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#### Recommended Citation

Luke; Aiken, Eleanor; Rea, Thomas W.; McKee, Michael G.; Jones, James; White, Charles; and Spidel, Mary Ann, "The Vehicle, 1969, Vol 11 no. 1" (1969). *The Vehicle*. 20.

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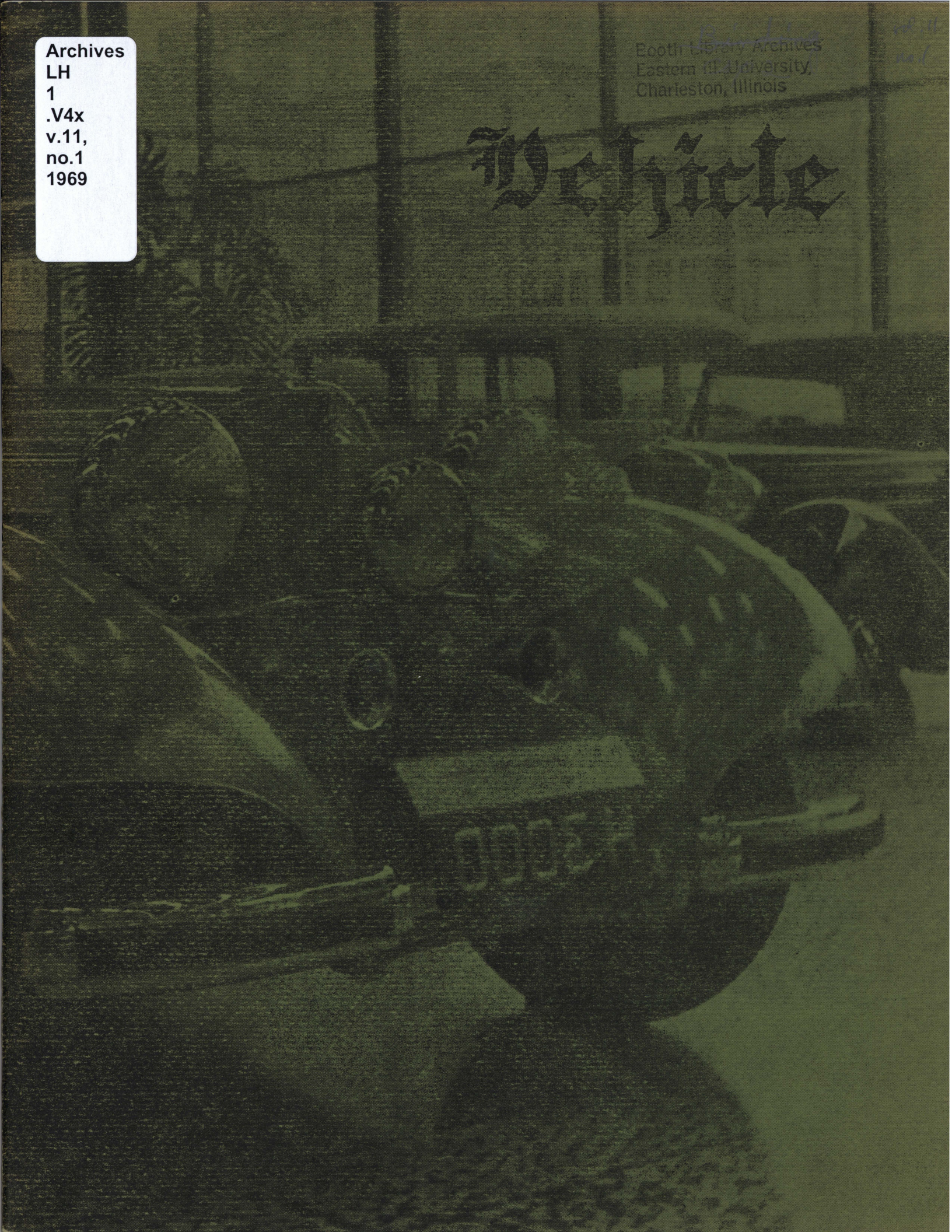
**Authors**

Luke, Eleanor Aiken, Thomas W. Rea, Michael G. McKee, James Jones, Charles White, and Mary Ann Spidel

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*11x17" Photo, Jeff Nelson*

10  
Vol. ~~11~~ No. 1

# Vehicle

Eastern Illinois University  
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Charleston, Illinois

Co-Editors

*James T. Jones*

*Paula Bresnan*

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PANA NEWS INC. 

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## PREFACE

A small magazine of any sort is faced with the problem of finding enough material to print and the problem of paying for what it has to print.

In "An Acre of Grass", William Butler Yeats says,

Picture and book remain,  
An acre of green grass  
For air and exercise. . .

At best our magazine can be no more.

James T. Jones

Paula Bresnan

Nick Dager



# ***The Dancing Bod***

Like doves they came a running  
Rumfring to the site  
Rumming fore the breathless  
Rumbling in the nite.

I stopped to ask them wumbling  
from where the hell they kame  
They tolled meeas they rabled on  
and I'll tell u the same.  
"We're going to a happening"  
they spake as yet thay trod  
"We're going to the Countreecide  
to watch the Dancing Bod." " " "

"The dancring bod . . . ?" I arked them  
Yes that's rite thay sed.  
She Dances for a dai or twoo.  
She dances in her hed.

And sew she soon kame interview  
A Bod with dancing limbs  
inside her hed she dranced now  
and wasn't even twins!

The croud was chirping lowdly  
Thay all chipped olde and yung  
While the DANCING BOD crept dancwing  
darwin on a rung

As I stood and watched this bod  
just dansing on and on—  
An apple dropped upon my hed.  
I lapfed and called it son.

a wauking stick come up to me  
with tuggly at my sleeve  
Sed, "yes i thank its wobberfal!"  
i only larked and sneezed.

and stil she keep on dancing  
Carrot not a care  
Dancing, Dansring, Densfling  
Dangling, my frens, on air!

(dumbly bumbly poodly dum  
bumbly fumbly dum—thank you)

*Luke*



# The Hide-Out

The old man stood up and walked from the porch into the yard. He kicked at the long grass and turned to study the front of his house. It needed paint. The porch steps sagged in the middle where the grain of the bare wood contrasted with the smoother, less worn edges. The porch, as the steps, was painted gray and it, too, was worn at the middle from the steps to the door. On one side of the door were two windows with light colored shades pulled half way down to the sills. The glaring lamps inside the house shone through the old paper shades, giving them the appearance of cracked egg shell.

He snorted and cleared his nose and throat, then spit the phlegm into the grass. He rubbed at the back of his neck where his wiry gray hair had begun to curl down over the neck of his undershirt. The legs of his gray work pants flapped as he moved across the yard toward the porch. He paused a moment to scrape some dog manure from the sole of his shoe onto the side of the step, where it clung for a second before it dropped to the ground.

Stifling a belch, he stooped to pick up a rake, then followed the walk that led around the side of the house. He had constructed the walk himself from empty bottles set bottom up in the dirt. Brown and green circles of old whiskey and wine bottles held a dull shine in the early evening light. His steps clunked as they struck the glass, sharp, hollow sounds that followed him around the side of the house. As he turned the corner, he glanced over his shoulder—at nothing.

One side of the cellar door was opened, exposing a short flight of damp cement stairs that led to a heavy wooden door. Before he entered the basement, he lifted the rake and scraped a slug from the brick foundation of the house. It left behind a faint, wet trail as the tines of the rake

peeled it from the wall. He had just finished grinding the white pulp into the grass under his shoe when a voice came from inside.

"Oh, it's just Mr. Pope," a child said. Two children appeared from behind the hot water heater. "We're hiding from Keith and Jimmy," the little girl announced.

"Does your mother know where you are?"

"Yes. We told her we were playing Hide-and-Seek. But we have to go inside when it gets dark. Boy! you sure got neat hiding places down here. Can we?" They looked at him, up at his dilating and contracting nostrils and at the holes in his knit shirt where the hairs of his chest poked through.

"Can you what," he answered.

"Can we hide down here," the boy said.

"I suppose so, but be careful. Don't move or break anything." The two children looked at each other, jumping excitedly, then ran to find a place to hide.

Omar Pope put the rake in the corner. As his shoulder brushed the light bulb suspended from a long cord, the ragged circle of light on the brick floor swung back and forth. His shadow on the wall grew and diminished in the swaying light. He climbed the squeaking wooden stairs to the kitchen and washed his hands carefully with Castile soap and water at the sink. He tossed the dish towel, gray with dampness, on the rack, then opened the cupboard. He brought out a brown bottle of Jack Daniels and poured into a glass tumbler that stood on the table. Standing, he swallowed part of it, then sat down on a straight-backed kitchen chair.

He pulled a small muslin bag out of his pocket and loosened the yellow stringed closing. Holding a strip of cigarette paper be-

tween two fingers, he sprinkled shreds of tobacco along its length. He completed the process of rolling and tamping the cigarette and lighted it. He slouched down in his chair, drained his drink, and poured it half full again. His lower teeth hit the rim of the glass and he winced as he swallowed the last gulp. He sat there, ankles crossed, the palm of his right hand cradling the elbow of the left arm, staring absently at his abdomen which bulged slightly over the waist of his trousers. Suddenly, his hand tensed fiercely around his empty glass and he set it quickly on the table as his free hand brushed a shred of tobacco off the front of his shirt. He toyed with a white button before he rebuttoned it into the stretched out placket. From the back yard came two voices.

"They must have already gone home," one said.

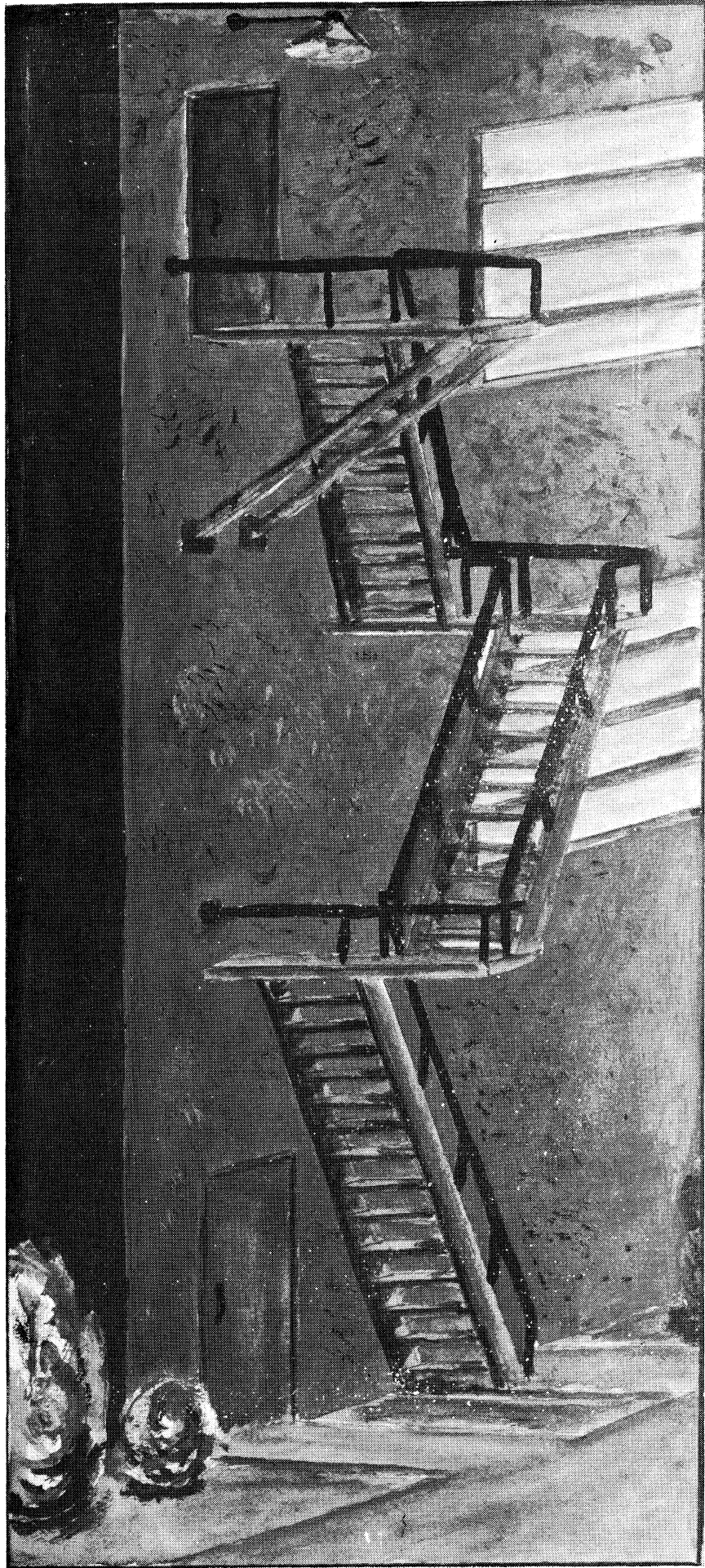
"Yeah, it's getting dark and I have to go in, too," said the other. "Our porch light is on. We'll play again tomorrow."

Omar Pope opened his mouth, then closed it quickly and belched softly. He walked stiffly toward the stairwell. Cool, damp air stirred in the draft between the kitchen door and the opened, outside door of the cellar. It carried the pungent odor of old books and damp wood, tinged with the smell of mildew.

The stairs creaked as he stepped on them and he heard the muffled giggles and the soft scuffling of the two hiding children. He took a breath and stopped on the steps, resting his hand on the wobbling railing. Then it was quiet.

An old rocking chair, a bureau with a dust streaked mirror, and a table filled one corner. Stacked pasteboard boxes stood nearby. Boxes of china dishes, straight-backed chairs, a round oak dining table, an empty bookcase, a

(Continued from Page 8)



*Lawrence  
Unfried*

(Continued from Page 6)

glass kerosene lamp, and a wicker hamper filled the space along one wall. Everything was thinly veiled with dust. Headboards for three different beds of walnut and maple leaned against a heavy chest-of-drawers. On top of it stood a rusted metal bird cage.

The cellar was packed with odds and ends of furnishings. Some of it was antique. And some of it was 'worthless junk' as Mrs. Moffel, his neighbor, called his collection of furniture. Still, antique collectors often inquired his asking price for some of the pieces. They all received the same answer: they were welcome to come and look around. He wasn't hiding anything, but he didn't believe that he wanted to sell anything, yet.

The children of bargain hunting women were fascinated with the cubbyholes and tunnels in the jumbled maze of furniture. But he was better known among them for the supply of cookies and penny candy he kept for visiting children. He had even hung a swing in an oak tree in his back yard for them. Every child ought to have a swing, he had said. And his was the only tree on the block large enough for a swing. They used the swing often and sometimes brought items from their mothers for repairs.

The old man spent a lot of time in his basement, repairing household equipment and mending additional source of income to his monthly social security check. ing furniture, which served as an

As he stood on the steps, half way between the top and the bottom, the children hushed and he scanned the room for them. A thump came from a large, round topped trunk that stood under a tiny window high on the brick wall. In years past, it had been used as a closet for clothing and blankets.

His hand tightened on the railing. The knuckles of his left hand were pale knots, covered by taut flesh. Blue veins stood up under the nearly transparent skin that always held a certain

shininess. His fingers, curled tightly around the wooden rail, were slender, knobby jointed, and unringed.

The shallow, rapid sounds of his breathing expanded and filled the cellar, as he watched himself take a step, then walking faster, gliding, floating almost, toward the old leather trunk. The air had become humid and stagnant. The children quieted again, then thumped and scuffled with laughter that became shrieks and wails as they tried to open the lid of the trunk. Behind it, the brick walls were damp and glossy with moisture.

Bumping, pounding, and crying, they screamed for help. Pope, a vision with folded hands, gazed out of the window at ground level into the grass that waved in a breeze. His eyes were half closed and glazed over a faint, thin lipped smile. They were round, without pupils, and yellow like the globes on the street lamps. The children screamed and shouted and pounded. He didn't hear them, but he felt their struggles through his toes that touched the side of the trunk. It was growing smaller, shrinking in all dimensions, exuding twinkling sparks of light and an odor of something like crushed dandelions and lilacs. It rapidly grew smaller until all that remained was a tiny oriental music box which he held in one hand. But no, he wouldn't open it, couldn't open it.

Then it was cool again. The walls were dry and dusty behind the silent trunk. The old man clenched his fingers tighter around the wooden rail. The muscles stood up in his forearms and the railing shook and trembled as he stood frozen on the steps. The light hurt his eyes as he stared into the swaying bulb. The draft of night air was cold as it came through the open door. The soft shuffling and giggling muffled by the trunk filled the cellar, then receded. They were laughing and hushing one another, not screaming or crying.

He stopped trembling and released the rail, his hand im-

printed with the rough grained texture of the wood. He rubbed at the marks with his other hand, massaged the back of his neck, then pushed the damp, gray hair from his forehead with the heel of his hand. He blinked his eyes into focus and rubbed his palm on the legs of his trousers. He walked down the remaining steps and came to a stop on the last.

"Beth, John, you kids come on out of there," he said and shoved his fists in his pockets. The trunk opened and the two children climbed out.

"They didn't find us," Beth said.

"No, but Mom's going to be mad if we don't get home. It's dark," John said.

"You kids better get on home. Hear me? And don't ever get in that trunk again. You kids stay out of there. Hear me?" They nodded and ran, hurrying up the cellar steps into the back yard.

Pope turned the light off and returned to the kitchen. He washed his hands with Castile soap and poured another drink.

As he sat in the front room of his house, he stared out of the window into the yard, dark in front of the light colored cubes of new houses around it. The room was unlighted and the shades of both windows were rolled up. He listened to the guttural noises of the nesting pigeons and to the sound of the wind high in the trees that scraped the leaves and branches against the side of the house. Somewhere outside bells hollowly clanged the hour. Eight o'clock.

He picked up his soft leather jodpurs and placed them beside the chair. He pushed himself up out of the soft, upholstered chair and walked in his stocking feet to the telephone.

"McGregor? . . . this is Omar Pope . . . Yes, I have . . . You can send those folks over to look at the place. I'm ready to sell."

*Eleanor Aiken*

The rain began with a deafening roar!  
 Like a startling crash it sounded its compulsive call  
 To some primeaval man in me,  
 And I rushed out wonder-struck in the night enclosed  
 Blackness of my cavelike porch.  
 I stood alone and fearless in wet darkness,  
 My face and hands again and again electrified white  
 By startling blue-white gashes of lightning  
 That tore the black seams of the midnight sky in crashing  
 fragments.  
 Soon the angry thunder passed and then began  
 The sound of the satisfying rain.  
 I sucked in its coolness, felt the prickles of wet pinpoints  
 Rising in the humming air to kiss my night drugged face and eyes.  
 I caught its incessant beating in my primitive heart.  
 Rain, rain, everywhere—pouring and flooding!  
 What a torrent! What a sound! A springtime downpour!  
 Billions, quadrillions of tiny splashes making a momentous roar  
 That ebbed and flowed and sung with a rhythm of its own.  
 What mysterious whispering and old primordial secrets spoke in that  
 pounding beat  
 My civilized man could only guess:  
 Something about springtime and new life it seemed to say;  
 Something about waking winter's sleepers . . .  
 Something prehistoric about the birth of life in water . . .  
 A moan of purification and purging . . .  
 A whine of prayer, a chanting of rain dances  
 And sobbing tears and joyfully prayers answered . . .  
 If I could but tell what I have heard this night  
 In the ceaseless beating, beating, pounding, plunging symphony of  
 spring rain.  
 At night, yes, and all the world asleep except for me.  
 That makes this rain my rain somehow—  
 I listen deep:  
 "What is rain? What is rain? What is rain?"  
 The tossing wet branches murmur.  
 Rain is sound and smell and taste and the drama  
 Of raindrops falling, splashing in puddles,  
 Beating a pounding submission from thirsting subjects;  
 Rain is a whirling, a thrashing,  
 Swishing voices of leaves and swaying branches;  
 Restless for the great expansive sea of oceans.  
  
 The rhythm slackens to a quiet murmur  
 That speaks of rain as quiet grass whispering,  
 The sound of grass drinking  
 And the parched earth imbibing.  
 It's the sound of silence singing  
 And a singing in my heart, standing here listening,  
 Watching the trees droop and fling out again for more.  
 Rain's a feeling about me, here seeing,  
 Me, here feeling the pulse of eons of time;  
 Hearing the ancient story of the lush green planet Earth  
 And smelling the purity of the washed stratosphere  
 As I dance rain-drunk in the barefoot grass.  
 Me alive! Yes! Mad for life!  
 In love with living! Yes!  
 Oh rain, rain beat on and on and on!  
 Never, never let this intoxicating music stop!  
 Go on and on for me forever rain!  
 Come on rain! I hear what you tell me,  
 Yes, you know I'm alive!

*Thomas W. Rea*

# **Rain-Drunk Midnight Mania**

# What I'm Supposed To Say About War

Bend she by the body  
Weep she weep,  
Childless now  
As the barren maiden  
From the death beneath her bosom.  
Weep she weep  
She has no yesterday,  
She lost her legacy  
For a green fuse epitaph.  
Weep she weep for the flesh of her,  
The life of her,  
The death of her.  
Bend she by the body  
Weep she weep,  
She touch  
She see  
Her waning warm  
Her still dark blood.  
She hear naught.  
Weep she by the body  
In the dust of dusk  
With tears clear as time  
Whos marrow emptied on the ground  
Beneath her eyes.  
Weep she by her pride,  
Her duty,  
Her son.  
Weep she well  
For great wars wax  
In the red dust  
Beneath her bosom.

*Michael G. McKee*

## *Sinking Lashes*

A tear stained world came  
Dancing down around and down  
From my love's sad eyes.

## *Candle*

I watch the melting  
Wax and follow the dripping  
Tragedy of time.

## *Nervous Chaperone*

We laugh on the grass  
While the moon lusts and fidgets  
At her silver crown.

## *Formless Beauty Left to Dry*

I saw a napkin  
Drenched by the slight of hand of  
A fat, pink barmaid.

## *Masquerade*

While we live fooling  
The dark, our eyes betray masks  
And speak flashing words.

*Thomas W. Rea*

# MAD JOHN

It had been fun thought the bush; fun to believe in communication and lose yourself in the excitement of it. For once to forget death in the knowledge of some real happiness. To escape the gnawing hunger of the reaper's scythe in a moment's transcendent intercourse. To tap, ecstatic, with leather heels on bar rail. To witness the friend's transfiguration into white snow and hold the dead living hand of Joshua. To forget.

But illusions shatter themselves as bushes often part their (sometimes flaming) branches to reveal the true identity of their minds. In this particular scene parting twigs were merely the entrance of a universe. On an erosion-balding hill commanding a hundred acres of pasture and creek bed a man set up house-keeping in a bush. And, being very apt at improvisation had devised ways to keep out the rain and cold, insulate against the wind and had, in fact, made a comfortable dwelling out of some otherwise unknown species of bush.

John now knew this shrub as his only home. He vaguely recalled other environments, but of homes, no other existed. Very raw job, he thought, reflecting upon his domestic situation. But what can one do without help or reasonably good tools? Not much better than this, I'll wager. He was proud that he had always been able to do what he wanted without any help from any of those other abominable creatures

to which he bore only surface resemblance.

His proudest possession was the knowledge that he was independent. He knew that he had attained a degree of solitude which comes after all communication has ceased, when the mind is freed from non-essentials; that separation of mind and body which so few men even admit to exist. The conjecture and goal of mystics had become John's daily routine. He reveled in it.

He was only slightly sorry that he almost never had to exercise any willpower to maintain his status quo. He had had several encounters with other humans, but none of them seemed to have been very formidable tests of his constancy. For the most part, people were so shocked when a very unobtrusive bush yielded up such an outrageous fruit, any attempt to break the barrier that John enforced was really a secondary attempt to relieve the initial surprise of the communicant and to restore him to a reasonable state of security.

When these incidents had passed, however, John did not feel strengthened in the least by them. The people simply fell off smallest satisfaction of a memorthe earth without leaving the able success behind them.

John was never depressed by the encounters, but rather only slightly confused because his ability was not confirmed. And so he met the awareness of another human presence with rela-

tive complacency, with little expectation.

His presentiment gave way to a soft humming; the tune on a woman's voice dredged up old anxieties without explanation. Pushing aside a few outer leaves, he saw her: non-descript but clothed in the countryside, which made her beautiful. At the rustle of leaves she turned hesitantly as if distracted. Fearlessly she looked at John's eyes; a glance calculated to pierce, penetrate, defile and destroy his being.

With a tenderness that nearly melted him she gazed intently at his soul, bared in freedom for the moment of trial; but in an effortless instant John summoned the supreme effort of consciousness. The struggle was a passing moment, incomprehensible in its presence, then, giving way to the endless succession of events, was lost in the immensity of meaninglessness and total meaning. He had conquered himself.

John awoke with night pressing his back into sweat-damp dust. The faint had cleared the air. He felt his knee bend and his leg draw up beneath him; the ground sank six feet. His universe was mindlessly empty. Obscure landscape was dimmed by the neon-haze illumination of a town, creeping twelve miles away. Dewy leaves made a mute attempt to rustle when John's body pushed them aside as he returned to the bush.

*James Jones*

# Black Racist

In a television interview on the evening of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Whitney Young, chairman of the Urban League, stated that "Stokely Carmichael's followers consist of fifty Negroes and five thousand white reporters." If one could accept statement of wishful thinking as literal truth, black poet-playwright LeRoi Jones would still be included in the faithful fifty. He is in earnest when he says that the Negro will not be free in the world "unless the white man/is dead." Nevertheless Jones's poetry goes beyond racism to a universal comment and retains an appeal which transcends skin color. I tend to see this appeal as a convocation of those who share his "thought color," those people who sympathize enough to feel the bitter reaction of his work and his psychology of the objectively inferior position.

It is not easy, by any means, for a white person to accept a philosophy which is sworn to the outright destruction of his social status, for it necessitates an evocation of compassion on some higher level, higher than a man's value for his way of living. It is this aesthetic sensitivity that Jones's poems call to witness, so much so that the reader who allows himself to sympathize, to feel black, cannot care that the words he is reading are threats to his white society. To me this is nearly an ultimate achievement in personal poetic gravitation.

LeRoi Jones has a gripe with society. He was convicted of possession of firearms and inciting to riot, and, by the statement of the judge, his sentence was stiffened considerably because of a poem published in the December 1967 *Evergreen Review*:

"All the stores will open if  
you/ say the magic words.

The magic words are: up  
against the wall mother/  
fucker this is a stick up!  
. . . Run up and down Broad/  
Street niggers, take the shit  
you want. . . We must make  
our own/ World, man, our  
own world, and we cannot do  
this unless the white man/  
is dead."

For the possession of two .32 caliber pistols and two poems (says Jones) he was sentenced to two-and-a-half to three years in jail and fined one thousand dollars. His point, and to an extent, the meaning behind his poetry, is well conveyed by an exchange between himself and the judge: after lecturing on the implications of his writing, the magistrate concluded: "You are sick." "Not as sick as you," came the reply.

Jones's more recent themes of racism are built on an adequate structure of social commentary, thereby rendering them more inclusive than if they were taken individually at face value. It seems that this man's efforts have accompanied the convulsion of the Negro race in their prime movement to discover a foundation on which to build their rightfully deserved place in society. His writing cannot, and ought not, to be separated from the evolution of the fight for civil rights and the identity of the Afro-American culture.

"We *are* foreign seeming  
persons. Hats flopped to the  
sun/ can't scald our beards;  
odd shoes, bags of books &  
chicken./ We have come a  
long way, & are uncertain  
which of the masks/ is cool"

He is continually manifesting his wonderment at the plurality of causes for the Negro condition, but also, the shape of everybody's world today. At times he departs from social critique to invent metaphoric causality in the relationships of his poems; he wants to know why he is black, and why he can feel both black and white. He questions, decides, asserts:

"Who knows what evil lurks  
in the hearts of men? The  
Shadow knows!

O, yes he does  
O, yes he does  
An evil word it is,  
This love."

Because of his social comment, I feel certain that LeRoi Jones has not cynicized or pessimized his role. The fact that he is still questioning his environment indicates to me that he believes that society is still living and that it can be modified to provide equity for presently second class citizens. It is this possibility for change in the establishment that allows me to feel empathy with Jones. If our situation were fixed and immutable, there would be no hope for poets, no reason to cry out in the desert.

Jones's self-view is a look at the inseparability of the poem and the poet, the search for identity in statement of thought. In an essay called "How You Sound?" he says, "MY POETRY is whatever I think I am . . . I CAN BE ANYTHING I CAN." His writing is the selection of the valuable from amid the garbage of living. The complete collection of his poems should equal the diary of his life in thought. His works are the rendering of himself as much as of his experience. He exposes his soul so that he may better grasp its significance.

This underlying credo will determine Jones's future as a poet. If he isolates his poetry in the experience with which it deals, then he ceases to be a poet by his own definition. When his writing becomes *only* black or racist or LeRoi talking, then it no longer pertains to the realm of poetry, but to the never-never land of personally and socially dissociated thought. In a word, it becomes meaningless. However, if he continues to exhibit himself as a man in a given situation (which is probably more difficult than the other alternative), then he will not be able LeRoi Jones alone, but he will have to feel as every man feels, he will be universally sensitive.

"ALL are a poetry, &  
nothing moves (with any  
grace) pried apart from

(Continued on Page 19)





# The Real Jonathan T. Willwick

It won't let go of my brain  
I feel it tingling inside me.  
I am pulsing to the beat of the drum  
And the tambourine.  
I am there,  
Dancing with those with the long oily hair  
And the sleeveless fur jackets  
And the pink striped slacks  
And the thigh high skirts  
And the "Draft beer not students" on the backs  
Of their sweaty blue work shirts.  
I am dancing with them there,  
But I remain here in this room  
That is silent and bare,  
A tomb of my own making.

The sound is part of me.  
I feel it as well as hear it.  
Why can't I break from this cell  
And go there and be myself?  
For I am one of them,  
If only in spirit.  
But do I dare?  
And do I dare?

Those people by the green Oldsmobile  
Are staring straight at me.  
They think my hair is ugly  
And my beard disgraceful.  
My dirty T-shirt and my khaki jacket,  
My string of clay beads and my sandals  
They find distasteful.  
They peer at me with contempt.  
Everywhere I turn  
People stare at me.  
My face must be burning.  
I can't return their stares.  
I can't even look at them.  
Why must I care  
What they think of me?  
Why do I care?  
Oh, I wish this pavement would open up  
And swallow me whole.  
Anything to escape this crucifixion.

"Jesus calls us, o'er the tumult  
Of our life's wild, restless sea."

"Long hair on boys is quite ugly, I think,  
And beards are awful disgraces.  
Their clothes are just filthy, their bodies they stink.  
How do they bear showing their faces?  
Conformity in our thinking,  
Uniformity in our dress,  
Else the ship is rapidly sinking,  
And the country's in a big mess.  
What's that, my dear Mrs. Dundee?  
Oh, no, now if all were like me,  
We'd have a dull world, wouldn't we?"

I am locked here  
In this sombre cell,  
Where the sounds of silence  
Echo off the stone-cold walls.  
I am locked here  
With myself, and yet I know well  
That I am the jailer,  
As well as the jailed.

I long to free myself  
From the chains of my fear.  
Only how shall I begin?  
And do I dare?  
The girl with the long brown hair  
(She was the mistress, so I'm told,  
Of the one-eyed guitarist-poet)  
Offered me a bite of her orange one day.  
It looked like a sweet juicy orange,  
And her eyes looking at mine  
Were bright and gay  
And oh so inviting.  
But "No thank you," I said.  
I couldn't take a bite  
Of her orange.

"My boy, we are quite proud of you,  
Your actions are noble and true.  
Your faith is quite strong,  
You'll not be led wrong  
By those who lack proper virtue."

"Jesus calls us, o'er the tumult  
Of our life's wild, restless sea."

I feel a claw down inside me.  
It's going to tear itself out of my body.  
I can't stand the emptiness of this room.  
Why won't my hand reach for the door knob?

"God bless America,  
Land that I love."

I hear them.  
They are calling at me  
With ugly voices.  
"Anarchy!"  
"Insurgency!"  
"Communism!"  
"Agnosticism!"  
I can't stand their hateful shouts,  
But my own cry is ugly too.  
How shall I spit out  
Such a bitter taste of hypocrisy?  
Is there any cure for weakness?  
How shall I begin?

My bones ache,  
But the warm water is soothing.  
She sits on the edge of the tub,  
And she rubs  
My back and my shoulders.  
As she leans over  
To pick up the soap,  
Her naked nipple touches my arm.  
She holds a cloth above me  
And squeezes water onto my head.  
It trickles over my eyes,  
Across my mouth, down my chin,  
Warm and wet.

"My boy, we are quite proud of you,  
Your actions are noble and true."

The girl with the long brown hair  
(I don't care that she's his mistress)  
Offered me a bite of her orange one day.  
But "No thank you," I said.  
I couldn't even take a bite  
Of her orange.

*Charles White*

It was Sunday, the third day of a new year. The family was sitting at the dinner table, eating dessert. Christmas vacation was almost over for Walt and Sandy. Walt was to leave later that afternoon for college, and Sandy was to go back to high school the next day. Neither was looking forward to the return.

"Mainly because I've got to work on that history paper that I didn't get finished while I was home on vacation," Walt said.

"Well, you'd better get on the ball and get your work done like you're supposed to," his mother said, "instead of running around with your friends so much."

"Mother, I'll get it done. I've got plenty of time." Walt knew that she was only half serious, but her gentle reprimands irritated him sometimes.

"You'll probably be too busy with Ruth," Sandy teased. Walt had first told them about Ruth when he was home for Thanksgiving. He smiled at this mention of her name, but he said nothing for a couple of minutes. When he did speak, the smile was gone from his face.

"I've been meaning to tell you something about Ruth," he began.

"What?" Sandy demanded. "Are you engaged?"

"No," Walt chuckled in spite of himself. Then soberly, he said, "I've put off telling you because I know you won't like it. And besides, I figured we probably wouldn't be going together very long, and I wouldn't need to tell you."

"Tell us what?" Sandy asked.

". . . Well, Ruth . . . she . . . she's . . ."

"Pregnant?" Sandy asked.

"No! Of course not. No, she's . . ."

"A nigger?"

"Sandy! Now, what are you trying to say, Walt?"

". . . Mother, Sandy may have been joking, but she's right. Ruth is a Negro."



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ANFIELD

## A Cold Afternoon In January

Walt's father dropped his spoon loudly into his dish. "A nigger? For God's sake, what is the matter with you?"

"I was afraid of this."

"Well, what did you expect? You come home and tell me you've been dating a damn nigger for what—two or three months now? What the hell do you expect? Now you listen to me! I don't want you to see her ever again! Understand? Just stay away from her! For God's sake! My son with a damn nigger! . . . For God's sake!" He got up and stormed out of the kitchen into the living room.

"Excuse me," Walt said, and he too left the table. He went into his bedroom and closed the door. For about an hour he lay on his bed, listening to his mother and sister cleaning up and washing the dishes. Not long after they had finished, he heard a quiet knocking on his door.

"Yeah," he answered softly. The door opened slowly. It was

his mother, as he knew it would be.

"Mind if I come in?"

He sat up, but he said nothing. His mother entered and shut the door behind her. She sat on the bed a little way from him. He did not look at her.

"I'm sorry that your father blew up in front of you like he did, but please try to be understanding. And I hope you'll be able to forgive him, Walt. Like I've told you before, he got it from his parents. They both hated Negroes. And I guess maybe they had a pretty good reason. I don't think I ever told you." She paused, and Walt knew that she was waiting for him to show that he wanted her to continue.

"What was it?"

"Well, to begin with, they both came from Alabama. But what really turned them against Negroes was something that happened after they moved north. The way your father tells it, two

Negro men knocked on the door and asked your grandmother if they could do some work so they could get a meal and spend the night on the back porch. She said she didn't have anything for them to do, and they left. But that night their barn burned to the ground. Naturally, they assumed that the two Negroes did it. Of course, this was before your father was born, but it still had a big effect on him. So I don't think you should lay too much blame on him. Just try to understand, Walt."

"That's reason to hate two Negroes, not all Negroes."

"Maybe so, but let me ask you this. Why wouldn't you play baseball for so many years?"

"Because— All right, I see your point."

"Because you got hit in the face with a bat when you were little. It only takes one bad experience, doesn't it?" After a moment of silence, she went on. "I was lucky. Neither of my parents hated Negroes, so naturally I wasn't brought up to hate them either . . . Walt, please try to understand your father." She reached out and put her hand on his shoulder. He did not act as if he felt it. She withdrew it. When she spoke again, there was a note of anxiety in her voice. "Walt, why did you think you had to tell us?"

"I don't know."

"Oh, surely you have some idea. You must have thought it pretty necessary to tell us. Otherwise you would have avoided a scene. And surely you knew there'd be a scene."

"I don't know. I just thought I should tell you."

"Well, thank you, Walt. I appreciate your wanting to be open with us. But— Walt, are you and Ruth pretty serious about each other?" He looked over at her as if he had hardly heard her question. He did not answer. "How did you meet her?"

"Through a friend."

"Oh. Why did you— Now, don't get me wrong if I ask you this. What made you decide to

ask her for a date the first time you asked her? I mean, you must have had a pretty special reason, since she is a Negro."

"She seemed like a nice girl. I thought she'd be lots of fun."

". . . Is that all it was? You must have met lots of nice girls that would have been fun to be with. But not Negroes. Do you see what I'm getting at, Walt? Why a Negro? You said at dinner that you didn't think it would last long. Then why did you decide to invite trouble in the first place? I'm not saying you did wrong, but— Well, why did you, Walt?"

"Mother, to be completely honest, I'm not sure. But I think I have a pretty good idea. I— All through high school, I tried to be what everybody thought I was—a good boy who does what he's supposed to do. I was almost afraid to be anything else. And it's been about the same in college. Take long hair, for instance. Now, don't get excited, but sometimes I think I'd kind of like to let my hair grow out some. But I just can't do it because of what certain people would think. See what I mean? I've always been—well, sort of conventional, and I'm tired of it. Because I don't feel like I'm really that conventional."

"I see. I didn't know you felt that way."

"Of course you didn't. Nobody else does either."

"But what exactly does letting your hair grow have to do with Ruth?"

"Nothing. But dating a Negro is something you're not supposed to do. It was a way for me to be— well, unconventional. I wanted to do something that people would disapprove of."

"Is that the only reason you had for dating her?"

"Of course not. Well, I don't know. I'm not sure. But that isn't the reason now."

"Then you are pretty serious?" Walt turned away. "Are you, Walt?"

"Well, not like you mean. We're not engaged or anything."

"Oh."

"But that's not saying— Mother, I like her a lot, and I think she likes me. At least she says she does. Like I said, I didn't expect it to turn out like this. But— Well, I don't know what—"

"You don't know where it might end?"

". . . No. . . No, I don't."

"Walt, have you given this much thought?"

"Of course I have."

"I mean, have you considered the consequences of— Do you know what it would be like for you if you and Ruth got married?"

"Mother, aren't you being a little—"

"I know, but isn't it a possibility?"

". . . Yes. I think so."

"Well, do you know what it'd be like?"

"I know. It'd be rough."

"But do you have any idea how rough? I don't think you've ever seen white people that were really showing their hate. You haven't seen it here in Franklinville because we don't have any Negroes here. I don't think you know how bad it can be. I know you've seen a little of it in your father, but very little. And while we're talking about him, I'm afraid that he would practically disown you if you married a colored girl. You may not think your family is too important now, but you might someday. I don't think you'd ever be able to come home here again if you married Ruth. A least not with her, you wouldn't. I might be wrong. He might change. But I doubt it." Walt was looking at the floor. "And what about her family? They may feel the same as your father."

"You want me to stop seeing Ruth, don't you?"

". . . Not exactly, Walt. I want what's best for you."

"And you think it's best if I

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stop seeing Ruth. Is that it?"

"Walt, I can't tell you that. You've got to decide for yourself. I just want to be sure that you know what you might be getting into. There are millions of people who hate Negroes with a passion. And if you marry a Negro, they'll hate you too. And if you have any children, Walt, they'll be rejected by both races."

"Mother, I know all that."

"Well, is that what you want?"

"No. But if Ruth and I . . . if we decide we love each other and want to get married—I know it'd be rough, but don't we owe it to ourselves to . . . to—"

"To make the sacrifice?"

"All right. To make the sacrifice? And besides, don't you think that maybe if more people would make the sacrifice, people like Dad would kind of get used to it? I don't mean right away, but maybe after a while there'd be a little less hate."

". . . Maybe . . . maybe. It's a lovely dream. And I'm proud of you for dreaming it and for wanting to be part of it. But Walt, I'm afraid it's a long way in the future."

"Mother, are you against interracial marriages?"

". . . Not necessarily."

"When aren't you?"

"Walt, I just don't want to see you spoil your chances for a happy life by marrying a colored girl. You may think now you want people to disapprove of you, but will you want them to all your life?" Walt's mouth opened as if to speak, but no words came. He lowered his eyes and turned away. He stared at the floor, hardly seeing it. "That's a long time, Walt. What if in a few years you don't want to be different any more? What can you do then? Divorce her? That's not as easy as getting a haircut."

"No," he said in a whisper.

"Do you remember several years ago when Finleys had the Philippine girl staying with them? I don't suppose you know this, but they got an awful lot of ugly, threatening phonecalls because of her. And her skin wasn't even very dark. Walt, are you listening to me?"

"Yes."

"I hate to have to be in the position I'm in, but I want to be sure that you know what you're in for if you go ahead the way you are with Ruth. I won't forbid you to see her, like your father did. I'm sorry that he yelled at you, but maybe in a

way it's good that he did. Maybe it'll give you an idea of what it could be like. I hope you'll give the matter a lot of serious thought. Will you, Walt?"

"Yeah."

"And whatever you decide will be all right with me. Like I said, I only want what's best for you. Oh, heavens! I didn't know it was getting so late. We'll have to be taking you back pretty soon. Are you all packed and ready?"

"Mm." He was still looking at the floor. His mother watched him for a moment and then went out.

Darkness was not many minutes away when Walt got out of the car with his suitcase and an armload of books. The winter sky was gray as a marble tombstone. The wind was sharp and cold. The old campus trees stood black and bare, their roots thrust into the frozen ground. There was no snow.

The car was gone now, and Walt stood alone looking up at the old four-story dormitory. It seemed strangely formidable. Its gray stone walls seemed unusually cold. Even the bright yellow lights in the windows seemed uninviting.

## Impression

I sit upon my bed  
To wait for time  
And pull long loose threads  
From the spread  
And twist them  
Into soft round balls,  
And the balls grow larger,  
And the night grows longer.

*Michael G. McKee*

# The Hunter

Goaded by lust of blood  
He crashes through the growth: now left, now right,  
And sightless the cold grey probe of leaden death  
Is thrust like a query before him  
Into the pulsating bush.  
Leaves whisper to him of unwritten laws  
Conceived in light in tops of trees  
To balance the life that courses below;  
Each shape that moves has its own defense.  
He does not hear.  
Birds, plashes of color against the green shimmer,  
Are watchful and mute.  
Sudden in time  
It seems that the sun leaps speckled upon him,  
Flashing yet melting slow ribbons of gold.  
The echoes are enormous where he falls;  
They ripple outward from scarlet.  
It is quietest where he lies.  
His eyes, the idol retreating before their stare  
And the homage of eons of spectator birds,  
Roll upward for ever toward vengeful palms  
That shut out and shut out the sky.  
In silence the jungle rejoices.

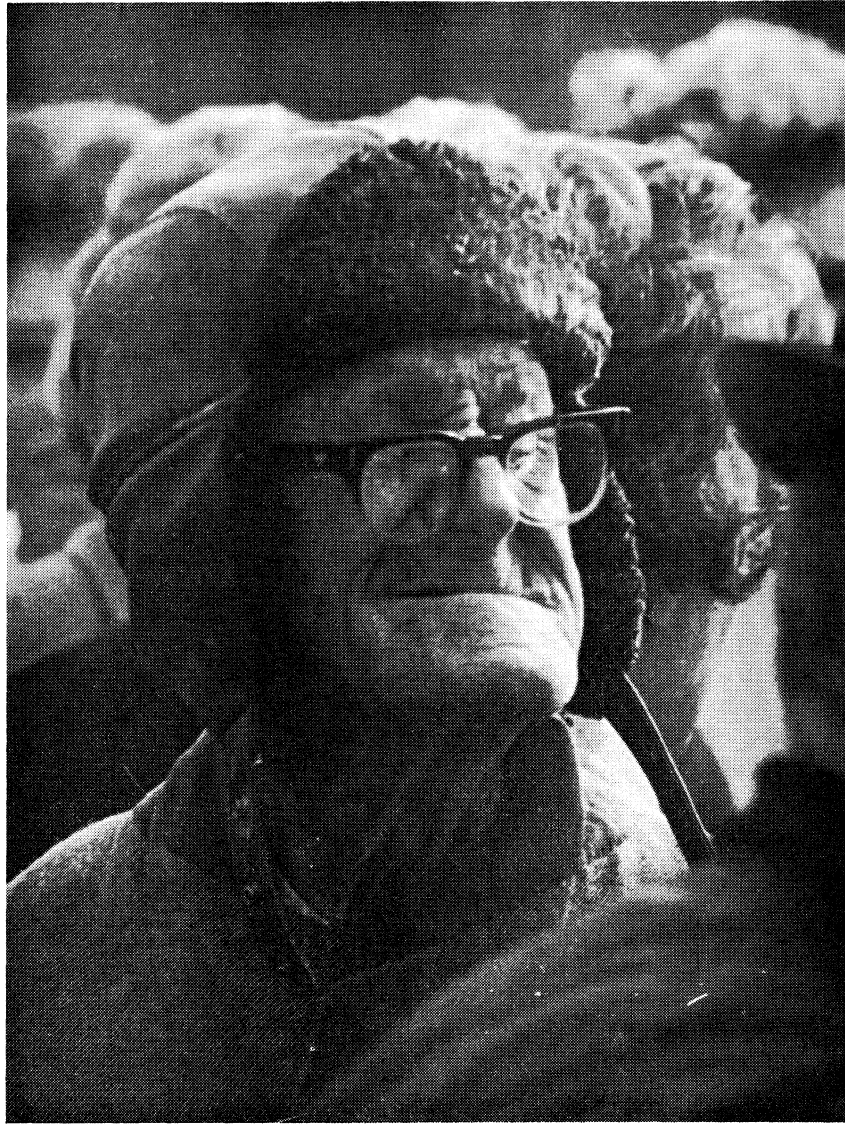
*Mary Ann Spidel*

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## Black Racist

these things. There cannot  
be closet poetry. Unless the  
closet be as wide as God's  
eye."

If he will be *only* a follower of  
Stokely Carmichael, he will con-  
demn himself to execution as a  
poet. There will be no co-exist-  
ence. —James Jones



This is for the old men  
Who are old today  
As all great things  
Are lesser in their time,  
And for the young men too;  
For even marble melts  
Into the rivers and the seas,  
And the plains are dust  
Of dead, great peaks  
Who gave their grace to grass  
And animals that crawl.  
This is for the falling men  
Who need not regret  
The consequence of time—  
Who live as red suns cool  
And atoms burst;  
So what is there to say  
To make the old men sad,  
And this is for the reverence due.

*Michael G. McKee*

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