

The American Inferno

The sun is beginning to set and the oncoming dusk seems all too dark and hazy. The twilight of every society is potentially threatening and its prevailing darkness rests, whether we want to realize it or not, on the minds of all its individuals. Our various styles of life which are manifested as the amalgam of our basic desires and society's values, are curiously powerful in their interreaction and their impact on society. We should agree on the axiom that whether we are actors on the stage of life or not, our thoughts and deeds are the very fiber of the concept "society." The energy inherent in our apathy or our concern will both permeate and influence the direction of our society.

I wonder if our society has not become too forlorn. If this statement is true, we ought to study our social face and where required lift it. If there is disagreement, I ask only that tolerance be given to what I am writing.

If our society has lost its direction we should analyze the cause of this social infection. In order to find the cause it would be necessary to examine the different strata of our society. I would like to introduce a superficial analysis of our society by inspecting (the different strata) its various characteristics. I have placed the characteristics in the concentric circles of Dante's Inferno with each circle representing a different social section.

"Midway this way of life we are bound upon,
I woke to find myself in a dark wood,
Where the right road was wholly lost and gone."

The inner circle of society's inferno is inhabited by the workers; so great in number and so indigenous to all societies. They stand as the innermost crust in our social inferno due to a contribution that is the matrix of our continuity. Their situation has constantly changed; the machine once servile to man now casts an awry shadow above him. Regardless of this fact, they seem possessed of the same nature. They swarm to their factories; confused and hopeful, complacent and worried, honest yet watchful. Their days are marked by the endless pressure to procure food, clothing, automobiles, and the entertainment that will fill their time on earth. When these commodities are challenged they would immediately shout for change, yet if they are plentiful their smile is endlessly present.

This circle is surrounded by its concentric brother, the soldiers. The suffering of these men has constructed the protection of our present society. They are a great force in our society; being taught that killing is a tactic, not murder, if one wears a uniform. Of this fact no person is proud, yet from their victories we sense a deep pride and from their defeats stem hidden, spiteful lament. They have won the wars and consequently they have secured our land from foreign occupation. Ironically, they must send their offspring to foreign lands to protect the past laurels of victory, yet the taste of victory was hard won—and not yet lost. They stand in naked green with the reflection of cold steel yet their faces, angelic, scarred, tearful, reflect a strong hope that their conquest will portend social peace.

The next circle is represented by our harbingers of social innovation. This circle is filled with the educators of life; the high browed yet intelligent strata of society. They spend endless hours at the podium spouting the knowledge that contributed to the construction of our present fate. They are powerful; possessed of a knowledge and experience in their lectures, yet instructing in an age of different experience and greatly needed instruction. They dot the lives of everyone; captivating a moment of our past in either a good or evil sense. They discover various directions and our past corridors of life echo with their concern and regret. They have tried, succeeded, failed, and they have left us with the message that it will soon be our turn to direct.

The next circle is the church. They are educators also yet their purpose is directed at varying intentions. They were once a revolutionary body striving to pace themselves in our society. Presently, its influence is indelible yet it has swayed from social change to social harmony. It is void of a once characteristic urgency and now we are faced with the admonitions of sin. They are sincere, hopeful, and possessed of a benevolent nature. They help us bear the frustrations and violence of life with a less painful grimace and they concern themselves with the passions and desires that could undermine our potential benevolence.

The next circle is our youth. I had intentionally hoped to place them as the outermost circle yet our obese and crippled political system has become too political. Our youth is undeniably present in some measure in every social crevice; our universities, business, and every corner of society. They exist filled with the burning knowledge that regardless of their own individual deaths they will someday be left with the responsibility of deciding a social direction. They are the expedient hope of what everyone desires; a better society. They have been mesmerized by the TV, hopeful of success, afraid to lose, possessed of different deficiencies—an odd fit to the awaiting social vacancy.

The outermost circle of this concentric circus is our ubiquitous political system. It is difficult to assay the power of this system in our bewildering inferno. It is an impenetrable mass of power whose control supposedly rests on the consent of the governed. They represent a way of life too obscure for the common man, yet too

frustrating for the challenger. They hope that they are helping and they have contributed greatly to our achievements. Mr. Nixon, Mr. Agnew—different names yet I have seen their motives all too often. They subtly rob the wealth of a nation in order to reheat the fire of a past ideological struggle. They are too powerful, too amorous. They have been overfed with the confidence of a past era and their political boundaries are indistinguishable. The pinnacle of their power is greater in strength than the base of their support. They are seemingly self-perpetuating; a force feeding on the hope of a lost era and denying the tides of social change. They are blindly refusing the statement that "You can't go home again!"

I have not listed every area of society that claims a characteristic circle. We have also been without the wisdom of a Virgil. We are vulnerable to the pressures of every social circle and in fact we could easily experience all of them. We are naked and blind; groping in a braille-like manner for some recognizable hope. We are both frail and strong in our personalities, and although it is hard to admit this fact, it is easily discerned. Individually we hope to change our situation but we are overwhelmed by our apathy. We try to turn ourselves away from our impending destruction yet our social maladies are too great. An identification with our country's actions is inevitable and we can only alter this by social change. Whether we are the soldier in Viet Nam, the educator, the student, the worker or the priest, we are in the same predicament. We are caught within a self-perpetuating system and our needed change will not come from apathy or indifference. The defects of our society are found everywhere; no person can claim innocence, yet we are responsible to decide a commitment, if any, towards our lingering social problems. If we feel weak in our actions it is due to a loss of a once promised influence that has been inculcated in our government. The present need for change will not evolve from without and our apathy can only contribute to our deeply entrenched position.

Sam Miller

Canonized

General St. Claire
really did care
who won.
High in his saddle
driving 7000 human cattle
into the inhuman battle.
The enemy line was bending
St. Claire foresaw the ending
just one last offence
and his victory would be immense.
Regrouping his forces
he counted his losses and found
only one blue clad ally,
. . . himself.
"Six thousand nine hundred ninety-nine
honorable deaths",
he proclaimed as he led his troop
over the blue and red field once
green.
Reaching the front
he found the enemy had run.
This his greatest moment,
he dismounted a black stallion and
gingerly
stepping over
the bulges,
the puddles,
the pieces,
he found a small patch of green
and planted his victory flag,
sweet victory!

Tom Magner

Nightshade's Obligato

The buzzing, lightly
trembling street lamp,
casting my shadow
thrice one night,
blinds
the orange, dawning
bright sun casting
hazy, anticipating shadows
before the sad, long
silhouettes of dusk,
and dies at the sun's
elusive noon.

Paul McNiell

If poets were a commodity which could be produced by following a certain formula, then one would have to say that Sylvia Plath was a combination of a certain amount of Emily Dickinson, intermixed with touches of Edgar Allen Poe. For Plath's composure certainly resembles the restraint, the serenity with which both of her predecessors wrote of things traditionally held to be horrible. Miss Plath has the same fascination with Death that characterizes these other two poets, and she brings the same underlying tension to her discussions of the macabre side of life. But poets cannot be created by combining certain elements, and for all the similarity between their themes, Sylvia Plath is a very different poet than either Miss Dickinson, or Poe.

Sylvia Plath's poetry as represented in her volume *Ariel* first may produce in the reader a kind of awed paralysis. One just doesn't know how to take these poems. They're clever, they're restrained, they fascinate like a cobra about to strike, slowly undulating, changing before its victim's very eyes, but most of all they challenge the reader to view the world through a glass darker than one he's ever dared look into before.

The first facet of Miss Plath's vision is that she is primarily concerned not with the centre of life, but with its marginal situations. For her life itself was one great duel with Death. Life is a vast tightrope everyone of us must walk in order to stay alive. And what most fascinated her about this tightrope was the crystal definition it gave to Death. While life was a constant blur, a vague uncertainty, Death seemed to offer complete peace. In her poem, *Tulips*, we can see just how great her desire to escape the constant challenge, the constant threat which life poses was. She says:

I didn't want any flowers, I only wanted
To lie with my hands turned up and be utterly empty.
How free it is, you have no idea how free—
The peacefulness is so big it dazes you, . . .

These lines reveal the great sensitivity she possesses, a sensitivity so refined that even the tulips are "too excitable" for her.

But another aspect of her poetry equally as impressive as the sensitivity of her perceptions is the quality of the control which she uses to describe them. An example of this superb, half-a breath, then-squeeze type of control can be seen in these lines from her poem, "Cut":

What a thrill—
My thumb instead of an onion.
The top quite gone
Except for a sort of a hinge
Of skin,
A flap like a hat,
Dead white.
Then that red plush.

Perhaps it is this control which adds to her insights the power which makes them so chilling. For her perceptions of life appear at first to be so macabre, that they seem completely devoid of reality, but slowly and strangely the images and visions of this poetess sneak up on the reader and suddenly overcome him, so that he feels he has never read anyone *more* real.

Intellectually, a reader can realize that the sensitivity of this poet is so rarefied that it borders on the insane, yet emotionally, the reader must be won over by the great control which Miss Plath uses to express her vision of life. She convinces us that the world is so much dross, heavy, slow, paralyzed. And as these lines from *Years* show, Eternity would be no different:

O God, I am not like you
In your vacuous black,
Stars stuck all over, bright stupid confetti.
Eternity bores me,
I never wanted it.

Where, then, does Miss Patch find redemption, hope, or any kind of perfection? Not illogically, the poet finds it in Death:

The woman is perfected.
Her dead
Body wears the smile of accomplishment, . . .

And unfortunately for her readers, Miss Plath took her poetry too literally. She committed suicide February 11, 1963.

Michael Rybarski

Stew

It took an old woman
to say
from her rocking chair:

"That stew ain't
no good
unless heatin' on the stove
or chillin' in the icebox.
Outside o' that
it'll just
get itself mouldy."

Paul McNeil

. . . through the magic of television
we will now witness the end of the
world.

a small white daisy
being crowded by weeds
can still smile at the son

The problem with us happy people is
that we're only funny n laughin' outside;
while thunderstorms are goin' on inside
n the louder the thunder inside the
funnier we seem outside.

Here I go again
marchin' backwards
through rusted turnstyles
toward mumbleing subways.

J. Patrick Ellis

Today Is Rain

The day before
white pidgeons would
CLASH
on the blue

Now they combine
fly around bird
dull
with the sky

I haven't the need
to feel the cold breath
which hides my sight to trees.

smile sun,
today is rain.

Gerard Egan

hope & consolation 1971

war deaths — this year's -ization +
exponentially escalating troop withdrawal
depletion configurations = successful
restoration of the geo-political balance
of objective power.

Dear:

In behalf of the Department of the Army,
I regret to inform you . . .

" . . . at least he was part of a two-week low as
opposed to last year's six-month high . . ."

Good, then I won't cry.

Neil C. McNeil

Outer Flight

The noise
of a moon shot,
trembling
around the world,
might abort
the subdued conception
of our small-time wars;

but not
the premature agony
of a mother cat,
licking the empty dust—
her litter,
silvery-metallic, space-suited
on the moon:
still, slimy with afterbirth.

Some umbilical cord
of inner space,
needed to tie
the ship to our creation;

else
flies the machine,
our grip on things
lost.

Paul McNeil

I.

Chased. Falling,
The sidewalk rips her knee skin.
The raw wound screeches,
And the chaser-devil pounces.

Like this, a government of guns
Will scrape the skin of a soul.
Then, to be free will be
To want to be left alone
To lick the scab in private.

And the artist, a skinny hemophiliac,
Won't heal even to a scab-point.
Always wound open,
Dirt will be in the blood
To infect, to agitate, to make art.

Sleeeeeeep, sleeeeeeep.
Stay asleep till twelve.
I don't care cause nobody does,
So kindly GO TO HELL!

Like this, a nothing-governed state
Will blanket us one from another.
Then, to be free will be
To "take or be taken,"
Or "Kill the alarm, don't wake me."

And the artist, a bored fatman,
Will be insulated from the truth,
As a gloved hand from the cold is.
But waste bears boredom
Bears discontentment, bears art.

III.

We are short of the truth.
The truth is in a precise society,
Where deception, the hopping frog,
Is caught and squished like a pregnant grape.
Discipline, seasoning of the soul,
Is sprinkled to assist taste.
Art, the mirror,
Is unwarped by a false motive,
But is truth made.
And the artist? A perfect Greek mesomorph.
There is no one image to give you,
No place to take you to to show you.
There is only the *feeling*, that as we are
We'll never fully climax.

Charles J. O'Neil Jr.

More or Less

Confectioner

Your more to you
Is only more if it's more than I.
And the use of your more—
To make me less, oh!

Such a shame—
You make me beat back.

And when done,
You to you will be less than I,
And you will be as dead
As you tried to make me.

Such a shame—
You are already less to me.

I must know you breathe.
If physically you leave,
Spiritual as well will.
Though growing,
I'm small still.

Till I can tell another,
Unless I be a father,
I must know you breathe.

Till this isn't my need,
Keep your living going.

Charles J. O'Neil Jr.

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As a Seed

For Existential Mariners

I got tossed wrong and
I fell to the sideland
Of a New England corn field.
While my sames grew together,
Wild hay raised me near a wall.
Those in the field jeered:
I rooted firmer.

Then the farmer came and
I'm the only stalk standing now.

Angst.
Ship sour-black, lead bird hanging,
Decks expose men dead.
The gestalt to the eye pains
As ammonia the senses stings.

Aid!
Genesis pre-built, but becoming to be.
Never now what was,
The bow is your own.

Shoot to obliterate or to wake to love.
If first wrong-shot, back pull the arrow.
Let all the world's birds breathe.
The bow is your own!

Charles J. O'Neil Jr.

Charles J. O'Neil Jr.

Thursday Night

I saw a man
in the library tonight,
who sat near to me
and proceeded to read a magazine.
He didn't sit back
on the seat like most
but sat haphly hunched on the edge
with his feet put somewhat apart.
He made all sorts of noises
as he sucked on a cough drop
and breathed loudly
thru his nostrils.
He reminded me of someone
trying to take a shit,
and reading a magazine
to help him along.

Forgive me mister
whoever you are.

Gerard Egan

Balder

As I saw the sun
winking at me from above,
I stretched towards it
my arms;
I began my dance
dating from the days of
Primitive sun-worshipping pagan tribes.

And so I felt like the Pied Piper,
disporting through
the streets of Hamlin,
followed by rats.
Or children.

Gary Bortolot

The Death of the Amerikon Achilles

Come one and all to this Arlington vault
Embracing the remains of the Amerikon Achilles.
Within, his warrior spirit abides
As the soul of his forefather in the second realm of hell.

Young Achilles once breathed of brimstone and fire
Fearlessly killing in the heat of the combat.
Weapons of war he mastered to perfection,
As great Achilles once cast his Pelian spear.

Clad in olive helm and garb, boots of ebony
Tiny trinkets adorn his green uniform.
While brandishing a gun forged of cold blue steel
Young Achilles charged across the plains of Ilion.

Death enveloped him like a shroud
Charging into the hell of battle.
Comrades and enemies fell all around,
Cardboard blown down in the wind.

The Amerikon Achilles in his frenzied charge,
Stained with human blood
Met face to face with the horseman of death
Concealed beneath the cold, clay carpet . . .

"AND THE SOUL FLUTTERING FREE OF THE LIMBS
WENT DOWN INTO DEATH'S HOUSE . . ."

The great Achilles of Homeric fame
Will be remembered for all time.
Being eulogized, all know his name,
In both ancient and modern rhyme.

Now, here lies the Amerikon Achilles
Alone, and unknown in his coffer,
Who will remember his glory and fame (or even his name)
Or anything he had to offer.

J. C. Osborne

Childhood's Dream

I lay down to sleep on the cool damp grass
as it tickles my arms, legs and feet.
Soon, in my dreams I witness
the transition.
The atmosphere presses
at my body—it's hard to breathe.
The moist verdant coolness
becomes warm, warmer, warmer . . .
I become a vapor
free in the air around me.

I melt and flow; I blend
into the universe,
as I decompose
a net of reticulum
catches me . . .
surrounds me . . .
adding to my microcosm.
As I expand I
dominate all.

After conversing with the stars,
discovering that
they are not so far away after all;
I decide that they are not
very nice people.

Gary Bortolot '73

People don't see the SUN
the MOON
They just know it's there
People don't see the shaven Rasputans
Trying to catch a subway
somewhere
They don't see the gutter man
pass right on
They don't see a siren, a scream, a paperboy's voice
pass right on
People don't see a grand central
grand no more
They don't see the pretzel man
only the pretzel
People don't see whores or flesh stores
They don't see a topless town with topless joints
They don't see the money makers all wound up
They see themselves—a world of them
Oblivious to ALL

I see
and more
Jesus, What a cornucopia of decayed fruit!

Joe Piergrossi

The wind,
the moaning, sounds
of spring wind
filled his ears
as he made the journey.

He hiked his lips
over her mountainous breasts
leaving a few red flags
where he'd been
all around them.

Down and across and around
the flat lands
where the grass
that's small and golden grew.
all on the plain
the young man roamed.

To the oasis
at the head of the valley.
and there their thirst was filled.
and replenished.
for the journey
they slept.

Gerard Egan

THREE POEMS

1. *Psalm*

He will hold me up
 if I let Him
 Carry me back
 and home
 Where I ride on
 a little pallet
 I worked up
 out of clips and straw
 If I lean back quickly
 He may let me fall
 I will catch me
 with a new way of twisting
 till I win a prize
 for falling clean and true
 and knowing all about it.
 Look to the left
 neither to the right
 The patient is resting quietly
 he will sleep either way
 leaning or falling
 Carried in that good lap
 with a treat of spoiled milk
 God do not let me go
 Take care
 it's not like turning me loose
 I've gotten used to the stairs
 no vertigo now
 But I don't know where You are
 And I walk with my feet hung down
 peddling the air with my feet
 Are You holding me tight
 meaning—am I?
 But how can I hold
 what I do not know to hold
 or to love
 where You lie in me clumsy?
 I am warm and weaker now
 Take care of me please.

2. *Nocturne: Charles Street*

Oh, my head and hands
 have wounded trees
 and little girls
 Have opened eyes of rocks
 where salt was once
 before the body shrank from love
 Small talk about Venus
 how she wont turn much
 her face burned up on the sun
 her bottom cold as books
 brought in three times a week
 and laid on the window-sill

We'll dig up Max
 and let him play for coffee
 I wonder why the walls
 wont let me love my old friend
 Johann Sebastian Adderley
 who crawls in knocking sin
 and wonder drugs and falls
 at my feet like a burglar
 We'll mention death and God
 go under kicking His Name around
 my five dry wounds

3. *Magdalene*

It was a green flask in her hand
 with a stain on it like copper
 Earth underneath
 the stain till the hot liquid
 called it to be green
 and to be a place
 where perfume could make a stand
 to sweeten somebody sometime
 He was there
 before she knew who He was
 and let her cry like a little girl
 the mascara ran a little
 and she had to wipe it off His instep
 In the second act He got up
 and fought this guy
 to save a worthless name
 Then he turned around
 and gave her His own

"Peter and The Aberration"

—dedicated to my brother
 Lillian without whom I
 would never have developed
 a limp . . . and to Peter's
 mother Martha.

Peter Mitchell had a *giant* Chiquita banana which he worshipped every day and of course he kept it refrigerated (so it would stay moist). It was the most beautiful banana in the world with its soft smooth yellow skin and you won't believe it but this banana didn't have a blemish (nor any teeth marks from a hungry person) just an oval blue sticker with its brand name on it. One day Peter sat down and cried; he was twenty-five, rich but he wasn't married. He lived a lonely life worshipping his banana but a banana isn't too good company cuz bananas don't talk, walk or do anything constructive. So Peter cried louder. He opened the refrigerator and hugged his banana and really loving it he kissed it right on the blue seal. Suddenly to Peter's amazement the banana turned into a beautiful girl, a perfect girl (pimple free) with a figure that was kind of cosmic. He stared for a moment and then shouted with joy, "Will you marry me?" The stunned Banana-girl stuttered and paused, but knowing the care that Peter had bestowed upon her while she was a banana (which was the result of a 2000 year old family curse) she answered, "You bet your ass." Pete was so happy he ran at her and kissed her square on the mouth. BANG! she turned back into a banana. Pete cried, "What have I done?" but being so sexually frustrated started peeling the banana trying to figure out a way to carry it up to his bedroom.

J. Patrick Ellis

Media #7

Commercial:

(two beautiful, semi-hippy, young people
 of the opposite sex gazing into each
 others eyes chewing gum)

GIRL: Arnold, I love you
 BOY: I love you too, Helen
 GIRL: Arnold, I love you
 BOY: I love you too, Helen
 GIRL: Arnold, I love you
 BOY: I love you too, Helen
 GIRL: Arnold, I love you
 BOY: I love Boupee gum because . . .

ANNOUNCER: Help Arnold ladies and gentlemen and finish the phrase "I love Boupee gum because . . ." in twenty-five words or less and you may win the White Cliffs of Dover—or you may decide to fly to Tierra del Fuego—or you may take a oneofakind ride in a chariot with the Vice President of these United States. You may even decide to forget that you won the contest and receive at no extra cost—a whole years supply of Hemmeraide toilet tissue made by the same people who make Boupee gum.

So remember:

"Don't grab anyone's Boupee
 Go out and buy your own"

J. Patrick Ellis

A GOOD PASTIME

Today you can go to America
 Admission there is free;
 And, 'oh', so is called the land!
 It just dawned on me.
 Anyway, you can ride it
 You stand, and feel it seep from under you;
 and, it's free!
 Or maybe you like hide and seek?---just let go hands!
 Sorry folks, the Statue of Liberty is 'OUT OF ORDER'
 But there are always those enjoyable times for you;
 The times you get to see the waters, in colors---
 and, it comes extra thick
 and, it's free!
 America is a good pastime.
 And at mid-day you go to replenish your supply of air
 Then back at play---to wonder perhaps why America
 buys such unlively animals---and,
 in bunches!---and, wonder why
 America has turned the heat so low;
 and, wonder AMERICA.
 It makes you giggle.
 America is a good pastime.
 And everything there is free;
 But you mustn't stay too long
 For fear of awakening them.
 America is a good pastime.
 Seats are limited so
 Please stand in line for tickets!

John and Marion
bought a dog.
He was a mongrel
his nose was wet
his coat shiny
They named him Zabu.

They taught him to do
all sorts of doggy tricks
but they couldn't get him
to fetch a stick
They tried hard
they even gave him
doggy treats
But he refused to fetch
God knows they tried
to teach him this
the most important trick
to them.

Zabu did not want to fetch
he became mad
when they tried
to force him

One day John began
scolding him
because
he wouldn't fetch
He got carried away
and chased Zabu.

Zabu was gone.
Marion cried.
John was angry.

Soon after a Lion
escaped from the Zoo
He ate John
who was on his way
to school
Marion cried
and Zabu came home
to fetch sticks for her.

J. Patrick Ellis

Downtown Yet Not Spring

Two degrees to freeze and I'm freezing.
I sit my ass down on a bench;
a bench kin to winter toilet seats.

People shop past my eyes
like bees to flowers
dropping pollen in the money machines.

"Love Story" is in all the windows
but I haven't any money.
Why doesn't spring come around the corner?

Gerard Egan

I Knew A Little Midget Man

Little midget man
Trying a life somewhere
Dejected Rejected Projected
a queer

Little midget man
Plodding a life somewhere
A stockman in a lonely town

Little midget man
Fighting a new life somewhere
Open yourself to a new day

Joe Piergrossi

In the night I stand
and breathe the evening
into my lungs, into my veins.
The moon rises watchman for the resting sun
and I'm alone to the stars
that owl above my head.

Gerard Egan

red worm

for i a sore and suffering worm

too hot on
these leaves your green body is more than
mist on you this is me oow

don't
not for a while yet
i am lost off this green
land oh you are not a land
you blush you are an amazon
as black as hair as sharp as green as leaves
the sea is nearly your color

my red skin
comes in the air over your treetops again
my worm again and again for you

—in memo (rousseau, hen)ry

skyles rhys

Before my hands full
to original powers
count on cigarette
sore one-to-five fingertips give
again in silence hours
six-to-ten, the alphabet
safe as I mislay a shovel
buried my numeral name and adjective
face with merds of air from zoos.
The hours of my palms, a penny pays
each second hand if days long to live
where four and twenty command ten
and more, cant roll the sun
set up the sky or touch twenty-five.

Michael Kilgallen

1969 Political

White on black,
World City D.C.

Word wary
compurgators of the innaugural
oath,

Stand beside him,
Latest victim,
Guides them,
Through the ni-i-ight by the li-i-ight from ab-o-o-ove.

skycostwarstinkingrisingmaking
On my honor I will do my best to do my duty
Bloody
Honor:
vain, violent Vietnam.

Anti-mythic element,
the modern mushroom atom,
musty-smelling plants
of death,
lurking.
Beneath Washington Obelish,
a policeman is falling off his hors.

Paul McNeil

To Go

A funnel with sides of electrified guilt
Sucks us, makes us live *don't*.
Never narrow enough for it,
We grow narrow down the funnel,
Till down too far, we touch a side and die.

To be our own,
We must be funnel-free.
But by knowing alone,
The funnel won't release.

We got to decide
To leave what is the funnel's,
And snap the lock
Of the trunk with our maps.
Maps read and decided,
Then we have to act.

This choke-hold:
We got to break it to breathe.

Charles J. O'Neil Jr.

My KITE reached the SUN

Today
I pulled the ripcord—it floated UP

Between the sandy grass I sat
A turtle rock my sitting mat

People look up to see my SUN

Taken aback with my playing
God

Joe Piergrossi