

medium took me years. After I'd begun working with it, I slowly realized cellophane has two absolutely distinct aspects: one glossy, the other dull; one sticky, one slippery. It can reflect, or it can reveal; it can cling to things, or allow them to slip away. Through all human history, the purpose of material and technique in art has been to preserve an essence, a vision; and I succeed at what I try in a way no artist previous to this, our age of limpid possibility, might have dreamed. I keep nothing fresh.

#### USE YOUR IMAGINATION

It was art activities hour, Brad's favorite time. Mr. Hammer wheeled in the library record player and put on orchestra music. He told the class they were to sketch whatever things their minds saw as they listened. David, Brad's neighbor, happened to notice the enlarged photograph of a bumblebee on the record jacket. He also noticed Hammer sliding said jacket under some papers. David began drawing bumblebees. Brad said he doubted that was what Hammer meant, but David reminded him they were only supposed to draw anything that came into their heads, so ... how could it be cheating?

Hammer strode from desk to desk. He got to David's bumblebee. Brad expected an explosion. Hammer did not explode. The fact was, he turned and exclaimed to the class that David was a genius. After that, he stepped down the hall and brought another teacher, who said the same thing. That was that.

#### PANDEMONIUM

"I'm not saying I know what we're up to over there," said the voice on the tape recorded in the dorm room, "because I don't. But the one thing I do know is that this'll be the same as having a red star over your draft card. Get what I'm saying, bonehead? I want you to be able to work for a living when this is over."

Randy's walls were closing in. There was little likelihood of the draft board granting him the conscientious objector status he had requested forms for; unlike Dick Nixon, Randy had not been born a Quaker, hence he had no officially sanctioned basis

to resist "service" in Vietnam. But how could he serve? To what purpose? "You were one of those kids who constantly wanted to know why this, why that," said the voice on the tape recorder, "and I always tried to answer you. Now I wish I'd just said: Because I Said So, Son, That's Why. It would have done you more good. You're too selfish, Randy. I have to pity you for that."

Randy wasn't feeling terrifically selfish. They were asking him to walk the plank as part of a media event to demonstrate American "will" power; that's how it felt. Wasn't it imposition enough to have his old man opening mail before forwarding it -- and then propping a tape recorder over the sink and holding forth on the social dangers facing a C-O? Through the pandemonium of clanking dishes his father exhorts, jeers and wheedles, unconscious of the fact that his tape recorder batteries are running down and his voice is rising. Like a rocket it gathers speed as it ascends. In the end there are no distinct words, only a sound like compressed air shrieking through a penny whistle. Randy supposed that's funny and appropriately surreal and he summons his dormmates, who also deem it funny and appropriately surreal. Yet none of the young men laughs very much.

#### THE SPIRIT OF SEVENTY-SIX

I dream I'm in the post office with a letter of great importance, for which the rate is very high, in fact the maximum. The clerk weighs it, mentions a figure, I pay for the stamps, affix them, turn to leave ... "Wait," says the clerk. He's weighing the letter again. With the weight of the stamps added, it requires another stamp. I shell out, lick the stamp, he puts the letter on the scale once more. "Wait," he demands as I turn to leave. He won't grin, he's performed this too many times to be able to locate the humor. The letter is on the scale. I reach in my pocket for more change, discover a revolver ...

#### THE DRIVER'S SEAT

He was used to doing the driving and he didn't mind doing the driving because he was sure he was a better driver although she was the one who'd never had an accident yet what did that show as far as he was