A Fine Night For A Sail
James P. Foley

Two Poems
Richard Eberhart

Two Poems
William Bronk

The Thorns of Life
Jacque Hopkins
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EDITORIAL

WITH the appearance of William Carlos Williams in our last issue, we began significantly our program of bringing to our readers previously unpublished work by known writers. Mr. Williams suggested the quality which we hoped subsequent appearances by other writers would quantify: Mr. Eberhart and Mr. Bronk have helped us to avoid violating the confidence of our audience established by Mr. Williams.

Richard Eberhart represents a later school of modern poetry than does Mr. Williams. His poems, while often difficult, are never lazy, dull or trite. Those of his latest published collection, Undercliff, although of comparatively "wider range and greater diversity," seem especially to have a center of force, a strong controlling sensibility. He never seems overcautious in his choice of language and rhythm, and this willingness to take chances is what arrests our imagination.

William Bronk, later still than Mr. Eberhart in this age of modern poetry, gives us two very interesting poems. More particularly, it is his handling of rhythm which immediately interests us. Aware of the extents to which many poets have gone, typographically and otherwise, to achieve technical uniqueness (often unsuccessfully), we cannot help admiring Mr. Bronk's technique and particularly his ear. And we are grateful for highly individual work which is like no one else's. What we have seen of his work—these poems and a scattering of others in other magazines—suggests that he is a writer of unusual interest, and on this evidence, although slight, that he deserves more attention than he has received.

J. R. B.

CONTRIBUTORS

JAMES FOLEY, a junior, has previously published in The Trinity Review. He was recently made an associate editor of this magazine.

RICHARD EBERHART'S Selected Poems won the Shelley Memorial Award in 1951. At present he teaches English at the University of Connecticut.

WILLIAM BRONK studied at Dartmouth. His poetry has appeared in The New Yorker.

JACQUE HOPKINS, a native of Illinois, has published several fine stories in The Trinity Review.

CHESTER RINGHEISER, a veteran, appears for the first time in these pages. His verse is part of a longer work.

RONALD RICHARDSON received the Review prize for poetry last fall. A sophomore, he was recently made an associate editor of this magazine.

WAYNE SCHOYER has been art editor of this magazine for two years. His illustrations are effective and harmonious, and their presence gives a visual interest to the magazine.

ROGER HARMON, a senior, has contributed poetry and prose to earlier issues of this magazine.

HERBERT PARK was awarded the Review prize for fiction last fall. A senior, he is an associate editor of this magazine.
It was with deep regret that we learned of the death of Jack Boyer in Philadelphia on March 6 of this year. The Editors feel that contributors, subscribers, and readers share with them their sense of loss in his untimely death and join with them in this expression of sympathy to his family and friends. Before his transfer at midyear to the University of Pennsylvania, Jack was an associate editor of the *Trinity Review*. He had a genuine interest in this magazine and his contributions, possessed of a very distinct verbal aptness, added qualitatively to each issue in which they appeared.

We are saddened and perplexed by his death, but because we feel that he would not have wished it, we shall indulge in no timeless lamentations. Rather, to one who will not be forgotten in the noise and importance of tomorrow, we dedicate this number of the *Trinity Review*. 
“I get too hungry for dinner at eight,  
I go to operas and never come late—”

MICHAEL stared ruefully into the bot­
tom of the glass he was holding,  
swirled the ice cubes around, and  
finished off the gin and tonic. “Well, might  
as well go honor one of the young lovelies,” he  
muttered, and turned to place the glass on the  
bar.

“What did you say you wanted, sir?”

Michael gazed with a kind of pity at the  
small bartender with white starched coat, his  
waxed bowtie repeating his absurd mustache.

“You want to know something, buddy. If  
you put a cap on, you’d be a dead ringer for a  
gas station attendant.”

“That’s the lady is a tramp.”

“Christ, I must be getting tight. I always  
get brave when I’m tight.” He began to walk  
slowly around the crowded dance floor, his  
impeccably tailored black dinner jacket con­
spicuous against the dizzy whirl of organdy,  
tulle, and dacron. He had never worn a  
white dinner jacket. In what he liked to refer  
to as his younger days (“My God,” he some­
times said. “Am I really twenty-five?”), it  
had given him no little pleasure to hear some  
sweet young thing exclaim; “But you do—you  
look so distinguished in black with everyone  
else in white!”

Carefully avoiding the stag-line of boys with  
receding pimples and blooming artificial red  
carnations in their button-holes, Michael cut  
in on a cute blonde and whirled her expertly  
away at a fast debutante pace.

“I don’t think I know you.”

“I’m Mrs. Pearson’s little boy Michael, dear.”

(Oh, Christ, you’re not funny Pearson, drop it).

“You’re Michael Pearson?”

“Yep.”

“And do you really play the piano at a club  
in the Village?”

“Yes.”

“Oh, I just adore the Village. It’s so sort  
of picturesque with all those arty people around.  
Do you know what I mean?”

“Yes,” responded Michael automatically,  
thinking of all the arty queers he met each  
day.

“You don’t seem to like to talk about your­
self. I think it’s fun to talk about one’s self.  
I go to Miss Finch’s School.”

“And do they teach you to keep it until you  
are married at Miss Finch’s School?”

“What did you say?”

“I said, can’t you stop batting those damned  
eyelashes. Look, I’m sorry, but I have to leave  
—been swell meeting you.” Then he added,  
“You look as though you could take care of  
yourself all right.” With the compliment from  
Mike Pearson, “You know who plays in the Vil­
lage,” ringing in her ears, she ran off.

Michael started with relief toward the bar,  
thinking egotistically, “She’ll probably tell all  
his friends that I tried to seduce her.” Half­
way to the bar, he saw the mustache, remem­
bered the previous wisecrack, and turned toward  
the other bar.

“Why Michael, where have you been all  
evening? Are you being a nice boy and danc­
ing with all the girls?”

“Oh, hello mother.” “Christ,” he thought,  
“how does she do it? Must be forty-five and  
she merely looks like an experienced deb.”

“Michael dear, please don’t drink too much.  
After I present the Yachting Trophy to Mal­
colm I want you to play some of your cute  
little songs.”

Michael leaned up against one of the pillars
supporting the canopy, twined with garlands and evil-smelling gardenias, and looked down at his mother, Mrs. Pearson, the party-giver. She was small, with a boy's slender figure, her softly curled hair reaching just to the nape of her neck, encircling a face that at first glance seemed always to be laughing. "Mother, dammit, you know I didn't come all the way from New York just to be exhibited at one of your stupid parties."

She puckered up her face, looking more like a child than ever, and with a flirtatious motion, stood on tiptoe to fix one of the gardenias in her son's lapel.

Michael instantly regretted his brusqueness as his mother looked up at him, her fingers clenching his coat so tightly that they paled, a new look of urgency in her face. They stood there silently, gazing deeply into each other, oblivious to the gay tunes, to the laughing couples which surrounded them. Michael had had this feeling just once before. He had come home from prep school one vacation to find the house a kaleidoscope of people, drinks, and urgent pulsating music. Being weary, he had gone upstairs only to find his mother waiting for him. He had proudly unpacked the symbols of his success at school, the varsity letter, the dance souvenirs, talking gaily all the time, not noticing his mother's silence. Finally, there was the inevitable break in the monologue. Michael had become very much embarrassed as he prepared for bed, his mother showing no inclination to leave, and it was with some mixed feelings that he approached her to say goodnight. They gazed into each other's eyes for a long while that night, an expression of something like hopeful curiosity on her face.

Now Michael read it all again. It was clearer now, what he had not seen before; the short-lived, frenzied marriage that had produced him, the traveling from place to place, never settling down, the many strange men that never remained. Then there were the parties, marked by hopeless urgency, the revolving shells thinking each bottle was the last, but there was always one more. Trying to believe that each dance was the last, but savage beats seemed to carry one along forever. Toolatetoolatetoolate, the music shrilled as Mrs. Pearson now looked up at her son, asking for help, for an escape. He wanted to tell her that he'd do anything for her, that he'd play the damned—

"I hate to break up such a charming family scene, but may I have this dance?"

"Oh, excuse me, Malcolm. Michael and I were just talking. Remember, Mike. After I present the trophy."

And she danced off, carefree and laughing gaily at something Malcolm said. Michael
watched them until they were lost among the others and then again took up his march to the bar. He asked for gin and tonic, drank it fast, and with another in his hand wandered away aimlessly. Dirty bastard, he thought. Why don't you leave her alone? Can't you see that she doesn't belong here, that the party is over? It's not what she's looking for! Savagely he tore at the small flower she had fixed in his lapel. As he threw it, broken, to the ground, a slight breeze lifted it, toyed with it momentarily, and then let it drop. He realized then that he was on the veranda of the club. He sank into a large chaise lounge, sobering a bit, listening to the sibilant murmurings of the waves as they lapped against the seawall directly below him. It seemed to him now that it had always been like this. Beneath it all was his mother. She sent him to school, to college, backed his fraternity liquor bills, bought him boats, horses, had given him everything. But dammit, why couldn't she lay off. 'T've left the nest,' he said aloud. That's trite but true. But she still keeps trying to support me, to bring me into her way of life. Can't she realize that when I want something I can ask for it? She's trying to hold me—bitch would like me to be a watchfob she can dangle. Oh mother I don't mean that—for God's sake, forgive me. Some sense told him that the music had stopped, and he entered the ballroom in time to hear Mrs. Pearson present the trophy to Malcolm. 'And now, if you would all like to look under the tables and try to find my son Michael, I'm sure that he would be delighted to play a few of his avant-garde little tunes for us.'

Bitch, he thought. And then, whoa Michael my boy. Remember, this is mama's party. Amid a great deal of suppressed whispering and tittering, he walked to the bar, refilled his glass, and after looking at his mother for a long moment (mother, why won't you come down to me, won't you leave this with me?) turned to the piano, ignoring the ingratiating little man who made room for him. Well, here he was, in his element, amusing people. Some of his confidence restored, he turned to the audience to introduce his song.

"Kiddies, the name of this first number is *Be Prepared*. This song, whose title of course is the motto of the Boy Scouts, is a rousing anthem dedicated to that worthy institution."

"Be prepared, that's the Boy Scout Marching song—,”

Looking up from the keyboard, he saw the face of the blonde he had danced with earlier in the evening.

"Don't solicit for your sister, that's not nice, Unless you get a good percentage of the price."

There's something to write home about, sister—a real parent shocker. Talk about your liberal education. Once he looked up and saw his mother. He had a scowl on his face, and her eyes were saying, "I'm sorry, Michael."

And so it went for an hour. The tinted tunes, the suggestive glances at fashionably embarrassed girls, the requests for drinks that were eagerly filled, all as much a part of his repertoire as the tunes themselves. Finally, with the professional intuition that knows when to leave the audience in an appreciative mood, he stopped, knowing that one more would transform their feeling of being well-fed into one of nausea. As he got up from the piano, trying to focus his eyes on the crowd and single out his mother, he realized that he was quite tight. (Almost time to stop, Michael, old boy. Mustn't let yourself get drunk.) Michael drew a very fine line between being tight and drunk, but now the line blurred. He had a vehement objection to members of his sex who draped their arms around each other... drunk, Michael would say. After contemplating the danger of this happening to him, he reassured himself, and went for another drink. Squinting his eyes against the glare of his cigarette lighter, he again scanned the crowd, looking for his mother. He saw her, alone for a moment, sitting on the edge of the dance floor. She was nodding to the persons who passed her, her face...
wreathed in an appreciative smile as though she were acknowledging something she knew was her due. Michael imagined the words flung at her in passing, “Such a lovely party, Mrs. Pearson,” and “I don’t see how you do it.” (God, Mother, do you really want these words? Are you satisfied with them and Malcolm and the others, and are they what you really need? Look at me now, Mother. Look at me now the way you did the night I came home from school, for I can understand now, Mother, I’ve reached you.)

Abruptly she rose, and walked out onto the veranda. From the other end of the room, Michael saw her, put down his drink, and followed. Outside the white moon was the center of everything, the heart of everything, and it seemed to Michael as though the stars were being drawn to it. Bathed in its soft light, his mother was almost invisible against the white chaise. As he approached, she lifted her hand to him until their fingertips barely brushed, and together they looked at each other and listened for a long time until the sounds of the sea drowned out the disturbances from within.

“Do you know something, Michael? It’s a fine night for a sail.”
RIGHT AFTER SHE DIED

She lies still warm who will not ever now
be warm again, her body limp and all
her barriers as though they never were.

How like a sleeping child, yet even then,
even asleep, one thinks she could not lie
so easy, so unwary. Life in her

Was a hurt she hastened to repay. Pain
given and taken, the gauge of its forcefulness.
She shied behind the tissues of her scars.

What demons gentle death has exorcised.
Oh, pity her! Life, be kind to us
when hunger bites at the starving guts of love.

William Bronk

IDOLS OF IMAGINATION

I put the idols by. I left the place;
I journeyed where the eagles are
To sail upon necessity
Under a lucid star.

Far out upon the sea
Where talon meets the fin
I was perplexed again
As pure thinkers are.

What natural act can teach
Up to the soul's reach,
Though killer and killed are one,
What but idols of imagination?

Grant me then one lucid star
And freedom give me now
To cast the dual nature out,
But net idolatry,—who knows how?

Richard Eberhart

JOE'S JITTERS

Everything is fastened down to the floor.
I can't move anything in here any more.
I can't get out of this house,
or close the door.

William Bronk

THE GLANCE

Cold nights in December are pure,
The moon is my metal.
A glance for a long thought
To tell
that all
is well.

Enrapture my blessing
Immediacy of perception.
Concentrate my purpose
To tell
that all
is well.

Truth, instantaneous,
Have no other message.
Other times and other men
Will tell
that all
is well.

Cold nights in December are pure,
The moon is my metal.
Come year—all heaven and hell,
And tell
that all
is well.

Richard Eberhart
Mid-Season Check Up
by Ronald Richardson, '56

MAHLER, mobiles, and The Caine Mutiny Court Martial have been early highlights of the round of activities which will comprise Hartford's contribution to the arts this season.

The arrival of Fritz Mahler on the musical scene was an auspicious event not easily over-rated. Mr. Mahler brings with him musicianship of the first order and an unwavering vitality, which has been a great impetus to orchestra and audience alike. The four concerts which we have already heard this season have been arresting and by-and-large well performed. If the more conservative section of the audience has notice with regret the absence of Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms from this season's schedule, certainly the avant-garde has noticed with great pleasure the inclusion of Barber, Bartok, and William Schuman. New works directed by a new conductor have brought more excitement to a Hartford Symphony concert than has been witnessed in several years. There is no reason to believe that Mr. Mahler will not include sections by the Romantic composers on programs of future seasons.

One of Mr. Mahler's most significant innovations is a series of Saturday afternoon concerts for young people. These highly enjoyable performances provide an important experience for the youth of the city and fill a gap long vacant in the Hartford area.

Perhaps one of the reasons for the high-calibre performances by the Hartford Symphony has been the appearance, each year, of the finest orchestras of our land. At least six evenings this season the Bushnell auditorium will be cosmopolitan in atmosphere, for the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Detroit Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Boston Symphony, and the Pittsburgh Symphony all appear.

Operawise, Hartford is extremely fortunate in being able to hear some of the finest singers of our time. It is true that performances by the Connecticut Opera Association are often uneven (the orchestra is not always what it might be), but those who heard Otello at the Bushnell last season agree that they witnessed a performance that, for sheer vocalism, certainly equalled and perhaps surpassed recent performances at the Metropolitan. This season we have seen an ill-balanced Tosca, a slipshod Carmen with a cast of young singers, and Victoria de Los Angeles' enchanting Madam Butterfly. On April 6, the Connecticut Opera Association will present their final offering of the season, a double bill — Mascagni's Cavalleria Rusticana and Puccini's Gianni Schicchi. The last production by the Association each year is advertised as a presentation of an unusual work. Both Cavalleria and Gianni Schicchi, however, are popular at the Metropolitan. It is true that last season's final show Otello was not heard at the Metropolitan from 1913 to 1937, but since the 1937 revival, the work has been heard a number of times. L'Elisir d'Amore, the "unusual" production of the 1951-52 season, may not be in the repertory of every road company, but it definitely is not a rare or unique piece.

Of late, however, the Hartt School of Music has presented very unusual works. How many in the audience of Verdi's Macbeth last year had ever heard the work before? On February 3-6, the Hartt School offered Benjamin Britten's Albert Herring. This work, which has never been performed by a major company in the United States, is of some importance in the annals of contemporary music. The only opportunity one has of seeing it is at a college or music school. In May, the Hartt School will do two modern novelties, Martinu's Comedy on
the Bridge and Menotti's Amahl and the Night Visitors.

Danilova, Slavenska, and Franklin are names which even the most casual ballet fan would recognize, and for two seasons Hartford has seen these admirable artists and their fine troupe. Unfortunately, the new "Streetcar Named Desire" ballet, which caused such a sensation in New York, was not performed here last November as scheduled, but the more traditional works were received with great enthusiasm. On March 22nd, Agnes de Mille's Dance Theatre will make its debut in Hartford, and in May, the Bushnell has booked the only other ballet attraction of the year — Lucia Chase's company, which will arrive straight from European triumphs.

Absent from the Bushnell's calendar this year (with but one exception) are virtuoso recitals. Because of a low budget, the management is unable to guarantee sufficient funds to prospective artists; and therefore, musicians like Iturbi, Marian Anderson, Heifitz, and Rubenstein will not be heard. On April 22nd, however, Lily Pons will appear in a benefit concert for the Sisters of Mercy.

The Sunday-afternoon recitals at the Wadsworth Atheneum are charming but innocuous and must be classed with the minor activities of that institution. The high point of most of the concerts and lectures at the Atheneum seems to be the sociale, where conversation just witnessed, is very precious, at times devastatingly so.

"I hope it's not too sweet?" chirped a plump matron as she handed a gentleman a cup of tea.

"But there's no sugar in it," the perplexed fellow replied.

"No," the lady effused, "but you've touched it."

Fortunately, such events, which are the bane of smalltown society, are completely overshadowed by the creditable work of the Atheneum. Very provocative was the exhibit of mobiles and kinetic constructions by Calder and Gabo. We wonder how many of those free-moving contraptions now dangle from the ceiling of West Hartford living-rooms.

As the activities of the movie industry this year have been largely confined to the size of the screen rather than what is being shown on it, he in Hartford who wants to see an unusual movie must check the newspapers very carefully. The Art Theatre, which in the past could be counted upon to show something esoteric, changed its policy in September and for several months seemed content with Hollywood, vintage 1953. At this writing, however, the management has obviously seen the error of its ways and is currently showing foreign films once more. Other than a series of four films being presented at the Atheneum, the only unusual films to be seen are the offerings of the Cinema Club here at Trinity. The newly-formed organization has signed an agreement with the Museum of Modern Art in New York and has already offered "The Birth of a Nation" and "What Price Glory."

Nearly every week 1089 Main Street has all the excitement of a Schubert theatre on an opening night. The New Parsons Theatre can look with pride at the theatre section of any New York newspaper. Josephine Hull, Melvyn Douglas, Judith Anderson, and Sir Cedric Hardwicke are stars in anybody's book and are indicative of the high calibre of the New Parson's program this season. Most of the plays have been on pre-Broadway runs, and one had its world premiere here in Hartford, Make Momma Happy, a pleasant domestic comedy starring Molly Picon, queen of the Yiddish theatre.

To the Bushnell, however, must be given the honor of having presented what will probably go down in contemporary theatre annals as the outstanding play of 1953-54 — The Caine Mutiny Court Martial.

And there we have it, highlights of the ceaseless round of goings-on in Hartford. For its size, Hartford offers an extraordinary amount of first-rate, professional entertainment.
A Variety of Poets:

PATH

I know the path, at the foot of a hill,
With towering needle falls in freeze above it,
And shadowed crazy quilts of oak and elm leaves,
Lashed with boughs and branches, round about it.

I know the path, a crease at the neck of a hill.
A grassy slope, pursued by spindling trees, races Below it into icy water sidling
By (a brook which laps at spewn-forth boulders).

A path instinctive labors of many have torn From nature, gradually succumbing, prey to The quiet wiles of spring and fall.

An early morning, late May, static taupe in the east
And purple in the west, the air still moist, I lingered by that lichen-flattered log, to Breathe the incensed forest mulch.

I sat on the huge, receptive rock, Peered up at the waking birds.
Chirp-chirp, twill, twit-a-twit-a-twit
Down the artless stades, echoing the many-sized prints
From generations of no place to nowhere.

A path's age is measured, one step to none. Corroded, it is lost; tinker-trampled, it grins, Fighting its passive battle.

I know the path.

John Sinclair Brims

IN THE FALL OF THE YEAR

That year the leaves fell like tears, straight down,
Through the still atmosphere of the dying year.
No sigh, not a hushed breath came through the barren branches
To incite them to a last pretence of life.

The dull, grey, overhanging clouds, that touched the hills,
Seemed to wait, gently, like hopeless men.

I had been out among the hills, and then,
Returning early from my ride,
A solitary man approached me, gruffly,
And left me word that you had died.

And then the wind came, with the rain, As though the earth could breathe again, But breathed in pain.

Herbert Park

TIME

Walk close between the space of time (And what's that voice I heard of late?)
Walk the tight rope of your mind?
Is she the child who swung upon the gate?

Love she who smell of trees. (The sheerness of her dress wrapped about her knees).
Of tangled hair across a velvet calm
Of fingers curled in sleep against the palm.

Love she who dances in the rain.

Carry now the raindrop, As your feet trail bare across the wetness of the grass.
Lie listening to the shell that softly sighs
Is he the child who swung upon the gate?

And learn to build with velvet and with snow. And know somewhere a clock will chime for you,
Will chime and chime and sound as in dreamless sleep
And tick off days you've swung upon the gate.

D. William Ritter
A NEGRO VIEW OF THE CIVIL WAR

De plow most broke and de mule most dyin,
De white folks fighten and da missy cryin,
July am here an no plowin done
The soap ain’t made or de candles run.
De ole field negahs on Jackson’s place
Gettin lazy as hay from sitten a space.
The big house black as de missy’s hair
Dey ain’t no whoopin goin on there
They ain’t no chicken fryin an cookin
Dey ain’t no hams an no big doins.
De hosses am gone and de massa’s dead
De missy went loco and shot up ha head.

Den they took de cutains and de windah weights
Dey took ha corsets and ha pretty lace.
Dey goin put em all in one big pile
An shoot up the yankees fo miles an miles.
Don’t make much sence when Miss Bessy cryin
Marse Myron gone and de field need plowin.
Big ole Lincoln an ole Jeff Davis
They’s makin things happen all ovah de place
Ah keeps on workin an Miss Bessy keeps cryin,
Marse Myron keeps duckin ta keep from dyin
Don’t make no sence to dis ole black head,
Folks id mine dey own business if’n dey’d listen ta Leb.
PROLOGUE

Woman: What is that distant sound?
Man: The sound of wind at the mountain’s jaw. The sound of leaves across the distant lawn. Wind’s winding. A thunder roar among the outer clouds. Nothing more.
Woman: Again I hear it, and my womb aches at its issue. Listen again, and reason.
Man: It is sound, only sound.
Woman: But nearer now. I hear the sounds of men, and the sky is red like wicked eyes. I hear men’s voices.
Man: I cannot lie, I see them. I hear the echoes back along the rolling time. Mute is the tongue time has placed within My mouth. But the thoughts are weary, and yet they are full of strength.
Woman: Then my fear is true.
Man: Your fear is true. Men are less eager to be men than woman, woman.
Woman: Men love nothing sometimes, and in those times women must teach him. She fights this battle sound from the first she drops her pain into the outward air, and when she sees the young blond head move to wooden swords and paper three-peaked hat. Who fights in this battle? Your eyes are better to see these things than mine.
Man: One country fights, folded in upon itself. Like a snake who fears the sound behind him in the leaves, and turns alone in forest to bite the enemy he fears, stopping only when he sees his blood, and feels the pain. They are blue and gray.
Woman: What will be the issue?
Man: Union and peace.
Woman: What does the Union mean?
Man: It means a Union of free men.
Woman: I have seen these things before. When men are free they seek the strongest voice and follow blindly every master’s call. Men cannot decide.
Man: The future is unknown even unto itself. A brave man dies to save his home, then a lantern pushed by the curious fingers of his child destroys it. Laws passed in justice, in time become unjust. Only some things are timeless. The future is and is in time when the drums roll among the columns and the arches of the dead. But this war must come. Some moments come in history when the deep stains of error are erased.
Woman: Men do not understand, they settle for less to gain the foolish name.
Man: Would you have us stand still? Are you not proud when they show brave action?
Woman: I am more proud of my sacrifice than I am of their courage.
Man: We must wait.
Woman: Oh, the pain has made some of us men.
Man: We must love each other. We must wait.
Woman: We must love each other.

Chester Ringheiser


**Table of Two**

LISTEN to the tune the old
tune tuba and a bit of christmas tinsel
in a two-step time that’s weary

from the porch along the open rail
i looked across to the window where
i lived—
in between
the alley

Listen to the clumsy tune a rasping
fickled flute and a bit of christmas tinsel
that scratchy jazzy jig of the spheres

i heard and said this is not
TRUE and so I did not hear
yet my heart became distressed
though it was
not true

Always thinking of the HEART the little heart
the poor heart the hurt heart the broken...
(who dies of a broken eyelash?
they splinter it and shoot him full of
anadiodrine)

BUT the broken heart is never real

my dear she said and I slipped her
hand upon my knee and i
smiled "Let us dance inside my dear."
(could i look into her eyes and say i cannot
—i have a broken eyelash)
"It is evening again my dear dear."

One day when you are very old so crippled and
createless
a memory of something almost done will come
and you will smile, and cry, and DIE

Look at the alley at its black cinders
where i guess the sun never falls
where never a clean breeze picks
up the scraps of sticky trash (i cannot
dance)

a neighbor on the far side arose early
before the lamps were off to dig
carefully nudged into a tuft of earth
the only life he knew nor did he
speak of it or hint in any way day by day
he sat and watched the sun go up and down

"Let us go" she said. the twilight
is short these days and evening comes
like a storm in august yes yes now
it is time time for you and time for me
—yet the moment is not right

CAUGHT under the purple moon, blue bassoon
and an alley of coral-green monsters
and a stale wind that ruffles the feathers
of stiff yellow birds and brown sparrows

now it was evening again i knew
(old age will come so crippled and createless)
shall we SAY only to the alley and to
the broken heart and to the purple moon
—the long day ends it is evening again

Across the way lives a neighbor girl
(her hair is golden and her eyes are grey)
but the day was her fear and she shut it
OUT in the evening she strolls with locks
of a child and a lollipop and lives
in the beam of a beautiful dream

"It is dry, the alley is dusty."
yea, it is dry i said but we tarry
the music is stopped our friend wishes us
gone
that is my window i said
"Of course" she laughed "that is the win-
dow."

You are neighbor to an alley with black
cinders where the sun never falls
where seeds rot fall is all year long
yours is the beam of a dream
that enters the blackness and is GONE.

Roger Harmon
OUT of the agonizing travail of birth­ing, Agnes Lockhart brought her son into the world.

But she never saw him. The rigors of mother­hood destroyed what never had been a strong body, and she died three days later.

(In the three days since his son had been born, Henry Lockhart had not yet seen the child.

He had waited anxiously at the hospital during the labor, not hoping for a boy or a girl, but only impatient to see his wife again. The doctor had come out smiling — Henry cursed him now for his deception — and congratulated the new father. Henry gestured irritably with his hand and asked how soon he could see Agnes. Casually, the doctor replied, "It will be a while yet, Mr. Lockhart. Your wife had a difficult delivery."

That was Sunday night. Henry spent Mon­day morning at the hospital waiting as patient­ly as he could. That afternoon, they finally let him into the quiet room where Agnes lay on the large hospital bed. She looked so tiny, so weak that Henry suddenly felt sick and help­less. He left the room docilely. There was nothing he could do. The doctors would do their best.

All that day, all Tuesday and Wednesday, Henry stayed in their small apartment. He drank a little and smoked too much, roaming the rooms from window to window looking out blankly at the gray skies and the dirty city, while the antiseptic hospital nurses efficiently bathed and cared for the son he had forgotten. On Wednesday night, the phone call came while Henry was lying in a nervous sleep on the sofa. He lifted up the telephone sleepily.

"Mr. Lockhart? This is Dr. Morgan." The doctor spoke briskly; there was no sense in try­ing to be pleasant about something like this. "Come to the hospital. Your wife is sinking rapidly, and I'm afraid there's no more hope."

He arrived too late.

As Henry turned to go, a nurse stopped him. "Mr. Lockhart, we'll care for the child until
you make arrangements elsewhere. And, oh yes, had you and Mrs. —, had you decided on a name for him?"

Henry looked at her blankly. He rubbed the two day growth of beard on his face and said, "Michael." Then he walked out of the building.

Michael lived with his grandfather and grandmother for the first ten years of his life in a few musty, dark rooms that formed the upper half of an old, brownstone house.

He was a quiet, well mannered child although somewhat small and frail which caused his aunts and uncles to remind the boy what a fine woman his mother had been.

He knew his father as the man who sat uncomfortably ill at ease in the parlor on Sundays and who occasionally brought footballs and baseball bats which were put in the attic to gather dust.

Michael had few friends (the other children played too hard), but he loved his teddy bear, the old worn purse that his grandmother gave him, and the kings and princes and magical people that inhabited his only storybook.

Michael was well behaved; he played quietly alone in the dark rooms; and he cried himself to sleep at night.

Henry Lockhart remarried when his son was ten. He came to the brownstone house and took Michael away from the beaded lampshades and the rooms with the dark, flowered wallpaper.

The boy’s father, now portly prosperous with a chesty laugh and dead, gray eyes, had married a brittlely beautiful platinum blonde whom the dark haired Michael immediately hated and then forgot. Henry Lockhart went through the ritual of making self-conscious attempts at friendship with his son ("How’s it going, Mike, old trooper?") but was baffled and hurt by Michael’s indomitable reserve, and finally left him alone speaking to him infrequently and addressing him coldly as Michael.

When Michael was fourteen, Henry decided to send his son away to school and, after conferring with his business partner, concluded that St. Matthew’s would be as good as any other place. They sent Michael down to Brooks where the salesmen had been instructed to outfit him completely and appropriately for the sartorial rigors of preparatory school, although this was unnecessary since no one had ever taught Michael how to knot a tie properly or to keep his trousers zipped up.

It was at St. Matthew’s that Michael discovered God, and then rejected Him.

(The sanctuary lamp in its crimson crystal burned unwaveringly, casting red shadows on the dark shapes of pews, the pulpit, and the squat altar of the school chapel. It was Saturday evening, and the building was deserted although Michael could hear groups of his schoolmates passing by the chapel on their way to the flicks in town or to the ice cream shop. Michael had been in the chapel since five o’clock when he had finished eating his solitary dinner in the dining hall.

When the boy first started coming to the chapel at night, he would only stay a few minutes, praying silently, and waiting for the white heat of revelation which, he was certain, would tell him to spread the word of God among the heathen, or to devote his life to the contemplation of His Perfection. And quite often Michael lost track of the time, sitting enrapured by dreams of future holiness and sanctity.

"Father Lockhart is such a handsome saintly wise man," they would whisper as he spoke of the Sacraments, and Divine Grace, and Abiding by His Word— The congregation blurred and faded. The young girl was sitting alone on the lawn. It was evening. She was calling out to him gaily, "Oh, Father Lockhart, come sit with me." How beautiful she was! "Father Lockhart, I am so lonely . . . and Father Lock-
hart . . . oh, Father Lockhart . . . dear Michael."

And the boy was hot and trembling on his knees in an agony of remorse praying for forgiveness for his adolescent sins of lust.

Michael had soon learned to avoid the perils of intellectual venery by praying fiercely and passionately, as he was doing this night. He stared fixedly at the cold, brass cross on the altar until it seemed to waver and strain upward like a searing flame of gold. Michael's frenzied voice echoed hoarsely from the arched ceilings, his words blurred and meaninglessly disconnected.

"Oh God . . . to do Thy will . . . I am so lonely, saintly loneliness . . . I am Thy humble servant . . . so stupid in class, the others laugh . . . if Thou would only . . . and at night, sleep is hard, I try to be pure in thought and deed, but . . . Thy perfection shall encompass me, I shall plunge myself into the radiance of Thy holy body . . . ," and the words spilled out until the cadence of the language brought soothing dulle­ness to his intellect, escape from remembering.

When the laughter exploded from the rear of the chapel behind Michael, he stiffened and his fingers tightened around the prayer book. He heard someone shout, "It's St. Lucy Lock­hart!" and then, amidst more laughter, they scrambled through the door and out of the building. As Michael prayed, he had not heard the chapel door open and the sound of furtive footsteps. Michael slumped back into the pew, his teeth clamped together hard and his eyes closed. Tears of anger streaked his cheeks as he stood up. The boy walked up the center aisle to the altar rail. He stood look­ing at the brass cross under which was the re­served Host, the Body and Blood of Our Lord. Wordlessly, he leaned forward and spat upon the altar. The prayer book fell from his hand to the floor as he whirled around and strode out of the building.

(That was the last time that Michael ever entered the chapel.)

After Michael's tilt with the Creator, he learned two things that were not in the curriculum at St. Matthew's:

he learned the fine art of self pity,
and he realized that he was fated to be one of the world's finest poets (for he had suffered, had he not?).

Beyond that, Michael learned nothing from the bored instructors whose thin, querulous voices rose through the dry air reciting the monotonous catechisms of Latin, algebra, English literature, and history; the reedy pronounce­ments died unheard as Michael composed poetic phrases

and mused over the countless tragedies of his life
and shuddered with the dark longings of adolescent blood.

Michael had not often thought of the woman from whose blood and broken body he had sprung. He had never thought of her as mother; if he thought of Agnes Lockhart at all, he employed the vocabulary of mournful spin­ster aunts and tired uncles: poor Agnes, that un­fortunate girl—

Indeed, the child had known no other than himself.

(The thin boy traced childish runes upon the dusty windowsill; watching the raindrops on the pane dribble down, now hesitate, then run the course and break upon the casement. The yellow lace curtains brushed against his face and smelled of age and death. He turned around and saw his grandfather reading the newspaper in the dimness of the room, while his grandmother crocheted another doily for the sagging easy chairs. Michael walked quietly into his bedroom and sang a sad song because the world had died and he was all alone.)

Somewhere amidst this careless heap of days, among the endless infant songs, a thought oc­curred: Michael is the world, and the world is Michael. The mysterious comfort of this statement had formed his solitary life, and the child had cried no more at night.
— Now, in the ageless dust of St. Matthew's classrooms, he traced out the lovely tragedy of the motherless child ("Dear mother, I loved you so!"), rejected by an insensate father, and...

the circumstances mounted in a tottering pyramid; he felt the happy weight of sadness, and his lips trembled while he scrawled another sonnet —

well, almost a sonnet, at least it's lyric and it's beautiful because no one understands it unless his soul's impaled upon the thorns of life (ah, Shelley!)

—in his dogeared notebook.

Michael left with one of St. Matthew's annual tributes paid to the Ivy League. His omnivorous reading showed up his lack of academic diligence when he took the college boards; he managed a minimal grade,

and with the beneficent intervention of one of his father's business associates (Harvard '12).

Michael (a thin volume of avant-garde poetry in his pocket) left for Harvard, mother of poets, CummingsEliotPoundsStevens, and veritas.

He spent his freshman year in the Hollis room that had housed Thoreau, a more monumental rebel, many years before and had not experienced renovation since. The freshman months expended themselves in introverted passions immortalized (perhaps) in inky scrawls on paper which were added to the mounting pile of cherished manuscripts: assignments slipped by undone, countless offices of collegiate life remained neglected, and the room became a chaos of dirty clothing and crumpled paper (sloppy? oh no, la vie Boheme!).

In the stifling atmosphere of Pepsi-Cola scholars and darkskinned, ugly Jews whose Semitic intelligence crackled in the academic gloom of Widener Library and Mass Hall, Michael thought that he would surely languish and his poetry perish, for his soul was far too sensitive to flourish in the arid wastes of footnotes, bibliographies, and literary analyses.

"And anyway, my tragic home life has left its crippling impress on my soul," he thought, savoring this saccharine sadness which so conveniently excused academic failure.

Young Lockhart searched and found the coterie of Harvard boys who met by candlelight and misinterpreted Eliot and listened to each other's poetry, with occasional flashes of jealousy, and spent their Sunday mornings trying the "Complacencies of the peignoir, and late Coffee and oranges in a sunny chair . . ."

Although not one of them knew what a peignoir was, of course, nor did they bother to find out. They were not pedants. They could intuit the meaning of poetry. They had souls.

And Michael, of the seismographic soul, suffered and wrote, and accepted from an admiring fellow artist a book of poetry inscribed: For Michael Lockhart, il miglior fabbro.

Occasional defections led these aesthetic devotees from their melpomenean occupations, and they roamed the gin mills of South Boston,
Scollay Square feeling faintly alien, unable to rub off the gloss of Cambridge, yet knowing this is good, for this is Life.

But intoxication sometimes plays bad jokes on Cambridge boys, even poets.

(Michael sat at the table with Dan Mason and Bill Sumner, his arm resting in a puddle of water on the plastic table top. His eyes were half closed, and he kept brushing ineffectually at the black hair which fell down across his forehead. He squinted through the smoke at Dan and Bill who were arguing about the function of the poet in a democratic society. Since he didn’t feel up to following the conversation, Michael turned his attention to the other patrons of the bar. It was a pretty seedy collection of people, he decided.

He wasn’t quite sure where they were, although he knew that they must be near Scollay Square. Someone had said something about going to the Casino to see the late show, and all seven of them had taken off from Cambridge. The first cab would only take four, so Michael and his two companions caught another. When they got to the Casino, the box office was closed, and they started walking around looking for a place to get a beer.

Michael picked up his glass and tried to finish off the beer, but nearly gagged. He had drunk too much and pushed the glass away from him.

"The Morrison? Yeh, how ’bout that?" Mason slurred his words drunkenly. "Hey, Michael, are you game for a li’l sportification?" He jabbed Lockhart in the side with his elbow.

The boy turned and looked inquiringly at the two. Sumner glanced at Michael sharply as he leaned over, and Lockhart noted that he looked almost fiendishly sober. "Dan wants to go down to the Morrison Hotel for a bit of carnal frolic," Sumner replied with his mannered and pedantic mockery.

When Michael didn’t answer immediately, Mason commented, "What’s wrong, are you of the other persuasion?" He added an unnecessary leer to his mocking innuendo and continued, "Or is it just inexperience?"

Michael flushed and protested lamely, fearful that the others would discover the truth of Mason’s taunting remark about his innocence, but the two had already begun finishing up their beer. Recovering from his momentary embarrassment, Michael felt a sudden surge of desire in anticipation of the adventure. He drank his beer and waited impatiently for Sumner to finish his. The three rose and unsteadily left the bar, pausing only while Michael and Bill dissuaded Mason from addressing a few obscene remarks to the patrons.

The cab ride was short, and they stumbled out in front of a shabby hotel. Michael stood in the overheated lobby supporting Mason, who was leaning sleepily on the shoulder of his slight companion. Sumner registered them for three single rooms, concluded a whispered conference with the bored night clerk, and led them upstairs. Michael and Sumner guided the staggering Mason into his room where he fell on the bed and almost immediately began to snore. The two walked further down the hall and finally found Michael’s room where Sumner left him, remarking, "They’ll be up in a minute."

Michael walked into the small room and turned on the bare light bulb which hung from the center of the ceiling. He threw his coat on the flimsy wooden chair which occupied one corner of the room. The boy looked around nervously and then sat down on the edge of the creaking bed. He picked at his fingernails, trying to keep from glancing at the door in front of him. When Michael heard the soft knocking, he jumped up and called out, his voice breaking adolescently, "Come in." The boy felt vaguely disappointed when he saw the sallow faced, thin girl who stood in the doorway dressed in a faded dress.

Her voice was stridently South Boston when she asked, "You the kid wanted the room service?" Michael nodded, and the girl walked into the room closing the door behind her...
As she left, she glanced back at Michael, laying on the bed, his eyes tightly closed. "I hate to take your money, kid, but you know we all gotta make a livin'. You shouldn't try it when you had so much to drink. Maybe again sometime—" She quietly closed the door.

Michael was breathing hard and cursing under his breath. "The bitch, the bitch, the goddam bitch! Goddam them all and Sumner and Mason too." He got up and angrily dressed himself. He splashed his face with cold water from the cracked wash bowl in the corner of the room, and stood there, lips trembling, pounding the palm of his left hand with his fist. The anger subsiding, Michael walked over to the bed and laid down tiredly. Staring at the ceiling, he muttered, "Oh Christ, I'm no good," and felt the satisfying sting of tears in his eyes.

Michael said nothing to the other two as they took the interminable trip back to Cambridge. When they got to the Square, he left Sumner and Mason wordlessly, and ran to his Hollis room.

The next day, Michael wrote a long poem on faithless friends and carnal love.

Rejection slips from the Advocate despondingly punctuated the months; a clumsy satire consisting of much heavy handed emphasis on the American Way of Life elicited no response from the Lampoon snobs; the examinations concluded with a parturition of low seventies; and Michael joined the intellectual fringe, finding in the notsocal light of reason a solace for his frequent moods of black depression,

discussing Kierkegaard,

misunderstanding Sartre ("Oh hell, what's the use? Men are animals; there is no God. You believe in free love, don't you, Diana?")

forsaking the melancholy candlelight of poetry for bright philosophy (seen through a glass darkly) in Boston's gleaming coffee shops.

He studied harder but was ever dismayed by the persistency of low grades, the stupidity of the Harvard lecturers who ignored his soulful genius; and Michael wept when he recalled the crippling effects of his unfortunate childhood — that story now embroidered suitably to provide an etiology for what was, in essence, an inadequate intellect — and performed the litany of self pity:

No one loves me.
No one understands me (for I am too unique.)
I am all alone (genius is always lonely.)
I should be dead (for suicide is creativity; death is life.)

There was a compensation, however, in the syllogisms of a fuzzy kind of Existentialism which often led to Radcliffe beds.

(They were walking down the Esplanade by the Charles River. It was a warm, spring night, and the lights of Boston were reflected in the silent river waters. Cynthia, shorter than Michael, walked closely by his side, her head tilted upward to watch him as he spoke. She never really understood what he talked about, it sounded so vague and nonsensical, although she could recognize some of the names and terms from her Radcliffe course in intro-
ductory phil. Cynthia always nodded understandingly and agreeably, although her thoughts were ever occupied with her love for the tall, thin boy.

Michael had met Cynthia through his roommate. She was not really very attractive, but she had a kind of cheerful intelligence which attracted him, and she was an admiring listener. While the others had always turned away or stirred their coffee impatiently when he expounded his latest theory, Cynthia had listened almost rapturously.

"Go on, Michael. Everything you say is so true."

"Thank you, Cynthia." He could hardly hide his pleasure. "Well, why don't we get out of here? Go to Boston and find a place where we can really talk?"

And that's the way it had started. The months slipped by, and Michael found in Cynthia's love the assurance and the confidence in himself that he had never known before.

Cynthia assumed from the beginning that Michael reciprocated the affection that she had for him. Although he never mentioned this (he was not the romantic sort, and told herself), the girl had long since planned their eventual marriage in her optimistic day dreams. Often, she attempted to draw Michael into a discussion of his future plans. She suggested, in fact, that he talk with her father who owned a profitable business in Springfield, but Michael would only reply with vague illusions to "the life of aesthetic achievement" and references to his poetry. Cynthia accepted this and told Michael that he needn't worry because she would marry him no matter how impoverished he was. The boy had looked at her sharply when she said that, but had not replied.

Cynthia continued her romantic, joyful dreams; Michael resumed his poetic philosophical wanderings; and neither of them showed any concern when their romance became suddenly more intimate.

"... And so, Cynthia, rightly understood, suicide is the only true form of self-expression and artistic creativity." Michael waved his free hand in the air as he concluded his favorite sophistry.

The girl was shaken from the warm security of her musings by the word suicide. "But Michael, you aren't serious?"

"Of course. When you realize the cruelties and pain of human existence, the only alternative is voluntary death." He spoke smugly. Michael considered the argument and its confused references to mystical philosophy irrefutable.

"You wouldn't kill yourself, would you?"

He smiled at the note of panic in her voice. "I don't see why I shouldn't."

The girl replied quickly with conviction, "But you can't... now."

They stopped, and Michael pulled away from Cynthia. He looked at her carefully. "What do you mean?"

She brightened as she replied, "We have to get married. Oh, I knew you didn't want to get married right away, Michael, but it just happened that way. It will be grand fun though. Father will give us some money so that you can finish college, and I could work later—" She hesitated, looking fearfully at Michael. Seeing the dark expression on his face, Cynthia lost some of her assurance but hastened on. "I'm really quite a good cook you know. It won't be like they always joke about in the cartoons. And I could help you so. Don't you understand, Michael? I'm going to have a baby."

The boy backed away muttering, "No, no." His voice was hoarse when he finally spoke, "No, Cynthia. I can't get married. I've got to remain free to be a great poet." Michael felt the cold fear rise from his stomach. His hands tensed at his side, he continued as his voice rose hysterically. "Never! I won't do it. You planned this, Cynthia. This has just been a scheme to trap me and make me work for your middle class father and keep me from being a great poet! I see it now. Well, it's not going to work!"
The girl recoiled from the viciousness of his attack, her eyes wide with shock. Then she brought her hands up to her face and began sobbing, her shoulders trembling. Michael stood watching her, trying to put down the fear that possessed him, but it became stronger. He turned and walked away quickly leaving Cynthia alone. It was quiet now on the walk next to the placid river. The only sounds were the girl's soft sobbing and the crunch of gravel as the boy walked toward the bridge.

Later that week, after Michael had recovered from the effects of Cynthia's betrayal of their love, he sent her a letter enclosing a check for three hundred dollars and instructions for her to see a doctor he had heard of in South Boston. After that, Michael never saw her again.

In the loveliness of Cambridge spring, the boy returned to poetry. He read "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" once, and studied an interpretive commentary of the poem for a week, and still was not sure what Eliot meant, although his loquaciousness — so cleverly evasive — provided a sophisticated facade.

And Michael's friends and professors became accustomed to seeing the burning eyed boy approach with sheaves of paper in his hand; they read the lines while he waited silently, timorously for approval.

("Come in, young man." The old man shouted through the layers of tobacco smoke that filled his small and dark office.

"Thank you, Mr. Beard. I'm Michael Lockhart. I gave you some of my poetry to read—"

Michael sat nervously on the edge of the straight-backed chair while the professor relit his pipe. Puffing out clouds of heavy, aromatic smoke, Mr. Beard rummaged through the litter on his desk and found a thick sheaf of typewriter paper held together with a paper clip.

"Yes, I enjoyed your poems, Mr. Lockhart, and I must thank you for giving me the opportunity to read them. You have a facility for clever phraseology. You should continue writing after you leave college. It would be a worthy avocation."

He handed the poems across the desk to Michael before continuing, "How are your studies coming along?"

Michael swallowed hard and replied, "But sir, about my poetry, isn't it really any good?"

The older man raised his eyebrows quizically. "Any good? I didn't say it wasn't good. It's well above average as a matter of fact. Highly subjective, of course, but that's not unusual for an undergraduate."

"And is that all?" Michael urged the interview on.

"Well, Mr. Lockhart, it's just that your poetry is really quite insubstantial. It is superficially clever, but really possesses no depth. Of course, I may be wrong, but—"
Michael had stopped listening, although Professor Beard did not notice this and rambled on into a general discourse about the inherent difficulties in modern poetry forms. The boy sat stunned in his chair. He had set this interview as the supreme test. William Henry Beard was the Harvard English department's claim to eminence in the field of literary criticism. Michael had not considered for a moment that the man would have anything other than praise for these poems, his best work. He had called it a test, but was unconsciously convinced that Professor Beard would immediately discern genius in the verse. Now, this—

"—and you should keep those elements in mind when you read Eliot or Pound, young man.

Well, thank you again for allowing me to examine your poems, Mr. — uh," he fumbled the name and continued, "I rarely have a chance to see undergraduate work these days. Good day."

Michael mumbled and left the office.

When the boy returned to his room at Adams House, he threw himself upon his bed and lay there moodily. There was little light in the room now that the sun had gone down, but he didn't bother to turn on the room lights. Finally, Michael leaped out of bed and grabbed all of his manuscripts. He threw them angrily into the fireplace. When he held a match to the corners of the paper, the flame leaped high and soon only smoking ashes were left. As the acrid smoke spiraled upward, Michael felt despairing tears roll down his face.

He sat with his head in his hands for a melancholy half hour, then arose and washed his face with cold water. Now refreshed, Michael sat down at his desk and wrote "An Ode to My Poetry Manuscripts, Lost by Fire."

In later years, he often remarked about this tragic accident which destroyed his greatest work.)

Summer came. With a swirl of black cotton gowns and the more colorful display of the faculty, Harvard performed the rites of graduation.

Michael Lockhart, baccalaureus artis, now one of the thousands undistinguished graduates, returned for the last time to his lonely room in Adams House. He packed his clothes and his poetry, crated his books, and, leaving, returned the room to timeless anonymity.

The summer months limped by in the heat of Greenwich Village. The satisfying joys of city life—

— it was sweet to hear the children chatter like scolding squirrels as they played beneath the open fire hydrants;

— at night, the music of more gentle tongues than English filled the streets; the old people sat upon the stairs and talked of childhood days in Napoli, Turino, Firenze;

— the lovers dragged their feet upon the sidewalks, languidly walking in the evening coolness, no words to pierce the silence;

— these things were lost on Michael. He lived amidst the feverish desolation of Bohemia, but even there he was much too sullen, turned in upon himself, and the aesthetic castaways left him alone in the corners of their restaurants, their bars;

— the little ingrown world of la danse and modern painting where Art was propitiated in nocturnal ceremony.

His college record was little more than ordinary, but a B.A. (Harvard) was good enough for graduate study at a Western university. Michael returned to the dusty library stacks and four bare walls of literary study, and traded a year of ChaucerMiltonNineteenthCenturyEnglishLit and "The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy A dissertation presented in partial fulfillment of —" for a Master's degree, then returned once more to the world of saintly prep schools.

Milton had not changed, the airless classrooms were still too dark on winter afternoons, the students only blonde and well scrubbed duplicates of their older brothers;

— there is little joy, but there is comfort, in the finality of failure.
(Mr. Lockhart sat tiredly on the edge of his bed, his pajamas falling loosely around his skinny body. The thin hair was shaggy around his ears and neck. My God, Michael thought, the brats get worse every year. The classes had been a bedlam today. He looked at the stack of uncorrected papers that his sixth form class had turned in and winced, emphasizing the wrinkles around his eyes. Deciding not to try to correct them tonight, he sighed, took off his heavy hornrimmed glasses and laid them on his bedside table.

Thoughtful for a moment, he turned to the table and opened the drawer. The bulky Colt gleamed dully as he weighed it in his hand. It was well oiled, well kept, a marvel of machinery, he thought, and cocked the hammer.

"I fall upon the thorns of life, I bleed!" Well they bled for me, bled me dry. The barrel of the pistol was cool against his forehead and recalled to him the coolness of those nights at Cambridge, the night on the Esplanade with Cynthia, the coolness of the dark rooms where his grandmother and grandfather had lived, and—

The hammer fell with a dry snap.

Someday, he thought dully, I'll buy some bullets.) Thoughtful for a moment, he turned to the table and opened the drawer. The bulky Colt gleamed dully as he weighed it in his hand. It was well oiled, well kept, a marvel of machinery, he thought, and cocked the hammer.

"I fall upon the thorns of life, I bleed!" Well they bled for me, bled me dry. The barrel of the pistol was cool against his forehead and recalled to him the coolness of those nights at Cambridge, the night on the Esplanade with Cynthia, the coolness of the dark rooms where his grandmother and grandfather had lived, and—

The hammer fell with a dry snap.

Someday, he thought dully, I'll buy some bullets.)

Michael is the world, and the world is Michael: the little boy believed it.

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