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HARTFORD CONNECTICUT

the trinity
review

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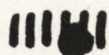
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Exercise Number One

This is a translation and summary of the first part of the 'Elegy on an ancient battlefield', written by Lee Wah, a Chinese poet of the sixth century A.D.

Far and wide stretches this lonely land,
O'er the horizon, away without end;
Like a crumbled ribbon lies the river red;
In tangled confusion the mountains stand.

No roving creature on its purpled sand;
Beasts of the earth had left this land;
Vultures of the air away had flown,
To a gorgeous feast dared not descend.

Only spirits now o'er their remnants fly,
Skeletons that on skeletons lie;
Their woeful cries pierce the air,
To pound on the door of the heavens high.

The naked trees shiver and sigh;
The broken reeds hang their heads and cry;
The cold wind sweeps the darkened plain;
The heavens are closed behind the leaden sky.

This is the ancient battlefield!
Where once with sword and shield,
O'er ten thousand miles, through wind and snow,
Man had come to kill and be killed.

His bones now by the cold winds chilled,
His fate with the past is sealed;
His pleas by heavens concealed,
His sons march on to fresher battlefields.

Y. Y. Yam

"The Great Man"

The boy was outside in front of the small wooden house on the Main road. Being set in the gentle hills and pined woods of the country made it seem to be far away from anyplace. But five miles back down the road was the university town, and friends of the great man would stop on their way or on their way back to inquire of his health. They would pull up next to the mailbox and call Peter over from mowing the small lawn.

"How is he today?"

"Just fine, thanks."

And sometimes they would stay longer to chat with the tall boy about the old and crippled man.

"Well Peter, what's it like to have a person like your great-grandfather in the house?" Peter, turning back to the house and to the room where the old man lay, would stop to think for a moment. The sound of the heavy breathing through the open window satisfied him that the man had not yet awakened to the early morning sun. He smiled when he thought of the good times there had been when he had nursed him. And he frowned when he remembered the dirtier tasks involved in taking care of him. But he answered, saying only, "Oh, it's good to have him here."

"It must be . . . think of it . . . Mark Perrin . . . author . . . scholar . . . it must be fascinating." And Peter thought of taking the old man off the comode and cleaning him, and smiled to himself.

"Yes, fascinating."

The car started up and Peter walked to the house. It was time now to get the old fellow up, and he went inside to start the breakfast. Later he stood outside the bedroom and took a last few puffs on a cigarette before going in. He went into the bathroom and stood before the tall mirror. He was large and stocky and good looking. His blond hair, now brighter from the bleaching of the summer sun, was combed neatly back. His strong arms came out through rolled up sleeves of the light shirt. His khakis were a little crumpled but clean, and over his shoulder was a towel. He went back to the door. He was young and happy and he smiled as he took a deep breath of the country air through the window in the hall. He looked at his watch. It was eight thirty . . . time to get him up. He walked softly into the dark room that smelled a bit. The boy raised the blinds and then went over to the bed. The figure in the

bed was breathing heavily and making a sucking sound with his mouth. He shook him gently and said, "Good morning grandfather." Peter called him this just as an affectionate name. But really the old man was his great-grandfather. The boy stopped by the bed and listened to the thick almost choking sound in the old man's throat as he breathed.

"Every time he goes to sleep I think that he'll never wake up. How does he have enough strength to get up each day? I just don't understand . . . to read and eat . . . His old heart must be ready to stop any day now . . . yet he lives on . . . almost like clockwork . . . but so frail. He went slowly over to the side of the bed and looked down at the shriveled up figure in it.

"How did you sleep?" the boy asked. The old man opened his eyes and turned away from the sun. He replied but could not be understood since all his teeth were out. Peter got a basin out and filled it with warm water from the bathroom. He put it down on the table next to the bed and prepared to wash his great-grandfather. He looked at the man in bed again and was reminded for a second of his father and his grandfather, both of whom had been killed in an automobile accident five years before. In the thin gaunt white face of the old man he saw something of his father. He remembered the time his father had taken them, his other brother and sister and himself, out in the fields to play hide and go seek. They all had split up and Peter was alone in the woods looking. It was a little fun and a little frightening to be alone in the fields surrounded by the dark pines. But at the edge of the trees he looked down and there was his father pretending to sleep. He laughed aloud then, and today he smiled lovingly as he looked down at the figure in bed.

He began to wash, rubbing the cloth over the wrinkled body—on the thin legs—all over. He winced as he took the cloth gently between the old man's legs, but kept on.

"That's good," the old man said. "it won't itch." Peter cleaned the wash cloth and turned the man over in bed. Seeming to enjoy the approval of the old man, he was more careful to wash every spot on the old man's back.

"Be soft."

"Yes, Grandfather." And Peter was. He thought to himself how he didn't mind doing these things for the old man. "He's so old and helpless. . . I really don't mind that much . . . and he's a great old man and will teach me . . . tell me many things about his life . . . about his work at the University . . . and his books . . . it will be worthwhile." And he sat the man up in bed. He went to the bathroom and took the slimy dentures out of a cup next to the sink. Then he brushed them and brought them back to the old man. He slipped both plates one by one

into his mouth. Then the boy took a clean shirt out of the drawer and began to put it on the man.

"No no you fool. Do you want me to itch all day? The powder . . . the powder." Peter sighed and then picked up the container of baby powder that had been on the bed-side table.

"Damn it . . . I always have to forget something . . . don't I?" he said to himself as he rubbed the powder over the man's back under his arms and on his chest. He rubbed the powder softly until all had disappeared except the white smooth film on the skin. Then he took up the shirt again and dutifully put it back on the old man. His arms were stiff and it was difficult to raise them high enough to get them through the sleeves.

"Owe . . . be gentle boy." the old fellow snapped as Peter apparently raised one arm a little too high.

"Yes sir" Peter said. His earlier cheerfulness was disappearing now. But the old man didn't hear him as his hearing aid was still on the table. The boy picked it up and put the little knob carefully in the old man's ear, then he wound the cord around and down over the ear, and attached the battery case to the breast pocket of the shirt.

"Fix the dial boy." Peter turned the dial up.

"How's this?"

"Don't shout. Turn it down a bit." He was now accustomed to the light of the early morning and was looking around the room to see what the boy should bring him next.

But Peter knew what to do, and in what order, as he had done the same things now since his father had died. His mother had to work, and Peter was forced to postpone going to college until he and his mother figured out a way to get money and still have someone take care of the old man. He had left the University ten years before. He should have gone before that but he loved it so much and the University liked having the great scholar there, so he was kept on. But that was years ago, and now he was too old . . . even too old to walk. The boy placed him gently into the wheel chair next to the bed. The old man felt the boy's strength as he was lowered into it.

"You should play football," he said, and they both laughed. He looked at the bookcase to see what he would read that day. His eyes were still good. On the bottom shelf was the set of Shakespeare that he had read so many times . . . when he was young, as a boy, at college . . . at graduate school . . . and finally as a scholar and editor. On the shelf above were his own books. They were in a set that the publishing house had presented to him. All twelve had the same brown leather binding and on each in gold was his name: Mark Perrin. And these books were now his favorites. They represented accomplishments and talent of his

youth which had passed away many years before, thought the boy. And on the next shelf were the classics, book-of-the-month-club selections, and others from colleagues and friends. After the old man had been given breakfast and the tray had been taken away, he turned again back to the bookcase, and pointed to one on the top shelf, one that he had been going over for the past few days.

"That one" he said. He was pointing to Hardy's *Far From The Madding Crowd*, and Peter walked over to the shelf and handed it to him. "My cigarettes," he called to Peter who was in the midst of picking them up. He brought them back and lit one for the old man. Then he took the glasses off the table, wiped them, and placed them carefully and gently on the old fellow in the chair. He put a blanket over him, and then smoothed it over to make sure that all of the man was covered. Peter then walked quickly out the door before he could be asked for anything else. He went outside and was even more depressed when he saw that the clear and refreshing blue of the early morning sky was now hidden by large dark clouds.

Later in the afternoon Peter gave the old man a shave and wiped his face with a hot washcloth. He said something to the effect that the boy really knew how to give a good shave. Peter smiled. "At least I'm learning something while I'm not in college." But his great-grandfather didn't hear him. The boy dried his face with a warm towel, and then slapped his skin gently with some after shave lotion. He stopped, took a few steps back to examine his job.

"There. Aren't you happy?"

"What do you mean?" the old man shouted. "Why should I be happy . . . Oh God." The boy had realized his mistake too late and decided to make the best of it.

"Why . . . because you've had a good shave and now you can read your book."

"Oh God," the old professor groaned.

"What's the matter?"

"I wish I were dead." Peter sighed when he heard this. It wasn't something new. The old man had said it many times and the boy was relieved to remember the times when it was proved that the old fellow really didn't mean it. Once he had caught some food in his throat, and he coughed and gagged and screamed, unlike a man wanting to die.

"What an awful thing to say."

"What do I have to live for?"

Peter thought for a moment and then mentioned that he had his mother, himself, and all the faithful friends to live for. The old man didn't seem to hear him, but said instead, "Me . . . I can't walk . . . need all this help . . . old . . . have to stay in bed . . . Oh God . . . Oh God."

"I feel sorry for you old man. I guess it wasn't like this a long time ago . . . well, at least you have a good mind . . . alert . . . and you can still read . . . that's something," the boy thought to himself. He turned to leave the man alone with his book, but he happened to look down at the bookcase as he passed it on the way out. He saw the shelf where the professor's books were and he picked one up and left.

The book was something to read that night. It was a Friday and ordinarily Peter would have gone out. But his mother had to go into the town and the boy was left to be with his great-grandfather. Times like this one slowly forced the boy from seeing his friends in town. After he had given the old man a bath, carried him to bed, and cleaned up the room, he went to his own room. He lay down exhausted, and picked up the book that he had taken in the afternoon. On the cover written in gold were the words "Mark Perrin", and the boy thought of the old tired man, now breathing heavily in his sleep. On the cover inside the book was the title: *The Psychological Use Of Music In Shakespeare*. He had to think a minute to know exactly what this meant. "Boy . . . that old guy . . . think of him writing something like this . . . must have been years and years ago . . ." He leafed through the pages. "How much work must have gone into this . . . look at that bibliography . . . that old and shriveled up man. Just think . . . he once was sitting at his desk at the university . . . reading and writing . . . moving about quickly as a young man . . . staying up late working . . . and now his slow hands have trouble turning the pages of magazines. But once he was young . . . like me . . . and now he is old and ready to die . . . What the hell am I doing with him . . . I want to get out with young people . . . where they don't talk about dying and where they can still do the things that he once did . . . instead of sitting around here listening to the old man talk about wanting to die . . . makes me sick . . . Oh . . . I don't really mean it . . . I suppose . . . I am getting something out of taking care of him I guess. And I don't mind that much. If I can get him to talk about his books and things, then I will be learning . . . learning things that I couldn't get in college. . . . But we are so far apart . . . wonder if he really can give me something . . . here he is . . . just about to go . . . and me. . . . I'm just starting . . . what a start . . . and yet here we are together. . . . If I can only get him to talk and to teach me . . . then it will be a little more worthwhile . . . after all he is a great man everyone around here has heard of him . . . and being with a great man is good experience . . . sure . . . I wouldn't get this opportunity anywhere else . . . maybe I'm actually lucky." And all the sacrifice involved in taking care of the man was forgotten in deference to better things to come. He started reading the book, and fell asleep with it in his hands.

He woke up early the next day and looked out the window above his

bed. The sky was deep blue and the sun was bright. He got up, happy that it was a good day, and that it might even be better if his hopes for himself and his great-grandfather were realized. After carrying out the morning duties for the old man, he walked outside. He began to finish weeding the lawn which he had started on the day before under the dark sky. But this day the weather was good and he pulled out the weeds quickly and tossed them into a basket on the ground next to him. The noise of a car was heard coming up the road behind him, and he turned to see the post-man slow up and stop next to the mail box.

Hi there Peter."

"Good morning Mr. Jeffers," the boy said.

"How is he today?"

"Oh, fine thanks." Peter answered back enthusiastically.

"What are you so happy about?"

"Oh . . . nothing much?"

"Well, I wouldn't be so happy if I had to take out all those weeds."

"It's not so bad." The man nodded his head, and turned to go, but he stopped and asked, "Say, Pete . . . when are you going to finish the schooling? You're not through are you?"

"No . . . someday I hope to go to college . . . after we find some way to take care of him," and he nodded towards the house.

"That's a pretty big thing you're doing boy . . . taking care of him . . . missing out on a lot, aren't you?"

"Well, I hope not . . . I mean . . . I don't think that I really am." The boy said emphatically, remembering his thoughts of the night before.

"Good for you boy . . . I hope you're not also." The man seemed not to understand what the boy had meant. The expression on Mr. Jeffers' face told the boy that his answer had been unexpected. "Well, back to the job," he said and chuckled as he went to the truck. He waved to the boy as he got in and started it up.

"So long Mr. Jeffers," Peter yelled, and then went back to the weeding.

In the afternoon the boy came through the door of the old man's room. He was in the wheel chair reading the paper. The ashes of his cigarette had been falling all over the blanket, but he was squinting at the editorial page and didn't notice.

"Don't catch on fire" the boy said cheerfully. The man looked up from the paper to find the boy peering over his shoulder.

"Hello grandfather."

"Hello." He went back to the paper again. The boy took up a chair, and sat down near the old man. He seemed a little determined as he asked, "Have you finished your book?" He motioned to the Hardy novel on the table.

"Oh . . . that . . . I've read that before of course . . . Just reading it again."

"I see," the boy said eagerly. "Why are you marking it?" Peter had seen the old man go over the book with a pencil making markings in the margin every so often.

The professor didn't hear what the boy had asked. He cupped his hand against the hearing aid. "What say?"

"I say, why do you mark the book?" Peter asked louder.

"Oh . . . well Hardy has some peculiar usages that appear every so often. I like to note them. Very interesting."

"What do you mean . . . 'usages'?"

"Let me read the paper, boy . . . Light a cigarette for me please." Peter was startled by the abrupt end of the discussion and reluctantly lighted a cigarette for the man. Then he went out the door and into his own room. He lay down on the bed. "Thanks grandfather for your lesson: don't interrupt . . . but light me a cigarette . . . give me a bath boy . . . scrub my back . . . watch out . . . it itches . . . my bed is all wet . . . what an education . . . learned a lot today didn't I . . . think of that though. That old old man, marking the book . . . so weak . . . when will he have strength enough to come back to it? . . . marking it for what . . . how will he remember to come back? . . . as if he will ever look at it again . . . so futile." He got up again, made a sandwich and went outside.

But later on in the afternoon he came back to the room and found the great man in his chair. He was sipping a glass of sherry that he had once a day. And he used to tell the boy the best way to drink sherry . . . slowly so you could enjoy each sip. The boy was grateful for the advice and wondered if he would ever get a chance to use it. Peter started off again, abruptly, "I was looking at one of your books last night." The old man heard and smiled. "I was looking at your book on Shakespeare and music . . ."

"Ah yes . . . that was a book." Peter smiled also, seeing the man's interest. "It was a good book" the professor laughed at his conceit, and the boy joined him. He watched as his great-grandfather took another sip of the sherry, smacking his lips afterwards.

"I bet there was a lot of work involved in writing that book."

"Yes, quite . . . ah . . . a good book . . . one of my best, I think." He laughed again. And the boy went on.

"But what I don't understand is how anybody can be really sure that Shakespeare meant all those things that you said he did . . . like using the off stage music in one play to show sadness on the part of one of the actors."

"What do you mean. Of course you can." His voice was sharp.

"Well, what I mean is . . ." But the old man interrupted him.

"Why I've studied Shakespeare all my life and after all that study one can be fairly sure what Shakespeare intended and what what he did not."

"I see," the boy said. But the old man had begun looking at his book again and did not hear him. Peter sat for a moment, thinking, and the professor looked at him.

"Now that you're here and I don't have to call you, would you please put some powder on my back? It itches terribly." Peter sighed and picked up the can of powder and put some on his hand. He began to rub the man's back. He wasn't as gentle as he usually was. Not so hard," his great-grandfather called at him, and the boy stopped rubbing. He walked out of the room before the professor could call him back.

He was lying on his bed in his room. It was dark and he looked up at the ceiling. He was breathing heavily, and doing this reminded him of the old man in the other room. "Really I am like him," he said to himself depressed. Both of us . . . we do nothing . . . and get nothing out of anything. But at least he has lived . . . I am just starting . . ."

His mother came into the room. She was surprised to see the boy lying there with the light out. "What are you doing Peter, sleeping?"

"No, just lying here."

"Well dear, have you forgotten that this is the night that you give the enema."

"Guess I did, sorry."

"Well, would you hurry Dear, because grandpa is a little upset."

"Oh, he is. All right." And the boy went into the other room. He did what he had to do without speaking to the old man. The professor in turn said nothing also. He never did when he had to have the enema . . . he was too disgusted by it all, Peter thought. It was too far below him . . . too undignified. Usually after it was all over, the boy would come back and sit with his mother and great-grandfather and talk. But this night he left the room immediately. His mother wondered what was the matter, and as the days passed she discovered that the boy and the old man never talked any more. She cried about it one night, but Peter didn't hear her. He heard only the heavy breathing and thick sounds from the "great man" as he slept.

The Black Moon and its Loves

- I. black moon, who strays
into malignant dreams
and thought of everlasting
love by love; when stars
were young, drinking the thirst
of dawn to doldrum days;
perhaps with madness, too,
it was a memory to last
for ever, and then sobriety,
and doubt behind the clouds;
in love for ever,
but surrendered to the dawn.
- II. it is madness here to stay,
sipping sunlight through
my eyes, laying as the dawn hums up
and rises in the eastern sea;
obscurity as daylight lives, with
dimness in the day;
I am the moon who knows
too soon of everlasting
fresco waves, of marriage
to the malice stars
and climax in your
peace and catholic loves.
- III. black moon, who immature
as winter dreams
and thought of yesterday
with hope; when time
counts every love by
evening's tear; dispersion
into faith, crumbling like
the memory of everlasting
love by love, makes you
alone without a dream;
because, my moon,
you cannot shine much longer.

*A fragment of an early norse epic
in translation*

... and loki said i to thor and wooden woden
and flaxon saxon fria.
i? what is this i? the aye? the eye?
said they in unison.
no, said loki, the i that is i;
the me that is not you.
thor and wooden woden and flaxon saxon fria,
who only knew of we,
could not perceive of a divinity
which was not at least a trinity;
this self which was single and would not mingle
in the crowd which but lacked a common shroud
was not to their accord.
this i, this loki, must be bound
(the majority found).
their verdict was a unanimity
to be held until infinity.
that not a loki can be found
shows their power to be sound . . .

Paul Briger

Reflection

Over and over
I try to hear the
sometime truth
in the long whisper
between our eyes.

Nearer and nearer
I draw to find it
somehow set
in the dark iris
become myself.

Lee H. Kalcheim

Unfinished Elimination of Meaning

I drank a draft of reason's aged dew
While weeping in a sleeping pew.
The granite gray of rising gothic spires
Mourned as always in mourning fires.
From knees grown tired of prayers I rose
To leave the church in stained glass pose,
To move alone as some frail moth at night
In fluttering flight from light to light.
Grasping, I found in science's marble breast
No explanation and no rest.

G. H. Mackin

Birth of the Blues

It was a good crowd that night. Almost two-thirds of them had on black ties. Not bad for a little joint on 62nd and Columbus in the coldest city in the world. Charlie, waiting for his cue, listened to them; the clinking of ice in the half-empty glasses, the subdued murmuring and the occasional giggles and squeals. Then "Doc", the drummer, caught his eye, and tossed him the beat. Charlie grabbed it with a grin and worked it over some. He pushed it around a little, pounced on it, then drove it hard and fast, with a long roll, down the keyboard, and caressed it with loving fingers all the way back up. Finally he packed it up, turned it blue, and pushed it over to Saul.

And Saul played. And from his saxophone came a soft whisper of sorrow, a gentle cry of grief that floated out over the crowded room. Charlie watched, as he did every night, the almost magical transformation in the audience. He heard the murmurs fade and die. His eyes wandered from the man, busily trying to catch the waiter's eye, who hesitated, then slowly turned back to the band, drink forgotten; over to the couple who, only a moment before had been in deep conversation, but were now wordlessly listening; to the door, where a man and his graying, tired-looking wife had stopped, and now stood, coats in arms. And finally, he gazed at Saul, standing there alone, oblivious of the crowd of the world with his thinning brown hair, and eyes which, when open, were dark and sad, but which now were closed; and a tall lank body that seemed somehow just able to support some fearful burden. And without knowing why, he looked at the floor and muttered "Damn."

Then Saul was done, and the show was over for another night. As the last note hung in the air, like a plaintive, mournful plea, an almost imperceptible sigh was heard. There was no applause — not yet. Not for five or six seconds. Not until the feeling of awe and sadness had passed.

But then it came. They clapped and stamped and yelled for more. But Saul never seemed to notice. He just packed up his horn, and without a nod or good-bye slowly left the stand and disappeared into the night.

Twenty minutes later, in Doc's room over the joint, the group was having, as it did every night, a final cup of coffee.

"What's with that guy?" Joel asked. "Two weeks I been with this gang, and I ain't seen that guy smile yet. I don't think he even knows I'm here."

Charlie stared at his cup. He let Doc talk. After all, Doc was the leader of the group — got their jobs and all — so it seemed right that he should tell this chubby, pink-cheeked young trumpet player “what was with” Saul.

“Joel,” he said, “That man is dying. He’s got himself a woman — as lousy a two-timing bitch as ever broke a man’s heart. She met him a couple a weeks before I took him on here — met him, caught him hard and complete . . . Worked on him till he woulda died for her — and then laughed in his face.”

“Been like that ever since,” Charlie continued. “Saul knows what’s going on; he ain’t no fool. But he’s a stubborn guy; keeps thinking she’ll come around . . .”

“Crap,” Doc broke in savagely. “He knows damn well she won’t. That’s what’s killing him.”

“Look,” Charlie said. “I like the guy. Always have.” He paused.

“You know my brother? Al? He’s an agent, kind of, in Philadelphia, you know? Yeah, well, he owes me a favor. Suppose I get him to tell her there’s a good job for her there . . . You know, get her the hell out of town for a while.”

“Charlie boy,” Doc said, a smile splitting his face, “you just got yourself a ten buck raise.”

Three days later she was gone. And Saul, following the time-honored tradition, grieved intensely. His body stooped more than ever, and his eyes, always cheerless, seemed to lose all trace of life. He drank and smoked a lot but on the whole, Doc and Charlie were pleased. As Charlie said, “What the hell, he’ll get over it.”

After two weeks of silent agony, Saul did indeed “get over it”. One night, after his solo, he seemed for the first time to notice the wild applause. He looked around for a second, and then . . . and then a small slightly bemused smile appeared on his face. He sat up a little straighter, and Charlie, who was nearest him, saw a little warmth come into his eyes. And as he walked out the door, swinging his sax case, the slight spring in his step was unmistakable.

“Goddamn,” Charlie whispered. “He’s forgot her. Didja see him, Doc? He was smiling!”

Ten days later, after the show, Charlie, Doc, Joel, and Sam, the colored bass man, were sitting in Doc’s room.

“Did ya see ’em out there tonight? Did ya see ’em? Half the tables empty and the other half making noise.” Doc’s voice was harsh and low. He took a short, hard drag on his cigarette and savagely ground it out, jabbing and twisting it until only shredded tobacco and torn paper were left. “And now that son of a bitch owner wants to cut our pay back. How ’bout that, Charlie?”

Charlie said nothing. He thought of how it had started — how just one week before, three days after Saul had finally found himself, the band had become aware of the change in the audience. Charlie remembered the kid trying to run his hand up his girl's leg, while both of them giggled. He remembered the steady undertone which failed to dim as Saul played. And the couple that rose to leave half-way through his solo. And the man who ordered new drinks and then turned back to his bored date. Finally he remembered Saul, playing flawlessly as always; every note soft and clean and right, but somehow different, somehow cold and without its old meaning.

“. . . What about it, Charlie?” Doc paused briefly, and then, getting no reply, continued, “When we was bringing in class, we was getting paid for it . . . See how many tuxes there were tonight? Three. Three stinking tuxes, and they all left after one drink. And you know why? It's Saul. That son of a bitch's been acting like a kid after school burned down. We know it, and I guess they can hear it.”

“Lord, Doc.” Charlie's fist hit the table. “You begrudge him that? I like the guy, and I'm glad to see him right. He was tearing himself the other way.”

“I begrudge him that,” Doc said slowly. “I like it here.” There was a long silence.

Charlie suddenly felt old; old and very tired. He sighed heavily and got up. He walked to the phone.

Squeezing his eyelids until his eyes ached, he tried to keep the catch out of his voice as he heard himself say, as if from far away, “Operator, I want to call Philadelphia. Speak to Miss Julie Myres . . . That's right. M . . . as in man. Uh huh, the number's Fr . . .”

William Gale

On the Half Shell

A plump red carpet cushions feet treading
as soft as the light off pale thin lilies humbly bowed

in white silence sheathed in delicate droplets
gently splayed by cool greys whispering reverence

Mrs. Harriet McCullough's new hat is eyed
with curiosity and envy by Mrs. Willa Low while
grey flannelled ushers strut hawk-like beneath
white-petalled gardenias never meant to prey
shuttling newcomers behind craned necks and
flitting smiles wrinkle noiseless good mornings
over the settled buzz that awaits the arrival of
the widowed Mrs. James Gillespie and
her cub scout Jimmie

Jack-in-the-boxes pop in tune
like sightless bird-young
squawking waiting to be fed
never quiet until clap-trap mouths
are stuffed into submission and
complacency

Sunday church on the half shell

S. J. Crockett

In a quiet wood

spider web wetly . . .
love touches the face lightly
leaves it wetly too . . .

exquisite image . . .
will the river carry you off
if she moves away?

kicking up autumn leaves
a man can smell sweet death
in the quiet wood

G. H. Mackin

Pantomime

A stick of wood devoid of life save
tumbling rode the white-laced longest wave;
froth enclosed, it found dry land and gave
an ocean drink away in shallow grave.

The ocean's first waves late ones seemed to teach
lapping overlapping on the beach
hurried moonward, leaving out of reach
the traveler swam in salt, spume, dressed in each.

Alone, ungripped by any save the dry
particles it set its knotty eye
seaward, opportunity and try
tonight to slide in midnight tide; or die.

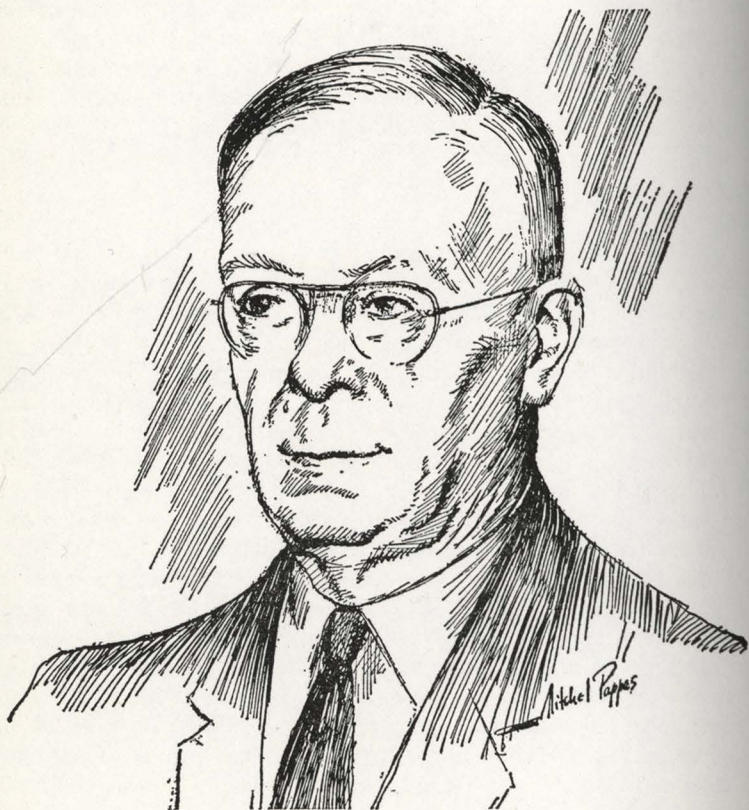
T. R. Swift

Notes on Philosophic Skepticism

The following lines were among the last philosophical reflections of Harry T. Costello. They were written on January 22nd (three days before his death), and received by Prof. Paul W. Kurtz, formerly of the Philosophy Department. It is fitting that these last words of Professor Costello be published by the College that he loved so well. Though brief, they reveal the true power of the man, his wit, his insight, and above all his ability to express in a few incisive words what others requires pages. The piece should not be read out of context. It is an attack on only one kind of skepticism: Costello is interested in defending the possibility of objective scientific knowledge against skeptics, obscurantists, mystics, phillistines and subjectivists.

“Francis Herbert Bradley has said there have been a few really respectable skeptics, such as Shankara, the final formulator of the Advaita Vendanta, who said all the world is Maya, illusion. But it takes a very powerful thinker to be a real skeptic. Ordinary skeptics cannot defend their own position; the evidence they bring forward in defense of skepticism must be true or it is no good. So they promptly fall over their own feet when they try to move. They do not have a rival philosophy to other philosophies, but merely a lack of philosophy. They have failed. But as Bishop Butler said about the world, ‘things are what they are, and their consequences will be what they will be.’ And as Woodbridge added, there is no reason to suppose the human mind must automatically fail to know that world. Butler added, of course, to Woodbridge’s delight, ‘Why then should we wish to be deceived?’ and accept the myths which other theologians were inventing. But to be critical of false beliefs is not to be a skeptic. We may hold that some philosophies are true and some false. But even if we say all existent philosophies are false, said Royce in his early writings, there must be a true account of the world to contrast with the false philosophies, else these would not be false. But might we not, with the analysts, hold that all philosophies are equally true? This is a worse skepticism than to hold all are false. It

holds they are 'ideologies' believed for reasons of the economic and social status of the believers. This would be allowable in literature when you are just making good fictions, but not in philosophies, for they at least *claim* to be true. Agreement among men is possible if you believe there is a truth, for it would enable you to escape party lines. Let us not deny ourselves that chance for an agreement. To believe all truths are fictions is worse than to believe there is no God. The cold war must then go on forever, except as decided by brute force. This is the real heresy of the Marxians. I see no reason to deny that things are what they are. It is the first axiom of realism. We can be mistaken, but we correct our mistakes, and science is gradually doing so. It is the most reasonable assumption we can make. To be unreasonable is to be weak and perverse. Why praise failure?"



Rhinoceros

Bloated relic of a past
Where hungry behemoths
In ponderous herds lumbered
Through the swamp-swilled woods.
Behind the folds of unwashed poundage,
Behind that muted horn of plenty,
Pink eyes, myopic and small,
Strain into the African muds.

Preposterous nose,
Elephantine toes,
Cyclopean rear,
Cumbrous ear,
Down to a whee-whispish,
Barely switch-tipped,
Tail.

And yet the memory of a swift
And silken racer of the wind,
Golden horn rippling the pool
Of dreams, troubles my mind.
What alchemy of the last few worlds,
What lava-filled abyss
Transformed that silken fair:
Has the unicorn come to this?

Jane Yolen

The Last Resort

Ethel Belmar stood by the door at the end of the recreation hall, letting the infrequent evening July breeze whisper through her hair and breathe softly on the back of her neck. She looked out across the dance floor, where under the half dimmed lights, couples moved irregularly to the rhythm of the music. The music and the couples and the dance floor itself all seemed so removed from the corner where Ethel stood. Removed because of a longing that clung to her as uncomfortably as her red cotton dress in the stickiness of the crowded room. The longing to be involved.

Ethel was a secretary for Chapman and Sons, brokers in New York. She had saved most of her sixty five dollar a week salary since last August. It was just enough to pay for a week at "Martinswood", one of a list of medium priced New York State resort hotels. The small ad in *The Times* had said, "a friendly place with stimulating excitement at reasonable rates." But the cost of the vacation also included the buying of a medium priced but stylish wardrobe. Last summer Ethel had been to "Quiet Pines". She had bought two new fur collared cartigans and three of the latest sack dresses for the occasion. All of them were home in her closet. They weren't fashionable this summer. It was important to be fashionable — even down to the three new revealing two piece bathing suits she bought. She didn't think the suits were right for her, but the saleslady at the store said they were the "only thing". This was important. It was important to be seen in them at the lakefront. It was important to be seen.

After buying her clothes and making reservations, Ethel had just enough money left to pay for the round trip bus fair to the resort and keep a small roll of bills in her purse for the drinks she might have to buy herself. She had arrived Monday afternoon and met a few people she knew from the city. Not many. Her best friend Sylvia, who usually went with her, wanted to go to a more expensive place this year. She said that, "she could find more expensive men there. It was worth it even at that price."

As Ethel stood near the door, she looked down the long row of chairs beside the wall of the dancefloor. A stretch of empty chairs were dotted by solitary women sitting quietly, neatening the creases in their dresses, fearing to look up and find no one waiting there in front of them. Ethel wondered why she had come here this year. This was her fourth year at a summer resort. She was twenty nine. Her first two years she had gone because she was tired of New York in the summer. She had heard that

you could learn to dance and meet other New Yorkers at the resorts. She wasn't particularly interested in getting married. She believed that she would get married when the right man met her in the office of Chapman and Sons, or at one of Sylvia's Friday night parties. She wanted a week of fresh air. A suntan to show the girls at home. She really didn't think she wanted much more. It bothered her though that first year, that she hadn't met many men. Any in fact. Really. Oh, she had talked to some by the pool, or in the cocktail lounge, but only because everyone's so close to one another you can't help talking. But no one *came up* to her. No one *asked her* to dance in the evening. No one asked her her name.

Her second year at the resorts she bought some better clothes, still deciding that she was going only for relaxation. If she didn't meet any men, then she didn't care. She was still only . . . twenty seven. But the winter in New York treated her as badly as the summer in the mountains, and when she turned twenty eight, she suddenly realized that you don't always meet men in your own office, or at your friends' parties. You go out to meet them. If you care. When Ethel turned twenty-eight, she cared.

She and Sylvia went to "Quiet Pines", last summer. Sylvia met enough men to keep her busy in New York right through the winter. Ethel only met one. He was the drummer in the band and he was short and chewed gum, and twice a night when he didn't play a number he would frantically run onto the floor to find a girl. Ethel had been that girl several times. She told him she liked music. He told her it was a living. She said it must be an enjoyable life traveling all around and meeting people. He said it was sort of a drag, and shrugged his shoulders and chewed his gum. Ethel tried taking off her shoes a few times to come down to his height, but it wasn't worth it. He was the drummer. And he couldn't even dance. And he could never be "the one."

Ethel couldn't count the ways she had had her hair done this year. She couldn't count the number of articles she'd read on what parts of your face you should accent when you have such and such a nose or forehead or jaw. Ethel knew she was not a pretty girl. But she had good taste. And a sense of humor. And she could dance. Sylvia had told her not to worry; "Once a guy gets to know you, he won't believe what he's got. Men don't look for beautiful women anymore. They want someone they can live with. And anyway . . . I think you're a very attractive girl. Really."

Standing by the door in the corner of the recreation hall, she noticed what women the men were dancing with. The dark complexioned girl with the blonde streak, who had sat near her on the bus, had been dancing all evening. Ethel noticed that she had had her nose fixed, and that she wore dark low cut dresses, even in the lounge. Ethel could have had

her nose fixed. She thought about saving the money for the next three summers. But then she would be thirty-two. And then, maybe Sylvia was right. She wasn't a bad looking girl. She had a very unusual color of green eyes. And a fine brow. Even the drummer had said, "You've got very green eyes, don't you?"

Ethel walked back toward the crowd surrounding the dance floor. A contest was starting. "Champagne Prizes", the master of ceremonies said. Ladies choice. A mambo. Ethel froze in the crowd. She could ask someone to dance. She would make a good partner in a dance contest. She had won one once before, two years ago. Her hands began to push nervously against the skirt of her red dress. She brushed her hair back and straightened her waistline. She didn't want to begin. She didn't know who to ask. She hadn't been looking at the dancers. Who was a good one? Who could mambo? Who would accept? Who would accept? She put her hands up to her mouth and ran them around the edge of her lips. Indecision turned in her stomach. She could go to the bar and get a drink and sip it, away from the floor. And it would be all over. But she was wearing her new red dress. It flared at the bottom, and it would flare and swirl in the dance. She had bought it for that. It would be a waste of money not to use it. The master of ceremonies made the last call for couples on the floor. Ethel put her hand out to break through the crowd and go to the bar. A man turned and said, "excuse me." Ethel smiled . . . and just about to go on, she breathed . . .

"Would you care to . . . dance . . . The contest . . . I . . . I'm pretty good at Mambo."

The man shrugged his shoulders. The man next to him jabbed him in the ribs and said, "Go on, we'll split the bottle . . . Go on."

"Yeah, I'll try . . ."

Ethel followed the man to the dance floor. The music started. Ethel danced. Her red skirt flared. She looked at the floor through most of the dance. Once she looked up when she suddenly realized she didn't know what her partner looked like. She saw that he was rather handsome; a boyish face, with small dark eyes and a thin moustache that looked as if it had been drawn on him with a pencil.

The music stopped, couples were eliminated, and Ethel found herself in the finals. When the music started Ethel looked back at the floor, and her skirt flared, and she tried to relax.

The master of ceremonies walked up to the microphone and stopped the band. He asked for the audience vote, and pointed to each couple. Ethel looked at the floor, until she heard the applause . . . and her partner said.

"Hey, I think we won. Pretty funny."

She had won, and she looked up to see the master of ceremonies

handing her partner the bottle of champagne. Her partner finally introduced himself. He was Sid Simkin. He was a salesman. Draperies.

"I'm Ethel Belmar."

"Belmont?"

"No, lotsa people confuse the name. It's Belmar. B-E-L-M-A-R.

"Oh, I see. Well I suppose we oughta drink this stuff. Less you wanta save it for somethin' special. We could let it sit around and get old. It's supposed to taste better then, huh . . ."

Sid held the bottle away and smacked his lips. Ethel rubbed her hands together and waited. The music started again in foxtrot rhythm.

"Eddie's probably looking for me. He probably thinks he deserves some of this for tellin' me to dance."

"You did a very nice job."

"Ahh . . ."

Sid turned to Ethel and saw her waiting there. He sensed that she expected something. A drink of champagne. A few moments of conversation. A dance. Sid saw that she was not the kind of girl he usually spent time with, but he knew he should be polite — after the contest. And he thought, from the way she stood, just stood and waited for him, that she might be a very willing girl. And the week had just started.

"How about if we dance. Then we'll break the seal."

Sid held the bottle in his right hand, and put his hand around her waist. He drew her close and started to dance. Ethel felt her cheek brush his clean shaven face. She felt his arm pull her to him. She felt the heat of the July evening run through her body in heavy nervous waves of excitement.

They danced for a while, and then Sid looked at his watch and looked at Ethel, and said,

"Listen it's almost time for the music to stop, why don't you come back to my cabin and we can kill the champagne. I've got glasses and ice and everything. It's much cooler there. And we can talk. Y'know . . ."

Ethel looked at the floor. But instead of the hardwood surface, she could only see thin dark eyes and a moustache, and she felt the strange excitement that they conveyed. He was a very handsome man. Sylvia said *she* was attractive, but she couldn't believe it. She was a good dancer, but men don't care about that. Men don't really want women to live with. Not until they have to take them that way. Sid was a handsome man. But how was a woman to know if he was sincere. Or was that important? Now.

She looked back into his face, and forced a smile and replied,

"I . . . suppose so . . . But not too late . . . I . . . I want to play tennis early in the morning."

"Sure . . . Sure. We'll just have some of our victory champagne."

It was strange entering his cabin. It was strange and quiet and uncomfortable. She sat on the edge of the bed while Sid opened the bottle and poured the drinks. He turned and smiled and held out a glass to her. She took it, and he sat down next to her.

"So tell me about yourself."

Ethel took a sip of the wine, said it was good, and told Sid all about Chapman and Sons, and how it was a nice place to work, and how she'd been to other resorts and she thought this one was very nice, and how she liked to read quite a bit, and go to the movies, especially Cary Grant movies, and Clark Gable, even though they were old timers. Sid sat through the talk, looking at his glass and nodding.

"Y'know, you look somethin' like Clark Gable. Anybody ever tell you that?"

Sid smiled, and thought what the best answer would be.

"Heh, No . . . No one ever said that. That's pretty good. I should say thank you, but I wonder what Clark Gable would have to say about that."

Ethel laughed, and finished the champagne left in her glass. They talked some more. About salesmen, and draperies, and drank some more champagne. They finished the bottle. Sid took the last sip, and said . . .

"Well looks like we killed our prize huh?"

There was a silence, so like the one Ethel felt when she had walked into the cabin. The champagne had made her feel light. But her head was clear. She had been talking quite fluently, and suddenly she could think of nothing to say.

Sid reached over and took her empty glass. He put his and hers on the floor. The tap as the glasses touched seemed to echo in the still room. Ethel bit her lip and tried to say something. But she couldn't. She could think of nothing to say. Nothing. Sid turned back, and slowly reached over and put his hands on her shoulders. He moved closer and slid his hands down over her arms. He began pulling her slowly toward him. Ethel stiffened. She looked at him and thought how handsome he was. She felt his hands tighten on her arms and felt herself being pulled to him. She shivered and felt his cheek against hers. She breathed deeply and heavily, and asked herself at every breath: Is this how it is? Is this what I've been waiting for, looking for? Is this how I'll find him? Does he care? Do I

"The question caught in her throat as she felt his lips press on hers. He put his hands around her, tightened his grasp and began pulling her down on the bed. She writhed as his hands moved up and down her back. She tried to find an answer somewhere. Somewhere in her mind. Somewhere in the time of the last four summers. Was this what she'd been looking for? Was this the beginning? Was this how it began? Was

love this frightful, sudden meeting and sudden embracing? Could her man be so handsome? (But she was interesting.) Maybe Sylvia was right. Men do like girls they can talk to. Maybe he knew. Maybe it was all right. Maybe . . .

Sid slid his hand up the back of her dress to the catch on the zipper. He toyed gently with it at first, but finding it stuck decided to give it a quicker pull. He jerked his hand. Nothing. Then he pulled again sharply and there was a sudden sound of ripping cotton.

Ethel bolted upright. She turned and found that she was looking at herself in the mirror over Sid's dresser. She saw the terrible frightened expression on her face. She saw the sour turn of her mouth and the fear in her eyes. She felt a weighty emptiness in her stomach. As she looked, Sid's hands touched her shoulders. A sudden nausea shot through her. She stood up, and put her face in her hands.

"What's the matter baby? What's the matter?"

She could not even answer. She reached out and opened the door and somehow stumbled down the steps. Ethel ran, ran until she reached the porch of her cabin. The nausea beat within her stomach. It was not the champagne. She knew that. It was the game she had played. The game of hoping and the game of believing. Believing the nice things Sylvia had said. Believing more. Hoping that Sid was sincere. Hoping more. Looking at herself in the mirror she knew that the game had run ahead of her, that Sid had never seen the new red dress, but had run his fingers beneath it. Sid had never looked in her green eyes, but had come close enough to kiss her.

She clung tightly to the porch rail as the wave of nausea passed, then she relaxed. It was simple. She could go back to New York and wait. Wait behind the desk at Chapman and Sons for someone to notice her very green eyes. She could go back to Sylvia's parties and stand and talk to the different men who managed to come occasionally. Or she could go to Philadelphia, and stay with her aunt for a while, and try to get a different job. Or maybe all the way to Seattle where her grandmother lived. She could stay there a year and work in that wonderful climate. And if she liked it, then . . . Or maybe she could go back into her cabin and go to bed, and in the morning she would be all right.

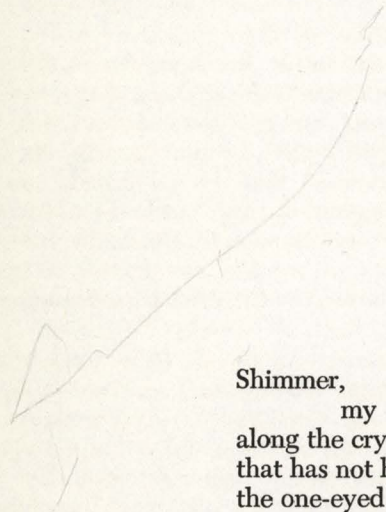
She would go down to the lakefront, and sit in her two piece bathing suit, and talk to the girls. She would go up to the cocktail lounge at four o'clock in her new print dress and have a drink. She would go to the dance hall and wait, and sit, and someone would ask her to dance. She was a very good dancer. And it would be all right.

Ethel put her hand on the railing, straightened up, took a deep breath of the late night air, and slowly climbed the steps to the cabin. She opened the door, walked in and stood for a moment looking at the

suitcase sitting by her dresser. She slipped out of her shoes, eased over to the bed and sat down. She watched as the night breeze ruffled the dresses hanging on the back of the door. She was tired. She would go to sleep. And tomorrow morning she would go to the lakefront. And it would be all right.

Lee H. Kalcheim

Poem



Shimmer,
 my soul
along the crystal rim
that has not heard
the one-eyed gull of love
crying to the moon and her
 that we are one.

George Rand

A Glance at Childhood

I was born in, and have lived all of my life in the same house. It is an ugly old yellow frame three-family house. In the back yard are five maple trees. In the small burnt-out clay plot which we sometimes call the front yard, for lack of a better term, is a large stump, leveled with the ground. When I was a child there was a very large, old elm tree there, a tree which shaded the front porch in the summer time, and which served as a source of great pride to me since it was the largest, highest tree in the neighborhood. With the exception of this tree, and of a few faces which have gone, the view on our street is quite the same. It is a very long street, level, and lined with oak and elm trees. The houses and stores which line it all have the same tired, lived in look. Sitting on the front porch (second floor) you can see for a half mile in each direction before the lines of trees come together.

When I was three, the world was much larger, but it only went as far as the corner. I can't remember the winters too well; yes, there were snowball fights, and different things to eat, but it is the summers that I remember best. We played tag, and hop-sotch, house, marbles. It is only recently, at least in my neighborhood, that "boys' games" and "girls' games" have become distinctly separated. And when we tired of playing with the twirlers which fell from the maple trees, the horse chestnuts, when we were out of marbles, or too few in numbers to get up a good game of hide and seek, we waited with childish patience for the punching-bag man.

There is a time of day — I can't say now just when it is, — when the adults disappear from the streets, and only the children are left to disturb the quiet. It comes some time in the late afternoon, for I can remember the quality of the light; rather soft and dusty, and very warm. It was at this time that the punching-bag man would come each day — no, not each day, but perhaps once or twice a week. We could see him coming for many blocks, trotting along like a boxer doing his road-work. He always wore the same gray suit, and when he came close to our block we could make out the steel rimmed spectacles, the close cropped gray hair, and finally the bland vacant smile on his face. It was the same every time; one of us would see him approaching from a distance, and rush to spread the news. Even the cry was the same; free hits on the punching-bag man! When the pack had gathered, we would all troup down to the corner he was approaching, to shout our greetings as he crossed the side street to our block. The whole pattern would repeat itself, as he accosted the nearest of the group and asked "Ya know what

I'm gonna give ya fer Christmas?" After we had all jubilantly and obediently shouted no, he would respond "A jackass!" All this time he continued on at his fast trot. Having finished his part, he settled down with even greater seriousness to the process of propelling himself down the block. Now that it was our turn to ask the questions one of the number would blurt out the rest of the verbal portion of the ritual: "D'ya know what I'm gonna give you? A punchinably!!! This was dispensed with the greatest rapidity so that we could get to the task of pummeling him as soon as possible. Since none of us was allowed to cross the street at the end of the block, we had to leave him there. After waving a cheerful good-by we would return to our serious playing back in the middle of the block. When the summer ended, we went indoors to play with toy soldiers, and the skies turned gray with the falling snow.

So many things occur to me now. I wonder how this game started. I can't remember if it went on for one summer or more, or if the children in the blocks before and after ours played the same game. There were no children on the other side of the street at that time, and our friend could have crossed it to avoid us; I don't remember ever having seen him on that side. But what disturbs me most is my acceptance, at the time, of the game; My playmates and I never questioned the game or the rules. We were never told by our parents (who may or may not have seen the often-repeated spectacle) that what we were doing was unkind. We were always sure that the punching bag man existed to be hit, that he enjoyed it as much as we did, and that things were as they should be.

Many years later I asked my mother if she remembered this man, and if she knew what had happened to him. He had been a prize fighter, she said, or rather an ex-prize fighter, punch drunk, a little crazy, but harmless. He worked a few hours a week as a coffee grinder in a small plant at the other end of the avenue. One day he had come home from work, turned on the oven and quietly committed suicide. That was in winter-time. When summer came again, we went out to play and grow with the trees. If the punching bag man was gone we thought nothing of it being little concerned with anything but this summer.

My story is over; in our psychologically oriented world every detail is easily explainable. I need feel no guilt for having been an ordinary three-year old, and certainly it is senseless to seek to "blame" anything as large as mankind, for allowing what happened to happen. The elm tree died of Dutch elm disease; the old man died of a sick mind and loneliness (to which our actions could contribute little if any burden), and I live to see, and think, and remember.

John Avallone

A Bit of Americana

The potting shed paused, gaspingly picked up its sides, and fell heavily onto the strawberry garden.

(“And with a bit of hammer and nail . . . perhaps, a coat of paint . . .”)

The corroded singlement of the carriage house, knowing only the damp of moulding rain, cried softly for a loss of sapling tears.

(“ . . . certainly, chintz and hepplewhite in the room where “he” slept.”)

The cherry trees do their springtime best to bear a bare blossom, and then fall short of their summer promise.

(“Could you dare ask more of a two-hundred year old tree?”)

The purple panes of the colonial dowager glanced angry glances into the translucent gaze of the supermarket beyond the hedgerows.

— *Paul H. Briger*

For Oedipus, Dionysus Danced

Hands strained upward, condemn
And strike to quell disgrace.
Wild tears plummeting red
Rain on the marble floor.
Distorted features scream
Insane cries to damned fates,
And once adored crimson falls
To mark a palid breast
Below the self destroying man.

Mangled in damning protest
You met your violent death
Tortured by simple fate.

Today, books reveal the cause,
And we are instructed to know
Forces we cannot change.
The enlightened age of muted reaction,
Of finite involvement,
Has gained one universal end..
The rot of calm surrender—
The rot of stagnant protest
Alone reflect our tragic age.

Fate heeded not your brutal cries
Nor sights of scarlet stone,
And there were no books to quiet
Your raging disbelief,
But the satyrs mourned your dying,
And it made Dionysus dance.

Wm. DeColigny

Response

It was one of those cold winter afternoons when the snow from the previous night had settled under foot and the wind had temporarily slackened. The sun had been out all morning, but now the gray clouds had once again shrouded the sky and everything was bathed in a sterile half-light. The birch trees stood silently naked against the ominous backdrop of the mountains and the ice slept placidly on the pond.

I reached the top of the hill and sat down on the rock wall which marked the edge of Mr. Lowell's property. I used to often come up there during the summer months to watch the cows and the plough horses graze on the hillside. Now there was nothing to see except a few tufts of grass which stuck out through the unpatched holes in the ivory quilt. I knew where the pasture ended and where each of Mrs. Lowell's vegetable plots lay, but now they were all hidden below the same layer of white powder. In the distance I could see the tops of the farm buildings but the fir trees shrouded the rest from my view. A thin wisp of black smoke rose from the main house and I watched it in its ascent as it slowly assimilated into the oncoming darkness. I tried to watch it actually disappear but realized that I could only see a hazy billow as it was ravenously enveloped by the darker clouds.

I heard voices from the other side of the hill and turned my head in that direction. I didn't see anybody but realized that there could easily be men chopping or collecting brush in the thickly camouflaged woods below. I listened again but the voices had stopped and the only audible sound was the far-away lament of a scavenger crow.

The early December darkness was beginning to descend on the hilltop and I jumped down from the wall. My fingers were beginning to itch from the cold so I pushed my hands deep into my jacket pockets and walked over to the path. The snow had banked curiously in one spot and had formed an almost perfect sphere. I stopped for a moment to try to kick the ball of snow down the hill but it was only powder and fell apart from the blow.

As I approached the clearing at the bottom I again heard the voices. This time they were much closer and I stopped to find out where they were coming from. I looked over at the woods but realized that the sound was coming from behind me. I turned around and walked over in that direction. The voices continued but only in short whispers, and I knew that it would be difficult to follow them in the darkness. It was still only about five o'clock but when the sun wasn't out, the late afternoon was almost as dark as the night.

I continued trudging through the hardened snow and soon arrived at the low wall which surrounded the cemetery. I never liked this part of the valley and usually took the other route, around the pond. Even in the summer, when the tall grasses almost covered the headstones, I felt a fearful shudder reverberate down my spine whenever I passed this spot. I had never thought much about death but secretly felt a great fear about it whenever the subject was brought up. I could never fully believe that people went to Heaven or to Hell when they died and whenever I passed a grave-yard, I always was obsessed with uncomfortable visions of the decaying bodies that were imprisoned below me in the earth. I remember that once, when I was about six or seven, I had told Granny that I never wanted to be buried in the ground if I should die.

"Heavens, child, now who put such thoughts in your tiny head? Everybody is buried away so that when the Day of Judgment arrives, God will know where everybody is."

"Yes, I know," I had replied, "but don't the insects and the moles dig through the casket and eat you up?"

Granny had uttered a little cry of horror and slapped me on the hand ". . . And don't you ever say such a thing again."

Then she had rushed out of the room and I remember that as she reached the door she turned around and looked at me again and that her face was white and she was afraid.

I crouched down behind a fir tree because the whispers were coming from the cemetery and I didn't want to be seen. I peeked through the boughs and saw a dull light reflecting off one of the grave stones. It cast a yellowish-gray shadow on the snow and a black form was silhouetted against the rock face. I was afraid to move from my hiding place but knocked some of the snow off the tree so that I could see better. There were two figures hunched over a lantern. One was standing and holding a shovel; the other was crouched and seemed to be digging with a small trowel.

I held my breath and continued watching the pair. They were both digging now and I watched the pile of dirt as it slowly crept up towards a crucifix which stood above a near-by tomb. They stopped for a moment and I silently prayed that they not know of my presence. I trembled as the taller man walked towards my hiding place, but he only was carrying the lantern closer to the grave and I breathed in relief. Now I could clearly see the two men. The taller man had stepped down into the hole and the light outlined his bony features. He wore a misshapen black hat and his face was covered with a scraggly growth. His friend was hatless and had a twisted scar which ran from his forehead

down to his left cheek. He wore a tattered brown overcoat and workman's gloves.

I looked up for a moment and realized that it was now completely dark and that the stars and moon were obliterated by the dark clouds. I was afraid, but at the same time thankful, for the sanctuary which the black night afforded me. When I returned my gaze to the grave-robbers, I saw that they had reached the casket and that the top had been layed aside on the snow. I saw them stuffing various articles into a large carpet bag and soon the short man climbed out of the hole. I expected them to replace the top of the casket and re-fill the hole but instead they brushed the dirt from their clothing and prepared to depart. They picked up the lantern and lifted it above their heads. I guess they were making sure that no one had observed their act for they seemed relieved when they lowered the light. Then they blew out the flame and departed. They walked toward the far side of the cemetery and I could hear the hollow echo of their crunching footsteps retreating across the packed snow. I waited until I was sure that they were not returning and then cautiously tip-toed to the wall. I knew that I should go right home but a compelling force seemed to remonstrate with my reasoning. I climbed over the wall and crept over to the open pit. I wanted to look down, but at the same time was greatly affrighted by the prospect of what lay in this mysterious abyss.

The match flickered weakly in the cold night air and I had to cup it in my hand. I kneeled and slowly lowered the light to the rim of the grave. Then I braced myself on my elbows and looked down. I jumped back in horrified alarm. The robbers had torn every valuable vestment from the body and the newly bared portions of the anatomy were covered with a veritable army of crawling insects. As I stood trembling against the adjoining head-stone I knew that I would have to look again. "Now I must look at the face," I thought to myself, "the face of death." I knelt again and lowered another match to the pit. I looked again and as the sickly ray or light rested in the casket I screamed with the pitch of one obsessed with the Devil. My body was shaking wildly as I climbed to my feet and as I ran and ran I was hardly conscious of who or where I was. Only to keep running, to get away, to forget.

Finally, exhausted, I fell onto a pile of snow. It was cold but my shaking body was not even cognizant of the sensation. I could only lie there, terrified, the vivid image still so firmly implanted in my mind. Then slowly my thoughts began to collect. . . .

At first glance, it had been just as I had imagined. Ugly insects crawling everywhere . . . destroying, desecrating . . . great gaping holes that gleamed reflections of horror from the exposed inner sanctum of bone and tissue . . . And yet, it was not the physical horror which so

affrighted me. I had always expected such a sight. But the expression on the face . . . the tortured, contorted face of death . . . it was this silent mask which so penetrated into my emotions. Although the physical contours, the once-human shaping, was totally obliterated, there still remained a provocative, an almost taunting expression, which pierced so deeply into my mind. It was fear. There was no escape, no solace, no hope . . . only an anguished appeal for release; release from the extreme horror of the grave.

And as I lay in the snow, my hands pressed hotly against my undeceived eyes, I suddenly began to laugh. And I could not stop for the irony of the truth drove me to hysterical understanding. And I could not erase the burning image of my Granny — of her reaction to my childish yet so poignant exhortation . . . and of the expression which had suffused her blanched face.

A. Timothy Baum

Outdoor Exhibition

This picture was a sunny photograph
of our love, a smile, a laugh
when we came here last.

The time before in orange evening red
a new-love portrait hung instead,
captured the richness of a day just passed.

The first time here, a windy summer day
a crisply chipped mosaic lay
of flirtations in a frame as greenly grassed.

Today, my single-pictured gallery
becomes a field again, in front of me
a muddy pool reflecting half a love held fast.

T. R. Swift

The Visit

I watched down the road
after you; then on the road
in front of the house
I saw a cloud of smoke
you left behind,
lingering.

I watched it rise until
it disappeared . . . until
you disappeared again
into the air and,
I looked and smiled
and breathed you in
and went inside.

Lee H. Kalcheim

Arthur Wetzel

"Damn, kid, further shenanigans and carryings on will land you out of the school, if I have a chance to talk." The soft, pudgy-faced man sat back hard in his swivel chair, and cracked his rather formless knuckles with the moist palm of his left hand. The boy who stood before the desk, ran his arm across his mouth so that he would have a chance to straighten the lines of amusement from his lips. It was to little avail and the other beginning to crack the knuckles of his other hand screamed uncontrollably at the youth to leave. Pep arose quickly and spryly, turned his broad, strong body and left the office, ducking slightly as he passed through the inadequate door that had been allotted for the small office of Mr. Wetzel.

It was always like that on the Sundays that Arthur Wetzel had the job of checking in the boys from their weekends. The second the six o'clock bell rang, he would write down the names of those who had not yet arrived and push the list into the box. One boy swore that he actually saw the middle-aged, elementary algebra teacher turn ahead the master clock of the school one Sunday night. Yes, the man was different there were no two ways about that, but the students guessed what prompted his actions until they were seniors and never were able to put their thoughts into words until they had been out and given a chance to grow in a world more realistic.

The boy who had just walked out of Arthur's office was able to grin because he knew that it was one of the last times that he would ever have to put up with one of the man's unpredictable eruptions. For three years he had swallowed unprompted explosions with a certain amount of fear, but he was beginning to look a little deeper or rather to sense that the screaming was being driven by a more complicated source than the indignation accrued from the violation of petty rules.

His first scene with Wetzel had been in his freshman year. He had managed to get out of the winter term dance just long enough to look at his somewhat underdeveloped goddess in taffeta, and to get up the nerve he needed to kiss her because he wanted to and not because the milk bottle had pointed its neck towards him. Young eyes were just closed when older eyes saw the two dark shadows beside the gym. Wetzel crept across the hard, packed snow to the spot where D. H. Lawrence was having preliminary rites enacted over his principles. Up-and down came his hands, each on a shoulder, wrenching apart the horrified young couple. When the initial shock wore off and the growl of Wetzel had subsided, the heretofore propped open eyes of the little

girl fell closed and tears streamed down her frosty red cheeks. The boy just stared with disbelief at the man and blinked very fast to keep the tears below the overflow point. Wetzel dropped his hands from their shoulders to their elbows and marched with them back towards the music with one on each side. Before the door was opened the man looked at them, snorting white air from one nostril and mucus from the other saying: "You two should have more sense than to--to be acting that way. W-what do you think we're running here?" His shoulders heaved and he turned quickly, running down the steps from the temporary ball room. He drew a flashlight from his pocket and played its beam on the neighboring bushes as he went. This allowed the terrified pair to re-enter the party, little puppies who had just had their noses dirtied in reprisal for their boldness.

The second trouble of major consideration occurred near the end of the spring term of Pep's junior year. It was the Sunday afternoon following the big dance. As always there was a picnic and the boys looked forward to it with relish for they knew that the rolling fields of the Berkshires set off from one another by stone walls and interspersed with trees, would afford them the privacy they desired to make awkward advances on the bodies of their dates. Pep was in high spirits as he walked down the road with the date he had rather cleverly procured from the neighboring high school. He knew that all the girls in high schools and this one in particular were built of different moral stuff from those with which he danced under the strictest surveillance, at the neighboring schools. His generalization had been accurate as far as this young thing went. After fried chicken and potato salad they led one another through the woods to a spot which was beyond the sounds of the group and indeed, very grassy and pleasant. She readily accepted his first kiss and it wasn't long before the couple was thrashing around on the ground naked to the waist, shut off from all the world but Arthur Wetzel who had seen them leave the party and had stealthily followed. He watched them for several minutes from behind a clump of rather young and thick pines; then advanced with his head turned in an opposite direction from where the action was taking place. His eyes were strained to the side however, as he said in a voice rising to a cracking tenor, "This is not a hatchery but a boarding school and I am not willing to ignore such filthy beha-behavior. Get dressed immediately and return to the group with me, an--and as for you young man, Mr. Halpin will hear of this and your position in this school may be considered at best a precarious one." The poor girl grabbed her sweater and underthings and tore down through the woods she knew so well just as fast as her tight skirt would allow. Wetzel's weak, blue eyes followed the firm rear end until it was out of sight and then slowly pulled his head back to his captive.

The next day there were a few words between Pep and the headmaster but the "precarious position" turned into one demerit.

Wetzel pulled Arthur to his full five feet six and stared through the window of his ground floor office. His eyes fell upon a bush and dropped to a point at which the stem entered the ground, there to become transfixed and to lose focus and look through it. His mind strayed not with imaginative expectation but simply to recall incidents. He had never really done anything correctly. Nothing had ever worked for him as it had for others. There was no part of his life that anyone could ever point to and say, "I wish that I could have done that as well as Wetzel," or "Only Wetzel could have done that." He had failed miserably at sports when he was a boy not even being capable of watching the flag in "capture the flag."

Trying soccer in high school, he had literally kicked himself off his feet, and to make things worse cried while on the ground. "Try cross-country," said the anxious father of the boy. No luck there, for Arthur would break out into terrific coughing fits on running 150 yards. "Well, the boy wasn't built to beat himself to death," said his mother, "He takes after me and was meant to think." And think the boy did. About saving himself from being thrown out of school for the lack of good grades and of why he had no friends, and of how hard it was to get some one to talk to him for more than two minutes. No one wanted to be seen with the soft, uncoordinated, dandruffy, scaley faced, stupid slob. If money could have glazed over his incapacities it wasn't given a chance for he never had any.

Arthur Wetzel would never admit to anyone that anything hurt him; least of all to himself. Probably the cuts that came closest to escaping repression were those dosed out by the females of Arthur's acquaintance. Once, due to parental insistence, he was invited to a birthday party. No game could be played until he left the circle of youngsters for the devils in muslin refused to even be near him.

Rather plain Marylou, the "smartest" girl in the class, with whom no one else would go out, laughed at him when he called her on the phone and asked with a quaking voice if she would go to the movie with him. At the high school graduation he ended up picking up paper plates after the mid-night supper, afraid to place himself under the scornful remarks of his father for returning home at such an early time. College at the state university was a nightmare of greater and lesser sorts for he was exposed to that many more things he was unable to do. The size of the place had made it possible for him to lose himself and after his freshman year, he took a tiny room off-campus in which he was able to study the fourteen hours a day which were required for his making the minimum grade. He once managed to get a six foot girl weighing one hun-

dred and seventy depraved pounds up to his room. The sight of his sad little body had so convulsed her when he stepped nude from the closet, that she put her clothes on as fast as her shaking hands would allow, and went down the stairs sending the shrieks of laughter which escaped her trembling lips all over the building.

On graduation, he applied for and got a job teaching elementary algebra at the school where he and his wife are today. He did find a girl to marry him. The summer after his last semester at the university, he was living at home. One night on the completion of his twelfth consecutive hour of television, he walked ten blocks to an all-night cafeteria. Behind the counter was a rather old girl of thirty. She was not a woman for she had not lived through the normal life of a girl. Her high forehead was not creased by any worry lines. She was too dull to worry. Her body was a type of soggen oval, with knock-knees near one end and a small head at the other sporting stringy brown hair. Bent yellow teeth subtracted from or rather, rounded off her appearance. She did not grin at Arthur as he finished his hot-dog and payed. She simply looked and he looked back, even daring to drag his hand across hers when he got his change. He saw her again and again in a courtship devoid of interest.

His wedding day came. The Justice-of-the-Peace had to send out to the streets to get witnesses, for both of the couple's parents thought their children were being cheated and refused to attend. While they were *en route* to a town ten miles away the battered foreign car that Arthur had started to buy, chugged to a halt, and the first night was spent in the back seat. Both had imprints from the door handles and ash trays on them; especially Arthur.

The couple moved into the two room suite in one of the school dormitories and have lived there for twelve years. In his first class Arthur saw a little fellow with very little mathematical aptitude quake with fear when he yelled at him in impatience. And so he wailed through the years. One boy said that he thought the flare-ups were worst at dances, picnics, and Sunday night check-ins.

Wetzel whipped his head about as a hurried knock was sounded at the door.

Joseph O. Humphreys

Notes on Contributors

JOHN AVALLONE '59 gives us a DeMaupassant-like story. TIM BAUM, a senior returns to *THE REVIEW* with some fiction. PAUL BRIGER and STEVEN CROCKETT both juniors and *REVIEW* editors contribute poetry. (Mr. Briger will be next year's Editor in Chief) WILLIAM DE COLIGNY, a senior exhibits some more of his poetry, while WILLIAM GALE, a freshman is seen for the first time in *THE REVIEW* with his short story. BEN HUBBY a newcomer to *THE REVIEW* and JOE HUMPHREYS, a new editor, contribute fiction. Both are juniors. LEE KALCHEIM, senior and editor in chief and GIL MAKIN, a junior and a newly appointed editor, display some of their work. LOU RENZA and GEORGE RAND, sophomore poets, are again represented in *THE REVIEW*. THOMAS SWIFT, a junior gives us two poems. A translation of Chinese poetry marks the first appearance of YING YUM YAM, a senior. MISS JANE YOLEN, a Smith senior brightens *THE REVIEW* with her poem, Rhinoceros.

