



exile

Exile
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Prose:
Borchert (translated by Fridman)
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Poetry:
Allbery
Bennett
Cloran
Jamis (translated by de Armas)
Jones
Kessler
Mayhew
McMullen
Miehe (translated by Fridman)
Orleans
Patnode
Weber
Yevtushenko (translated by Turnbull)

Pound:
de Rachewiltz
Kenner
McNaughton

Photography: (in order of appearance)
Yeomans (Mirror Image of Mountain)
Liebow (Untitled)
Hull-Liebow (Chinese Dyanstic Rubbing.
Composite Animal: Rubbing,
Bronze Vessel, Early Han.)
Pound Photograph Courtesy of Bill McNaughton
Yeomans (Double Image)

*I have weathered the storm,
I have beaten out my exile.*
—Ezra Pound

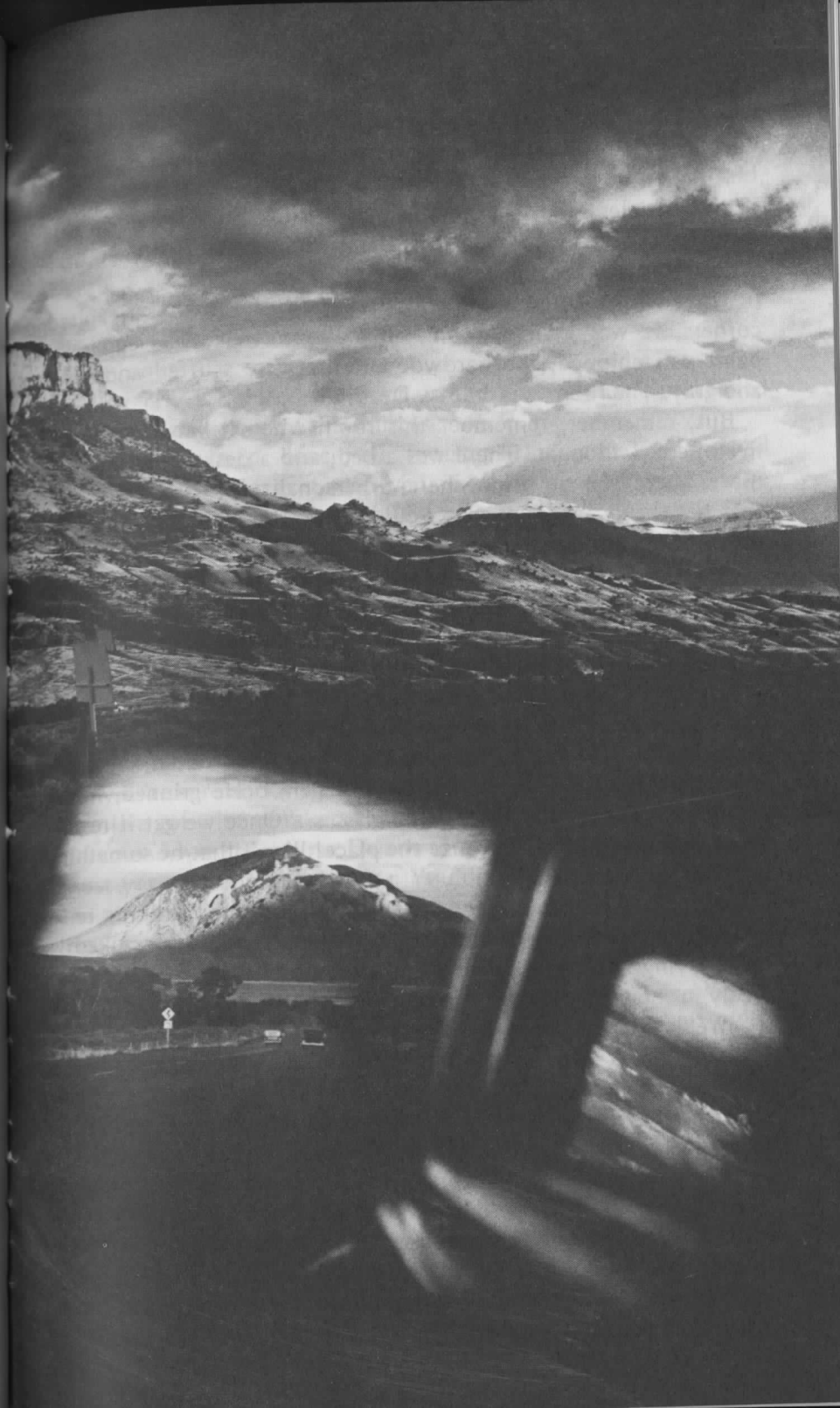
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DUST

by Katie Tight

I picked it up. It was fuzzy, soft, entangled with hairs and unidentified particles. I let it run down my palm and watched it until it caressed the floor once again. "Damn dust." I straightened up and uneasily brushed by hands along the sides of my skirt.

The room was bare except for the puffs of dust that inhabited its corners. It was a small room, only about twelve feet square. The paint was chipped, the hardwood floors were scuffed and cracked and gray. The room was empty. Dead.

But, remember, remember this room when it was alive and you lived here, I thought. There was a bed, and a desk, and a chair. And more, there was an atmosphere, a personality in the room's clutter that had been a part of me, would always be a part of me, I loved this room, this house. How could I sell it?

"And how's everything in here?" The real estate man squinted at a small black notebook. "Let's see — no personal belongings, no articles, nothing. Everything checks out okay." His stubby fingers gripped a stubby pencil and wrote a check mark in the notebook. "Let's see the rest of the house, okay?"

"Sure, why not?" I followed him down the hallway, watching the amusing way his large buttocks shifted from side to side.

"You know, this house is really a gem." He grinned, his eyes disappearing into slits behind his glasses. "Once we get it restored, why, you won't even recognize the place! Won't that be something?"

"Yeah, I guess so."

"Well, take this room, for instance." We stopped walking to look inside the room. The setting sun filtered through the cracked window, giving the room an eerie, orange glow. Dust particles floated freely in the sun's rays.

"We'll put nice, thick shag rugs over this gawdawful floor, repaint the walls, hang a coupla fancy curtains on the window, and viola, it'll be the perfect place for someone to set up their stereo equipment and have a swingin' time, if you know what I mean. Heh, heh." His voice was an elbow jab to the ribs.

The room had been my father's den. When we lived here, it glowed with warmth, and its smell was a blend of Prince Albert tobacco and leather-bound old books. He used to sit in an over-stuffed chair in that corner — or was it by the window? — and smoke his pipe, and his face would break into a thousand lines when he smiled at me.

I smiled my father's smile, savoring the memory.

"Hey, somethin' wrong, little lady? You're grinning real weird." The real estate man poked his face into my line of sight and his squinty eyes narrowed with suspicion.

"No, nothing's wrong." Knowing he wouldn't understand, I said, "I was just thinking about 'swingin' times."

"Oh, heh, heh." His snicker betrayed a relieved tone.

"Yeah. I guess you musta had some, all right." His eyes raked my figure, taking in everything from my long brunette hair to my sandled feet. They lingered momentarily on my legs.

"Your room?"

"Not exactly." I closed the door on the memories and preceded him down the hall, toward the staircase.

We walked down in silence, our footsteps ringing clear and naked in the house's emptiness. Six. Seven. Twelve steps. We reached the bottom.

"Live here long?" The real estate man removed his glasses, carefully wiped them with a slightly soiled handkerchief, then replaced them on his bulbous nose.

"Yes, a long time. All my life until I went to college."

"College, huh? Which one?"

"Berkeley. I just came here for the weekend to settle everything. I'm still in grad school at Cal."

He stuck his hands into the pockets of his baggy pants. "Not bad. Listen, you're sure about wanting to sell this place? I've got to know, because I've got a lot of takers that are hot to buy it."

"Of course, yes, of course I want to sell it. I think, well, I'm not sure just yet, not completely sure. You don't have to know this very second, do you?"

"No, no, of course not. But what about your folks? What do they think about this?"

"They don't think, they're dead. They died two years ago." How could I have said that so bluntly, so impersonally?

His reply was the equally blunt, "Sorry, well, okay, that does it then. Tell you what, you sleep on it, then decide by tomorrow if you can. I'll meet you here at one o'clock tomorrow to see how things stand." He squinted skeptically at me. "Do you think you'll know by tomorrow?"

"Yes, of course." My voice was too emphatic, too convincing.

"It shouldn't be that hard a decision, you know. After all, it's just an old house."

I smelled the dust and the oldness. "Yeah, that's what it is. Just an old house."

Then he left.

I set my purse down, sat on the step, and leaned my head against the banister. The smoothly carved mahogany felt cool against my cheek. I let my hand fondle the railing. It moved from the top to the bottom, my fingers exploring the various curves and niches thoroughly. My hand dropped wearily back into my lap.

It was covered with dust.

"Aw, *damn* it!"

We used to slide down the banister all the time, Mark and I. We were the bravest of playmates, so brave that even the twelve high steps could not stop us. . .

"Hey, watch me, here I go!!" Mark, poised precariously on the railing, screamed delightedly, and slid down, landing perfectly on his feet.

"Look out, I'm coming too!" I hoisted myself onto the railing and followed him. But Mark had not moved quickly enough, and within seconds, we were an entangled mass of arms and legs that rolled and shrieked with laughter.

"Now children, enough of this!" Mother, drying her hands on her apron, loomed, huge and ominous, before us. She was angry. "You're bound to break something or hurt yourself if you keep this up. What am I going to do with the two of you? Now either go outside and play or go and play quietly upstairs. But *no* more sliding down the banister."

I looked at Mark. "Let's play house."

He wrinkled his nose distastefully. "That's sissy stuff. Only girls play house."

"Have you ever played house before?"

"No. I'm a boy."

"Well, it's fun! Come on."

He hung back for an *imperceptible second*. "Well, okay."

I gripped his hand and we ran up to my room. I took my dolls carefully out of the closet and placed them on the floor in front of me. I picked up my favorite one and handed it to Mark.

"Here, you hold this one." Mark took the doll and cradled it awkwardly in his arms. "And I'll take this one. Do you want to be the father or the mother?"

"The father. I'm a boy."

"Okay. You need a hat. I need some high heels."

I ran to my parent's bedroom and pulled a chair over to the closet. I stepped up onto the soft cushion and reached for my father's gray derby hat. It was barely within my reach. I stood on tiptoe and my

arms stretched further and further until I had it at last. Stepping down, I carefully replaced the chair in its original position, making sure that its legs fit perfectly into the worn grooves of the carpet.

I located my mother's black patent leather pumps and gently slipped my bare feet into them. Hat in hand, I clunked noisily back to my room, my feet lost in the oversize shoes.

I placed the hat on Mark's head with great solemnity. "Now, you're the father." The hat fell forward, covering his eyes and nose. We both giggled. "You look funny."

Mark pushed the hat off his face, and examined my legs, which were wobbling dangerously in my mother's spiked heels.

"So do you, you've got skinny legs."

We giggled again.

Protected by the room, we constructed the perfect household atmosphere from plastic cups and saucers, make-believe tea and cookies, and Mattel children.

I sipped at my tea. "Mark, are we engaged?"

"I guess so."

"When will we get married?"

"When we grow up, of course."

The door opened, and Mother stood there, smiling this time.

"Oh, we're having a tea party, how nice!"

Mark stood up grandly. "I'm the father, she's the mother. These are our children. We're engaged."

"Why that's just lovely. But, Mark, I'm afraid we'll have to end the tea party for today. It's suppertime and you must go home now."

"Okay. Here's your father's hat." He handed it to Mother. We walked down the stairs. Mother and I stopped at the bottom step, watching Mark as he strutted to the front door. He turned. We smiled at each other.

"Bye, see you tomorrow."

Goodbye, Mark. . .

I stood up quickly and walked across the deserted room to the large bay window. My eyes took in the surrounding neighborhood. It had changed quite a bit in two years. Not a single house had escaped the aging process. Each one had overgrown, neglected shrubs, cracked cement walks, peeling paint. The once lovely houses were beginning to decay. Why, even Mark's house, with its perfect landscaping. . .

"I think I'll become a gardener." Mark inspected the lawn area. "These bushes and shrubs are really pretty. I wouldn't mind taking care of bushes and lawns the rest of my life."

I shifted my position on the lawn and scrutinized his face. He was serious.

"But, Mark, what about college?"

"Who needs it?" He lay back on the lawn and closed his eyes. His face, illuminated by the sun, was peaceful. The lines were clean and pure, the kind of noble lines that sagging age would never touch. The corners of his mouth curved down slightly. His hair was gold, untouched by any illegitimate brown or black hairs. No wonder he was the heart-throb of our ninth grade class.

"But everybody needs college! You have to have a college education so you can get a decent job. Our counselors have been telling us that for ages.

"Gardners make enough to live on."

"But. . ."

He raised himself up onto one elbow. "Listen, I just don't want to go to college. My parents have been on my back about good grades all year, pushing college and telling me I'm going no matter what. But I can't see working hard in high school to get into college and work even harder. That doesn't make sense to me. I can't see suffering, and working hard is suffering. I want to enjoy life, take it easy, do what I want without any pressure."

"Well, I'm going to college. And graduate school, too."

"We're two different people. You're more practical."

I plucked at the evenly trimmed grass. I didn't want to be different from Mark. We had always been friends, always felt the same way about things.

I changed the subject abruptly. "Who are you taking to the promotion dance?"

Mark flopped back onto the lawn, crossing his arms beneath his head. "Nobody, I'm not going."

"What do you mean, you're not going? You're graduating from the ninth grade, this is the biggest dance of the year, and you're *not* going? There are probably five or six girls who are dying to go with you, why, I can think of two right now. There's Debbie Bancroft and Lisa. . ."

"Look!" He sat up quickly and his blue eyes looked intensely into mine. "I'm not going and that's that, okay? I don't like dances. I think they're stupid. Besides," He rolled over onto his stomach, "all those girls are dogs, and I wouldn't ask one of them on a bet."

"Okay, okay, sorry I asked."

The sun was hot. My palms were moist, and I rubbed them on the grass to erase the sweat.

Mark straightened his arms, assuming a push-up position. "Hey, who's taking you to the dance?"

This was my big opportunity. I gazed skyward, dreamily. "Oh, I have three or four boys in mind."

"Hah, nobody would take *you!* Why, with those braces and. . ."

He stopped suddenly and *looked* at me.

I wasn't smiling at his joke.

His voice was an apology. "Besides, you've got skinny legs."

He lowered his arms and hid his face in the grass. There was just no hope for him. He would never grow up.

"Well, skinny legs or not, I wouldn't go with you to the dance if you sent me three dozen roses and begged me on your knees."

His voice was muffled by the grass. "And I wouldn't ask you either, so there."

Silence. A minute passed. I waited.

"Do you want to go?" His voice was barely audible. I couldn't believe I'd heard him right.

"What?"

"Do you want to go?" He raised his head and stared straight ahead. "With me, I mean."

"Yes."

There was nothing else to say.

I threw back my head and laughed triumphantly. I jumped to my feet, stepped over his prone body, and flew across the street to my house.

"Hey, guess what, everybody, I've got a date! I'm going to the Promotion Dance!"

"What's that?"

I bolted upstairs and flung open the door to the den. My father was sitting in his chair in the corner, immersed in the newspaper. He looked up casually.

"Dad, I'm going to the Promotion Dance!"

He refused to get excited. "Who with?"

"Mark. Isn't that great?"

"Um-hum." He buried his face in the newspaper, but not before I caught a glimpse of a pleased smile teasing the corners of his mouth.

Mother bustled into the room. "What's all the commotion?"

"Our daughter has just departed for Cloud Nine, never to return. Mark just asked her to the Promotion Dance."

He was grinning broadly now. His brown eyes were surrounded by thousands of tiny smile wrinkles.

"That's wonderful, dear. What are you going to wear?"

Well, I don't know. He just asked me two minutes ago."

I ran into my room, shutting the door behind me. I walked to the window and looked across the street at Mark's house. He was still lying on the grass, on his back, staring contentedly up at the sky. His foot was jiggling to some unheard melody. He was smiling.

I sat down on my bed. This is only the beginning, I thought. First the Promotion Dance, then high school activities, then college.

College, Mark's remark worried me. He has to go to college, it'll be a waste if he doesn't. I can't see him as a gardener or in any other menial capacity. He has too much to offer.

His parents and I will just have to get together and make him see how important college is. He'll go then, I'm sure of it.

I got up, stretched and looked out the window again. . . .
He was gone.

I turned away from the window. The living room was in semi-darkness. I walked around the perimeter, slowly. Our couch had been against the wall, the coffee table in front of it. The two chairs had been against the opposite wall, with a worn area rug in front of them. And scattered around the room had been the newspapers and typical household clutter that only our family could scatter.

It had been a beautiful house.

I returned to the staircase and sat down. But you have to decide, I thought. I lowered my head and rested it wearily on my folded arms. You have to decide. . . .

"Have you decided yet?" She shifted into fourth gear.

"Let's go to the Coffee Cantata. It's only about two blocks from here."

"Fine. Remember how we use to go there after *every* football and basketball game?"

I began laughing, "God, who could forget! I haven't been there since graduation, though, have you?"

"No."

"I wonder if it's changed?"

The coffee house was lighted only by bulb-like candles on the small circular tables. It was crowded. Cigarette smoke hung like a fog along the ceiling. Music filtered from an unknown source, and filled the room. It was hot.

My girlfriend coughed. "Do you see any place to sit?"

We squeezed through the mob toward the empty table, reached it, and sat down.

A bearded waiter appeared. "You ready to order?" He picked at a scab on his forearm.

"Two coffees."

"Gotcha." He sauntered off in the direction of the kitchen.

My girlfriend was lost in observations. "Hey, this place *has* changed since last year. There are a lot more weirdos now." Her eyes, which had been moving at random, suddenly focused sharply.

"Jesus, look at the guy over there."

"Where?"

"*There.*" She nodded her head in the specific direction. "He really looks out of it."

The man's forehead was on the table top. A cigarette burned lazily in the ashtray. Its smoke was spiraling upward. He moved his head from side to side, his long tousled hair shifting with each movement. His shoulders trembled intermittently.

"Come on, you've seen worse than that at school." I looked away.

The waiter ambled up and clumsily placed the coffee in front of us. He grinned lecherously at me, then disappeared into the dimness of the coffee house.

My girlfriend picked up her cup. "What are you going to do this summer? Any definite plans?"

"Yes, I definitely plan to do absolutely nothing, except sit back and relax. I am so glad we don't have to study anymore." "Me too. Hey, let's drink a toast!"

"To what?"

"To surviving our first year at college, of course. I think that's worth celebrating, don't you?"

I picked up my cup and extended it into the air. "Here's to UC Berkeley, may we never look upon its hallowed halls again! Or at least until September."

We both laughed raucously.

The man at the other table raised his head.

I glanced at his face to try and find something strong, distinguishable about it. But there was nothing. Just a straight nose, a mouth with drooping corners, and two eyes, assembled into a totally nondescript pattern. The face was devoid of life. Even the red-rimmed eyes were vacant, expressionless. He looked old.

But the telltale signs of age, the creases and saggings were not to be found. He rubbed his eyes with the back of his hand, and I looked more closely at him.

It was Mark.

Oh, Jesus.

I stood up sharply, jostling the table. "I'll be back in a few minutes."

My girlfriend looked perplexed. "But, where. . .?"

I sat down opposite him.

"Mark?"

He leaned back a little, and his eyes narrowed as a means of focusing. He opened his mouth with an effort. "Oh, Hello." He attempted a smile, but failed.

"How have you been? I haven't seen you in over a year."

He hesitated. "Fine, just fine." He was trying to assemble his facial muscles into a functioning sequence.

My stomach hurt. Bad. "I heard you were at college."

"Yeah, Santa Cruz. Dropped out though." He reeled backward a bit, but balanced himself.

"Did you like it?"

"What? Oh, Santa Cruz. Yeah. Got loaded a lot. It was great." He pushed hair out of his face.

I leaned forward until our faces were inches apart. "Mark. Why?"

He understood me. He licked his lips nervously, and his eyes avoided mine. Then a calm settled over his face, and he stared defiantly at me. "Why not? I do what I want, remember?"

I remembered, I remembered a lot of things. I closed my eyes for a second and drew a breath. "What are you going to do now?"

His face was suddenly very vivid, very alive. "Well, I got into grad school. That's what college did for me. Maybe I'll become a gardener!" He threw back his head and laughed wildly.

I stood up. I could not look at him. "Well, I've got to run, take care. Maybe I'll see you around sometime. Good luck."

He was silent. Then "Yeah" I started to walk back to my table.

"Hey!!"

I turned around. He was eyeing me boldly, and his lips parted into a grotesque imitation of a seductive grin. "You still got skinny legs, but they look pretty good, now."

I walked back to my table, accompanied by the sound of his laughter.

"Let's go."

My girlfriend gaped at me. "But we just got here! And you haven't finished your coffee."

I reached for my purse. My hand was shaking. I clenched it into a fist. "I don't want it. I have a huge headache. Do you mind?"

"No, it's okay."

I lifted my head from my arms. The sun had set, leaving the house completely dark. The only source of light came from an outside

street lamp. It flowed through the window, forming a checkerboard pattern on the floor.

I picked up my purse and walked to the window. I opened the purse and fumbled for my car keys. I moved closer to the light so I could see.

Clinging to the lower edge of my purse was a huge, intact clump of dust. I plucked the dust off, and held it up to the light on the palm of my hand. It was so fragile, so transparent, I could see through it.

I thought of Mark. I had not seen him since that night at the coffee house. I wonder what he's doing, I thought vaguely. I will probably never know. I sighed with resignation.

The dust puff dissolved in my hand.

I turned my palm upside down and watched the remains trickle in the direction of the floor. I could not see where they landed.

I located my car keys; they were heavy, concrete.

I hoped the real estate man would be home when I called him. I didn't want to keep his clients waiting for my decision.

I opened the door, heard it close behind me with a resounding click, and drove back to Berkeley.

The Masculine Cure

by Elizabeth Thomas

I think something is happening to my room. Or rather just outside of it. It is becoming invaded by voices — whispering voices surrounding my room. The voices seep through the walls, the cracks in the floor and ceiling. They seek me out and haunt me with their incessant whispering.

There is another door that opens to my room that is kept locked. Maybe it leads to a passage all the way around my room. They are whispering out there. I must do something. I must go out. I'll go out to dinner, but no, it's not time. I've no place to go so I must stay here and listen to them. Do they never stop — never rest?

I'll go downstairs to see Daniel. He will be surprised because he never has even been in his rooms before. But I will just tell him, he will say, "I have just come for a visit, a little chat before dinner and he will not think it so strange, but I will not tell him why. I know he would not believe in my voices. He would think me mad. Maybe the voices are meant just for me.

The voices say strange things that mix up time. "Here is the baby that was killed in the first atomic blast," they say, but what is that to me?

My mother and little brother are fighting at each other so I say a few words to them both. I say, "You should both respect each other." I say that to them so they will be mad at me instead of each other. So Mother gets mad. She says, "Do you want us to leave?" I say, "No, it is better that I do that."

I want to stay to hear the voices because they give me wisdom but they frighten me. They frighten me because at any moment they might come through the locked door and find me. They will know I have listened and heard them. Maybe then they will bury me behind the walls too.

No, I won't see Daniel. He isn't a sane person. I knew that from the first time he spoke to me on the stairs. Daniel tells me strange things. He lives downstairs and when I go down, sometimes he's standing there under the staircase waiting for me. He pulls me beside him so we are both hidden and he talks to me.

All the while he talks, he never lets go of my arm. His hand is so big, it goes all the way around my arm and he twists it and squeezes it until it becomes quite painful.

"Did you see the yarn ladies?" he says to me. "They were purple

and yellow and green all mixed up. They came to see me. They came to find me. Did they find you?

His breath is foul and I have to turn my head away, but I know it will make him angry. He makes my stomach sick he is so dirty. But whenever I move, even ever so slightly, he tightens his grip on my arm.

"They made a circle around me," he says, "and kept dancing around and around. They never talked, though. They never said a word. I didn't know what they wanted from me so I punched one. I punched her in the stomach and it made her eyes pop open. They have real eyes, you know. I punched them all in the stomach and all their eyes popped open and they stared at me. I don't like that. They stared with their real eyes in their yarn faces. So I picked one up and tore its legs off so it would stop dancing. I threw it down and it lay there and started to bleed. I thought the others would get mad at me then, so I tore their hands off and their legs off and they bled. Wet, sticky, red blood and they wouldn't stop bleeding. It looked funny, the blood coming out of the rags that way. It was funny and I laughed. But they wouldn't stop staring at me. They kept staring and bleeding, staring and bleeding. Don't let them stare at you that way. Don't let them dance. We've got to stop them from dancing. We've got to destroy them. Let them drown in their own blood."

Sometimes the voices scream. They scream through the walls. And sometimes at night I think it's Suzy screaming at me, screaming and screaming. But I know it's not her. She's not here any more. She went away. She left me. I cured her, though. I made her well. I wish she'd come back. I like her.

I like to watch Daniel's eyes. They are like hot marbles. They are hard but they are melting too. Sometimes I see nothing but the white edges and sometimes I see only black. He changes like that all the time. His hair is greasy and it hangs in his face, but I can see his eyes through it. His eyes are wild and they shine.

All the murder victims are whispering now. They're crying out that they were murdered. All the wives who were murdered by their husbands in blind range; all the innocents who were killed wandering the streets at night; all the political figures who were assassinated; all the royal folk who were beheaded by usurping kings; all the men of war who died for their countries. They are crying murder. They are screaming for vengeance. They say they can't rest until their murders are avenged.

I must get away, but there are so many things I must do before I leave. I must get dressed and I must find my glasses for I can't see

anything. My eyes don't work — just my ears listening and hearing those voices that won't go away.

I would go see Mother but she is still mad at me. She never smiles at me any more. She comes to see me but her eyes are still mad, so she turns away because I can't stand to see her mad at me and I don't know why. If I turn away, I will forget about her.

I turn away and hear the voices. They tell me true things. They tell me awful things but they are true. Sometimes Mother lies to me. She never used to, but ever since I moved away she tells me strange stories that I know can't be true. She told me yesterday, or was it the day before, that my little brother got married. That's absurd. He's only sixteen. She would never let him get married that young even if he would want to. I don't think he would want to anyway. He's never been able to get along with the girls much. He's always naturally avoided them. Maybe he's getting better now. I hope so. I don't know, though, because he never comes to see me. He's never seen me since I moved. I think it's because he doesn't like me. He never liked me very well. I think he's always been rather jealous of the way I have with women. He could never come close when I started making it with the women. That's why I can't possibly believe this absurd marriage story. I feel sorry for him because he's not very good looking. He's not handsome like I am. I guess it's just chance — who's born handsome and who's not.

All my scabs are gone now, but I can still feel the scars. Four wrinkled lines on my cheek. Matty's hands are so small. They are white and soft like silk, Matty's my girl. Her real name is Matilda. She's not like all the other girls. She's pretty. She's so pretty. She sits there and looks at me. She watches me. She's trying to understand me, she says. But what's there to understand? I'm just human like she is. She gets me all excited. I try to make love to her but she never lets me. All that damned Catholic upbringing. She dances good, too. She's a lot younger than me and I taught her how. We go into all the bars and dance. She turns around and around and teases me. She goes fast, too. She's a real fast dancer. It makes me dizzy, watching her dance.

She likes me, too. She depends on me. She needs me.

Sometimes I take her for a walk in the woods. She looks at every least little thing. "Look at the leaves," she says. "They're all dying. Why are they so beautiful when they die? Maybe they are really ugly and we just think they are beautiful. Or maybe dying is really beautiful like the leaves."

She says a lot of things like that. Things that don't make sense. So I kiss her to keep her mouth busy. I shut her up with my kisses. "We're alive now," I tell her. "Don't worry about things. You think too much. Give your brain a rest." Then we roll around on the ground and the leaves crunch beneath us. I try to make love to her again but she pushes me away. Someday, Suzy, someday you'll learn to live.

Mother has aged considerably lately. She looks older and older each time I see her. Her hair is completely white now and she has wrinkles around her eyes and mouth. Maybe that's from being mad at me too much — too much frowning at me.

I hate to say it but I think Mother's getting rather senile in her old age. I think she's becoming prone to making up stories. She told that story about my brother because she wants him to get married. She wants him to have a normal life. And she would like to have grandchildren to fondle, I'm sure. She would give her love to them since she can't to me.

She told me once that Matty was a nun somewhere, but I know it's just another of her lies. That's why I turn away from Mother and go back to my voices. They never tell me any lies. They always tell me truths. They make me wise when I listen to them. Sometimes the voices all blend together so I can't make out the chant. And sometimes when they are all together, they start wailing. One time it was Negro wailing. It was religious — spiritual. They were wailing for Jesus to save them. And the whispering started up again, softly at first so you couldn't hear it because of the wailing. But it got louder and louder until the very walls shook and the wailing ceased. The word they were whispering was 'nigger'. "Nigger, nigger, nigger, nigger . . ." louder and louder until I had to yell at them to shut up. Then I went to sleep. Times goes slow when you're sleeping.

Matty's wrong about death, though. I know now because I learned it from the voices. The voices were loud as if there were many and they were wailing. They were wailing like lost souls. It was the whole of purgatory crying out for their lost souls. All those who died drunk in the gutters; all those who had gone mad; all the Jews; all those who had been led astray; everyone who had broken one or more of the ten commandments; and more besides. The voices were all those who couldn't find their way to heaven. They were all outside my room wailing through the walls. The door was locked and kept them out, though they made the chains rattle. But the whispering voices stopped them again. They stopped the wailing and quieted the lost souls. The lost souls stopped wailing because they ceased to exist.

Through the chanting of the whisperers, I came to understand what death is. It is nothingness. There is no afterlife. There is no place to get lost in. There is only nothingness. This is what the voices told me. I am becoming wise by listening to them and learning such secrets.

Matty never was so wise. She wanted to save my soul. "I don't understand you," she says. "You scare me with your silly ideas." Then she tries to change me with her religion and I kiss her again just to shut her up.

Now I hear the voices wailing again. It is so hot in here. There are no windows, just heavy walls and the voices fill the air so that I cannot breathe. Now they are babies — they are all the aborted babies of the world, the whispering voices tell me. They are the babies that never got a chance to live — babies that were never born.

I saw her that night at the party. She was dancing with some young man, younger than me. He had a beard and long hair. I came in late and she didn't see me so I sat down and watched her dance. She's a good dancer. She gets me all excited, watching her. She's pretty, too. She was especially pretty that night. She was wearing a red dress. She danced with him for a long time and then they sat down and talked. He talked and she listened.

I don't like the way she looks at him when he talks to her. Her eyes get all big. It's the same way she looks at me sometimes. I don't want her to look at him that way.

"Come on, Matty. Let's go." She looks surprised to see me.

"Don't yell at me. Can't you see I'm busy?" she says to me. She never talked to me that way before. I don't think it's good that she stays with him. He makes her act funny.

"Come on, Matty. Let's go for a walk." I don't think she wanted to come, but I made her. She came with me in the end. I knew she would. We go outside. She doesn't walk with me, though. She grabs hold of me and stops me. "What's wrong with you? Why were you yelling in there like that?" she says.

Suzy's all upset now. I wasn't yelling. She's imagining things again. She does that a lot. Sometimes she doesn't make sense.

I try to calm her down. "Don't worry, Suzy," I say, "everything's all right. You're my girl, remember? You're mine. Don't listen to anybody else. It mixes you up. I'm here now. Everything's fine." I touch her hair. She has soft hair. It's real soft.

She pushes my hand away. "What?" she says. "What? Why are you talking so crazy? You're scaring me."

"Don't, Suzy, don't make me mad. I don't want to be mad at you. All the other girls made me mad, but not you, Suzy. You never make

me mad. You always do things right. Why do you have to start messing things up! Why do you have to start making things go wrong?" I try to kiss her. I want to make love to her so things will be all right again.

"Let go of me," she says. "What do you want? You're acting crazy."

"I am not crazy!" I push her on the ground and she starts screaming. "Don't Suzy, don't do that."

"I'm not Suzy," she screams. "I'm not. I'm not."

I hold her on the ground so she'll stop. You don't understand Suzy. I'm trying to help you. I'm going to make you well. You're a woman. You're my woman. It's for your own good. I'm going to cure you. I'm going to show you how to live. I'm going to teach you how to dance. I'm going to open your goddamned eyes!

After awhile she stopped screaming. So many times. I've been through this so many times before, Suzy. Don't they know what I was trying to do? Don't they see why I did it? It did help her, too. If she was here, she could tell them. She could explain to them. She'd tell them what I did was good. She'd show them how I helped her. Then they'd let me out of this cage. Maybe then they'd turn off the voices.

The Rats Still Sleep At Night*

by Wolfgang Borchert

The empty window in the isolated wall yawned, admitting the bluish-red light of the setting sun. Clouds of dust and debris floated between the remains of stone chimneys. The piles of garbage and brick stood silent. His eyes were closed. Suddenly it became much darker, and he sensed that someone had come, and now stood over him, a form dark and soft.

"Now they've got me," he thought. But when he blinked quickly he saw only two shabby legs, so bowed that he could see clearly between them. He risked a second quick glance at the trouser legs and discovered that they belonged to an old man who held a knife in one hand, and a basket in the other. His fingertips were covered with dirt.

"You sleep here?" asked the man from above. Jürgen blinked in the sunlight which shone through the man's legs and said:

"No, I don't sleep here. I'm standing guard."

The man nodded. "So that's why you have that huge stick, eh?"

"That's right," Jürgen confirmed, holding the stick tight.

"What are you guarding?"

"I can't tell you." He held the stick firmly in his hands.

"Probably money, eh?" The man set the basket down on the ground and wiped the blade of the knife, back and forth, across the seat of his pants.

"No, not money," Jürgen said with contempt, "something completely different."

"Well, what then?"

"I can't tell you. Just something else."

"O.K., then don't". But of course then I can't tell you what I have in this basket." The man poked the basket with the toe of his shoe and closed the knife.

"I already know what's in the basket," Jürgen said confidently, "rabbit food."

"My God," the man said, astonished, "you're pretty smart! How old are you?"

"Nine."

"Really? I remember when I was nine years old. Then you probably know how much three times nine is, eh?"

"Of course," Jürgen said, "that's easy!" He looked through the man's legs. "Three times nine, right?" he asked again. "Three times nine is twenty-seven. I know that."

"You're right," the man said, "and that's exactly how many rabbits I have."

Jürgen's mouth fell open. "Twenty-seven rabbits?"
"That's right. You can see for yourself. A lot of 'em are still young. Would you like to see 'em?"

"I can't. I have to stay on guard," Jürgen said with a trace of uncertainty.

"All the time," the man asked, "even at night?"

"Even at night. Always." Jürgen looked at the bowed legs. "Since Saturday," he whispered.

"But don't you ever go home? You have to eat!"

Jürgen lifted a large rock. Under it lay a half-loaf of bread and a small tin box.

"You smoke," the man asked, "you got a pipe?"

Jürgen held his stick tight and said timidly: "I roll my own. I don't have a pipe."

"Too bad." The man stooped down to pick up his basket. "You could see the rabbits before all the rest of the boys. You could even have your pick. But — you can't leave here?"

"No," Jürgen said sadly, "absolutely not."

The man took the basket and straightened up. "Well, if you have to stay. Too bad." He turned to leave.

"If you won't tell anyone," Jürgen said quickly, "it's because of the rats."

The bow-legged man turned back around with a puzzled expression. "Because of the rats?"

"Yes, they eat the dead. They live on dead bodies."

"Who told you that?"

"Our teacher."

"And now you're guarding the rats?"

"No, not the rats. Then his voice dropped. "My brother is lying under there. Over there. Jürgen pointed to a crumbling wall with his stick. Our house was bombed. All of a sudden the lights went out, and my brother disappeared. We've called for him, but he doesn't answer. He was much younger than I am. Only four. He must still be there. He is much smaller than I am.

The man looked down at Jürgen and said, "Sure, but did your teacher also tell you, that all the rats still sleep at night?"

"No," whispered Jürgen, who suddenly appeared to be very tired.

"No, he didn't."

"Huh!" the man said, "That's some teacher you have, who doesn't even know that simple fact! Rats sleep at night. At night you can

quietly go home. You should always sleep at night, after it gets dark."

Jürgen dug little holes in the garbage with his stick. "They are nothing more than little beds," he thought, "all little beds."

Then the man said, shuffling his feet in the debris: "You know what? I have to feed my rabbits now, but when it gets dark, I'll come back here. Maybe I can bring a rabbit with me. Would you like a little one?"

Jürgen dug little holes in the garbage. "Nothing more than little rabbits. White, grey, whitish-grey."

"I don't know," he said quietly, looking up at the bowed legs, "if they really sleep at night."

The man climbed over the crumbling wall out into the street. "Of course they do," he called back, "and your teacher should pack his bags if he doesn't know that!"

Jürgen stood up and asked: "Can I really get one? A white one?"

"I'll try," the man called back, already on his way, "but you'll have to wait here. Then I'll go home with you. I have to show your father how to build a rabbit cage. You have to know that!"

"Of course," Jürgen shouted to the man, "I'll wait! I have to stay here, until it gets dark. I'll wait for sure!" Then he continued: "We've even got some boards at home, from old crates. We can use those!"

But the man couldn't hear him anymore. He ran with his bowed-legs into the sun. It was dark red, and had almost set. Jürgen could see how bowed the man's legs were. And the basket swung back and forth. There was rabbit food in it, green rabbit food, a little dusty from all the garbage.

translated from the German by Eric Fridman

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Largo for a Pelican

by Morgan Wills

That night I come home and I hope to see Ma alone. I'm walking toward the building after my shift ends and, first thing, I trip on the chipped yellow curb by the bus sign and rip my hose. I see how the evening will go. Then I climb the stairs like I do every night, but tonight I see a spoon on the floor of our hall. It's one of Ma's good spoons, with the lion's head handles, and it has a dried noodle stuck to it. I pick it up and open the door. Sauerkraut for supper again, and Peterson's been messing with Pop's sweet hair oil.

Marietta's sitting right up before the television watching a Japanese chop a board in half. She's wearing last summer's one-piece red bathing suit and Ma's high-heeled shoes. She looks like Minnie Mouse. When she sees me with the spoon, she gets up and runs into the bedroom, shuffling and tripping in the shoes. I say,

"Marietta, you know anything about this spoon?"

"No," she yells back. I hear the bottom drawer of the big chest squeaking open, then closing.

"Ma," I call. "Marietta's in the drawer again."

"Marietta, come out of there," Ma says. She comes into the living room, wearing her purple swirl dress. I wish I'd stayed back at the hospital. The only times Ma's ever worn that dress were when Kennedy got shot and when the canary died.

"Here's one of your spoons," I say. She takes it, looks at it a minute, then breaks off the noodle. I sit on the flowered couch, on the upper end because one leg's broken and it tilts. I rest my feet up on the heater. Pop comes out of the other room. I see he just got a haircut; the back of his head looks like a mower went over it, all bristles. If Pop's hair grows about an inch he thinks he's got an Afro.

"Eveline," he says, squatting down on the horsehair footstool. That's his way of saying hello. "Pop," I say. He rubs his eyes and calls in to Ma for the eyedrops. Ever since they laid him off he thinks he has eye trouble. The first bottle of drops was real medicine but now Ma fills it up with water and he doesn't know the difference.

Later on Bernard comes in and heads for the bedroom.

"Supper's almost ready," Pop says.

"I'll be there," says Bernard. He goes in to work on his piano. It's an old one the youth organization found him last month. When he got it, it was painted green and had peace decals all over it. He's restoring it; the bedroom smells like turpentine and little pots sit around on the floor that say, "To Bring Out the Natural Beauty of the Wood." So far he's only got the peace flowers off. Ma doesn't like the mess in the bedroom but she puts up with it. When Bernard got under custody of Juvenile Court they told her to encourage him

in a new direction. He started this new direction a few weeks ago. Before that it was a handkerchief laundromat in the basement. Tonight I don't want to hear the piano. I don't even want to look at Bernard.

At supper Marietta is sulking and Peterson won't talk because Ma has his head wrapped in a wet towel to drain off the hair oil. Peterson is so little, all that shows above the table is a skinny neck and pink-turbanned head. He won't talk. Ma and Pop eat on the couch. So it's just me and Bernard, and I don't want to speak with him. I see he has on his white tie and one gold earring. He wears a tie everywhere he goes, even over old T-shirts, but he's not supposed to wear the earring in the apartment. I send him a look but he acts like he doesn't see me.

After supper Ma says,

"Bernard, go down and get me some detergent."

"I wanna go," says Marietta.

"Wild Kingdom's on," says Ma. Bernard leaves and Marietta and Peterson fight over who has to turn on the television. The set shocks you no matter where you touch it. Finally Ma comes in with her elbows all shiny and dripping suds. She has a broom and she pushes the button with the stick end.

We watch Wild Kingdom. I remember the first time Bernard watched that show. He never looks at television but that night he was sick, still getting over his hepatitis, so he sat home with Marietta and Peterson. They had some birds on Wild Kingdom, and one was a Pelican. They showed it flying over a marsh, just flying along real low, flapping its wings like it was an effort to make them go. Its pouch was hanging, weighting it down. Peterson said there was a baby in there; Marietta said no, that was with a stork. When the bird landed it turned out there was a big fish in the pouch. Bernard liked that pelican. The next day he asked me to go along with him to the Bronx zoo. We went, but the pelican they had there was a sad looking bird that sat in the corner by itself. Its feathers were oily and grey and separated into bunches. One eye was pink and glazed over. Bernard liked it even better and when we got back he went to work on a song. He called it Largo for a Pelican. He always had to use high class musical names for his songs. He says that's how he got into the group; they liked his style.

We sit watching Wild Kingdom. This time it's about llamas in the Andes. I see Ma alone in the kitchen, changing the lightbulb that hangs over the table. I go out.

"Ma, can I talk?"

"Sure," she says.

"You know Betty from work?"

"The one with the jewel in her forehead."

"I told you, that's how they do in Pakistan."

"Hmmm?" Ma is down on her hands and knees getting out some Jergens from one of the boxes on the floor.

"Ma," I say, "it's important." I look out the door into the living room. Marietta's looking in here with big eyes; I go and shut the door.

"Betty told me some things about Stacie."

"Stacie. Bernard's friend."

"From the group. I think he plays drums. Betty heard that he's queer. Messing around with young boys. The whole group is like that, she said."

"How does she know so much?"

"She lives in the same building with one of them, I guess." Ma drums her fingers on the cracked formica table top and looks out the window at an airplane light blinking across the sky.

I go out and see Bernard in the bedroom playing the piano. "Ma wants you," I say. He has on his velvet brown tie, ready to go out. He gets up and gives me a mean look, throwing back his head and widening his nostrils. I stare back at him. After he gets in the kitchen Ma closes the door. I sit in at the piano for a long time, it seems. Through the door I see some llamas jumping a ditch. Then Bernard slams out of the kitchen and kicks at the footstool. Marietta jumps up and runs into the other room. I hear the drawer opening. Pop says, "Hey, hey now," but Bernard pays no attention. He comes in here and rips off his tie and throws it on the bed.

"What'd Ma say?" I ask him.

"You know fucking well what she said. No more group is what she said."

"Did you know about Stacie and them?" I have to know.

"You get the hell away from me, Eveline," he says.

"You just can't stay out of trouble can you?" I say. He picks up a can of furniture restorer and throws it at the piano. I run out into the living room and sit by Pop. We sit and watch Wild Kingdom while Bernard throws every can of turpentine at the piano. Sometimes it hits the keys. Mostly it spills on the music rack and then falls to the floor. He picks the cans up when they fall and throws them again. Finally he stops. I look in at Ma. She's sitting there at the table with a hand over her eyes. She has the mirror set up on the table and half her hair is up in bobby pin curls. There's a bobby pin between her lips. She doesn't move. Everything is quiet for a while. Then Bernard comes out with his velvet tie back on and leaves.

Later on Marietta and Peterson drag out my shag rug and practice leaping over the footstool. They wear the rug over their shoulders. I sit watching the television until it goes off about two, but Bernard never comes in.

By Anne Tomfohrde

Always I recall that It Was. Needing to order those masses of impressions into capsules of experience, I must remember that It Was. And somehow I must make good those rare, true impluses I lose myself in continuity so that afterwards I can say It Was and feel the wholeness of It. Stepping out and stepping in. I can feel the unity as I go through them, but afterwards I lose chronology; and 'if there is no chronology, there is no background, and if no background, I can never respond on the basis of what came before. Half of it is finding the order in what appears to most as chaos; then I can create continuity and meaning, and some guy in a green cardigan will feel that It Was — even though he might feel it differently.

I contrived my use of time, and really didn't want it to be so, but I had to push because of the deadline. At first my rendering was a typical one.

In an elevator on some downtown Mainstreet — the kind of elevator you imagine getting stuck in, panicking because it's so damn close — and she was fooling with her hair, pulling it from behind her ear and then putting it back. . . in a languid manner. I kept staring at her cheekbones which were high and taut and smooth and tan. And she stared straight ahead, making me feel puerile and gawky. She grew nervous, and I grew disappointed because her hair became her study. She kept flubbing it, leaving strands out here and there, wondering how she was to place them again without obvious finger-revision. I was amused.

It would be predictable if the elevator were to jam now, bringing on my claustrophobic tendencies with all their ramifications — like a perfect setting for a potential relationship. No, but it doesn't happen that way. I say this for you readers who think that you develop an interest and some magic happens and the mystery woman finally moves her gaze to meet yours and suddenly you're lunching in a Parisian cafe, and she's telling you she used to be married to Prince Agamemnon of Tallahassee and had an affair with Rhadamanthus, who, by the way, has promised her a palace.

And yes, It Was. But what It Was was a glaring day, and people were shining and it was so obnoxious I hated it. I was always the one who cringed when some influentials at some great who-the-hell-cares-where place decided that we'd have that dinner outside after-all. (Damn the forecasters for tampering with my mood); or when I'd have to endure the one-in-every-relationship picnic — so

romantic, with those mosquitoes that make your attempts at composure look ridiculous when they're flying in your ears and eyes and up your nose and thank God you're wearing pants. . . .

I hated it because I was inside and the sun was spotlighting all the fuzz and lint and crap in the air that I breathe all the time but why do I have to look at it for Christ's sake. I was squinting and I itched all over and my hair was stringy and I felt like shit and needed to go so badly, and there was only a sign EMPLOYEES so I couldn't. . . .

That's how it was, okay? It was. But I couldn't feel It Was, or She Was, or We Were.

"Have you got a cigarette?"

Could it be *more* typical, and wouldn't you know I did? I did have a cigarette because I'd gone to the bathroom in Garrison's and there were three of them white and clean and new sitting there next to a puddle by the sink, and had seen what they'd looked like when that lady splashed a bit too much, making the puddle bigger, and somehow the run in my stocking had for the moment given me a thing about preservation, so I slipped them in my bag (in Kleenex).

I didn't even see her tallness because I was looking in the mirror and she was looking in the mirror at me. There were cheekbones — big and boney, and they didn't move. One can't smile when asking for a cigarette. So somehow I had to unwrap the Kleenex (everyone says "kleenex" and they're really tissues) without letting her see. . . .

"I always leave the last one loose."

"That's okay. I don't smoke." (Of course, she wouldn't smoke.) A smirk. A look. Contact and she was gone. I was still holding the cigarette. (No, just looking. . . or rather, I'm finished and didn't see anything and shall be going thank you).

But I couldn't find her — anywhere — and although I felt inclined towards search, I knew better than to diffuse my energy in the city's cacophony. I also knew that she would be best sought in repose in receptivity to her presence — for one who will not wait for the fly to land, will never make his catch. Besides. . . I was in my slip.

When I returned to my apartment she was there. "I waited outside for you. . . and then went down the manhole." And I could only laugh because I knew she had gone down the manhole. That was a difference between us. She was always going over fences for a paper, or pulling the cord on trains *between* stops, or trying out a toilet in the appliance section of a department store and then complaining that it wouldn't flush. And then she'd take the taxi home because I was so embarrassed. "No sense of humor" she'd tell me. Wrong — no taste for peculiarity.

I know this married couple and the wife is just the kind I could never imagine as my mother's friend. But evidently they were close once and now exchange Christmas cards, personal ones, and later books — sharing in a way that I used to think got lost in adulthood but now I think gets stored, away from the reach of children. . . and children's children. Oh yes, but I know she cries — and not about bread molding or rain Sunday but about failure and identity and womanhood and motherhood. (Why *did* you have children?)

This woman friend of hers perhaps knows. . . this woman with shiny black hair and a beautiful square face and eyes that tell you she's got an undercurrent like the rapids. . . Tweed sweaters and off-the-cuff Indian prints and Jamaican beach shoes and sometimes shiny lipstick, but only lipstick. And she's "intense", Mother says.

Now the point is that her husband is much older — white hair and big stomach — and hardly ever says a word. A queer arrangement. But then he watches her and you know that it almost shows that you're smiling because he's gleaming — still fascinated after twenty-one years. When he walks, he's comfortable and confident and part of a story you might think. . . the old story of the very conservative man who finds this liberal, brilliant beauty in love with him and opts for a chance fantasy — though it's curious that he never tires of the counterpoint but rather finds a sort of home in it.

In a sense, Caaran *was* that woman for me. That's what I'm trying to explain to you. She was a magnetism that took me away from things usual and familiar and led me into things that resisted my own sphere.

"Francois needs the house tonight so how about dinner out?" (Yes, she *would* eat out — often I think).

"I'll treat."

"I'd rather have the cash," she said, then smiled twistingly and settled into her jeans. I could always tell when she was "into" what she had on. Her long black black hair was cleverly Indian tonight — sort of cross-legged, a double bun, nice. Whenever I looked at her I felt beautiful. You know how it is when your're face to face with some huge pimply washer woman at some Esso station in Kellogg, Montana — how you want to wash your face and hands and puke the banana cream making a new fold somewhere where there isn't?

I went to change — (I'm *never* into what I'm wearing) — and caught myself looking at myself and peering into myself. At some point each day, I curse hellish mirror moments and am grateful for my strength in facing them — all at the same time. That night I thought perhaps I'd stay in and take a hot bath.

It took a long time to know Francois — not because he was French, and not because he was difficult to know; he was, as I, strategically entranced. We were two beings defined by another and anything in the way of getting along was because of some necessity. Breakfast without Caaran was humorous at best, boring mostly, and much to be avoided. So I'd get up at 5:00 when he planned to rise at 6:00, or I'd skip breakfast when I'd misjudged. But on those mornings that I approached the kitchen surreptitiously and he approached it equally so, we'd usually end up standing face to face, quiet, embarrassed, and miserable.

"We have no toast," I'd say, or something as mundane.

"Doesn't matter. We have Cheerios." He had a thing about Cheerios — every night, every morning. They float. He was in ships — like my father's in oil.

"Do you mind if I read?" (Anything but talk).

"No. I'm going to smoke. Your roll's burning."

"I take 'em black."

So I'd have to choke down some dried, gross thing because I couldn't stand failure. . . especially with Francois. He was too much for me. Perhaps that's why she lost us both. . .

Okay wait, skeptical reader. I'm sorry. I've wasted our time. I can't finish the story, but I'll be honest with you. . . with myself. Just listen.

You see, I'm not a total ass. . . I almost have her. I always almost have her, but then she's gone and becomes more *me*. I don't know what she's like with Francois. I don't know what she says — what she's thought, is thinking when she isn't speaking. I don't understand her coolness. But it seems to me that in the third act when she leaves Francois to go with Julie, she has broken — a sort of falling back on her affections. A political animal? A social misfit? I don't know. I've tried experiencing her. I want to experience her character, observe her, analyze, and slip inside. But she's empty now, and everything has emptied into me. I'm not acting anymore. It Wasn't and I've lost Caaran.

The show opened and closed on July 10, 1971. . . . And some guy in a green cardigan, flipping through the morning paper, came across a few short lines — something about illness or loss. . . in the family no doubt.

GOODY TWO-SHOES MEETS THE CINCINNATI KID

by Kim McMullen

Child star — that's it. A latter-day Shirley Temple sans tap shoes winning my way into your hearts daily on channel five, six, thirty-seven, P.B.S., the educational station: you name it and I have a schtick ready.

"And yes, Mrs. Kinderman, of *course* I read the assignment." But later, on the way to study-hall:

"No I didn't, John and Cotton, can't you guys see? That's how you win the games around here. Grinning subversiveness. I didn't read it — honest to God, Cliff. But you can't let *them* know that. . . . Oh hell — to be perfectly frank, I *did* read it. I didn't mean to, but I just couldn't stop myself."

Study halls are a crashing bore. Read your Spanish for the ninety-fifth time, coffee beans and *la corrida de los toros*.

"Rrrrrrrrrrrrrrr. Let the tongue rrrrrrrrrrrrr. *Bien Juan, bien Suzanne. AH — Señorita Simpson — ¡MAGNIFICO! Muy Bueno. Por favor, por los todes de les estudents.*"

"Piedrrrrrrrrrrrrrr. Corrrrrrrrrrrrrrrida de los terrrrrrrrrrrrrrros. RRRRRRuffles have rrrrrridges." Everyone laughs. (Triumphant swell of royal coronetors. Queen Isabella steps forth to award me an Andalusian estate for my brilliance. I scornfully thrust aside her parchment condemning her colonial policies in the West Indies. I am arrested the peasants riot.)

Of course I read my Spanish, how can I not? (Tap, click click click, tap slide, curtsy). You expect me to write notes to a wrestler instead? Draw pornography on the tables in Magic Marker. Blow farts on my arm, then look the other way, at Marianne Dahman, when Mr. Herbert hears? Old Marianne — everyone has their favorite pimple to pick. I talked to her one time — she goes to our church so it's all right — I talked to her and she told me she likes jazz. Ugly zit-faced Marianne listens to Thelonius Mark and Charlie Mingus, just sits there very calmly liking them while all of these heavy metal transistor brains, weaned on Grand Funk, blow armfarts from her direction. That's Congressional Medal of Honor material — or maybe Purple Heart. It always makes me wonder if I could ever act with valor under fire.

They're all sitting over in the corner again, as usual. I'd like to be over there too, but on *my* terms this time. As an equal. Tup and I tried it once — tried to slide in next to them. We're cool, we both agree to that, it's just letting *them* know.

"Hey Clifford, d'ja see Carson last night?"

"Just caught the opening monologue — really surprised they didn't bleep that football joke."

"Yeah, oh God."

I roll my eyes at Tup, take a deep breath and dive into the conversation.

"Or hey, how about Dick Gregory's bit? He really *stuck* Ford, didn't he — make ya laugh all the same though, like Lenny Bruce."

"Like *who*?"

"Gregory you say — that's that black guy's name that was on after the trumpet player? Didn't like him too much — too many politics. . . . Oh, but hey Cotton, remember when McMahon kept brushing that lady's leg every time he reached for the ashtray and old Carson would. . . ."

Tup and I slunk away. Ignominious defect. We read *Lampoon* and it doesn't mean a damn thing to them, the stupid hicks — they've never heard of it. And then for them to think we were really stupid just because we hadn't known about the latest copy of *Mad*! My God, are there no end to the ironies? Still they're all you've got, assholes or not. And though it's tough to aspire to something you don't particularly respect, when you've outgrown your tapshoes, you've got to go somewhere.

"What did you say Mrs. Kinderman sent you up here to the office for, Miss Simpson?"

"The speech I gave in class today." Everybody hated Heckler and he played golf with my father.

"And exactly what manner of speech was it, Joni?"

"A speech to convince, Mr. Heckler. And it was actually pretty good — I think it convinced a lot of people." Sitting alone in that office could be so hard — nobody to know if I dimpled and curtsied like Heckler wanted, nobody to know if I put on some sort of black arm band and clenched my fist.

"Well, what was the subject matter?"

"Legalized abortions — particularly the suction method. I had some pretty good diagrams that they sent me from the free clinic in Pittsburg and I think these are what she got upset about because they. . . ."

"Yes, yes — well actually I'm a bit inclined to agree with her — that is hardly a fit subject for a high school speech class. . . ."

"It sure as heck is — it was supposed to be something controversial and besides half those people in there are gonna find out about it sooner or later anyway. . . ."

"Joni, now listen, I know you're a nice girl from a good family and that you've been reared better than to talk about such things so let's just forget the whole incident, shall we?" Heckler chased his mechanical pencil across the desk mat, and ignored it when it fell to the floor. "I know you didn't mean it — you young people get so caught up in today's adventures that you get carried away. Now you know nothing like this will ever happen again, Joni, because you're a bright girl and you obviously wouldn't have given that speech had you thought. . ."

A cubscout master, exactly what we needed for a principal. I was obviously in disgrace, it'd ruin his golf game. Still, he couldn't take me seriously, wouldn't believe I'd picked that topic deliberately with forethought — refused to settle for something like "The Importance of Hall Monitors". Oh hell, it doesn't matter what I say at Winslow High School anyway, because they'll just readjust my bow and send me out to play.

They all will — even Cotton, John, and Clara who are supposed to be hip and should know better. Maybe they should know better. Nobody's willing to forgive me for twelve years of honor rolls and prompt homework assignments. I'm caged.

"Hey Cotton, I was just sort of talking around and I heard you had some dime bags for sale."

"Whadjou say, Joni?"

"Dime bags, you know Cotton."

"Oh, you mean those little role things that'll hold \$5 worth of dimes? I don't have any but you can get them at Union Savings. . ."

"Oh c'mon Cotton — I mean marijuana, dope. You don't have to play cute with me — I've been getting high since I was fourteen" (and I had, too, twice, on a summer vacation in Maine with this boy who never suspected who I was). "So don't worry, just sell me the dope."

"Gee Joni," he said looking down at my kneesox, "I really don't understand you, I mean I wouldn't touch the stuff. You'd really have to be crazy because you'll get lung cancer and all of your children will be born with three legs. Nosiree, not me. . ."

There was no way around it, I'd landed the role the day I was born, and all those Fischer-Price Educational toys and Golden Book Encyclopedias made it worse until I even thought I liked to wear saddle shoes and pleated skirts, and volunteer to erase the board. It's like a social security number — yours for life. And you just keep dancing the way that brings the most applause. Oh fuck Shirley Temple! Just fuck her. Yeah — a gang-bang, that's what's called for. An obvious cherry-grabber of a change. 360°. Curlfree, plastic

surgery on the dimples, sandals for tapshoes, and for God's sake, get her out of those crinolins and into some jeans. Wouldn't think I knew those words, would you? I do and others besides — reciting them like a litany before I go to bed just so I'll remember myself when I wake up the next day.

So that leaves Clifford. Tup agrees he's my only way out, my "free ride to liberation" she said. She'd come too, but she's got an older brother who can tell she's buying the right records and will discuss Fellini with her, so she's not as pressed as I am. I've got her and that's it. It should be enough, like Marianne and her black plastic disks. It should be enough, but it's not.

I sit three seats behind Clifford in English class and study his broad back, usually sausage into that purple t-shirt with the James Gang album promo on the front. He's been kicked out twice for his hair and it still seems longer than everyone else's, spilling over his collar and parting into greasy strings. You can see his neck through it, pastey-white with red blotches. It's the blotches that make him accessible. That and the fact he's only been at Winslow for a month.

"Joni, is there anything you found interesting about today's reading?" Naturally Ward'd call on me, I was probably the only one who'd *done* the reading. Oh to be able to say no.

"Well, I thought the 'Civil Disobedience' thing was really relevant. I mean I can see the same argument being used by draft dodgers and civil rights workers and socially conscious people like that."

"You gonna make another sermon, Joni?" Cotton whispers from behind me. "Another left-wing liberal *stance*?"

"Fuck you, Cotton," I say over my shoulder.

"Pardon me, Joni?"

"Nothing Mr. Ward, I was just commending Cotton on the astuteness of the observation he's just made. Share it with the others, Cotton. Darnit — simpering again. That's it, Joni — just winning points all over the place. But Cliff snickers; at least he knows I'm alive. Cotton reddens and mutters, "Never mind."

The more I think about it, the more dedicate the situation grows. Cliff's gradually getting in with Cotton and John — he looks hip enough for them, even manages to act the part. And he easily carries enough weight to drag me along with him — through the looking glass, as it were, into another world. Yet, he can't get *too* close to them too soon or it'd ruin everything. They'd start bullshitting some night and my name would come up and Cotton would roll his eyeballs and say "what a *nice* girl" and I wouldn't stand a chance. It's obviously time for some fast shuffling.

“...it's called *Dune*, Mr. Ward. Science fiction — you really ought to read it,” Cliff was saying. God — he likes science fiction, what a waste. I even read the *Bible* of scifi, *Stranger in a Strange Land*, and could only get halfway through it. Drugstore books — like gothic romances.

Still Clifford seems to be pretty excited about it — you'd have to be to discuss it with Ward for five minutes. C'mon Joni, the period's almost over, so you'd better come up with an opening line soon or Cliff's gonna be out of range entirely and you'll have to find some other means of escape.

“Hey Clifford — you know that book you were telling Mr. Ward about in class today? Yeah, well do you think I could borrow it sometime, because I've been meaning to read more science fiction but I never know what's good.” Bald-faced, and pretty weak.

“Sure Joni. God, you really wanna get into it? Because I have piles of it at home. Ever read any Heinlen?”

“*Stranger in a Strange Land*. Kinda liked it a lot.” Christ, he'd better not ask about the ending.

It went on like that for a couple weeks — casual encounters and general conversations. Perseverance was the key. Tup and I would get together in homeroom and plan the day's campaign. Wile and cunning, like playing 'Mission: Impossible'. It had advanced as far as eating lunch together and then walking out behind the bus garage and watching for Heckler while Clifford snuck his mid-day Marlboro. What a major advance. Me, Joni Simpson hanging out behind the bus garage. It even got to the point where the other guys who came back for smokes no longer turned pale and hid their packs when they saw me standing there.

“Hey Joni,” Cliff finally said one day. “Clara's having a party on Saturday at her sister's place, wanna go? Weed and wine generally, but if you'd like to, I might be able to get ahold of some downs.”

Careful, Joni, watch the tone. “Well, I guess Cliff, I mean there's nothing else to do. Only don't bother with the downs because I haven't had any good weed for awhile.” Yeah, like since three vacations ago.

“Great, around nine then.”

“Oh hell,” I said before I thought, “the game's Saturday.”

“Huh???”

“Basketball, first game of the season. I've gotta be there.”

“Why the hell d'you have to be there? Starting at center?”

“Um, no... I'm uh...” Oh Christ. “I'm sort of... um... president of the p-pep club and I'm supposed...”

“President of the Pep Club?? Christ, whadaya gonna do, pass out pom-poms?”

“Lookit Cliff, damnit — I'm trying, I'm *trying*. Just allow me some relapses now and then will you?”

“What's that supposed to mean?”

“Oh nothing — forget it... Look, look — okay you said nine o'clock, right? Okay, so just pick me up at the game. No sweat either way.”

Clara's sister's place was on the north side of Youngstown in a crummy neighborhood. Cliff and I sat in the parked car for awhile, groping around in the dark and steaming the windows. His tongue was like a fat walrus in my mouth and tasted vaguely of fish.

“Hey, Cliff, wanna go in and catch some action?”

“Not enough out here for you Joni?”

“Oh yeah, sure, Cliff, only I just wanted to see what everyone else was up to.”

“In awhile,” he said and pulled me close to him. He covered my mouth with his and the walrus flopped around inside, slapping sporadically against teeth and tongue. I kissed back until the gnawing pressure started to rub raw the place where my teeth touched my lip. My foot started to itch.

“Oh c'mon,” I said pushing him away. “It's really getting cold out here.”

I tried to untangle my hair as Cliff and I walked up the steps.

“You look okay, Joni,” he said, but I couldn't tell if he was sarcastic or not. “Only take that ridiculous 'Go Leopards' button off your jacket.”

“Oh yeah, thanks.”

“¿Que pasa, hombre?” Cotton called to Cliff as he walked in. “Get your ass over here, there's one hit left in this bong...” He stopped short when he saw me, looking at Cliff cautiously.

“Well gee whiz, how are you Joni? I thought there was a basketball game tonight.”

“Blew it off,” I said coolly, narrowing my eyes to mellow slits. “There any beer in the fridge?” I slid a proprietary arm around Clifford and the smirk faded from his face.

“Oh yeah, sure — help yourself.”

I stuck my head into the icebox to cool it down — end of round one, and I'm winning. Tup was right, he *was* a free ride.

The night went well. No one commented on my unique toking method, filling my lungs like Johnny Weismuller going for a dive, turning red and bug-eyed before I'd let a whip escape. Clifford blew

shotguns at me all night and I held my own with the lambrusco. Nobody paid any special attention to me which was a triumph in its own way — they'd let me slip out of my tap shoes. The ultimate coup came with Clara's sister. I was the only one there who'd ever heard of Firesign Theatre. Dot was impressed, and because she owned the apartment and had bought the wine and had two years of communal living under her belt, everyone else was impressed too. Cocktail party banter: it pays to listen to your FM station with scholarly concentration.

"Well, take it easy Clifford," Clara said at the door. "You too, Joni. Y'know I was sorta surprised when you walked in, but what the hell — we had a good time, huh? Hafta come back down sometime."

Something clever to leave with, some line from Dylan. . . no, too obvious maybe. Just be careful not to trip over the doorsill.

"Yeah, sure Clara — see you around." Mellow Yellow.

"I dunno, Joni," Tup said. "This all seems a bit extreme to me." She'd come over with the I.D. I'd asked her to borrow from her sister-in-law for me. Cliff and I were going out drinking with everybody and it would never do to sip Cokes all night. "I mean, it's like you're losing your sense of perspective. You only started all of this to help you get going in a different direction. I mean — we both know where you're at, but it was just supposed to let everyone else know, too, and now it's . . ."

"Lookit Mom, it's better'n everyone expecting me to wear hair ribbons, isn't it?"

"Okay, just remember it's a game and it's just temporary. Don't get getting caught up in it, or somebody's gonna start snowing the snowman."

"Oh, come on, Tup, how could I possibly take Clifford and all of this seriously? Gimme a break. I know exactly what I'm doing."

"Yeah, yeah, well I just think you're playing it a little heavy, that's all," she grinned, drawing her lips into a Humphrey Bogart grimace and flipping her cigar ash. "An' me an' the boys, Biggy, we's startin' to feel less respectful t'wards ya."

Such an easy abdication from the throne of the Pep Club, with vague whispers of scandal following me through the halls. It made the rest so much easier, too — no more community service projects, no more posters to make. A pariah, with all of the blissful notoriety of the role. I still got my homework assignments in on time, but at least I spent my lunchtimes hanging out with Clifford instead of grading papers.

"He's not quite your type of young man," Heckler said once when

he'd collared me in the cafeteria. "I know your personal affairs are none of my business, Joni, but it's for your own good."

"You know, Mr. Heckler, I really think you're right," I called over my shoulder as I walked away, "about it being none of your business, that is."

I met Clifford after school as usual, at the rear exit to the gym. Just enough time for some heavy breathing before we had to catch our buses home. It kept him happy, the big bear, drooling all over me like that, and if I was lucky I'd run into Cotton and his sophomore honey, or even Clara and that head she was dating, and we'd exchange a sort of conspiratorial nod. I remember how Cotton had looked startled the first time he saw me saying "Christ, Joni, what are you doing back here?" like I was warden especially assigned to monitor the area.

Clifford fiddled with the front of my sweater and I brushed him away at first, finally giving up and absently studying the sidewalk. Marlboro butts all over, I noticed, probably hear about in it assembly next week. He started gnawing on my ear "Hey c'mon, knock it off," I hated when my hair got all soggy. He held me to him insistantly.

"Hey, Joni," he whispered in this ludicrous voice, supposedly sexy I guess, but he just couldn't pull it off. I almost cracked up then, nearly lost it entirely right in front of his dumb cow-face trying to look seductive and half-lidded like he'd seen them do on T.V. I nearly threw in the towel too, thinking it wasn't worth all of this absurd slobbering; thinking, the hell with it — I'll just lock myself in my room, listen to FM, read Guinsberg and *National Lampoon*, and talk to Tup.

"Hey Joni," he said, all semblence of sexiness discarded for the direct approach. His hands gripped my arms, hurting a little. "Nobody's gonna be home at my place so you wanna come over and listen to some records or something?"

Oh God, one more day of his Deep Purple collection.

"Gee thanks, Cliff, but I've really got things I should do. . ."

"LOOKIT JONI, it's a hell of a lot better than paying four bucks for the drive-in some night, and a shit-load more comfortable too."

"Huh??" I said, genuinely mystified. "I don't understand Cliff. I mean, you don't have to come up with 'cheap dates' or anything if that's what it is, because if you wanno go out some time and you don't have the dough I can pay, so don't worry about it, okay?"

"Oh for Chrissakes, Joni," he said, pushing me away. "All of a sudden you turn coy. You're not that dumb, so don't go trying to pretend you don't understand. Now, you gonna be a virgin *all* your

life or you gonna *do* something about it? My old lady's gone for the afternoon, so if you want to come home with me and effect a cure that's fine. . . otherwise, fuck off. . ."

I widened my eyes into an innocent little stare and allowed my lips to quiver just slightly. He didn't move one bit, just stood hands on hips with a smirk across his face. I thought about crying — letting a single tear slide disappointedly down my cheek. Nothing. Go to bed with him?? Christ, I didn't even *like* him that much. Okay, so he had long hair, but it was greasy most of the time and just hid the zit on his neck anyway. And he wasn't that smart, he didn't know who Lenny Bruce was or Daniel Berrigan. And he *walked* like some sort of Neanderthal man. And, okay, so he got high and went to concerts and hung around with Cotton and John and those guys but that didn't mean one fucking thing.

"Well?"

I looked up. He was leaning against the bricks with his arms folded across this chest. Not trying to look sexy any more, not trying to look anything. He didn't have to, he'd seen my hand.

Suddenly I burst out laughing. Not hysterical or nervous laughter — but rather the kind that comes when you get caught in your own practical joke. That big hairy simian had outmaneuvered me. Or maybe he hadn't, maybe I'd backed myself into the cage this time. I laughed and laughed, and Clifford just stood there looking smug, grinning like the Cincinnati Kid after he'd just called the bluff on some diamond-cufflinked riverboat gambler and stood to win the pot.

"Well, c'mon then," he said, "We'll miss our ride."

Perfect — riding off into the sunset in a schoolbus to the scene of the seduction. His bedroom's probably in the basement and we'll have to dodge clothes lines and his sister's dolls to get to it. The sheets will be grey and the bed won't be made and I'll lay back with my eyes closed being bounced on and snorted over, trying to remember to make the right sort of noises and thrash around occasionally, just laughing at myself and staring at the beams, joists, and heating vents above the bed thinking that all of this is just like some new dance step I've learned — the Hustle instead of tap.

"In the Final Analysis (Psychological or Otherwise): A Review of Carl Jung's Theory of Art"¹

by Issa Christian Halabi

Carl G. Jung's article "On the Relation of Analytic Psychology to Poetry" discusses the aspects of his brand of psychology as a theory of art. It begins with the definitive assertion that the author is not concerned with the matter of what art is;² the psychologist, rather, must limit himself to commenting simply on the processes of artistic creation. The true essence of art, according to Jung, is desecrated by any sort of psychological analysis; hence, to attempt to understand art as Freud did, in the same manner as neurosis, makes symptoms out of symbols. Freud's reductive method, reconstructing the elementary instinctual processes, overlooks an understanding of symbols as one means of artistic expression of "intuitive ideas for which no verbal concept yet exists." Do such non-verbal concepts exist, one may ask; to which query Jung provides the reader with a positive reply and a famous example: Plato's symbol of the cave for the problem of the theory of knowledge. (A Freudian analysis would bring us to the uterus, shedding no light at all on the man's brain.)

The psychologist, therefore, must inquire into the *meaning* of art. Here is where the problems begin: Jung's ambitious program raises many questions which cannot be merely psychological; simplistically put, how can the peripheral matter of the meaning of art be examined without answering first to the question 'what is art?' After all, how are we to know our subject to be art — and art may be such that it has no meanings.

By the nature of his task, Jung deals indirectly with the question of what art is; the reader can thus deduce certain basic definitions.

In sketching out his theory, Jung defines to a limited extent his answer to this question: art is supra-personal, meaning that it is expressive and meaningful beyond the limitations of the artist's own personal concerns; art is therefore separate from its creator — it can be meaningful by itself, independently and outside the context; bearing a meaning of its own, it can be understood to be more than just "a product of its soil", that is, it transcends the artist's own limited scope of creative engineering; and finally, it must be aesthetically pleasing, meaning that it is attractive in a "pure", "complete" manner, a manner which is satisfying without need for a complement.

Jung explores the "meaning" which he sees as intrinsic to art. Claiming that meaning inheres within art, he asserts that it does not

lie in its extrinsic determinants. But there is one other, unexplored alternative: that art may gain its meaning from the *beholder*; this Jung overlooks.

Words may be misleading in this matter: a word, we say, has meaning. But we ignore that it has meaning *to us*. Itself a phenomena, it is bare. The same is true of art. A word means *something*; but it is absurd to understand this in any sense other than relative to human society, from which these devices gain their leverage. To push the metaphor further, a tool is not a tool *to us* unless we know its function, or at least guess its nature. Words, tools, the meaning of art — all these must, importantly, be understood in context of our own values, knowledge, and outlooks.

To the extent that Jung doesn't go into the essence of art, we are left unsure of what he means by the term. Is "art" an evaluative term? Saying that meaning actually is inconsequential to art, and that art is an "autonomous complex" (meaning that it is independent of the hierarchy of our consciousness, being valuable of and for itself), Jung then springboards in another direction, by asserting it is *more* than a phenomenon.

Art, when looked at from "outside", holds images which must have "meaning." This is where his non-committal stance on the question of what art is draws problems, along with an "invasion" of its autonomy by psychological investigation. Art comes to equal what it "seems". Jung's theory seems nearly to belong to the idealist school from this perspective.

Where philosophers may want to distinguish between expressive portrayal (content) or something to be prehended in art (media), Jung steamrolls these distinctions and sees only an unclear totality. A work of art's content may lead some to examine its subject matter, and therefore (tracing it back) its artist and his time and intentions, and hence any consciously injected symbol. But Jung dismisses such an approach in favor of a somewhat far-fetched theory dealing with what he terms "the corrective ones."

This is what he has been building up to: when speaking of a meaning of its own, Jung sees art as drawing this from a sphere of "unconscious mythology whose primordial images are the common heritage of mankind." Though he is very vague regarding this, in contrast to the personal ones, is never repressed or forgotten. It is merely a potentiality that is inherited and hence is *a priori*, having emotional impact upon realization.

This, the collective unconscious, shared by all humankind, is the "great secret" of art: the creative process consists of the unconscious

"activation" of an archetypal image and elaboration and personal shaping of it (i.e. the artist in some way translates it into the language of the present.)

A lack of social restrictions on the collective unconscious in the form of "adaption" is beneficial to the artist. Without these inhibitions the artist can tap his deeper self and express it. Of course, he is unaware of this internal process, and the beholder is aware of it only in so far as it is apparently communicative.

The collective unconscious may be compared to a deep well into which the waters of millenia of human experience have flowed, now within every human being to be drawn out by comparably deep experiences. Like the Kantian *a priori* Forms of Sensibility (space & time) which condition all perception, this Jungian notion of the collective unconscious (archetypes) is an *a priori* form of primordial images. Primordial images, which make up the collective unconscious, he states, are "determined as to their content only when they have become conscious and are therefore filled out with the material of conscious experience." The archetypes themselves are empty and purely formal, nothing but the "possibilities of representation." These representations are not inherited, only the forms.

Art is one medium through which these forms can take on solid representation, and thus be consciously realized by human beings.

But what of this symbolic value to the beholder? In the first paragraph of this essay it can be understood that Jung sees art as symbolic and an expressive of concepts. These are due to our shared "collective unconscious" — but how come this is "roused" in some people, sometimes, not at other times, and not at all in some others? Seemingly the theory does not fit the facts as constantly as should be expected.

Granted, Jung allows that the psychological aspects of art are inessential to it, but he proceeds to determine that art does have its effects (of a psychological nature) upon us. If so, is this universal to the phenomena of art, and can it be recognized by these? Jung is unclear on this.

Perhaps we need training to recognize the effects of art. But surely some art *is* art that does not and cannot inspire anything in one person, yet stir "deeper chords" in another. And this "stirring" may be of an intellectual or of an emotional nature.

It is, I believe, a strange sort of assumption on Jung's part to say that one would *need*, or for that matter, *want one* universal explanation for the meaning of art.

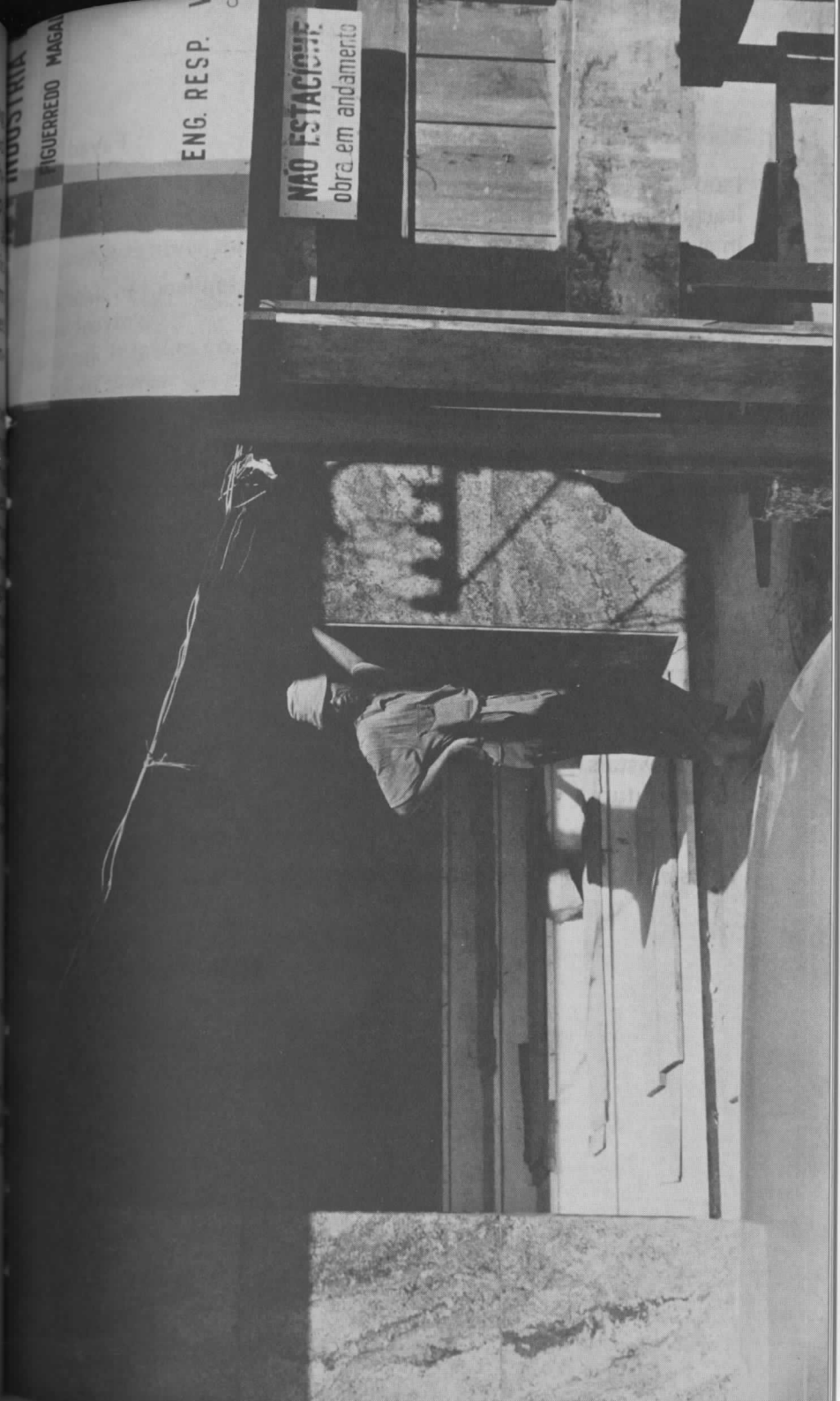
One single meaning is not likely to come by to all men regarding anything, and since the collective unconscious cannot be recalled (unlike Plato's "anamnesis" or Freud's consciousness-raising technique of psychological analysis), no sort of "training" will help. (Such a view as Jung's that assumes that universal symbolism is reality imposes limitations upon man. No longer can man define his own meanings; rather, they are to be "discovered". Jung's symbolism depends upon a view of man that reduces him to a predetermined set of qualities and potentialities. Certainly many modern "existentialist" artists would refuse to admit of such a theory as valid.)

We are drawn to conclude that as an explanation for the psychological impact of art, Jung's theory is full of holes, beginning with an imprecise definition of the subject under study, and resulting in a postulation of a blanketing theory which actually only moves the question of meaning one step backwards. Now we ask, if the meaning of art is in the collective unconscious, what does that mean to us, and why does it manifest itself significance through art? The mere activity of art-making certainly cannot be the determining factor in art's potent psychological effect; (Jung has been quick to point out that the extrinsic determinants of art have nothing to do with its effects.)

Apparently Jung must show why art, which is often distinguished by being a product of creativeness, inspires these primitive stirrings while something which is mass-produced is not. In the final analysis (psychological or otherwise) the important essence of art must be defined.

1. From *The Portable Jung*, edited by Joseph Campbell; The Viking Press, New York, 1971.

2. In the title to Jung's article the word "poetry" appears. Throughout his essay this is taken to include all the arts, and for that reason I have chosen to simplify the reader's task by using the more conventional term of "art".



I am here
 learning how to be born
 in every newborn ear of grain
 Here
 day after day
 in amazement
 watching walls going up for those who had not
 even a place to cry
 watching the way the fields fill with colors
 with men who whistle and work
 with cleanly dressed children learning to read
 in the hands of the fatherland

I am here
 like one more stone
 like another river
 like another tractor
 like another dream fountain
 A man
 among men
 who sow stars
 for the future.

*Taken from Guerpos (Bodies), 1966 Havana, Cuba.
 Translated from the Spanish by Joseph R. deArmas*

Becoming small, this room
 lets me hear the ocean;
 the ocean was never this close.

You speak of loneliness,
 people leaving,
 how weak it makes you.
 I speak of waves.

You are the one who knows
 life swells from our fingers.
 I grasp the movement too well.

Oak doors against wind
 have opened
 and opened and closed
 and closed.

Salt air has stirred nightmares
 of childhood,
 in limbo of half-child
 and half an old woman,
 no bridge inbetween.

Grey hair at fifteen
 and hands of cedar tree bark,
 curled back, lichen
 telling ninety year stories.

If these are the weeks before death,
 then let me tell them,
 let the stories tell me;

Let your loneliness
 be a scoop for the ocean.
 Your fingers unconscious of breathing
 as crickets,
 before the sun sinks.

Dawn Patrols

When sand flies like dust, at our ankles
and clouds
are fierce as the foam below them,
there is no fear of ocean monsters,
or other men.

Sky-jet scrapes across the star-clustered zenith.

Death is upon us,
as walking from a blanket of streetlight,
hooded,
watching shadow reaching,
thinning out.

Narrow streets by sea
where lights burn-out for days,
and sand is softer
and clouds are ash,

is where people learn
to walk at night
and lay back their hoods;
like wind,
building storms on breezes.

Ulf Mieke

In my room
everything's in its place.

Table, lamps
chair and bed.

The paperboy and milkman
are right on time today —
I'm a good customer.

In the morning one sees me
leaving the house
in the evening I'm back again
oftentimes late.

Everything's in order.

On the dresser
my suitcase and bags
are packed.

I always keep my bags packed.

translated from the German by Eric Fridman

Saturday Night Lament

Woodrow Jones

A.

Each day of my little life has a season
and weeks that harvest little knickknacks,
though many seeds of my spring time will
await etceteras.

For one score tiny what-nots-
blackened against foresight (—just because—)
I have collected (Some from Elizabeth with
imports from Africa India Japan etc). with-
out fretful hindsight.

Collect and let sit,
knickknacks like the dormant seeds of my
spring.

Monday through Sunday knickknacks
January through January knickknacks.
Wait.

B.

But what is this!

The fall has uponed me.

The two parents have come to lay collect
on their loans.

Burnt brown leaves will pay their debt to
father time and mother nature.

Yet those green that remain,
that have braved the natural selection are
the strong,

those which will grow and add fullness,
depth and breath to the bearer.

My mind is like the trees only a sapling
shaken by the seasons of my life.

Falling from this "peculiar" tree
is the used, the dusty and the forgotten
knickknacks of one score.

C.

What remains,

I am the stronger for.

My life is reborn.

The seeds of my spring
of my Monday are astir.

Seeds break old but reincarnated ground, take
roots, anchor, unsunderable-from me—.
My one score grows two fold; three.
My mind's tree grows rapid.
The green leaves, they are no longer
ornaments, they make me breathe anew, help me
remove waste, the dusty knickknacks of my life.
Air me out.

Photosynthesis of the mind.
Oh — verisimilitude come upon me at
last! I wait no longer.

D.

Each day of my life has a season
and weeks that harvest tools to work
the green saplings of my life.
From the shattered cracked knickknacks
that once sat upon the stale aired shelves
of my mind

hindsight, foresight and fresh crisp air
awakening my one score from the bed
of ignorance is bliss (inevitable as it
may have been to sleep, I have risen).

E.

The life time of weeks is a long time,
though the Monday of my life seems only
yesterday.

I have grown as trees;

Often I shed as they with the seasons.

I have mobilized the memory of dusty dark
knickknacks and brittle brown leaves with
full knowledge and understanding of their
workings as a warning to never return.

So I take care to utilize the tools that
their death begot.

F.

Yes the Monday of my life seems only
yesterday.

But who will lament the Saturday night of my life?

After all, I have no knickknacks to represent me.

I will leave little for others to gaze upon.

They would only let them sit about and gather
dust upon the gray china cabinets of their minds.

BASHO'S HUT

Lenore Mayhew

We climbed up and up
over rocks and old roots
until we found the thatched roof
and a quiet bench.

We sat a long time.

You said, "Another great thing about Japan —
there aren't so many insects."

And I picked a big black ant from your chin.

I suspected Buson

but you said his spirit lived
in the double-bending pine, further up the hill.

We went to look

examined the old graves
and then came back
to peer in at the kitchen sink.

And somehow it won't all fit
into seventeen syllables.

Even now

too much is unsaid.

FROM A TRAIN: IRELAND

Kim McMullen

Pendulum breasts
press sweat-soaked muslin,
dust sticks,
chaff flies up the nose,
and the sun is hot upon the hayfield.
Her arms swing with steady scythe-strokes
fat just forming on the undersides.
Six babies, thirty-five years.
Across the river the train rushes past.
To stop
smooth scythe handle loose in hand,
arms hung heavy,
idle:

the hayfield neglected
for a thirsty gaze at rushing cars
a slack-jawed daydream
the body unclenched
heavy on stout legs.

Eyes follow the final coach
fading into distance.

Suggested by *One Hundred Years Of Solitude**

Martin Cloran

It wasn't Smith in springtime
but something that
reached farther, ate more
knew little
It wasn't the crying child
or inventive son
that ruined locations
but something more
Smith was father and founder
ruler of unseen machines,
laugher,
joy of the household,
ghost friend,
he knew more
Nothing was perfect
and never in the same place
if the forces didn't collide:
they moved often
town and picnic
rising further to a higher plain
seeing neighbors always at home
It wasn't in springtime
that visionary fancy
took the final plays
from his discarded hand
It was early summer
when he came to a tree where the forces met
and saw the spirits at work
He sat and remained,
motionless,
staring at his years.

*the title of a novel by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

(to L. Martynov)

by Yevgeny Yevtushenko

The window opens on the white trees.
The professor looks at the trees for a long time.
He looks very long at the trees
and for a very long time chalk crumbles in his hand.
Why, it's simple —
the rules of division!
He forgot —
think!
the rules of division.
A mistake!
Yes!
A mistake on the blackboard!
Today we are all sitting differently.
And we are listening and watching differently,
but now you can't help but not be different
and we don't need prompting in this.
The professor's wife left the house.
We don't know
where she went from the house,
we don't know
why she left the house,
we only know that she left.
In a suit both unfashionable and old,
as always, unfashionable and old,
yes, as always, unfashionable and old,
the professor goes down to the cloakroom.
For a long time he searches through his pockets for his ticket:
"Now what is this?
Where is this ticket?
But can it be
I didn't take a ticket from you?
Where did it disappear to?
He rubs his forehead with his hand.—

translated from the Russian by Doug Turnbull

AT SEA

Paul Bennett

His eyes carried the afterglow
Of sun settling into the sea,
His nose the heavy odor
Of leaking diesel fuel.

He barely heard the explosion
As the whistling wind lifted him
And laid him back down
Against the torn bulkhead.

Why did he feel wet —
Had waves risen deck high?
His hands discovered
A tooth gap in his side.

He returned home
In the midst of winter;
Oaks stopped rustling,
Frost silvered each spider web.

Warm and dry in his boots
He walked with friends
Along familiar streets,
Threading the crunching snow.

At last they came to sled hill
Which he had climbed countless times
And whizzed down. The angle
Of the slope surprised him.

Words In A Line

Lawrence Weber

Day was slowly putting on her dark gloves.
My hands trembled with empty pens.

Day was slowly putting on her dark hat.
My brain throbbed like a new wound.

Day was slowly wrapping herself in a dark cloak.
My body shivered from winters without you.

Day whisped away within a dark alley.
And I broke like a key in a lock.

The night knelt and prayed in silence,
his pants tattered and unfitted.

it is only an
Indian's summer.
maple and elm leaves
once warmed by june suns
now
fall
changed
and lie as coppered gold and wines
about my feet.
I
listen
to the leaves fall,
tones descending in minor keys.
I can hear their downcast october song
as they expose
a turquoise sky
framed by tangled branches.
walking through leaf showers
mellowed fragments of summer
passing
I have singled out
the most beautiful
and left
the rest to die.

The guy who fixes my garbage disposal
reads skin sheets
behind his office door
for three fifty an hour.

Crouching under my sink
watch and wallet
beside him on the floor.

Poking out back pocket
curled up telescope
eight page glossy photos
LESBIAN HOT DOG LICK OUT.

Bartering cigarettes,
I hear of pimps, prostitutes,
strippers that he's known
He leaves
me his magazine, no bargain
From a stranger,
I had wanted more.

As The Water Whittles in Colour

Lawrence Weber

the glass of water sits on the table
clear and silent
as eyes
travel the path past tombstones white as milk
translucent as snow.
the epitaphs bleeding
memories that roar like
tigers at dying trees.
we trickle white wine down stone falling throats
to the beat of rain and thunder.
and the glass of water sits on the table
clear and silent
as eyes
lock the dead to sleep and windows
shut, screening insects, our talk.
muffled shuffling of drunken feet
lie buried in newspaper coffins
cringing from spike toothed raindrops.
children have walked over,
reciting lessons and forgotten curses
returning home like cattle to a barn;
they wait to be fed.
and the glass of water sits on the table
clear and silent
as eyes
glowed
from skulls of hot coals.
streetlamps lit. leaves on the trees hung;
butchered meat in smoking houses.
the fogged aroma moved like clouds
surrounding darkness
and the glass of water sits on the table
clear and silent
as eyes
watch your tears fall through my fingers
as sand, insinuating time, ownership, the routine.
yet discipline remains creative, separating
like a fork in the road. and your dreams
in painted masques danced twirling their
opaque skirts of poems while puncturing
my head like nails through a tin lid jar.

but something was still imprisoned,
only now, it could breathe.

and the glass of water sits on the table
clear and silent
as eyes

scan the scabs
of wounded sleep peeling
while the shackles of my love break with fusion.

for earth would melt without its name,

and what are names to the dirt embraced dead.

for Poe could not have lived without loneliness or coca leaves

nor Rimbaud without mens' ripe assholes or opium

nor Baudelaire without desolation or Poe.

and i, i who look like a framed child's puzzle

in a gallery of rare oils, couldn't live without

the questions of selflessness and you.

and the glass of water sits on the table

clear and silent

as eyes

explain that you are not a coin in my pocket,

for my pockets are those of a beggar;

a beggar of your richness,

to which

lambds of waves,

breaking

lambds of waves,

breaking

lambds of waves,

breaking

lambds of waves,

breaking

over

oceans flowing

over

god's solitary

orgasm; your naked perfection.

and the glass of water sitting on the table

clear and silent

spills

on our laps,

and we run outside

to dry in the rain.

Falconsong or
Falcon Song

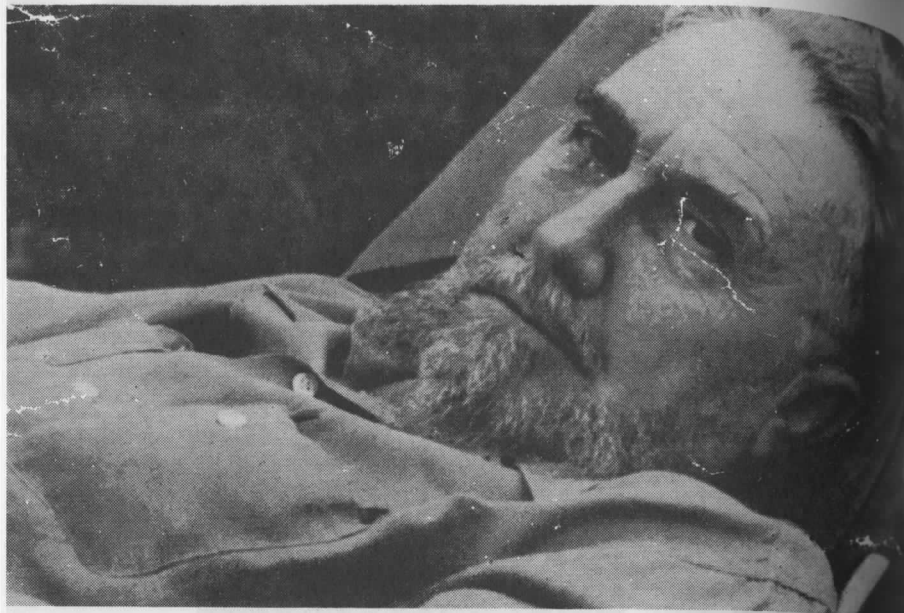
by The Man from Kürnberg
(Austrian, ca. 1150-1200)

I raised a falcon for more than a year.
After I had tamed him as I wanted,
After I had worked gold thread into his feathers,
He lifted off and flew away.

Since then I've seen my falcon flying finely.
He had silk straps on his feet
And his feathers shown red-gold.
May God send together those who love each other.

translated from the German by John Kessler





EZRA POUND (1885-1972)

This section of *Exile* celebrates the 90th anniversary of Ezra Pound's birth. American poet, historian and translator, Pound concerned himself with the literature and art of his age, as well as for the tradition which preceded it. A powerful influence on 20th century thought, he rallied with the slogan, "make it new".

In this section appear several responses to this celebration. *Hugh Kenner* is a Professor of English at John Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. He has written two books on Pound entitled *The Pound Era* and *The Poetry of Ezra Pound*, and is also one of the Senior Editors of *Paideuma*, a magazine concerned exclusively with Pound scholarship. *Princess Mary de Rachewiltz* is the daughter of Ezra Pound and Olga Rudge. She is the author of an autobiography entitled *Discretions*, and has recently completed a translation of the *Cantos* from English into Italian. *William McNaughton* is a Visiting Lecturer in the Department of Classics at Denison University and an authority on Chinese literature. He met Pound in 1953 while the latter was confined to St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, D.C. He remains a close friend of the Pound family.

Dear Exile:

Pound's greatest value to the undergraduate student of literature? His example, I should say, of *caring*: caring for bits of verbal manifestation sufficiently to keep them active in his mind, year in, year out; caring for whatever came before his mind sufficiently to undertake the feat of attention required to write down its essentials succinctly and without loss; caring enough for the language to be intolerant of non-language however majestic its ring. The curiosity he designated in Canto 85 —

"Their writings wither because they have no curiosity" — is not busyness (unstillness) but a caring.

The manuscript copies of Sappho are all lost because the ability to care for her writing was an interrupted tradition for a time-span longer than the durability of the papyrus. Anyone who had cared enough during that interval would have made himself a new copy, and nobody did. In the photo-offset age texts are in less danger of going out of physical existence, but for anyone who thinks them not worth attention they vanish just as effectively, into dead storage or into the limbo of page-turning. What is absent from before your mind you do not begin to study, a fact much scholarship inadvertently illustrates.

Sincerely,

Hugh Kenner

To the Editors of *Exile*:

Yes, indeed, let's celebrate the impact Ezra Pound has had on "modern" thought. The first step in this direction would be to drop the designation "modern" — The kind of awareness Pound requires from the student transcends all temporal designations that tend to clot the silk cords of pure thought. Thought can not be corsetted by time.

I would further suggest to the "enthusiast of literature" not to seek "literary values" — but *virtue*, and to find the *Viaduct to the Honestum*.

"Viaduct to the Honestum" would be my theme had I time and talent — and were I certain that I am not stealing the title from some worthy scholar. A scholar versed in the Medieval Tradition of some would be able to illustrate the meaning with examples from Cavalcanti's* work. He would do a better job than I could, but you are welcome to publish this letter as sign of solidarity with *Exile*.

The reason Pound has been avoided in the "educational process" is best stated by E.E. Cummings:

"You sadist! You want to make people THINK".

Sincerely yours,
Mary de Rachewiltz
Brunnenburg
Dorf Tirol-Meran
Italy.

*Guido Cavalcanti, Italian Poet (ca. 1255-1300) Pound translated Canto XXXVI, Cavalcanti's famous poem "Donna mi Priega", did an edition of his poems (*Rime*); and wrote in *Make It New* a long essay on his thought.

THE CANTOS: THE "VISION" OF EZRA POUND

William McNaughton

In this piece I will try to give the readers of *Exile* what its editors asked me for: an article on Ezra Pound in which the subject of "the poet as visionary" is dealt with. In Pound's case, actually, this is not difficult to do. Pound spent most of his life — fifty years — working on a modern version of a poem that has been called "The Vision of Dante Alighieri" and is now better known as the *Divine Comedy*. In my article, then, I will try to present "the poet as visionary" through a close and specific examination of "the Vision of Ezra Pound:" his long poem *The Cantos*.

The Cantos As Autobiography

Pound wrote to his mother in 1909 that Dante, without the "four necessary conditions" for it, nevertheless had written an epic because, dipping into a multitude of traditions, he had unified them "by their connection with himself."¹ Pound wrote *The Cantos* in precisely that way: the multitude of traditions that appears in *The Cantos* is unified by their connection with Ezra Pound.

In 1941 Stanley Kunitz and Howard Haycroft wrote to Pound and asked him to supply a brief autobiography for their book *20th Century Authors*. Pound replied, "When a writer merits mention in a work of reference, his work IS his autobiography, it is his first person record."² I think that the first thing for the reader of *The Cantos* to keep in mind is that he is, when reading Ezra Pound's "autobiography."

"Histrior" and Masks

The second thing for the reader of *The Cantos* to keep in mind, after "autobiography," is the literary device or psychological phenomenon, of the *mask*. I knew Ezra Pound between 1953 and 1957. During those years, especially up to 1956, I visited him at Saint Elizabeth's Hospital almost every Tuesday, and frequently on Sundays.

Pound at that time was working on Cantos XCVIII and XCIX. His source material for Cantos XCVIII and XCIX was *The Sacred Edict*. In its original form, The Sacred Edict was sixteen maxims written by the Chinese emperor called K'ang-hsi as exhortations to his people. Pound's aim was to get the emperor's words into English.

During the time that Pound was working on these two "Cantos," I noticed, his way of walking and his bearing changed a good deal from

their normal character. I know of no other way to describe them, their new character, than to say that they were *imperial*. Yellow is the imperial color in China, and I also noticed that the poet frequently wore yellow clothes. He sometimes had on a large scarf into which Chinese characters had been knitted, black on gold. I had noticed several months earlier that Pound's conversation always reflected his work and often recapitulated it; at the time of which I am now writing, after listening for some time to the conversation while studying the physical attitudes, it came to me that Pound was being the "Emperor *K'ang-hsi*." He was acting the role with great seriousness (and, to my mind, with considerable effectiveness).

We see here an example of the second "thing-to-bear-in-mind" which we read *The Cantos*: Pound's delight in acting and mimicry, which, through the literary device of the "mask" he carried over into his writing. I believe, however, that as a psychological phenomenon it was more than "mere" histrionic talent (not being an actor, I cannot say whether or not all good acting is accompanied by, or generated from, the "psychological phenomenon" to be discussed below).

Concerning the influence on himself of the French poet Jules Laforgue, T. S. Eliot said that it was like being possessed for years by a stronger personality. But Pound, I think, saw this psychological phenomenon in himself while he was still very young, I mean he became self-conscious about it, and then he kind of let himself go to it. We can see his perception of the phenomenon in his poem "Historion," written before December, 1908:

No man hath dared to write this thing as yet
And yet I know, how that the souls of all men great
At times pass through us,
And we are melted into them, and are not
Save reflexions of their souls,
So cease we from all being for the time
And these, the Masters of the Soul, live on.³

The title of the poem, "Historion," comes from the Latin "histrion" and means "actor"; it is cognate to our word "histrionics."

Ezra Pound's third book, published in 1909, was titled *Personae*; the title is the plural of the Latin word *persona* and means "Masks." Specifically, *persona* means "A mask, especially that used by players, which covered the whole head, and was varied according to the different characters to be represented." The word is said to mean etymologically "the thing through which, i.e. through which sound passes," and so refers to the function of the actor's masks in ancient

times — to amplify their voices. Pound later kept the title *Personae* for his selected poems, first published in 1926 and in print at least until 1970. Here again, with the word "personae," Pound gives us an important clue to the nature of his poetry, and to one of the important characteristics of his genius.

Pound in College: the "Seed" of The Cantos

Pound transferred to Hamilton College, Clinton, N.Y., in 1903. He studied German, French, Italian, Anglo-Saxon, and Spanish, among other courses. One of America's rare scholars of Provencal — the language in which the troubadour poets wrote most of their work — was on the Hamilton faculty. This man was William Pierce Shepard, and Pound in his first year at Hamilton studied French and Italian under him. Next year Shepard gave Pound Provencal tutelage, extracurricular and free. A personal friend of Robert Browning's visited the college and gave a lecture. For Pound the lecture was one of the high points of the year.⁴

Pound wrote to me in 1954 (in a letter dated "10 Guig/ sers in wop/ ore 21"), "as undergrad I used to work midnight to 2 a.m. BUT have always needed a GRRRRreat deal of sleep." In context "to work" meant to work on poetry. According to one of Pound's roommates at Hamilton, Pound often woke him up between midnight and 2 a.m. Pound pushed a glass of beer at him, and when the roommate refused it, Pound read him his poems. He frequently broke off his readings to ask, "Do you understand that?" The roommate reported, "I usually had to admit that I didn't." At the end Pound ordinarily said, "Oh, GAWD!" drank off the glass of beer, turned out the light, and went to bed himself.⁵

During his second year at Hamilton Pound had with Rev. Joseph Darling Ibbotson, Professor of Anglo-Saxon and Hebrew, a conversation about "long poems" in which Pound said he was going to write a "trilogy" about Marozia. Marozia was a woman of 10th century Italy who was married, successively, to Emperor Alberic I of Lombardy, to a man known as "Guido of Tuscany," and to Hugh, King of Italy. She had a son with Pope Sergius III: the son became Pope John XI. She also had a son by Alberic, and this son threw her into prison. Professor Ibbotson agreed that if a man could "pull it off," it would be his magnum opus.⁶ Pound never wrote his trilogy, but he kept through his life an interest in historical figures, and obscure historical figures, as subjects for poetry. He was already under Browning's influence. Pound later said that his idea for the *Cantos* grew from the seed of this conversation with Professor Ibbotson.

Pound and Browning's "Sordello"

Pound himself has told how important Robert Browning was to his development as a poet. In 1928 Pound wrote to the French critic Rene Taupin, "Und uberhaupt ich stamm aus Browning. Pourquoi neir son pere? ["And especially I come from Browning. Why should a man deny his father?"]"7

From Browning's "Sordello" Pound got a very important thing. He got an interest in "bringing dead men back to life" (in poetry). This interest in men of ancient days, this effort to bring back before the modern reader "each ghostly man/ Striving to look as living as he can," is perhaps Pound's basic literary ploy. Hugh Kenner describes it when he says, "Pound. . .has lent Confucius his own voice."⁸ In his earlier days Pound used the ploy with Bertrand de Born and Arnaut Marvail, and he used it later, in the *Cantos*, with Confucius and the K'ang-hsi Emperor. . .and with many other men.

Pound and Browning's The Ring and the Book

From Browning's long poem *The Ring and the Book*, Pound got two principles of poetic composition that were to direct his own writing for the next sixty years, and these two principles are neatly symbolized by the objects that give Browning's poem its title: ring, book. The first of these principles is: the use of documents. The second principle is: the technique of "*dichten = condensare*" ["write poetry' means 'to condense'"]. In the next few paragraphs we can look at these principles.

The use of documents. *The Ring and the Book* is about a murder case that was tried in Rome late in the Seventeenth Century. Browning wrote his poem out of seventeenth century documents and records of the case, which he got hold of quite by accident. Mrs. Orr's *Hand-Book* gives the following account of how the documents came into Browning's possession:

Mr. Browning was strolling one day through a square in Florence, the Piazza San Lorenzo, which is a standing market for old clothes, old furniture, and old curiosities of every kind, when a parchment-covered book attracted his eye, from amidst the artistic or nondescript rubbish of one of the stalls. It was the record of a murder which had taken place in Rome, and bore inside it an inscription [in Latin] which Mr. Browning transcribes.

The book proved, on examination, to contain the whole history of the case, as carried on in writing, after the fashion of those days: pleadings and counterpleadings, the depositions

of defendants and witnesses; manuscript letters announcing the execution of the murderer, and the "instrument of the Definitive Sentence" which established the perfect innocence of the murdered wife: these various documents having been collected and bound together by some person interested in the trial. . .Mr. Browning bought the whole for the value of eightpence, and it became the raw material of what appeared four years later as *The Ring and the Book*.

From documents Pound himself wrote much of his poetry, early and late, the way Browning wrote *The Ring and the Book*. When Pound began to write his *Cantos*, he took this technique of Browning's as his own basic technique. One afternoon at St. Elizabeth's Ed Fitzgerald asked Pound, Why hadn't Pound put gypsies into the *Cantos*? Pound replied, "Well, when you've set out to write a poem based on documents, it's kind of hard to work a group like the gypsies in. I did write that poem in *Personae* ["The Gypsy"] about them."¹⁰

In this century we have so lost contact with the classical tradition that it may seem strange, to many students, that Pound should have made the decision to rely this much on written sources, instead of writing poetry that was "more original." (When during his lifetime critics attacked Pound's work because it "smelled too much of the library," this is what they usually meant.) But as John Berryman tells us,

All the ambitious poetry of the last six hundred years is much less 'original' than any but a few of its readers ever realize. A staggering quantity of it has direct sources, even verbal sources, in other poetry, history, philosophy, theology, prose of all kinds. Even the word 'original' in this sense we find first in Dryden, and the sense was not normalized until the mid-century following. . . 'The old playwrights took old subjects, did not even arrange the subject in a new way. They were absorbed in expression, that is to say in what is most near and delicate.' So Yeats.¹¹

From the following letter, written in 1923, we can see, however, that Pound worked hard and conscientiously to get the "smell of the library" off the work he did, and to give "a local habitation" to the kind of airy nothing that library research yields:

Have blocked in 4 cantos on Malatesta and am now verifying last details (Vatican Library this A.M.), also geographical verifi-

cation, cross country in wake of S[igismundo] M[alateste] to see how the land lay.¹²

Dichten = Condensare. The second principle of poetic composition Pound learned from *The Ring and the Book* can be called "dichten = condensare" ["To write poetry' means 'to condense'"]. It is the "ring" part of the technique. Pound gives Basis Bunting credit for finding the verbal formula "*dichten = condensare*" one day when Bunting "was fooling around with an old German-Italian dictionary." Pound elaborates with a note that "a Japanese student in America, on being asked the difference between prose and poetry, said: Poetry consists of gists and piths."¹³

At the opening of *The Ring and the Book*, Browning describes his intention to condense his law-case documents into a poem. He uses a ring as his metaphor for the poem; and the goldsmith's working of the ring becomes a metaphor for the poet's process of composition.

Do you see this Ring?

'Tis Rome-work. . .

There's one trick,

(Craftsmen instruct me) one approved device

And but one, fits such silvers of pure gold. . .

To beat the file's tooth and the hammer's tap. . .

That trick is, the artificer melts up wax

With honey, so to speak; he mingles gold

With gold's alloy, and, duly tempering both,

Effects a manageable mass, then works:

But his work ended, once the thing a ring,

Oh, there's re-priming! Just a spurt

O' the proper fiery acid o'er its face,

And forth the alloy unfastened flies in fume

While, self-sufficient now, the shape remains. . .¹⁴

(Browning goes on to explain the analogy of the ring to his poem.) In this way, *The Cantos* became in a rather exact sense "Pound's *Ring and the Book*." Pound takes the documents he has decided to use, whether they are the Thomas Jefferson-John Adams letters, letters to Sigismundo Malatesta, the Venetian "Book of the Council Major," Martin Van Buren's *Autobiography*, or the K'ang-hsi Emperor's "Sacred Edict" — they are his "book"; and he tries to find in them the gists and piths, and to make of these his poem (*The Cantos*) it is his "ring." The technique, in much simpler form, had appeared in Browning's "Fra Lippo Lippi" a decade before Browning wrote *The Ring and the Book*. In "Fra Lippo Lippi," Browning took

Fra Lippo Lippi's biography from Vasari's *Lives of the Famous Painters and Poets*, and the reader who is sufficiently curious about the technique, but who doesn't feel like plowing through *The Ring and the Book* (it is not easy going), can get some idea of the technique, and of how the poet uses it, if he will read Fra Lippo Lippi's biography in Vasari and then turn to Browning's poem "Fra Lippo Lippi."

The Cantos as Criticism of the Divine Comedy

"Dante drew a street map of Heaven and Hell," Pound has said, "and I'm busy populating it."¹⁵

Dante's *De Vulgari Eloquentia* was Pound's stimulus and guide as Pound did his very early work on the troubadours. It is when he begins to publish cantos, however, that Pound first really appears in public "as Dante" — for Pound's major poetic work and achievement, *The Cantos*, is self-consciously, is premeditatedly Ezra Pound's "Divine Comedy."

Of all the pages on pages of literary criticism that Pound wrote, none (I believe) is more important than the paragraphs with which *Make It New* begins:

Criticism has at least the following categories, differing greatly in the volume of their verbal manifestation, and not equally zoned.

1. Criticism by discussion, extending from mere yatter, logic-chopping, and description of tendencies up to the clearly defined record of procedures and an attempt to formulate more or less general principles. . . .

2. Criticism by translation.

3. Criticism by exercise in the style of a given period.

4. Criticism via music, meaning definitely the setting of a poet's words. . . .

This is the most intense form of criticism save:

5. Criticism in new composition.

For example the criticism of Seneca in Mr. Eliot's *Agon* is infinitely more alive, more vigorous than in his essay on Seneca.¹⁶

'Main Form' and the Divine Comedy

Ezra Pound's *The Cantos* is criticism of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. It is criticism of the fifth category identified by Pound: "criticism in new composition." If one understands this at the outset of one's reading of *The Cantos*, one can move ahead rather more rapidly and with greater ease; and as one reads cantos, one stands

to learn a good deal about the *Divine Comedy*, too. Pound took the *Comedy* and tried to "make it new."

We may recall Pound's letters to his mother late in 1909; that Dante had been able to write the *Divine Comedy*, though he did not have the "conditions necessary for an epic," because he dipped into a number of traditions and unified them "by their connection with himself." It was exactly the technique that Pound would use when he came to write *The Cantos*.

The *Divine Comedy* actually is divided into four parts: Introduction (one canto); Hell (thirty-three cantos); Purgatory (thirty-three cantos); and Heaven (thirty-three cantos). In the Introduction Dante tells how he came to write the poem and what it is going to be about. The *Cantos of Ezra Pound* is also divided into four parts: Introduction (thirteen cantos); "Hell" cantos (thirty-nine cantos); "Purgatory" cantos (thirty cantos, not counting Canto LXXII and Canto LXXIII which were never published); and "Paradise:: cantos (thirty-six cantos including the "drafts" and "fragments" of Cantos CX-CXX). Pound's thirteen-canto introduction is a "microcosm" of the rest of the poem. Pound sometimes referred to these first thirteen cantos as his "preparation of the palette."

In the logic of his three main divisions, however, Pound does not follow Christian dogma, so his categories are somewhat different. In order to get the differences down simply and clearly I will give a broad outline. On the outline I will give the "organizing principles" of Pound's three main divisions, based on Pound's own conversations about *The Cantos'* main form. The words in quotation marks are Pound's own actual words.

1. Dante's *Inferno*: Pound writes about "people who are still prey to their emotions" and so use up their vital energy — "the life vouchsafed" as he calls it — in purposeless activity (Cantos XIV-LI).
2. Dante's *Purgatorio*: Pound presents "the factive personality," men "who are engaged in *constructive effort* — in trying to build something" (Cantos LII-LXXXIV).
3. Dante's *Paradiso*: Pound writes about "the benevolent" (Cantos LXXXV-CXX).¹⁷

'Main Form' and the Bach Fugue

It will be instructive to consider the organization of Dante's "cantiche" *Inferno/Purgatorio/Paradiso* and then to proceed, cantiche by cantiche, to the consideration of each of Pound's three main

divisions. As we do this we will want to keep two things in mind: 1) Dante's values are based on St. Thomas Aquinas, Pound's values are based on Confucius; 2) Dante's progress/is "narrative," that is, it moves forward in a straight line, exactly as Dante described it, from some bitter state-of-affairs to a happy ending, but Pound's progress is "fugal." Pound once tried to explain what this meant. Pound's explanation was made to William B. Yeats. Yeats printed it up, but nobody felt it helped much. Pound later said the trouble was that "Yeats didn't know a fugue from a frog."

First, I think, we want to make sure that we can tell a fugue from a frog. Douglas Moore gives us a very simple and clear explanation of the construction of a fugue. I will quote from this explanation insofar as it will help us to understand the construction of *The Cantos*, omitting such details as are relevant to the study of "musical figures" only — such details would tend to distract and to confuse the reader who has not already studied some music theory, I feel, and omission of them can do no harm to the reader who has studied music theory:

... Every fugue is built upon a short motive which is stated at the beginning of the work by a single voice. This motive is known as the *subject* of the fugue. A fugue subject... determines the character of the whole composition. . . .

When the subject of the fugue has been stated, a second voice enters. . . [This] second voice repeats the subject literally in [another] key. . . This repetition of the subject. . . is known as the *answer* to the subject. While the second voice is stating the answer the first [voice] takes up new material which we call the *counter-subject* if it develops any thematic significance in the course of the piece. Often it is merely counterpoint of no especial interest and will not be repeated, but again it can develop an importance second only to the subject. . . . When the fugue subject is not being stated by any one of the voices, we call the material *episodic*. Episodes are usually designed to bring about further statements of subject or answer. The plan of the fugue is a simple one. . . the first part states the subject and answer in each of the constituent voices. Thereafter the subject appears in various designated keys, separated by episodes. Eventually the original key reappears and the fugue is brought to an end. There are certain devices which are sometimes found

There are certain devices which are sometimes found in fugues to vary this simple scheme. One of these consists of overlapping statements of the subject by several voices. This is

called *stretto*. It is somewhat like a traffic jam. Instead of the voices stating the subject in orderly procession, several of them rush in at once so that while they are not singing together in unison, they are engaged in singing different parts of the subject at the same time. When you have the subject well in mind, you will find the effect of the *stretto* very amusing. It generally comes, if present in the composition, just before the triumphant last entrances of the subject in the home key.¹⁸

As far as main form in *The Cantos* is concerned, it is particularly important to understand, from the above explanation, what *subject* is, what *counter-subject* is, what *episodes* are, and what *stretto* is.

The three major sections of *The Cantos* — that is, the “Inferno,” the “Purgatory,” and the “Paradise” — each is built on a plan abstracted from the fugue’s “subject—counter-subject—*stretto*” plan with episodes dropped in according to the author’s (composer’s) judgment or whim. What I am saying, in effect, is that the main form of *The Cantos*, taken as a whole, is like *The Divine Comedy*; but that this whole can be broken down into three “fugues,” “Inferno,” “Purgatory,” and “Paradise.”

Perhaps this would be a good place to outline *The Cantos*, or to “draw a cross-section” of them, according to what we have just learned about the fugue. I omit from the outline “Cantos I–XIII” because they are an introduction to the entire work and do not fit under this plan. The outline, according to my lights, would run as follows:

FUGUE 1: “INFERNO”

Cantos XIV–XXX. *Subject*: Europe.

Cantos XXXI–XLI. *Counter-subject*: America.

Cantos XLII–LI. *Stretto*. Cantos XIV–XLI treated *stretto*-style (see above.)

FUGUE 2: “PURGATORY”

Cantos LII–LXI. *Subject*: China. [Great emperors].

Cantos LXII–LXXI. *Counter-subject*: America. [John Adams.]

Cantos LXXIV–LXXXIV. *Stretto*. Cantos LII–LXXI treated *stretto*-style.

FUGUE 3: “PARADISE”

Cantos LXXXV–XCV. *Subject*: The natural world.

Cantos XCVI–CIX (“Thrones”). *Counter-subject*: A definition of sovereignty (note the pun on “thrones”).

Cantos CX–CXX. *Stretto*: Cantos LXXXV–CIX treated *stretto*-style.

Even a superficial examination of this outline, I believe, will show one of Pound’s most important aims in *The Cantos*: to weigh American culture against European culture and against Chinese culture. His efforts to do this make *The Cantos* important as an “American” poem, and these efforts put *The Cantos* solidly — though rather more eruditely — after Walt Whitman in the tradition.

It was not difficult for Pound to integrate these fugal “sub-systems” with the “main system” he got from Dante. Before he wrote Cantos XIV–LI he had decided that they would “be about” crimes and sins (where “crime” and “sin” would be defined according to Pound’s moral vision and to his perception of the modern world). Having decided what these cantos would be about, Pound then had to decide where he would go to get the raw material for them. As soon as he decided to base Cantos XIV–XXX on raw material from European history; to base Cantos XXXI–XLI on raw material from American history; and in Cantos XLII–LI to use materials from both European history and American history, he had determined the “fugal structure” that I have outlined above.

In order to keep his overall Dantescan design, then, all Pound had to do was to choose from his sources specific material appropriate to an “Inferno.” I do not mean that the specific material all had to “exemplify Inferno,” but the material all had to work together — by exemplification, analogy, similitude, dissimilitude, comparison, and contrast — to “define Inferno”; to “project the image” of Inferno. And of the material chosen for Cantos XIV–LI, a high enough proportion of it had to “exemplify Inferno” so that the “main effect” of Cantos XIV–LI would be “inferno.”

With his “Purgatory” section Pound was able to get his “fugue,” and to maintain his overall “Dantescan design” by the same simple process. He decided to go to Chinese sources for the raw material for Cantos LII–LXI and to go to American source for the raw materials for Cantos LXII–LXXI. And then he made sure that the specific material he chose from his sources was material appropriate to his “purgatory,” in adequate proportion.

When he came to write “Paradise” Pound faced a somewhat different problem. For one thing, it seems obvious that Paradise transcends national boundaries: therefore to use geographical, or even cultural criteria to characterize his “subject” and his “counter-subject” would have been gross and inappropriate to his main design. In this case, then, Pound made a choice on philosophical grounds. He decided that his “subject” would be the natural world — the world of bluejays, of Ovid’s visions, of God’s glory “in one part less, and more

in another" — presented more or less "philosophically." He decided that his "counter-subject" would be sovereignty — for God is, and Pound writes it in at the end of "Canto LXXXI":

ruling all things
aye
Zeus. . .
by laws all things
piloting.¹⁹

Confucius and "Good Government"

Another way to describe this "definition of sovereignty" in Cantos XCVI-CIX is as "precise language moving to law." "Precise language," of course, is within Pound's aim as poet—to "Make the word perfect." (I don't say he thought he, or any man, could actually do it) Precise language is also within the Confucian value of *cheng ming*.

The Greek in the lines at the end of "Cantos LXXXI" is particularly interesting — the last word, which Pound translates (very accurately) as "piloting," is *Κυβητική*. It is the root of the modern word "cybernetics." Norbert Wiener, who gave "cybernetics" its name (as well as much of its earliest theory), describes as follows his reasons for going to this root:

We have decided to call the entire field of control and communication theory, whether in the machine or in the animal, by the name *Cybernetics*, which we form from the Greek *Κυβερνήτης* or *steersman*. In choosing the term, we wish to recognize. . . that *governor* is derived from a Latin corruption of *Κυβερνήτης*. We also wish to refer to the fact that the steering engines of a ship are indeed one of the earliest and best-developed forms of feedback mechanism.²⁰

Shortly after Wiener's early development of Cybernetics as mathematical theory, a number of sociologists, political scientists, psychologists and anthropologists began to see that "control and communication theory" might have important implications for the study of larger "systems", including bodies politic, social and cultural. The problem of *communication* between element and element in these other systems was seen as of paramount importance. Such a vision is completely consistent with Confucius's theory of "*cheng ming*" — that good government begins with calling things by the right name. Such a vision is completely consistent with Pound's hard work in these cantos — and in all *The Cantos* — on precise language.

Whereas for Dante his philosophical guide was Thomas Aquinas, for Pound it was Confucius. Though "name things right" is not the only Confucian idea around which *The Cantos* was organized, there

is certainly no idea more important in them. Of "name things right,"

You don't have to look through a superior man's words for his meaning like something lost in the grass, and the meaning won't change on you from one time to the next (*Analecets* XIII,3).²¹

The Confucians were very serious about it. *The Book of Documents* says,

Look at facts in detail, listen to facts in detail. And don't make the words lean to one side so as to change the scope or significance of any fact.²²

The Record of Rituals, in the section called "The Royal Regulations," says,

For those who split words as so as to break the law; who name things wrong so as to change governmental functions, or who try to sneak around established and traditional practice and so subvert the governmental authority, the punishment shall be death.²³

Pound himself writes as follows of the "social function" of writers, and his view is in complete accord with Confucius's ideas about *cheng ming* (naming things right):

Writers as such have a definite social function exactly proportioned to their ability AS WRITERS. . . Good writers are those who keep the language efficient. That is to say, keep it accurate, keep it clear. . . If a nation's literature declines, the nation atrophies and decays. . . A people that grows accustomed to sloppy writing is a people in process of losing grip on its empire and on itself.²⁴

In his own copy of *The Cantos* (which then ran only through the *Pisan Cantos*), Pound in 1955 had transcribed onto the first title page (*A Draft of XXX Cantos*) the Chinese character *ch'eng* (character no. 381 in *Mathews Chinese-English Dictionary*). Pound himself defines this character as "'Sincerity,' the precise definition of the word."²⁵ Pound also analyzes the written character, poetically, as "the sun's lance coming to rest on the precise spot, verbally." He had written it on his title page as if it were a motto, to tell the world, or to remind himself, what he was trying to do in *The Cantos*.

1. Noel Stock, *The Life of Ezra Pound* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 76.

2. *20th Century Authors*, ed. by Stanley J. Kunitz and Howard Haycraft (N.Y.: H.W. Wilson, 1942), p. 1121.

3. Ezra Pound, *A quinzaine for this Yule* (London: Pollock 1908). Also in Pound, *A Lume Spento and Other Early Poems* (N.Y.: New Directions, 1965).

4. Stock, *The Life*, pp. 15-17.

5. I first read this anecdote in an American periodical of the middle or late forties. I quote it here from memory.

6. Hugh Kenner, *The Pound Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 354-55. See also Stock, *The Life*, pp. 18-19.

7. Pound, *The Letters of Ezra Pound, 1907-1941*, ed. D.D. Paige (N.Y.: Harcourt Grace, 1950), p. 218.

8. Kenner, "Introduction," in *The Translations of Ezra Pound* (N.Y.: New Directions, n.d.). p. 14.

9. Robert Browning, *The Complete Poetical Works* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1895), p. 414.

10. I was present at this conversation.

11. John Berryman, in *Partisan Review* XVI, ii, p. 383.

12. The letter is printed in Daniel Perlman, *The Barb of Time* (N.Y. Oxford, 1969), p. 303.

13. Pound, *ABC of Reading* (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions n.d.), pp. 36 and 92.

14. Browning, *Complete Poetical Works*, pp. 414-415.

15. Remark made in conversation in 1955.

16. Pound, *Make It New* (London: Faber and Faber, 1934), pp. 3-4.

17. From Pound's conversation in 1955. In the sixties Pound was saying, "people dominated by emotion, people struggling upwards, and those who have some part of the divine vision." See *Writers at Work: Second Series* (N.Y. Viking, 1963), p. 58.

18. Douglas Moore, *Listening to Music* (N.Y.: Norton, 1937), Rev. ed., pp. 170-72.

19. Pound, *The Cantos* (N.Y.: New Directions, 1972), pp. 256 and 421.

20. Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics* (N.Y.: Wiley, 1961), 2nd ed., p. 11. (Note that in this edition the Greek word for "steersman" is twice misspelled — with initial "chi" instead of initial "kappa.")

21. See William McNaughton, *The Confucian Vision* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1974), p. 12F.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

23. *Ibid.*

24. Pound, *ABC of Reading*, pp. 32-34.

25. Pound, *Confucius: The Great Digest* (N.Y.: New Directions, 1969), p. 21.

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