limb on a stick trapeze.
the moaning carries with it the crack & sway
of winter sticks & the gray moon scud
floats above the snow.

5

a lantern on the farthest hill screams
across the snow then two then three & four
& soon the night is filled with lantern screams
but the swans are undisturbed
& the wild cat dreams
still linger in the dark resting fur
like the dangerous scent of unseen enemies.

6

one swan opens its wings & climbs into the sky
leaving one white egg in the snow
with one black wine eye
staring at a cloud of distant stars,
a lidless cone that opens into space.

JAMES McGINNISS studied at the University of Vermont; he is now a graduate student in Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia.

GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUEZ was born in Columbia in 1928. Many of his stories and novels have received prizes and are held in high regard. His latest novel, *Cien Años de Soledad* (1967) is still a best-seller, both in Latin America and Spain; it has been translated into English. MEREDYTH SAVAGE works at the University of British Columbia and translates Latin America poetry as well as fiction; she has lived in Mexico.

Isabel's Monologue While Watching it Rain in Macondo

GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ

Translated from the Spanish by Meredyth Savage

WINTER STARTED SUDDENLY ONE Sunday just as mass let out. Saturday night had been suffocating. But still, on Sunday morning no one had thought it would rain. After mass, even before we women had time to find the clasp on our parasols, there blew a thick, dark wind that swept the dust and the hard tinder of May in a wide, round circle. Someone next to me said: "It's a rain-wind." But I already knew before then. Ever since we had gone out on the church steps and I had shuddered with a viscous sensation in my bowels. The men ran to the nearby houses, each with one hand on his hat and the other holding a handkerchief, defending themselves against the dust and the wind. Then it rained. And the sky was a grey and gelatinous substance that fluttered, just skimming our heads.

During the rest of the morning, my stepmother and I were seated next to the railing, happy that the rain would revitalize the rosemary and spikenard in the flowerpots, thirsty now after seven months of an intense summer of scorching dust. At midday the reverberation of the earth ceased and an odor of fresh-turned soil, of awakened and renewed vegetation, mingled with the fresh, pleasing smell of rain with rosemary. My father said at lunch-time: "When it rains in May it is a sign the good rains are coming." Smiling, pierced with the luminous thread of the new season, my stepmother said to

digestion over by the railing, silent, his eye closed but not asleep, as if he dreamed waking.

It rained throughout the afternoon at a single pitch. In the uniform, peaceful intensity you could hear the water falling like when you travel all afternoon in a train. But without our noticing it, the rain was penetrating far too deeply into our senses. Early in the me: "You heard that in the sermon." And my father smiled. And he ate his lunch with hearty appetite and even spent a good time in its morning on Monday, when we had closed the door to keep out the frozen, cutting draught that blew from the courtyard, our senses were filled up with rain. And by mid-morning on Monday, the rain spilled over the brim. My stepmother and I returned to contemplate the garden. The harsh brown earth of May had been converted during the night into a dark and pasty substance, like the soap the hired hands use. A stream of water began to run between the flowerpots. "I think that all night long they have had more than enough water," my stepmother said. And I noticed that she had stopped smiling and that her merriment of the previous day had been transformed into a lax and tedious gravity. "I think so," I said. "It would be best for the hired hands to put them in the corridor until it clears up." And so they did, while the rain grew like an immense tree above all trees. My father took the same place as on Sunday afternoon, but he didn't speak about the rain. He said: "It must be that I slept badly last night, because I woke up with my spine hurting." And he sat there beside the railing, with his feet on a chair and his head turned towards the empty garden. It was not until the afternoon, after he had refused to eat lunch, that he said: "It is as if it weren't going to clear up, ever." And I remembered the months of heat. I remembered August, I remembered those long, numbing *siestas* in which we stretched ourselves out to die under the weight of the hour, with our clothes slicked against our bodies from our sweating, listening to the deaf, insistent ringing of the motionless hour outside. I stared at the washed walls, the joints in the wood swollen with rain. I stared at the little garden, empty for the first time, and the jasmine tree against the wall, true to the memory of my mother. I stared at my father seated in the rocking chair, his aching vertebrae resting on a pillow, his sad eyes lost in the labyrinth of the rain. I remembered the nights of August, in whose marvelous silence you can hear nothing but the millenary noise the Earth makes as it turns on its rusty, un-oiled axis. Suddenly I was seized with an oppressive sadness.

It rained all day Monday, as it had on Sunday. But on Monday it seemed as if it were raining differently, because something distinct and bitter was happening inside me. In the afternoon, a voice next to my chair said: "It is boring, this rain." Without turning to look, I recognized the voice of Martín. I knew that he was speaking from the chair by my side, with the same cold, numb expression that had not varied even after that dark dawn in December when he had begun to be my husband. Five months had passed since then. Now I was going to have a child. And Martín was there, at my side, saying that the rain bored him. "Boring, no," I said. "What seems to me so incredibly sad is the empty garden and those poor trees that can't be taken out of the courtyard." Then I turned to look at him and Martín was no longer there. It was only scarcely a voice that said to me: "From the way things look, it never plans to clear up," and when I looked towards the voice I only found the empty chair.

Tuesday morning a cow appeared in the garden. She resembled a promontory of clay in her solid, rebellious immobility, her split hooves buried in the mud and her head bowed. During the morning, the hired hands tried to drive her away with bricks and poles. But the cow remained imperturbable in the garden, firm, inviolate, her splayed hooves still buried in the mud and her enormous head humbled by the rain. The men persecuted her until my father's patient tolerance came to her defense: "Leave her be," he said. "She will go as she came."

By Tuesday afternoon the rain tightened and ached like a shroud around the heart. The coolness of the first morning began to change into a warm and pasty humidity. The temperature was neither cold nor hot: it was a temperature of fever-chills. Our feet sweated in our shoes. We didn't know which was more disagreeable: the skin exposed or the contact of clothes and skin. In the house, all activity had ceased. We sat down in the corridor, but we no longer watched the rain as on the first day. We no longer sensed its falling. We no longer saw anything but the contour of the trees in the mist, in a sad and desolate afternoon that left on the lips the same taste with which you waken after having dreamed of an unknown person. I knew that it was Tuesday, and I remembered the twins of San Jerónimo, the blind girls that come every week to the house to sing us simple songs, saddened by the bitter, helpless prodigy of their voices. Over the rain I heard the little song of the blind twins and I imagined them in their house, squatting at the door in wait for the rain to stop so they could go out to sing. That day, the twins of San

Jerónimo wouldn't come, I thought, nor would the beggar woman be in the corridor after the *siesta*, asking, as on every Tuesday, for the eternal sprig of balm.

That day we lost the order of our meals. At *siesta* time, my stepmother served a simple bowl of soup and a piece of mouldy bread. But in reality we had not eaten since Monday afternoon, and I believe it was since then we left off thinking. We were paralyzed, drugged by the rain, given up to the collapse of nature in an attitude that was pacifistic and resigned. Only the cow moved that afternoon. All of a sudden, a deep murmur shook her insides and her hooves sank heavier into the mud. She remained there motionless, then, for half an hour, as if she were already dead but couldn't fall because she was restrained by the custom of being alive, the habit of being in the same, single position under the rain, until the custom became weaker than the body. Then she folded her forelegs, her brilliant, dark buttocks still raised in a last agonizing effort, sank her slimy nose in the mire and surrendered at last to the weight of her own matter in a silent, gradual, dignified ceremony of total collapse. "That's as far as she got," said someone behind me. And I turned to look, and in the doorway I saw the Tuesday beggar woman who had come through the storm to ask for the sprig of balm.

Perhaps by Wednesday I would have become accustomed to this apprehensive ambience if on entering the drawing room I hadn't found the table, tilted up against the wall, the furniture stacked on top of it, and on the other side of the room, on a parapet improvised during the night, the trunks and boxes filled with household goods. The spectacle gave me a terrible sensation of emptiness. Something had happened during the night. The house was in disorder; the hired men, shirtless and barefoot, with their trousers rolled up to their knees, were carrying the furniture into the dining room. On the faces of the men, in the very diligence with which they worked, the cruelty of frustrated rebelliousness could be seen, their coercive, humiliating inferiority beneath the rain. I moved without direction, without will. I felt transformed into some desolate meadow, seeded with algae and lichen, with soft and viscous mushrooms fertilized by the repugnant flora of humidity and darkness. I was in the drawing room staring at the deserted spectacle of heaped furniture when I heard the voice of my stepmother in the room warning me that I could catch pneumonia. Only then did I become aware that the water was up to my ankles, that the house was flooded, the floor covered with a thick surface of dead, viscous water.

At noon on Wednesday it still was daybreak. And before three in the afternoon, night was fully upon us, come before its time and sickly, with the same slow, monotonous, pitiless rhythm of the rain in the courtyard. It was a premature twilight, smooth and dismal, that grew in the midst of the silence of the hired hands who squatted in the chairs against the walls, subdued and impotent before the disturbance of nature. It was then that we began to get the news from the street. No one brought it to the house. It simply arrived, precise, individualized, as though it were borne by the liquid mud that ran through the streets and dragged along household objects, things and things, ruins of a remote catastrophe, rubbish and dead animals. Events which had occurred on Sunday, when the rain was still only the herald of a benevolent season, took two days to be known at the house. And on Wednesday the news came, as if thrust by the same internal dynamism of the storm. It was learned then that the church was flooded and its collapse expected. Someone who had no reason to know it said that night: "The train hasn't been able to cross the bridge since Monday. It seems that the river carried off the rails." And it was learned that a sick woman had disappeared from her bed and had been found that afternoon floating in the courtyard.

Terrified, possessed by horror and the deluge, I sat down in the rocking chair with my legs drawn up and my eyes fixed on the wet darkness that was filled with murky forebodings. My stepmother appeared in the doorway, with the lantern raised and her head erect. She looked like a familiar phantom before whom I felt no dread because I myself participated in her supernatural condition. She came over to where I sat. She still held her head erect and the lantern high, and she splashed in the water in the corridor. "Now we must pray," she said. And I saw her face, cracked and dry, as if she had just abandoned a sepulcher or as if she were fashioned of a substance that was not human. She stood before me, her rosary in her hand, saying: "Now we must pray. The rain broke open the sepulchers and the poor dead are floating in the cemetery."

Perhaps I had slept a little that night when I awoke startled by an acrid, penetrating smell like that of bodies in decomposition. I shook Martín, who was snoring at my side. "Don't you smell it?" I asked him. And he said: "What?" And I said: "The smell. It must be the dead who are floating in the streets." I felt terrified by the idea, but Martín turned to the wall and said in a hoarse, sleepy

voice: "It's all in your head. Pregnant women are always imagining things."

At daybreak on Thursday the smells stopped, and all sense of distance was lost. The notion of time, deranged since the previous day, disappeared completely. Then there was no Thursday. That which should have been Thursday was a physical and gelatinous thing that you could have parted with your hands in order to peer out at Friday. There were no men or women then. My stepmother, my father, the hired men were waxen and improbable bodies that moved in the quagmire of winter. My father said to me: "Don't move from here until I tell you what to do," and his voice was distant and indirect and I didn't seem to make it out with my ears but instead by touch, which was the only sense that remained intact.

But my father did not come back: he got lost in time. So when night came, I called my stepmother to ask her to accompany me to my bedroom. I had a peaceful sleep, serene, that lasted throughout the night. The following day the atmosphere remained the same, without color, without smells, without temperature. As soon as I woke, I leaped to a chair and stayed there motionless, because something told me that there was a zone of my consciousness that had not completely awakened. Then I heard the whistle of the train. The prolonged, sad whistle of the train fleeing from the storm. "It must have cleared up somewhere," I thought, and a voice at my shoulder seemed to respond to my thought: "Where. . . ," it said. "Who's there?" I asked, looking around. And I saw my stepmother standing with one long, weak arm stretched out towards the wall. "It's me," she said. And I said to her: "Do you hear it?" And she said yes, that perhaps it had cleared up further off and they had repaired the tracks. Then she handed me a tray of steaming breakfast. It smelled of garlic sauce and boiled fat. It was a bowl of soup. Disconcerted, I asked my stepmother the time. And she, calmly, with a voice filled with prostrate resignation, said: "It must be two-thirty, more or less. The train isn't late after all." I said: "Two-thirty! How could it be that I slept so long!" And she said: "You haven't slept long. At most it could only be three o'clock." And I, trembling, feeling the bowl slip between my hands, said: "Two-thirty Friday. . ." And she, monstrously tranquil: "Two-thirty Thursday, girl. *Still* two-thirty Thursday."

I do not know how long I stayed sunken in that somnambulism in which the senses lose their powers. I only know that after many uncountable hours I heard a voice in the next room. A voice that said:

"Now you can wheel the bed over there." It was a voice that was fatigued, not the voice of the sick but the voice of the convalescent. Later I heard the sound of bricks in the water. I stayed rigid until I realized that I was in a horizontal position. Then I felt the immense vacuum. I felt the vibrating, violent silence of the house, the incredible immobility that affected everything. And suddenly I felt my heart turned into a frozen stone. "I am dead," I thought. "God. I am dead." I sprang from the bed. I screamed: "Ada, Ada!" The flat voice of Martín answered me from the other side of the room. "They can't hear you because they are outside now." Only then did I realize that it had cleared, and that round about us there extended a silence, a tranquility, a mysterious and profound beatitude, a perfect state that must be very like death. Later, footsteps could be heard in the corridor. A voice rang out, clear and completely alive. Then a slight, fresh breeze shook the shutter of the door and made the lock creak, and a solid and momentary body, like a ripe fruit, fell heavily into the pool in the courtyard. Something in the air suggested the presence of an invisible person who smiled in the darkness. "My God," I thought then, confused by the disorder of time. "Now it would not surprise me if they called me to attend last Sunday's mass."

TWO POEMS BY ULRIKE WEISS

Translated from the German by Marcus Bullock

BRANDENBURG

Preface your comments with "Aha!"
When you say
"The wind is like razor-blades tonight"
My attention is wandering
Toward other things
My patience
As I remember it
Has grown thin
The wind, among other things
Has grown quiet
The storm, which you recalled
has grown still

Now tell me
Do you recall, as I do, how it was
One Berlin wintertime
When you spoke to the man who played music
By the Church of Remembrance on the Kurfursten-
Damm

And the rabbi who spoke of Moby Dick
As a mass of entrails and exits

Perhaps these things never happened

Brandenburg

A grey mist is rising from the canal
It is 4:30 — a dark and cold hour
Both early and late
Someone vomits against a wall
I am surprised his face is not changed

IN FAIR WEATHER

The aphorists in the newspapers
Have stolen my hours
Left a note in my shoes
Threaten to tattoo me
Gave me to understand

They gave me the lie in my bed
While I was sleeping
They taped my breathing
Drew me on the walls
And stabbed my heart with lipstick
They are reeling in the messages faster than I can read them
They are waiting for a fair wind

In autumn all is well
They buy clarinets from their mothers
And have scissors for the string
It is we and they on the steamboats
But all is very well

ULRIKE WEISS is probably the best-known of East Germany's younger poets, in spite of the fact she has received no official recognition.

MARCUS BULLOCK is a recent immigrant from Britain now living in Vancouver. He has translated several books from French and German, and his own poems have appeared in a number of literary magazines.

TWO POEMS BY WILLIAM VIRGIL DAVIS

JUMP

I joined the crowd
gnated together
around the bottom
of the skyscraper.

I asked someone
what was taking place
and discovered that a man
was going to jump from the twelfth floor.

I looked up.
The man was a spot of black
in the sheet of sun
along the glass windows.

He was waving.
At least he was moving his arms.
I liked the man.
I waved to him.

Around me people shouted.
Some yelled, "Chicken;
go ahead, chicken, jump."
Others (mostly women)

cried and hid their heads.
They pleaded, "Go back,
my God, don't jump."
"Jesus, Mary, save us."

I watched the man.
I wondered if he could hear
any of these shouts.
He didn't appear to be affected by them.

He waved his arms again.
He seated himself
on the narrow ledge.
He crossed his arms.

I knew he was happy
and was enjoying himself,
perhaps for the first
time in his life.

The crowd became silent
after he sat down.
When everything was still
except for the wind between the buildings

which we had all forgotten,
I shook my fist
at the man on the ledge
and yelled up at him,

"Jump, chicken, jump."
The man didn't move
but I thought I saw him smile
and nod his head at me.

People around me
murmured and pointed
at me. The crowd
shrank back from me

leaving me in a space
all to myself.
I looked at the faces
staring at me.

I had done nothing wrong.
Everyone else had been shouting too.
I turned to the people
around me. I wanted to explain myself.

I opened my mouth
but nothing was said.
I ran toward the building.
As I ran I glanced

up at the man on the ledge.
He was standing again.
The noise and shouting began again around me.
I entered the building,

breaking my way
through the police barrier.
I ran up the stairs
to the twelfth floor.

I found the room
the man was outside of.
I climbed out the window
and moved along the ledge

toward him.
He watched me calmly.
Neither of us spoke.
We looked down

at the people
in the street. They were
a black mass,
a moving shape.

We heard the faint
murmur of their single voice.
The wind whined
against us. The sun

was in our faces.
I turned to the man
beside me and extended my hand.
He took it in his.

We nodded to each other.
He sat down to watch.
I raised my arms.
I stepped off the ledge

into the wind.
The wind was soft against me.
I knew that I was not alone.
I stepped downward on air.

THE SURVIVORS

After the battle was over
the field was littered with bodies
piled on top of one another.

No one left alive knew what
to do about the mess that
was left. Where could we

pile these dead? But wait.
First things come first.
And so we scavenged the refuse

for what we could salvage
from the remains. I picked
up a helmet that lay

beside a dismembered head,
partly burned. I knew those
eyes were not watching me.

I collected buttons, ribbons,
three good shoes, a belt,
a canteen with a bullet hole

in it, a rosary, seven
rings (to get three of them
I had to cut off the fingers

of the men who wore them),
two watches that were still
running, a jacket totally

unmarked and partly clean,
a money belt with six
dollars in it, and other

miscellaneous items, like
a glass eye, a knife, two
pistols, a rifle, a gas mask,

and a wooden leg. That
was all I could carry away.
Besides, our time was almost

up. We left the field
to the birds, wavering over-
head like angels.

Tomorrow we will herd
the cattle back into the field
and let them graze again

in the pasture. After all,
they too are survivors.
And the birds will be gone.

WILLIAM VIRGIL DAVIS has had poetry published in numerous journals in Canada and the U.S., including *The Nation, Shenandoah, The Malahat Review, West Coast Review, Southern Poetry Review, The Georgia Review* and *Wormwood Review*. He has also published fiction and articles.

KNOTS

ELIZABETH HOSKINSON

Bending over
folding in sizes
breaking
when you touch ground
you find that
knots
are straining to close
what already hasn't been working.
The bulldozer in the corner,
chewing up earth-coated
chocolate rust
chalking white
and yellow dribbles,
it isn't performing,
it isn't spreading things around,
meaningful discourse
isn't drooping
like clay from its jaws.
You can stamp and kick it
or make a movie of yourself
with Marshall McLuhan lips
or sulk in the corner
above, under or inside,
until a passer-by
or a tourist
jokingly pulls the string.

Spilling out
is a constant scheme
of slow urging
from the instant saviour,
who whispers
love me
before tying you up again.
An act of God
usually saves you,
a snowfall or two
covering up your trails
and footprints,
leaving shadows and moons
to follow you at night.
Perhaps it is then
that they will find you,
deep in the bowels
of the white ground
where the dampness may loosen
your knots just a little,
enough that you'll break through
as spring.

ELIZABETH HOSKINSON writes poetry during her extended leaves from a paint company in Montreal.

ANNIVERSARY

SUSAN FROMBERG SCHAEFFER

Now the sun drags our marriage across the sky
Like a carriage, and we fall out,
Settling in the field like seeds.

You bloom once yearly, like a tree.
Now you are shedding your leaves.
They blow up against my roots like a deep brown quilt.
I have curled up in it, a squirrel in its pelt.
You keep beckoning to me with your long fingers.
You have as many as the grass.

The days pass by like clouds.
Like pillows, we lean against them.
Now moss covers my north side; it covers yours.
The years are beneath us, like rings, like wire.
The loon circles above us, flying with his mate.

Woodcutter, woodcutter, now we wear
The plain gold sun, the smoothest moon.

Poems by SUSAN FROMBERG SCHAEFFER have appeared in many journals, including *Kayak, Canadian Forum* and *Expression* (England). She teaches English at Brooklyn College.

ANNE MARRIOTT, a previous winner of the Canadian Governor-General's Award for Poetry, has had poems and fiction in many journals. She lives in North Vancouver.

THE RIDE

ANNE MARRIOTT

THE DAY OF THE RIDE was a fine day. No dust blew. That alone set it apart from the rest of the summer.

Other days, by dinner time (which was noon) the wind had risen. After dinner, when I went down the yard to the outhouse, there was at least a faint brown film in the air, making me blink and sniffle. If the wind were rising, the film would thicken, until the atmosphere was full of grit, collecting in the corners of the eyes and grinding between the teeth.

On the worst days, a choking cloud of soil moved across the country, a dark blizzard piling up dry drifts against the paintless farmhouses, sagging barns and sheds. It seemed to pile above me, filling the sky; I could feel the weight of it, pressing down, smothering. Days like that, I tried not to go outside at all. Before my rest I would use the chamber pot upstairs.

The afternoon rest was the tag-end of my convalescence. I had been ill, close to death, for a long time the previous winter and spring, and my visit to the prairies — a high, dry climate — to my father's sister-in-law was to finish the cure. (My parents, obviously, had not believed the reports of the drought which appeared in the eastern papers.)

I would lie on the bed and listen to the wind outside the house slapping a loose piece of siding against the wall near my head. The wind had a curious whine, lonely, foreboding; the sound increased the state of fear I was constantly in that year — most of all the fear of death. I had escaped death so narrowly, and some day — any day! — I would not escape it at all.

I went to the ride with my cousin Harry — not that he wanted me to go.

He came into the kitchen where I was finishing a late breakfast and said to my aunt, "It's such a good day I think I'll go down into the hills and look for those two damn colts."

He gave me a wink, something I had taken to be our special signal, recognition of a bond holding us close together — and also holding us apart.

A first cousin was the next thing to a brother — my parents had stressed this when seeing me off on the train west. So I was at ease with Harry, not stupid with shyness as with all other boys — potential boy-friends — whom I had met. He had bright red hair and blue eyes, and the reddish, perpetually chapped-looking skin that sometimes goes with that colouring. I thought him the most handsome boy I had ever seen and fell in love with him my second day on the farm, a love heightened by the knowledge it could never reach its climax — a white wedding.

When he told my aunt he was going to ride after the colts, "Can I come?" I cried, "Can I go with you? Please, Harry! Please?"

"It's too hot for you," said my aunt.

"It's too far," said Harry. "I might go all of twenty miles before I'm through, and you were never on a horse in your life until last week."

"It's not too far," I said, "And heat's good for me — the doctor said so. Please, Harry, please — "

I kept on until he got angry and shouted at me, "Okay, then, come on, but don't blame me if you don't enjoy yourself."

By noon, we had ridden nearly ten miles, over summer fallow that rose like dry cocoa around the horses' hooves; over crackling stubble and stunted crop, and into the shallow, dead-grass-covered hills which lay to the south of the farm.

I was dizzy with heat. Once in a while Harry, riding ahead, looked over his shoulder at me with a sarcastic grin.

Coming up through a narrow, stifling draw we arrived suddenly on a small level area. There were a few rusting pieces of farm machinery, half-buried in dust, Russian thistle and pigweed, in the middle of the flat ground, and on the far side, looking at first glance like an outcrop of the hill beyond, was a house.

"I'll be damned," Harry said, "I'll bet you this is the James' place."

"Who're they?" My mouth was so dry I could hardly speak.

"The James — who else?" He smiled more kindly then. "I

don't know much about them actually — nobody does. Some say they came from England years back. Others say they're from the States some place. There's tales Bert James was only a jump ahead of the law and that's why they hid out down here — but then people'll make up tales like that, anything to give a bit of spice to life these days."

A screen door in the front of the house was flung open. A broad woman in a brownish dress came out and stared at us.

"Company!" it was a shout. "Lord love us, we got company!" She turned, called in the dark hole of doorway behind her, "Rosella! Did you hear? We got company — and one of 'em's a *girl*!"

We rode around a half-buried stone-boat and up to the house.

"Why, it's Harry, isn't it?" the woman said, "Harry Burton. I seen you last year at the Stampede."

"That's right," Harry said. "Never come across your place before, though. — This is my cousin, Irene Gray, from down east."

"Pleased to meet you," Mrs. James said. "Well — don't just sit there, get down, come on in! — Rosella!" she called into the doorway again, "Girl looks about your age, too!"

A tremendous greasy smell of onions suddenly gusted out of the door — I could almost see it, thick on the air.

"You're just in time for dinner," Mrs. James said.

"Harry — " I said urgently. "We — we can't stop, can we? And we have — *that* — "I pointed to the lardpail tied to Harry's saddle. On the other side hung a quart sealer of hard well-water flavoured with Watkins' lemon crystals.

"It's not much of a meal," Mrs. James acknowledged, her hearty voice dropping a little, "But you're more than welcome — "

"Of course we'll stay — be glad to," Harry said. "A good hot dinner's better than a bunch of sandwiches any time." He gave me a sharp look as he got off his horse.

"Put the horses un the barn, Harry, there's shade for 'em there if nothing else," Mrs. James said. "Rosella! What's wrong with that girl? — stiff, eh?" she added, to me, as I forced a leg around over the horse's rump and then caught at the stirrup to save myself from falling full-length on the ground. Harry watched me.

"Come in, then!" Mrs. James held the ragged screen door open. As I passed her, I accidentally bumped against her huge buttocks, feeling them wobble under her worn, patched dress.

After the harsh light outside, the inside of the house seemed pitch dark, but after a few seconds I made out a girl — Rosella, I

supposed — standing motionless beside a long table a few yards from me. As her mother had said, Rosella like me was in her late teens; unlike me, she was extremely pretty.

"Hello," I said nervously, as Rosella continued to stare at me in silence. She still did not answer. I looked away, around the big room. The wallpaper was cracked and faded; here and there a strip hung down. The window sills were crammed with half-dead plants in tomato cans — Rosella moved and I looked back at her. She wore a shapeless, greyish dress with a random pattern in places, a design of lighter streaks and marks.

She moved again. The design was not a design, but Rosella's pale skin, showing through holes and tears.

A gust of onion odour came from the wide cook-stove at the end of the room. The familiar panic swelled in my chest. I was going to vomit — to faint — to have a heart attack, perhaps a fatal one — *here*!

"Give'er a chair, Rose," Mrs. James spoke quickly, "She's got a swimmy turn."

Rosella pushed a wooden kitchen chair toward me and I lurched on to it. "Too much sun," Mrs. James said, nodding her large head. She had a mass of sandy-grey, wiry curls. "Need your dinner, too." She slammed pots and pans about on the stove.

"We can't stay!" I said to Mrs. James, trying to get to my feet, "It's so kind of you to ask us but Harry really has to find — "

"Won't get him going again till he's had his meal," she said, but for a moment she looked disturbed. "It's not much, as I said, but lucky we got a crop of spuds if nothing else, and them Swedes over west give Bert a bag of onions." She poured water from a black kettle into the frying-pan and steam rushed up, an oily geyser. "Rosella! Don't stand there mooning! Get the table laid before Dad and the boys come in! — always wishing and wishing there was a girl to talk to," she said to me, "and now there is one, cat's got her tongue. — Not that *I* never thought girls was that good company!"

Harry was in the doorway. The screen slapped shut behind him and he came into the room laughing, giving Mrs. James a wink.

"Harry," I said, "I don't feel well."

For a moment he looked anxious. But then Mrs. James said, "She keeps wanting to leave, but I tell her she'll feel better when she's had her dinner."

Harry's expression changed. "You will feel better when you've eaten, Irene," he said with meaning.

My eyes filled up with tears. Blinking, I turned toward Rosella. Mechanically she was putting bent and blackened cutlery between the chipped enamel plates already spaced down each side of the table. Every time she leaned forward her breasts pushed against her dress and I expected the cloth to rip further.

She caught my look, misinterpreting it, and spoke to me at last. "Them's awful plates, all right." She spoke slowly, her voice mechanical too. But having once spoken, she went on, gradually speaking faster, sounding more natural. "If the government sends us that relief money this fall, then we get new dishes. I got them picked out already, in the catalogue. Roses on 'em — that's *my* flower." She got to the end of the table nearer to me and said in an undertone, with a glance at Harry, "I'll show you — after dinner. I'm getting something else, too, something special. I might show you that, too — I *might*."

"Here's the men!" Mrs. James pounded a wooden masher into a pot. "Put the bread on, Rose, while I make the tea. Then we'll dish up."

"I might," Rosella said again, so low I could scarcely hear it.

"This is Bert James, Irene — " I realized Harry had already said it once.

"Pleased to meet you." He wore a sticky-looking cap; he pushed it back as he spoke but left it on his head. He was smaller than his wife, dark, weasel-looking. His eyes looked hot. In spite of the lines on his sweaty face I thought he was younger than Mrs. James — certainly younger than my father, who was fifty.

He glanced at Rosella and she at him. Her face was blank. He went to the water-bucket, dipping water with an old tobacco-can which floated on the surface. He drank. Behind him five young boys who had followed him into the house slid one by one along by the wall, to drink from the tobacco can in turn. They looked sideways at me from shy-animal faces. Their hair-cuts and shirt-collars were ragged — though their clothes were neatly patched and darned in many places.

"Sit down!" Mrs. James set an enamel wash-basin full of potatoes on the table. "Sorry we've no meat, but the bread's fresh." She carried the chair, which I had sat in, to the head of the table and Mr. James sat down. He jerked his head at Rosella and she moved in behind the table, along the wooden bench which ran the table's

length against the wall. "Sit by me!" she murmured, and I got in beside her. Harry sat next.

"Move down there!" Mrs. James said to the five boys on a similar bench the other side of the table. They made noises of protest.

"Lots of space over here," Harry said. "If Irene doesn't take up so much room." He gave me a shove and Mrs. James plumped down at the end.

It was the first time I had been so close to Harry. I was surprised at the hardness of his arm, his hip-bone and thigh, against mine. He seemed quite unaware of any contact, turning away and laughing at something Mrs. James had said to him.

Rosella held the basin for me to take potatoes. They were streaked with dark lines and for a moment I didn't think I would be able to swallow any. But I *was* hungry, after all —

To my surprise, the potatoes at least tasted all right, and the onion gravy was good. The fresh bread was delicious, even without butter. I had second helpings. I managed to edge half an inch closer to Harry — he must have been aware of our closeness after all, for he had moved away, but could not get far. I looked across at the dying plants and wondered with momentary vague indignation why Mrs. James did not water them. It struck me that I was actually happy.

I felt Rosella catch her breath. I became aware of a sound outside — a truck was approaching, grinding over the hills. Mrs. James stopped talking. The truck came close, into the yard, and there was silence around the table except for a faint snickering from one of the boys.

I was surprised that no one moved. My aunt would have been up and at the window at the first noise of the engine, eager to see who was coming out to welcome them — as Mrs. James had welcomed Harry and me.

The truck door slammed. Mr. James scraped his chair a few inches over the cracked linoleum, closer to Rosella. Everyone looked over at the door.

When a figure appeared in the doorway, black against the dry brilliance of the yard, I was almost as much startled as relieved to see that it was of normal shape and size.

"Well, come on in, Bob, you're just in time," Mrs. James said. She sounded hospitable enough. I saw Mr. James glare at her. "Rose, get another plate — "

"No. No, thanks, I've eaten. I'll just get a drink of water." He was a middle-sized young man, a few years older than Harry, rather fat. "Howdy all." I saw he was carrying a large parcel, in brown paper. It looked like a dress box. "I brought you something, Rose."

She did not look up at him. "It's a dress," he said, "You been needing one. Pink, your colour. You ought to like it." She stared into her cup, at the blob of tea-leaves congested in the bottom. He set the parcel against the wall.

Mr. James was looking at her with his beady, hot brown eyes. Suddenly he hit the table with his fist; the dishes jumped and thudded, the enamel ones clanking. I jumped too, inadvertently jabbing Harry with my elbow. He pushed me away with his forearm.

"Why the god-damn-hell — " Mr. James shouted, apparently at Mrs. James, "Do you let her go around like — "

Her red face became purplish. She leaned forward, around Harry, the heavy cushions of her breasts swinging forward inside her dress, against the plate in front of her.

"As if you don't know I can't do nothing with her, not any more!" she shouted back at him. His eyes wavered away.

"Give us more tea," he muttered. The boys passed the big, brown, broken-spouted teapot to him. Everyone ate dessert — stewed Saskatoon berries, dry and seedy, needing more sugar — while Bob leaned against the wall.

"This here's Bob Lewis," Mrs. James suddenly realized no one had been introduced. "Pleased to meet you," he said.

Harry had been looking at him carefully. "I saw you at the Stampede last year," he said. "That's right," Bob nodded.

The Stampede — where Harry had also met Mrs. James. No doubt Rosella had been there too. Busily my mind put the romance together. She was so pretty — if only I had fair hair and blue eyes — Bob had fallen in love —

"How are crops with you — anything at all?" Harry was asking, "You're down in the valley, aren't you?"

"Not as much crop as it used to be," Bob said, "But compared to most folks, I got a lot to be thankful for." He nodded again, solemnly, "We need to count our blessings."

"That's right." Harry's voice was as solemn as Bob's but I thought his voice had a certain sound I had learned to beware of. But if he were making fun of Bob, he let it end there.

"Got some pliers and some spare wire in the truck," Bob said to

Bert James. "Noticed last time, you've got some fence down along the pasture. I'll give you a hand with it."

"We can look after ourselves," Bert said, scarcely loud enough for Bob to hear it. It was Mrs. James who spoke loudly, "I don't know what's the use of mending fences when there's nothing to keep inside 'em — and not likely to be whether it rains or it don't!"

No, it didn't, I agreed to myself, look as if anything would grow in these hills anyway. But my attention went back to Harry. Before I could think of anything to say, Mr. James got to his feet and all the other males at the table followed suit, Harry included, Mrs. James getting up to let him out. She stood, finishing her tea — all the boys, even the smallest, I had noticed, drank strong tea like the adults, and many cups of it.

One after the other, the men and boys went out. Rosella watched them go.

Mrs. James grabbed up the last boy in line, the one who looked about five. "Here, ducks, you're too little to go off with the men again, listen to their talk. You stay with Mum this afternoon, that's my baby!"

"I ain't no baby!" He struggled free and ran after the others.

Mrs. James shook her head, sighing. "He ain't, that's the truth. And he's the last, seems like, more's the pity." She went to the door and stared out, bulging against the dazzle, then came back briskly and started to clear the table. She told me over the clatter, "That last one there, Bert and Rosella, they helped when the time came — helped the last two, far's that goes. Something didn't go right, the last one — none of their fault, it wasn't, but I was laid up a long time. Since then something seemed to drop like — I can feel it — " she pointed with one of the forks at her sprawling abdomen, "Bearing down. And since, seems I can't carry no more children. Hurts, too, when — "

She stood still, staring at the fork, then her red face went back to its former cheerfulness, "Well, if we get them relief payments maybe I'll get someone to drive me to town, see a doctor, get fixed good as new!" She laughed, went to the bucket and began to ladle water out sparingly, with the tobacco can, into a bent dishpan which she placed on the stove.

All this time Rosella had been sitting motionless, at the table. She was staring now at the opposite wall. Mrs. James looked anxious.

"Rosella! You're mooning again. Why don't you show Irene — ?"

she jerked her head toward the door at the opposite end of the long room. "*Rose*!"

Rosella stared at her mother. Then abruptly she sprang up. "Come on, then," she took hold of my hand; hers was so rough it shocked me. She gave me a tug toward the far door.

"She's the artistic one!" Mrs. James said behind me.

Reluctantly, I let Rosella lead me down the room. Though I was supposed to be "artistic" myself; perhaps we had something in common after all. But I didn't really want to know.

Rosella opened the door and I followed her into a very small room almost entirely filled with a very large bed — the largest bed I had ever seen — a bed, I realized, extended to the farther wall by boards and boxes. I stared at it. How many of the family and in what order slept in that bed?

Rosella dragged something from underneath. It was a huge, dilapidated cardboard box, with the name of a farm machinery company on the side. She seemed to hesitate then over opening it and I looked away, around the room with its row of shabby winter coats and caps hung on nails on the wall, its distorted mirror and some faded pictures of girls and kittens cut from magazines.

"See?" Rosella said uncertainly, and I looked back. She was holding up a tombstone.

My eyes blurred. I made them focus. Except that it was smaller, it was just the shape of the stones I had seen on an unwilling visit to my uncle's grave last Sunday. In the centre was a wreath of roses, painted in palest pink.

"It's my flower, see?" Rosella said. "I always do this design."

"What — what's it for?" I asked.

"I dunno." She looked blank. "I just like doing them. I couldn't buy no more paper, and then the little one, he found some clay down in one of the draws. Mixed it up with water it sets real hard."

"She puts it in my old meat tin, and it make a real good slab like," Mrs. James said from the kitchen. Rosella frowned slightly.

"I got more," she said to me in a whisper. She began tossing sheets of old newspapers and catalogues on to the floor, and carefully, edge symmetrical with edge, laying out more and more of the slabs on the bed. Each one had exactly the same rose wreath in the centre. Some were pink, some pale blue, some pale yellow. The last ones were grey.

"I run out of everything but black, and then clean out," Rosella

said. She bent over, searching among the papers in the bottom of the box.

"Where did you get the design?" I asked.

"It was a transfer — one of them things for embroidering, you know? It come in an old country magazine, in a box with some of them relief clothes one time. Being it was my flower, I liked it — " She straightened up, something in her hand; as she did so I heard her dress rip again.

She opened the thing in her hand, held it out to me. "Run right out," she said.

It was a paint box, the primary grade type which had originally held the primary colours and black. It was scrubbed clean; there was a small brush, threadbare. Something about that empty paint-box was worse than the tombstones. Though it did not produce any of my usual sensations of illness; I just sat there, staring at the faint stains of colour that Rosella's cleaning could not erase.

"That's what's special, that I told you about!" For the first time Rosella was lively, excited. "It's in the catalogue — I'll show you." She picked up the well-thumbed book from a packing-box bureau and began turning the pages quickly. "It's a De Luxe paintbox — *twenty* different shades! Could you believe that? Think of all the roses I'll be able to paint! Pink and mauve and — and — "

I could send her a paintbox with *forty* different shades, if there were such a thing, send it to her right away. But should I? I didn't want to seem like a rich city girl (I had been scolded about this enough times by Harry). And if she were only going to keep on and on painting the same funeral-like wreath —

"Think you'll find my horses that way?" It was Harry, pushing open the half-closed door, standing looking at us with reddish eyebrows raised. Rosella moved between him and the tombstones. His blue eyes ran over her without interest. "Well, come on. Let's hit the trail," he said.

Rosella whispered to me, "I got dozens more, waiting for the paints. Stacked out at the back of the barn — "

"Come on, Irene," Harry said from the kitchen.

When Harry had brought the horses over to the door, and we were all standing outside, Mrs. James exclaimed, "Well, it done my heart good, seeing some new faces! Come again — any time! And stay longer! And if that relief comes through we'll give you something better than spuds and gravy."

"It was a damn good dinner," Harry said.

"I'll make a wreath just for you if you come and get it," Rosella murmured to me.

"We'll have roast beef and Yorkshire!" Mrs. James promised recklessly. She grabbed me, her thick arms pressing me against her. I felt her breasts against mine, moving and squashing. She gave me a smacking kiss. "Goodbye, lovie! Hope you feel okay now. Have a nice ride back!"

She turned to Harry, holding out her hand. "Aren't you going to give me a kiss?" he asked, his eyes sparkling.

"You bet your life I am!" She seized him, her face crimson. The loud kiss landed on Harry's mouth; he was kissing her back. "How's that?" she asked him when he had finished.

"You could still teach the young ones a thing or two," Harry said to her.

"I thought you were in a hurry to get started," I said to him.

I turned angrily toward my horse and tried to leap into the saddle. I was still so stiff that my muscles would not respond. I was stuck, one foot in the stirrup, the other poking at the air instead of swinging over the horse's back.

"Give her a push!" Mrs. James cried, laughing. They all laughed. Rosella caught my dangling ankle, pushed it up and over. Mrs. James shoved on my rump. I was astride.

Harry mounted lightly on the other horse. "Thanks again," he said. "Yes, thank you very much — " I made a great effort to sound grateful and pleasant.

We began to jog slowly away. After a dozen yards or so we looked back, waved. "Goodbye!"

"Goodbye!" Mrs. James waved; Rosella waved. Her dress opened up from armpit to breastbone — "Get up!" I kicked my horse, yelling, "Get up! Get up!" The horse as always paid no attention to me and ambled on at the same gait.

Harry said nothing until we were in the draw, Mrs. James, Rosella, the house out of sight behind us. Then, "You don't suppose I've never seen one of those things before, do you?" He added, after a few moments, in a gentle voice I hadn't heard from him previously, "I guess it's all just the way you've been brought up, Irene. So sheltered."

A movement above us caught my eye. On the rim of the yellow-grey knoll, Bob was working with pliers on the broken, sagging wire fence. Why, if no one wanted him to? Against the blue sky his fat

belly was noticeable, yet he looked hardier, stronger, than I had thought indoors. He saw us and made a sort of salute with a gloved hand.

We went around the next bend in the gully and Bob was hidden.

"He wants to marry her, you know," Harry said. "You'd think she'd jump at anyone, to get away from that place. And her old man — "

I took hold of the saddle-horn. I was dizzy again — but it was not really a physical dizziness. I did not know what it was.

One thing I did know, though, abruptly and very clearly. Life was not what I had thought it to be, not like that at all. What it was — For a few seconds I was more afraid of living even than I had been of dying. I wanted to die. If only I *had* died, last winter — I saw my grave, also perfectly clearly, a peaceful mound with one of Rosella's tombstones placed dead centre.

"Giddap!" Harry yelled.

He whacked my horse across its rear. We bounded up, out of the draw, on a level plateau, the tombstone falling and shattering behind me. It was glorious; exhilarating; the sky, so close to us, still perfectly clear, the sun brilliant, and Harry and I alone together, for the whole yellow afternoon.

But in a few seconds the rubbing of the hard saddle against my chafed thighs made me cry out, "Slow down, Harry! Please! Slow down!"

I tried to pull the horse in and at the same time hold on to the saddle horn and stand in the stirrups, so that my legs would be away from the hot leather. "Harry! It hurts!"

But all Harry did was gallop on, laughing.

THE EXCUSE

ELIZABETH GOURLAY

After the Trojan war is over,
Ulysses, due to the enmity of Zeus,
is forced to travel far and wide, —

All the while Menelaus prospers
and his lady Helen lies in her long robe
along by her husband's side, —

I have to snicker
when I listen to
this sister of Clytemnestra,
sitting in the frescoed hall
explaining to Ulysses' son,
how it was Aphrodite blinded her,
who lured her away from her daughter
her bridal chamber
and her husband noted for his wit and his handsome
red hair. —

I think Helen smiles over at Menelaus when she says this.

Well, we all know Aphrodite. Her deceitful character.
No matter if she does ride in a white wagon drawn by doves.
She is lewd, lascivious, vengeful, a liar and a cheat.
But beautiful. And not to be resisted.

Aphrodite. Whom men often call by her other name.

Of Love.

ELIZABETH GOURLAY's latest play, on Andrea del Sarto, was recently given a reading in Vancouver. She is the author of *Motions, Dreams & Aberrations*, a poetry collection.

THREE SEQUENCES FROM *INNER SPACE*

GEORGE AMABILE

1. *Myth*

Ouzo fills with glass highlights
gulls
that explode in the wind gloss
and the gilt figures of heros
cluster around the bar mirror
which is engraved
THE ANGELIKA
San Diego, 1923

The ice melts into an iridescent cloud
We edge out from the dock
Ithaka's wine-dark inlet
slips by like a worn figure of speech

2. *Nostalgia*

A tree
in the dusk
like a scrap of thread
that's begun to unravel
begins to unravel
the book I've read all afternoon
and something stirs under the blue ashes of winter

I'm alone after school
beating a fine blizzard out of the erasers
Huskies curl up and sleep in the drifts
At the window
an indian with grey hair
is weaving a mat with a deer in it
The light she works by smells of buffalo tallow
Calcium collects in creased knuckles
The hair on my wrist is grey

3. *Romantic Love*

I sit like the body ghost
in a tweed blizzard
that follows the national anthem everywhere
Cold sores flower under sweaty lip hair
I adore you
Lightning turns the rainy window blue every few minutes
I sip at the spaced waterstills
but it's like flipping through a skin magazine
or making up a bedroom
in cherry brocade
and surrounding the bed
with candles plugged into empty bottles
It makes your blue eyes darken
until you're somewhere else

GEORGE AMABILE's poems have appeared extensively in North American journals; he co-edits *The Far Point* at the University of Manitoba.

SUPREMATIST SKETCH #3

STEPHEN SCOBIE

They came along the westward shore: two. Two together,
two alone. Sand to their right, falling in dunes. Two
together, they stopped.

A crowd had gathered. We could see them now, twins. Male
and female. Two alone, with the dunes behind them. Before
our eyes they lay down on the sand, brother and sister,
two; they made love.

Each of us watched them alone, single, in a single vision.
Not a crowd, but each of us one. Watching two. They lay
down underneath the dune, brother

and sister, two; they made love. And when they had done,
they turned to us with open hands. We walked towards them,
a crowd towards the sand, but each still single in a single
vision, fixed upon two.

It broke apart. Each became double; suddenly

we turned on our shadows and savagely tore their flesh.

STEPHEN SCOBIE was born in Scotland in 1943 and came to Canada in 1965. He now teaches English at the University of Alberta, where he also co-edits *The White Pelican.*

RAW MATERIAL

ACHILLE CHAVÉE

Translated from the French by Michael Bullock

Words
immortal words
of eyelash of string of powder of salt and of flowers
moist mauve worm-eaten pale and carnivorous
words of red wax and tears
of kisses and Judas torches
pointed stubborn sinewy obtuse pot-bellied and heavy
end words rhyme words
with dangerous couplings
with easy connexions
with incurable diseases
slip words sick with the plague
monumental and proud
with gems of spelling mistakes
criminal and pure words
beheaded on the scaffold of censorship
words my boon companions of orgies
of nights of snow and of the pen
words tortured with the flame-thrower
words with the figure of a gazelle
with a skin of red velvet

with French can-can legs
with the shifty silhouette of a pimp
words wearing bowler hats
hidden in pianos and jazz trumpets
high-stool words
that are a permanent and gratuitous insult
words of perdition and derailment
of Babel of carnival and of hieroglyph
words that are now making love
stilettos of exact duration
amulets and figures of gold
magical masters of objects
serpents of dialectics
creative burning words that deliver the world to us
grow multiply more cruel and more strong

ACHILLE CHAVEE, born at Charleroi in 1906, is a leading member of the Belgian surrealist group. He is the author of twenty-two volumes of poetry, two collections of aphorisms and numerous essays. By profession he is a lawyer.

THREE POEMS BY RAY WAITKINS

LEAVES

when the leaves fall in the
backyard they swirl up in the draft from
the alley as if still being
green they refuse death in the garbage
but make a last jerky dash for
the sky ending instead in some tarry
roof corner where an old wino
sees them as yet another assault on his
sanity just before the first puddles
freeze on the sidewalk and it takes two pints
before he can dream of sunshine and
driving with his beautiful cousin to
the beach you don't even notice
the ending

BOZO

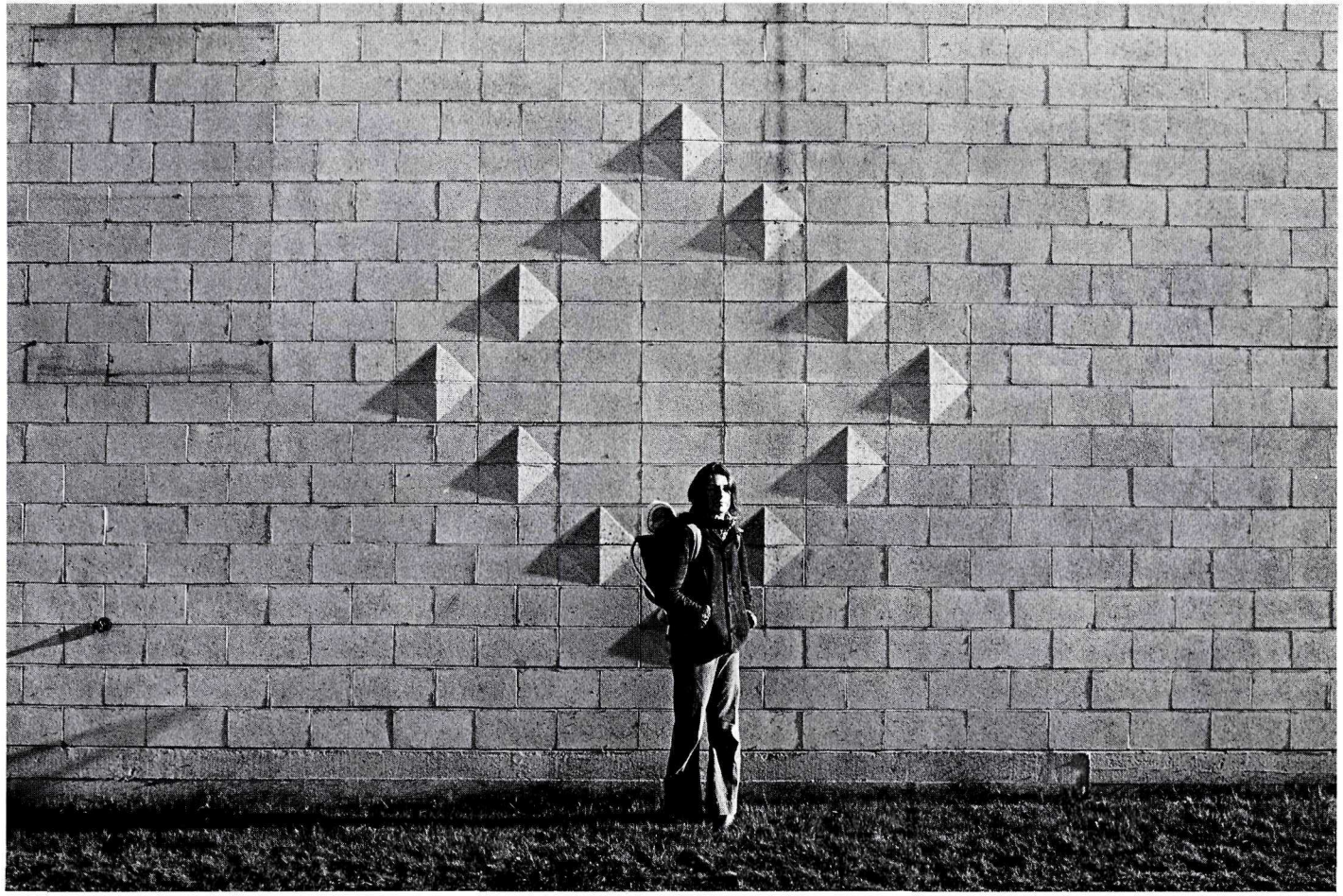
the Nuenezes are moving out from
this beer bottle block with its
gaudy lacework of Spanish voices hanging
from fire-escapes wafting down alleys
they're leaving the fleas and La
Cucaracha old friends of many a
dinner and dream all left behind in the old
cave greasy from the interminable flow of
rice and beans and five kids running always
running to kick the bottle at the cat to
climb over the newest car to chase
the Dominicanoes from the block running
after the numbers man for soda money
Bozo the youngest runs and doubles
back through the hall-way where he saw
the ghost of Big Hector and hides
in his brother's pigeon coop built so strong
it can withstand the onslaught of a hundred
pigeon thieves from Brooklyn until
found he leaves screaming out the car window
and the neighborhood is quieter dreaming
of the Nuenez's new
home half of a two family house in White Plains

BOTTOM LIFE

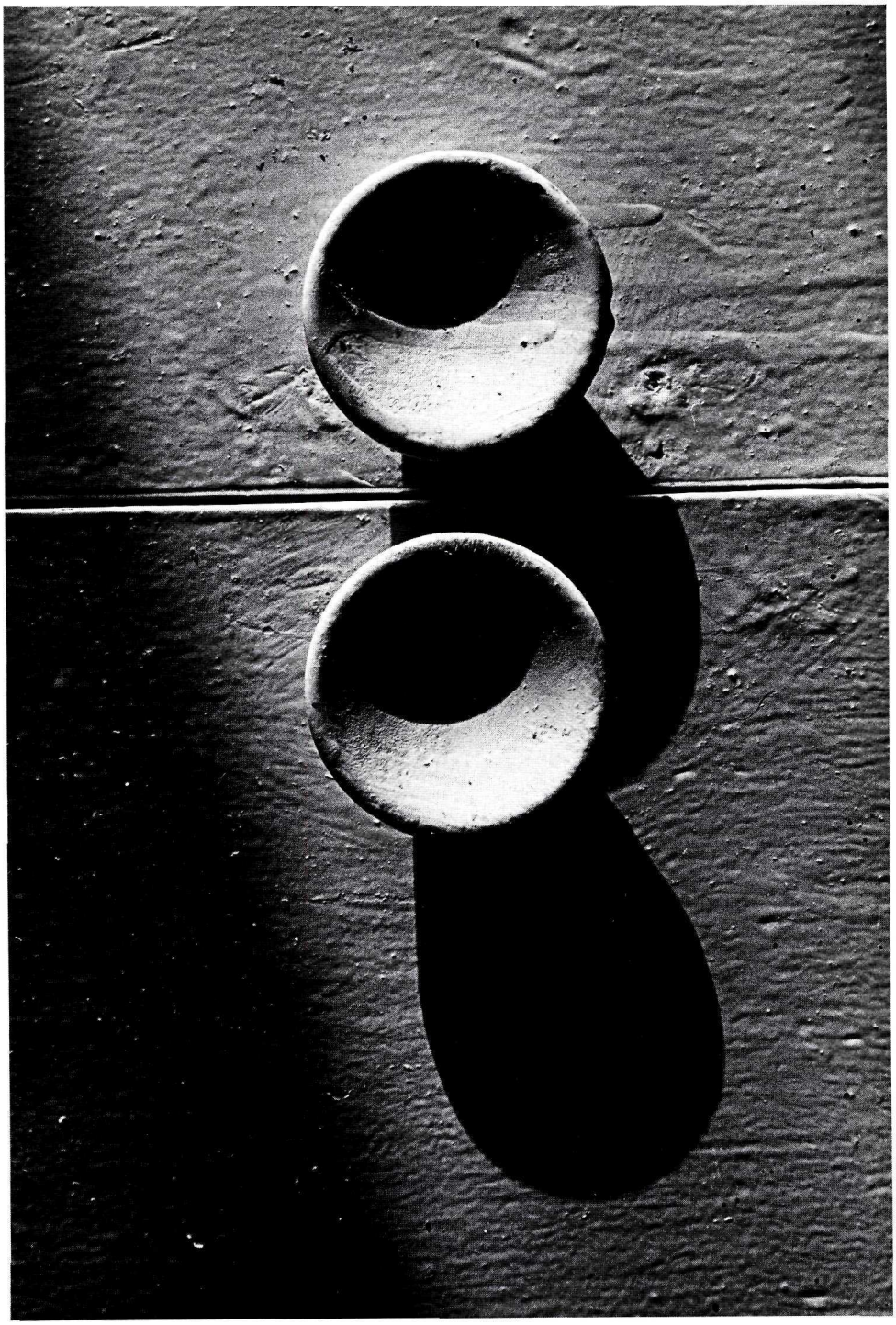
a beautiful day it's
beautiful so sunny and crisp
you can see the passenger jet's window-
teeth of the king shark
gloating across the public air waves
surrounded by a coterie of translucent commercials
their delicate tentacles probing the mud
for little fish to numb
and suck their brain matter

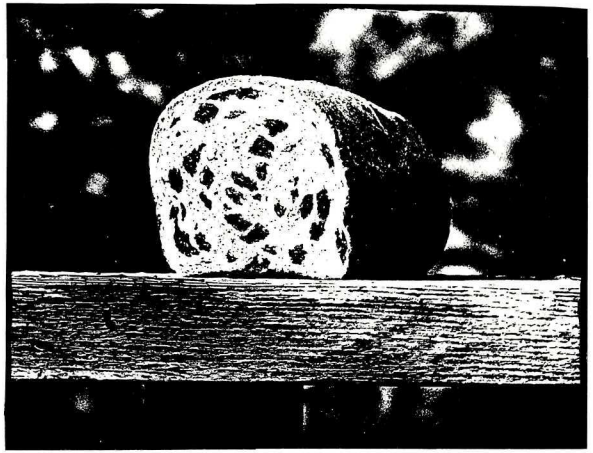
we live in a dark hole in the coral wall
but it's pretty inside
we work on it nights to make it warm and clean
days we scuttle around outside collecting shells
for friendship necklaces
I found one that played the music of childhood
I'm always surprised when I make it home
to your soft teeth and friendly pinches

RAY WAITKINS, who lives in New York City, has had poems in *The Little Magazine*.



Michael Henry's land... Roberts Creek B.C. "Mushroom Festival" Oct. 26, 1969





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SHINICHIRO NAKAMURA is known in the Japanese literary world as a writer of analytical yet mystical flavour, and has published full-length novels as well as a book of short stories. The story printed here is the first to be translated into English; other work of his will soon appear in French, Italian and Russian.

HANABUSA is a pseudonym.

The Genie and Her Magic Bottle

SHINICHIRO NAKAMURA

Translated from the Japanese by Hanabusa

The young man got off at the streetcar stop and looked to the right as he had been instructed over the telephone and immediately noticed the signboard: Natural Botanical Garden.

He walked to the wooden gate which looked like the grand entrance of some ancient mansion and handed 100 yen through a small ticket window beside the gate. The old attendant, who wore a black stand-up collar, handed back a strip of blue admittance ticket in a bored manner. As he passed it through the window he tore off a portion and stuck it on a spike. It was close to noon but judging by the scarcity of receipts stuck on the spike, this botanical garden had very few visitors. Actually, the young man was not aware that there existed such a quiet place within the city limits. Walking through the gate, he immediately stepped into dense forest. It seemed inconceivable that there could be such a heavy growth of trees right next to a busy streetcar line and separated from it only by a single wooden gate.

While he walked leisurely along the path, observing the interlacing branches overhead, he gradually sank into a dreamy state.

The fact was, this was the place where a girl he had met a year ago worked. A botany graduate from Hokkaido University, she had found this job in Tokyo.

The young man had met her at a mutual friend's home. He himself had studied law and was headed towards a diplomatic

career, but his aim was not so much to become a member of the Japanese diplomatic corps, but more to escape from crowded Japan and wander all over the outside world. As a youngest son, there was no obligation for him to live with his parents, and the family had expected him to earn his own living.

And so, with responsibility resting lightly upon him, he had grown up to be an easygoing footloose person. It was this easygoing personality which enabled him to become a good friend of a rather unusual girl who didn't use any make-up and who cared nothing for human company but preferred that of plant life. Throughout the one year of their acquaintanceship she was a most congenial companion who went for walks with him and listened attentively to all his talk about his endless daydreams. The girls he had known in the past had always led him to noisy jazz bars where conversation was carried on by yelling at each other at the top of their voices, and in throwing paper ribbons at their favorite popular singers. Or else they were girl students who wore heavy glasses and who cornered you and expounded their views on ecology or international awareness or nationalism. None of the others had radiated the same feeling of tranquility as this girl naturalist.

As the young man followed the path, he thought: Her entire existence is like that of some plant. She revealed a quiet, friendly nature and her very silence often stirred something within him. She had mentioned that she worked here and slept in a room adjoining the research room, and today, for the first time, she had invited him to visit her in her quarters. In the past, when he had made repeated requests to visit, she had always replied, "Not yet, not yet," but today she had phoned and asked him to call on her.

"Why is today particularly all right?" he had asked, and she had replied:

"Figure it out for yourself. Can't you guess?"

He had no idea whatsoever. Her birthday? Perhaps he had asked the date of her birth and then forgotten it. And so, to be on the safe side, he had brought a box of shortcakes. Bringing flowers to a botanical garden seemed somewhat redundant.

Up until now, she had always come into town to meet him, but why hadn't he thought of visiting her before? When they first met she had mentioned this place. He wondered what could have been the matter with him for not having thought about coming out here sooner. But at the very beginning, when she refused to have him call on her, he had vaguely assumed that the botanical garden was her

residence, and if so, had he come uninvited and run into her here, he might have caused her some embarrassment. But as he walked through the woods so overgrown that the sky was invisible, he thought: I wish I had found this place much sooner.

At exactly that moment he experienced a queer psychological phenomenon: I have been here before. He was certain. When was it? Had his parents brought him here as a child? But this feeling of "before" was of very recent occurrence. Was it a month before? But no, more like yesterday. . . .

He was perplexed. It was impossible. As a child he had walked in his sleep, but he had outgrown his somnambulism and there was no reason to believe he had come here without knowing it. But as he gazed up at the smoke-like sky which appeared in patches through the thick branches, he felt as though he was floating and that his feet were not touching the ground — and he was positive he had experienced this same sensation very recently.

He finally came out of the woods into a small clearing. A little stream was flowing and there was a wooden bridge in the distance. It's true — I have crossed that very bridge, and after crossing the bridge . . . yes, yes, he knew exactly where to look . . . to the right. Just as he remembered, there was a pool formed by a natural spring and a wooden ladle in it to welcome anyone who wished to have a drink.

He approached the spring and stopped for a drink. His face was reflected in the water and moved. In that instant, he involuntarily spoke out loud: "That's it! This was last night's dream!" In his dream he had wandered to this place and drunk the water and observed the reflection of his face, and then as he watched, a girl with a secret smile emerged next to his own. She stared at his reflection for a few seconds and then whispered:

"Come. Come in here."

The voice enticed the young man into the water. Its surface was like a mirror and after going through it, he had walked into another world. It was exactly as though he had stepped into the opposite side of the world of men.

The girl took his hand and walked ahead of him, looking back again and again and smiling reassuringly at him.

Finally he found himself in a cave sitting in the midst of flower petals piled high like a feather quilt. The fragrance was overpowering; he was lulled into drowsiness and was barely able to keep his eyes open to gaze at the girl who had led him in here.

"How is it? Isn't it a wonderful feeling?" She said. Then her expression suddenly changed and was now charged with deep emotion:

"Let's live here forever and ever," she whispered in a low voice. He was suddenly afraid.

If I should succumb to this seductive voice and stay, this will certainly be the end of me. My life will end here in this cave. Grasping at this thought, he struggled to get to his feet. But the flower petal quilt was too light and soft and the more pressure he put on his feet the deeper he sank. He felt himself sinking, sinking deep in the petals and finally lost consciousness.

And . . . from that unconsciousness . . . now — precisely at the moment his gaze focused on the mirror-like water, he recovered his total presence. I have returned to the very spot where last night's dream originated. In the natural lifespan of a man, he cannot turn the clock back to one certain period of his past life and live it over again. But in a dream, it is possible to return over and over again to one specific time. There is no drifting of time in a dream. But right at this moment I am not dreaming. I am living in the world of days with each second ticking off relentlessly into the future. It could be that my last night's dream was merely a rehearsal for what is to come today in reality. This is the first time I have actually looked deeply into this pool of water, and if I take the next step and follow that girl's voice again, that will be the end of me. The years will be spent in idleness. If I let that happen, then what is to become of my aspiration to travel and to feel and experience the pulse of the world? . . .

He was assailed with confusion as to the identity of the girl who had enticed him from within the pool in his dream. That girl, that face, that voice — have I met her someplace in real life, or is she merely a figment of my dream? . . .

At that very moment a real girl's face appeared in the reflection next to his own. She was smiling as she whispered:

"Come. Come this way."

The young man recoiled and leaned against the rock beside the pool.

"What happened? Did I frighten you by speaking unexpectedly?" That was the botanist girl speaking those words. But her first "Come. Come this way," was exactly the voice he had heard in his dream and the face reflected in the pool was also the face he had seen in his dream. He was completely bewildered. But the person who

touched his shoulder and said, "What happened?" was without a doubt real and belonged to the gentle girl who had always enveloped him in an atmosphere of serene tranquility.

He reacted promptly to the present and to a realization that he had been invited to call on her this day. The sudden impact of stepping into virgin woods in such drastic contrast to his daily surroundings had momentarily made him lose contact with reality and he had lapsed into a dream. Now this real girl had brought him back solidly to the existing present world.

He stood and faced her. She looked at him with a guileless smile. Her expression today seemed more alive and glowing than usual. But this too may have been the after-effects of having been deep in a colorless dreamworld.

The girl led the way further through the woods. Observing her from behind the young man began to feel lighthearted and had a sudden urge to burst out singing.

With her back still turned to him she said: "My room is so dingy, you'll probably be shocked."

"So is my apartment . . ." and he continued: "I wonder — will you come to my apartment sometime?"

"Is it really all right?" Her voice bounced back: "Perhaps I'll move in with you."

"Yes, please do!" he replied lightly, half in jest.

But the minute he spoke those words, he saw her body go rigid. Well, what do you know, the young man thought. That was no joke to her. She really meant it. If so, did she have one special room of "my apartment' in mind? Surely, she didn't mean simply to move in with him just for convenience sake, but still . . . one chance in a million . . .

He was flustered because there had never been any show of affection between them. He abruptly changed the subject: "By the way, what day is today?"

"Don't you know yet . . . ?" Her voice became subdued, and slightly agitated: "Do I really have to tell you?"

The silence continued until they were out of the woods. He was depressed by this silence. It must be her birthday today as I guessed, and it could very well be that she told me once and now she is disappointed because I have forgotten. They came to a wooden structure and a greenhouse.

"This way," and she turned and smiled at him. There was the

usual calm gentleness in her smile. The young man recovered his cheerfulness.

A tiny room. The walls were somewhat soiled, very much like a hospital room. A metal bed was pushed against one corner. On the walls were photographs of odd-shaped plants that were unknown to him. Outside the small window was a flowerbed covered with strawbonnets.

The girl suddenly flung herself at him. Since the room had given him the impression of a hospital, his first thought was that she had become ill. But clinging to him she whispered:

"I like you." The voice sounded exactly like the girl of last night's dream. He became confused and pushed her head away from his chest. He noticed for the first time that she had make-up on her face and the scent of powder teased his nose. And this scent also was reminiscent of last night's dream. The face before him rocked like the face of the reflection in the pool. He tried to shake himself free of the illusion by opening his eyes wide.

"Why do you look so angry?" the girl whispered. This time the tone of her voice came through naturally as the one he was used to hearing. In relief he smiled and said:

"It was so unexpected."

The girl blushed slightly and looking towards the bed whispered:

"But then, today is Valentine's Day. It's the day a girl can declare herself to a man."

He burst out laughing. "What a surprise. You are the most unpredictable . . . No, sorry . . . you are really romantic just like any other girl, aren't you?"

The girl sat on her bed and sighed:

"I knew it was no use. This is so embarrassing — so embarrassing. I am clumsy at this sort of thing. I can't do it well. So honestly, let's forget the whole thing."

Now the young man became embarrassed.

"That's fine with me. This will be the end to what happened today."

He hurriedly brought out the box of shortcakes and placed it on the table. "You must be tired after exerting yourself so much. Have some." They looked at each other and burst out laughing. He sat next to the girl. Suddenly a feeling of close intimacy sprang up between them. The young man thought: I wish this tranquil feeling would last forever, and in this mellowed mood he became talkative

and his reverie jumped from one foreign country to another. She listened wordlessly as usual, then raised her head:

"If that's what you want, I'll have to spend the rest of my life living out of a trunk."

For a moment he did not grasp her meaning. Then his face reddened. Her words implied that she would go wherever he went for the rest of their lives . . . that she was indicating she meant to marry him, for she had assumed that she had been accepted by him for this role.

Oddly he then realized for the first time that he, too, had been in love with her unknowingly. He had never in the past tried to analyze what her feelings were towards him, and certainly the thought of marriage had never entered his mind.

Married life — this was something that was supposed to have no meaning for him. Even today, while riding on the streetcar, he had noticed highrise cooperative apartment buildings and had pictured in his mind a man and a woman living in each apartment, giving birth to children and putting out roots — but he saw himself as one of those who would always be looking in from the outside. He was happy in the thought that he was free to take off and wander when and wherever his heart desired.

But now that the girl had come right out in the open and let the idea alight, she made married life sound rather enjoyable and free. He had a wild vision of a large balloon appearing in the sky and the two of them seated in the balloon basket, waving goodbye to the world. The two of them together and independent, separating themselves from the world . . .

Outside the window, the melancholy winter shadows indicated the lateness of the hour. He stood up to leave.

Then very naturally she came to him. He placed his hands on her shoulders and kissed her wide forehead lightly. Suddenly embarrassed, he turned and left the room.

The girl followed him as far as the pool, and then, picking up the ladle, stirred the water to mix both their reflections.

That night he dreamt a strange dream again. He was seated in an unfamiliar hotel room. He seemed to be waiting for something. He became impatient and started to drum his fingers on the table.

Suddenly the door opened and the roomclerk appeared in a white uniform.

"Did you call, sir?" He was speaking Spanish, the young man thought. He gave some kind of instruction, also in Spanish. The

clerk seemed to understand him, nodded his head several times and then said politely:

"This is Madrid. You have to go to Toledo for that."

The clerk bowed and left. The door closed.

The young man shouted to someone: "We're leaving!" and then recoiled, thinking that if he shouted too loudly, he would awaken himself.

The partitioning drapes parted and his wife appeared. She was the botanist. Without a word she started to pack briskly. Then just as quickly she started to unpack on the bed.

"What are you doing?" he asked irritably.

"This is Toledo."

"But you . . ." he started to say, when the door opened and the same roomclerk appeared:

"This is Toledo. You have to go to Brazil for that." The clerk retired.

"South America?" he muttered to himself in disappointment.

The wife started to pack without uttering a sound. He watched her silently. Then once more her action reversed, she started to unpack and his trousers and shirts were thrown all over the bed.

He shouted again: "You're repeating the same thing over and over again. There is no difference between what you are doing, and the people who put out roots in one spot . . ."

His wife looked up quickly and said: "That's exactly what I told you. Take a good look at this room."

He tried to look around and found the room had abruptly changed into the cave in the dream.

He became frightened and looked towards his wife. A woman was inside the trunk rearranging the contents and she was the girl in the cave. She seemed unaware of the fact that she had turned into a genie, and holding out the magic bottle she said to him:

"This magic bottle really lasts. We've been using it for fifteen years already. When we bought this at a department store in Tokyo, you complained that it was too expensive, but in the long run it was cheaper to leave all the shopping to me."

Fifteen years — magic bottle — shopping at a department store . . . How long . . . how long is this dream going to last? he sighed in his dream.

SOUL POEM

LEN GASPARINI

we live in a hole
my wife drinks
our kids found a dead rat
in the toilet bowl
and i'd give my welfare roll
to see LEROI JONES
enter
a WASP church
on christmas eve
stroll
up the main aisle to the altar
fingersnap
the sign of the cross
and holler
HEY, WHITEY!
DON'T JUST HANG THERE!
SMILE!
IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY!

LEN GASPARINI edits, with others, *Mainline*, and lives, with countless other poets, on the Lower Peninsula of Ontario.

SEQUENCE

ELIZABETH WILSON

i

speech

Oh,
I am a master
of corollary.

I can compare
Christ
to an apple
if you want

or you to me

ii

mouths

my mouth
    went to sleep
as you spoke to me

and the sour stale inside
was my only rebellion

iii

the archaeologists

All they need
are your jaw
and pelvic bones

to find the size of your head
and the way you stood

Stop loving me
Stop writing it down

They'll never know
unless your
voice stops
in amber
like the flies

iv

for Sartre

Why haven't these words
been used before?

ELIZABETH WILSON is a student at the University of British Columbia. This is her first published poem.

MARCUS BULLOCK's translations appear elsewhere in this issue.

Miss Cunningham

MARCUS BULLOCK

Now what's this? Why am I hurrying this way when it's still morning and I should really be sleeping still? Who hurries down the Hornsey Road anyway? Here I am and today is today — is it not? And I am the whitest man on the Hornsey Road. And of course everything is strange as usual. Well well well. Nowhere to go — that's fine, there is nowhere I want to go, and, praise be to Providence, I want to go nowhere.

Praise be, praise be, praise be.

Now what's this? Somebody calls my name when all is well? Can good come of this, as indeed it should? Indeed, indeed. "Raphael" the name, beautiful as it is, that makes me say "Here I am" faster than I can even think it. Now where is this beautiful voice that sings out my beautiful name? Are you there, are you there?

Ah! Miss Cunningham, Miss Cunningham!

God bless you Miss Cunningham, my saintly Miss Cunningham, for arriving down the Hornsey Road on your two spinning wheels of silver! May God and all his gods bless you for being the blessed district nurse of this wild, wild district. Now tell me, tell me soon, how are things in your wild whirling world of sickness and of good health. And while you tell me, and tell me at length, let me watch you, for you are the whitest woman on the Hornsey Road and stirring to my heart. You are so golden my golden girl and now it is noon, so tell me all as I requested and give me time to draw breath between each sentence.

So, Miss Cunningham, tell me about the Greeks.

Are they sick, are they well, are they happy and are they sloe-eyed like in the films? Do they still dance when the weather is inclement? Bouzouki? Sirtacci? You make them welcome, do you not, Miss Cunningham, so they do not feel so far from their little island.

And the Turks, Miss Cunningham, the Turks, who think that even I am Greek?

Do you make them welcome so they feel very far from the evil archbishop? Are they as strong as oaks? Do they offer you hashish, Miss Cunningham, and do you accept?

Oh, Miss Cunningham, Miss Cunningham, you look so tired. Have you been fighting the plague, Miss Cunningham? Are you are you sad? Be golden, my golden girl. Today is still today, is it not? They say it is yesterday's tomorrow, and how true, how true! But remember it is still today's today, and is it not?

Is it the Pakistanis? Oh Miss Cunningham, is it the Pakistanis? Have they brought the cholera back to London, as they say in the papers? Oh, you are a saint, Miss Cunningham, and I read the wrong papers. You are a saint and you will be rewarded, you are an angel, you are a goddess. Is it as you say? Praise be, praise be, praise be.

Is it the West Indians, beautiful teacher? They are darker than the night. Is it the West Indians? Tell me all; I must know; conceal nothing; I hang upon your words. Do they drink rum and speak coarsely in their homes? Do they sing wicked calypsos and dance the limbo between your legs?

Oh, you are a true saint, Miss Cunningham, most certainly a true saint — now let me reward you. Come with me and we will go pray for an hour and He will not begrudge us. Then we shall drive down in a taxi all along the Caledonian Road. The whole afternoon we shall have — the whole afternoon for our honeymoon. For saying yes, here's a golden ring, which I shall wear in your honour. Yes, honour is yours, and honour is mine too, and honour is ours and *vindicta mihi*, and we shall bring honour to all our friends up and down the Cally. And we will go down to the filthy river and dream about the time when salmon swam there and I will guess what colour your hair is today. Please God, please God, let it be green.

But you are too close, much too close, Miss Cunningham. Oh, please step back, please step back a little, I must breathe. Step into some words, my love, step into a dream. Step back so I can see you.

* * *

There she is now. She is as beautiful as a dream and she is there to wait for me. A noble character, a conscientious and idealistic young person, she is well-respected for herself as well as her work. She not only earns goodwill and respect for herself, however, but to the same degree she influences opinion in favour of the authorities who assigned her to the task she performs so well. Thus she is also a potent political force. In an environment less enlightened than our own dear city this might attract a certain amount of hostility from some opposing party or faction, but mercifully this is not the case. Not at all. Her good work is universally approved and applauded for everyone appreciates its value and importance.

But who needs the extravagance of a taxi to go down the Caledonian Road? I would rather travel high up in the air on a giant red bus and see London as it should be seen. This is no place to be riding round in a taxi. This is not Paris at midnight or New York in the afternoon, nor is it even six o'clock here to go speeding underground from Baker Street to Waterloo and beyond. And so I am by the filthy waters of the Thames and I dream of the time when salmon swam there in monstrous profusion, and servants were obliged to eat this tedious food three times a week. All up and down the river old men sit and dream the same dream. It rains and the opposite bank fades. But where are you, Miss Cunningham, when it gets late so early now?

You are no longer with me; you are no longer there. Where are you? Are you at the house of my friend?

* * *

Yusuf, my friend, says that God was born of the sky and brought to hideous perfection in a black womb of night. When I see him on the street I say "There is someone there I would rather not see." When I go to his house to see him, he is not there, and his neighbours say that Miss Cunningham has not passed that way today. While I am travelling home I dream hard, but she is not there. But when it is late and I sit at my table and stare, I find her far away. What could Yusuf tell me, except that the minutes are flying by like snowflakes — as though I had not seen that for myself? Yusuf left Cyprus in 1954, but he says it is still yesterday. Every time I see him he says "Raphael, Raphael, you are a Greek, and to think that only yesterday I was in Cyprus!" It is hard to talk to such a man. What can I ask him about Miss Cunningham? "Raphael, come to

my house," he tells me, "come we will eat majoun and drink Turkish coffee. I will read to you from my Turkish newspapers. I will forgive you for yesterday and we will talk about my sister."

"I saw her today."

* * *

You are so far away, Miss Cunningham, so far away. I sit at my table and you are there, but it is all so hard. You hide in some words or in a dream and I do not know what to say or do. Are we in different worlds, Miss Cunningham? Is fate such a bitter thing? I wish you would play the piano for me and soothe the trembling from my chest. I would sit and watch you, and when you paused I could tell you the good news until we were both quite familiar with it. We could discuss what the young people next door are saying about Macedonia. Once I knew a girl whose father was a Montenegran and she was tall and slim and dark and ugly, and I loved her, but she was not like you, Miss Cunningham.

Do you know Yusuf, Miss Cunningham? He is my friend and loves me.

When I look down at my feet, my shoe-laces are always untied. Always. No matter how often I tie them. What does this mean? Always, always, always. Who has decided it should be this way? I am not master of myself. Yusuf could tell me, but what would he say? Is the answer in his Turkish newspapers? Perhaps I am a character from a cartoon who always has his shoe-laces untied. I appear daily to be read by people of the world of four dimensions. Each day at breakfast time they take in the newspaper from the doorway and unfold three dimensions into four and read about me and see me walking down the Hornsey Road with my shoe-laces undone. Who would know? Can it really be true? Would Yusuf know? Would Miss Cunningham?

Oh, Miss Cunningham, Miss Cunningham, you are so strange and far away — I think I see you hiding in words and in dreams, but where are you really from? Do you go home into the darkness and read about me? Do you, also, take out your newspaper in the train as you travel to work in the morning, and rustle the pages loudly till you find me just to see that all is well and my shoe-laces are still undone? Angel that you are, is that what you do?

* * *

Yusuf! Yusuf! Why are you hurrying when its still morning? What's there to hurry for on the Hornsey Road? Have you heard the news and is it all true? And is God still great and fate still what it was? Is she truly dead as they say, or only bathed in a pool of blood? Was it a calamity that struck her or just a glancing blow? And was it, as they say, a great red London bus? Ah, she is gone forever like the ladybirds of Atlantis! Take me to your house, Yusuf, and we will eat majoun and drink Turkish coffee. Forgive me for yesterday.

They say the new district nurse is Indian. Let us all say ahimsa, ahimsa, ahimsa.

The Eighteenth of Brumaire The Sixth of May

To Steven Brion

MICHAEL PATRICK O'CONNOR

"... the coup d'etat of Brumaire opened the way for the restoration of personal power." GEORGES LEFEBVRE

One

There is no window
There is no screen
The air moves in slowly
as I lift the shade
I put my hand out the window
It is spring and we are still alive

Of course we must come to some resolutions
But we have to stop planning for emergencies
At least today let them come
See if we care today maybe even tomorrow

I wrote in my diary

Afraid of the approaching persecutions
I have gathered together all my money
so I may go abroad immediately if need be

Every quarter of an hour I receive news
from Saint-Cloud and depending on the news
I hasten or postpone my departure

I have copied out this passage for you
but the diary itself I have burned
I will have nothing to do with the man
who always kept his eyes motionless
on principle

Why can't I tell you the whole story
of the knock on the door or the fall
down the stairs
even though it is funnier
when I leave things out
And then it makes sense to you
But there was more
You always guess that but you never ask

It is true I have to admit it
because I love you and that affection
stinks of our time that the return of spring
will mean the resumption of the war
despite the cries of famine
despite the civil strife

But I have had enough of politics
the head plus the sword to carry out
what the head devises the other man defined it
but he placed first the head
and I after him give first place
to your breath

Two

That unlived world
is only touched by our sources
in secret
and they are all unreliable
that is no nobler for the time lost
or the loss itself than their makers
who were no nobler than we are

Sometimes I get lost
as I spread and join my fingertips tracing
the routes those streets describe
especially the way to the garden

There down from the garden
was the harbor its location
was disguised by the mapmaker

intentionally a cover up for the sources

of the ever-growing
flower of our loves' loves
a summer flower
that does not remember its spring
does not look forward
to the 18th of Brumaire I pray
for that summer flower

as I sit on the river bank
and light a match watch the blue cone
support the yellow one and spread beyond it
into the colorless flame that can only be seen
against this darkness

And against this darkness
I pray we find the rose's stem
as the match explodes
into its triple order and then dies down
leaving first a red glow and then just
the blackened match

I knead the black wet soil
as we need that summer flower

At the sight of it
we will be slowed a little
not so blind
not so breathless

Three

Out of unending sensuality arises
nothing not even tears
and never again the deadly dance
The graven images forbidden our Jewish forbears
mean nothing to us

Think of Benedict Spinoza
grinding lenses alone in his room
patiently grinding lenses

By the government of God
I understand the fixed and unalterable order
of nature and the interconnection
of all natural things

grinding with special care his objective lens
the one closest to the thing observed
receiving its rays of light
directly

Those other flowers
and the still air they grow in
are beyond our reach
beyond the mesh which grows from silence
out of which silence grows
catching us here leaving us
with only our prayers that those we love
have long lives

And the enemies of the Directory
would have been killed
as were the enemies
of the Committee for Public Safety
were it not
that the Directors themselves

were discarded
like the leaves
in November

I remember before and then
and after the leaves
Do those leaves last
until November only to be torn
from their branches by the rain
or simply fall
that gratuity overcomes only the earth

Four

He moves toward the steps
His share of a bad harvest
has been requisitioned
for the Directory's army
He hears the cries of famine
outside Saint-Cloud
but he does not understand
He ignores the snipping around him
the deserters the hostages

Here we manage to bring in a harvest
twelve months of the year
Each part of the cycle
seems to recur every day

pulling our loves out of the air
we turn on the night
but leave the lights off in the room
waiting for the gentlest breath
of the breeze through the window
and then the rain
in which I fall
to my knees

The other man lying drunk
in the field he had turned over
that morning pulls himself up
He traces the barriers
and they arch
into rigid down-pointing curves
strings taut as wire

Napoleon declares
to one of his aides
on the 18th of Brumaire
The situation of the French peasant
now . . .
it will . . .
not change

Breaking your spine
that weight bends you back
to the earth

Five

I will put this together
in the park and the playground
by the river as I move the merry-go-round
and it moves me
I have no place to stop
I fall off dizzy

I will order this herbarium with Napoleon's life
No my life yours
Exactly as the records have it
from the common beginnings
the sky reflecting hell's fire
as breath dies among the streams of water
that offer to succor us in the July heat

As I swing tonight I can't see the sky
for the branches of the tree
which at night goes to gray then
goes brighter at the flash of his great deeds
his conquests all are upheld
He is accorded all honors

This is known from the memory of others
I remember nothing The flowers wilt
All those flowers fade

When the other man awakens as that tree
will awaken the others he will fall

You appear to me in my own likeness
but I cannot find another likeness
to make you appear again

dizzy off the merry-go-round

That tree obscures the night sky
by the river but at the round of a stone
the hiding places of parasites will be razed
The voice in the garden speaks

Your faith in me destroys my own
When I find you still in this mire alone

Another voice another memory
other deaths another voice

Six

I am caught writing a poem I cannot finish
The Directory the 18th of Brumaire
I am half mad to bear this burden

But patience which is to possess
the time to discover where
do I discover patience?
In music
in the crocuses which have bloomed and died
or in the tulips which are blooming now?

The resonance of their cry
The revolution is over
does not move through us to rest
Like the sun at noon
it reflects only itself
and I have not just myself but you
to answer for

I pray these gods may grant you
patience drawn through a long life

I am caught writing a poem
I cannot get out of the way
Out of the flow
of words that are bounded by time
and have no patience
that receive the direct rays of light
which are deflected from me

And I want more than to see
or to hear
What more there is
you understand

Seven

A flower encased in a block of marble and ice
and a man in solitary confinement
fought for power that November in France

The flower its motion secretive won out
That man's heartbeat was too loud too regular
He sees in his memory something he saw
when he was free and his heartbeat continues
too loud too even

Napoleon and his brother rode
out of Paris that morning
spoke the Eastern desert
where they killed off the wine and grew
enormous in the afternoon sun

The city the cell the grotesque garden
where the tick of a clock is heard
all day long
                just as sometimes
when you step out of your room
you find the other room the one
with window to which you cross
slowly

The ice hangs irregularly
on that marble shorn off
only by accidental contact
And the prisoner often cries at night
knowing that he may never be released
But he will not shape himself in time to his lot
That is not possible
He will have nothing to do with the man
stifling a yawn at the thought
of that old catastrophe
What November demands is impossible

I have been listening to the clock
in this room all day long
The ice melts around me
I will not shape myself in time
to my lot
Accidental contact is reshaping
my face The ice floods the river
in the spring By May it is all over
I have drowned I am defunct Write me off

Eight

All things are constructed
on certain principles
The air is the first of them
moving slowly into the separate sound
of the world taking up the sound
as we discover the other principles
light the zenith the horizon
This is the constitution of things
the air moves majestically
into the world's separate sound and spreads
through layer upon shining layer
We behold the world complete
There is now wind for breath

The other says
But there is no world without death
They have no bread in this city
governed by bayonets
holding people in their houses

Those bayonets have nothing to do
with the separate sound of the world
They were there in Paris
on the 18th of Brumaire
The steel will make it through the winter
A little rust perhaps but it will be there
tomorrow

The state is not a mathematic thing
It is Napoleon Bonaparte who conquered
Switzerland Italy Egypt and India
took his troops there and took
the lands This is Napoleon Bonaparte
When he speaks he does not use the air
He makes no sounds separate from the steel
and the bread

This cannot be the constitution of things

On the 18th of Brumaire Napoleon Bonaparte
says to *les Anciens*

The Constitution?
You have violated it
It no longer exists!

Now there is no barrier but the air

Nine

Engels writing of the 18th of Brumaire said
Freedom is the recognition of necessity

It was necessary for example
that the yellow tulips come out today
and that the red ones wait two
or three days

The red ones will have no clumsy leaves
but the yellow ones are dying already

It starts at their roots of course
Their death starts at their roots

The yellow tulips are out
I have ripped one off its stem
I have it here with me
These few hours in a glass of water
it almost seemed to thrive
its leaves open to more than their fullness
But I know that it is dying

And dying it inspires me to write
of the triple curse
cast by the shards of every broken
plaster flower
whose moral is nothing more
than your bruises your pain your sweat
The dust settles soon after that flower's fall
The greatest death is the most sudden

I am going to discard the tulip I should never
have taken it from the clay I should never
have noticed its leaves are clumsy Its roots
would never have occurred to me I have no roots
of my own I live here from time to time

I pray and celebrate from time to time

Freedom is the recognition of poetry

Ten

Too often my joy and praise grow
out of my anger at the other man
who thinks his dreams are a mistake
Every color lays on him
like impatience in love to finish
what hasn't been begun
He protests that rigid lines
hold our lives to the old truths
He screams that deadly
pressures shape
every wrinkle on his unjoined hands

Look at me I begin to say
my clothing has seams
and when I stand in the sunlight
I cast a shadow

But the reply I must make begins

This is a poet's birthday

Forget the money
We'll sneak out of the country

And suspend the elections shoot
every man in Saint-Cloud
if necessary if your birthright
means nothing to you

The other man out there
is standing up he is running
Now he stops and he is slowly
putting his foot on the sun

Ignore him and celebrate today

The world is full of balance
You did do too much of the work
Your world your balance

There is no window
There is no screen
The air moves in slowly
as I lift the shade
I put my hand out the window
It is spring and we are still alive

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TWO POEMS BY EUGENE McNAMARA

DILLINGER LEAPING

the figure in
the straw boater
his suit jacket
buttoned all the way
his face floating in
the tall dry air
above his collar
not needing to brace
himself on the bank
counter vaulting slowly
not needing to hold the
rim of the straw hat
the gun held loosely
his face floating in
a mask of unconcern
brute matter overcome
by his high sailing
high easy jumping
floating face set
and serious and the
hat is pure circus
what muscles bunched
extended mutually
precise and pure he
leaps and history
falls apart lies
at his feet as he
jumps high there
a figure in the air
higher than death

TIME, I CRY

pity the woman
who undresses slowly
whose eyes are full
of figures: the length
of curtains hemlines
small boys trousers
cooking time for roasts
the time since the last
period the time since
a headache pill the
time the sitter will
arrive her mothers
birthday the number of
cousins to reinstate on
the christmas car list
the number of days before
an anniversary she can't
remember what of now

as she undresses
does she think of
the times she's been
kissed or the times
she cried out of her
skin or saw the moon
on cinematic water or
of the time remaining?

of lovers unkissed and
passing saints who only
glanced and wondered
or thought *later*
or *ill come back*
but didnt and
now what?

carefully she combs
her hair looking
through the mirror
seeing herself on the
other side of it like
a lithe picnic image
or an ad for a new
bathroom and on that
other side it is like
a postcard in kodachrome
on this side of the
mirror she feels her
skin heavy as the clothes
on statues of victorian
statesmen public awkward
on constant view

slowly she finishes
turns out the light
ready for sleep
hoping to dream of
becoming the girl
behind the mirror
or more blessed of
nothing at all

EUGENE MCNAMARA edits the *University of Windsor Review*, helps edit *Mainline* and has had poems and stories in various journals, including *Prism international*. Delta/Canada recently published a collection of his poetry.

TWO POEMS BY JAMES TIPTON

SUSPENDED VISIONS

Now the work you do
Keeps you going
The work you do

— ANDREAS SCHROEDER

The pawn shop on Polk
in San Francisco: cameos,
white out of India, or
the bones of old whores
carved into comfortable
faces; and a used bidet,
made in Peoria, once owned
by Pocahontus; new
perfumes for secret parts,
tasting of cherry, or
champagne; a bust
of Venus, rusting, with
a feather boa, sitting
under three gold balls.

And eyes, for specialized
collectors, by arrangement
with a local master,
mortician; the glass globes
wearing blue caps, or
speckled brown; one,

bloodshot, a rarity; and
even a pair; all safe
on silk cushions
in a wooden tray;
the way eggs are safe
in cold weather; or shrunken
heads, the lids sewed shut
and stuffed with sand.

ABSOLUTES

One thing is certain:
eyes are never seen as simply eyes.

JAMES TIPTON lives on a farm near Elwell, Michigan. His poems, short stories and translations have appeared in several North American magazines including *Nation, West Coast Review, Contemporary Literature in Translation* and *Carolina Quarterly* as well as *Prism international.*

CHERRY GRIMM's stories have appeared in *Meanjin Quarterly, Southerly, Quadrant* and other Australian magazines. She also does free-lance reviews for two newspapers. At present she is living in Sydney, New South Wales.

a chronic condition

CHERRY GRIMM

AT THE END OF A LONG DAY the bushwalkers began to straggle more than usual and to spread out. Then one group or another would prick up their ears to the sound of receding voices and the whole party would come together again. Sometimes a boy and girl found themselves alone for a few seconds in the whirring, ticking, baking silence of the deep bush, with only the flash of yellow parkas off to one side.

A young chap in weathered jeans, who walked in old tennis shoes without socks, had worked his way back and forth along the fringe of the party all day. He seemed to know the bush well and confidently took all sorts of sidetracks. He climbed a pile of rocks, or tested the branch of a red gum, unselfconsciously, as if preparing to swing from it. He sat cross-legged, peering at the ground, scratching it a little, familiarly.

As the sun left the valley he found himself quite alone, out of earshot of the group, on the dark side of a hump of ground. He had gone after something that resembled a bush-orchid, though reason told him there were none about and he could not find the spidery, swaying plant that had suggested it to him. It was an interesting formation too: the hump was a long ridge of ground dividing the track on one side from a deep, overgrown cleft on the other.

Martin jumped ahead now that he felt the distance that had grown between himself and the rest. He slipped, lost his left sneaker and came down heavily on the uneven ground. In an elaborate fall he rolled and pitched down the damp nether side of the bank. He stretched his arms wide, clutching at trees and scraping up the shallow-rooted undergrowth. Before he settled in the trough of bushes at the bottom of the slope there was an audible crack, a

natural sound, like a tree-limb snapping. Martin saw his naked left foot twist and felt the long shin-bone of his left leg shudder and part.

He cried out very loudly, not so much in pain but in fear of being left behind. He continued to shout, like a man roaring in a nightmare, for his chest felt compressed and the leaves seemed to swallow up his voice. He turned his eyes to the top of the ridge and saw to his surprise that old Professor Champlin had been the one to hear him and turn back.

Robert Champlin had switched on his hearing aid and caught the tail-end of a cry . . . a sharp edge of sound distorted by the mechanism. It was the sound, half-heard, which seems to be calling our own name, but which we *have* recorded, so that when we think back, or when the noise is repeated, we know that we were not called. So Professor Champlin translated the coo-ee momentarily into 'Robbie' and then, as he ran up to the top of the ridge, decoded it again. He was reassured to see the student lying in the cleft of the rocks because it showed that his ears had not deceived him. Yet he could walk all day, in the bush or out of it, among trees or among people, with his hearing aid switched off; no-one had called out to him, no-one had called 'Robbie' for thirty years.

He gave a nod towards Martin and, holding the thin trunk of a sapling, he looked back and swung a little in the direction he had come. Martin, terrified that he had not been seen, waved feebly and called again. In fact Professor Champlin did have an odd desire to run up the slope again and decode that too. The cry and then the running uphill were half-remembered, like a word on the tip of his tongue.

He focused on Martin instead and came nimbly down to him. The Professor was dressed in the fawn tweed and worsted which made him, in his usual surroundings, more conspicuous than he realized, for the clothes produced a monochrome effect. His jacket blended too closely with his lightly tanned skin and with his thick, faded, brown hair, heavily speckled with grey and cropped unacademically at the back and sides. He was a fawn professor, porridge-coloured, pacing in a deaf man's solitude towards the tall buildings of light stone, past beds of rosemary. Here in the bush he was camouflaged; Martin recognized him at the top of the bank, then he became a dappled figure, half-invisible among the long shreds of gum bark and the trembling leaves of the underbrush.

He materialized at the young man's side, kneeling above him with only a slight crackle of his knee joints. Perhaps this was what trig-

gered Martin's hostility: the thought of old legs still going strong. He clawed at the leaves around him and said in a hoarse angry voice:

"Call them! Call them back! My leg's broken!"

The Professor stared keenly at Martin and accepted his information at once, with some cluck or grunt of assent. He jerked up his head . . . there was a hint of jerkiness in all his movements . . . and began to call and halloo with uncanny strength and resonance.

It seemed impossible for him not to be heard; everyone must be within coo-ee of the marvellous ululating cries that welled out through his cupped hands and rolled about among the trees. Both men listened with all their might, the Professor scrambled back up to the top of the ridge, but at that moment drenching rain poured through the trees, as if a frail roof had given way over their heads. Martin began to curse and the Professor, rushing back to his side, found him gasping and sobbing, as the rain swept down his unprotected face like tears. It was cold and suddenly very dark; they had not been able to see the cloudburst building up above the trees. A long way off the bushwalking party had come up over the rim of the valley and were belting down the other side through the rain, laughing and shouting, on a wide front.

"We'll have to wait a while," said Robert Champlin. He reached out and altered the position of a branch so that it kept the rain off Martin's face.

They said nothing; the rain soaked down; the broken leg throbbed; the Professor looked at his watch. A vile, aching discomfort gripped them both.

"Can you catch them up?" Martin demanded.

The Professor, still down on his haunches, was pondering with his lips drawn back against his teeth. He advanced his hand towards Martin's face and felt the wet skin of his forehead. The boy was pale and shivering: in shock he supposed. His impulse was to stay until the bushwalkers mustered at the end of the walk and sent a party back for the pair of them. It might not be more than a couple of hours.

"This one gone . . . eh?" He looked at Martin's left leg, canted up by a piece of rock, but did not touch it.

"Go and get them!" shrieked the boy, all of a sudden. "What you bloody well hanging about for, you stupid old bastard!"

His eyes were clenched shut and his teeth chattered; the shivering wracked his whole body. Professor Champlin stared at him with an

air of impersonal appraisal. He slipped off the little canvas satchel in which he carried his lunch box and deliberately emptied his pockets into it. He took off his heavy tweed jacket and laid it on top of Martin. He did up the top button of his fawn viyella shirt and the rain immediately soaked it in irregular patches, at the shoulders and along the hump of his spine. Martin grumbled:

"What are you trying to do?"

The Professor stood up, chafing his hands absently; the bush had suddenly spread out around him . . . he was conscious of the acres of sodden trees on every side. He had for an instant the same crushing illusion of littleness experienced by a man gazing up into a sky filled with stars. He felt that his companion must have experienced the same sensation and he tried to reassure Martin.

"It's all right," he said. "I'll just go and see . . . "

He hurried back, right over the ridge this time, and stood calling in the direction he thought the bushwalkers had gone. He tried to recall who was in the party . . . the new fellow from the Geography Department. Was he a good man? It was the sort of question he might ask in the common room. His cries dropped without the slightest echo and he plunged back towards the boy, so troubled by his feelings of isolation that he could not bear to stand still and wait for an answering call.

Martin was waiting for him, shivering under his cover and showing the whites of his eyes like a skittish horse.

"Silly old sod . . . " he muttered. "Should have gone after them."

The Professor fumbled in his satchel and brought out a round tin; he fed Martin a piece of barley sugar. Martin managed to take it out of his mouth.

"Eat it!" said the Professor sharply.

"What the hell for?"

"You're in shock." The Professor was eating one himself. "Do you good. Glucose."

Involuntarily he glanced at his watch; it was five o'clock. The rain was easing but there was the sound of water rushing and gurgling all around them. Huge drops gathered and slid from the leaves, boring round holes in the softened ground. Martin said:

"It will get dark."

For a moment he heaved himself up from the bent bushes, balancing carefully on his right buttock so as not to jar the injured leg. The tweed coat fell down across his lap and the Professor made him put

it on properly, one arm, then the other, like an adult helping a small child.

"It never seems to get so dark in the bush," he said. "Eyes become accustomed to it . . . "

When Martin started to lie back again he said:

"Wait . . . wait there . . . "

He drew from the place where the young man had been lying handfuls of leaves and twigs, a dead branch of banksia, all more or less dry. Then he bent the bushes down and, as Martin lay back, packed him into a comfortable position.

"There's a Mount Champlin in Queensland," said the boy. The rain had stopped, so the Professor was trying to get a fire going with a tiny heap of twigs and a page from his notebook.

"My father," he said. "Ernest Champlin."

The paper flared for a moment, then went out; the match burned his fingers.

"Not having much luck there, are you,' said Martin. "Why is the mountain named after him?"

"Why . . . ?" The Professor frowned, indicating that he had not grasped the question.

"Was it a *property*?" asked Martin, more loudly. "Did he own the land . . . Mount Champlin?"

"Oh no." The fire began to draw; a thread of smoke rose from the cone of leaves. "He discovered it. Explored the region."

The Professor was transfixed by memory. A wind blew in from the desert where his father was; he could not look back to the comfortable dray that had brought them there, or the horses cropping the last of the grass, where it petered out among the sand. His mother stood at the top of the dune; her long navy-blue skirt was weighted with the sand, which the wind piled around her ankles. Her blouse and her white dust-veil blew back, straining; she was immobile, like a figurehead, one hand holding the brim of her hat.

He went on automatically tending the little fire, which burnt excellently in its shelf of rock, on the awkward slope of the hill, but made the surrounding bush more dark. His breath came a little harshly and he shut his eyes against a spurt of smoke. His mother stood at the top of the dune; when he tried to walk up to her the shifting sand closed over his sturdy lace-up boots of tan leather and the hateful, long, fawn stockings.

The Professor cleared his throat.

"He discovered Mount Champlin as a young man," he said. "Before I was born."

He had never seen his father's mountain but imagined it wonderfully green, clothed in verdure and crowned with the feathery tops of palm trees. He remembered the desert journeys. They waited, on the other side of the continent, in dusty towns where the road ended and the railway had not gone through. One dark morning . . . it was Christmas time . . . he went out in bare feet, on to the balcony of a country pub and saw great beasts padding in silence down the main street: his father's camel train.

"Wake up!' cried Martin harshly. But the Professor, nodding, with his eyes closed, still felt the cold iron of the balcony against his cheek. What should he have done to make the memory a good one? Another boy would have called out, waved to his father, run and dressed himself. He watched, all alone, until pounding on the hotel door began; he did not wake his mother up.

"Wake up, can't you!" Martin cried again. "What's the matter with you anyway? What d'you want to come out in the bush for?" and, explaining all his ill-humour: "I wish I could get some sleep."

The Professor jerked his eyes wide open. For the first time Martin's rudeness had penetrated; the boy had got to him. He was flushed and his sandy eyebrows bristled comically. He mumbled something that might have been:

"Bloody well hold your tongue."

"What's that?" said Martin, laughing. "Are you telling me to keep a civil tongue in my head?" For answer the Professor stood up, cast another small branch on the fire and blundered off into the dark bush.

Martin's voice, scolding and sick, came after him but he paid no attention. He stood outside the circle of firelight until his vision cleared, then walked slowly along beside the narrowing cleft of undergrowth. Professor Champlin was cold and he kept thinking of a rescue party, with brandy and blankets, making their way into the valley. Surely they had started out by now. Would anyone miss the young man or himself if the leader, Wilson or Wilcox from the Geography Department, did not have the elementary good sense to count heads?

He was tormented by a vision of his cold room, cold as the wet bushland . . . uninhabited, with his medical kit, as he called it, ready on the tallboy for the next morning. He was disgusted by the thought of bodily weakness; his distaste for molly-coddling brought out in

him all kinds of symptoms. Now he shook like the boy Martin, and as he sat down on the damp ground he found his fingers resting upon his left wrist, as if feeling for a pulse.

He remembered how his wife . . . poor Margaret . . . had disguised all her fussing as caresses; a touch on the brow, a light kiss on the cheek . . . was she checking his temperature? Why, even when they were young and he rested his body on hers for a moment, after copulating, she would whisper tenderly: 'How your heart pounds!' She flinched and turned away when he gave himself an injection from the medical kit. He had not wished Margaret back so strongly for many years . . . he wished there were someone to worry. The boy was making a great show of his independence; probably no-one knew where *he* was.

The Professor filled his pipe and got it going at last. His anxiety was subsiding; he wondered if a pipe of tobacco would do the boy any harm. He fell into a long reverie about his next paper . . . on the behavioural sciences . . . and by the pipe's end he felt for his notebook and remembered that he had left it at the fireside. Still his mind ran on; he ransacked his brain for scraps of poetry and came up with Darwin's journal or William James and his chapter on habit. He remembered all the names of a certain bullock team his father had learnt from a drover; the names of fossils and rocks and aboriginal tribes.

He had learned a great deal but they had not been able to make an explorer of him. He was a sickly boy and a sickly young graduate of twenty-two, in hospital 'under observation' when his father came in from his last long walk and died. His mother said:

"I know you will bear this bravely."

But she was doubtful; she did not know how much he could endure. Within a month, before the euphemism of being 'under observation' had worn thin, he was recalled to life by a new treatment. It occurred to Robert Champlin for the first time that he might die here in the bush with only the snarling, injured boy for company.

The Professor walked back to the fire and began to build it up gently with leaves. Martin was asleep, so he took care not to wake him. He took out a plastic sandwich box from his canvas satchel and chewed methodically through crispbread, apple, and cheese, washed down with warmish milk from a corked medicine bottle. He felt irritated at having served the boy so badly; he had no patience with good intentions and could not bear to become an embarrassment, collapsed by the fire, breathing stertorously. Any one of the young

men would have done better . . . or a girl . . . he knew the very one. There was always an archetypal Girl in his psychology classes; hair was wound up or down but she remained the same. Miss Susan Finch of Psychology II: surely *she* had been on the bushwalk . . . red hair, large breasts, orange trousers clamped over her hips. She would have been more than adequate to sit beside the young man until help came; to hold his hand one way or another . . . a helpmeet for him.

Professor Champlin laughed aloud; he remembered that Margaret, his own wife, had been A Girl in her year. A sleepy girl, with long, plump, rounded, white arms and a little cap of black hair; her Spanish shawls were much admired. When she demurely donned her trencher the rowdies at the back of the Great Hall sang 'O you Beautiful Doll', but she looked at him sidelong . . . a junior lecturer. Poor Margaret . . . tender-hearted creature, childless mother, gone so long that he had forgotten the sweet scent that trailed after her about the house.

"What's the joke?" demanded Martin, wide-awake again.

"I was thinking about girls," replied the Professor.

"Dirty old beggar," said Martin. He unzipped his fly and managed to urinate into the leaves, then lay back trembling. After he was settled the Professor offered him the food that he had subtracted from his diet.

"Ah!" said the boy. "Holding out on me."

He wolfed it down so eagerly that he choked on the last sour drops of milk and jarred his injured leg. He did not seem able to get comfortable again. The Professor could see that he was in pain; there was nothing to be done.

"You want to try a pipe?" he asked.

"Don't use the stuff," whispered the boy.

He stared at the older man for a few minutes with fiery eyes, then said: "Listen . . . I've got a cigarette in my pocket here. Can you get it out?"

From the recesses of a zippered back pocket, hard up against the boy's sharp bones, the Professor drew a thin, brownish cigarette. He placed it between Martin's dry lips and set it alight carefully with a glowing twig. The boy inhaled slowly and deeply; the Professor snuffed up the unfamiliar scent of the weed with some curiosity.

"Does it help?" he asked.

Martin's face had relaxed; he was dreaming behind closed eyelids.

"It helps," he said.

He went on puffing slowly, more deliberate than a tobacco-smoker.

"Here . . . " he said presently. "Have a drag . . . Hold it down a bit."

The Professor brushed aside a thread of anxiety: what effect would it have on a man in his condition? He took several slow deep puffs, then on the boy's instruction put out the butt and replaced it in the zippered pocket. At first he felt nothing and then a slight warmth, a lifting of his spirits. He seemed to breathe more easily; the movement of his limbs was positive and pleasurable, like a good stretch in the early morning. He became convinced that this was how it felt to be young. He was not rejuvenated but had been given some whiff of kinaesthetic memory.

While he sat, enjoying these sensations, he began to relate to his companion the story of William James, who experimented with Laughing Gas and experienced the touching delusion that he was talking sense. The Professor quoted:

"What's Nonsense but a kind of Onsense . . . what's Nausea but a kind of Ausea . . . ?"

The boy laughed with him and said: "I've heard you tell it before."

"Where?"

"Psych I." And he added his own name. "Martin Foster."

Professor Champlin thought of the crowded lecture hall.

"Then the joke's on me," he said.

"What's that stuff he was taking?"

"Nitrous oxide."

"What a gas!" said Martin. So they laughed again.

The moon, which had come up over the rim of the valley, was already declining. All they could see of the intense moonlight above the tops of the trees were strong, misty shafts of light.

"I'm thirsty." Martin licked dry lips.

"There's water . . . " The Professor stirred himself. He took his plastic lunch box and the bottle he had used for milk, banked up the fire and set off into the bush a second time.

The Professor was light-headed; strangeness clung round him like the damp leaves. The night sounds of the bush, which he had scarcely noticed during his earlier walk in the same direction, came close then receded, like waves running back to the sea. He realized that he had not once switched off the hearing-aid since he had heard Martin's cry. He pressed on through the shafts of light and golden patches of shade like a man exploring a new world. He came easily

to the place in the rocks where he thought there was water. An old tree had fallen recently, moving the rocks, and now the moonlight poured down. He could hear the water bubbling among the rich, new growth that had sprung up, encouraged by an access of light.

He parted the bushes and saw the water cascading thinly down a channel in the rock. It was not a spring, he decided, but a rock basin that filled up with rainwater, then drained away. He filled a container and drank himself. Deep under the ferns some object flashed crimson; the Professor reached far down, burying his face among the leaves. He had to move back and let in the light; there it was again . . . dark red. He lay on his side, groping, and came up with a small pocketknife, almost rusted to pieces. The handle, of some old-fashioned plastic . . . what used to be called 'composition' . . . still glowed like a ruby when the moon caught it.

He reached down again and patted gently. He was aware of his own hand, squat, living, patting the lichened surface, moving over a regular pattern of small excrescences upon the rock. They had been there a long time but his hand knew them: phalanges, metacarpals, ulnar, radius . . . his hand moved up its length but the humerus was displaced. As if to prove what it had found the fleshed hand moved back to the one unfleshed. Robert Champlin drew his hand up into the light and in his palm lay three white knucklebones.

He sat moonstruck for a long time, brooding over what he had brought to light; what he had found that others had searched for and not found. He felt a kinship with the dead bones; they were of his own species. His instincts were protective; he was an old man and these were the bones of a child. He was uncivilized by his discovery, and had to wait, squatting cross-legged by the fallen tree, until the considerations of bereavement and loss returned to him, like a tribal wailing growing in his ears.

He looked at the pocketknife again; as a boy he thought he might have had one like it. Would not this have been a good end for that miserable boy, to have been lost, in the desert or in the deep bush, following in his father's footsteps? Would his mother have borne her loss with a touch of melancholy pride? No, it was a trivial fantasy. It was better to sit here, an old man, able to commune with the dead bones, to feel death and life in the same instant, in the same body, as indeed he had always done. Simply to explore, to make journeys, was not all; for one might come, with patience, and by chance, upon a reasoned understanding of all things. His father often confessed

that he felt humble when he looked up at night into a starry sky; Robert Champlin never did.

The moonlight was fading. He slipped the three white bones and the knife into his pocket, collected more water and started back. He gave Martin a drink and more barley sugar, then built up the fire. The boy was querulous and uncomfortable; he fell into a feverish doze, rousing every now and then to stare at his companion. At last the Professor fell asleep himself, a deep, dreamless sleep that lasted until a long coo-ee ripped through the valley, soon after first light.

Three policemen, in overalls and heavy boots, had come to rescue them. As he doled out hot tea from a thermos and cheese sandwiches, the Sergeant explained that the heavy rain had made a certain creek impassable during the night. The Professor found himself in poor shape; it had been all he could do to sit up on the cold hillside and guide the rescue party in with his cries. Martin was delirious at first; he cried out when they splinted his leg and laid him on a canvas stretcher. The Sergeant, a man in his fifties with a ruddy face, peered curiously at the Professor and asked how he was doing.

"Pretty good," he replied.

It was not the truth; Robert Champlin felt horribly sick. The wretched symptoms had grown upon him since he woke, like the aura which warned an epileptic. His vision was blurred, his breath short; he hunched yawning over an aching belly. When he tried to get up he could not; his eyelids were heavy and when they closed he was cast back into the same memory. His mother stood at the top of the dune; with an immense effort he began to walk up towards her, the sand clogging his feet at every step. He wrenched open his eyes.

"Steady on!" said the Sergeant. "You should have your medicine." He produced from a pocket of his overalls the Professor's own medical kit. Robert Champlin reached for it with delight.

"Where did you get that?" he panted.

"Mr. Wilson gave it to us," said the Sergeant.

"Ah, good man! Good man!" said the Professor.

Already, unaware of the whole party watching him keenly, he was rolling up his sleeve, flexing his arm and clenching his sturdy fist to find a vein. He laid out the worn leather folder on a rock and gave himself his daily shot of insulin. One of the younger policemen flinched when the needle went in and helped himself quickly to another drink of tea.

Martin demanded: "What was *that* all about?"

The Professor explained.

"You're full of cheek, all of a sudden," said the Sergeant to Martin.

Martin still stared accusingly at Professor Champlin.

"It was the sweet tea," said the Professor apologetically. He was soon able to walk about slowly, feeling his legs. The bush was steamy and fresh in the early morning light; the Professor was glad to have his jacket again. He stood staring through the leaves at the fallen tree, some way off, where the first sun struggled down into the gum forest. It would be difficult to find the place again unless a marker were left behind. The bush tricked and deluded those who walked in it. He took the knife and the cluster of bones in his hand without looking at them again, and let them fall into the undergrowth.

The party set off soon afterwards. The policemen carried Martin lightly along the tracks. The Professor walked at an easy pace with the Sergeant, moving up now and then to walk beside the stretcher. When he looked back the trees were completely strange; he had no idea where they had been. He switched off his hearing aid and stumped along in his old, comfortable silence. But he saw Martin's lips move and switched it on again, leaning down to hear what the boy had to say.

TWO POEMS BY LUCEBERT

Translated from the Dutch by Larry Ten Harmsel

LIGHT IS CLOSER THAN

light is closer than
the lit-up face of man
with muscled flags it shuts
the doorways of the skin
night stands guard outside

empty water flutes and lures
in hard and frightened waves
under the beam on his hearth
the beam of his bolted face
in his bolted face lies man

a single room for loneliness
an outer court for dusk
there on every threshold sways
the streamer of the past

THE BEGINNING

reality in decrescendo
shrinks and shrinks
though distant blue condemns the echo
though bright yellow devours the distance
yet there are voices that shrivel and burn like leaves
and footsteps as hasty as wings
come blind come deaf come mute
there is a city built of silence
of twilight and tranquility

man may again be silent and wise
the drenched venomous ruts of imagination rubbed smooth
man may again stand quiet and stare
and with all objects disappear

and enter moonsleek gardens
past empty snailshells and stones
past hard resin crystals barren branches and
still smiling speak in the void

LUCEBERT, the Dutch poet and painter, is slowly being granted international recognition commensurate with his prolific talent; a volume of selections from his twenty books of poetry is being prepared by LARRY TEN HARMSEL, a member of the Ohio University Translation Workshop.

A PURE PAUSE

GYÖRGY PORKOLÁB

Your breasts
each two and a half mouthfuls,
your tongue dripping spray
and the smile of an arctic wolf,
you slipped through the border
— man law in the wilderness —
and padded in with surgical certainty.

In the instinctive dark
we orbited each other,
your tidal heat
and the animal perfume of your sex
a spiral attack,
the murmur of spring decay around an empty highway.

Above the high tension wires,
below the ozone glare of iodine arcs,
we worked without nets or cages
committed atrocities of truth
and exchanged apologies,
a futile design for retrieving time,
a point of diplomacy,
after the weather
the rainbow
in the fjords of silence.

Both of us possibilities,
neither dared to invent the other,
each fiercely proud of the other.

GYORGY PORKOLAB has had poems in a number of journals and on CBC's radio *Anthology*, translations from the Hungarian in *Contemporary Literature in Translation* and *Expression* and radio documentaries on CBC. He is a graduate student in Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia.

bush

R. P. GUEST

waiting kept it early all day
morning fell to darkness afternoon having evaporated
completely night brought the first doubt wrapped in
surprise an unwanted gift
simon thought he heard shots from above about six in
the evening but he didn't tell me at supper so the
pleasure of resting my ear on his imagination fell to
the floor like a fact making virtually no sound
morning hit like a question
simon answered with breakfast-sized trout two each
which conquered the night in our throats letting our
stomachs tighten with the anxiety we were trying to rub
out of our eyes and into our angry faces which had
been trodden on by the night
one whole day had rammed into our lives ambushing
us in our reverie we stiffened against our laxity and
hardened against our setback
i attacked the lake slaughtered lunch and set into
cooking it meanwhile simon performed his silent dia-
logue with the sky undoubtedly the source of the shots
he kept hearing and the buyer of his dreams
our meal was slow simon ate carefully and said no grace
i merely crouched over my plate listening through my
saliva we avoided seeing by putting our eyes out of
focus and staring away
simon drew a line through yesterday

R. P. GUEST is an undergraduate student in Creative Writing at the University of British Columbia. This is his first publication..

THREE POEMS BY LAZAR SARRIA

Road.

earlier, we had stolen
watermelon
warm from the field.
now our heads lay
where the fruit had lain.
we were cornucopias in embrace
our lungs and bellies filled with seeds.

road.

we had spread out our shadows as blankets
like mystics on a picnic
taking heaven literally;
one of us was fond of words,
the other talkative, flicking
coins down the slope,
rewarding the hill for its company.

road.

down in the city,
a prophet stood hugging the minaret's thigh,
moon dust under his nails
caused him wonder greater than grief;
no grief
to us except our pastry melting
on the rock;
we laughed,
so odd to watch the sky's heart setting.
Although the missing-toothed shepherd came to wake us,
we had not been sleeping
but daring each other to pray.

road.

how many times had we kissed
by the sea
beyond the fists of waves.
we were prepared to fight with them
disguise ourselves as fish with a
costume on our lips of salted water.

road.
to share in my excitement
you said you had never climbed
the top of the fortress;
you said and saw the same things I did as
we struggled upward and
you helped me as I revelled
as if you had to teach me
how the war could end,
road.

When I felt for rain
I saw the lunch bucket
drop
  from the fiftieth floor;
                gliding bread and
                tuna paste
        and balloons of wrappers
  and napkins
          a bird of grapes and
even
      proverbial apples fell;
before the rain could dampen
the cake the sweet wife made,
the workman came tumbling after

How bald the heads of some men are;
You can see their eyes
sparkle from the back
of their skulls like
the movement in eggs
of twin birds looking
for the world through
the weakest point.

LAZAR SARRIA has published a book of poetry, *Singsong*. He lives in Montreal.

GLOBAL PLATITUDE

LORLA WASMUTH

By now you've seen the cartoon face
of some politician
who failed to arrive at his destination.
That was a change in attitude,
not direction.
The sky was moved
to beg
to differ
but his name hurt more
than ever.

This weather of absence and poverty reaches
from flag to comic ballet.
More and more often I hear the sky
counting ancestors' regret,
relating commonplace and rainbow
in parallel terms.

A thirst and thunder grows inside:
I likewise feel an outer shame
and smell the fine derision
clutching history between natal
and other punctuating factors . . .

A mad uncle mutters
easier to give birth to a man
than a revolution.

LORLA WASMUTH is an ex-Library clerk from Alberta; this is her first publication.

ALAIN BOSQUET published *Chicago, oignon sauvage* last year in Paris; this excerpt indicates that he continues to dream of the phantom of the opera. Christine Cotton lives in Athens, Ohio.

PSYCHEDELIC

ALAIN BOSQUET

Translated from the French by Christine Cotton

ARE YOU MY GREAT MALE GOD? Will you let my lip, so gentle, wander under your toes? Do you realize that it's a most obedient animal: hedgehog pulling in its quills, newborn doe? Do you want to be my mountain: oh, no, I mean my volcano? Will you think about terrible eruptions, my Vesuvius, my Fujiyama, my Stromboli? Why are you turning over? Don't you like Art Tatum, who severs love like an axe cleaves the piano? Don't you think that jazz comes from our vertebrae? What colour is your sigh? Will you ever guess how many obelisks it takes to satisfy a virgin? Do you love me, tree and ocean, word and sun planted in my soul? How are you going to transfuse your blood into my body, in exchange for mine, which will travel through your arteries, divine exchange, exquisite little death? Peace, peace, did you ever think that a woman could bring it to you, like me, at the end of an eyelash, at the tip of a fingernail? Will you set up the censorship of words, for we must not say them all: only those related to happiness have the right to live? Is this mine, this tuft? To whom will you offer this mucous membrane, if I kill myself tomorrow? Will you forgive me for this sad, silly thought? Does it seem to you that we are stark naked? What would you say about this pair of spectacles which I am putting on your stomach, like that, so that the comfort of an object will be between us? Should I refill the empty glasses? If you don't answer me, is it because you need to see me run away, far, far, as far as the post office, where I would send you a mysterious telegram: "The chameleon caught fire?" Which flower do you want to smell? Is the serenity of the hyacinth more sensuous than the mimosa? But haven't you always liked the white lilac, smell-

ing like the sheet where we collapse in love? Shall we make a profession of faith: we, for solidarity among men, only accept one, single act, to hide our face in the petals of a petunia, and our eyelids in those of the gillyflower? Would you interrogate the mirror: perhaps you might find your nostril eloquent, or your chin worthy of mild anger? In that case, would I dare give you this vase? You really will break it in a hundred pieces, won't you? Is your hip trembling, as if it were crying to be caressed? Which knee are you going to send to school to learn Sanskrit? And, among your teeth, is there one which you would suspend for eternity between my breasts, at the end of a Ceylonese necklace? Isn't our most precious mission to adore the mignonette, honeysuckle, wild rose; pick them without hurting them, put them on the palms of passers-by? That vein, under your collarbone, haven't I already followed its course, as far as the forest of your armpit where it disappears, very salty? My fawn, my fawn, are you ready for your meal of ancient music? Does Palestrina always put you in a trance? Will you overwhelm me with reproaches if I have a little more *grass*: oh, to become a lozenge, half yellow and half green, shooting through the galaxies with the pleasure of a suzerain meteor, to reach the empire of the Unnameable, transformed into a unicorn grazing, a thousand years long, on plants fresher than the dew of our invisible eyes? Will you be my friend of dis-incarnation? You won't spy on me if I take a paintbrush, dip it: yes, blue, pale pink, a little pearl grey and there, no, don't look, on your side I paint stamens as big as udders? You'll hold your breath? Now, who will know if, covered with pictures, you're a rough Batrachian, or a diamond screening the thousand spectacles of a feverish cinema? Who else ever camouflaged you with so much love? My enormous male god, will you finally command me to bury you under real tattoos, so as to release the secret of your soul?

BOOKS AND PERIODICALS RECEIVED

BOOKS

PIERRE BERTON, *The Last Spike, The Great Railway, 1881-1885*, McClelland & Stewart, 1971, 478 pps., $10.

BILL BISSETT, *Dragon Fly*, Weed/Flower Press, 1971, poetry, 8 pps., $1.50.

GEORGE BOWERING, *George, Vancouver: A Discovery Poem*, Weed/Flower Press, 1970, 39 pps., $2.00.

COLIN BROWNE, *Down the Sunline*, Granny Soot Publications, 7938 West Saanich Rd., Saanichton, B.C., 1970, poetry, 56 pps., $2.00.

FREDERICK BUELL, *Theseus and other poems*, Ithaca House, 1971, 89 pps., $2.95.

MICHAEL BULLOCK, *Green Beginning, Black Ending*, Sono Nis Press, 1971, Fables, 189 pps., $6.95.

ED BYRNE, *Poems 1968-1970*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1971, 20 pps., $ .50.

LEE CALKINS, *Equinox*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1971, 20 pps., $ .50.

FRED COGSWELL (translator), *A Second Hundred Poems of Modern Quebec*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1971, 80 pps.

VICTOR COLEMAN, *Old Friends' Ghosts*, Weed/Flower Press, 1970, poetry, 53 pps., $3.00.

JOHN ROBERT COLOMBO, *The Great San Francisco Earthquake and Fire*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1971, 45 pps., $2.50.

JUDITH COPTHORNE, *Miss Tree's Pillowbook*, Intermedia Returning Press, 1971, poetry, drawings.

PHIL DESJARDINS, *The Starlings Didn't*, Poverty Press, Montreal, 1971.

MIKE DOYLE, *Earth Meditations One to Five*, Coach House Press, 1971, poetry and photos, paperback, $3.00; cloth, $6.00.

LOUIS DUDEK, *Collected Poetry*, Delta Canada, 1971, 327 pps.

L. ECKARDT, *Love Apples*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1971, 32 pps., $ .50.

JOAN FINNIGAN, *In the Brown Cottage on Loughborough Lake*, CBC Learning Systems, 1971, photos by Erik Christensen, $6.25.

BRENDA FLEET, *Bullets and Cathedrals*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1971, 46 pps., $2.00.

P. FLETCHER, *The Hell Seekers*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1971, 20 pps., $ .50.

LEN GASPARINI, *Tunnel Bus to Detroit*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1971, 28 pps., $1.00.

GARY GEDDES, *Poems*, Black Walnut Poetry Series, Waterloo Lutheran University, Waterloo, Ontario, 16 pps.

M. LAKSHMI GILL, *Mind Walls*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1971, 62 pps., $2.00.

DUNCAN GLEN, *In Appearances*, Akros Publications (England), poetry, 80 pps., 1.15 pounds.

BERNARD GREBANIER (editor), *Edwin Arlington Robinson, A centenary Memoir-Anthology*, A. S. Barnes & Company, Box 421, Cranbury, N.J. 08512, 1971, 68 pps.

ELDON GRIER, *Selected Poems 1955-70*, Delta, Canada, 129 pps., hardcover $5.00; paperback $2.50.

FREDERICK PHILIP GROVE, *Tales From the Margin*, edited by D. Pacey, Ryerson Press/McGraw Hill, Canada, 1971, short stories, 319 pps., $8.95.

D. GUTTERIDGE, *Death at Quebec*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1971, 53 pps., $1.50.

PIET HEIN, *Grooks in Music*, Borgens Forlag, Denmark, grooks by Piet Hein, music by Svend Asmussen.

ANSELM HOLLO, *America Del Norte & Other Peace Herb Poems*, Weed/Flower Press, 1970, 16 pps., $1.75.

SIMON LEIGH, *The Bleeding Clock*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1971, 56 pps.

N. LINDER, *On the Side of the Angels*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 24 pps., $ .50.

DOROTHY LIVESAY, *Plainsongs*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1971, 48 pps., $1.00.

SUNYATA MACLEAN, *Poems to Define the Corona of Silence*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1970, 52 pps.

ANNE MARRIOTT, *Countries*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1971, 16 pps., $ .50.

A. MOORHEAD, *Morganstall*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1971, 24 pps., $ .50.

MARC PLOURDE, *Touchings*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1970, 32 pps.

DAVID ROSENBERG, *Headlights*, Weed/Flower Press, 1970, poetry, 10 pps., $1.25.

RONALD SILLMAN, *Crow*, Ithaca House, 1971, poetry, 32 pps.

DAVID SOLWAY, *The Crystal Theatre*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1971, 32 pps.

FRANK M. TIERNEY, *Come Climb A Mountain and other Poems*, University of Ottawa Press, 1970, 57 pps.

DAVID UU, *Before the Golden Dawn*, Weed/Flower Press, 1971, poetry, 9 pps., $1.25.

DERK WYNAND, *Locus*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1971, 40 pps.

MARG YEO, *Game for Shut-Ins*, Fiddlehead Poetry Books, 1971, 20 pps.

PERIODICALS

Back East, issue no. 15 of *Imago*. Poetry by Victor Coleman. Edited by George Bowering, Dept. of English, Sir George Williams University, Montreal. 75¢ per issue, two issues, $1.50, four issues, $2.50.

Beyond Baroque, edited by George Drury Smith, Bayrock Press, 1639 West Washington Blvd., Venice, California 90291. Poetry and prose, bi-annual, $3.50 per year.

Black Fish, edited by B. T. Brett, Allan Safarik, 1851 Moore Street, Burnaby 2, B.C. Poetry, sub. $2.00, single copy 75¢.

The Falcon, edited by Joe David Bellamy, W. A. Blais, Mansfield State College, Mansfield, Pa. 16933. Poetry, fiction, interviews, $2.00 per year, $1.00 per issue.

Guido's Body Shop, edited by Jim Gustafson, Chris Fessler, Wayne State University, English Dept., Poetry magazine, appearing once only.

Lotus, edited by Jonathan Hemley, James Ragan, Dept. of English, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio 45701. Poetry, fiction, semi-annual, sub. $2.00 in U.S., $2.50 in Canada and Mexico, $2.75 foreign. Single copy $1.00.

Six Days; An Anthology of Canadian Christian Poetry, edited by H. Houtman, Wedge Publishing Foundation, 1971, 141 pps., $2.50.

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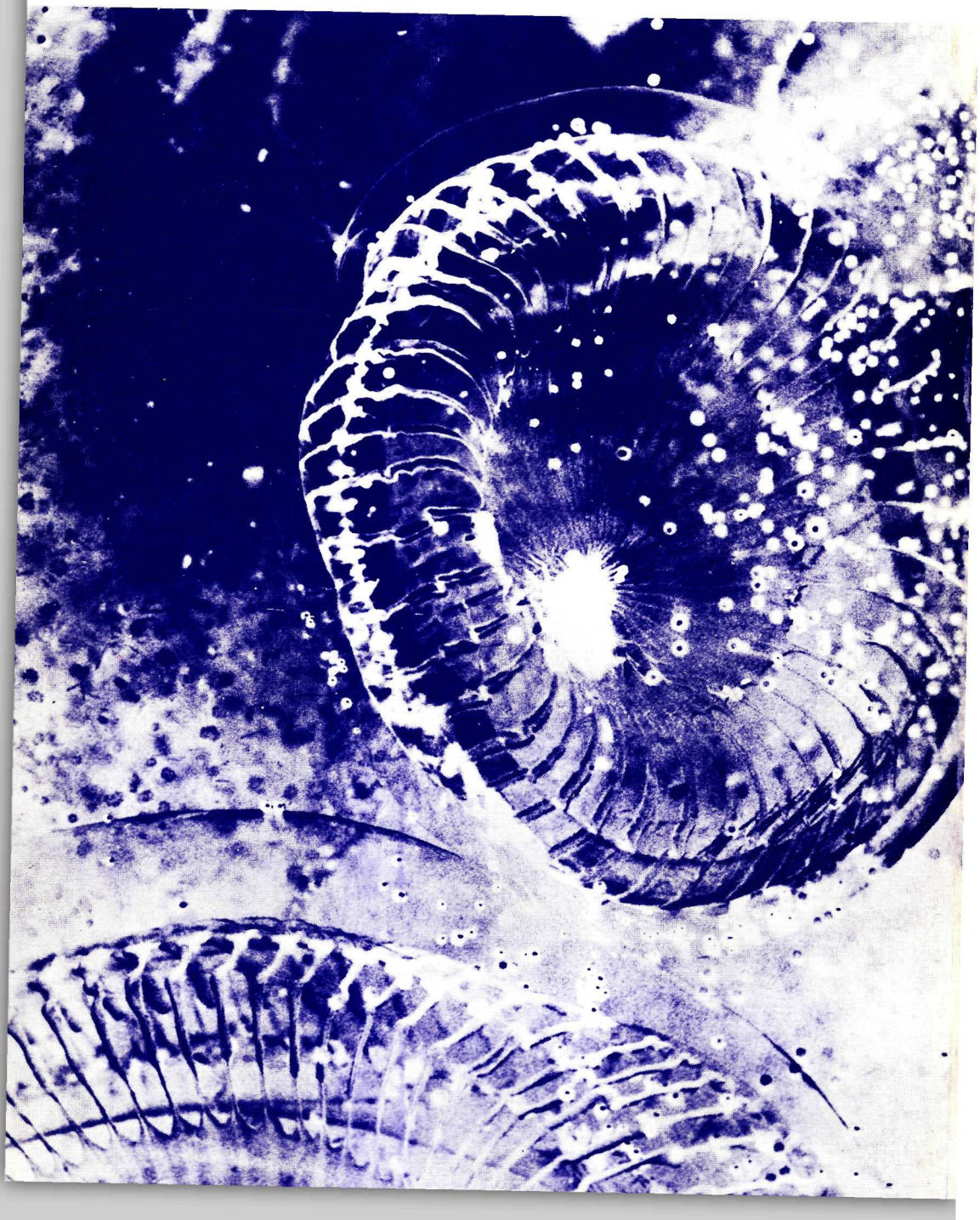
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