The magician is a poet . . .
And the poet's words are magic words.

— Novalis, Fragmente
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Whirling, open mouthed, in my cell like a drunken monk
I turned softly through a hundred years on dusty feet.

The whisper of my shuffling steps against the crumbling walls
belied the thunder of my dance.

The agony of an age spent copying dying words by candle light
rended earth and heaven apart, leaving a raw wound at the horizon.

Cauterized by the white hot sun at dawn, the cloud-hung wound
healed
into the hideous scar of another day.

And my dance was done.

Jon Horton
LEA'S POET

Love feeds slowly
from the hand of a thousand
western towns,

and when we
pull off our clothes, it is in
remembered beds.

Words happen to me
then, when the restriction
of my body

is lifted away
from your brown hills,
and the day

does not rise
until I tell it to. It will
never rise,
quick-breathing
and clear, until I demand it.
If you rise

with me, laughing
and singing in the joy of my words,
then you understand

I do not care
that you have loved others,
I only care

that these sounds
come to your ears’ oceans
like new silver

or like the wind
painting umbered fields
with its guitar.
TO ANY TIRED FRENCH PHILOSOPHER

Your psalms, sir, are long
And come as midnight bearing
Shrouds. You would take our
Silver-necked girls and put
Them in Freudian peep shows,
Rush them over neon-hushed
Carpets and paint polka dots
On their bones.
Thirty years you have balanced
On smirking belligerence in some
Grotto lit corner, waited within
Your iron images for sainthood,
Which came of course, for your
Leer is very, very poignant.
Yet, you still wait, hoping
For crucifixation, slouching
Before your altar of blood-rust
To give cologne scrubbed conceits.
Yes, you wait, and spread your
leer which sanctifies malignancy
By saying there is no sanctity;
Which says that one day, God gave
A tympani roll of thunder, and,
On solid streamed lightning, rode
The apple to any dull-eyed planet,
Where both now rest, rioting with
Worms.

Now sir, still slouching, your face
Held by a grotto; before you sprinkle
stained glass cocktails over our heads,
Before you put us on your undulating
Chess board, before you brand our groins
With Norman Mailer novels, please, sir,
Take your leer out to the street, blare
Your barbed wire trumpet, and, see if
The sun parts.
IN THE BEGINNING WAS RAVI SHANKAR,
WHO WITH ONE MIGHTY STROKE MADE FOUR SEASONS,
WHO HURLED EARTHBOUND STONES, LEAVES, AND GRASSROOTS,
WHO MADE ANIMALS, BYRDS, TURTLES, AND BEATLES,
WHO WROUGHT HERMITS, BLACK SHEEP, AND YARDBIRDS,
WHO WERE BOUND TO SERVE SUPREMES, IMPERIALS, FORTUNES,
REGENTS, VOGUES, AND PALACE GUARD,
WHO WERE ENTERTAINED BY HONDELS, VANDELLAS,
DAKOTAS, SUNDOWNERS, AND KNICKERBOCKERS,
WHO SENT AS SYMBOLS OF FAITH RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS AND
MIND BENDERS,
WHO APPOINTED TO HIGH PRIESTDOM BEACH BOYS, FOUR TOPS,
AND SPOONFULS OF LOVIN',
WHO STOOD IDLY BY AS ENEMIES AND ASSOCIATION BROUGHT
ALL EARS TO A CRISIS,
AND EVERYONE KNEW THERE COULD BE ONLY ONE SOLUTION,
IN THE END WAS RAVI SHANKAR.

Jerry Boorda
Easter Sunday and the sun is not shining, nor is the weather even clear, nor is there anything very bright at all.

Easter Sunday and there is a light rain and there is a coldness with this rain, and this rain is not good company for a young boy.

The boy is thirteen, and small. He is frail, and has tiny feet, and has often seen prematurely black hairs swimming in sweat on long thin fingers. He has a dark young head, and deep blue eyes, and thinks fierce thoughts, and reads too much, and has a wart on the knuckle of his left little finger.

The boy’s thoughts are of an Easter gift. The gift has arrived, but has not been presented. He is a young boy waiting anxiously and while waiting — suddenly — the sound of his heart in his ears. Suddenly, sadness closing in like a soft rain. Tragedy curling around a young heart, like smoke through a chimney from a quickly lit, quickly dying fire. Slowly and suddenly the waiting is over. The index finger of the young boy comes to trace a stick figure on a wet window pane, only with all the parts disconnected. (How does one tap the love from a little bird’s heart without scaring it to death?)

Long since before church let out, small streams of gathered raindrops, lying in the cracks of church sidewalks, were turned miraculously to fragile ice.

“See the rain changing to wrinkled cellophane?” said the young boy to the old woman he called Mom. The boy and the woman were on their way home from church, walking alone together in the rain, and the cold was slowly turning the rain to thin ice. The old woman was not the boy’s mother. She was much too old to be his mother, and so was not, but she tried hard. She was not his mother, but she tried very hard to be so, oftentimes too hard, and not always with the most easily understood tools, but no one, not even the boy, who took special pains in seeing the old woman’s aching feet and fiercely pounding heart, could hate her for the slow tragedy in her efforts.

The Easter gift the boy was expecting was not from the old woman. It was from his real mother — his real mother who lived very far away and who always sent him a present on holidays.

“See the rain changing to wrinkled cellophane?” repeated the boy.

If the old woman had heard the boy the first time, she had not thought it necessary to answer. The old woman wanted only to be home. She wanted only to be home and warm so that she might worry about the boy and the passing of Easter in comfort. She had an especially good reason to worry this Easter. She knew the boy was expecting a gift from his mother, but then she knew also something about that gift which the boy did not know. She did not like to think about what she knew. She did not like to think about what the boy did not know. Hurting terribly and feeling threatened from so many different directions, the old woman wanted only to be home and warm and not frightened.

“Cellophane . . . schmellophane,” said the old woman, turning to the boy. “Rain is rain, Paulie, and cellophane is cellophane.” The woman fought
herself for a frightened smile, and won the smallest of victories. "And never the twain shall meet," she exalted. The woman was both pleased and embarrassed with this last remark. "Paulie, for the hundredth time, will you please button the top button of your jacket?"

"What?" said the boy. He had just stooped to pick up a very flat piece of ice.

"I said will you please button the top button of your jacket."

"Oh," said the boy. His fingers began an immediate but unsuccessful exercise around the collar of his jacket. His thoughts were on something else. He did not feel cold from the rain that was slowly turning to fragile ice as it lay on the ground. "Mom?" The boy was thirteen and the cold was elsewhere. "Do you think Judas always has to be blamed for what he did?"

"What?" said the woman. She did not think she had heard the boy correctly.

"I said do you think Judas always has to be blamed for what he did to Jesus?"

Old black shoes with low, very low heels, and plenty of room on all sides, feeling nevertheless cold and tight against very old feet, because earlier in the morning the old woman had stepped unknowingly up to her ankles into a freezing puddle of ice and rain, and now there was nothing left to do but suffer from it.

"I mean," continued the boy. "You remember when my father was killed in the war? And later you said that God must have decided it was best that way. That God wouldn't have let anything happen that wasn't supposed to happen. Well, I was just wondering if it couldn't have been the same with Jesus's dying on the cross?"

"Paulie," began the woman. She was not prepared for such a conversation from the boy. Thoughts of an Easter gift. An old woman's dignity. How to make sense out of life and aching feet and the love held for another woman's son. "Paulie," repeated the woman.

"I mean," pursued the boy, "if God wouldn't have let anything happen that wasn't supposed to happen, then He must have thought it was best that Jesus die the way He died. And if Jesus was supposed to die the way He died, then we can't really blame Judas for everything. Can we?" asked the boy. He looked up once quickly at the old woman before continuing. "I guess a lot of things are that way. Once you really begin thinking about them. I mean just because something seems to be bad when you first look at it, that doesn't mean that it really has to be bad. Not when you really begin thinking about it."

Strange and unwanted conversation always coming at the worst time for an old woman. Why today? So much else to think and be sorry about today. Something very close to interrogation in the boy's tone. Or is it just nervousness that makes it seem that way. Love. To love in peace. Can one never be in love and not frightened? Goodness. Aching feet. Camouflaged puddles of ice and rain. Thoughts of an Easter gift. Could the boy possibly know? Impossible. He couldn't know. He was nowhere around. (How does one tap the love from a little bird's heart without scaring it to death?)

The old woman looked down at her feet and carefully skirted a suspicious looking clump of slush.

"If you are trying to say that Judas needn't be blamed for what he
did to Jesus, you are mistaken, Paulie. Very mistaken. Judas was the one responsible for Jesus’s death. He was the most wicked and unforgiveable of men. And there are no two ways of viewing the matter. If you had paid a little more attention to Reverend Knoll’s sermon this morning, you wouldn’t be so confused on the subject.”

“I’m not confused. I just got to thinking about things, that’s all,” said the boy. Easter Sunday, a real mother’s absence, the sad figure of an old woman in love with another woman’s son, and suddenly this morning a young boy named Paulie is anxious to prove himself communicable. Paulie and the old woman have not been able to talk with each other very easily very often — they have never been able to decipher the code concealing from them the language of the heart, and as a result much of their time together has been spent in an unspeakable state of separate longing. But today is to be different. Today, Paulie suddenly seems almost desperate to get something said.

A few years earlier when Paulie had been told that God was in everything, in his pet snake, and in the Germans, and in his mother and father, and even in himself, it made him very happy. He had remained very happy until one day not long afterwards when he suddenly realized that God must be dying because everything else was dying. His father had been killed in the war, his mother had gone away, his pet snake had died of a squashed head, and even he was getting noticeably older. He began to cry. He cried uncontrollably, and for the longest time, never really stopped, or even wanted to. After all, how much future can there be in an unwinding toy? Today, however, at age thirteen, and having long since cried himself out, and not being much in the market for agony anymore, Paulie seems almost desperate to get something said — almost as if to say it, would be to recover a key with which to wind something up again.

For the next few minutes Paulie and the old woman were silent. Having made a right turn off the street where the church was located, they began making their way across an elementary school playground. The playground was wide and soft and suffered neither from a true snow nor a true rain, but only from a disgusting slush, and as Paulie and the old woman made their way across, the slush crumpled from beneath their feet like wet brown sugar, making them hate it. It was not a time for talk.

Upon reaching the other side, Paulie scaled a low fence and waited alone on the sidewalk until rejoined by the old woman who, a bit less adventurous, had taken the exit gate.

“I remember reading this poem once,” began the boy suddenly, his voice cracking a little from the rapid adjustment of his breathing. It is cold, and the light rain of moments earlier is no longer a light rain. The rain has stopped altogether. Perhaps only gathering energy for one grand and final deluge. “I didn’t read the poem in school or anything. But I remember a couple of the lines. It was a poem about Judas. Judas was the one talking. Talking right to the reader. And he said: “Who betrayed whom? Who betrayed whom? We stare across two thousand years and heaven and ... hell, into each other’s gaze.” I’ve got the rest of it in a little book of poems I have at home. You don’t mind me using the word ‘hell’ if it comes from a
Young dark head with deep blue eyes, resting uncertainly on thin frame, supported by tiny feet, and pulled tight in the middle with father's belt, feeling heavy and much too burdensome because the word 'hell' came out oh so easily, almost as if practiced, and no one can ever guarantee an old woman's reception to anything.

Paulie stooped to the ground, picked up one piece of fragile ice, discarded it, and reached for another.

"Paulie, I wish you would stop picking up that dirty ice. It's ruining the leather of your gloves. And I want you to know I chased all over town—"

Old women always throwing such ferocious energy into so feeble projects. Why? Patience. Surely patience is the virtue of the young and the lonely and the uncommitted heart. Or is it just that old folks are so much bigger? Aching feet. And even more exhausted maxims. And all the while varicose veins, pulsing big and blue against quietly unshaven legs. Only this time around the hairs are black. The return to youth is such a tragic lie.

"And for the hundred and first and final time, Paulie," continued the woman, "Will you please button the top of your coat!"

But Paulie isn't listening. He does not feel the cold. He is thirteen, and the cold is elsewhere. Waiting. Waiting for an Easter gift. The gift has arrived but has not been presented. Waiting for an old woman whose heart is filled with a sad type love to decide when the time is ripe. From where comes this feeling of slow moving heartbreak?

"I didn't memorize the whole poem," said Paulie slowly, bending forward slightly from the waist, giving evidence of his concentration. "But I remember most of what it was about."

What is it that can ache so terribly in a thirteen-year old whose shoulders set so close to the ground while walking beside an old woman who shows how much fear there is in loving?

"I mean, what Judas seems to be saying in the poem is that if it is true, like it says in the Bible, that Jesus died on the cross in order to pay for the sins of all men, then that must mean that Jesus was supposed to die on the cross —"

"Paulie," interrupted the old woman. How easy it is to upset an old woman with either an old or a new idea! "Paulie," she repeated, "I don't know from where or from whom you are getting such ideas as this. But perhaps before you go any further, you had better tell me. I'd like to know."

Again Paulie does not hear the old woman. Can't hear her. Something very sensible yet to be said. Precious, really.

"I mean," said the boy, "According to what Judas says in the poem, if it hadn't have been for him, what God had decided was supposed to happen, wouldn't have happened. And also the sins of all mankind wouldn't have been paid for. It was kind of interesting the way he put it. That's why all through the poem Judas kept asking, "Who betrayed whom? Who betrayed whom?" And then at the end, he says, "We stare across two thousand years and heaven and ... hell, into each other's gaze."

"Paulie," began the woman quickly. From somewhere there has come
desperation into this voice. An exquisite anguish, it is loud, much too loud, and is breaking a little around the edges.

"I guess a lot of things can be that way," offered the boy. "I guess a lot of things that we think bad at first, don't necessarily have to really be bad. Once we get to thinking about them."

"Paulie," repeated the woman. Quiet fury pressing red on full-shoulders and slowly heaving chest. "Paulie, I asked you a question. I expect an answer. Where or from whom are you getting such ideas as these! I want to know!"

Once more Paulie does not answer the old woman. It is not in him to answer. He does not, can not, answer the old woman. Removing first the glove on his left hand, Paulie, stoops to the ground and picks up a nice round piece of fragile ice, then sails it left-handed as far down the street as this, the less coordinated of his two arms, can throw. He does not answer the old woman.

The incommunicable dread of separate suffering being most dearly felt and most inexplicably savored on a day when a light rain falls heavily about the lives of an old woman and a young boy, Paulie and the old woman he called 'Mom' moved two blocks closer to home choosing not to speak, choosing not to interrupt each other's despair. Upon passing a fence, however, which marked the beginning of their front property, Paulie slowly and suddenly felt compelled to break the silence. He had always held an unformulated fear of ever entering the old woman's house without the aid of some sort of conversation.

"Mom?" began the boy, as the two of them entered through a high gate. The gate was the only passage which opened the way to a short flight of stairs, leading to the front porch. "Did you ever notice that there is the same number of letters in Jesus as there is in Judas, and that they both begin with a 'J' and end in an 'S'? They both have 'U' in them too."

"What?" said the woman, not having her thoughts well enough collected to translate coherently the entirety of Paulie's remarks. An old woman's fears being oftentimes too soon relaxed, not because there is nothing left to fear, but because there is no longer any strength left to shoulder it. "I said both Jesus and Judas have 'U' in them," repeated the boy. "They both begin with—"

"Me in them?" interrupted the woman, more than just a little off-guard. "What do you mean they—! Paulie, what in the world—"

"Not you," said the boy quickly, "Not the y.o.u. you. The letter 'U'. Both Jesus and Judas have the letter 'U'. They both begin with 'J' and end in 'S' too.

Suddenly for the old woman everything had become a little more than she could bear. Aching feet. An old woman's dignity. Thoughts of an Easter gift. How to make work the love held for another woman's son. And all the while varicose veins. Could the boy possibly know? Impossible. He couldn't know. He was nowhere around. Love. To love in peace. Goodness. Can one never be in love and not frightened? The old woman too, earlier in the morning, had seen sadness closing in like a soft rain. She too had seen tragedy curling around, not a young heart, but an old heart, like smoke through a chimney from a quickly lit, quickly dying fire.
“Paulie,” started the old woman, her voice exuding fear and resignation never before displayed in front of the young boy. “Paulie,” she repeated, her voice pitched high and quaking. (How does one tap the love from a little bird’s heart without scaring it to death?) “What in the world are you getting at! What do you want to say! I’ve never before heard such things as you’ve been saying today! I’m asking you a question now, and I expect an answer! Where or from whom have you been getting such ideas as these!!”

Having come to the front door of a very old two story house which was much too big for just the two of them, Paulie, turning to the old woman, said very quietly but without any break in his voice, “Mom, if I answer your question, will you answer me one?”

“What do you want to ask?” said the old woman.

“Why did you burn the Easter present my mother sent me?” said the boy.
MAN IS MAKER, THE SPENDER OF CHILDREN
MAKER OF CITIES, DEFILED IN RUINS
LOW MIDNIGHT, AFLAME IN BLOOD
SPILLING BY CASUAL GUTTERS ONTO
PLAIN AND PASSING GRAINS IN SEED
MAKER OF TIME BY POWER OF PAST,
CASTRATING VENOM, AFLIGHT LIKE
A WHORE AT SIX O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING,
MAN IS THE MAKER OF TIME DYING
WHO IN PROMISE AND DREAM USURPS
WEBS OF FLESH TO WEAVE VIRGIN
FANTASIES, RARE AND SHRIEKING THRU
HIS LIPS OF BRONZE AND OPALINE.
MAN IS THE GOD — MAKER OF SELF;
USURER ON YELLOWS VINES, WHOSE TENDRILS
CLEAVE THE FRUIT, BARING ITS TISSUE
BELOW THE SUN. MAKER OF CIRCLE AND SIREN
MAN BREATHER SIGHTS DECAY, BURNING
WITH AN IRON HIS FRAME UPON THE RETINA
MAKING THAT VIOLET SPHERE HIS MIRROR.

MAN IS MAKER OF MOSS, THICK ON MEMORIES WALL
CREVICED, BY VAIN SCRAPPING, WITH SCREAMS OF BLOOD
MAN IS THE HARROW, TEARING TO POSTPONE HIS FALL.

Kenneth Honerkamp
CANDY MAN

There's a kind of a man
Who would kiss a little girl
Who would kiss her so kind
On her little behind
That before very long
She would very much long
For a kiss on her little
Before.
Candy Man, Candy Man,
Let's play the game:
I'll be the lady and you be
The man who comes for the kisses
And tell me what kind.
A dozen of orange and six of vanilla?
We're out of vanilla
Will strawberry do?
Old Daddy, first lover,
Old Daddy, old fart,
You took all my kisses and then
Ate my heart.
How deep is my mother, you
Dear,
Candy Man?

Annette Kanter
FOR STEFFANI

Steffi, I said
While we on nightbeach
roadside parked in minor
makeout.
Steffi, I said

Can we
go on like this?
for long?
I mean
like I wonder

Should we deny it?
We ought to reach agreement
on where we’re going.
That is to say
we should

I dunno
we should do something, I mean . . .

Speak, she said
With irritation.
For chrissake, get to the
point.
CUMQUATS AND SCOTCH

Falling through a
window blue flecked
moon on
face of hair
wildly raining
she’s
slowly
combing
her hair.

My eyes waver toward my love . .
she lifts her eyes surely
and gives me a cumquat.
Cigarette ash is severed
from ember upon the floor.

I weakly awake
puke
fall back
on the bed
in it;
and her lips,
within stench,
whisper.

The unspoken poem . .
our love,
marigolds,
and broken stems.
ELENORA

Sub conservationes formae specificae salve anima—Raymond Lully

Elenora’s song so fragrant; as heather’s breath
In dawn’s dim greens; solitary awakening
It comes as promises to scent the airidness
Of time before a sun or moon were ever born.

Harbinger of fantasy and fiery dream;
Elenora, shrouded hyacinth in evening dew,
Sings rainbows to a meadow flower; then silent,
As dusk draws on, she sleeps in memory of morning.

Reviving still born dreams Elenora dost sing
Of golden towers three times offered to the sun
At midnight; Florentine shadows luminescent
Aurorials in glaciers of remembrance.

Elenora, Elenora three times alive
Elenora; anointing white a virgin’s milk,
The rose and lily transmuted violet die
In quiet reminiscence, memory’s caresses.
It was scarce day when, all alone I saw her throne,
In fresh damasks she was dressed, o’er a saphire globe
Did rest this princess saturnine and sere. For joy;
Could I perceive, a silent dew steal down her cheeks.

Touching hands thru the Vale of Many-Colored Grass
I with Elenora as lilacs newly opened.
Passed. There by Lethean calm she gave her song to me:
Strange brilliant flowers, star-shaped, burst out upon the trees.

Upon the darkened green; white daisies shrank away,
While in their place rings of ruby asphodels sprang.
Drinking of their glowing liqueurs I dreamt silence,
Mystic murmurs; “Forever,” whispered Elenora.

Ten thousand psalms sent golden praising by one word;
“Forever,” rising. Finite in those boundless airs,
I remembered songs unsung, songs immutable
And one; though by that vision, Elenora was gone.
I can only say, there I have been, I cannot
Say where, and I cannot say how long, for that is
To place it in time. Rapt with joys of no tomorrow
I awakened one; “Forever,” singing Elenora.

Dawns invested in purple gauzes, violet snows
Slow melting; grow, by my celestial seal so round,
To rosial skies where only albatross are found,
And shattered suns reflecting worlds bereft of causes.

Sleeper ’neath a frozen lake, dweller of the cypresses,
My dreaming thoughts go barefoot in the evening, and
In glaciers of remembrance I become confused
With the remembered; recalling Elenora.

Elenora; The dream eternally continuing,
A fountain and a shrine, renaissance season’s flower;
Scenting golden dawn song’s token of what in other
Worlds shall be, “Forever” singing Elenora.
I came back muttering to my shoe lace,
A pair of eyes for humor with me
Which have seen the best tales yet,
Wondering if Odysseus' old man
Ever recognized his wayward son

Greeting him through shaded eyes:
"What did you return for
Like an unwound comedy,
Wise as a leg for running
Stubborn as a leg for standing
Cunning as a hand for fighting
With the other held
For singular applause?"

But when I arrived at home
I found my faithful woman
Winding a lovely fate
Asking where I had been
Wondering when I would go again.
And I could not tell her.

David W. Jackson
BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL

Who so-ever
and like myself
has endeavored
as with an asiatic eye
to seek beyond good and evil,
chart the abyss of pessimism,
and free it
no longer as Buddha
and Schopenhauer,
of old ICONS

And like myself
the distance
does grow
as it were the space around men
and becomes no more important
than a child's pain to a dying man
now almost childish enough,
once more
and now eternal
a Sangrail to
those like myself.
THEN,

The seasons
shifted.
Patterns
scattered in the light.
Softly you returned
to open me
in spring.

Karen Stephens
THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT HER

There was something about her.
But, then, there was something about all of them
 unknowable, incomprehensible, unpredictable;
something that drew you to them.
Caught up in a question
that was really unanswerable.
you went down many corridors
only to find the outside of the labyrinth.
HYMN TO SAPPHΟ

A portion of a letter from Sabīna to Elustra
Lesbia in Absentia

Summer approached, in heat.
I Sabina attended the flute
When you Elustra played.
Our song, our dance.

In your embrace
My body has drawn music,
My soul kissed the torch,
And no fruit came to bear,
No pain came to pass.

I stood
With my feet spread wide
As does the bright crimson
Tree
Free of the brown fig

So my limbs swayed
When you Elustra played.
Our song, our dance.

The summer is again the season
Our sea, Our sun
Do wait with me; ............

From the candle's fashioned light
Fingers trailing serpents
Thighs tapered into a silkened absence
Along the blue-wash sea wall.

The hair upon our back
And the taste of salt-sea-hair in mouth.
MIDNIGHT

You see
There's no beginning no end
here
Only this pocket full of threads
I've found
A few fingers with or without fists
Some shakers with and without salt
And mooring lines which yesterday were
cracks
Some words I like to keep at hand
like keys
And my one match for
illumination

David W. Jackson
Down the end of Nightingale Street right near Talbot there's this big old lot of empty land. Nothing stands there, because a long time ago a big fire burned down all the wooden houses. And they never built any more houses there because it's haunted. Us kids call it "the haunty." At night it's really scary. In the wintertime it's all covered with tons and tons of snow, and we go there to build snow forts and have snowball fights. Usually we have fair fights, but once in a while some wise guy will stick a rock in his snowball, and then some kid ends up with his forehead cracked open or a front tooth knocked out. When that happens we all stand around kind of dumb-like and watch the kid go running home and crying all the way. It's so quiet for those few moments that you can really hear him running up the steps of his house in his big rubber boots. Usually we could hear his mother yelling, and sometimes a mother comes out on the porch and screams at us: "Are you satisfied now, you animals? You hoodlums! Aren't you ashamed?" Then we would get back to the snowball fight.

When summer comes the haunty looks just like a jungle. It has tangly vines and bushes and poison ivy. The ground is full of garbage and broken bottles and junk and stuff, and once we found part of an old skull. Gosh, was that scary. When school gets out in June us kids start up our club—the Demons. You have to be twelve, and when you're fourteen you can join the gang for older guys. All the kids on the block gotta belong. That way we get the biggest and toughest club in all of Dorchester. 'Course we need a club-house too. Bernstein has this machete that his pop got off a dead Jap on Okinawa when he was a marine in the war, and we all take turns using it to make a clearing for our hut. After we make enough room we start to build the hut out of anything we can find or steal. We get these old wooden doors for the sides and slabs of wood and shingles and tar paper for the roof, and we hold the whole thing together with rusty nails and rope. Then we cover it up with large branches and vines and leaves so nobody can find it 'cept us kids.

'Course, we never let girls into the club or our hut 'cept Deedee, who helps us with the amitiation. You can't become part of the club unless you kiss Deedee's rear. She really smells terrible and she's always dirty. Harry Schwartz—he's the club president—he told us Deedee smells bad because there's something wrong with her ovularies which was part of her regina. And we knew he was right, because he's going to be a doctor when he grows up and he's always fooling around with his medical stuff on his two kid sisters. I really wasn't too sure what a regina was and once, when this social worker lady came to our house and said her name was Regina O'Brien and asked if she could see my mother, I asked her if she knew what her name meant and I told her about Deedee, and when my mom came to the door O'Brien made up these lies about what I said and started in telling mom about this thing she called a child guidance center and that all the kids in the neighborhood should be sent there.
When the hut is finished we loll around inside smoking cigarettes. Cohen steals these really big ones, Pall Malls, from his grandmother. We usually play stick-ball in the street, even though the city playground is right down the corner. Anyway, the older guys always kick us out, so we never bother to go there. Sometimes we play mumblety-peg for a while, or go on safaris in the haunting hunting for alley cats with our slingshots. If we ever get one, we hang him in front of Nagle’s grocery store. None of us kids like them, the Nagles, ’cause they’re from Germany and they never give us anything free like Mr. Kutch. He owns the tailor shop next door to the grocery store and always has free gum for us.

Whenever Mrs. Nagle sees us hanging ’round the street corner, she spits on the ground and yells these foreign words at us. She sure is nuts. She has these numbers — about eight little ones in green ink — on the inside of one of her wrists. When I asked my older brother about it, he said she had been in a concentration camp in Germany because she was Jewish. And then he started telling me about this crazy guy, Hitler, and something else called germicide. I couldn’t understand any of it because I always thought that germicide was this medicine they told you about on radio that you put on cuts.

Mr. Nagle — he’s worse than his wife. He’s a big, fat guy and he coughs all the time. Mark Katz delivers grocery orders for him and says that every time Nagle coughs he runs into this back room and spits out big chunks of stuff into an old pickle barrel. When he blows his nose he stands over the barrel and puts his dirty fingers to both sides of his nose and then blows right into it. And Mark says he never saw him miss either. We always wondered how many pickle barrels Nagle filled up in his whole life.

The best thing about the Nagles is that they’re so stupid. We never have any trouble swiping candy bars and stuff from them. About eight of us kids go into the store and crowd around the candy counter and make a whole lot of noise and drive them crazy.

“Hey, Mrs. Nagle, got that new candy bar in yet — Fruity Delight?”

“There it is, Mrs. Nagle. In back of you on the second shelf.” When she turns around we grab a couple of Hershey bars.

“No, not that shelf, Mrs. Nagle. Over here, c’mere.” She goes to the other counter and we sneak a couple more candy bars.

“No, not that. Jeez.”

“Behind ya, Mrs. Nagle.”

“That one! That one! There! Over there.”

“Gee, that’s not it, Mrs. Nagle.”

“You sure got a lousy store. Nothing good.”

“C’mon, let’s get out of here. What a crummy store.”

“You got a crummy store, Mrs. Nagle.” We leave together making a lot of noise, and when we get outside we run for the hut. And all the way we’re laughing and yelling.

When there’s not too much to do we go looking for this crazy guy, Bernard. The older guys say that Bernard’s a hobosexual and to stay away from him. Usually he sits on the stoop of his house reading this book called Tobacco Road that everybody knows is dirty. Miller cracks us up. He walks by Bernard very slowly and wiggles his rear end and sticks out his pinkie and
says in a girl's voice: "Hi, cutie." Bernard starts to yell at us, and he sounds just like a girl. Boy, it is funny. One day Miller laid down on the sidewalk and spread his legs open and said to Bernard: "Come on, darling," and Bernard started crying and screaming and then he ran into his house. Afterward Bernstein told us about the things hobosexuals do to each other, but we didn't believe him because it sounded so stupid. Even Ah Fong, the Chinese guy who owns the laundry down the street, said that Bernstein's stories were stupid. Ah Fong is a real nice guy. We like to climb on his roof and wait for somebody to walk by and then try to hit them on the head with a mouthful of spit. We can't do that too often 'cause Ah Fong will get angry and not tell us stories about the time when he was a warrior in China with Kublai Khan. His best stories are about this lady named Truman who lives in the White House and her singing is so terrible that nobody lives near her and they're always angry at her father because he never shuts her up.

Well, the Isaac moved in. That started everything going wrong. He hardly ever came outside, and when he did he just sat on the porch or sometimes he went walking to the store with his older sister, who was about my brother's age. Katz found out that they came from Germany. Isaac sure was funny. A couple of times a week he used to walk down the street to the synagogue, and he carried this little black bag with him. One day we saw him coming out of the synagogue and we decided to go over and talk to him. We walked up behind him.

"Hey, kid," Cohen said. "Hey, you." Isaac stopped and turned around. He looked scared for a second, and then he smiled. What a stupid thing to do.

"What's so funny, kid?" Katz asked him. I guess Isaac couldn't speak English too good. He just stood there.

"Ain't your name Jerry?" Schwartz asked him. That's what the American soldiers called the Germans in the war comics.

"Jerry! Right?" Schwartz said again. "Jerry the jerk, huh?" We all laughed. Isaac smiled. I couldn't figure him out.

"No it ain't. That ain't his name," Katz said. "It's I-i-i-i-saac."

"I said what's so funny, kid?" Katz asked him. Isaac stood there and didn't answer. He sure was a jerk. Real skinny, too, and he was wearing this suit that look old and really used, and it was way too big on him and the cuffs on the pants spilled over his shoes so you could hardly tell he was wearing any. When he smiled I could see that some of his teeth were black and some were crooked, too.

Then Katz went up to Isaac and pushed him in the chest. The little black bag fell to the ground, and Isaac bent over to pick it up.

"I said what's so funny, kid? And I want an answer!" Isaac had his little black bag in his hands now. He looked at Katz, and his lips moved a little and he made an "o" with his mouth. Then he blinked his eyes. "Please, I am Isaac," and he smiled again.

"I know that already. What are you, nuts or something?" Just then Isaac's sister came running over. She didn't say nothing to us and she takes Isaac by the hand and walks away with him and she's saying these foreign words to him.

"Bye-bye, Jerry."

"Jerk!"
A couple of nights later I was sitting on my bed, watching my brother getting dressed up really good like he did when he went to college every day. He had a new tie, too, and I sat and watched him trying to brush down his hair that looked like a giant brillo pad. He sure was quiet.

"Hey, Ron, where you going tonight?" I tried hard not to sound too interested 'cause lately he was always telling me I asked too many questions.

"Just out," he said, looking into the mirror, still brushing his hair. I really wanted to know. Since he had started college I hardly ever saw him and we never wrestled anymore, and when he did talk it was only to dad and the discussed this Chinese guy, Ken Shea Check, and this other guy, Macarthy, who hated the Commies.

"C'mon, tell me, huh? Please, Ron?"

Finally he said: "Davey, do you know Isaac — that new boy who just moved in across the street?"

"Oh, you mean Jerry the jerk?"

Now he turned away from the mirror. "No, I mean Isaac. And you know who I mean too."

Well, I guess I did.

"So?"

"You aren't bothering him, are you, Davey? You know what I mean?"

But I didn't. "No. What do you mean?" I was beginning to feel curious.

"I mean I hope that you and your friends aren't pushing him around. He's not as strong as you guys, and he is a nice little kid."

"So what?" I couldn't understand what he was trying to say. Ron looked at me and I could tell he was mad about something. "Well just this, Davey. Isaac's not the kind of kid that you are. You see, he's not too strong and he doesn't like to do wild things like you and your friends."

"Well, that's too bad, ain't it?"

"No! Now listen to me, will you. Isaac is different. It's as simple as that, Davey, and there's nothing wrong in a boy being different. You see, he's not the type of boy who's interested in playing ball in the middle of the street or hanging around that haunty place."

Boy, he sure wasn't making any sense. "Ron, you told me yourself that when you live here you have to be part of the gang."


He was making me really mad. "I don't know what you're talking about. Some brother you are. Remember when I was twelve and didn't want to go through the amitiation you. . . ." "O.K., but now you're thirteen and the lesso nfor today is to understand different kids. That's also part of life. Now, you and your friends just lay off him."

"Uh-uh! He's gonna haveta come in the club. It's the only way for him to stay alive around here." I was really mad now 'cause my own brother was sticking up for a skinny little German kid. I jumped off the bed: "Otherwise, we're gonna beat the . . ." He didn't let me finish.

"I said leave him alone, punk, or I'll beat something out of you."
"Oh, yeah? You think so? You and what army? You're a big, stupid jerk, know that? You don't understand nothing no more when you talk like that." And then I ran out of the room before he could catch me and down the stairs out of the house and into my hut in the haunt.

Next day, when all us kids were at the hut, I told them about what my brother said. Katz said that he found out from listening to his mother that Ron was taking Isaac's sister on dates; so then we figured she must have squealed to Ron about us. Katz said that all college guys take girls out on dates and they spend all their money on them, and they go walking around these dirty bookstores in Harvard Square and they kiss, and put their arms around each other in front of everybody in public, too. But I knew Ron wouldn't do goofy things like that, so I told Katz he was a dirty liar and not to talk about my brother like that. It didn't matter if I was mad at Ron, but I wasn't going to let Katz get away with saying that.

We talked for a long time about what we should do with Isaac. See, even though we all thought he was a creepy kid, we just couldn't let him defy the club. Schwartz said we'd have ta make Isaac a member of the Demons or otherwise we'd lose our face or something. Well, that didn't sound too good. Besides, the whole thing was traditional, so what we could do is just get Isaac to go through the amitiation. At least that would be some fun. And if he never came to the haunty or to the club again, none of us would care. Just so long as we knew that we made Isaac join, that was the important thing. We decided to wait for him when he came out of the synagogue that same day.

"Hey, Isaac," I called when we saw him. I tried not to sound too tough, because if he got scared right away then everything would be ruined. "Hi, I'm Davey." He didn't look too scared. The other guys came over, and the four of us made a circle around Isaac.

"Isaac, you have to join our club. Every kid who lives on the block has to join. See?"

"Club?" Isaac said. He was looking at me through these big thick glasses that made his eyes look really gigantic.

"See, Isaac, it wouldn't be right if you didn't become a club member 'cause that would mean you didn't like us. Besides we're not going to hurt you. Really!"

"I... Isaac... study today," he said in this German accent.

"No, you don't understand, Isaac." So I had to tell him the whole thing all over again about the club and the amitiation and the whole thing.

"There's nothing to be afraid of, Isaac," Bernstein said. "We ain't gonna hurt ya." Isaac still looked at me and was smiling. I don't think he really could understand English too good.

"Oh... now?... Me... Isaac go with you?"

"Yeah. It'll only take a little while. Then we'll bring you home, and we'll all be club members and buddies, Isaac. Everyone will be proud of you!"

"Yes... fine, sir... very fine."

We cut through some alleys and when we got to the outskirts of the haunty Isaac took off his suitcoat, and we told him to take off his glasses so we could blindfold him. While Bernstein put the blindfold on him I looked
at Isaac standing there in his short-sleeve white shirt, and then I noticed
that he had those same little numbers on the inside of his wrist like Mrs.
Nagle, and I wondered if he knew her from the camp at all. We started going
through the haunt and Isaac fell a couple of times and scraped an elbow,
and finally we got to the hut. Some more kids were there and Deedee, too,
but we sent her outside.

Schwartz made everybody keep quiet. He took out a little black note-
book that we used for the amitiation-and started to read: “Hear ye! Hear ye!
The meeting of the Demons will now come to order. Today we’re going
to amitiate a new member — Isaac . . .” He looked at Isaac. “What’s your
last name?” Isaac smiled at him. “Your name, stupid.” I made Isaac
understand.

“Isaac Himmelstein please.” Some of the guys giggled.
“Shut up!”
“. . . Hummelstern. Isaac Hummelstern, you are accused of being a
Commie spy, a chicken, and a stupid jerk. How do you plead? Guilty or
not guilty?”
Isaac smiled. I told him to say “not guilty.”
“O.K. Then ya gotta take the truth test, Isaac, to see if you’re telling
the truth.”

Katz brought out this old paint can with all kinds of stuff in it,
and it smelled terrible. It was made out of rotten eggs, orange peels, muddy
water, and a piece of cake that had green stuff on it and some lady’s per-
fume and an onion and smelly cottage cheese, and even some spaghetti.
Schwartz picked it up and gave it to Isaac to hold. Then he read from his
little black notebook:

“As Soopreme Ace President of the Demons I decree that you take
a swallow from this truth drink. If you are not guilty nothing will happen to
you. If you throw up that means you are guilty. I decree that you drink!”
Isaac just looked down at the can in his hands.
“I decree that you drink!”
Katz came over and pushed the can up to Isaac’s face. “Drink!”

Isaac really took a swallow! He choked and coughed and gagged
a lot and fell on the ground. His face was all red and he put his hands over
his mouth. But he didn’t throw up!

“As Soopreme Ace President of the Demons I decree you not guilty.”
We took Isaac’s blindfold off now and gave him his glasses. He was
still gagging a little, but sure enough he smiled when he got off the ground.

“Big deal, Isaac,” Katz said. “Now let’s see how you do on the second
part.” He called in Deedee. She dropped her pants. Isaac just stared at her.
He was really lucky ’cause she didn’t smell too bad.

“As Soopreme Ace President of the Demons,” and Schwartz pointed
to Deedee’s rear end, “I decree that you get on your knees and kiss it.”
“But . . . but . . . please, sir. . . .”
Schwartz pushed Isaac, and Isaac bumped into Deedee and sent
her sprawling.


"Please ... please, sir ... I ..." He was stumbling around without his glasses, but Katz wouldn't give them to him. "Please ... glasses. ..."

Schwartz pushed him down near Deedee. "I decree that you kiss it! Now, you schweinhunt!"

All the kids jumped up and started yelling.

"Schweinhunt!"

"Schweinhunt!"

Katz jumped on top of Isaac and started hitting him and pushed his face into the ground. Before anyone knew what was happening, Isaac was screaming these foreign words and was on top of Katz and punching him and still screaming. My stomach felt sick. It was like Isaac had never cried or screamed before in his whole life and had saved it up for the whole world to hear. Some of the guys jumped in to get Katz. They were all a big pile of bodies and arms and legs, and Isaac was still screaming and punching everyone. The whole hut was shaking, and I got pushed and fell. I was under a big pile of bodies and being smothered and couldn't breathe, and I tried to fight off the guys on top of me. All of a sudden I heard Katz scream at the top of his lungs:

"My eye! My eye! He stuck my eye out!"

I saw Katz on his knees with his hands over his face, and a lot of blood was running out between his fingers and it was all over his shirt. He tried to stand up, but he just fell over on top of the other kids and the pushing and noise got worse.

My ears were full of screaming, and I was getting knocked around and punched and my nose was bleeding. I could see Isaac everywhere. He was crying and screaming and punching everyone else, and we banged against one of the walls of the hut and knocked it out and then the roof fell down, I think, and I heard, "Mater! Mater! Mater!" And then there was no air to breathe and everything was flashing red and yellow light, and I felt myself flying through the wall into blackness.

My eyelids were heavy. I heard a whole lot of commotion. I heard sirens. They were coming closer and closer. There was a funny taste in my mouth, and a voice very far away said "take it easy, kid." I opened my eyes and managed to sit up. I found myself on the ground not far from the hut. It was a mess. The whole thing had fallen in, and a crowd of older people were all around it yelling and pulling out some more of the kids.

Katz was lying near me, and some man was wrapping a shirt around his head and part of his face. Then two cops came running up and one of them said, "Oh, sweet Jesus." They started pushing the people away to get some of the kids. Two more guys dressed in white ran over, and they carried stretchers and black bags and they swore at some of the people and told them to get out of the way for Chrissake.

Schwartz's mother held him by one arm and was whacking the daylight out of him with a black garrison belt. His nose was bleeding all over him and he was crying loudly. Some of the other ladies stopped his mother...
and she was crying too. She screeched: “Get out of my sight. You’re no son of mine!”

Bernstein’s father grabbed him and started shaking him and hitting him. A man yelled: “What’s that gonna do?”

Bernstein’s father cried: “I’m so ashamed. I’m so ashamed today.”

I got up on my feet. I could hear another siren coming closer. Just about everybody in the whole neighborhood was there, even Mrs. Nagle, and she came over to me and started yelling: “You animal! Animal, you!
You kilt that boy!” She slapped me in the face real hard, and my nose started bleeding again and tears came to my eyes and I cried. I killed Isaac, she said.

There were a lot of policemen and questions. I felt so tired. Katz and another kid had bandages on, and they were put in a car and driven away. A girl was crying — it was Isaac’s sister. Some ladies were holding her. She kept crying: “Why Gott? Why Gott? Why? Why?”

The ambulance men carried out a stretcher with a white bundle on it. I knew it was Isaac, but I could not see him because he was all covered. Little red drops of blood dripped from the stretcher and left a trail all the way to the ambulance. Then Isaac’s sister got in and it drove away without the siren going.

I turned and saw Ron standing there. His face was white. His eyes were watery. He came toward me very quietly. My mouth jumped open and a loud shriek came out from somewhere deep inside. I threw my arms around my brother’s waist and cried and cried.

Ron put his hand under my chin and lifted my face.

“Come on, Davey.”

We started walking, but then I remembered. I broke away and ran back down the alley to the haunty, to the hut. There, under the pieces of wood, I found Isaac’s glasses. Both the lenses were cracked, and one of the ear things was missing. I held them up and looked through — it wasn’t too bad. I could see the tops of the trees and the sky. I put the eyeglasses in my pocket.

I started back toward the street. Ron was ahead waiting for me. A baby was crying in one of the houses. I looked behind me. The baby was crying, and I started to run.

END
SESTINA: DAHLAQUIN

Lo! Dahlaquin
From the mystique
Of dream
Dreaming in her magic
Floating song
That the maiden of the dulcimer is woman.

In her becoming a woman
To the maiden Dahlaquin
No dervish whirls a howling song
But a poet praises the mystique
Of her red magic
Throbbing dream.

Falling to the depths of death dream
From the wand that bears woman
Through the multi-mirrored halls of red-magic
Emerges dark Dahlaquin
Realizing woman’s lunar mystique
To sing a prayer sad song.
As from the litany of her self song
Dividing a diminishing dream
Her response to the awakened mystique:
“I the maiden have become woman
Who is hailed as Dahlaquin
Sing praise to my flow of lunar magic.”

And as from this magic
The refrain of the song
We see Dahlaquin
Dreamer of dream
A woman
Aware of her mystique.

That the flow of this mystique
Be the magic
Of woman —
Know the song
And the dream
Of Dahlaquin.

Spinner of song
Weaver of dream
Lo! Dahlaquin

Gerald Margolis
THE RECONCILIATION OF NOAH

You may call this the day of the dove on the way to sea the dancing oxen at the chained ploy waiting and Noah dreaming of a prosperous market in the hull of his wooden universe of mysterious species.

There is no explanation where the oxen came nor cause for where the doves went away nor vessels for the receding flood, only the bony earth and the few remaining waves which Noah rides like Scripture.

Say it is the recollection dreaming union that precedes imagination. That the oxen had been plowing uncounted years is the unmatched logic of olive branches and reconciling rainbows.

The dove flew remembering to tie two wings with air in one persistent motion. And Old Noah sleeps dreamily in his hulking rib hewn timbers on a flood of anguish waking slowly wrapped in color.

David W. Jackson
THE SLIP

APOGEE, DAD!
FALLING FREE ACROSS THE ICE
AND STOPPED.

DANGLING ON THE LINE
AND FEELING FAR OFF COLD
ACROSS THE BENDING OF MY SPINE.

PULL ME UP YOU MOTHER.

M. P. Cohen
DRIVERS

HURTLING NOW LIKE FREIGHTS
DOWN 101 —
DELANO VISALIA SANTA BARBARA
OXNARD VENTURA
HEAVY BROWN MEN WITH SWEATING
KNOTTED HANDS PUSH THEIR RIGS
DOWN ASPHALT NIGHTS AND SAY
"SOMEDAY I QUIT THESE FUCKING TRUCKS,"
AND DRIVE LIKE HELL.

Robert Baty
number three orwell road rathgar dublin.
The address flitted through his mind and was gone.

He had been sitting in the dark little taverna mindlessly sipping ouzo, feeling it soak into all the dry corners of his flaccid, bony body. His hand, liver-spotted and laced with huge grey veins, had clenched on the glass but he didn't notice until his shoulder, or rather half a shoulder for it plunged down at a reckless looking angle from his scared, scrawny neck, had begun to ache.

The old man reached up and carefully removed the smelly black stub of a cigar from his short brown teeth, raised the glass, grey with his fingerprints, to his mouth and flicked the ouzo back into his throat. It blazed there for a second, bringing a film of tears to his rheumy eyes.

The old postcard was somewhere back in his room; probably in the odds and ends of the junk box in his closet.

Mary Boland
#3 Orwell Road
Rathgar
Dublin, Ireland

"The postcard, eh?" he whispered to himself.

The old man stood up from the table. Taking his black beret from his jacket pocket he walked slowly to the door of the taverna, paused on the step, then went over to lean against the wall in the slanting sunlight.

He closed his eyes.

He could see her, reddish hair ashine in the early morning sun, turning briskly out of the narrow cobbled street and starting across the cool white sand toward his boat. The sun was glancing blindingly off of the Mediterranean. Shading her eyes against the glare with her hand, her large breasts rhythmically, warmly astir under her starched blouse she was making her way across the beach to where he was cleaning his catch.

"Kalimera-sas."
“Kalimera-sas.”

And their morning ritual would begin. A few words in Greek, a few English words and much moving of the hands and much looking into each other's eyes. Three days a week for almost two months it had gone on like that. Finally, one night she had come down to the beach while he was getting his boat ready to go out and they had made love on his nets.

He had been fascinated by her at first but there was something about her that he feared also. Sometimes he would glance at her face while they were making love and her eyes would be wide open, embracing him as tightly as her strong arms were. It was all he could do to summon the courage to let himself be folded in her arms when they began their lovemaking. He felt much like he did when he was out in his boat in the dark with the wind blowing and the sea moving hungrily under him. Sometimes he thought that it was very possible that this could be his last act on earth, that one night he would disappear in this strange woman's arms.

Suddenly the old man shook his head and muttered to himself.

"Better to die by a witch's hand than to be rundown and crippled by a freighter, Christoforu."

The ironical statement appealed to him. A spasm of silent laughter shook his bent body once and then it was gone. Reality crowded back on him, sweeping away his broken reverie. The sun was suddenly too hot for comfort and a woman was raising dust in the street with her broom.

The old man walked back into the cool taverna and sat down at his table. The owner came over and filled the glass to the very brim and then stood there, hand still on the bottle, staring out the door as if inviting conversation. The old man remained silent so the owner turned and walked back to the bar where his wife was washing glasses.

"I wonder, Elena."

"You wonder what?"

"I wonder what these old men think about. In the morning before the card game starts"
POEM FOR MY GRANDMOTHER

The old remember, like clocks unwound
and ticking, melodies played by brooding men
held once to a game of death
played with grace among the dying.

You
like majas once moved, a red veronica
turning on the sands of an ancient bullring
where men young and dark
held you amid lace mantillas and shuttered rooms
where lights shone like blood in the darkness
and
youth was the laughter
of an old man
singing a gypsy song to the sea.

In the hills above Salamanca
you opened your legs
in the ragged dirt of an earthen room
to give birth to children brown and peasant
contained in the semen
of my dead unknown
grandfather
alone in a hut in the mountains.
And women all in black
came forth
to offer breasts to these two
born quietly and with pain
in the Spanish night.
And yet, knowing this, that
the blood of their veins
is the blood of your heart
now almost gone from so much
-giving,
and the marrow of your bones the stuff
of their untempered flesh
they come, and the room becomes full
with the squalor of them. You
staring up at them, eyes black with will
a million words strangling
in your throat,
live again each of their lives
while hands paw you with tribute scraped together
in the course of useless afternoons
when children brought in gliding Ramblers
to touch you smile as taught
and you, crushing them against breasts
once fondled, now forgotten,
have lived ten times
their lives
and see in this child
held to your heart
what is of you still living.
The moment gone, they depart.
With pursed lips they engulf you,
a blanket of flesh smelling of sweat
and impatience, muttering "ya me voy, ya me voy."
Receding
they are gone.
Drifting shapes huddled together like shrouds hurrying
to have coffee and regrets
round a table I remember as a child.
It is quiet.
Night like smoke drifts down from blackened trees
and eyes flashing like sunlight
amid the shadows of a southern cave
and men shouting saetas to the night
fill the darkened room.
On a hill with the wind upon my face
I will watch them take you away
a sorry procession in shining black
crawling across seeded lawns and spotless streets
to speak the words
practiced by anxious men
standing stupid in their rented grief.
And I on my hill
will not stand among
them.
In that box of wood and lead
a thing lies which once
had life and now
is thrown like chaff across the land.
Your death is seed
upon these hills
I tramp this ground
and leave furrows of you
in the dirt.
It is here you will dwell
It is here you will give blossom
to this meadowed, waiting land.

Robert Baty
A ROOM BY THE SEA

On the floor of the darkened room a carpet gathers filth.
And seated, silent, seeing shadow of the empty past
Am I — unobserved by others who think the carpet magic
And prepare themselves to fly — and lose their fears in hazy clouds.

Boy and girl — man and woman — where have your identities gone?
I thought I knew you all, one time, but now I see the truth
Of your hapless faces and eyeless minds — and now I see at last
The ghostly palour of your empty, soul-less, shaking shells.

Come back home. Come back to the people who knew you way back when.
But my plea is useless and grey — and vacant lots stare back
With blind, eyeless ears that cannot see my sounds —
And I wonder when I ever knew their real colours.

The darkness of the room is emphasized by useless
Eyes of heat — not light — for light might let them see again.
Heat alone, which fills the room in blue-green fog —
Will rise and carry to the sky: the fog — and other colours.

The colours that I thought I knew as crimsons, golds, and greens
Are now clearly grey — and getting blacker all the time.
And for all the little teary eyes of light that stab the dark,
Not a single one shall see again the light of day.

Lou Maurer
DISILLUSIONMENT WITH THE MOONSCAPE LITHOGRAPHER

For Melanie...
who will come again
and teach me the art
of eating parsley.

Tonight climbs a sliver of lavender and I,
against a tree,
try to sing her name.
Windless stir
of rust-laden boughs
and brazen claws.
your grating slips over
the stars and
darkness, I
breathe the stars and
there is no answer
for pain—
(pain is pools of rain)
mare nostrum
when it began
or will come again.
I sing to Melanie.
I trust
she will come again.
A swelling tear
of the eye
is a red wound
on the night—
her burnoose
as she steps—
an ostrich ascending the leaved bank.
The morning steel sliver
becomes a wisp of cloud.

C. V. Dickinson.
FROM THIS THE INCOMMUNICABLE 
AND UNSPEAKABLE WORLD OF MINE.

From this the incommunicable and unspeakable 
World of mine...; the idiot 
I rewrite a letter to you. 
Know that there be
Behind these
These enormous fairytale 
Idiot eyes
An uncanny awareness
Of the algebra of the soul.

Frightened
Where my hands can freely
Fetish to the touch
Of a mother’s skirt 
And feel
At one and the same time
Time and again
Again the father’s broken face
When he looks 
At his crippled son.

Frightened
When forever screaming
Within oneself
d I can sometimes see
Small men on small horses
In raging battle fight
Chew with iron jaws
Through closed wooden doors
Fighting within oneself,
I am the battlefield
Passive, vacant
I have absorbed the wounded
And the dead
And show no scars.
And yet and
Yet through these the selfsame
Eyes absorbing luminous
The universe which I cannot
Effect nor act upon
Is comprehensible.

Frightened
Forever and alone
These the selfsame eyes
Avoid not the averted glance
Puzzled stare, curious gaze
And compassionate smile
At the idiot
Forever and alone
In the faceless mob of eyes
I seek the pulling, drawing,
Absorbing eyes
Of another idiot
Where an extraordinary intensity
Of nothing
Becomes silent vision
Forever and alone.
And yet and
Yet there be moments
When from the nothing
Leaps a Mozartsian ecstasy
Burning madness into my night
Ending.
Forever and alone.
Frightened
To have forgotten
All the bent faces
Tying my shoelaces,
My mother's face
Among them most.
And if I could
Would I
Raise my hand
To push my finger
Through my father's chest.
And write upon his heart
Love?

Frightened
To be right exact precise
Where it is at
And not to be able to act,
Dumb, stupid, hanging . . .
Remembering
Small men on small horses
Collisions and hair.
The meaning escapes itself
The meaning escapes itself
Re-enters upon another self
And I realize
That I look like
And possess many
Many of the attributes
of, myself . . . an idiot.

And to be the idiot is;
To disremember yourself
And become a hanging edifice
In the sky
Without staircase or entrance.

Gerald Margolis
I've not the right
To cry another man's tears
But I hear the same voice
Echo through our souls
One now cries out—
The other should respect the silence.

Take It Now and Run, Boy
To P.M.—wherever he
may be now.

The cynicism is gone,
the knowing smile has fallen.
The only remains were
a newly full grown beard on a half grown man
whose greatest difficulty now was in breathing in and out,
breathing the same air he breathed
in his not so younger days
when the answer was blowing in the wind
and caught his tongue.
His muscles become heavy in a week,
and his words, once so lovingly exciting
have become slow and moist.
All the accomplishments of half a life
seen through dilated symbols
nullified in an hour of recognition—
petrified into steel casement barriers
to sanity.

But there's yet half a life
to breath in and out, expanding and contracting;
a life wherein even sleep becomes tedious,
and the core of our beauty, love, turns rotten
and eats away slowly, day by day from inside.
The hearts murmur is not heard
by stethoscopes of feeling,
but only by distant pity—
the only stance pity seems able to afford,
For we ingest pity through the rectum
and spew it out our mouths
and take love with our hands
instead of our eyes
while we siphon the blood from the veins of passion
to feed the gods of comfortable.

Where is Israel's God of Anger
that I might rest him in His bosom,
And America's God of Laurels
that I might crown him on His beach?

Martin Nakell

Insert to the Eclipse, March, 1967