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Kerygma, Spring 1962

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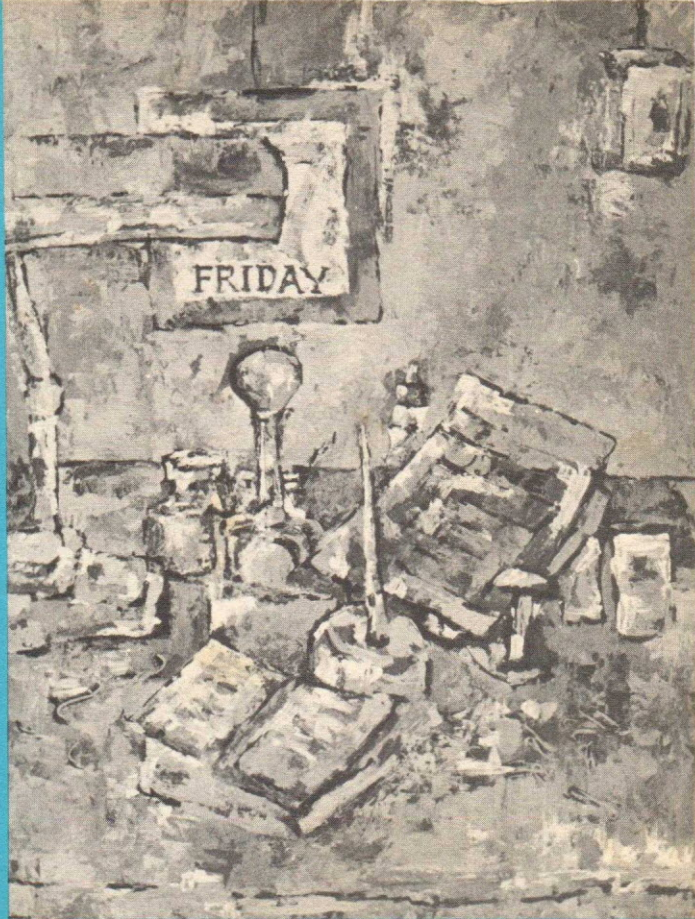
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THE UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS

KERYGMA

A JOURNAL OF COMMENT Vol. II, No. 3

A Note on the Title:

KERYGMA is a Greek word meaning "proclamation" or "heralding." It originally designated the action of a herald; in the Gospels it takes on the particular connotation of a declaration of the "glad tidings" of Christ's resurrection.

In our context, however, it is a proclamation on a different level—a cultural one. It is an announcement that is meant to be heard. It is one that has direct consequences for modern culture—implications that demand to be either accepted or rejected, but never ignored.

Our major "proclamation" is the fact of an impending choice between a culture that is totally secular and one that is Christian. But this principal kerygma is surrounded by many minor ones, such as the place of the university in society, the grounds and bases of the arts, the place of the sciences in the humanities, and other specific problems.

We do not pretend that what appears in our magazine will always be complete and finished. Sometimes it will be only in the nature of a "kerygma," an idea which is to be developed and expanded later. Ours will be an exploration, an investigation of the implications of Christianity and the University in society.



A Journal of Comment at

THE UNIVERSITY OF DALLAS

Spring Issue, 1962

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Cecilia May, *Medieval Madonna*, Serigraph, 32" x 20"

Two Notes on T. S. Eliot's THE WASTE LAND

Recent years have witnessed a steady reaction against both the criticism and poetry of T. S. Eliot. Such a reaction is no doubt to be expected when a literary figure has attained the status of near legend in forty years. The natural processes of resentment are too strong to allow Mr. Eliot to live on unscathed past the era he influenced so profoundly. But it is not only his poetry and criticism that are under fire at the present moment. The revolt is against an influence more comprehensive than the merely literary.

In the late twenties Eliot's conversion to Anglo-Catholicism was greeted with dismay and disappointment, even by some of his most staunch supporters. That he had simply followed his principles, in all honesty, to their logical and most meaningful conclusions seemed, to secularists, no adequate defense. To them Eliot had betrayed both the modernity of his poetry and the shrewdness of his criticism by reverting to medievalism. It is tempting in this connection to compare his predicament to that of another poet and critic who found himself cast off in his later, more conservative days: John Dryden.

When Eliot's style was fashionable and modern, his anti-Christian opponents were silent; now that his poetry seems slightly dated, they have begun to make themselves heard. A single poem, his famous *The Waste Land*, is the most appropriate focus for this shift in critical temper. The poem appeared in 1922, first in the British magazine *Criterion*, then a month later in the American *Dial*. It was responsible in no small degree for the final repudiation of outworn nineteenth-century literary conventions; in fact it may be taken as the sign of maturity in American letters. It was final evidence that the development beginning with Bryant's *Thanatopsis*, a poem that "could not have been written on this side of the Atlantic," had come to fruition. American literature could no longer be regarded as provincial or backward; it had now become a model for world literature.

It is, then, somewhat dismaying to find *The Waste Land* is still a critical "problem" after forty years. Apparently we have not yet really made up our minds about its success as a poem. More significantly, we are

not certain whether or not to heed it any longer or to attempt to test its solutions. Whatever is to be the eventual place of *The Waste Land* as a poem, we must not forget that it is basically different from other pieces of its time, for example, Pound's *Cantos*. Eliot's poem has a cultural relevance that much modern literature lacks, for it poses an answer to a cultural question.

What *The Waste Land* set out to do as poetry it has already done with a vengeance. The return to sophistication and polish, to more difficult and meaningful language, has already been effected. The reaction against this kind of difficult and obscure poetry has already stimulated a return to verse more formal and clear, and thus the movement of modern poetry may be said to have gone full circle. Nevertheless, our problems of tradition, culture, and religion have not been solved, and it is for their sake that we must not repudiate *The Waste Land*, whatever we think of its difficulty and obscurity.

The time has come to realize that the revolt against Eliot is directed not only against a powerful literary figure but against Christianity and Western culture. It is because the enemies of tradition and religion have been able to unite, in part, with those who are in revolt against so-called academicism and over-intellectuality in literature that they constitute so dangerous a force. None of us, to be sure, want to see any more imitations of *The Waste Land*. But we do not want the real meaning of the poem to be rejected simply because it is obscure, peculiar, and susceptible to imitation. For this reason *Kerygma* presents two short essays, both concerned with aspects of the meaning of *The Waste Land*, in the hope that it may not be buried in anthologies, controversy, and scholarship before it has a chance fully to speak its peace.

ANNE LITTLE

Under the Shadow of This Red Rock

In his book *Arthurian Triptych*, Charles Moorman states that the Grail myth is the essential theme of *The Waste Land*; that is, the Grail material provides Eliot with a substratum upon which to build his poetic structure. A complete study of the Grail material would require the investigation of the Fisher-king, the Dolorous Stroke, Percival, and the Chapel Perilous, and it is in this inclusive manner that a few critics see the Grail as the central theme. However, it is possible to trace indirectly throughout the poem the theme of the Grail itself under the controlling symbol of the Red Rock.

Actually the importance of this reference is not restricted to the one mention; the Red Rock — the Grail — exerts its influence throughout the course of the poem and thus becomes a basic symbol and central theme.

This reference to the Grail occurs early in the first section, "The Burial of the Dead." Echoing *Isaias* 32:2,

See where a king rules his folk justly!
His nobles, too, make right award;
to them men look,
as for shelter against the wind,
cover in a storm;
for running streams in drought,
shade of towering rock in a parched land. . . .

the protagonist sees a place of respite in the vast waste before him:

. . . Only
There is shadow under this red rock,
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock).
(I, 25-26)

In the *Conte del Graal*, Chrétien de Troyes — Eliot's primary Arthurian source — refers to the Grail as “la roche de Sanguin.” It is this Red Rock, this vessel that was said to have held the life-giving Blood of Christ, which offers relief in the desert. Cleanth Brooks (*Modern Poetry and the Tradition*, p.170) cites a parallel passage in the *Parzival* legend:

And this stone all men call the Grail . . .
As children the Grail doth call them,
'neath its shadow they wax and grow.

The Red Rock, then, is a symbol of salvation, a salvation at once spiritual and cultural. This meaning and function of the Grail is seen directly in the first section of *The Waste Land*.

In the second section of the poem the protagonist enters a richly furnished room. The description of these furnishings, especially the references to the throne and the repeated mention of the precious stones, metals, and fabrics remind one of a castle in which is kept great treasures of the past:

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,
Glowed on the marble, where the glass
Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines
From which a golden Cupidon peeped out
(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra
Reflecting light upon the table as
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it.
From satin cases poured in rich profusion;
In vials of ivory and coloured glass
Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes, . . .
(II, 77-87)

The relics of the past tradition, then, are constantly before the occupants of the castle. However, these rich treasures are not mere dead things; they contain a seed of life, for they are “framed by the coloured stone” (II, 95) — the Red Rock bathes these representations of the past in a light that is life-giving. Yet, this radiance is a “sad light” because the modern occupants neither recognize nor receive the light. Their actions are a witness to this fact.

If the second section of *The Waste Land* illustrates apathy toward the effect of the Red Rock, the third division shows outright antagonism

to it. The protagonist meets the merchant Mr. Eugenides. This figure is a living contradiction. Being a merchant from Smyrna, he is associated with the principal carriers of the stories of the Grail. (*cf.* Brooks, p. 153). Yet, what does he carry? A pocket full of currants — red, seedless berries. He brings no life to those he meets. On the contrary, in trying to seduce the protagonist, he proves that he is destroying life, here symbolized by the sexual imagery.

The persons and events of this third section neither enjoy the refreshing shade of the Rock nor do they delight in its light. Because the people oppose the Rock, they are not “framed by the coloured stone.” Rather, they are bathed in a “violet light” — a kind of perverted substitute for the light of the Rock. This violet hour is the time for the mechanical copulation between the typist and the carbuncular young man. The adjective “carbuncular” (III, 231) connotes the garnet, a reddish stone. Such a connotation should associate itself immediately with the Red Rock, but the young man’s actions show that he too is another substitute for and antagonist to the Rock.

The antagonism heightens as the violet light becomes flaming red. This color is seen first reflected in the sails of the water-craft described in the song of the first Thames Daughter:

The river sweats
Oil and tar
The barges drift
With the turning tide
Red sails
Wide
To leeward, swing on the heavy spar.
(III, 266-272)

The color is given meaning by the second nymph whose song links the red-sailed craft with a sordid Elizabethan love affair:

Elizabeth and Leicester
Beating oars
The stern was formed
A gilded shell
Red and gold. . . .
(III, 279-283)

Red thus becomes the symbol for lust and passion. The significance of the title of this division of the poem is seen now in its own light. The chief image in “The Fire Sermon” is the passion fire with which Buddha

and the protagonist see everything ablaze. Confronting the waste of the Unreal City, the protagonist resembles the Psalmist lamenting over the ruins of Jerusalem:

By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept . . .
Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song.

(III, 182-3)

The "Sermon" ends with intense play on the color red. The concluding lines, referring to Augustine and his lustful life, show that the red is no longer a mere color, but a consuming fire:

To Carthage then I came
Burning burning burning burning
O Lord Thou pluckest me out
O Lord Thou pluckest
burning.

(III, 306-311)

From the direct mention of the Grail in the first part of *The Waste Land*, the reference has moved to the indirect symbols of the violet hour and the passion fire. It is in the fourth division of the poem that the progression turns in the direction of the Grail itself and prepares for explicit reference. The consuming passion-fire results in death. But there is another death—the "Death by Water," the death which Madame Sosostris has warned the protagonist to fear (I, 55). By means of this water the fire is quenched and the possibility for new life is present. Phlebas, the drowned Phoenician Sailor of Part I, is the symbol for one who surrenders to a life-giving death. Unlike the complacently cruising barges on the Thames which, as the nymph sings, sail "Wide/To leeward . . ." (III, 270), Phlebas has entered the whirlpool and his wheel as well as his look is "to windward." (IV, 320). The turn back to salvation has begun. The passion fire has been quenched and the violet hour is coming to an end.

The fifth and final section of the poem is now able to revert to the thesis of the first section—the fact that salvation is found "Only" in the Rock. In this part the protagonist has left the realms of the "torchlight red" and now sits upon the shore,

Fishing, with the arid plain behind me.

(V, 425)

Continuing the lament of the Psalmist and comparing his experience with the collapse of London Bridge, the protagonist has seen the breakdown of a culture and of a spiritual vision. It is as though the castle of

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the second section of the poem had been demolished and only a few fragments of the treasures of the past remain. In this section these visible symbols give place to the things which they represent—the visible treasures of the castle are the various fragmentary phrases from literary works of past cultures. Viewing the ruins, the protagonist commits himself to a personal reconstruction program and, like St. Francis utilizing the remaining stones to rebuild the ruined church of St. Damian, he gathers the fragments of the past and resolves to build anew.

These fragments I have shored against my ruins.

(V, 431)

At the end of the poem, just as Percival and Arthurian legend comes upon the decayed Chapel Perilous housing the Holy Grail, the protagonist finds the secret to life in the midst of the decay and death around him. The Waste Land and Chapel Perilous are realities; yet, contained within this waste is a deeper reality, a reality which is the salvation of the death-in-life existence of the Land's inhabitants. This salvation finds its embodiment in the Red Rock, the Holy Grail—the life-in-death principle which is the fundamental paradox of Christianity. The protagonist likewise sees that contact with this life principle requires the “awful daring of a moment's surrender” (V, 403). It is this daring that enables Phlebas to enter the whirlpool. It is this daring that is necessary in order for one to “come in under the shadow of this red rock.”

MARCIA DICKSON

Philomela As The Poet

The legend of Philomela is not only an apt addition to the accumulation of myths which make up *The Wasteland*, but it is a key reference that operates on ascending levels of meaning, from a literal base to the analogous peak at which she is a type of the poet.

Literally, Philomela is a young girl who, violated by her brother-in-law, Tereus, has her tongue cut out so that she cannot reveal the crime. She is then hidden away, but manages to weave her story into a tapestry, which she sends to her sister, Procne. Procne frees Philomela, and, to aid their escape from Tereus, a god changes Procne into a swallow and Philomela into a nightingale.

Actually, that is, at surface level, Philomela has meaning in the poem as the only real woman in the desert. Unlike the Marie of "The Burial of the Dead," who says, "I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter," she has courage and self-sufficiency — the initiative which leads to her release. Unlike Madame Sosotris, she realizes the great importance of the power of communication and knows the full significance of what she is trying to tell. Also unlike the enthroned lady at the beginning of "The Game of Chess," whose Chair

Glowed on the marble, where the glass
Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines
From which a golden Cupidon peeped out
(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra
Reflecting light upon the table as
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it . . .

Philomela is not artificial. She does not need these material ornaments

to give her life meaning. She is very much alive; she knows what is valuable and realizes when something of value has been desecrated.

Through contrast, Philomela makes her opposites effective. Rather than assemble a continuous balance of amoral women, Eliot places Philomela on the opposing side of the scale, where she is elevated by the overwhelming number of opposites. Her position accentuates theirs, or vice versa. Philomela's sense of indignation and of injustice, her sorrow and suffering over the violence dealt her body and soul are in great contrast to the indifference of the typist, who, neither hot nor cold, has no understanding or concern for herself, or for anything in life:

Hardly aware of her departed lover;
Her brain allows one half-formed thought to pass:
"Well now that's done: and I'm glad it's over."

Philomela realizes that her fate is a violation not of herself alone, but of mankind, that each is responsible to and for all, and she tries to tell her sorrow — first in tapestry, then in tongueless "Twit, twit." She has the grace of indignation, unlike the casual girl of "The Fire Sermon," who says:

". . . After the event
He wept. He promised 'a new start.'
I made no comment. What should I resent?

Actually, then, Philomela is the one redeeming woman in *The Wasteland*; and she is the contrast which shows the depth of the wasteland woman's descent.

Philomela's symbolic implications heighten the importance of the reference to her legend. Her violation represents the supplanting of *agape* by *eros* in the wasteland.

Above the antique mantel was displayed
As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene
The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale
Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
And still she cried, and still the world pursues,
"Jug Jug" to dirty ears.

The fact that she and her plight are displayed "above the antique mantel" — framed, but as nothing more than a "sylvan scene," reveals

the loss of a system of values and of the compassion of brotherhood. This separation from the people who have "hung" her symbolizes the breakdown of Western culture, which isolates the victim from society.

The inane conversations which take place before the manted picture of the martyr are further proof of this forfeiture which includes, and, in fact, springs from, ultimately, a loss of religious beliefs and standards.

"My nerves are bad tonight. Yes, bad. Stay with me.

"Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak.

"What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?

"I never know what you are thinking."

These shallow speakers are the ones who hear Philomela's truth as "Jug, Jug" to dirty ears." Even her song is stripped of meaning and made nothing but repetition of a dirty word.

Philomela symbolizes, in her plight of violation and now of loveless "framing," the losses of the wasteland.

At the peak of this hierarchy of meaning, Philomela is, analogously, the poet. She knows the truth of the crime which has been perpetrated, but cannot reveal it because the criminal has cut out her tongue. The poet also knows the truth of what has happened to his people, but he has no tongue with which to speak straight truths, direct statements, because the violators have taken away the efficacy of normal expression. He must now find the best possible way to communicate.

Philomela weaves her story into a tapestry — a complex network of threads in which the truth must be found. The poet weaves his insight into a poem. The insight is necessarily obscured, because it must be subtly woven into a network of other events, like tableaux.

Philomela is hidden away, exiled by the cowardice of her betrayer. Likewise, the poet is exiled from his world, by its fear of his knowledge. He sees that the world knows

. . . only

A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,

And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief.

And he can offer only one remedy:

There is shadow under this red rock,

(Come in under the shadow of this red rock)

And I will show you something different . . .

I will show you fear in a handful of dust.

Kerygma

The fear and kenosis required is too much for modern man to pay for truth, however. He chooses to ignore the poet:

And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.

In *The Wasteland*, Philomela is the tongueless yet song-filled poet. She is a type of the blind poet-narrator, Tiresias, who has "foresuffered all." Her echo is the also tongueless Hieronymo, who, likewise, knows the truth, but cannot communicate.

Tiresias, Philomela, Hieronymo all have defects which do not dim insight, but which make more difficult any contact with the world they love. Yet they struggle to transmit their message. They have a compulsion, of love refined by suffering, to communicate the truth, but they must sorrowfully watch men continue to ignore or misunderstand their message.

Tiresias is blind, yet he can speak, and he does speak for these, his types. He uses their words for a mutual sorrow:

Quando fiam uti chelidon — O swallow swallow. He speaks Philomela's unspoken words as an agonized plea for the tongue of the swallow: "When will I be like the swallow?" and, in reference to Procne, a cry for someone else who cares what has happened. As poet, he says,

These fragments I have shored against my ruins.

The fragments are the "heaps of broken images," which he has saved and out of which he hopes to produce order, making man's communal life whole again. As Hieronymo, he says,

why then Ile fit you,

promising to undertake this painful reconstruction. Then Tiresias, the poet, again speaks his own words:

Hieronymo's mad againe.

Hieronymo is mad again in the heart of the poet, and Philomela, though tongueless, has communicated her vocation to an heir.

Cecilia May, *Primavera*, Oil, 4' x 2'



EUGENE CURTSINGER, JR.

A Taste of Freedom

From the riverbank the three of them, almost sober now, watched the men in the rowboats paddle around in the lazy current, hemp ropes angling in the greenish water as the iron grapplers dragged the bottom, stirring up many an old mudcat from his afternoon sleep in the cool black mud and every now and then pulling up a waterlogged treelimb, the first glimpse of it coming up through the water like the black hair of a man; and for the fraction of a second that it took to clear the surface the twisted branches, stripped and black and dripping, were like some grotesque riverjoke, a caricature of the way a man's bones hang together.

"Thet ain't Willy, sheriff!" shouted one of the three men on the riverbank to the boatman who had just dragged up a treelimb. "Willy had more hair!" He jumped a little in the shale at the river's edge and slapped the thighs of his muddy blue-jeans and laughed, "Whah-whah-whah-whah!" and the echo slapped her blue-jeans on the other side of the river and laughed back.

The sheriff's fat cheeks drew up in a scowl. "You shet up, Hub, or I'll have you out here a-dragging. He was yore friend, not mine. I got better things to do than poke around in this old fishy-smelling river."

"You cain't make me drag no river," Hub says, kicking a piece of loose shale into the water. It splashed dangerously close to the boat, coming in a little closer now. "I ain't no sheriff! Whah-whah-whah!" Hub tilted his greasy felt hat forward, stuck his chest out, put his thumbs into his hip pockets, and strutted up and down in the mud and shale. "Heck," he says, "this ain't hard. I could larn to be sheriff in no time. Whah-whah-whah!"

One of Hub's companions, sitting on an old oak stump, had been holding back his grin but now it burst loose with a smacking sound. The other man, a little older, tall and thin and with a beard like a mess

of spinach, had been leaning against a tree and staring out into the water for the two hours since Willy had waded into the river and started across, but now he watched the sheriff pay the wet rope back into the water, and he screwed up his face in preparation for speech. "Leave 'im alone, sheriff," he finally grunted.

"What?" said the sheriff. "What? what, Gannet, what?"

Gannet straightened up from the tree and rubbed the crumbles of bark from his hands. "Leave 'im alone. Let 'im stay in the river. You bothered Willy enough in the last ten years. Leave 'im alone."

"Sober up, Gannet," says the sheriff. "You know we can't leave a man in there, even if it's just Willy. We got to git him out, else how we going to give him a decent Christian burial?" His eyes glazed over in the heat of thought. "Anyway," he says finally, "we got to git him out. And I ain't heard your side of this story yet, Gannet. Only what Hub said, when he come after me."

Gannet slipped a plug of tobacco from his shirt pocket, cut it with a knife, and flipped a cut past the stained pointed teeth that appeared briefly in the spinachy beard. His jaw moved as he mouthed the plug and prepared for speech.

"Willy and us was having a party," says Gannet, "and Willy seen a nekkid woman in them bushes over there on the other side of the river. He says he was going to swim over and—"

"You gone crazy?" says the sheriff. "Nobody lives down here in these old bottoms. There ain't a nekkid woman within five miles of here. You sure you seen one?"

"Willy seen it. We never seen it. Anyway, he says he seen it, and he wades out into the water, didn't even take off his shoes or anything." Gannet stepped out on the rocks and pointed to some muddy prints. "Them's his tracks right there. He waded out and started swimming, and he got just about out to the middle and he must have had a cramp or something, he throwed his arms up and hollers, 'I'm a goner, boys!', and he splashed around some and that's the last we seen of him. Ask Lew here."

Lew, perched crosslegged on the stump, slapped a crawler off his neck and admitted that was about the size of it.

Maybe it was a little warmer in the sun out over the river than it was along the banks. The sheriff mopped his forehead with a red handkerchief and said, "Didn't you try to git him out?"

"We didn't have no boat," says Hub. "We used to have that old skiff down the river once, but you come and—"

"Never mind that," says the sheriff. "You shouldn't have let Willy go out in the river drunk like that."

"Hell," says Hub, "we didn't know no better, we was drunk too. And Willy always done what he wanted. Besides, we was trying to see the nekkid woman, and Willy just kinda walked in when we wasn't expecting it. He was always bragging about what a good swimmer he was."

"Well why in hell didn't you have your party last Tuesday or next week or sometime?" says the sheriff, waving his red flag. "I was supposed to make a speech at the town-picnic this afternoon. Damn you old drunks anyway!"

"We had one last Tuesday, sheriff," says Hub. "This here is still it! Whah-whah!" Then he sat down on a boulder, leaned left behind a clump of bushes, and came up with a long round bottle, popped the cork, took a long swag and pitched it to Lew standing on the stump.

Sheriff Roy scowled in the boat, his thumbs in his hip pockets and his gun slung in front of him instead of at the side so it wouldn't hit the board when he sat down. "You boys better lay off that whiskey," says the sheriff, "or you'll end up like Willy did."

"This ain't whiskey, sheriff, it's water," says Hub. He tilted his greasy hat, then says, "Firewater! whah-whah-whah!", and the echo shouted "Firewater!" on the other side of the river and started laughing.

Sheriff Roy was rocking the boat savagely. "Anymore tom-fooling out of you, Hub," he roared, "and I'll lock ever one of you up for six months! And if this is another one of your dang drunk tricks—"

"Don't rile him no more," says Gannet, pushing Hub in the shoulder. "Don't never rile a sheriff any more than necessary. Anyway, this ain't no trick, sheriff. Go on and git Willy outa there. The catfish has done et Willy's ears off by now. He was the onliest friend I ever had."

The sheriff growled something about nekkid women and rowed farther out into the river and slapped a rope at a turtle's head that slipped up out of the water and ducked in again.

Hub sat back on the boulder and pushed his greasy hat back and scratched his scrubby brown hair. "What you mean, your onliest friend?" he says to Gannet. "Ain't me and Lew your friends?" Big Lew stopped winding himself around on the stump long enough to listen.

"Not like Willy was," says Gannet. "And besides, you ain't dead."

"You oughta be glad," says Hub. "We never took you up on old Rocky Hill and rolled you down it when you was passed out. We never—"

Gannet's mouth worked some before it exploded. "What? what?" he says. "Willy done that? Willy done like that when I was out?"

"Lots a times," says Hub, his left heel making a sucking noise in the

mud. "I thought you knowed it and was afraid to let on. He throwed you in old Mucker's pigpen one time, and me and Lew got you out fore you was et up. When he couldn't think of nothing else he would just kick you around a little, and like that. Willy didn't really mean nothing by it. He was just having fun."

Gannet's jaws were working but nothing came out, and Hub laughed, "Whah-whah! that time Willy throwed you over his shoulder and clumb a cottonwood tree and left you hanging there! whah-whah-whah!"

"Whyn't you stop him?" says Gannet. "Whyn't you tell me? Whyn't you do something? Hell, that ain't so!" Gannet looked at Lew standing on the stump and examining the bottle. Lew bowed and admitted that Willy never had been exactly gentle when Gannet was passed out.

"Why that old sonabitch!" says Gannet. "I thought I just stumbled around some and got bruised up. And them dreams I had! And I got a blue patch on my leg, I thought I fell over a log last night. You should've stopped him."

"I wasn't gonna stop him," says Hub. "He was a friend of mine. Besides, it was kinda funny."

"Friend of your'n!" says Gannet, spitting a brown blob into the river's edge. "He was maybe a friend of Lew's, but you don't seem to be exactly a-wearing mourning garments."

"Willy's done gone," says Hub. "No use crying over spilt milk. Gimme a drink."

Lew, kneeling on the stump, pitched the open bottle at Hub who caught it without spilling much.

The spinach on Gannet's chin jerked nervously as he watched Hub tilt the bottle. "You only liked him," says Gannet, "because he always had plenty of whiskey."

Hub swished a mouthful of whiskey around in his teeth and gums, his cheeks popping out like strawberry suckers without the stick. Gannet reached for the bottle and Hub says, "Willy was a leader of men. A man's got to like a man for something. Maybe it's for something good, or something bad, or maybe for his talking. Maybe it's for his gun, or his whiskey. It's gotta be for something. It don't matter what."

Gannet killed the bottle and threw it at Lew, who lay hanging sideways over the stump. Lew began yelping like a hound, and yelped until Hub leaned back into the bush and came up with a full bottle and tossed it to him.

"You never had guts enough to tell Willy that," says Gannet. "You sure he done them things?"

"I ain't crazy enough," says Hub, "to bite the hand what feeds me."

Besides, Willy was too dang big. I ain't the only man in Buck county who gave Willy a clear path. I got lots of company there. Willy even backed Lew down sometimes, but of course Lew never gave anybody any trouble. That right, Lew?"

Lew admitted that he liked to mind his own business in his own way, then he squatted down on the stump and croaked like a bull frog. Across the river one old grand daddy croaked back once or twice, since the boats were downstream now, and the sheriff in his boat was almost past the trees in the corner of the bend.

Gannet, sitting in the mud and shale at the river's edge, threw a flat rock sideways against the water and it skimmed across the smooth lazy current and sank. "About where Willy went under," says Gannet. "I hope it landed right in his big mouth." Somehow he thought that was funny, and his spinachy whiskers shook as he giggled and began splattering shale and mud out into the river.

"Looka Lew," says Hub. "He's gittin' ready to start making his speech."

Big Lew was standing straight up on the stump, still as a statue, with one hand pointing high at the sky and the other raised out over the water in silent blessing. Gannet threw an empty bottle that whistled past Lew's head, but the lashes of Lew's dark eyes did not bat.

"He's dang near ready," says Gannet. "Wonder what it'll be this time. Willy, I bet."

Hub slid off the boulder and trotted over to the stump and raised a half-filled bottle high under Lew's nose. Lew stood motionless in the late afternoon. Hub trotted back across the shale, tripped over Gannet's legs, and ended up on his boulder.

"He's ripe," says Hub. "Let's git him started." Hub and Gannet began clapping their hands and making little cheering noises, and Lew turned slowly to face them, his hands outstretched as the noise echoed across the river and faded out. In an oak behind him a bluejay yelled, and farther up the river there was a little plop of water.

"My friends," says Lew, speaking in his deep heavy voice, "today we seen a man drown hisself in the river, Willy Johnson. He wasn't no ordinary man—"

"He never drowned hisself," says Gannet. "It was accidental."

"Sure it was accidental," says Hub. "But he done it hisself. We never done it."

Lew had not noticed the interruption. "—but who we called friend, for one reason or another. I ain't gonna say that Willy was what folks call a good man. For a fact, he was no damn good. I'm going to—"

Gannet and Hub perked up and looked at each other. "That ain't like Lew," says Hub.

"—has been a skunk in the woodpile and a snake in the middle of our grass. Six years he had something on me," continued Lew, "that I done bad over to Royal City one time. Whenever I had any money he made me give it to him, or he was gonna tell Sheriff Roy. If I—"

"Aw, Lew, you never done nothing bad," shouts Hub. "And we don't care if you did, you're still our friend!" Hub waved the bottle before him, and Gannet nodded and says, "Friend!" and grabbed the bottle to keep from falling backwards.

"—and I was going to California, and he says no, he'd tell Sheriff Roy, and the dirty—"

"What went with that other bottle?" says Hub, looking around suspiciously, feeling behind the boulder and in the bushes.

Gannet waved the empty bottle and looked innocently for the other. There was the sound of shale scraping and a piece of it snapped and broke a little ways back in the trees, but nobody seemed to hear it.

"—done it to me for six years, but I was a patient man. I likes to do things in my own way, and I waited too long. Willy's lying out there now in the riverbottom mud, and—"

Hub was swinging on Gannet, hitting him in the spinach-beard with his greasy hat, and Gannet fell back in the mud laughing, and says, "Why I ain't even seen the dang bottle!"

"—and carve on Willy Johnson's tombstone that he was the dirtiest—"

"Amen!" shouts Hub.

"Lowdownest!"

"Amen!" shouts Hub and Gannet and the echo across the river.

"Snake in the grassiest!"

"AMEN!"

"SKUNK IN THE WOODPILIEST!"

"AMEN!"

Something jumped out from behind the trees and landed down in the mud in front of Gannet and Hub, and it was Willy Johnson, Willy's big shoes splattering mud in Hub's mouth when Hub was saying "AMEN!" Willy was laughing so hard he bent forward, and whenever he took a breath he straightened up and laughed till he got bent down again. He reeked warm with the riversmell. There was dried mud on his clothes, and his hands curled big around the bottle that Hub had missed. Willy's wide jaw seemed to swing on hinges like a barn door, and finally Willy calmed down enough to say, "Well, I guess I found out about you guys! Haw haw haw!"

Gannet was lying back in the mud working his mouth like he was

trying to eat his whiskers, but Hub finally found some words. "You're supposed to be dead, Willy. Sheriff Roy ain't going to like that."

Willy laughed and reached over and shoved Big Lew off the stump, and Lew came up with a handful of weeds and mud and climbed back on.

"Sheriff supposed to make a speech at the picnic," says Hub. "He's gonna lock us all up and he ain't gonna let us out."

"It's as fine a trick I ever done," says Willy, standing on Gannet's leg. "Only it worked out even better than I thought. A nekkid woman across the river! Haw haw haw!"

Gannet finally got his tongue shook loose. "It don't seem right," he says. "It ain't right somehow."

Willy straightened up and sucked in another gutful of air and started haw-hawing his way down again and Gannet jumped up and looked at Lew and Hub looked at Gannet and just when Willy got to the end of the haw-haw-haw Big Lew leaped from the stump to Willy's back and Hub got one of Willy's arms and Gannet wound around the legs. They crushed Willy forward into the river's edge, and Hub held Willy's twisted arm and kneeled one knee on Willy's neck in the cool shallow water and the mud and the riversmell got all stirred up until they couldn't see Willy's hair anymore, and after a while Willy stopped jerking around and after a while longer they gave Willy a push and waded dripping and muddy out of the water and Lew got a long pole and poked around for a while and admitted that Willy was probably far enough out for the current to catch him, if there was any current.

There were dark swirls where the mud had been stirred up in the green water, and for a while they watched the swirls fade away and soon the river looked as it had before, cool and green and silent and smooth and reflecting sky and the orange of sundown and the shadows of the trees, as it always had. A small fish leapt pink in the light, then returned to water.

"Well," says Gannet, rubbing his beard, "I reckon the catfish will be eating on Willy's ears before long."

Lew admitted that was so, and sat on the ground and leaned back against his stump, and it was a little while before Hub said anything.

"We done been through all that," says Hub.

After that the three of them sat alone and quiet in the dusk, each man by himself, and watched the darkness mass under the trees across the river and felt the air grow cooler and heard the leaves stirring and the night-noises growing around them and saw the river shining under the rising moon.



Cecilia May, *Incarnation*, Bas Relief in Clay, 8" x 17"

DOUGLAS VINSON

From the T'ang Shr San Bai Ssuh

Agony of sadness—gone beloved;
Drift, drift into fogs and mist;
Gone away, woman of Lwo Ch'ang.
The useless bell of Gwang Ling Shu
Is so this morning, because of the parting.
At what place, where to meet again?
All the world, a boat on rough waters,
Drifts down its course—whirlpool! where
will it end?

The above poem was translated from the T'ang Shr San Bai Ssuh (Three Hundred Poems of the T'ang Dynasty), written about 700 a.d. In the original it has five syllables to each line with internal tone rhyme and an end rhyme of abcdb. It is basically a word picture of feelings, emotions, and bleakness. Phonetically, the first part of the poem goes like this:

chi chi choo chin ai
fan fan roo yan wu
gway jwo Lwo Chang Ren
t'san jung Gwang Ling Shu
jin jyou we sye b'ye
hu ch'u yuan syang yü.

Utolsó Estém Velencében

(Naplórészlet)

Ha holnap elhagyom Velencét,
megérzed-é, hogy erre jártam? . . .
Kereslek lenn a lagunában,
hol árnyad kedvesen kereng szét.

Meglátlak-é, te Egi Lélek?
Te küldtél itt találni rad és
ragyogni szépen, mint a lángész,
amely a Végtelenbe nézett.

Te küldtél megcsodálni sorban
a San Marco-t s a keskeny, árva
utcákat, melyeknek homálya
a villanyfényes vízbe csobban.

Sietve ring a vaporettó,
körötte csöndes gondolákon
sóhajt a vággyal terhes alom,
hogy elhagyottnak lenni nem jó . . .

Emlékedet kutatva nézem
a partokat, honnan merengve
kiváncsi fények lengenek le
fürödni lenn a messzi mélyben;

vidáman hancúrozva, halkan
utánam kúsznak, mint a kigyó,
s mire szemembe villan Lidó,
tudom, hogy nem vagyok magamban.

Megláttam arcodat! Ilyen légy
örökké! . . . Halld csak, zúg a tenger:
ó, mondd, siratsz-é majd, ha egyszer—
ha holnap elhagyom Velencét? . . .

A NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION. The original (which is printed on this page) is written in quatrains rhymed abba. For those who are familiar with Hungarian the translation will not seem literal at every point. In other places it will seem that too much has been translated. Since the Hungarian language

My Last Evening in Venice

(Extract from a diary)

If I leave Venezia tomorrow,
Will the ground still look as if I've walked on it?
I search for you, strange self, in the lagoon,
Where your shadow circles like spreading water rings.

Spirit of myself, found here, will I see you again?
It is you who sent me here to find you, and
To give me a glow like the hand of some genius
Who once felt the contours of the Infinite.

You have sent me here, to admire in turn
San Marco and the slim, orphan
Streets whose sombre gashes splash into
Pools of the streetlamps' incandescence.

A vaporetto rocks in hasty random
Swaying, while about it, gondolas
Quietly float in pregnant dreams of want
Which sigh the disadvantage of abandon . . .

Searching for your memory, I look
On the banks from which the sleepy lights swerve
Eccentrically along the lower curb
And bathe into a final, distant nook.

Gay, and romping soft around my boat,
They slink up on me like a patchwork snake,
And when the Lido looms before my eyes,
I know that I'm not floating here alone.

I have seen your face. So be it
Always. Listen: the sea rolls on.
Oh, tell me, will it hurt much if someday—
If I leave Venezia tomorrow?

is not in the Indo-European linguistic group, and because this poem in particular possesses a subtle irony that is all but impossible to translate, putting it into English involves not only several losses of literal meaning, but even violations of them.

WALTRAUD BARTSCHT

Nature and Art

(Translated from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

Nature and Art appear to disagree
before we understand they are entwined;
and now, since my aversion has declined,
their forces can attract me equally.

Honest endeavor holds the secret key!
So, when for certain hours set apart
we've bound the mind, with diligence, to Art,
again the glow of Nature sets us free.

And thus will all formation be effected;
the unrestrained spirits try in vain
to gain perfection's purest elevation.

Who aims for greatness, keeps himself collected,
since limitation shows the master's gain
and only laws can give us liberation.

Natur Und Kunst

Natur und Kunst, sie scheinen sich zu fliehen
Und haben sich, eh man es denkt, gefunden;
Der Widerwille ist auch mir verschwunden,
Und beide scheinen gleich mich anzuziehen.

Es gilt wohl nur ein redliches Bemühen!
Und wenn wir erst in abgemessnen Stunden
Mit Geist und Fleiss uns an die Kunst gebunden,
Mag frei Natur im Herzen wieder glühen.

So ists mit aller Bildung auch beschaffen:
Vergebens werden ungebundne Geister
Nach der Vollendung reiner Höhe streben.

Wer Grosses will, muss sich zusammenraffen;
In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister,
Und das Gesetz nur kann uns Freiheit geben.

(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe)

DONALD COWAN

In a Falling Elevator

Angels before (but demons too) have known
The lovely lightness of this freedom cage
Where nothing plummets, where no probing stone
Drops straight from Pisa. Newton can gauge
No fruit from Eve's bough. No mark at all
For the hairs of our head or a sparrow's fall.
We cannot weep for what we must not fear:
Within this golden room there falls no tear.

SR. FRANCIS MARIE, S.S.M.N.

Michelangelo Muses on His Pieta

The glossy finish of each minute detail
Scarcely reveals the labor I have spent
To shape the Marble bulk to match the dream
By force of brawn and greater force of will.
When the reluctant rock refused at first
To yield and let the form of art indwell,
The artist's form within the mind remained
A writhing concept still defying skill.
The image yet imprisoned in the heart
At last broke free and so informed the stone.

The youthful tools then wrought with utmost care,
And patiently. The marble shone with light—
Not dazzling light of Christ's transfigured form
Or Moses' robes—but like his Sinai face
That glowed with hardly less intensity.
The surface too was smooth. The pin-point nerves
Within the fingers and the wrist were set
Atingle all responsive to mere sight.
Beauty of brilliance, symmetry, and form
To youthful mind comprised the highest good.

Strength does not lie in brass or mirrored stone.
The gaunt and lifeless Christ, besmeared with blood,
Can best be sculptured in unpolished stone.
The lines must writhe as did the dying Christ;
The stone must show His strength. An artist must
Lose self, must joy to hear the viewer ask
"Is this the Christ?" must be content to be
A tool for Golgatha's epiphany.

GEARY BLANKENSHIP

Fox-Fire

A pert red fox, while on his morning prowl,
Came upon two farm dogs blithely roam-
ing. Startled, the poor dogs maintained a howl
Until the sly fox offered them a pome.
He proffered, "Show me to your master's fowl;
I'll give you anything on loam or foam."
The duped hounds pondered long if it were foul
For such prize to betray their master's home.
Poor canines thought to heed the fiery beast
One time might not hurt their integrity—
That should they yield, the fox might leave well-pleased
And they retain prize plus tranquillity.

Don't think *just once* will make the fires abate;
You'll always find them quite insatiate.

ROBERT DUPREE

Ballade of Capital Punishment

Was earthly pardon due for Absalom,
Halted by his pretty head of hair
And cut off from his coiffure. Some
Say we should pity Robespierre,
Who gave France all the freedom he could spare
And met corruption in humanity.
Should naked treason dress in soul and wear
The death that gives life's meaning dignity?

Did innocence of Athens' Socrates,
Who drank a weed so classical and stark
That Plato and the youths sank on their knees
Before his stony self; and Joan of Arc,
Licked by flames before consuming dark
(At later times of evening fires can be
More amply splendid than in daytime), mark
The death that gives life's meaning dignity?

For modern Brutuses we've firing squads
That lend a kind of flair and graceful speed
To justice: all drum forth and one man nods
A *no* to open forum stabbings. Creed
And reason cannot bridal the stampede
Of honor; Charles the First tried capitally
To save his neck, though he knew monarchs need
The death that gives life's meaning dignity.

ENVOI

Death-dealers, you, who hold life for a loss,
Cannot be held for spirit's poverty.
It was our Lord you gave upon a cross
The death that gives life's meaning dignity.

ROBERT DUPREE

An Allegory

Six o'clock, the night was out, and Messrs.
Vickery and Kent heeled up the walk,
Cut figures through the gate, and stopped to talk
About how each was out to court his lessers.

"It's this way," Kent expounded, "Social caste
Is useful for the persons that will use it.
The flower of our system, why refuse it?
Let's only hope the state of things will last."

But Vickery could not be stopped at that.
"I reckon I don't get your reckoning.
Common folks is the uncommon thing."
The latter was, of course, a democrat.

"Now I believe in equal rights of man,"
Kent said. "I don't want you to be mistaken
About the firm position I have taken
On mankind." He was a republican.

"Your talk has got a fancy kind of ring
To it," Vickery replied, "but I'm
Not likely to give one good thin dime
For uppity." Kent said, "That's levelling."

They argued late and ground each other's axes
Till midnight, when they noticed that their dates
Had dimmed the humble lights of granted fates
And let the evening pay their timeless taxes.

ROBERT DUPREE

Loose Ends

We pulled the shoebox from beneath his bed
And marveled at a string anthology:
The fiber-fold variety of twine,
Soft cording, rope, and threads, pressed to serve
As salvage. Who among us will forget
His loud complaints when ladies stole recruits
For package missions from its tangle or
The children borrowed that famous piece of pride
He found at work and jumped rope in the street.
Now after tidying a knotty store
Of treasure, we can see a new twist in
These worn-out segments of his foresight. Snarled
Hands, disjointed legs: so many parts
To keep together; little wonder that
We executors of his will betray
A lack of gray-haired practicality.



Cecilia May, *Pregnant Virgin*, Oil, 17" x 34½"

JOHN HARGRAVE

Prior Commitment

It was still early; the headlights of the pickup bounced wildly against the rusty hangar as the truck rattled across the culvert. Howard Josephs cut the ignition and lights and let the truck roll to a stop without using the brake. He got out and shivered a moment in the heavy mist; the pullover felt good around his ribs and shoulders, but he wished the day would lighten up. He pulled the tight ring of keys from his pocket and felt for the third one to the left of the silver dollar that he always denied was a good luck piece. The dollar only reminded him that there was luck, but he knew, too, that sometimes things happen a certain way, luck or no luck.

The key to the padlock was a bad fit; he mumbled an oath as the key jiggled into the cylinder. He held the open lock in his hand, then threw it hard and straight into the weeds on the west side of the hangar. The big doors were heavy and still; he worked hard to get them a foot or so apart. Then, putting his shoulder first to one and then the other, he slowly slid them back.

The silver Stearman sat nose high, ready in the pale light; a hint of a reflection glimmered on the new prop. The rear of the plane was in darkness, and for an instant the plane seemed to emerge, to fly towards him. He had flown the plane a long time. He would hate to lose it.

He'd been carrying the Parkson bid in his pocket for a week, and now he had to tell them something today. Ten thousand they'd offered for the plane and the other gear. "Plus ten per cent face value all contracts," the telegram said. Howard lit a cigarette with a kitchen match and his dark brows wrinkled as he inhaled some of the biting sulphur. He leaned against the cool metal of the door and gazed at the plane while he waited for more light.

He almost hadn't shown Margie the telegram, and when he did she

hadn't believed it at first. He had turned to pour himself a cup of coffee. But she had grabbed him by his hip pocket and pulled him back.

"Wait a minute. This is almost twice what you've been offered before. How come?"

He shrugged and pulled against her hold; it would only make matters worse to explain that this was the big operator's last bid for a graceful settlement. If he turned this one down there would be rough competition, and plenty of it.

Her grasp was firm, "You're going to take it, aren't you?"

He wanted a cup of coffee, "I don't know yet."

She poked the chicken on the stove; grease sputtered onto the splash board in angry yellow drops. He poured a cup of steaming coffee and sipped it.

"Well, you'd better make up your mind."

He started to answer, but the cuckoo clock over the kitchen table struck six and gathered itself with a convulsive whir. It ticked along for a moment, then a roughly carved bird popped out and squawked six times. The melody had died soon after they had bought it, a little high on champagne, during their honeymoon in New Orleans. It was cheap, but it kept good time, and they were somehow proud that it still worked.

"Damn it, Howard. If you don't sell this time, I'll, I'll . . ."

He slammed the cup down on the tile, "Don't threaten me, Margie."

"I'm not threatening you!"

"The hell you're not!"

He jumped slightly when she slammed the fork to the floor.

"Now you listen to me, Howard Josephs. I . . ."

They both froze when they saw the children.

"Gee, Dad, we never saw you fight before," Howard, Jr. grinned. Tommy and Susan stood behind him, giggling.

"We're not fighting. You guys get back to the den. Go on."

They turned reluctantly and went down the dim hallway. Howard picked the fork up and extended it slowly towards his wife who looked sadly at the retreating figures of her children.

"Howard, I'm sorry . . ."

"Now don't start that stuff. It's better when you throw things."

"Please, Howard. I only . . ."

"Damn it! I'll think it over. That's the best I can do."

In the bathroom he had washed up for dinner and looked at the wet shining face in the mirror. He sneered at the face and said, "Well, I guess we know who's a dirty bastard."

Howard yawned and stretched; the early stiffness was gone now as he

ground out the cigarette on the oil stained concrete and walked towards the plane that the receding darkness had left in a soft patch of light. The preflight check was slow, easy; a gentle kick here and a short tug there was all he needed, but he missed nothing. That was part of why he was still alive after seventeen years of flying, part of his luck. At the wingtip he rocked the plane back and forth on its landing gear and remembered a line of poetry from a trade magazine; something like, "a plane is a nervous queen, tight corsets, wild pride, hot breath." He didn't believe stuff like that, but as the plane rocked to and fro there was more to his plane than just a good engine and tight airframe, something almost alive.

When he finished the check he got his helmet and coveralls from the cockpit and put them on. The plane dipped and creaked easily when he climbed onto the walk way and stepped into the cockpit. Down the field the mist was thinning, leaving the gray windsock limp in the thick stillness.

He squirmed in the seat until his body found the right places, then he turned the gas and ignition on, and, with a loud click, twisted the primer to the left and pumped four stiff shots into the carburetor. He pulled the starter out and felt the engine engage; the prop turned as slow as the old ceiling fan on his back porch. Suddenly the engine fired and caught; it coughed twice as the carburetor sucked in the wet air, then roared harshly for a moment as he adjusted the mixture control. The hard rocking died to an easy roll and the engine settled into a smooth, sustained bass.

The place in his stomach came alive; he knew everything was okay as the phosphorescent pointers on the instruments twitched and wavered across the panel like a bunch of drunk buddies yelling down the empty barracks, "Howard! Hey, Howard, get yourself on down heah and drink some of this limey whiskey. It's almost killed us."

The memory faded as he pressed down the curled ends of the faded legend below the compass; he remembered how fat, bald T. O. McCarren had leaned into the rear cockpit of the trainer and stuck that legend on the panel: "There are old pilots and there are bold pilots. There are no old, bold pilots."

T. O. had climbed down onto the hardstand and said, with the dead cigar stub still between his teeth, "Okay, son. It's all yours, but remember what that sign says and you'll get to be as mean as me someday." The ends of the tape on which the legend was typed were dry; he reminded himself to make a new one.

The engine was warm now, the vibration sure and even. He taxied the plane out of the hangar and across the field to the north end of the mowed swath that was his runway. He stood hard on the right rudder

and brake; the plane pivoted neatly so that it was aligned with the runway. He concentrated on the final check with deftness and finished quickly. Taking a deep breath, he reached for the throttle, but stopped. He thought of Margie and his children—and about not flying anymore. He counted it all up; the business, the land, his house; he could get up thirty thousand easy, and old Morris would take his note for the balance. It wouldn't be hard to swing a deal for Williamson's Harvester dealership, and, if he worked it just right, he could get Sam Allen's place down at Logan and have the whole county. But he wouldn't be flying anymore.

He shoved the throttle forward; the big engine wound up and strained as it pulled the loaded plane down the runway.

At four hundred feet he broke cleanly out of the mist. The sun flashed across the windscreen, shot along each scratch, and exploded into a distorted star. He pulled the green tinted goggles down and made a shallow, climbing turn to the west.

The mist was almost gone by the time he reached Olford; only patches remained in the hollow where the river flowed quietly on the east side of town. He took Tommy and Howard there to gig frogs sometimes, but he liked the river better from up here. The town, with its narrow streets and shaded houses, still slept. In the business section around the square a few cars and trucks moved; one of Gene Callaway's milk trucks was parked in front of the Easy Cafe, and a sheriff's car moved slowly out Route 26 towards the honky-tonks.

On the west side of town Howard circled Williamson's Harvester dealership. "Needs a new roof," he thought as he looked down and noted the number and types of farm implements nuzzled under dew covered sheets of polyethylene.

He rolled out of the turn at exactly the right point; the nose passed over the red and white stick of KDOX's broadcast tower and was pointed straight towards the Hanson's water tower off on the horizon. Howard's favorite coon grove squatted low and dark off to the left. Cows in even green pastures walked the stiffness out of their joints with majestic slowness. The sun glistened calmly on the surface of a stock tank, and Howard checked the alignment of the nose and the water. He thumped the compass and the card swung violently back and forth; it steadied up ninety degrees off course, but it didn't matter, he never used it. The compass was like a clock that had been in the family a long time and couldn't be repaired—you never threw it away. Howard squirmed a little in his seat as he thought about capital outlay, and notes, and equipment prices, and putting Margie in a new Oldsmobile next year. He felt the vibrant, electric tension in his hand, and gripped the stick tighter;

the spot in his stomach moved a little to the left; he would miss the beauty and the freshness.

A few minutes later he spiraled down over George Eggleston's farm. In the pasture, east of the cotton to be sprayed, Bill Calley leaned against the fender of the tank truck, his hands in the pockets of his windbreaker. When Howard was down to two hundred feet Bill got a handful of sulphur from the cab and let it float to the ground. The dust settled evenly at Bill's feet.

A line of trees formed a windbreak at the west end of the field, so Howard decided to start from the east, with the sun at his back. He turned on the spray for a second and twisted in his seat to make sure the dust spread evenly. The engine instruments were all in the green, and his shoulder harness was secure, but he tightened it a little more. Then the plane slipped down to the edge of the field and he opened the throttle and spray valves.

The plane leaped forward; neat rows of cotton dissolved into a green blur. Halfway down the field the engine coughed, fell off slightly, and a tight cloud of black smoke popped out and floated past. The stick was hard as he waited, then his mind was working like an automatic mill that ripped out lumber as fast as you could feed it raw logs. In the time it took to pull the dumping valve he had examined half a dozen alternatives and selected the right one.

The plane rose rapidly as the dust gushed out. Another cloud of smoke eased out and floated by. He angled the plane up and to the right, towards the lowest saddle in the Bois d'Arc trees. He braced his hand against the cockpit combing as the left wingtip slashed through foliage. A shower of twigs hovered in the flying wires.

The same wingtip had clipped a branch the first season he had dusted. He had been too low and too inexperienced, but his reaction had been fast, and he had set the plane down in Harvey Jennings' early beans. He had begun to shake a little as he examined the plane, then he had puked into the soft, delicate plants. But afterwards he had been older, and if it happened again he would be ready.

He was ready now; a tough scrawny branch caught a flying wire, pulled it taut. Silver specks of fabric flanked off in a trail behind the wing.

The harness bit deeply into his shoulders for an instant. The wire snapped like a rifle in the night and was gone. Black, acrid smoke poured out of the engine. The click was almost audible when he turned the gas and ignition off.

The nose dropped steeply as the prop slowed, stopped—ka-thunk. The young corn below suddenly grew much bigger, but he was free, clear of

the trees. The plane mushed flatly into the half grown stalks; they flapped against the wing like a slowly shuffled deck of cards.

The plane bounced violently once, settled into an uneven roll, and stopped.

There was only silence; then, gradually, the oil from the ruptured line plopped softly into the earth, and, from a long way off, a cock crowed and was answered by the sharp bark of a dog. He removed his helmet and unstrapped himself, then pulled up onto the edge of the cockpit and sat, feeling the tension drain from his stomach and thighs. He lit a cigarette, and turned towards the line of trees. Beyond the acute slice where his wingtip had gone through, and far to the east, there was a familiar face in a patch of cumulus that was building. The face wrinkled and dissolved. He had played the game of finding shapes in the clouds since he was a kid. He grinned to himself and felt better.

When Bill Calley got there they talked about it for a few minutes, but as soon as Howard knew that the plane could be repaired by noon, he walked over to Eggleston's house and caught a ride into town.

He left Eggleston at the feed store and walked downtown to the Longley Hotel. At the Western Union desk he addressed a wire to Jim Henderson, Parkson Dusting Service, Waco. He printed the message in dark bold letters with a soft pencil.

"SORRY. NO SALE. PRIOR COMMITMENT."

Howard tried to think of something easy to say to show Jim that there were no hard feelings. He grinned and rapidly finished the message with:

"SEE YOU AT 10,000. BE ARMED. SIGNED. BARON MANFRED VON RICHTHOFEN."

Howard left the hotel and went up Main Street to Dick Meyer's Music Shop. He was looking over an RCA console in rich mahogany when Dick Meyers came out of the back, straightening the dark blue bow tie he always wore.

"Morning, Howard. Do something for you?"

"Yeah, Dick. Is this the phonograph Margie looked at last week?"

"Sure is. Best Hi-Fi made. Here let me show you."

Dick opened the doors and began to demonstrate the machine to Howard.

"Stereo, AM, FM. It's got . . ."

"How much do you want for it?"

"Well, if you're serious, I'll let you have it for three hundred."

Howard hesitated for a moment. He ruffled the edge of a pad of bank

Kerygma

drafts on the counter and remembered the ripe slap of corn stalks against his wings. Three hundred dollars was cheap at the price.

"Okay, Dick. Have you got a pen?" Howard filled out the check and handed it to him. "Send it out to Margie this afternoon."

"Sure thing, Howard. Right after lunch."

Howard walked back towards the feed store; he knew that Margie would cry when he told her, then she would be mad because he tried to bribe her with the phonograph, but in the end she would understand and he would wind up with a big wet kiss out of the whole thing. As he waited at First and Main for the light to change he felt the silver dollar on his key ring. He slipped the silver dollar off and flipped it high in the air, and as the bright surfaces flashed, he decided to buy a new padlock with it.



Cecil May, 1918, Oil, 35" x 17"

MARY BLACKBURN

Two Goodbyes

A review of Dr. Harvey B. Searcy, *We Used What We Had*, Northport, Alabama: Colonial Press, 1961, and John Graves, *Goodbye to a River*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960.

These two books, although very different both in style and subject, have many things in common. Both are regional, both are reminiscent, and, most important, both evoke the spirit of a people and a time that has passed or is now passing from sight. Both authors are writing their own reverent farewell to a time in which they have had their part, whether large or small.

Dr. Searcy's book is far from being the product of a polished writer, but it manages to present the people of the Deep South honestly and respectfully. The book consists of a number of tales from Dr. Searcy's life as "an ordinary, small-town, eye, ear, nose, and throat doctor." The stories range from his discovery of "chewing-gum fever" to his grief with children choking from diphtheria, but all of them are interesting and concerned with people—Dr. Searcy's people in Alabama. It is rather roughly written, the tales being strung together loosely, with no strong principle of unity, but it has a warm and conversational tone. The chief value of the book lies in the honest and affectionate presentation of the people Dr. Searcy has come to know. He shows them as they were, real and likeable and funny. He recounts without bitterness the story of the way in which people change doctors when they become prosperous enough to pay off "old obligations," and he describes the people's respect for a doctor. Throughout the entire book, whether the story is funny or sad, Dr. Searcy's warm tone enriches and enlivens his "farewell" to the past.

John Graves does for the Brazos country what Dr. Searcy does for the South, although he does it in a more professional literary style. He has not played a role as active in the time of which he writes as Dr.

Searcy has in his, but his account carries authority because, unashamedly and unapologetically, he cares for his "piece of the river."

The book is the story of Graves' three-week trip down the Brazos River after he has learned that the river area will be changed by a series of dams. The entire book is shaped and flavored by this knowledge. It provides the motivation and starting point for the river trip, around which Graves weaves a tapestry of the Brazos land, its past and its present. The awareness that the river will soon be gone overshadows the whole book, giving a sense of the passing-away, not only of a river, but of a way of life. As Graves takes us down the river on this farewell journey, he skillfully blends tales of the past and of the present to evoke the spirit of the Brazos country. He meets the people of the present—the rough farmers and fishermen who still live close to the land, and the campers and picnickers who come to it for sport—and the people of the past—himself as a child, Mrs. Sherman, the Truitts and the Mitchells, and "The People." These tales, along with the experience of travelling down the river, are transformed by the human and lively tone of the book into a living evocation of the very spirit of the land.

Neither *We Used What We Had* nor *Goodbye to a River* is a great book, but both of them are good books, worth the attention of even the literary person. They manage to capture some of the spirit of a time that is past, and the reverent feeling for this spirit that they convey to the reader is worth having.

ROBERT DUPREE

An Epistle to Donald Davidson

on the occasion of the publication of his fourth book of poetry, *The Long Street*, Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1961.

In sixty-eight years lived like poetry
You've gone against the modern crooked grain;
The fields we chose to farm in only make
For sociology, not growing things.
You, sir, re-verser of the trend,
Radically steadfast, have built up
A minor fortress for the major tone
That plays about each century. No, sir,
I'll not have your steady gifts corralled
Within unbridled currents: finished Ransom
Polished off his verse in several years;
Warren, turncoat Southerner, has dressed
In cloth of new mythologies; while Tate,
Always *avant garde*, is now displaced
Into a system he does not deserve,
The lax ranks of an iron academy.
You have never asked a greater place,
Gentlemen, traditionist, and friend
Of all who hold the future in its past.
Your book (though that word wrongs you) oracles
Directions not unheard of, but too often
Unheard. I would not want, this day and age,
To slight your lettered friends' accomplishment;
They've done their due, and now I want to see
That you receive your turn.

Teach us the ropes

And subtle voyage of your poetry;
Teach us to sail our minds with melody

Into the harbors where the mind belongs;
The rich ride of our voices, the feel of our folk,
The psalm of our salvation, let us know
That these things can be asked but for the having.
Let us know when reason engineers
Its brilliant envelope of packaged praise
In this outlandish world, there'll be a land
Where poets can teach, a school for blood and bone,
A place where tongues can toll the muses home.

BEN PETRICK

Epic or Tragedy

A Review of George Steiner, *Tolstoy or Dostoevsky*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959.

It is with an ironic intention that George Steiner subtitles this study of two great Russian novelists "an essay in the old criticism." In the opening pages of the book he contrasts the "new criticism" with the method he intends to follow. Where the "new criticism" has been largely formalistic, he maintains, his study is to be philosophic in range and in temperament; he is interested in the point particularized by Jean Paul Sartre that "the technique of a novel always refers us back to the metaphysic of the novelist." As Steiner makes clear, he does not repudiate the "new criticism"; far from it. Like its best practitioners, he does believe that it requires an underlying mythology or lineage in order to explicate effectively. The "new criticism" seeks to praise the past rather than to bury it, and it is also with this view in mind that Steiner approaches Tolstoy and Dostoevsky.

The basic purpose of the book is to show how both novelists create, how they differ within their works, and how they compare with their contemporaries as novelists. The method employed is largely one of contrast and comparison. By devoting first a chapter to Tolstoy and then a chapter to Dostoevsky, Mr. Steiner is able to explore the techniques of each and relate them to the mainstream of modern fiction. Then he studies them in relation to each other, examining their religious, mythological, and cultural heritages.

Tolstoy, Steiner believes, surpasses Flaubert and James in the art of fiction. According to him, Tolstoy's handling of point of view, dramatization, and the presentation of life is less academic and therefore a more profound art. For Steiner, Tolstoy's work most resembles Homer's *Iliad* in its panoramic vision, the great scenes of the battlefield and of the Russian landscape. Thus instead of the restrained conclusions of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Bleak House*, or *Madame Bovary*, Tolstoy's novels end, like a river, at their point of greatest breadth. Despite knowledge and

appreciation of Shakespeare, contemporary and classical theatre, and the novelists of his own time, Steiner points out, Tolstoy chose to imitate the expansive range of Homer.

By way of contrast, Steiner shows Dostoevsky to be utterly unlike Tolstoy. His novels are closer to Shakespeare and Sophocles than to Homer. Steiner considers *The Idiot* to be, of all Dostoevsky's major novels, the closest to tragedy. Not only are the action and vision in the tragic realm, but the novel very nearly follows the Aristotelian unities of time and place. Another important character in Dostoevsky's work whom Steiner chooses to emphasize is the "underground man" of *Letters from the Underworld*. He is a Cain in the nineteenth century; his failure is to be found in his scorn for mankind and his retreat from reality. But at the same time, he resembles the fool in *King Lear*, for he is constantly involved in a process of self-definition.

The two Russian novelists are seen by Steiner as different not only in their approaches to art, but also in their religion, their views of man, and their attitudes toward the universe. Dostoevsky is a spectator of his own work; he lets the characters lead him into the tragic depths of the world. On the other hand, Tolstoy's relation to his art is that of creator to creation. He is the omniscient author at all times, surveying all with a visionary directness. For Tolstoy, Christ teaches man not to act stupidly or irrationally. For Dostoevsky, Christ teaches man to commit what, in the eyes of the world, are the gravest of stupidities. Finally, Tolstoy would have the Kingdom of God on earth, while Dostoevsky could only assert that such an "attempt would end in political bestiality and in the destruction of the idea of God."

In writing about two Russian novelists, Steiner manages to discuss a great deal of literature, not only Russian, but American, French, and English. In fact, the book is practically a survey of the history of ideas in the nineteenth century. But he does not allow his use of philosophy and history to dominate the literary element of his criticism. He does not superimpose a priori propositions on either author, although he makes constant use of parallels and contrasts. Finally, he explores Russian life as it is presented in the novels of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy and criticizes that life. In this way the reader is led to realize not only the relation of two great Russian novelists to each other but also their relation to great literature, culture, and life.

