

Finally the effort became too great, and I exploded out of the bird's body into a giant of a man, half the size of the earth.

In violent anger, I rent the world in half with my terrible hands. The whole earth groaned in agony as I dug my hands into the soft turf. Standing on the exploding halves of the earth, I used the planets to climb to the roof of the heavens. With my bony fingernails, I ripped a hole in the blue, satin roof. I pulled myself up through the hole, and found myself, giant that I was, squatting under an ant. I was frustrated beyond belief. I bellowed in rage, and everything turned grey.

Slowly I opened my eyes and found I was home again, in my own body. A sweet, spring breeze blew through the open window, and covers kept me snug and warm as I contemplated the alarm clock. I felt extremely rested. I rolled out of bed and meandered into the bathroom.

## After a Poem By T. S. Eliot

Phyllis Gorfain

**H**E WAS still a child when he came to college wearing the cross his parents had given him. They believed with a blind acceptance that the cross symbolized faith in salvation, in the ultimate exaltation of man. He was a child, but able to see. He was a child and did not fully perceive, but at least he could see: the cross to him, therefore, was not the symbol of faith and exaltation, but only of hope.

He had thought much as a child before he had entered college and had discovered he could not believe in the cross as his parents did. He found he could only hope in the silver cross which shone reflecting a light beyond itself; thus, the cross became for him a symbol of his hope to understand the Love, Truth, and Beauty he knew were beyond himself. He knew that these absolutes were beyond himself but he had hope, for he had been taught the greatness of Man.

So it was that a child who hoped to understand the Absolute came to college wearing a cross of hope. Soon he discovered that Love, Truth, and Beauty were even farther beyond him than he had thought previously. He saw that the absolutes were of a high knowledge and understanding which seemed attainable by only the wise. But he had not forgotten his lessons of Man's ability and greatness. Although the child knew that Love, Truth, and Beauty were there beyond him, he touched his cross hoping in the power of his mind. He was so filled with hope in Man that just the search for wisdom became his religion. The glory of the search for knowledge was still based on a conviction of the ultimate absolutes. The child was so hopeful in the search, so satisfied in just the process without a hope

of actual achievement, he even began to deify Man searching for the absolutes. How beautiful was Man, and how his cross shone!

He was still a child, however, and able only to see but not to perceive. His satisfaction in simply searching told him that the inability of Man to attain complete understanding was of no consequence as long as Man could, in his wonderful ability, just attempt to know the reality beyond. Man was so great that by simply trying to know himself he could approach the knowledge of reality. Then one day the child, trying to know himself through studies, learned the inevitable lesson that Man cannot perceive reality at all, especially within himself. He learned that all of man's perception is an effect of his culture, his experience, his heredity, his needs, his emotions. The child saw that Man's perception is so subjective, so individual, so relative to one unique set of causes, that no universal values, no absolutes, no reality could be perceived by man within himself. The child suddenly knew the futility of his hope in Man's great ability. In that moment when the child perceived the futility of man, he became a man. In that moment when he perceived the futility of man, he lost his cross.

The man without a cross had lost his hope in a Man with a glorious ability to seek reality. But the man, although he had no cross, still had an intuitive hope that reality existed beyond the insignificance of man. Hoping intuitively in a reality transcending himself, he wanted to make that unconscious hope into a conscious hope. He began to search for material with which to make another cross of conscious hope. He could only use material which would shine reflecting light beyond itself.

He hoped he could make his cross with Science. Science, he thought, would offer a revelation of reality. But Science cannot be elevated to scientism, the revelation of an absolute reality, because it is based on an assumption of cause and effect, of determinism. The man saw that scientism reduced to nothing but relativism which itself was determined by the relative and valueless perception of the scientist. Science offered no material to reflect light beyond itself, for it reduced to nothing but man.

"Here we go 'round the prickly pear,"

The man turned to Marxism and dialectical materialism only to rediscover philosophies of relativism. The man saw in them only the insignificance of relative man without absolute value. The man looked elsewhere.

"The prickly pear,"

Psychology with its psychoanalytic theory of an unconscious identification with absolutes, a belief in reality only as an ego-involvement, could not offer him substance for a cross.

"The prickly pear,"

The man found no hope of an otherness in Existentialism with its only value as life itself.

"Here we go 'round the prickly pear,"

The man searched, intuitively hoping to find a religion which transcended man. He looked at Faith, the absolute as a God, a divine otherness. But the idea of a divine otherness does not transcend man, for man can only understand a divine otherness in terms of psychoanalytic ego-involvement. In faith the man could not find a philosophy transcending relative and devaluated man.

"At five o'clock in the morning."

The man, dizzied by his futile searching, finally thought that no reality as an absolute existed beyond man. He faced for a second the complete insignificance of man.

"This is the way the world ends,  
This is the way the world ends,"

His intuitive hope had shrivelled into an overwhelming sense of futility. The man saw nothing beyond himself except the nihilistic abyss.

"This is the way the world ends,  
Not with a bang but a whimper."

## The Day Civilization Died

Russell L. Durbin

"THE ONLY thing we have to fear is fear itself."—F. D. Roosevelt, First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1933.

Fear was a tangible thing, oozing from the pores of thousands of surging, wild-eyed people. Like a giant boa constrictor, it writhed through the city streets, holding the people in its deathly grip. It was a whip that lashed people into a screaming, howling mob.

They ran. They ran in every direction, not really knowing where they were going—somewhere—anywhere away from what had once been the heart of a thriving mid-west metropolis. It was a veritable stampede, a great tidal wave of humanity sweeping through the streets, smashing everything in its path. A searing holocaust behind them drove them on with unseeing eyes, minds frozen with the horror they had just witnessed.

A mother stumbled and fell, and no one paused to help her get up. The human tide covered her and swept on. Her children, caught in the flow of the crowd, had to fight for themselves—a los-