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## Exile Vol. X No. 1

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## Exile Vol. X No. 1

### **Authors**

Jonathan Reynolds, John Hunting, Ellen Heath, Bart Estes, David Kay, Ed Brunner, Jane Cogie, Al Werder, Curt Matthews, and Judy Pister



EXILE

The  
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Vol. 10

No. 1

*Denison University*  
*Granville, Ohio*

Take thought:  
I have weathered the storm  
I have beaten out my exile.  
—Ezra Pound

## Contributors

Of the unidentified people on the table of contents JOHN HUNTING, ELLEN HEATH, BART ESTES and CURT MATTHEWS are senior English majors. Bart's story "The Gift of the Pelican Keeper," . . . the first section of a work entitled *Zoo Parade* was awarded the semi-annual Exile-Denison Bookstore Writing Prize. JON REYNOLDS, a five year senior, is majoring in Theatre Arts.

DAVID KAY is a junior English major. Poetry contributor JUDY PISTER is a music major. Junior art majors JACK REILLY, MONI GIBBS, and KATHY KNAPP contributed the art work; the cover on this issue is a work of Moni's.

The sophomore class is represented by AL WERDER, an English major, ED BRUNNER, and JANE COGIE. Sophomores BOB TAUBER and JEFF BARNES contributed to the art work.

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*Any Student of Denison may submit manuscripts of poems, stories and essays to the editors or to the EXILE box in Slayter Hall.*

## Editorial

In recent years, America has seen a relaxation of the strictures which classify a painting, a musical composition, or a book as a work of art. In New York City, galleries display paintings of Campbell's soup cans; musicologists discuss the structure of folk songs and blues; and in literature, writers such as Terry Southern (*The Magic Christian, Candy*), Joseph Heller (*Catch-22*), and James Purdy (*Cabot Wright Begins*) are working in a similar vein, utilizing a new freedom from form to produce social commentary aptly named "Black Satire."

There is no existent school of Black Satirism, nor is there a manifesto; indeed, no one seems to remember who coined the term. But the term is appropriate, for there have been satirists in the past, but none have been as destructive as Southern, Heller, Purdy, et al. Their work is a definite kind of destruction which differs from "regular" satire. For example, Elliot Baker's first novel *A Fine Madness* is mere satire; it deals with an old theme: the myth of the artist-as-genius, chaotic and undisciplined, versus a rigorously disciplined society (typified in this novel by psychiatrists who attempt to understand irrational man in a rational manner). In contrast to this, Terry Southern's *The Magic Christian* begins with the hackneyed premise that all people can be bought, everyone has his price; but Southern develops his theme in an original way: all his characters are stereotypes—they are like the people we see in TV, read about in *Life*, and sometimes aspire to be — and the function of *The Magic Christian* is to destroy these stereotypes, to show why they are impossible and even unhealthy. Whereas *A Fine Madness* exploits a myth (of the undisciplined genius) and even adds to it, Southern attempts to smash the myths we live by, smash our images of a rational world.

From a more technical standpoint, Southern often uses the device of fable to construct his theme — the best example is his collaboration on *Candy*. This reliance on the fable is another characteristic of Black Satire, for no Black Satirist writes a realistic novel about realistic people. Characters are exaggerated and are manipulated in such a way that they are pushed to their logical development, become parodies of themselves, and are destroyed. Significantly enough, Pop Artist Roy Lichtenstein began his experiments in a new

art in a similar manner: by creating a composition that was a parody of the famous picture of George Washington crossing the Delaware.

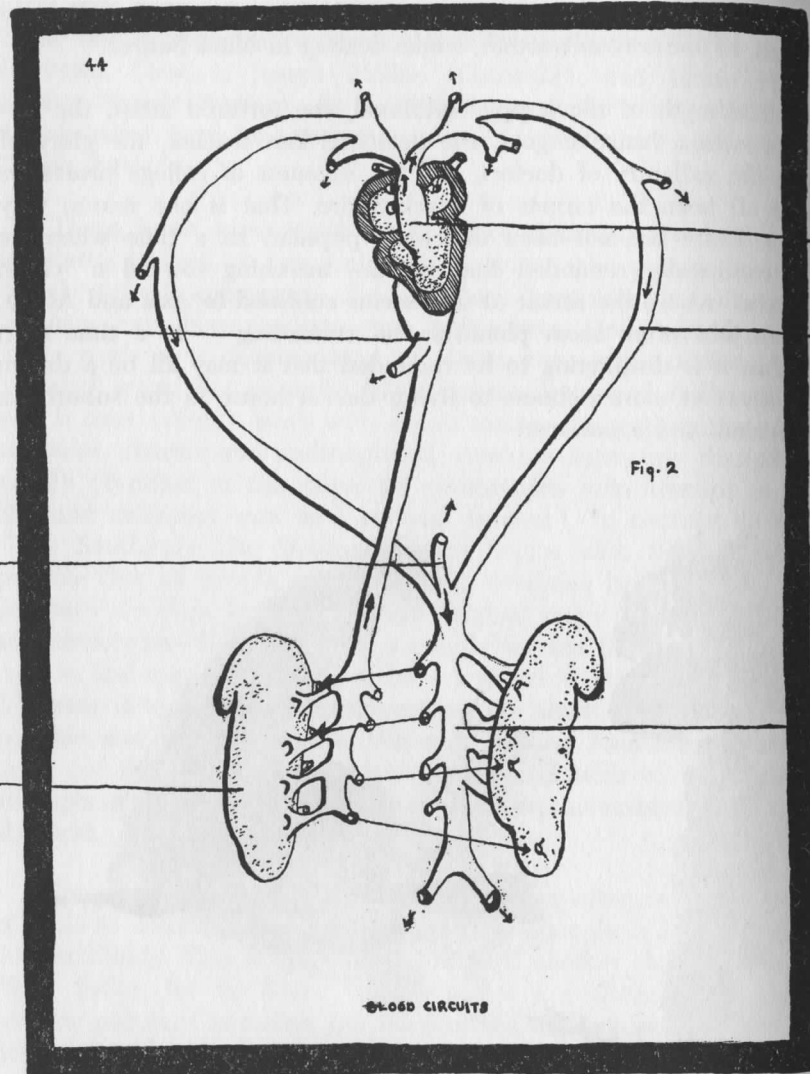
What essentially that the Black Satirists are doing is destroying the sacred cows that people hold to be both true and impregnable. Southern has been mentioned at length, but works such as *The Tin Drum*, *A Mother's Kisses*, and parts of *Naked Lunch* and *Nova Express* are all, in one way or another, works dealing in Black Satire.

The myth of the happy childhood, the tortured artist, the sergeant with a heart of gold, the detached Zen teacher, the glory of war, the gallantry of doctors, and the sageness of college professors have all been the targets of Black Satire. That is one reason why Black Satire has not been extremely popular. In a time when we are continually reminded that we are marching toward a "Great Society," where the threat of war seems confined to Asia and Africa, where jobs often seem plentiful and rewarding — in a time such as this, it is disquieting to be reminded that it may all be a dream and there is more richness to living than a house in the suburbs, a television, and a new car.



Reflections

# CHEW



cheer

R. Tauber '64

## THE CONTEST

by Jon Reynolds

The day of the Rangers' Picnic was very humid, with a hot, bright sun. The bricks of the Muncy Valley (Pa.) fire department were baking in the heat, and the few sidewalks that existed in the town seemed alive with dancing dots of glistening yellow sparks. The trees at the clearing of the picnic site were fully green (because they were pines), and the tables—large, brown, and firmly rooted into the ground—had been set up for a week. The space had been rented from the town for one dollar—because the town was fond of sponsoring the Ranger Charity Drive, and also because half the total profit was always given to the Muncy Valley Sanitation Department.

On this Labor Day in Muncy Valley, the Ranger President awoke feeling slightly gummy in his bedsheets, which were wet from his perspiration. Homer Glottis was one of the largest men—physically—in Muncy Valley, and he perspired accordingly. He took frequent showers, which could only mean that at least he was clean, and he had several refreshing after shave lotions and even a small bottle of bubble bath capsules.

From his position in bed, the Ranger President squinted at the bright sunlight glaring through his window. The skyrocket, firecrackers, and cherry bombs which had been set off during the night in celebration of the Ranger Picnic had given Homer a restless sleep, having caused him to awaken more than once and shudder at the thought of a nuclear holocaust. He thought that the only way to fight skyrocket was with skyrocket.

Homer, of course, had lived in Muncy Valley all his life, as had his parents and grandparents before him. His great-grandparents, however, Nikita and Natasha Glottisinski, had been born and raised in Russia but had left a year after their marriage because they weren't fond of the language. They shortened their name to Glottis, dropped out of the Party, and settled in Muncy Valley.

Homer heard his wife fixing breakfast for herself and their son Paul. He brushed his stomach with his huge right hand and felt that it was moist. Then he threw the bedsheet off his body and stood up, completely naked, and strolled to the window. Though all he could see below him were trees, he knew that only a few miles away were the two Ranger Picnic pavilions, each a mile apart. He wiped his hand over his face, and, feeling the coarse bristles that

dotted his unshaven jowls, began to perspire even more. He decided that for the picnic he must shave, for he wanted to begin the struggle looking his best. He would be ready, then, for Beefy Colon.

Homer picked his bathrobe off the bed, draped it over his shoulders, and went into the bathroom. He called down to Emily and told her that all he wanted was the small bowl of garbanzos and a can of beer. Once inside the bathroom, Homer examined his face in the mirror quickly and then showed himself his teeth. He ran his tongue over his uppers and felt the meaty slime that had accumulated during the night. He growled in his throat, spat ferociously into the porcelain bowl, and flushed. Letting the bathrobe fall to the floor, he stepped into the shower. He knew one thing would be useless for the event of the afternoon: his bubble bath. Its effect, if it remained this hot, would be sweated away before he had even left the house.

After Homer had showered and shaved, he went back into the bedroom to choose his clothes: a pair of too-large, khaki-colored walk shorts; red, white, and blue argyles, which he decided would go well with his black lace shoes; and the shirt from Sacramento. The shirt, already too large for Homer, looked even larger because of the strange arrangement of colors. Different sized swatches joined together in an indefinable, asymmetrical confusion that ended only because of the spatial limitations of the garment. It looked distinctly Hawaiian, bombed with color.

Finally finished with dressing, Homer went downstairs and greeted his wife at the kitchen table with a kiss. Paul was also sitting at the table, forking a large piece of scrambled egg into his mouth. Emily Glottis, who was just as old as her husband, did not share Homer's passion for clothes and bubble baths. She did, however, share Homer's penchant for food, and was in the process of eating a small, round, flat sausage covered with catsup. Next to her were her own home-baked breakfast rolls, shaped somewhat like small globes; upon closer examination, one could make out three strategic circles that looked remarkably like countries, but were only raised bubbles caused by Emily's ten year old cooking molds.

Homer sat down quietly and began to eat his garbanzos. He hated the taste of them but knew that they increased his appetite. He gulped the beer down quickly, for the weather was very hot, but took his time with the garbanzos.

"How do you feel, Homer," Emily asked when she had swallowed her last sausage.

"A little hot," Homer answered.

"Do you feel hungry, Pop?" Paul asked.

"Starved," Homer said.

"Good," Emily said. "That's very good, dear."

"I sure would like a piece of that sausage," Homer said.

"Ha! Do you think Beefy Colon's eating sausage this morning, Pop?" Paul was a bright boy.

"All right," Homer said.

Homer finished his garbanzos, and Emily and Paul continued to chew on their scrambled eggs. When Emily's plate was clean, she moved to the kitchen stove and removed the pan full of grits. She spooned a large amount onto her own plate and then gave the pan to Paul, who scooped out an even larger portion for himself. Homer suddenly felt a little lightheaded, as the odor of the grits brought saliva to the sides of his tongue. He stared at Paul's plate as Paul poured maple syrup onto the white grits before him, mixing the two together. Homer decided that another beer would only increase his appetite—and besides, it was very hot in the kitchen, so he went to the refrigerator and opened a can. He felt red.

"What time do you want to go, dear?" Emily asked.

"In about an hour, dear," Homer said.

"It's eleven now, dear," Emily said.

"Yes, I know, dear," Homer said. "Beefy and I are supposed to start eating at 12:30. Of course, Mother Cool is supposed to be there, too, dear, but her capacity is pretty small at the moment. She's a threat for next year, but this year she'll be finished before Beefy and I are even into the second course."

"Isn't it strange having a woman in this, dear?" Emily asked.

"First woman ever, but I don't mind beating her at all. You know, she and I don't even get along too well. We have the same basic outlook on life—the same ideology—but she's so inhumane, dear," Homer said.

"That may be true, dear, but she never gets hot-headed."

"That's right, Pop," Paul said, "She never gets angry."

"You have to admit that," Emily said.

"Yes, I'll admit that," Homer mused. "Cool mother, Mother Cool."

\* \* \* \* \*

The annual Labor Day Rangers' Picnic had several contests. There were swimming races, three legged races, the always riotous pie throwing contest, the egg-pitching contest, the old-timers' race (where last year, Hammy Sickie, the town's ninety-six year-old flagmaker, had



broken his leg), the bicycle race, the poetry reading contest, the choral group and solo singing contest, and so on. These events went on all day, but at 12:30 everything stopped for an hour so that all could watch the beginning of The Eating. No one in Muncy Valley ever called it anything but "The Eating." It was never called "The Eating Contest" or "The Eating Race." Simply "The Eating."

The Eating began at 12:30 and continued until everyone stopped eating except the eventual winner. When The Eating had first begun seventeen years ago, there were over forty contestants, but soon all but two had stopped within an hour. Those two continued until 4:30, when Rudy Bismarck threw up for the fourth and final time. Since then, the number of contestants had steadily diminished until, in recent years, the number had never risen above five, and only once above three.

The rules of The Eating were quite simple. Regis Trinity, the town mayor, made out a list of his fifteen favorite meals, and they were cooked to perfection by different housewives. The number of groups of meals depended on the number of contestants entered. If there were three contestants, as there were this year, then three batches of the fifteen meals were made up, so that each contestant would be eating the same food. Contestants were allowed, however, to choose their own drinks. In addition, there was no time limit on The Eating; whoever refused to eat anything more would be disqualified. Whoever fainted or said, "I quit," would not be able to win. Theoretically—under the supposition that someday the gorbellies would inherit the earth—a single contestant could eat indefinitely, in order to set a new record, and the town would have to pay for the food if the Ranger profit ran out. The record, however, set by Benny "The Hero" Hitler a few years ago, was only six hours. The winner won nothing, absolutely nothing, except the reputation of being the biggest Eater.

Such was the contest for which Homer Glottis had been preparing. Scientifically, he had begun to work out for the contest one month before. Fully aware that starving himself was no help, for it would only shrink his stomach, he gorged himself for twenty-five days with all kinds of food suitable for stomach stretching. He ate endless amounts of potatoes, rice, and gravy, drank five and six quarts of milk a day, and always followed his desserts with a gallon of beer. He was not interested in becoming a nutrition addict and instead satisfied himself with cakes and pies, chocolate bars, and dishes of butter pecan ice cream with hot butterscotch sauce and marshmallow syrup.

At night, following a heavy day of feasting, Homer would collapse into bed, his stomach aching from the load of food inside it; but while it ached and occasionally groaned, Homer's stomach also grew. Every night before going to bed he drank a gallon of water just for expansion.

His bowels, of course, were dumbfounded. Homer was never a light eater, but thanks to Emily he had always been a balanced eater: meat balanced with roughage and something green. But for the past month Homer had eaten meat only every three days, ate practically no salads, and only seldom thought of regulating his trips to the bathroom. He spent as much as two hours a day (not in one sitting) excreting the remains of puddings, biscuits, mashed potatoes or French fries, oatmeal, grits, hot butterscotch sauce, and ravioli.

After twenty-five days, Homer saw no reason to continue expanding his stomach any further. He simply wanted to keep it the size it was and yet still remain hungry all the time. He would eat heavily one day, lightly the next, and then alternate days in this manner. On the hungry days, his stomach groaned for food, so that his wife continually had to feed him water in a variety of satisfying ways: water with sugar, water with marshmallow syrup, water with hot butterscotch sauce; anything to keep him from eating. Five days before The Eating was to take place, Homer discovered that he was lacking one of the most important of all the abilities which a champion must possess: the ability to vomit. Though Homer had never been a contestant in The Eating (he was always preparing himself for it mentally, however), he had watched champions and challengers gorge themselves year after year; he had also watched them as periodically they would lean over the massive garbage pail that sat next to every contestant and regurgitate legs of lamb, carrots, corn fritters, green beans, turnips, summer squash, and spaghetti. So Homer had practiced spewing forth, and after two days, though he never actually enjoyed it, he did manage to get the hang of it.

Two days before The Eating, Homer gave up smoking and was amazed to discover how much it helped his appetite. At the same time he limited himself to two bowls of garbanzos and a gallon of beer a day. For though he wanted no one to know it, Homer Glottis, the Ranger President, wanted desperately to win The Eating.

\* \* \* \* \*

There were factions in Muncy Valley that hated Homer Glottis, just as there were factions that hated Beefy Colon. Mother Cool had the support of certain minorities, but she did not have the

popular appeal of either Colon or Glottis, for she was not as powerful, yet, in the complex society of Muncy Valley. But whichever candidate Muncy Valley favored, everyone in the township had shown up with several guests, paid his one dollar admission (guaranteeing the Rangers a very good profit, as usual), and was now ready for the race of inner space.

As Emily drove Homer up to the Ranger Picnic site at 12:15, a cheer went up among the crowd. Beefy Colon had already arrived and was seated at the picnic table under the sign which simply said "The Eating." Homer wished he could have gotten there earlier so as to see Beefy's reception. He stepped out of the car, waved to Mother Cool, and mumbled a few words to some friends standing nearby. His thoughts went quickly to the Eating tables. Mother and Beefy were sitting at theirs.

Homer shook hands with Mayor Trinity and proceeded to the table. The entire table top was covered with trays of food, piled high on plates and in baskets. Homer had requested that he be allowed to drink beer, and next to his place sat a sixteen-gallon keg, its contents tapped and ready for consumption. Homer saw gallons of milk in clear bottles next to Beefy's place, and was sure that with the town's view of fairmindedness, there would be exactly sixteen.

He strode, unafraid, to his table next to Beefy and shook hands with him.

"Beefy, boy, you haven't got a chance," Homer smiled.

"You're going to be annihilated," Beefy chuckled.

"We," and here Homer pointed to his stomach, "will bury you."

Beefy was a pudgy man, about five years younger than Homer, and much shorter. He was always jolly, and kept pressing his forefinger to his dark brown sideburns. He looked distinctly American. He beamed at his friends, and Homer could see that there were several "Beefy for President" signs being held by members of the crowd; he also saw "Homer the Great" signs in many other hands. He nodded without saying anything to Mother Cool, who sat on the other side of Beefy. The mayor asked each contestant if he was ready, and upon their affirmative answers began a short speech which explained how the Ranger Picnic had originated and what good causes it served. Homer was quite nervous. He stared at the plates heaped with food and felt saliva trickle over the back of his tongue; for, despite the nerves, the tension, the slightly lightheaded feeling that he was experiencing, first and last, above everything else, Homer Glottis was hungry.

Finally the mayor concluded his speech, withdrew a blank gun, and announced the contestants as "Homer Glottis, President of the Ranger Charity Order, Lyndon "Beefy" Colon, President of the All-American Humane Society, and Mother Cool, owner of Cool's Chinese Laundry (Mother was only partially Chinese, but had taken over the laundry from Fung Yu-Bap in a shady business deal that had cost Fung his state of mind). The mayor fired the gun, and The Eating was under way, for the seventeenth time in the history of Muncy Valley.

Homer knew that if one were to eat slowly, pausing here and there to taste the food, which was deliciously prepared, he would soon become full. So the object, and the reason that four thousand townspeople all watched the first hour of The Eating, was to eat as quickly as possible, paying little or no attention to manners. Homer was poured a paper cup full of beer and drank it. He waited a few seconds for it to be absorbed in his stomach and immediately began to attack the fried chicken. All three contestants had to eat the meals in the same order. If Mayor Trinity put fried chicken down first—with mashed potatoes, cream gravy, peas, a tossed salad, and pickles, radishes, sliced raw carrots, and celery as appetizers (which, just coincidentally, did happen to be first on his list this year)—each contestant had to eat the fried chicken dinner first, though there was no determined order in which he had to eat the different portions. Some would prefer to down the boatful of gravy, then all the potatoes, then the chicken; or possibly they would prefer to mix the radishes and celery with the mashed potatoes and eat that particular concoction.

Homer attacked the chicken first: flaky and golden brown, with steam coming from it and no trace of grease or fat, an entire young chicken with all its components—save the head and gizzard—was placed in the basket, and the aroma penetrated his nostrils, filling his stomach with greed. He grabbed a leg in each hand, put one in his mouth and, without taking it out, freed the meat from the bone, gave two or three good chews, and swallowed. When he began on the breast, he was tempted to take it slowly, for he really enjoyed white meat, especially when it was dry and thoroughly cooked. But he did not dare to hesitate. As he finished each piece, he threw the bones into the garbage pail next to him. After the chicken, he poured the boatful of gravy over the serving bowl filled with mashed potatoes. The potatoes were a light, yellow color, thorough evidence that they had butter all through them; and on top, two pats of butter were

beginning to melt down the sides. Homer dove into them with a large serving spoon, hastily trying to enjoy each bite. Whenever he paused with the spoon to let the potatoes digest, he would pop a radish or a carrot into his mouth and begin to chew. When the potatoes were half gone, he poured the large bowl of peas into them and mixed. He then began to eat the mixture in spoonfuls of delight. He knew that the first thirty minutes or hour would be enjoyable, largely because the food was so good and because he had been fasting for the last day.

Mayors of small towns frequently have very limited imaginations. Mayor Trinity had been out of Muncy Valley only a few times in his life, and had never been east of Philadelphia. Consequently, his fifteen favorite dishes became somewhat repetitious; while his choices of meat went from fried chicken to steak with mushrooms, on to liver, lamb, lobster, haddock, and finished up with pork and scallops and then circled back to beef derivatives (hamburgers, beef pot pie, etc.), his choice of side orders was quite limited. After exhausting mashed potatoes, French fries, and hash browns, the mayor did manage to include rice before returning to mashed potatoes for three consecutive favorite meals; and while he did fairly well with peas, carrots, three or four kinds of beans (green, lima, and Boston baked), asparagus, corn, and zucchini, his ideas for dessert were exhausted after vanilla ice cream. Consequently, Homer, Beefy, and Mother had an afternoon of ice creams: butter pecan, chocolate, whipped ripple, brocaded burnt almond, peanut butter, champagne, and something called Burpled Rumble.

By three o'clock, Homer was in the process of devouring, with slightly decreasing speed, the fourteenth of Mayor Trinity's list (the one with the lobster, mashed potatoes, and asparagus). He was not feeling particularly full, and he was very determined. He had not vomited yet and he knew that Beefy had done so twice. Mother Cool, after surveying the situation, decided that she would let these two men exhaust each other; she knew she could win the following year with these two out of the way—all she needed was a little more resourcefulness and power. Besides, she decided, it wouldn't be a popular victory if she won this year. She had dropped out of the Eating at 2:15, and was now with most of the other townspeople watching the other afternoon contests at the Rangers' Picnic. Emily was still sitting in the temporary grandstand, watching Homer with the eyes of a football coach encouraging his star quarterback. Beefy was lagging far behind, and was only up to the tenth meal on the

Mayor's list, which meant that even if Homer stopped now, Beefy would have to finish four additional meals to be declared the winner. The grandstand area was fairly empty now. The mayor had left to watch the other games, and with him had gone the town council and everyone but the three cooks and two judges; the judges were to be relieved at 3:30 if The Eating was still on. Beefy, Homer knew, was not one to give up easily, so Homer hammered at the lobster with his nutcracker and ladled more Hollandaise onto the asparagus. The cooks were already in the process of finishing the second round of fried chicken (they always stayed three meals ahead), and Homer, now satisfied that he was eating at a good, steady pace, was determined to stay far ahead, undermining Beefy's confidence. Beefy began to lose his already slow pace. He still had several quarts of milk left and he stopped in the middle of his large hunk of liver to open another. He swallowed from it, three fast gulps, and then got up quickly and bent over the garbage pail for the third time. Wearily, he strode back to his table, sat down, and stared at his liver.

"Are you finished, Beefy?" his judge asked him.

"Just a minute, Ralph," he said to the judge. "I want to rest a minute."

"I can only allow you two minutes, according to the rules, Ralph," the judge said.

"That's all I need," said Beefy.

A young boy came running up the aisle of the grandstand and called to Ralph. "Has anybody quit yet?"

"No, youth," Ralph said poetically.

"What's the matter with Mr. Colon?"

"Nothing, He's just tired."

"Is he gonna lose, d'ya think? He looks pretty white."

Homer inwardly smiled, but didn't lose his pace, as he bit off the tips of the six green asparagus he was holding.

"He'll be all right, I think, son. But why don't you bring the mayor just in case."

"All right," the boy said. He turned and ran and ran and ran.

The mayor returned thirty minutes later, appearing somewhat annoyed that he was being taken away from the contests in the site a mile away. The sky above was still calm, but a large white cloud, shaped something like a weeping willow or a mushroom, hung over the Valley.

"How goes it, Jed?" Trinity asked. Jed had replaced both judges. For it was no longer considered necessary to have two judges since

the crowd was no longer there. Jed had taken over at 3:30, and it was now 4:00.

"Well," Jed said, "Beefy here is starting the fried chicken over again, for the, uh, second time, and Homer is way ahead and is eating liver for the second time. Homer's ahead by ten meals."

Mayor Trinity went over to Beefy and was about to ask him to concede, but almost as though motivated by the mayor's approach, Beefy got up and leaned over the garbage pail. Homer looked up for an instant but kept cutting the remains of the liver, shoveling a large slab into his mouth as he looked.

The food had lost its taste to Homer, and he was now eating almost out of habit. After his starting burst, in which he was driven by hunger, he had since succumbed to an almost mechanical action that had a certain strange, methodical rhythm to it. Always before him sat the paper cup, periodically replenished with beer. He estimated that he had only about a gallon of liquid; if he had had wine, as the mayor had suggested, he would have had to measure it carefully to avoid drunkenness. Homer wasn't full, but he wasn't hungry. His jaws did not bother him and were not tired. He was eating calmly but not slowly. His face was moist—but not soaking wet as it had been when The Eating started—and dark circles of perspiration shrouded the armpits of his shirt. Dried grease spotted his shirt and shorts, but there was no trace of bones or scraps on the table, for Homer always made certain that the refuse was deposited in the garbage pail. The garbage would be later disposed of—possibly burned, except that that was now considered inhuman.

Beefy turned back from the pail and watched Homer for a moment. He shook his head as if to say "No" and sat down again. He picked up a chicken wing and wearily took a bite. He chewed it for a long time, swallowed it, and then once again got up and leaned over the garbage pail. This time when he had finished, he turned to the mayor and said, "That's it. I quit."

The mayor beamed and looked at Homer, who was placing a large slice of liver into his mouth. The cooks to the right of him cheered him vigorously, for they were glad to be finished with their ordeal, and Jed the judge was pleased that he had been in attendance at the time of the victory, and that he had had to be there for such a short time to watch the win. Homer continued. He finished chewing the last piece of liver, then picked up an ear of corn and dipped it onto the cup of melted butter. He withdrew the corn and began to eat it, never once dropping his pace.

"Homer!" Mayor Trinity yelled. "You can stop now, you've won! You finished ten meals ahead of Beefy!" Homer kept gnawing on the ear.

"Homer?" the mayor called.

Emily Glottis came up to Mayor Trinity and said, "Mayor, Homer has a good pace now and I think he doesn't want to stop. It's 4:30 now and if he can just eat for two more hours, he will have tied the record." The mayor looked at her. "Why don't you let him? The rules say that the winner can eat as long as he wants to."

Mayor Trinity scowled. He calculated how much more money would be lost if Homer ate for another two hours. He looked at Homer and then at Emily; Homer had finished the tenth dinner and was waiting for an order to go on to the eleventh. Satisfied his loss would not be more than a dollar or two, he said, "All right. Good luck, Homer."

Homer told the cooks to bring him the beef pot pie, and then got himself another beer. The mayor smiled at him and jubilantly cried, "Go to it, boy!" and then left the grandstand to return to the field events.

Beefy lamely walked over to Homer and said, "Congratulations, you pig," with both a smile and a grunt of anger, Homer, with a forkful of beef pot pie next to his mouth, waved his free hand in salutation and plopped the gravy covered, juicy piece of beef down his gullet.

\* \* \* \* \*

At 6:30 Mayor Trinity returned. He knew that the old record had been six hours, and that since all the reports he had heard said that Homer was still eating, the mayor wanted to be there himself to congratulate Homer. He brought a photographer from the *Versailles, Pennsylvania Peace-Tribune* to write a story about Homer and take some pictures of the World's Champion Eater. When he arrived, Homer was still eating beef pot pie. The mayor wondered if he had just been nibbling and was on the same meal as he was when the mayor left two hours ago, or if he had managed to get through another list of meals.

"Hiya, Homer boy!" cried the mayor. Homer waved condescendingly. "Looks like you've broken the record. You just went over six hours! Attaboy!" He then turned to Jed and asked, "How many is that?"

"That's Homer's fourth beef pot pie, Regis."

The mayor stopped walking for a moment. Homer had not only *not* decreased his pace, he had actually sped it up.

"How do you feel, Homer boy?" asked the mayor.

"Wanta keep eating," Homer mumbled in a low, animalistic grunt. His face was completely dry, lacking its usual perspiration; his countenance was hungry. He had yet to vomit, yet to visit the bathroom.

He took a drink of his beer and, never taking his eyes off the beef pot pie, mumbled again, "It's in the rules. I can eat as long as I want. I get all the food free. I'm hungry."

\* \* \* \* \*

The winter was hard for Homer. The day after Labor Day, the volunteer cooks had quit in an effort to discourage him from continuing. So for a while, Homer, munching away at the hamburger patty in his hand, would go out and find firewood. After two weeks, the mayor ordered that the barbecue pit be taken down so that Homer would have to build his own cooking fire. When Homer ran out of wood, he stopped cooking and just ate everything raw.

At first the town thought that there was something wrong with Homer and ordered a doctor to examine him at the Ranger Picnic site—for Homer would not be parted from his table. The doctor checked everything, while Homer sat, laid, stood, kneeled, and coughed through an ordeal made pleasant only by the carrots he nibbled on or the fish he tore into. The doctor, of course, could find nothing wrong with him.

Every day, Alex, the delivery boy from May Tung's grocery store, would bring out four carton loads of food and deposit them at Homer's table. Once or twice he had even delivered the food frozen solid, in hopes that Homer would be unable to eat it and call of The Eating. But Homer had just snapped the piece of food in two, inserted it into his mouth to thaw, and eventually swallowed it when it defrosted.

Several times during the winter, Mayor Trinity had sent men to watch Homer, under cover, to make sure that he never did stop eating for any reason. One time they watched him in shifts for a full week, but they never once saw Homer pause.

In November, Homer dispensed with his fork. He would put his food in the same bowls and plates that were used on Labor Day, lift the bowls with one hand and ladle the food into his ever-churning mouth with the other; frequently a pea or a bit of mashed potato was forced into his steadily inhaling nostril.

The Ranger Charity Drive funds had been completely exhausted keeping Homer in food, and the town council was in debt in order to pay not only for food, but for the number of kegs of beer he had consumed. He was averaging one and a half sixteen gallon kegs and three of Mayor Trinity's lists daily.

The mayor and several of the town council members had frequently talked to Homer and asked him if he wouldn't please stop, that the town was paying a great deal of money towards feeding one man. Even Emily had pleaded. They had come and gone many times, and always Homer had given the same reply. Poised and graceful as an artist, with his filthy black hand holding a radish, a bit of raw liver, or six pieces of asparagus with Hollandaise up to his mouth, he would mumble gutturally, "Look at the rules," and with a wave of his free hand would dismiss them, while the other hand would plop a piece of underdone pork onto his tongue. He had yet to vomit, yet to visit the bathroom.

On a night in the following July, Homer rose to his feet for the first time since he had stopped gathering firewood in November. He wiped his hands on his walk shorts, already greasy from the months of eating. He was alone in the Ranger site, and he stepped onto the top of the picnic table. His body was covered with decaying food and grease, and his Hawaiian shirt was thick with gritty patches of rotten food scraps. Mangled skins of already digested animals clung to his shorts and forearm. His face was completely brown, partially covered with swatches of black, stringy hair that made up his beard. From head to toe, Homer was covered with slime and rotting mucus of one sort or another; ants and mosquitoes crawled up and down his legs, dazzled by the culinary delight before them. His hair, sticky from Hollandaise sauce or pork gravy, was very long and almost glued to the back of his neck and shoulders with grease.

He felt a throbbing in his legs, for it was the first time that he had been on them in months. He looked around from his position on top of the picnic table but could see no one. He certainly did not feel lonely but he knew that he was alone, and it did not trouble him. He stood on the table for a long while, his eyes surveying the ground around him. The garbage pail, of course, had overflowed, and dried bones cluttered the picnic site.

After two days, he stepped down from the table and began to walk towards home. He couldn't quite remember how to get there, but even so, Homer Glottis was a leader of men.

\* \* \* \* \*



#### KAREN'S ELEGY

Al Werder

As fog pervaded East in level ranks,  
You danced by the water.  
Like the silver appendage of a spider  
You caught the light in which you spun,  
And your heart was an eagle draining  
The wind to die. Shaking the snow  
From your wings, you said, "Think  
Of the silence between our hands."  
A silence of feathers and warm blue eggs  
That thrive where the cedar cones freeze.  
Such was the silence as, one by one,  
The days threw off their chains. The wind's  
Ammunition diminished, and ice disappeared  
From the arsenal floor. The spikes of Spring  
Grew taut and greened the land. Geese  
Barraged from southern guns, shelling  
The northern plains, but, removed  
From the revolution, you swam  
In shallows and braided your hair.

WERDER

Then Autumn came like Scottish warriors;  
A forest of tartans. You apprehended this—  
Turning towards the orchard, rebel,  
You raised your arms, "Pears, split with  
Ripeness, and drop your nectar on brown  
Pine needles this afternoon." Though the fire  
Sang and a leaf and acorn fell,  
The disciplined fruit lingered in silence,  
And, as geese roved home, you covered  
Your body as one who wraps a shroud about  
Her child; too deep a sigh would stir  
Your human dust.

Then, as blue inflected crimson  
Ignited cliffs, an ocean riveted with stars  
Assailed your spine and tumbled you into  
The furrows like a seed. You parted  
Your lips for the rain, giving your breasts  
To the wind, and your delicate fingers  
Became talons filed to destroy.  
Yet burning this the last feather,  
I forgive the dark incisions:  
As we watched one night dishevel dusk  
And yield to dawn, your lashes stripped  
Me of husks and left me blind and naked  
On the threshing floors of your eyes.  
Unlike a conch in a child's hand,  
With amplified chants of water and wind  
This ricochets through my flesh,  
For I lean like a tree too close to the sea,  
And my seed explodes in the sand.



## ENGAGEMENT

by John Hunting

The large colonial house sat much like the other houses on the hill above the street — white, tall and quiet. Before it, an asphalt driveway cut down through the spacious green lawn, through two brown stone pillars, and out onto the street. The house seemed lifeless, as did the others, except for a single sprinkler rotating slowly in the small square of flowers outside the front door. Joey Brooks knew his mother was home, for she alone was responsible for the care of the flower bed.

What a funny thing, Joey thought. That one small square of flowers. He revved the engine, and released the clutch to send the tiny car squealing up the driveway. He swung up and behind the house and parked the car in the empty garage. Before he had his suitcase out of the trunk, his mother, trim in a red dress and silver hair, was standing by the back door.

Her face was round and, as when he had left her, her bright cheeks seemed pushed to either side by the generous smile between. "Well, welcome home, Joey. My goodness you made good time. How was it? Come on up here where I can see you." As always, his mother's jubilation was marked by a flood of comments and questions which made Joey shake his head and laugh. As he walked up to her he smiled.

"How are you, Mom?" The two embraced and Joey's smile seemed as natural as his mother's.

"I'm fine, Joey. Fine." She looked at him sweetly. "Well come on in the house and have some lemonade. Bertha just made some." Joey let her take him by the arm and help him and his suitcase through the door.

Once inside, he took a deep breath of the kitchen air. The smell of linoleum and shelf paper and a roast in the oven clung to the room as if it were part of the pink flowered wallpaper. Whenever Joey was away, this smell was the first thing he would remember when he was thinking of home. San Francisco, the Columbia Pack-

aging Company, the world of business men — all suddenly seemed very far away. And this was the way he wanted it now. Joey smiled at his mother and waved away the glass of lemonade offered to him.

"When is Louise coming?" He tried not to sound too anxious.

"Louise has classes all this afternoon. She was over here just before she went out to the university. And she wanted me to tell you she would have to meet you at the cocktail party."

"Yes. That's right. She wrote," said Joey, then remembering the reference to the party in one of the pink perfumed letters. "Who's having this party anyway?"

"The Williams."

"That's right." He had removed a can of beer from the refrigerator and was emptying it into a glass. "What time's it begin?"

"It's at 6:00. Your father will be home around 5:00."

"And Louise will meet me there?"

"Yes. I bet you can't wait to see her." Mrs. Brooks smiled and touched him on the arm. "She's really looking very well and getting very good grades at the university. She's been over here a good many times for dinner."

Still very proper, thought Joey. Everything was very much the same. Leave it to his parents to see that Louise was taken care of. He liked that. From the very beginning, they had accepted her into the house, into the family really, and it was a warm feeling. "Good." Joey finished the beer, crumpled the can, and tossed it in the sink.

"In the wastebasket."

Joey laughed and put the can in the wastebasket. "Good old Mom." They both laughed and Joey explained his new home in San Francisco to his mother, responding to her questions as rapidly as she presented them.

The arrival at home was a good thing. Not only was it a welcome change from the severely serious world of business propositions and conforming individualists, but it was a place that had always meant something to Joey. Disagreeable at times, home was always there, nonetheless, to be appreciated. Joey liked that; and, for a moment, regretted the times he had openly rebelled against what he now thought was a very good thing to have.

When Joey's father came through the kitchen door, he slapped Joey's back and shook his hand. "Well son, how are you? How's the old working man?" He kissed Mrs. Brooks.

"I'm fine. And you?"

"Oh, just the same. A bit more grey perhaps." He chuckled, and looked at each of them. "Not much time to change I guess. Come on up, Joey, and talk while I get ready for this damn party. Tell me about the job. How do you like it?"

"It's good. I'm doing very well, I think."

"I told you you would." The two climbed the stairs and entered the soft, white bedroom. "Is Mr. Charlton being nice to you?" Mr. Brooks continued.

"Of course. He's my boss." Joey sat down on the large double bed and idly flipped through the pages of a magazine. His father began to change his clothes.

"Of course he's your boss. But I told him to watch out for you."

Joey looked up at his father who was fumbling through a pile of handkerchiefs. On his first day home, there was really no sense in letting his father's comments anger him, so he paused and said, "Yes, he's being nice to me."

"Good. Good. He's an excellent man to work with."

"Look, Father." Joey sat up on the edge of the bed. "I hope you don't expect anything . . . anything great. I mean I really do appreciate the job and I'm sure your influence helped me get it."

"Think nothing of it."

"But I hope you don't expect me to . . . to . . . well, forget it."

"Don't worry about it, Joey. That job is made for you and I have no doubt you will be a success."

"But I don't want you to be so sure."

His father turned and stopped tying his tie. "You mean you aren't doing that well?"

"No. That's not it at all. Never mind. It was stupid anyway." He sat silently for a moment. "It's just that you don't have to be that concerned, do you? I mean, now that I have the job, it really is my responsibility."

"Of course it is. But you don't want your Father not taking an interest. Eh?" He turned and finished doing the tie. Then he tucked his shirt into his pants. "Where's Louise?"

"She's meeting me at the party."

"We've got to have a long talk about her sometime."

"What do you mean?"

Mr. Brooks smiled and gave what could have been a slight chuckle or a cough. Joey had really wanted to settle this matter himself. He wondered about his father's lungs.



"I mean you two will be making some plans soon, won't you? That's what you came down here for, right?"

Joey didn't know whether to laugh or not. "Yes, maybe. I don't know." He picked up a comb from the bed and ran his fingers over the prongs. He knew of course that he had come down to settle this with Louise. But now he wanted very much to relax a moment in his home and save Louise until later.

"You don't know? What do you mean? Why, it's almost decided, isn't it?"

"Why yes. It should be, I suppose," said Joey. He broke one of the prongs from the comb and absently ran it over his palm. "Yes, of course. She and I . . ."

"My goodness, son. She's a damn fine little girl. When does she graduate? This year?"

"Yes. This year."

"Well, you like this job don't you? You'll be staying there. You've got to think about your future."

Joey rolled back on the bed and closed his eyes. "I know," he said. He thought of Louise's face and of her voice and he smiled.

"I mean Louise likes it down here so well. You think she'd move up there with you?" His father turned his head over his shoulder and winked.

Joey didn't notice. "I imagine." He remembered how happy Louise had been when she had first moved to California. The laughter at the beach, the cheerfulness at the parties where she had readily been accepted by Joey's friends, and the tenderness of her apartment during those nights he had slept with her. Having her in San Francisco, living with him, would make it all the same.

"I said, did you hear that you've been invited to go sailing tomorrow?"

"What? Oh, yes. Mother wrote me about it." He thought he might get ready for the party.

"Better take them up on it. I practically told them you'd be going with them."

"Oh Christ," he said, as he got up and walked toward his own room.

"What?"

"Nothing."

Louise was the first person he saw as he entered the Williams' front door. Already the house was filled with people, and the sound

of ice cubes and non-distinct voices bounced in the smoky air. He was glad he had come before his parents had arrived.

"Joey," was all that she said, and she grabbed tightly to him.

"Hello, Louise." Joey kissed her gently.

"Joey, how the hell are you?" It was Mr. Williams with a giant grin on his face and a wet, pudgy hand extended. "Excuse the . . ."

"Wet hand, I know," said Joey as he allowed his hand to be crushed in that of his perspiring host.

"Hi Joey." Charlotte Williams appeared from behind her father where she had been completely invisible. "How is your golf? And how is your job? You must tell us about your job."

"Hello Charlotte. Give me a chance."

More people came. Handshakes and polite words were exchanged meaninglessly. Mr. Williams had moved off toward the kitchen and returned in a minute with a tall scotch. "Goodness. Haven't been able to even get inside the door yet. Here."

"Thank you, Sir."

"You can call me Mort. You're a grown man now. Job and everything."

Joey laughed and Mr. Williams laughed with him. Then the smile left his face and he realized that he had, indeed, not moved one inch from the front door. He put his arm around Louise and the two worked their way through the jostling bodies, out the porch door to the back yard. There, the lawn had been planted with white metal tables and chairs, and was lit by black, smoking torches circling the yard.

"Let's sit down." Joey guided Louise to a table towards the side, away from the house. "God, you're looking good."

Louise smiled and kissed him. "I've missed you Joey," she said very seriously.

"Hi there, lovers." The boy presented himself before them with a freckled smile. Joey sighed, leaned back in the chair, and watched them come, his old friends. Each wanted a handshake and a warm hello and Joey found himself supplying both. The conversation left him slowly and he sat back and sipped his third scotch which had appeared out of someone's hand like the first and second.

"Joey, how about coming over to my place afterward and having a party of our own? Bring Louise. Charlotte is coming. And more if you want."

"Can we, Joey?" Louise grabbed his arm and Joey had a sudden odd sensation that she had meant to grab his drink.

"'Fraid not, David. A nine-hour drive has set me up for a twelve-hour sleep."

David chuckled slightly and made Joey curse himself for trying to be funny. The conversation dragged on; Louise was the main object of attention, always having something to say. Joey played with his glass and began gazing around the yard. He noticed his parents had arrived, probably long ago. Louise continued laughing with the others. He let out a deep sigh and turned to her. "Come on Louise. Let's go sit over here." He took her by the arm and led her to another table. When they were by themselves, he said, "How can you stand all this?"

"I can't. You know that. But you have to humor these social gossips." She paused and became serious again. "Joey. Sleep at my apartment tonight. Please?"

He put his arm around her. "Someday you won't be asking me."

Louise's face brightened. "Joey, I've waited it seems forever to see you. I can't wait until I graduate."

Joey smiled, then regretted having said that. He sighed and closed his eyes for a long moment. "Louise," he paused for a moment. "Do you really know why you . . . ." He took a slow sip of the scotch. "Forget it."

"What, Joey?"

"Nothing." He took another swallow. He closed his eyes again and gave his head a small shake.

"Joey, you'll never guess what Charlotte and I did last week."

"What?" said Joey absently as he slowly rocked the glass on the table in front of him. Louise's voice was all he could hear but he somehow could not listen. His attention had focused on his parents who were laughing and joking with the crowd in the living room. But it was not only them. Everyone was laughing and joking. Their cocktail glasses tipped forward and backward in their hands. The ice tinkled. No one was moving. His parents had disappeared somehow. No face was familiar. Everything seemed still. The hum of voices was a steady hum in his ear but no one moved. Form next to form in the thick air but no one moved.

"Joey?"

Joey caught his head from falling completely onto his chest. He shook it and looked up. Louise was still talking.

Suddenly he raised the glass to his lips and drained the remaining scotch from between the ice cubes, having just pronounced, at least to his own mind, the party to be over. He dropped the glass just

hard enough on the white metal table top that the resulting vibration caused Louise to jump in her chair.

"You don't want to hear what I have to say, do you?"

Joey tried to think. "No."

He pushed back the lawn chair and stood up, shoving his hands into his sportscoat pockets. He slowly began to walk across the lawn to the house.

"Joey?"

He muttered a second "no" under his breath as he passed between the large glass doors and into the stifling hot living room.

"Joey, you aren't leaving are you? Come over here and say good-by." Charlotte was sitting on the couch with a rather large group of black suits and green cocktail dresses. Her voice was barely discernible over theirs.

"Yes, I have a date."

She had risen and was coming towards him. "Come on now. Louise is here, silly. Why are you going?" She smiled and took his arm.

"No. I mean . . . I mean I have a date . . . an appointment."

"Oh, I see." She winked. "Another fight."

He turned to her abruptly. "No!" Joey dropped his eyes and took a rather large breath. "I'm sorry, Charlotte. No. I don't have a date. I'm just very tired. Louise and I did not fight. I think I'd better leave."

"Okay, Joey. I'll walk you to the door."

Joey did not welcome the company though he was glad she had stopped asking questions. "I hope the party was all right for you."

"Yeah. Yes, it was great, Charlotte. Just fine. Thank your parents for me, will you?"

"Sure. Should I tell your parents you have gone home if they ask?"

"If you want. Goodnight, Charlotte. Thank you again."

"Goodnight, Joey." She closed the door softly behind him and suddenly he felt very right.

It was quite warm out and the street was quiet. Behind him the music of a small combo and the gentle battling of voices drifted from the glow of the Williams' back yard. He took another breath and climbed into his car.

All but the house porch light was dark when Joey pulled into the driveway and drove back toward the garage. He stumbled over the dog's metal dish as he walked to the back door and he gave it a hard kick which sent it flying into the bushes at the side of the

yard. Inside the house he dropped the keys back in his pocket and began turning on the lights. He shuffled mechanically from the refrigerator light to the kitchen light to the light from the television. When the movie came on he settled into the armchair, kicked off his shoes, and took a large swallow of his beer.

He was already a bit high from the scotch he had consumed at the party. So he drank the beer slowly and let it get warm. Damn, he thought. When he had lived at home, he had enjoyed a good party. Then, the conversation had been there, the lively eyes, the casual manner. Tonight he had only drunk. And through the highball glass, he had seen that he was not alone.

He watched the grey figures on the screen flicker back and forth completely unconcerned. Louise. Joey smiled, then his face tensed. Louise had told him once that she didn't like these parties. He remembered that, from one of the first nights in her apartment. Joey felt very wrong suddenly, for having ignored her so obviously when he had left. He slammed his fist down on the arm of the chair and cursed himself for getting into this mood. He got up and went into the kitchen where, from an open cupboard, he pulled down a bag of stale Fritos which he took with him back into the television room.

The latch on the front door clicked open and Joey's parents walked in. "Joey, we're home." His mother's voice. He did not answer. He heard some low talk and the hanging up of coats and then the heavy footsteps as they made their way back to the television room.

"Well, well. You left early to come back and watch this?" Mr. Brooks turned off the set and came over and sat down next to Joey. Mrs. Brooks stood by the door, watching quietly.

"You know, Louise was very upset that you left like that. She came up to us afterwards and asked if you were feeling ill. My God, son. That was extremely rude, you know."

"I was tired of the party."

"That's no reason for leaving like that. How can you treat her with such lack of concern?"

"I know her."

"You are going to have to learn to be a lot more polite to people if you ever expect to get anywhere."

"Look, Dad. I know. Louise and I had a fight. That's all. I know I was rude to her. I'm sorry."

"But she didn't say anything about a fight."

"Well, let's just say we had one." Joey had not taken his eyes off the dead television.

"Joey, I think you better call her up and apologize."

"For Christ's sake, Dad. I know that girl so much better than you. Will you let me judge what I should do?"

His father shook his head. "You'll learn someday. We had a fine time trying to tell the Williams why you left."

"I'm sorry."

"You've got to learn to have a little patience at these parties. At least you can thank the hosts even if just for the sake of being nice to them."

"Yes. Yes, I know. I'm sorry." Joey took a large swallow of beer. "What did Louise say, anyway?"

"She wanted to know if you were sick or anything. She said you two hadn't argued. She was just puzzled. You better call her."

Joey sat and stared at the television set. His mother came in from the kitchen where she had disappeared for a moment and stood beside her husband. "Are you tired this evening, Joey?"

"Yes."

"You ought to go to bed, dear. We've got a big day planned for you and Louise tomorrow. The Wakemans were very thoughtful to invite you two out sailing."

"Yes, yes, I know, Mother." Joey stood up and crumpled the empty beer can in his left hand. "I'm going out."

His father rose from his chair. "Joey. What exactly is wrong with you tonight?"

"I don't know. I just don't know." He walked out into the kitchen, tossed his empty beer can in the sink, and left the house.

Joey drove for two hours, stopping at one bar, before he got to Louise's apartment, though the drive usually only took fifteen minutes. When he arrived in front of the tall gold structure of porches and windows which was Louise's apartment building, he turned off the engine and lights and just sat before the wheel looking up the street for a long while. He turned on the radio and slid down in the seat so that he could lean his head back. There was one window up on the far corner of the apartment building which shone pale yellow into the night. The curtains were pulled back and a small, bald man in an undershirt was sitting by the sill. The warm breeze through the window fluttered the pages of the newspaper he was reading. Every once in a while he would run a finger into his nose or take a drink from the bottle beside him. For a long time, they both sat

there, Joey watching the man, the man reading his paper. A woman moved across the room behind the man, apparently busy putting away clothing. As far as Joey could tell, she was nude. Joey watched her cross the room several times. The man put down his paper and was watching her also. He suddenly got up and put his arm around her as she stood behind him. She shrugged his arm off her shoulders. He held her again and put his other hand on her body and tried to kiss her. She twisted away from him and walked to the other side of the room. The man stood for a moment, then went back to his newspaper.

Joey started the engine, put the car in gear, and then shut it off again. He got out of the car, slammed the door, and walked into the apartment building. Even though he knew that taking the stairs would give him time to think, Joey stepped into the elevator and rode it up to Louise's floor.

When she opened the door, Joey walked in without saying hello. She closed the door behind him and followed.

"I thought you would call. I didn't think you would come. Honey, I'm sorry about tonight. I guess I was pretty boring."

Joey walked over to her desk and picked up the letter she had been writing. Then he put it down again.

"Do you have any beer in the ice box?"

"Yes, I think so."

Joey walked into the small kitchenette and got a can of beer.

"Joey, what's wrong? What did I do?"

"Nothing," said Joey. He got a glass from the shelf and poured half the can into it. Louise came and took his arm.

"Tell me what I did, honey. Why are you like this?"

Joey turned and looked at her unmade face. Her hair was disheveled and hung loosely on her shoulders. He set the beer down and held her. "Louise . . . Louise you'll have to forgive me tonight. I've gotten in this rotten mood and I don't know what it is." He stood holding her arms but it was almost as if he didn't see her. Suddenly he turned and picked up his beer. "What have you been doing?"

"Just writing some letters."

Joey walked back into her living room and sat down on the sofa. In a minute she came and sat beside him, curling her feet up and leaning her head against his chest.

"I've been thinking. Wouldn't it be fun if we announced our engagement next weekend at the Jones' party? No one would be expecting it. I want to surprise everyone." She looked up at him.

"But everyone knows already we're going to get engaged."

"Yes, but no one knows when. No one knows for sure yet. It would really surprise everyone."

"Why at their party? Why not just get engaged and leave it at that?"

"Oh, I don't know." She laughed. "I'd just like to see the expressions on some of those faces. But if you don't want to."

"Let's talk about it later."

"Okay, Honey." Louise lifted her head and kissed him gently on the lips. "How is your job?"

"It's all right."

"When do you get a promotion?"

"I don't deserve one yet."

"Can't you get your father to get you one?" She laughed.

"Look, Louise." Joey frowned and took another swallow of beer. "Louise, I came over here to apologize for the way I acted tonight. Look. Do you want to come up to San Francisco next week end?"

She sat up beside him. "Joey. That would be great. Could I? Is there a party?"

"There's nothing going on. I just thought it would be fun. You haven't seen my apartment yet."

"Oh yes. What is there to do up there? Can I meet your friends?"

"I could introduce them to you. They usually go their own ways on weekends. Joe might be renting a plane and flying the group over to Lake Tahoe."

"Oh how fun. Could we go?"

"They're just all boring business men."

"But I haven't met them."

"Well, I was planning to have a quiet weekend."

"But could we go with them?"

Joey looked at her bright face but his was expressionless. He was silent. Then he said, "We could settle our engagement up there."

Louise jumped up and her whole face smiled. Then she settled against him again. "Oh, Joey. Do you mean it?" They sat for a long time saying nothing. Someone's television in the next room came on very loud and was turned down. Joey lifted Louise's face and kissed her. She put her arms around him then and returned the kiss very hard. He pulled her back on the couch and slowly undid the buttons on her blouse.

"Joey, how much I love you."

Joey was silent. He lifted her from the couch and carried her into the bedroom. Gently he placed her on the bed, then lay down and took her in his arms. He didn't want to say anything. He wanted, somehow, for everything to be perfect. He kissed her very hard. She murmured something and clung to him. Her hands were hot and tight on the back of his shirt. He didn't move. "Louise, why do you love me?"

She started up, then laughed and lay against him again. "Silly." She put her hands under his shirt. "Let's make it so perfect this time. Like the first time in this bed."

Joey said nothing. He took his hands away from her and sat up on the bed.

"Joey?"

Again. It was the same now as at the party. He knew that it wasn't the liquor, that which had made him insensitive earlier in the evening. He got off the bed, and, without looking at her, walked to the door. Outside, he paused. Then he closed the door quickly and, in a minute, was out in his car. She would wait, now, for his telephone call. He looked up at the window where the bald man had been. It was dark. He wondered briefly how to get into the house without waking his mother; but there were more important things to be decided. He started his car, slowly let out the clutch, and drove off through the lighted streets of the city.

\* \* \* \*

### Chicken Little

I dreamed a day so  
Bitter bright glazed,  
A shriek, a sharp  
Sled's runner on concrete  
Might shatter it;

Even as the ice-image is  
Of sky and clouds  
By little boys in boots  
Stamping frozen puddles  
Cracked

### Curt Matthews

## SEA SCAPE

Ellen Heath

Two young girls sat high upon a sandy bluff with their feet suspended toward the plunging surf. They watched the deep red sun descend into the sea. Katy pressed her cheeks with her hands and gazed silently at the onrushing and receding water. Sally held up a long strand of grass against the low sun and looked at it with one eye. They saw rosy backs of waves and the pink and gold mist which was thrown into the air. Foam dazzled against the sand, and at its edges, the little sandpipers ran, scurrying out of the way at each new rush of water. The girls lolled carelessly in the shiny beach grass which grew all around them.

Sally smiled and said, "My father has a boat we can go out in sometime."

"What kind of a boat?" answered Katy.

"A row boat."

"Aren't you afraid of the current?"

"We wouldn't have to take it far from shore."

"Maybe there will be sharks."

"There aren't sharks any more. They only come every other year and they came last year."

"Are you sure your father will let us go out?"

"He lets my brothers; I hope he lets me, but I'm not too sure."

"Why not?"

"I don't know."

A big wave slid in far up on the sand and tried to lick their toes. The girls giggled and lifted their heels quickly, even though there was no chance of it actually reaching them. The water merely washed back to its source and the foam settled in an arc on the sand.

"Do you ever make up any poems, Sally?"

"No, I can't think of rhymes."

"Together we should make one up about the sea."

"What is there to say?"

"About the sun setting and the waves coming in."

Sally took a piece of rough grass between her thumbs and blew upon it. A squeak could be heard just faintly above the dull thunder of the breakers. She blew harder but the sea again swallowed the noise. She dropped the soggy strand, and listened for the sandpipers who were running in joyous threes and fours, farther down the beach. She could not hear them either. She sighed and bent over to talk to Katy.

"Wish we could go to beach parties at night."

"Yeh. The older kids go near the breakwater."

"I know; you can see all those black places where the fires have burned out."

"They leave beer cans too, and it makes my father really mad."

They both fell silent. Then a secretive smile passed over Katy's face.

"Have you ever tasted beer?" she asked.

"Now and then."

"What does it taste like?"

"Oh, it's really neat, but you have to get used to it, or it tastes funny."

"Does it taste funny to you?"

"Not any longer."

"Does it make you dizzy?"

"A little."

A sudden onrush of water threw spray into their faces. They both turned their heads and blinked their eyes.

"Hey," Sally said, brushing off her collar and the front of her shirt. Katy just folded her arms tightly and threw back her head. The warm colored light played upon her face and neck, making her features soft like a very young child's. The sunset had just begun to tinge the sky with its first streaks of scarlet. The sky reflected on the water too, gilding its grey-green color.

A seagull cried its kitten cry. They watched it as it glided above the edge of the breakers on white wings. As the wind pushed against it, it seemed to halt, tilt for an instant, and then dive into the waves. For a while, it bobbed in the water in front of the girls, its quick eye darting back and forth. Then, with great effort, it lifted itself into the air again. But they could tell it had not caught anything.

"He looks old," observed Sally.

"I wonder if he's about to die," said Katy. "They die in the beach grass you know."

They watched the smooth wash of the ocean; it seemed to be making a giant mirror on the sand, and the sky reflected in it a deep purple.

"Did you see Tom today?" asked Katy.

"Yes, and he wouldn't talk to me," answered Sally, pitching soggy sticks into the sand.

"I still say he likes you."

"He's always funny like that when he's around the boys. I don't know."

"Boys are queer."

Down at the water's edge, they could see breakers tossing colored pebbles onto the sand and tumbling them with great force. They began to unlace their sneakers. Cautiously they pulled them off and threw them into the grass behind them. They dug their toes into the chilling sand, but paused before going further.

They finally rose to their feet and stepped on tip toe on the damp beach. Sally rolled her trousers up a little way. Near the breakers they stopped, folded their arms tensely at their sides and waited. A wave slid up to them and warmish foam swirled around their ankles. Their feet sunk in the sand. The gull passed over their heads silently. Sally shivered and Katy noticed that the sun had gone under.

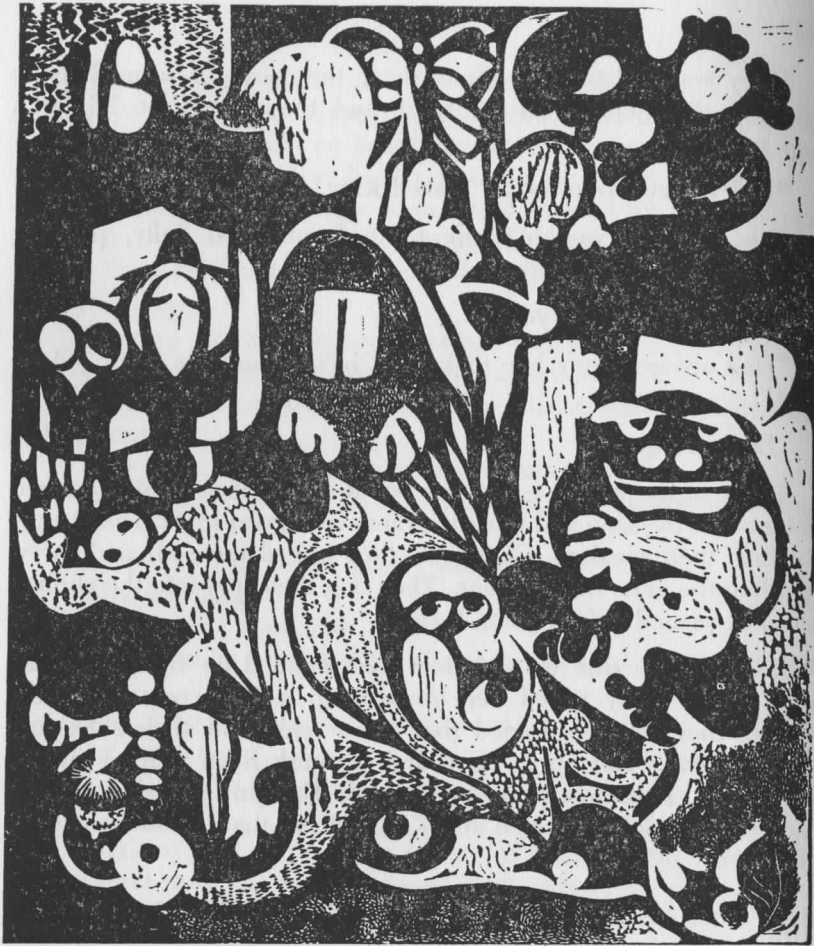
\* \* \* \*

## AUTUMN

Judy Pister

The wind caresses the dry stickle grass  
and urges

The drying leaves to nowhere in particular:  
Motion is the color of these days.



### THE GIFT OF THE PELICAN KEEPER

Bart Estes

"When there was a sometime thing, at least it couldn't be worried into always," said Ted Teschner, piebald in one small spot in the back of his head, pelican keeper at the Bronx Zoo. Why keep pelicans? He fed them and the people fed him. It was simple. It was stupid. Teschner wanted to write, but no one except his friend Caruso could be counted upon to want to read what he wrote, much less pay to read it. Even Caruso might have drawn the line there. Teschner shoveled some more fish to the birds and wondered what the Hell he'd just said to himself; "When there's something . . ." He couldn't even remember the words. The pelicans knew, or they might have known, but Ted would never know if they knew because

ESTES

they appeared to be interested in nothing more than filling their leathery pouches with dead fish, and besides that, they didn't even speak the language.

Teschner rammed a dead cod into a gaping oral cavity of the big bird on his left and wallowed in the despair of his unrequited love. Teschner had been a Catholic once and had started college at a Catholic school. He'd been an honor student in the first semester so the people that ran the place had let him into the closed tier of the library where "unrecommended" books were kept. There he had found Kafka and Camus and Sartre and a lot of others they'd never told him about listed under science fiction. He'd had to go to the fiction shelf, though, for the *Myth of Sisyphus*. For the semester before he transferred, he'd read a lot instead of counting beads and had never been seen near a church since. Thus, at the age of nineteen, he had decided to be an athiest and at the age of twenty-two he'd fallen in love with a Catholic girl.

She had been with Steve Smith the first night Teschner had seen her. Steve Smith was a member of the group Caruso and Teschner called their friends. Teschner and Caruso could never quite figure out why he was, though; he'd always just been there. Steve Smith was studying physical education and always insisted that the Red Cross Advanced First Aid Handbook was just as difficult as any poetry, probably even more so because it didn't have any rhythm so he couldn't read it as fast as he could Coleridge.

When Teschner had first known Constance all they had talked about was why Teschner had quit the church. He had been amazed a year later when she had come to agree with him. Teschner had considered buying a white horse and affecting a black mask to ride through cathedrals saving vestal virgins.

A half year passed without his seeing her. Then, suddenly, three months ago, she had been at another party with Steve. Teschner had looked at her that night and she had been everything young and fresh with soft auburn hair and a wide, sometimes sexy, smile. Teschner had fallen in love immediately and run to tell Caruso about it. Caruso had agreed to double the next week-end so he could meet Teschner's new girl. Her name was Constance. Teschner had been in love with her. He'd introduced her to Caruso and then Caruso had been in love with her. Caruso stayed in love with her until the night he tried to get her alone with him to tell her that. Teschner had hit him on the head with a beer bottle.

"Steve Smith?!" Teschner had asked when Constance had said

she might not be able to go out with him anymore because Steve was serious about her.

"He's been taking me out for three years now."

"He's an ass!"

"He goes to church . . ."

Teschner spluttered, but he couldn't say anything because Constance now went to a Unitarian Church every week and Teschner loved her. "You know my friend Hope?" he finally managed to say, "little guy they put in charge of the library where Steve goes to school."

"The one that's a . . ." she paused.

"Homosexual?" She nodded, then Teschner continued, "So Steve has been talking to you about him?"

"Some . . . yes."

"Do you know why he thinks Hope's a queer?" Teschner asked.

"No."

"Because he heard Hope talking to some English professor about Alcibiades. When he found out who Alcibiades was, it wasn't too hard for him to decide Hope was one too. Besides, he hates Hope anyway because Hope tried to have him stopped from practicing the hop skip and jump on the empty fifth tier of his library. You know Steve."

Steve had spent the three weeks which had ensued Constance's leaving him, chasing Teschner down alleys and through subway trains. He had even bought an engagement ring, but hadn't had a chance to tell Constance. Then in the third week Steve had met a girl called Karen, and by the fourth week he was spending most of his time chasing Caruso down alleys and through subway trains. Steve never ran out of girls. Teschner guessed that was why they gave him free booze and let him come to their parties even though he was rich and thought he was just slumming when he did. The engagement ring was new though. Someday soon Steve might marry a girl before one of them could steal her from them and that would be the last any of them would want to see of Steve Smith.

After he had had time to do something besides worry about Steve Smith's chasing him, Teschner had proceeded with the business of immersing himself in his love for Constance.

"I love you," he had said the morning after he had kicked Caruso out of the apartment the two of them shared so he could sleep with her. She muttered something and Teschner had shaken her to make sure she was awake enough to appreciate what he was saying. ("I'm never going to get tied down," was what Teschner had

always said to everyone he knew when they talked about girls.) When he was sure she was awake enough he said, "I love you," again, then he had closed his eyes and out loud started dreaming of happy ever afters, with her. He felt lonely, in his own way of course, and firmly declared that with his own two virile hands he was going to take what he found beautiful in the crummy world and make it last; and she was beautiful, and they could make it.

She hoped he wouldn't make a play on how he had changed her beliefs because she was grateful to him for it in a way, and was half afraid she would have felt she owed something to him.

Teschner thought of reminding her of what he thought he'd done for her. "Stay here and watch me grow old because I did something for you once," is what he realized he would have been saying and he hadn't said it. Teschner wondered if she'd gone out with Steve because he was rich. He asked he if she wanted him to quit his job as a pelican keeper and waste less time on his writing. He started to dream of happy ever afters in a little white cottage.

She shook her head, then said, "But I haven't been going out with anyone else." Teschner didn't say anything because he knew it was true. "What'll happen once you know everything about me?", she decided to try that. "What'll keep you from getting bored?"

He'd never have gotten bored. He'd promised. She was beautiful.

It was almost time for him to quit keeping pelicans for the day. He looked at the large silent bird on the left and bounced the final cod off the side of its head. Teschner watched it gobble up the fish, then hurried to the subway. He'd been planning to do some writing, but now he knew he had to go to the party to which Charles Brayburn was bringing Constance.

She hesitated when Teschner asked her to dance with him; they really hadn't seen each other since that morning. Teschner had spent the first half hour of the party drinking whiskey in an attempt to attain that drunken lucidity which he knew would assure him that he was saying what he meant and meaning what he said.

He asked her to go out with him the next night. She refused, she was going out with Charles Brayburn. Ah ha! and Teschner was sad, but had to ask the question anyway; did she like Charles Brayburn better than him? She didn't. Then why not go out with him? She said something about things being wrong between them and he had the answer — the church? maybe that was it after all, all she had to do was tell him and he'd join again — for her. He'd written "CRY" on a piece of paper one night when he had been



thinking about her. She said, "No," and tried to push away from him, but he held her in strong virile hands that were going to make something last. He loved her. She'd loved him once, but ever since that morning . . . Had he said something wrong then? All she had to do was tell him what it was and he'd unsay it. Teschner's writing had been getting a lot better, it really had. He knew it and so did Caruso. Two people had even asked him for copies of a story. He decided she was his inspiration and told her so. She asked what would happen if he woke up one morning and she wasn't there. "That would never happen. I love you."

She tried to push away again but he held her. All she had to do was tell him what she wanted. He'd climb mountains, even be a hop skip and jumper like Steve Smith — anything if she'd just say what. She started to look like she was going to cry and pushed away from him. "I'm sorry," she said and walked over to where Charles Brayburn was sitting on the couch.

Teschner was taking a course in movie making in night school at Columbia. "I'm going to make a movie after this course I'm taking at Columbia," he told her after he had walked across the room and stood before the couch.

"No Teddy," she said. She looked ready to cry again and quickly turned to Charles. Charles offered her a drink he had been keeping for her. She took it.

Teschner wanted to hit Charles Brayburn in the mouth. If she'd been with Caruso he could have hit him on the head with a beer bottle. He couldn't do either though because she would have said, "No," maybe even started to cry, and he would have looked like a fool and not had her anyway.

He went to the bar and got a dixie cup full of whiskey. Karen was sad because Caruso wasn't dancing with her, or talking to her, because Steve Smith had brought a tall blond to the party with him. Caruso thought she was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen. Since Steve had hit him in the nose, Caruso had spent the rest of the party in a corner worshipping her soul.

Teschner found Karen and talked to her. "You see something that might be beautiful," he was saying after his second dixie cup full of whiskey, "and you try to grab it and make it last and you can't."

"I know what you mean," she said and drank some of his whiskey. She commented on how sad it was, and Teschner told her he was going to make a movie about it at the end of the semester that would try to say everything.

Teschner never really regained full consciousness until the next morning at the Bronx Zoo when he stood confronted with the open bills of a flock of yammering pelicans. He hoped he wasn't going to be hung over that night because he had a movie class at Columbia and the movie he was going to make had to be perfect. He didn't even know exactly what it was going to be about, but it was going to deal with the tragedy of his unfulfilled love for Constance, and bring her crying back to him when she saw its beauty — if he could just find out what she thought was beautiful. He tried to laugh at her and make her look like one of the pelicans. He couldn't. He cursed middle of the week parties and gave a dead cod to the big bird on the left.

\* \* \* \*



## POEM

by Curt Matthews

## A Budding Psychologist Meets Achilles

Shoes shift on wet linoleum,  
 And a fly beats his wings  
 Against a dusty pane,  
 The speaker drones on.

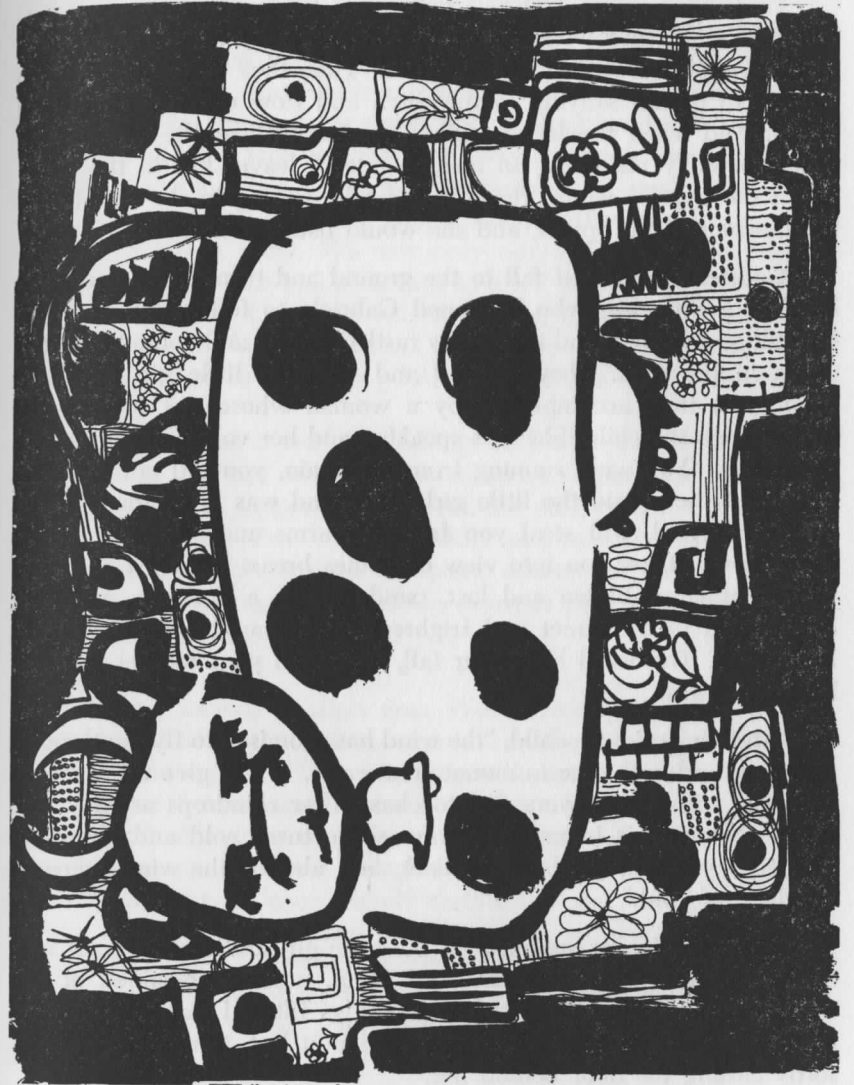
Achilles did he say?  
 His gleaming aegis wrought heroic hexameter,  
 His sword of true bronze raised to judge!  
 God what a man, demi-god actually, but  
 I don't think his armour would fit me  
 And even for him it was not enough,

Nor would his flashy sword  
 Suit the subtle work of my hand,  
 Far too crude a tool, adequate  
 Though it was in his time  
 To part the body from the soul,  
 Yet for my genius not enough.

You see gaudy tin man, I mean  
 To strip off your plumed helmet,  
 Slice your skull in thin section,  
 Light you in my scope and  
 Scribe your sum on this lined sheet.  
 I know your armour's chink,

And I will show the small spirit  
 That lirks in grandiose stanzas,  
 Strip off the husk, expose the worm  
 Which makes the pompous bean jump.  
 You shall not escape me  
 For all your pretty talk.

Shoes shift on wet linoleum,  
 And a fly beats his wings  
 Against a dusty pane.  
 The speaker drones on.



## TRILLIUM OF GUILT

David Kay

Under her covers, Gabriela listened to the rustling of leaves outside her open window. They seemed at one point to sing softly as a mother might, when calming her child. Then they would clamor like gypsies in dance, sallying to the pitch and flow of tambourine and guitar. And when the leaves stilled, she could hear the whisperings of spirits sadly unfolding an ancient tale of leaves lost in the wind. Again the gypsies would flourish and fall, and again she could hear the murmur of the spirits, and she would listen to their tale.

Gabriela saw a leaf fall to the ground and turn into a hand, the hand of a little girl who beckoned Gabriela to follow her. But she lay still and waited, and the leaves rustled loudly and spilled over her vision in the dark. They quieted and soon the little girl appeared again, this time accompanied by a woman whose sad eyes rested fondly upon the child. She was speaking and her voice echoed among the leaves. "You were running from me again, you did not hear my calls." "Mother," said the little girl, "the wind was in my hair." "The wind, my child, will steal you from my arms and soil your pretty dress. It will blow you into view of bodies breast to breast and give you nightmares. Blown and lost, pandering in a doorway, you will be brushed to the street and frightened with laughter and crushed by footfall. The wind bids your fall, but I am your mother and my breast is warm."

"Mother," said the child, "the wind has promised to fly me through meadows and bathe me in mountain streams. It will give me freedom to dance with the flowers and to chase after raindrops as they fall. When the wind is in my hair, your voice turns cold and haunting. This time you will not hold me back. See, already the wind prepares my dress of gold."

Again the leaves spilled over the little girl and scattered off into the night. And when the wind fell silent, nothing remained of the woman or her child. Only sad whisperings filtered through the cool night air. Gabriela was asleep . . . Alike at last, things her mother, softly closing the door behind her.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Mother is a warm bath after nightmares." I know, Sebrem, but Mother is dead. She has been gone for many years now and her

KAY

children are lost. We thought we didn't need her any more. We thought her home too neat and unreal. There were wolves outside and shadows beneath the cherry trees. A human fire blazed somewhere in a garden and we knew its smoke would stifle Mother's gentle kisses. So we read books, not her books, but books written by strangers who stood in shadows and called to the wolves. And the wolves came, as if from under our beds, and stripped Mother naked before our eyes, opening her secret and reviling her love.

"Then did the wolves carry her away?" I don't know. Someone was still mending our shirts and preparing our meals, and fresh flowers were always upon the mantel piece, but we no longer knew who placed them there. We saw only our books and they nursed our thoughts. To write and be artists, to revel with the wolves was our undaunted cry, for to us life was a profane image, typed on white sheets of gloom. Our characters fell heroic and agenbitten upon pillows of quilted love, to sleep but not to dream of Mother's nighttime songs.

Yet somewhere a tear was falling. And as it fell we could not help but hear a distant call, a summons home to dinner and warm bath water. The wolves snapped at our feet, but still we ran to where our Mother had been. But we ran wildly and reached nowhere, for Mother was gone, her home a childhood dream. We stood beneath a streetlamp and, gazing at the falling snow, felt the tear come to rest upon our frosting cheeks.

\* \* \* \* \*

Brooding heavily in first gear Weston felt the engine pulling against him. But in the shift to second the strain snapped and wind ran freely through his hair. Third gear brought final release and Weston floated southward upon a rhythm of rubber. Earlier that morning he had tried to write, but his characters fell lifeless upon the page. He knew he needed a change. The routine, the daily intercourse of words and canned soup, slowly rusting his soul, climaxed in such despair that Weston no longer cared to write. He clutched, sickened, and left his writing altogether. Night had fallen by the time he parked the roadster on Basin Street East. And several blocks up, amid candle flame and neon light, the Float of Faith was turning left on Chartres Street.

Winding through a crowd of candle bearers and masked martyrs, Weston caught sight of the receding float. It bore a towering figure of a woman adorned with purple flowers and a metallic halo which swayed with the wind above a hairless orange head. And though she

had turned her back to him, Weston knew he saw the Virgin Mary. He had seen the Virgin often enough in churches and museums, in such profuse and grotesque variety, that he needed but lightly ponder her adaptation to the Fête d'Orleans. He watched her fade behind a gaslamp and turned to see if another float was on its way. But people were moving, sifting into clubs and cabarets enclosing St. Peter's Square, uncovering in their wake a trail of flowers and the tussle of little children.

The Float of Faith was the last of the seven symbols of the Assumption to parade that night and the festivities were just beginning, as they always were when the ritual came to an end. And already shuffling feet mingled with wine and jazz trumpet. Soon people would revert to the streets once more to dance in the warm, drunken midnight air. But now little boys were scurrying about, gathering fallen flowers and other fragments of the forgotten Virgin to take home to their mothers.

Weston lit a cigarette and thought of the child who had just missed his favorite TV program. But, unlike the child, Weston didn't care. In fact he was relieved to think time had prevented his seeing the Virgin in full view. He leaned against an iron balustrade and drew heavily upon his cigarette. As if half expecting something, he waited. A trumpet laughed and lamented behind him, a martyr grinned with mask in hand, and somewhere voices cursed a broken flask. Still Weston waited. He began to think about the story he had tried to write that morning. But again he could not picture his characters. There was a boy named Sambo, too much abstracted by his innocence. And then there was the old man whose bountiful experience left him empty-handed and without hope of doing anything new. Ideas with not enough flesh to make them real.

Bongos beat on the corner of Bourbon Street and their jungle passion soothed Weston's despair. He was thinking of crossing over when something pulled at his arm. He started and met a boy negro whose eyes yellowed in the lamplight. Weston gazed at the questioning face and yellow eyes. "What's the matter," he asked, almost sympathetically, "did you lose your mother?" "No mistah," the boy replied, "me mamma's righ' there. She say her rates is cheap fur you." Weston turned and left the boy glaring after him.

The electric glow of St. Peter's Square shaded quickly as he proceeded down Chartres Street. He was somewhat wary of the unlit path before him and he seemed to feel his shadow in the dark. Strange silences echoed from unseen alleyways. To his right Weston thought

he saw a match flame and fall to the ground. Faint odors of cigar smoke and sweat filtered through the stagnant air. He walked on timorously.

The anger Weston felt when he parted from the negro boy had subsided to a dull, sickening abdominal pain. Now he reflected nothing and cared even less. He was frightened but would not think of turning back. He would not coerce another folly; he would no longer wait to see the human flesh rot in his eyes. Yet now it seemed as if something waited for him and that he need only walk until this "something" happened. His hand brushed a moist, velvety substance which ran side-long and then fell behind him. Wiping the moisture from his fingers, Weston thought of the Virgin, now alone and wilting in the dark. But his thought was interrupted by a light glimmering faintly in the distance. He moved toward it, attracted as if its beams promised repose from peril and numbing despair.

The river flowed like a liquid shadow and Weston followed the streak of light until it shivered and sank in far-off waters. Somewhere upstream a foghorn wailed its warning dirge to the evening mists. Weston leaned on the railing beneath the harbor light and contemplated his phantom form in the water. He thought of his writing, of his characters lost and wandering in ennui across the page. He remembered his roadster in third gear and the little boy with the yellow eyes. The Virgin's halo swayed and fell and broken metal cut deeply into his mind. Weston looked again at his watery shadow, only now it was not alone.

"Yessa, dat's de Ol' Man a' right." Weston did not turn but saw two brown hands resting on the railing beside him. He said nothing and continued gazing at the shadows. "Yessa, de Ol' Man's takin' a rest. Good fishin' tonight . . . You havin' any luck . . . why I sees you ain't even gotcha a pole." Weston was angry with the intruder and silently condemned his presence. He wanted to be alone, to forget and present and say nothing. "Folks say de Ol' Man has dreams when he's restin'. Folks say he spit out a dead man when'er he have a bad dream. Iun been fishin' him ten year now an Lord knows I pray for de sweet dreams." Weston withdrew his eyes from the water and glanced again at the brown hands on the railing. They were wrinkled but not weak. He thought they befitted a hoe or guitar. He was becoming interested. Weston would ask the man what he did with his hands.

\* \* \* \*

"Can you tell me where the Café des Exilés is?" The bartender said nothing and seemed to enjoy some private joke. "I said, do you know the Café des Exilés?" Still the bartender did not answer. Again the glass turned in his towel as if yet to yield a speck embedded within the crystal. "Do you know someone who can tell me?" A man seated himself several stools down and spun a half-dollar piece on the counter. The bartender moved toward him with the glass in his hand. A fly settled on the towel, now tossed upon the undershelf.

Asked how business was going, the bartender simply poured liquid into the glass and replied that one never knew. The man laughed as the glass found his grasp. He laughed again when the bartender nodded toward the figure on the end seat who looked at them but did not smile. "Wants to find the Exilés," said the bartender somewhat seriously. "Well, I'll be damned," said the man, stroking the stem of his glass, "why don't he ask cousin Willy?" "Yea, cousin Willy would show him by hand."

"Do either of you know where I can find the Café des Exilés?" The voice was now several feet away but the man who laughed did not turn. He continued to stroke his glass and no longer smiled. "Dauphine Street. That right, Minos?" "Yea, 11 Dauphine Street, 'bout a block from Congo Square. But the liquor's just as good here." The bartender nodded at the glass in the man's hand and quivered a smile. "Thank you, thank you very much. You both are very thoughtful."

The door closed quickly, a wave of night air brushed the bartender's face. On the counter to his right the man noticed a droplet of water where the voice had hovered. "I ain't seen Willy since the Fête," mused the bartender, "maybe he fell for the Virgin." "Yea, that's a good one," mumbled the man between his fingers. "More likely he fell for the Pope." The barman withdrew to his towel and a fly beat noisily on the mirror behind him.

\* \* \* \* \*



## THE ENORMOUS SNOWFALL

Ed Brunner

Halfway through the Green Mountains, we stopped at a general store; Tom had to buy some Maple Sugar candy. So we pulled over to a brown and white general store which advertised maple sugar in chalk markings on a blackboard near the road. The lady inside stood among the crowded shelves and gazed sadly as Tom looked over the small supply of candy.

"How about this one, Jay?" he asked, holding up a mixed package.

"Sure," I said. I glanced up at the woman who was still looking at Tom and then from her, out the window.

"It's starting to snow, Tom," I said.

"We've been havin' snow on and off," said the lady, speaking for the first time. "But it always stops come the end of March." She looked out the window at the large flakes.

Tom turned to me and said, with an innocent look: "Isn't today April fourth?"

I nodded back at him. The lady behind the counter looked disinterested, as if she was trying not to hear.

"Well," Tom said, to no one in particular. "We're lucky it's past March so's we won't get caught in any unexpected snowfall. How soon do the roads get cleared out around here, ma'am?"

"They're *always* clear by the end of March," she said, crisply. "They're clear now, aint they?"

"I don't know if they'll be clear very long," Tom said, peering towards the road with a stretch of his long neck.

"Well, the way you boys are heading, you'll be outa the mountains before the snow piles up." She rang up the total of Tom's candy by cranking an old cash register. "Anything else?"

"No," he said, taking the bag. "Thank you. For the candy." We walked outside.

The snow was falling quietly, melting into the ground, visible only in the air and for a moment on the dark roofs of the two or three nearby houses. The snow seemed perfectly in place here; the trees on the mountains around us were still black and dark without leaves.

BRUNNER

"We make friends wherever we go," Tom said, opening the trunk of the car. "You want a heavy jacket? I'm getting mine."

"New England wit," I said, motioning back toward the store. "You know. Thanks."

"Well, Jay, for Chrissakes! she didn't even know it was April yet. These Vermont people are worse than hillbillies; totally screwed-up, behind the times."

"She probably thought worse of us than we did of her," I said.

"Maybe," he said, getting in the car. "But she *was* screwed up."

When we had started up again, I asked Tom: "Where'll we stay tonight?"

"I don't know. Any suggestions?"

"There should be lots of places around Lake Winnepesaukee. That's the only place we'll find motels open so early in the year. And we're only about an hour's ride from it."

"It won't be dark for almost four hours, Jay. We could push on to Boston by then."

"Okay. It was only a suggestion," I said. "Boston is fine with me."

"Besides, where on the lake could we stay? Hell, I'd bet the only place where motels would be open is in Wolfeboro."

I looked over at Tom and he had a big wise grin on his face. I tried to look innocent. "Hey," I said, "I didn't mean . . ."

"Sure, Caldwell! The hell you didn't!" he said, laughing. "I was just kidding about Boston. Yeah, let's stay in Wolfeboro. I've always wanted to see Robin's new house."

"Well," I said, "she's probably not there, but I could show you the town and everything. God, it's about the greatest town you'll ever see, no kidding. The streets are just beautiful. I mean it's typical New England, that's all."

"How long has it been since you've seen her?"

"You mean Robin?"

"Of course," he said. "Who else would we meet in Wolfeboro?"

"Oh, God, Tom," I said, "I haven't seen her since she moved up here. That summer she moved I saw her, and that was last year. The year we graduated from high school."

"Did you write to her?"

"I tried a couple of letters . . . but I never sent them. You know how you write a letter and maybe you read it a little later and it doesn't sound too good. So you don't send it. I guess that's what happened to me. And then I was busy writing short stories and college

doesn't leave you much time as it is . . . Hell, there are a million reasons why I never wrote."

"Too busy to write a letter to her but not a short story, huh?"

"Yeah, I guess that's it," I said.

"That's sort of screwed up, hey," he said.

"I guess so," I said. "Yeah, it is."

"You'll have to show me where to go," Tom said. "You must know this place better than me."

"Sure," I said. "When I was a little kid my parents used to bring me up here all the time, only we stayed at Weirs Beach, across the lake. I'd never even heard of Wolfeboro till I met Robin though my parents must've driven through it hundreds of times. I suppose you'd like Weirs Beach . . . it has pinball machines, amusement parks, rock and roll dances. I used to go to them all the time when I came up here."

"So naturally," Tom said, "we're going to Wolfeboro where it's deader than hell."

"Naturally," I said.

"At least it's stopped snowing."

"A good sign, Tom," I said. "Turn here. We'll go through Melvin Village."

"Melvin Village! Oh now that really sounds like a *great* place to have a lot of fun! Sounds like a character you see in *Mad*. You sure you want to go through with this, Jay? We could be in Boston in a couple of hours."

"Positive," I said. "But look, if you don't—"

"I'm just kidding," he said. "I'm sort of looking forward to seeing Robin again."

"I doubt if she's there," I said. "I really do."

"She didn't go to college, did she?"

"No, but she's probably away, visiting, or working, or something . . ."

"I doubt it," Tom said.

We were coming into Melvin Village. I had never seen it before because I'd always come into Wolfeboro from the other side of the lake, going through the town and up to Robin's summer cottage. They hadn't moved into their new house yet, the last time I'd seen them. I wondered if they'd kept their cottage. It would be deserted now—if Robin was anywhere she was living in Wolfeboro at her house, the big white-and-green colonial they had moved into later that year. Robin had shown me the house the last time I'd seen her, the first

day of Autumn. Though it was supposedly locked, we had run through it looking at the dusty floors and leaving mysterious footprints everywhere, footprints that seemed to reverse direction in mid-journey, like the kind little kids make when they're walking in snow.

The road twisted around the edges of the lake. Melvin Village was elms and pines and colonial houses set back from the edge of the lake. Floes of ice were still in the water and the lake looked cold in the afternoon sunlight. A breeze was blowing and the water sparkled.

We were getting closer to Robin's summer cottage. "I remember that," I kept saying to Tom, "and I remember that too." I kept pointing like a little kid.

"Up here we'll turn right," I said, "next to the 'Community Wash-tub,' if I remember right." The sign came into view as we turned a corner; it was a large white sign next to the road with a blue tub painted on it. "No! It's 'Country Washtub,' that's right. What a ridiculous name! I remember we almost died laughing when she pointed it out to me. The funniest thing in the world, you know?"

"What's so funny about Country Washtub?"

"Oh, hell, I don't know. Nothing, maybe. It seemed awfully funny that summer, though. People must've really thought we were crazy, laughing like we did. Turn down this road."

The red white and blue sign pointing to the YMCA camp at the end of the road had been taken down. I showed Tom where to drive. The road to the cottage was almost lost in the forest.

"This is where she *lives*?" asked Tom, as we stopped in front of the cottage.

"No, no. This is their summer cottage. I've told you about it before. I was just wondering if they still own it."

"There was a sign saying 'Carter' on a tree next to the driveway, so I guess they still do."

"Well, I just want to take a look around anyway," I said.

"Well then, take a look by yourself. It's damn cold out there. Looks like it'll snow any minute."

"New England weather, pal."

"Hurry up."

I walked down to the edge of the lake. The water had darkened as the sky had clouded over and small waves were coming up on the sides of trees. I picked up a piece of ice and held it in my hands. Next to me was her house, cold and shuttered against the wind. I looked at the house next door, the one her father had been helping

paint the last time I was here. It needed a new paint job badly, because of the wind blowing across the lake. Then I looked at the dock where Mrs. Carter had been sitting, in her usual pose. When Robin and I had walked onto the dock, she had put down her copy of the *New York Times*, had peered over the edge of her sunglasses and taken in both of us in one glance. I had been smoking a cigarillo and she rattled the paper and put it on her lap. "I suppose," she said, "you have to smoke that thing because you want to be a writer." I remember smiling at Robin who was laughing at her mother's remark, and she smiled back. "Sometimes it helps to look like a writer," I said, but I had thrown my cigarillo over on the ground where it rolled against a tree stump.

Everything had changed now: this grey lake, the house next door that needed paint, the line of cottages visible along the lake through the leafless trees, the docks sprawled on their backs along the water—even my cigarillo had long been decayed into dirt, if I wanted to go so far back.

"Caldwell! Are we gonna be here all afternoon? I can't find the goddamn heater switch in this car!"

I turned and took one final look. Someone should paint that house. Maybe I'd better bring the dock farther up from the water. Suddenly my hands felt cold and wet. I had forgotten I was holding the piece of ice, and I ran back to the car.

We drove up the dirt road, past all the trees and the YMCA camp. "Andrileo," I said, looking at Tom, "did anyone ever tell you that you are *just*—precisely, exactly, utterly—as sensitive as a seat in an outhouse?"

"You did, Jay, but then, not all of us are *artists*."

"Here's their sign," I said, pointing to the woden slab on the tree as we pulled out of the driveway. "We could always break it up and stuff it in Mr. Carter's mailbox." A year ago, when we were seniors in high school, Tom and I and Bruce Miller and Paul Zito had taken down all the wooden signs pointing to our high school and stuffed them in Mr. Carter's mailbox. That was when Carter was still principal of the school. It was a perfect crime, but Miller went and wrote an essay called "The Art of Filching Signs," and Carter read that and caught us. After we had been caught and punished, Mr. Carter had remarked: "This incident shows me two things. One, you boys acted very childishly; two, the school should check the principal's mailbox more often. It took us a week before we discovered where the signs were."

"Yeah! That'd be a riot, Jay! C'mon, let's do it!"

"You're crazy! I was just kidding, Tom. Don't you think he'd know who did it? It's sort of obvious."

"Yeah, sure, but the expression on his face when he finds this sign in his mailbox! I'd give a million bucks for a shot of that!"

"I don't think he'd be too mad," I said. "Not really." He might even think it was funny, sort of."

"Oh, *sure*, Jay! I'll bet!"

"No," I said. ". . . I don't know what he'd do." I tried not to think about the sign at all. One stupid detail like that and you remember it the rest of your life. Stupid and pointless—like that cigarillo—and you never forget it.

\* \* \* \*

We ate at a small diner in Wolfeboro. The town was pretty much closed up, waiting for the tourist season. Across the lake, the sun was beginning to set. Tom finished drinking his root beer and lighted a cigarette.

"Why did Robin's family move anyway?" he asked me. "I never quite got that straight. I always meant to ask you."

"I really don't know," I said. "Her father retired for a year and then took a job as superintendent of schools. He kept that for a year, then moved up here. But I don't know why. I guess he'd always wanted to live up here and summers weren't enough for him."

"Yeah, probably you're right." Tom looked past me, out the window. "It looks cold outside."

Outside the window, beyond the lake and the mountains, the sun was beginning to set. It was a cold-looking sunset with sharpness of light around the hills and the edges of the clouds. It was colder here than I'd expected, and it was real nice to be sitting inside, smoking after a meal.

We paid the check and left, crossing Main Street to the car. The stores were dark, except for one or two whose fronts were lighted, showing up patches of deserted pavement. Farther down the street, a gas station, a laundromat, and a drug store were open and bright. "Well," said Tom, getting into the driver's seat, "which way do we go?" He started the car. "I'm ready for anything."

"Just drive around," I said.

"Does she live around here?"

"I don't know, Tom," I said, looking out the car window. "She never showed me her other house. When I was here two years ago, she hadn't moved in yet." I saw my face in the window and composed



it for a moment; after a second, I turned to Tom and looked him in the eye. "Honest," I said. "I don't know."

"You have *no* idea?"

"Seriously. But look, I figure Wolfeboro isn't that big a town and if we drive around long enough, we're sure to see her mailbox. You know?"

"Yeah, but it's getting dark pretty quick. We shouldn't have stayed in that diner so long."

"Well, then, don't sit there," I said. "Let's get moving before it gets black out. Come on."

We drove around by the lake, but it was too dark to see very much. There were some boats in the water but not many compared to the summer.

"This is really nice," said Tom.

"It's quiet. Usually the place is mobbed with boats."

"This is nice now."

"You should see more of the town," I said. "It's too bad it's getting darker. I didn't think you'd like it."

"It's okay," he said. "But don't worry about Robin: we'll find her."

"I hope," I said.

"Christ! You don't sound too enthusiastic!"

"Well, I do hope we find her," I said.

"We will."

"You know, we haven't found a place to stay yet, either."

"We'll worry about that later. Maybe the Carter's will ask us to stay with them."

"Now *that's* really likely, after some of the things we did to Mr. Carter in high school."

"Hey, I thought you were on good terms with her old man?"

"Yeah," I said. "Well, I don't know. You know, I hate to impose on someone like that unless I'm really a good friend. Unless they really mean the invitation."

"Hell, Jay, why would they ask us if they didn't mean it?"

"Look, Tom," I said. "Here we are arguing about staying at the Carter's and we haven't even found their house yet. Let's go."

"But do you think they'd invite us?"

"Probably," I said. "But let's find their house first, huh?"

We drove around some more and finally turned into the older section of town. There were dozens of smaller lakes here in the foothills. We'd have to pass her house soon—it was right around here,

but I knew they didn't have a mailbox because Robin had told me to write to their box number in Wolfeboro.

"Where the hell do you suppose Robin is?" Tom finally asked, after we'd driven around another five minutes. "The goddamned moon is starting to rise, for Chrissakes!"

"I don't know. She never really told me where her house was. Turn down this road."

"Is this where she lives?"

"No," I said, looking at the houses going by. "I just like this part of town. I think it's great."

"Too dull. At least there's something going on by the big lake. Nothing around these little lakes, nothing happening."

"No. It's beautiful here. Especially in the autumn. The trees have started to turn colours, and the lakes seem bluer and clearer than anyone could imagine."

"It's hard to imagine that in the dark," Tom said. He turned down the road leading past Robin's house.

"You just don't know how beautiful the whole thing is in the fall," I said, and we drove past Robin's house. There was no mailbox by the road. The lights were on downstairs and though the night was cold, two upstairs windows were open. In the lake across the street, where we had watched the sun set once, the moon was reflected. In the water it shone white and cracked and wobbly. It followed us along in the water, shifting and bobbing, and then we turned a corner and the lake went out of sight.

Tom asked again, "Does she live around here, Jay?"

"No! For God's sakes, how many times do I have to tell you I don't know where she lives!"

"All right, okay! I just thought with the way you were looking . . ." He glanced over at me.

"I was thinking. I got lost. You know how we artists get carried away in meditation. You know." I smiled at him and he laughed.

"Yeah, I know. Now how the hell do we find our way back to Main Street or are we lost for good out here in the wilderness?"

"Left, then a right. Turn here."

We drove around about ten minutes longer, not saying anything. It was completely dark out now, the moon behind clouds. Tom suggested we look for a place to stay. "Maybe we can find where Robin lives in the morning," he said. "I haven't seen many mailboxes around at all."

The only place open was a guest-house on Main Street. Tom

went in to ask about rooms while I sat in the car and waited to see if he could get any. He came back out.

"You get them?" I asked.

"Sure, sure," he said, and started the car.

"Hey! Where the hell are we going?"

"To a laundry. Take it easy. I have to wash some of my clothes."

"You're going to a laundry? At seven-thirty at night?"

"A laundromat, I mean. I want to wash my shirts. I don't have any left."

"I don't understand. How can you dry them? How can you press them? This is absurd!"

"Well," he said, looking at his watch, "it's been almost three hours since we've done anything absurd, so I figure it's about time."

I didn't say anything and he pulled up to the laundromat on Main Street.

"C'mon in," he said.

"I was coming anyway," I said. We walked inside. It was a typical laundromat with cinder block walls, cement floors, and lines of washers and dryers. "Really a beautiful place!" I said. "How colourful and subtle the decor is here!" And I put my tongue between my lips and blew so my tongue vibrated against my lips. Then Tom and I saw an old lady with her brown hair tied up in a bun sitting in a corner reading *Life* magazine. Tom dumped his pile of dirty shirts in a washing machine and messed up his hair with one hand. He took off the shirt he was wearing and threw it in the washer. "Watch," he whispered to me.

"I should'n' have had that las' beer!" he said, loudly, and then belched. "Boy do I ever feel sick." He leaned against a pole and then put his arms around it.

I wandered over to the magazines and held one open, in front of my face. Out of the corner of my eye, I watched the woman who was now looking—or rather, glaring—at Tom who had walked over to her dryer and was peering into the window in front.

"Hey, Jay!" he yelled. "Look at this, hey! The blue shirt keeps comin' around. Around and 'round and 'round. Where's the channel selector? This show's getting me dizzy. Too damn int'lectual."

"Come over here and sit down. You never should've finished that fourth six-pack."

"Hell with you!" He turned around and squinted at the room, his eyes finally settling on a door that said "Men." "I'm going to the john!" he announced.

"Well, maybe you'd better," I said. "You'd feel better." He staggered over to the door and peered down at the slot and box by the handle of the pay-toilet.

"Oh no, man!" he yelled. "No, no, no, nosire-e-e! That place ain't for me, boy. You know what this is, Jay, ol' buddy? You know what it is for real? Why it's a giant monster washing machine! Only for people, not clothes!"

"Just go in, will you?"

"Awright," he said. "I'll go in. You may never see me again, but in I'll go. But if I yell, you open this door quick! Cause I don't wanna get tossed all around." He managed to put a dime in the box and then bump into the edge of the door. "Remember!" he said, before he vanished. "If I yell, open. I don' wanna get dizzy." He belched, and shut the door.

The woman in the laundromat was taking her clothes out of the dryer. "If there's anything I can't stand," I said, "it's a boy who can't hold his liquor." And I sighed for the enormous imperfection of Man. Meanwhile, Tom was making noises of regurgitation from inside the toilet.

"I'm sure," she said, and gathered her clothes in a bundle. With a grim look on her face, she stamped out of the laundromat. The door didn't close behind her and she had to come back and shut it. At that moment, Tom let go with his loudest imitation and it sounded as if he'd just lost half his stomach and several feet of intestine down the toilet-bowl.

"Hello again," I grinned, and when she slammed the door shut, all the glass in the place shook.

"Has she left?" asked Tom as he poked his head out the bathroom door. "Or did a small A-bomb just go off?"

"Andrillio!" I said, laughing. "You're out of your mind! She thought we were both so drunk we couldn't walk!"

"That'll teach her to believe in the purity and virtue of American youth!"

"You're crazy!" I said. "You can't imagine how ludicrous you look, standing there in your undershirt!"

"Well, I can't wear my shirt. Or any shirt. Someone put them all in the washing machine." He laughed now. "Besides, it's better than being an artist, Jay." He looked at me across the room, past the dryers and the worn copies of the *Saturday Evening Post*.

"You're damn right, Tom," I said. "C'mon. Let's get your clothes."

We walked outside, Tom wringing out one of his shirts as he

walked. The town was completely empty, not even cars parked on the road.

"Well, I thought Burlington, Vermont, was a swinging place," Tom said, "but I see it can't hold a candle to Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, on a Thursday night. This place *swings*, boy, no kidding!"

"It doesn't seem like the place it did in the summer," I said. "But we should've had Robin with us. She would've loved doing something like that."

"That lady was probably her neighbour."

"So much the better!" We got in the car. "We used to do stuff like that all summer, she and I. Just raise hell everywhere."

"That's great."

"We should've found her."

"Ah, her parents wouldn't've let her out anyway!"

"Or maybe she wouldn't have liked it. We're getting pretty old to do stuff like that, Tom."

"Who gives a damn?" he asked. "I'll do it if I feel like it! C'mon, let's get back to the boardinghouse."

"I hope we don't see our landlady," I said laughing. "She'd wonder what the devil you're doing in your undershirt."

"Didn't I tell you, Jay?" he said, innocently. "That was our landlady in there, washing some clothes."

"Oh my God, Tom, are you kidding me? Holy Jesus, what did she think . . ."

"I'm kidding, Jay, I'm kidding!" he said. "Christ, if everyone worried as much as you do, nothing would ever get done. No one would have fun. And the world would generally go to hell."

"You're right," I said. "Right again. That's twice in one evening. You're turning into an intellectual, Tom."

"Don't worry about that," he said, starting the car. "No danger there." We pulled out of the parking-lot and headed up toward the boardinghouse.

\* \* \* \*

The next morning we were supposed to get up at eight; that had been our schedule for the entire trip. But as usual, I woke up at quarter to nine, and as usual, Tom was still asleep.

"Come on," I said to Tom, who lay in bed snoring. "Come on, let's go! We got to get a move-on!"

He woke up with a jerk. "Blah," he said, which was also usual, and reached for my cigarettes. "Blah." And he buried his head in the

pillow while one hand moved about on the nighttable, searching for matches.

"Get out of bed! Come on! Andriolio!"

He turned over, and with supreme effort, lighted his cigarette. He sat up in bed and scratched himself. "I fixed up the room after you went to bed last night," he said. "I figured that by now you were missing that Mondrian that hangs in your room, so, since I didn't have any Mondrians around, I hung that up." He had taken the fold-out from *Playboy* and stuck it on the wall in front of us. "Beats hell out of Mondrian any day, if you ask me," he said, and sat smoking in bed, looking at it.

"We're going to be here all day if you don't get out of that bed," I said, standing on the floor, in my pants.

"Hey listen, Jay," he said. "I got an idea. I got it after you went to bed last night. This is so simple I don't know why we never thought of it before."

"Well, what the hell is it?"

"Simple. We look up Robin's address in the phone book. Just look under Carter. Now why didn't we try that before?"

"You know," I said, "seriously, Tom, I'd forgotten where we were when I woke up this morning."

"Yeah?"

"Honest-to-Christ. No kidding. I wasn't even thinking of her."

Tom sat on the bed, thinking about that, and I walked over to the window. The rain I had heard during most of the last night had left puddles that were starting to freeze around their edges.

"It's going to be cold out today," I said.

"What?"

"Nothing; it wasn't important."

"Well, are we going to find a phone book or not?"

"No."

"No?" Tom got out of bed. "Why not? She must have a phone. There *are* phones in Wolfeboro, aren't there?"

"I don't want to see Robin," I said.

"I see," said Tom. "That's why we came to Wolfeboro instead of going on to Boston. Are you kidding me?"

"No. I don't want to see her. I want to forget her."

"Now you sound like a lovesick kid!" Tom said. "Why the hell are you in Wolfeboro then?"

"I don't know why I do things," I said.

"Well, I know why you're in Wolfeboro, pal. You *want* to see Robin."

"But I can't. I want to forget her."

"Well, you picked a great town to start in!" He walked over to the bureau and started putting on his clothes.

"It's like when you give up smoking and you put a pack of cigarettes in front of you to see if you've kicked the habit."

"You've never given up smoking."

I turned around to face him. He was staring with disgust at the wrinkled shirt he had taken from the washing machine last night. "That's not the point, Tom. I'm just trying to forget Robin, and I can. I'm as close to her home as I'll ever be, and I don't want to see her; I've managed to put her out of my mind."

"Caldwell, you can't do that. People just don't forget things!"

"I do," I said, "if I want to."

Tom looked at me questioningly, and I looked out the window. It was beginning to snow, but I pretended not to notice. "Listen, Tom," I said. "I can't go around for the rest of my life thinking about one broad, just *one* broad. Right? No one can live in the past. That's not living. And I can't do that. I've got more to do than think about one thing. I've got stories to write and people to meet . . . Can't you see that?"

"Oh, I can see it all fine, I can see what you're trying to do! But what's wrong with seeing her one more time, seeing how she is! Hell, she might've turned into a dope addict, a whore, . . . she might be married! . . ."

". . . Or she might be just the way she was the last time I saw her," I said.

"That's a risk you take. This way you'll never know."

"Right And I'll forget about her!"

"You can't willfully forget something!"

"Look, I'm not going to argue with you, Tom. I don't intend to see her. I don't know where her house is. It's starting to snow out, and we'd better get on the road before it piles up."

"It's April, Jay! How can snow pile up in the middle of April!"

"You never can tell," I said. "Funny things happen here. Now, pack up your stuff and take down that gross-looking blonde and put her back in *Playboy*."

"Reminds you of another blonde, huh?"

"Just take it down and let's get out of here!"

We packed our gear and walked out into the street. It was snowing big rough flakes that blurred everything near us into grey. "What a place," Tom said, as he threw his bag into the car and got in.

"I'll turn on the heater," I said, starting the car.

Tom grunted and looked out the window as I wheeled the car around and headed towards Boston.

"Snow in April," he said, looking at me. "Who would've expected it?"

\* \* \* \*

## MADAME BOVARY

Al Werder

The night has bared its head. He lies awake.  
Her images suffuse his blood like fish  
That swirl the surface of a lake.  
They whisper — Come, and live in me.  
The words expand like waterbeads  
But fall as random patter on a pane.  
As lids close softly over deafening dreams,  
The rain darts across a woman's face  
And pours his footsteps through her ears.  
She resigns to water's weight. Her lips lock  
Like stones that shut an echo in a tomb.  
Her body is a needle in a flame,  
And she sees visions of ice.



## STORY

by Jane Cogie

Slow and steady wins the race, by god, by damn. So you say to yourself one hundred times with vehemence, "Never fret, for tomorrow is another day," and you put in as a safety precaution, "And I hope to hell that it isn't another day like today." Life takes you down the bumpy road to death . . . and a one and a two and a one, two, three . . . leave the clock on the desk and take your watch off when you go swimming . . . I have a funny goddamn feeling that the life guard isn't on duty today.

COGIE

Swearing is the main theme of tonight's episode of "sluggish and methodical conquers the course"; of course if you do not put your all into the method of your methodary then your sluggishness shall without the slightest doubt pull you below the surface, and you shall sink to the very depths of deep—to the pit of the puddle, where you shall wallow with the slimy slewy toads amidst the green gory grunge. Oh a miserable life. Green toads and green grunge aren't hep on welcomes. So you slide down and with no comforting words for solace you are enveloped in a thick film of puice—don't ask me puice "what," for the pure fact that it is puice is enough to frighten anyone to be, if not methodical, to increase their pace of existence.

Crash your way through life, leaving a trail of dust and pincurlers behind and you will never have to fear the dark below of beneath or beneath of below as words come and go. You may say that with all those unmethodical speed demons that the earth shall become a mere thrashing, throbbing, pulsing, itching, twitching metropolis of nothing much from something little.

Well that may and very well might happen . . . but anything but the pitchy puddle of corrupt goo . . . anything but don't throw me on the briarpatch, Brerwolf—anything but that—twist off my toenails, pull my nose with pliers, but God—where oh where has my little dog gone . . . into the forest to dance with the moon. Hididdle diddle, there ain't no fiddle, no cow, no moon. Fee fie fow fum, I'll eat your twurpy thumb.

I can't see, in the second place, how the world could itch and throb and bop and bob anymore than as at its present status of lunacy but nothing has a limit including twitching and pulsing; so I suppose we should consider ourselves lucky that not everyone crashes their way through this dim old um-pa world and that some sacrifice themselves by falling in muds of mush—though I believe sacrifice is an incorrect term in this particular and peculiar case, as those who fall do it without conscious forethought and fall less through feeling for others and more because of their lethargic selfish attitude in their years on da earth. So whatever you do throughout time and space, beware.

\* \* \* \*