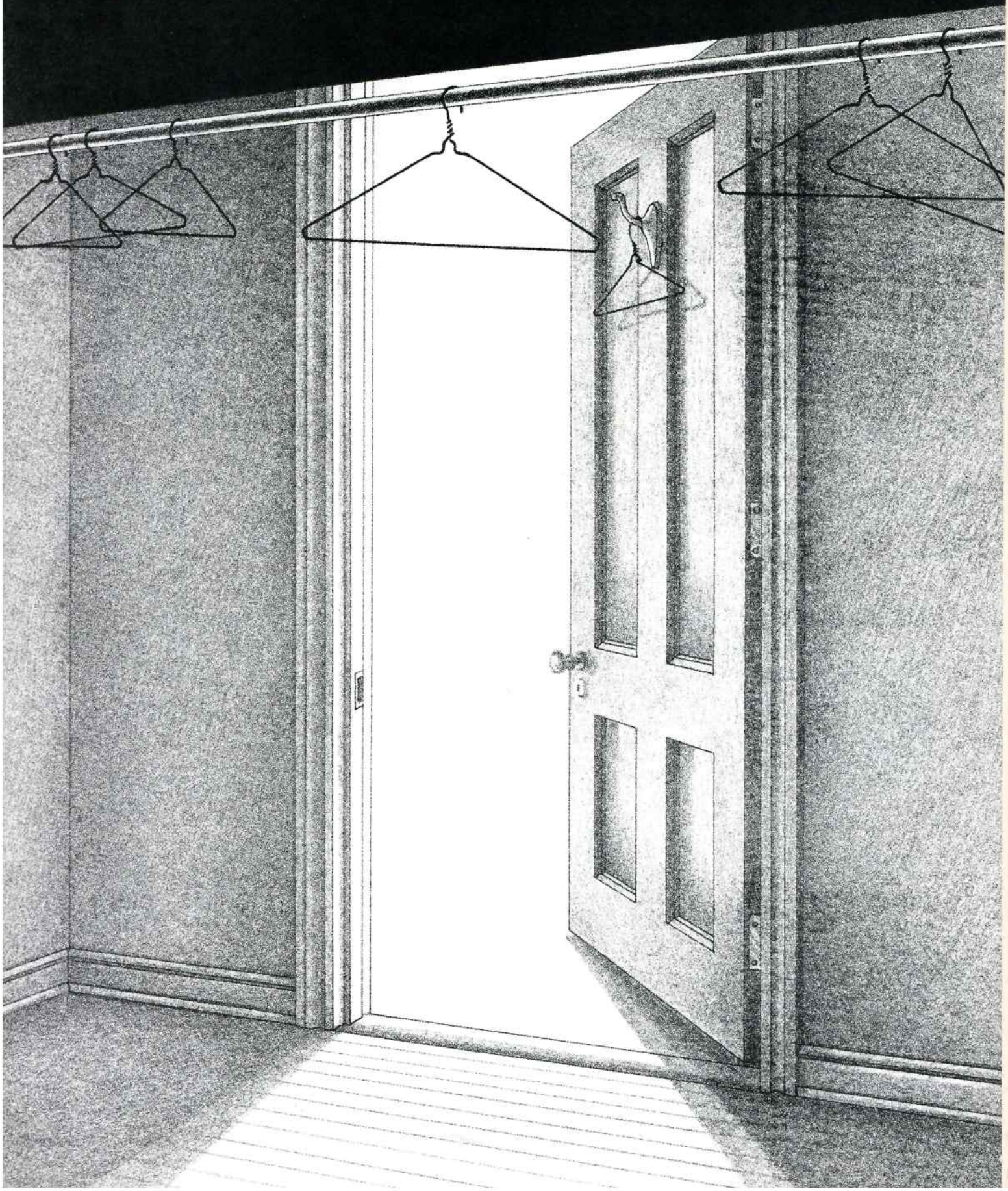
ChristopherStreet

JULY 1976 $1.25



NewTimes for half price.

That's like getting every other issue free.

It's quite a deal.

The regular price for a year's subscription to NEW TIMES is $15.

Subscribe now and *you* can have a year (26 issues) for $7.50. Half price. And a lot less than half price compared with the $19.50 you'd have to pay at newsstands.

Why are we letting you have the magazine for so little money?

Because we want to get NEW TIMES into your hands. Frankly, we think you'll be hooked.

The freshest news magazine since Time began.

After NEW TIMES, other magazines seem pretty mild. Newsweek said, "The magazine has shown a particular knack for picking up on hot stories that others tend to drop after the first flash." The Los Angeles Times called us "brash, irreverent and surprisingly literate." William Safire in the New York Times says we're "the magazine that has an adversary relationship with the world." According to the Washington Post, we're "a new

national news magazine of storytellers." To good old Time Magazine, we're "impetuous."

So be it. NEW TIMES makes things happen. We aren't afraid to tell all the truth we can get our hands on. We turn over rocks. We make waves. Troublemakers? You're damn right.

Remember folks, you saw it first . . .

A lot of NEW TIMES stories were firsts. Newsbeats. Scoops. Sure you read about them in other magazines. Afterwards.

We were the first national magazine to reveal the link between the CIA and the Mafia. The first to go underground and interview Abbie Hoffman.

(Among those who wondered how we found him—the FBI.)

The new wave of doubt about the JFK assassination started in NEW TIMES, with stories like the one that showed there had to be several Oswalds. We told the world that those little aerosol cans could be the death of us all. We put *est* (Erhard Seminars Training) in the public eye. We reported the murder trials of Peter Reilly and Joan Little long before they hit the front pages.

What's happening around here?

NEW TIMES is plugged into now. It's the magazine of what's happening, and that's a spectrum that includes love and music and lifestyles and all manner of rare new ideas.

We investigated the medical benefits of marijuana . . . tried to make sense of the Psychobabble that's drowning us all . . . dissected the Great American Bicentennial Sale . . . dug into the orgiastic revels of a country fair . . . looked into what happens when single grandparents are forced to live in sin to avoid losing their pensions . . . ran the first story on doctors who sell patients to hospitals for kickbacks . . . found the real Mr. Goodbar of the singles' bar murders.

And we're catching rock, movies, books, fads, and fatuities with a brash, fresh viewpoint you aren't going to find in the other magazines.

If you really care what's happening

in America in 1976, you're going to get into NEW TIMES.

The lucky thing is, if you act fast you can get into it for half price. Just use the coupon below. Or call us toll free day or night.

For immediate service
CALL TOLL FREE 800 327-8912

NewTimes **The Feature News Magazine**
Special Half Price Offer

YES, I want to get NEW TIMES at half the regular subscription price.

☐ Send me one year–26 issues–of NEW TIMES for only $7.50. That's $7.50 less than the regular subscription price . . . $12 less than the newsstand price.

☐ Send me 20 issues of NEW TIMES for only $5.77. That's half the regular subscription price . . . $9.23 less than the newsstand price.

☐ Payment enclosed (Canadian residents add $2 additional postage.) ☐ Bill me later.

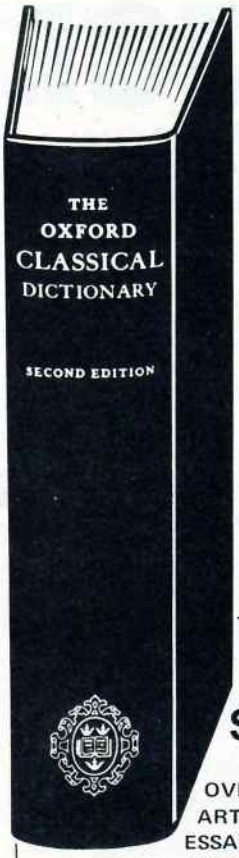
Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

NEW TIMES, P.O. Box 2948, Boulder, Colorado 80302

Code #6234



Yours free upon joining– this indispensable reference work from

The Readers' Subscription

when you choose your first member's selection at reduced prices from the books and sets below

Publisher's price **$30.00**

OVER 5,000 ARTICLES & ESSAYS ON CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY BY 212 DISTINGUISHED SCHOLARS

"Classical learning and scholarship have never, in their long history, been in the hands of scholars better equipped with learning, judgement, and good taste." –Times Literary Supplement

We'll give you free of charge the invaluable *Oxford Classical Dictionary* when you join The Readers' Subscription. Now we'll give you 7 more good reasons for becoming a member:

1. Savings. You usually save 25% to 35% of the list price on every book you purchase.

2. Quick, simple ordering. Members are regularly informed of club selections. Orders are filled promptly. So the lasting works of literature, biography, history, and reference you want most are easy to obtain.

3. Assured quality. You can judge our standards by the selections shown below. And because we're a service of *The New York Review of Books*, we often offer books recommended by its editors and contributors.

4. First editions. Many books available are the publishers' first editions, and can increase in value in your library.

5. The Griffin. Our monthly member's bulletin describes 5 new selections plus over 100 previous offerings–all at reduced prices. We give our own commentary on each new book.

6. Return privileges. Should you ever receive an unwanted automatic selection, you may return it at our expense.

7. Bonus books. After purchasing your initial 4 selections, you earn a bonus credit with every book you buy. Every 4 credits entitle you to a Bonus book.

OUR TRIAL OFFER: Let us send you free of charge *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* along with the book or set you choose from those shown here as your first member's selection. Your only obligation is to buy, at reduced prices, 3 more books during the next year.

Choose your first selection from these books and sets

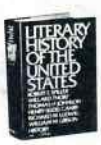
(First price is publisher's; second is member's price)

Byron's Letters and Journals
Edited by Leslie Marchand. "Byron's sinewy, funny, electrifying letters"–*Time*. 4 volume edition. $48.00/$32.90

Eugene Onegin
Aleksandr Pushkin. Translated by Valdimir Nabokov. Pushkin's masterwork, in Nabokov's epoch-making translation. With commentary, in 4 volumes. $50.00/$38.75

The Twenties
Edmund Wilson. Fascinating journals that record Wilson's friendships, his love affairs, and the beginnings of his literary career. $10.00/$7.95

The Oxford Book of 20th Century English Verse
Chosen by Philip Larkin. "A real treasure-house of old favorites and splendid surprises."–*Sunday Telegraph*. $13.95/$10.00



Literary History of the United States
Spiller, Thorp, Johnson, Canby, Ludwig, Gibson. 4th edition of this valuable guide to our literary past. $25.00/$17.50

The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Reign of Philip II
Fernand Braudel. Landmark scholarship. 2 volumes. $35.00/$24.00

Sir Gawain & The Green Knight, Pearl, & Sir Orfeo
Translated by J.R.R. Tolkien. 3 major 14th-century English poems in highly praised translations. $8.95/$6.95

World of Our Fathers
Irving Howe. Immigration of East European Jews to the United States, and their impact upon American culture. $14.95/$10.95

Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot
Edited with an introduction by Frank Kermode. Many previously uncollected essays are included. $10.95/$8.50

Modern English Usage
H.W. Fowler. Revised and edited by Sir Ernest Gowers. Practical, witty, and indispensable–still the best guide to English usage. $8.95/$7.25

The Readers' Subscription

250 West 57th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019

Please enroll me now as a member of The Readers' Subscription, sending me free *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* plus my first selection, for which I pay the member's reduced price. I agree to buy 3 more selections during the next year.

The monthly *Griffin* will inform me of club selections. When I want the Main Selection, I'll do nothing and receive it automatically. If I want any other selection–or none at all–I will indicate my decision on the reply card always provided with *The Griffin*, returning it by the date specified. If I ever receive the Main Selection without having had 10 days to notify you that I did not want it, I may return it at your expense.

Once I've purchased 4 books, I earn a bonus credit with every book I buy. Every 4 credits entitle me to a Bonus Book. (Most are available at no charge, others for a nominal sum.)

Unless I prepay, I will be billed on all orders for postage and handling. **This offer good for new members only.**

First Selection ☐ check enclosed ☐ bill me

Name

Address

City State Zip

Home Address (if different from above)

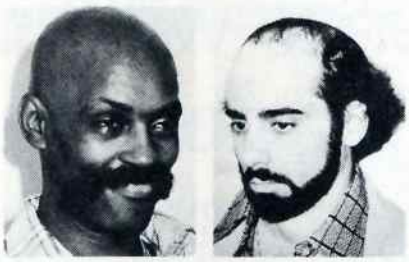
Signature

YOURS FREE when you send payment–*Contour in Time: The Plays of Eugene O'Neill* by Travis Bogard ($15 value).

CS1

The Headhugger.©

Now in natural Afro and all kinds of curls.



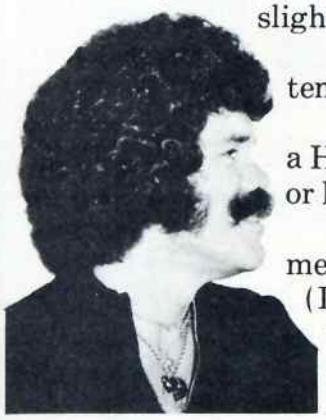
The Headhugger is like no hairpiece you've ever seen.

It extends *over* your natural hair. It has a special wire arrangement with a built-in memory that holds the sides close to the head, that never loses its full, rounded shape.

Defies detection. Here's proof in black and white.

Best of all, it ends the "giveaway" problems of the ordinary hairpiece. The wind problem. The thin sides problem. The problem of matching hairpiece hair with natural hair. Even fading, to a great extent.

You've probably seen our regular Headhugger. The one that comes in many different styles but mostly in straight or slightly wavy hair.



Like the one the tennis player is wearing.

Now you can have a Headhugger in tight or loose curls.

Or in a high, medium or low Afro.

(If you prefer less kink, we have them in *very* tight, *very* tiny curls.)

They're fabulous! Absolutely undetectable! And a breeze to care for.

Write for complete details.

We'll send you photos and info on all kinds of Headhuggers.

If there's no Headhugger dealer near you, you can order one by mail on a 15-day money back trial.

Ready-to-wear Headhuggers in Monsanto Elura are $279; custom-made in human hair, $550.

Amora Industries, Inc.

139 East 57th Street, New York 10022. (212) 752-6140.

Consultations in complete privacy. By appointment only.

In New Jersey. At Chantrey Salons in the following Bamberger Department Stores: Newark, 565-5279. Willowbrook, 987-5279. Menlo Park, 549-3032. Paramus, 843-1220. Monmouth, 544-1535. Morristown, 539-9050. Cherry Hill, 665-5000 Ext. 240.

In New York. At the Penthouse for Men, 139 East 57th St., 752-6140.

AMORA INDUSTRIES, INC.
Dept. CS66, 139 E. 57 St., NY, NY 10022
Please send complete details.

Name_____

Address_____

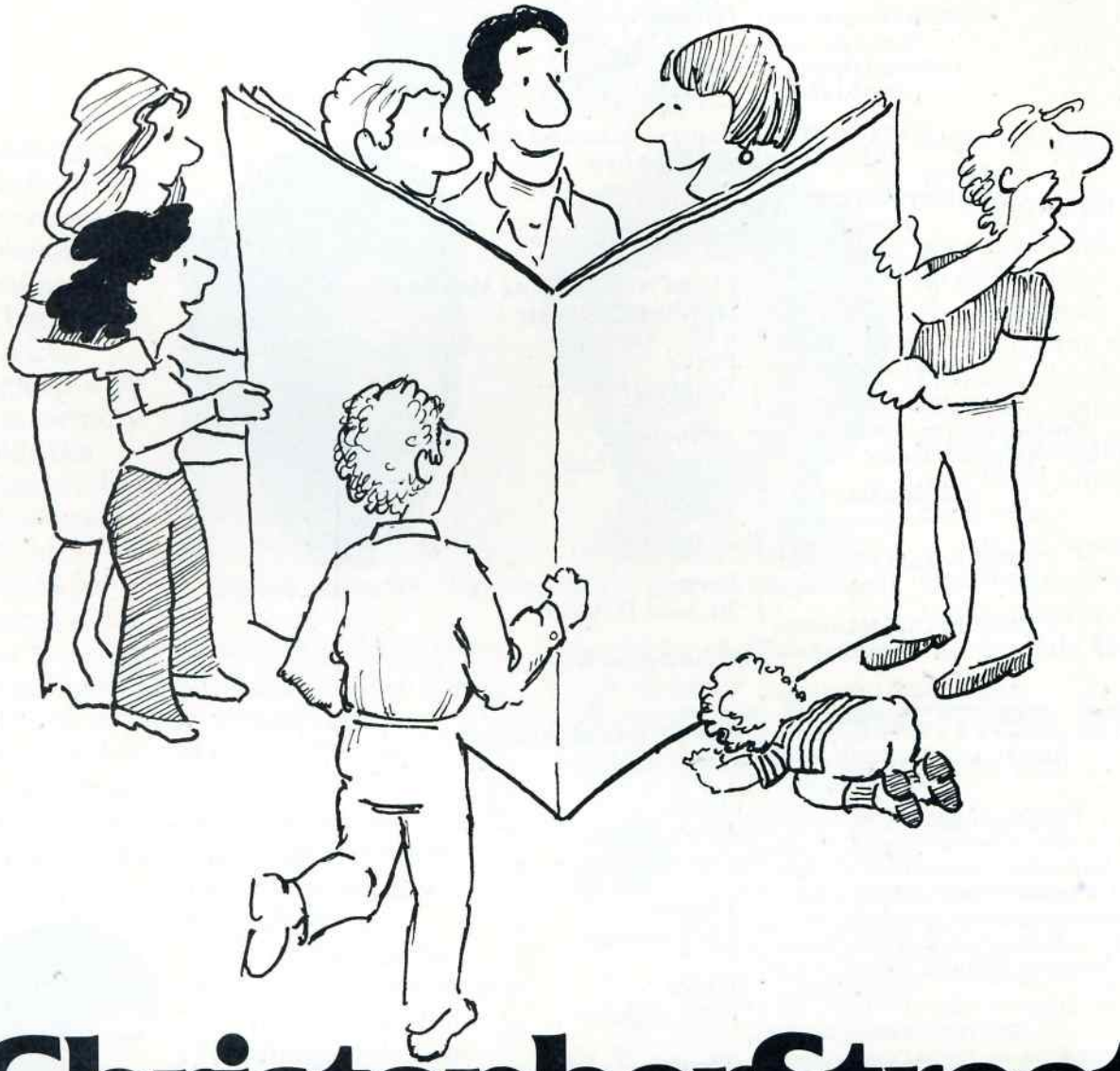
City_____ State_____ Zip_____

New Outlets: CONNECTICUT, Bridgeport: Ralph's Beauty Salon. ILLINOIS, Chicago: V.I.P. International. MASSACHUSETTS, Wakefield: Guiliano's Hair Design. NEW JERSEY, Fairlawn: Joyce's Beauty Salon. OHIO, Bucyrus: Don's Barber Service. OHIO, Cincinnati: Casual Hair; Mariemont Barber Shop. PENNSYLVANIA, Johnstown: Mr. Charles. TEXAS, Wichita Falls: Coat of Arms Men's Styling. VIRGINIA, Arlington: Unisex Hair Styling. SO. AFRICA, Johannesburg: RKO International. **Plus 105 other shops throughout America.**

ChristopherStreet

VOL.1 NO.1 JULY 1976

The gay magazine for the whole family



ChristopherStreet

Christopher Street
60 West 13th Street, New York, New York 10011

Please enter my subscription to Christopher Street.
Enclosed is my check for $12.50 (12 issues).

Name

Address

City/State/Zip

Christopher Street
60 West 13th Street, New York, New York 10011

Please enter my subscription to Christopher Street.
Enclosed is my check for $12.50 (12 issues).

Name

Address

City/State/Zip

Out & Around

That New Magazine

Just before our first deadline, we opened a notebook thick with a year's worth of ideas which had been considered for *Christopher Street*'s ad campaigns. Each in its own way brought back a minor or major dispute about the direction "That New Magazine" should take. Although the notebook wasn't splattered with blood, it did remind us of many excited, occasionally heated, discussions.

One of the earliest ideas was to shoot a picture of the magazine on some variation of a Parsons table, with the line: "The Magazine You'd Buy A New Coffee Table For." "Too East Sidey," said a West Side member of our staff. "Some of us do sneak over to the East Side to live," retorted another. Our zip code expert suggested we change the coffee table to some kind of crate confabrication for the less class-conscious segments of the country.

Another early strategy called for a photo of two tawny young men ("Let's get the Winston look," we said) walking arm in arm on a country road in upstate New York. Very chummy and wholesome. Their line was to read: "Why Should You Spend The Best Years Of Your Life Reading THEIR Magazines?" Unfortunately for this couple they never made it downstate to *Christopher Street*.

A variation on that theme was to show two women driving off into the sunset in a smart little sports car, looking cigarette-ad healthy and chic, as well as tough and independent. They were partnered with the caption: "Not Every Magazine Says You Have To Be God's Gift To Men." The verdict: a little too strident.

There were several more notions centering around the idea of the couple. We envisioned a gay Atlantic City couple on the Boardwalk eating tall vanilla ice-cream cones. That was our "The World Wasn't Ready For Ice Cream Either" campaign. "If that doesn't get them, nothing will" interjected one of the cynical members of the staff. These "two of us" campaigns forced us to consider what we meant by "the right gay couple." After extensive reflection we concluded that when we spoke of "the right gay couple" we usually meant an idealized version of ourselves plus an ideal lover. Irredeemably romantic.

We considered a series of strictly print ads: the rather severe "When Was The Last Time Someone Said 'Let's Go To That Great New Straight Disco?' " and the highly derivative: "Hello Mom, I'm Gay. Has Anybody Heard From You Lately?" And then there was the sexually succinct, "We Do It Once A Month." We decided there are other ways to say how often we're coming out.

A cutesy campaign was planned for the younger generation. A collegiate figure would be seen holding a copy of *Christopher Street* in front of the Student Union at a Large Midwestern University. The magazine would be wrapped in ribbon and the theme of this series was to be "The Gift They Should Have Given You When You Came Out." "The freshmen will love it," said one marketing consultant. But we were also concerned about our seniors.

There were more coming out ads, like the parent-child series. One "Mom and Dad" campaign showed a middle-aged couple looking directly into the camera: "Our Son Just Told Us He's Gay. We Apologized For Not Sending A

Card." We bequeathed that one to Hallmark. Turning the relationship about, we had a strong vote to go with a "So's Your Old Man" campaign. Alas, too limited. And after Laura Z. Hobson's book came out we couldn't very well call *Christopher Street* "The Magazine For Consenting Adults."

We prepared a series of self-promoting ads designed to appeal to Madison Avenue. "If You Forget About A Billion Gay Dollars, A Billion Gay Dollars May Forget About You." And equally to the point: "What People Do In Their Own Beds Is Their Own Business. BIG BUSINESS." An intra-industry ad would have shown a copy of *Christopher Street* alongside *The New Yorker*, *Esquire*, *Atlantic*, *Harper's*, and *New York Magazine*. It was predictably captioned: "Well, There Goes The Neighborhood."

We even toyed with Bicentennial tie-ins: "At Least After Two Hundred Years We Won't Be Tacky." And we considered being topical: "Who Ever Said The Supreme Court Knew Anything About Love?" We considered a special New York-oriented campaign showing a copy of *Christopher Street* with a button attached that read "One Of The Nice Things About Homosexuality." "Too parochial," one of the staff said.

While the whole advertising decision-making process hasn't made us totally empathetic with Madison Avenue, it has given us some sympathy for the devil. As our own hour of decision approached, we did take heart from one friend who wrote us that "No matter what you do, you'll be in trouble." At least we can be grateful for the opportunity to choose the kind of trouble we're going to be in. And so, although many were called, "Christopher Street, The Gay Magazine For The Whole Family," was chosen.

The Fuss

ROME, April 4 (AP)—Pope Paul VI declared today that a printed accusation that he was a homosexual was a "horrible and slanderous insinuation."

The charge was made by a French author, Roger Peyrefitte, who says he himself is a homosexual, in a 3,000-word article printed by the Italian weekly magazine Tempo.

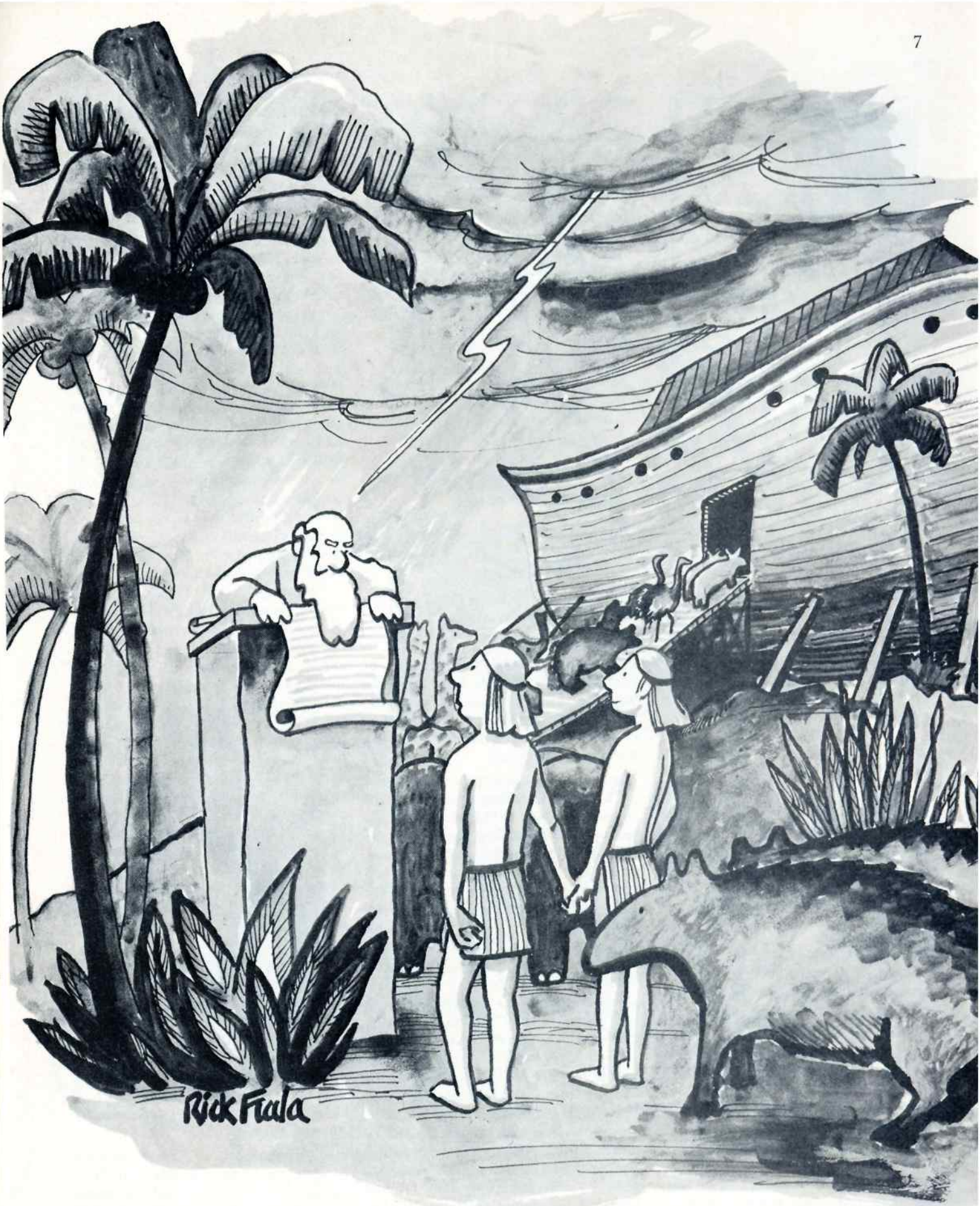
Without mentioning Mr. Peyrefitte by name, Pope Paul said in a brief address to 20,000 people in St. Peter's Square:

"We know that our cardinal vicar and the Italian bishops' conference have urged you to pray for our humble person, who has been made the target of scorn and horrible and slanderous insinuations by a certain press lacking dutiful regard for honesty and truth."...

—The New York Times

Christopher Street's *Special Informant at the Vatican was present recently when the Pope was visited by Ronald Firbank, the English writer and aesthete. Mr. Firbank is the author of several novels*—Vainglory *(1915)*, Caprice *(1917)*, The Flower Beneath the Foot *(1923), and many others, most notably* Concerning the Eccentricities of Cardinal Pirelli *(1926), in which the Cardinal, whose eccentricities include the baptism of dogs in his cathedral, collapses and dies while chasing a pretty choirboy around the altar. Mr. Firbank's visit was precipitated by the untimely attacks on His Holiness, to whom he wished to extend his sympathy and offer whatever assistance possible under the circumstances.*

One of the sturdier members of the Swiss Guard, who had disguised his luncheon scent of *Gruyère* with a liberal dab of rose-steeped Holy Water, pounded three times on the marble floor with his halberd and sent the Pope's pet mice, the twins Immaculata and Concezione, scurrying up the sleeve of a discarded, lightweight summer chasuble flung coyly over a carved wood *prie-dieu* that depicted Mary Magdalene Waylaying Our Lord. "The Hon. 'Wonny' Firbank," the guard called out in cisalpline accents. The disturbing effect of the mispronounced *R*'s was nearly canceled out by the bass register that the Supreme Pontiff had asked everyone connected



"But we'd still like two seats together, thank you."

"Je reviens."

with his household to affect until all Rumors of Vatican effeminacy had been laid to rest as thoroughly as last winter's ermine-lined cassocks.

Conscious of the great favor bestowed on him by this audience, the Hon. "Wonny" was seized by a fit of nervous giggles as he approached the heir to St. Peter, who was wistfully trying on a platinum triple tiara, cleverly fashioned into three bunches of bananas, which had been presented by the faithful of Panama. "We are giving this crown to the poor," the Vicar of Christ sighed as he removed his new treasure and began to hum his favorite Carmen Miranda show tune. Firbank saw the small Piero above the Pope's daybed of Eve offering an apple to Adam as a discrete foreshadowing of the pontiff's saintly sacrifice.

The bells of Rome began to toll the noon hour. "Paola," as the Pope was known to intimates, confirmed the time with a glance at his Lady Bulova, presented him last October by a delegate from the Knights of Columbus of Hoboken. Since the first vapors of Scandal had occluded the Holy See, the Pope had found some consolation in wearing whichever presents had been given him, no matter how shockingly those gifts violated the dictates of Fashion. Only half an hour until he was due for his henna rinse at the Mother Cabrini *Salon*. . . . "Come closer and state your business," the Pope said rather snappishly.

Alarmed by this display of papal vexation and feeling queasy about a closer proximity to Immaculata (Concezione was gamboling merrily on the window sill), the Hon. "Wonny" drew nearer the Pope's vanity table, crowned with a half-quart bottle of Joy. "I've been asked to wield my pen in defending His Holiness's honor. The College of Cardinals thought a teensy article under my 'byline' refuting the heretic Peyrefitte—"

Paola rose from his looking glass with awful majesty. No matter that he had once enjoyed Peyrefitte's novella, *Les Amitiés Particulières*, about that toothsome pair of prep school boys, one of them an acolyte—ever since those grave imputations printed in *Il Tempo* no one had been permitted to mention the monster's name within the Vatican walls. Besides, who was this Firbank with his pen? Had he not heard of the Pope's own considerable literary gifts? The recent Bull on Self-Abuse and Sodomy alone should have proved to any doubting Thomas the pontiff's skill as a *belle-lettriste*. It had required three drafts and a severe last-minute pruning.

"We welcome your prayers, anyone's prayers," the Pope said with more than a trace of *froideur*.

Miffed by this rebuff, "Wonny" couldn't help saying, as he contemplated a Mannerist painting of the Last Supper at *two* tables, "Prayer alone will not suffice. There are those compromising photographs of His Holiness from his days as Archbishop of Milan with . . . the pastry chef."

The Vicar's eyes misted over at the recollection; he wiped them with a copy of Veronica's Napkin, bearing the papal monogram, crossed keys below the mitre. Fond memories of the boy, nicknamed "Doughboy," came crowding back. But surely it was a mortal sin to confuse that innocent, delicious interlude with Sodomy!

The Englishman was continuing his troubling remarks: "And there are those who accuse His Holiness of being out of step with the times."

"Nonsense," the Pope exclaimed. "We're everything today's Pope on the go should be. It was we who purchased the first Vatican Boeing. And we who absolved the Jews of deicide (a step we've had cause to regret). And it was we who declared so many relics and saints to be fake; no matter that we had to stop wearing a rather sweet little Saint Christopher's medal that Cartier's had run up for us." The Vicar recalled other bold strokes: blessing the computer that was analyzing the *Summa*; the scientific progress that was being made in the study of the Shroud of Milan; the visit to those dear little *campesinos* in South America; the modernization of the Mass, the reform of Curia abuse—what more did they want?

Worst of all, the full impact of the "Fuss" (as the Scandal was called all along the Avenida della Conciliazione) was being felt during the Pope's busiest season. Only this afternoon the Gypsy Feet Travel Agency was bringing by three busloads of Americans for an audience. What were they called? A highly respectable name; what was it? Ah, yes! *Dignity*.

The thought of these visitors cheered the Vicar; ever since the Fuss, instigated by that French monster, Paola had been cross with the Old World and more enthusiastic about the New. He longed to re-do his summer

palace *à la Lefrak*. As he swept past the disagreeable English writer, His Holiness recalled other delightful aspects of the Western Hemisphere and resumed humming, "Yes, We Have No Bananas. . . ." He signaled a decidedly reserved blessing in the general direction of his unwanted guest.

The Love of Parallels

Recently we received a letter from our friend, the retired etymologist, which reads in part:

"Certainly I applaud your magazine endeavor. I would like nothing better than to have something sensible on the topic to read. And I think I could best help by sending you tidbits of things already published—fragments of thought, perhaps—which I have found food for reflection. Recently I read a letter Isak Dinesen sent to her brother Thomas in 1926, which interested me immensely:

> I have developed a theory of modern love as "homosexuality"—understood as homogeneous—which takes more the form of a passionate sympathy than of a personal joining with and devotion to one another—an emotion I don't think one can easily live with or like. . . . Aldous Huxley has an expression "the love of parallels" which in some way expresses what I mean here. One doesn't become "part of each other," "devoted to each other," one perhaps doesn't become so close and one is simply not one another's goal in life, but while one is oneself and strives for one's own distant goal, one finds happiness in the conviction that one is running parallel in eternity.

I have cut it somewhat but you can find the whole thing in Thomas Dinesen's book *My Sister, Isak Dinesen* (Michael Joseph Publishers, London, 1975)."

Sunrises at Julius's

For those of us whose knowledge of an earlier Julius's goes no further than the framed yellow clippings from Walter Winchell on the wall, or the speakeasy peephole in the back door, Paul Mazursky's film *Next Stop Greenwich Village*, with all its flaws, revealed a colorful new page in the history of this venerably seedy bar. In the Fifties,

"I know the art department is gay, but is it gay enough?"

long-haired hippy "chicks" (as they were called then) from Larchmont and Great Neck were patrons as regular as their male counterparts.

Most evenings now at Julius's there is at least one woman quietly sipping a drink in a softly lit corner of the bar with some male companion showing off his village world to a close uptown friend. Although a guidebook tells us that at Julius's "the gay scene is mild" (whatever that means), no one would mistake Julius's for Tuesday's, Thursday's, or Friday's.

Occasionally, Julius's is even a rendezvous for couples thinking of marriage. One chilly evening this spring, we were sitting at one of those graffiti-etched tables in the back, eavesdropping on a nattily dressed lawyer arranging a marriage between his female secretary and his Mexican lover, whose student visa had expired.

Her green eyes flashing with anger, the young woman snapped "But he hasn't even proposed yet. Besides, I want a big wedding—after all, it's my first marriage."

In the measured tones of a lawyer accustomed to working out compromises, her boss replied: "Look, Darlene, this is a business deal. You'll get your Plaza wedding and Bendel dress. Anything you want—just so long as the whole affair is settled before the Fire Island season begins."

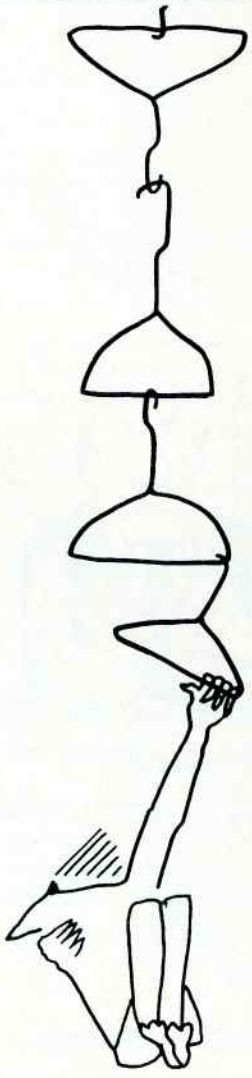
Her broad, approving smile brightened the dark reaches of Julius's backroom. Equally pleased, the lawyer kissed his lover and the bargain was appropriately sealed with another round of tequila sunrises.

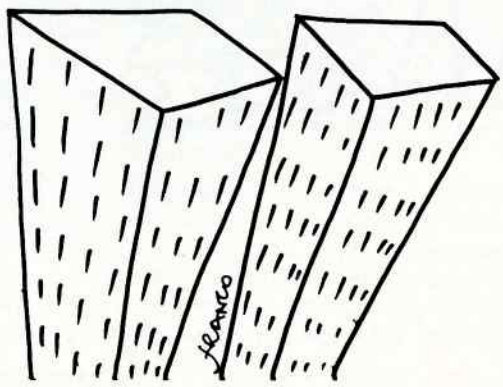
The Amazons of Darkover

Lesbian science fiction is something of a *rara avis*—Joanna Russ's *The Female Man* is one of the few titles still in print—but this spring saw a new and very good book come onto the stands, Marion Zimmer Bradley's *The Shattered Chain* (DAW Books), about the Free Amazons, a caste of dropouts from the ancient sexist forms of marriage who live on their chosen planet Darkover. Ms. Bradley is fondly remembered for her intense gay science fiction novel set on the same planet, *Heritage of Hastur*, which appeared last summer. No less than Arthur C. Clarke compared it publicly to Mary Renault and J. R. R. Tolkien.

California

It has been reliably reported to us that a noted character on the San Francisco scene is currently attending mortuary school to prepare herself for employment by the city's first all-gay funeral parlor. California, as usual, leads the nation.





Paul Goodman
REMO

A Short Story

During the days I wrote the argumentative story called "The Boy Scouts of Westhampton," I was in a mood of sobriety, as one who has learned a needed lesson. In this story it was agreed, between the Scoutmaster and the Boy Scouts, between myself and the Boy Scouts, between the reader and myself, that there must be no more deception, no more self-deception, no more lies, no more make-believe. *Why* fool ourselves? I had learned a sad lesson from the summertime with R. and from the springtime with G. and from the last week in February with E. Why fool myself? – even I realized that it was time to return home. The sober truth was that these pretended loves had spread in my soul a zone of death. But now, by a process of reasoning with my pen, I came to set a limit to desire.

I stepped out into the sunlight on the footpad snow, among the brittle icicles and among the rainbows on the trees, on the very day that I released "The Boy Scouts of Westhampton" to the publisher, and the mood of sobriety that had accompanied the composition of this story dissolved into gaiety as I moved in the frosty air. I chanced at once upon Remo, the boy who lives in the next house, throwing himself into the silent drifts. This Remo was little more than a child; he was thirteen years old; he was at the age of telling lies. Yet on this wintry day as I saw him – seeing him suddenly, as it were – in a snow-caked blue jacket, with a blue cowl concealing his head but not his face, which appeared surprisingly at the border of the cowl, I fell in love with the childish boy; anyway he was tall for his age. No, no! I was not fatally struck by such a love, like that writer von Aschenbach who died in Venice of the plague; but his face shone out of the dark cowl in an unusual manner that I could not deny. It was a week of Christmas holidays and we went all day for sleigh rides with Rippy and Jules.

My Remo lied about everything, to his mother most and next most to me. In school he told lies about the multiplication table. To win my admiration and especially to make himself seem older in my eyes, he lied to me that he was in the second term of high school. But I was no longer stupid (and why fool myself?) and I learned, by asking the others, that he was in 7A. And in order that he could talk to me about school, and not keep looking daggers at certain remarks of Rippy's, I went to meet him coming out of school.

"Who told you?" he said sullenly.

"Rippy," I said, naming his best friend in order that I could see my boy become angry.

"I'll kill 'im – It's a *lie*!"

. . .

"Wouldn't you like me better if you thought I was in high school?" asked Remo.

He told the same lie to other adults, for instance to my friend Mr. Terjesen, the mailman – trying in this way to make people think that my love was more reasonably directed, to a young man in high school! But thirteen is the great Age of Lies, when desire is growing more intense, but experience has not yet taught one to be circumspect.

January 29th was Promotion Day at school, and in the afternoon occurred the following amusing episode:

I was standing on the corner with Terjesen, the letter carrier, who had just finished his round and was leaning against the lamp post, and I was waiting, of course, for my boy Remo to come by, but was so absorbed in a discussion of mechanics that I had forgotten time and place, when suddenly he appeared and leaned against me. I lightly locked his head with my right forearm. "Well, were you promoted?" I asked. He said, "Yes," darting at the same time an apprehensive glance at Mr. Terjesen. "What class are you now in, in high school?" asked the postman. My boy pressed closer against me, so as not to have to see me. "In the third," he muttered darkly to Mr. Terjesen, and breaking loose he moved away, trailing an empty bookstrap, for their textbooks had been collected.

But just at this moment, while Terjesen and I were standing by the lamp post, while Remo was standing with one foot off the curb, a window opened above us and Rippy called out from the window on the second floor: "Remo– what class are you put into?"

"*What*?" cried Remo. "I can't wait, I have to go to the store."

I let the postman in on this little comedy, so that he could better appreciate the attempt made to keep him in the dark.

"I can't hear you!" shouted Remo, trying with these words to drown out Rippy's voice.

"7B what?"

"Higher! higher!"

"Two for lying," said Rippy.

Perhaps I ought not to have allowed a situation to arise where my kid felt so disgraced in my eyes (as he thought), especially since I did not want to correct him. It was in my power to have forestalled that situation by walking a step in any direction. But Remo would not find himself in disgrace with me when I saw him at 4 o'clock and we went on the pond with skates among a hundred other rainbow sweaters swaying from side to side; but he would find that I loved him more. It was, of course, as an effect of loving little Remo that I complicated the situation by letting Mr. Terjesen in on the comedy and then enjoying it with him – for the men who love childish boys desire to talk about their characters and games. But my Remo might have known – as if he did not know! – that whether he was caught in lies or was slow in school would not disgrace him in my eyes, although it might in some people's. What *would* be disgraceful?–if he no longer looked out from the dark cowl of his snow-caked blue jacket? No, no! we had already advanced beyond that. As the low red sun colored the ice, and as it glinted from the skates of the other skaters far off, little Remo and I skated into Jellico's Creek; and here, all noise and sight suddenly cut off, we were alone.

"All the same," I said to Mr. Terjesen, as we stood beneath the lamp post, as my sweet lad Remo moved slowly toward his house trailing his bookstrap, as in the window above Rippy disappeared like a portrait vanishing from a frame, "there is sometimes more advantage in seeming to be than in being actually."

"How do you make that out?" asked the letter carrier.

"Why, when he *is* in the third term of high school. . . ."

"Who is in high school?"

"My boy Remo, of course."

"What! is it *your* son? I didn't know that Mrs. Bairnsfather and you had any son."

"No, he is not."

"I thought it was a kid from nearby, though I have sometimes watched you go bobsledding with him."

"*Have* you?" I said sharply.

"I like to take out a sleigh too, sometimes, and join in with the kids of my boy's age."

"Do you?"

Reaching his house, *my* boy flashed a significant smile in our direction, and disappeared within.

You ought to teach this boy not to lie," said Mr. Terjesen.

"I am not so sure of that," I said, for I was not in favor of any change in my little liar, any change that might alter our relations, any change in the wintry afternoons. I said, "When he *is* in the third term of high, do you think my Remo will have any more pleasure than he has in 7B-4? No, no! that will be his ordinary class, as he has a class now and last term he had a class."

"Yes, every class is equal, I suppose."

"Just as you are a letter carrier, Terjesen, and I the author of 'Here Today, Gone Tomorrow' (do you think I can take pride in that work? – *I* know how it came to be written!); just as Garbo is *used* to posing before the camera, and Honig has *finally* gotten to be the Governor! Am I naming unusual instances?"

"Perhaps not," said the letter carrier.

"*But Lies and Wishful Fancies*," I said, "allow us, in other people's eyes or in our own, to skip the intervening stages and to get what we want when we want it! – all those things that will fade into the light of common day as we really approach them little by little."

Somewhat disturbed by my vehemence, by the expressiveness of my badly restrained emotion, by the uncalled-for confession of my easy love, Mr. Terjesen raised his gloved right hand to check me.

I said, "But it is my darling liar, my little Remo, sweet kid, who has taught me again this life of the fancy – with his lies about himself to me, and about me to Rippy and Jules, and to his mother about every one, when I had just invented a long and gloomy argument called 'The Boy Scouts of Westhampton.' "

Out of the corner of my eye – as if I had been watching for anything else! – I saw Remo with his poodle dog Mickey held on a leash reappear from the house.

. . . Alas! it is very true, I thought, that in two years, when he *is* in high school, I shall hardly be able to recognize my Remo; in four years he will be taller than I. Ought I not to act with these facts in view?

Blinking, I dismissed this afterthought to another time.

"Yet you see how it is," said Terjesen kindly, "the boys who lie are always caught in comic situations."

"Do you think any of the others are happier in the long run?" I asked with bravado, for I myself had ceased to think whether they were or were not.

"Happier I won't say, but safer. If he were my boy, I'd surely discourage such reckless habits."

"No no! at present you are talking like the Scoutmaster of the troop at Westhampton, a great proponent of the habit of freedom as he calls it, but no friend of the momentary free act itself."

At these words Mickey, who had been dashing toward me unleashed (for Remo had let him loose to fetch me), barked, and tore at my trouser legs.

During these last few moments, while our responding breaths commingled in the frosty air, while I watched Remo approaching from the door of his house, the wintry afternoon passed into a new phase, into an ancient phase that I had come to look forward to during thirty-five days, as a roulette slowing down stops at last: on a lucky number – a phase of pleasure, as at 5 o'clock in the dusk the golden lamps suddenly light. Who was I now, in my ankles and in my heart, in my senses and in my soul? Mickey tore at my ankles, as if to say, "Come away from this dangerous dialogue at the unlit lamp post where you are thinking too abstractly." My heart was pounding. My sight composed a portrait of Remo loitering at the newsstand, as if spelling out a headline, but he was spying at me through his lowered lashes. My hearing registered these words of Mr. Terjesen's: "Ha! will you advise him to spend all his life *skating* on thin ice?"–and to this my intellect had a ready reply in the form of another question: "And what keen pleasure is there without a risk?"– but my Desire, instead, caught up that idea of Skating from the mailman's metaphor.

Like a face returning to its frame, Rippy reappeared at the window above us on the second floor, and "Remo," he called down, to his friend but to my darling, "are you coming up to play?"

"No, no!" said I, "Remo is coming skating at Jellico's Pond."

–February 1936

Harold Rosenberg
AUTONOMY
(Paul Goodman: 1911-1972)

Many years ago Paul Goodman called me on the phone. "How are you?" I asked. "Right this minute," he replied, "I feel lousy. Underneath though, I'm all right. Below that there is, of course, the usual nagging. At bottom, however, I'm really fine."

How could a man conscious of so many layers of mood be a Type? Successful cultural performers of our time—Marinetti, Breton, Sartre, Buckminster Fuller, Warhol, McLuhan—are keyed to a single emotional state, one that is in accord with their invented personae. Paul Goodman preferred to cope (one of his favorite words) with himself as is. If there was any playacting in his public identity, it was in remaining simply Goodman, the kid off the streets, in a woolen pullover, with rumpled hair and no tie. A gamin with a Ph.D.

An actor on the public stage who plays himself is headed for trouble. Like Eugene McCarthy, Goodman enraged his followers by refusing to imitate their fiction of him. It is touching that his last work should have been an attempt to explain himself to his students at the University of Hawaii, to tell them "how I am in the world"; and it is interesting that he should have called this essay "Finite Experience" in order to set himself off against abstractions.

Goodman's creed was "the facts of life." Nothing less! It entailed endless psychic shifting, from glorying in the Greeks, the Old Testament, tales of the Buddha, to cruising for rough trade, telling it to City Hall, and arguing with Chomsky about language. The "facts" also included beings inherited from literature and myth, e.g., angels, saints. When Goodman writes "Saints, of course, can keep going," he is acknowledging the existence of these exalted beings and applying them as a practical measure of what he, Goodman, can't do, since he's not a saint.

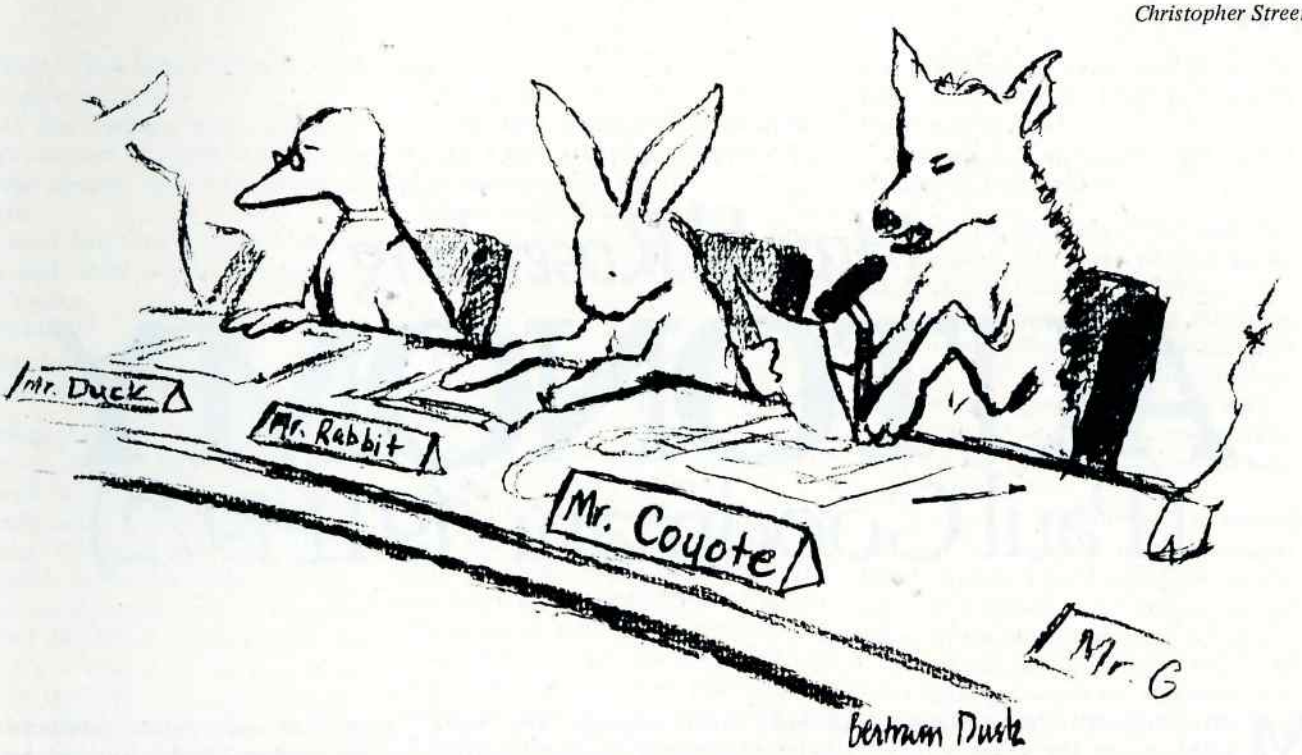
Goodman wrote novels, short stories, plays, essays, poems, criticism of a particularly unfettered sort. Yet these genres often seemed not to fit him too well, for he kept tightening and loosening them—only occasionally is a short story, essay, poem or piece of a play free of jamming and over-relaxing. One of his finest creations is *Five Years*, a diary. It is the book that brings him closest to his audience and most completely. It is the most unified in mood, and it reveals without distortion an ebb and flow of thinking and feeling in its protagonist.

The special merit of *Five Years* among Goodman's writings has to do with the way it softens the conflict between literary form and contemporary self-consciousness. The problem of formal incongruity is, of course, not peculiar to Goodman. Indeed, it is the problem from which art in the twentieth century has derived its distinctive qualities, and not only art. Most of this century's outstanding works of literary creation, from *Remembrance of Things Past* and *The Counterfeiters* to *Herzog*, are variations on the diary. Form bothers the contemporary mind—which knows that unless the sonnet, the five-act play, or a convention of behavior carries an independent emotional or social content, whether it be love by the waterfall or the proper serving of tea, its rules are merely an arbitrary deformation of the direct data of experience.

On the other hand, where a formal objective is lacking, the mind finds it difficult to make itself move and almost impossible to move coherently; it becomes subject to the drift and chaos of sensation. Form squeezes thought out of shape, but rescues it from shapelessness. Hence literary theory today tends to be split between a traditionalism that insists that inherited forms still carry a charge independent of content (hence, for example, that "free verse" is emotionally impoverished) and a primitivism that takes it for granted that "reality" can be dragged just as it is into books. Most writers avoid taking either position. They adopt a pattern they can manipulate while being dimly disturbed at finding their inner lives kept at bay by their own productions.

Goodman was one of the handful of writers in the postwar period who have been both thoroughly conscious of the dilemma of form and willing to extend themselves in working out forms suited to their unique needs. Efforts of this kind almost inevitably introduce into works a degree of abstractness and posing.

The journal, like the painter's sketch book, is a detour around art which results in a work valid only in relation to its particular content. It is the one-of-a-kind creative act that I have identified elsewhere with "Coonskin" improvisation. To Goodman it was the essential



"Mr. Chairman, before I answer this or any further question, I am obliged at this point to again remind the members of this sub-committee that the 'e' in my name is not silent, but pronounced."

antidote and relief to his normal "classicism." For despite his obsession with objective measure, if ever there was a Coonskining "making-doer" it was Paul Goodman. A man at all times engaged in cooking up what he is and casing his environment, he found in the little blank books in which he wrote *Five Years* the medium he needed in order to make the empty spaces in him part of the picture.

The variety of Goodman's encounters with phenomena and hypotheses amounted in effect to playing hide and seek with his entourage (in his case a more accurate word than "audience," since people who were close to him physically counted for more than the abstract presence of admiring readers). His genius lay in his range, a vertical span joining high and low. Facts and phrases lying in the gutter, which most writers pass by, were mixed by Goodman into his gravest utterances (and he was not ashamed to be high-toned, to speak of the "lordly" Hudson, and to declaim that "to us threadbare men of letters, heirs of humanism and the Enlightenment, it is again the entrenched system served by a priestly caste," and so on).

It was his hospitality to the familiar, to the unretouched datum too close to be noticed, as in "The Break-Up of Our Camp," that held me many years ago, though the first writing of his that I admired, when we were both contributors to *The Symposium* in the early 1930s and Goodman was about twenty-three, was a brilliant criticism of functional architecture, which, in an approach that was to become characteristic, he demonstrated was not "functional" at all.

From theories of architecture, of community, of human nature, of energy (how to get "an extra ounce of strength"), he passed on to flora and fauna of New York, his *Empire City*, including public officials, conceptualized plutocrats, grand pianos, Jewish jokes and Jewish "facts of life," the latter free of the usual garnishings of sour cream, dialect and pantomime—that is, free of "color" but with a respect for things as they are.

Goodman's *Five Years* is a chronicle of hunger, no less than the log of Joe Down and Out, who came to town without a cent, knew not a soul and spent his days scrounging for a handout. In this book Goodman appears *in toto*, the prowler hungry for every type of goody—hungry for sex, for companions, for being admired, for intellectual clarity, for a classical art, for noble actions, for the absolute. Who today has the genius to lack as much as Goodman could lack. Lusting was his gift, the golden secretion that continually freshened his mind and washed the dust out of his prose. His paragraphs whined and squealed in an environment as homey and bright as an old-fashioned tiled barbershop. "I am resigned to not knowing what I want, nor how to go about getting it; but I am not resigned to misery, but choked, sighing, finding a difficult music in the sighs, short of breath to sing much of it. 'Murky, confused,' says Lao-tse, and so I am. *I salute my little motor scooter poised for flight.*" (My italics)

Goodman's hunger was not for food —at least not directly (though in his Freudian scheme it might go back to that). It was a more total hunger, relentless as the gnawing of the worm. Goodman was hungry even after he had regaled himself—"I cruise for sex . . . then, when the bout is all over and gone, I lust."

Besides being hungry for sex, he was lonely. Yet except for a few trips to Europe, he remained in his own city, had a wife and children, met his friends, went to parties. They did not avail. As meat did not relieve his hunger, company did not allay his aloneness. It is not that he purposely separated himself from people. On the contrary, he wanted more communion with them than they were able to provide. He craved creatures to do things with—this he called community, love—but he couldn't

arouse them to his movement. Or they started with him and petered out.

He suffered also from too few occasions for action. He had time on his hands and wanted to be used. He waited for a call. Silence.

So instead of doing things with people, Goodman was tempted to do things to them. He seduced. Aging, and considering himself physically unattractive, he charmed through thought—if it worked for Socrates. . . . He delivered wisdom, in the hope of bringing about an event ("truth is not the description of a state of things but the orientation of an ongoing activity"). He thought of Artaud and of a theatre that goaded the audience.

Thus Goodman lived and wrote as a pedagogue (of getting together) and as a therapist (of the ills of holding back). He wished not to understand the other but to provide basic training for a partnership. "With a patient I do not have a 'diagnosis' but a kind of vaguely articulated prediction of behaviors in the session which, as they come to be, make me press on with more confidence." He was full of theories and perceptions, and liked to classify and make distinctions: "this can be seen as (1) . . . (2) . . . (3) . . . (4) . . . ." But his analyses were primarily intended to estimate the angle from which to move in. "When I have any success, it does not occur to me that I know (or have known) anything about the case; but I boast that I am a 'good technician,' I can get on confident paths and bring something about."

With Goodman, then, thought was attached to action at both ends, in its source and in its intention. His books sought recruits, were "help wanted" broadcasts. *Five Years* was to some degree an exception. Here he was largely working on himself. In the period that he wrote it he had, he told us, run out of publishers (actually he published two of his major works). He turned to notebook-keeping because he felt stymied as a writer and without hope of "bringing something about" through his literary creations. He had to give up the notion of acting on people, or do it directly. So he recruited daily in person—and with growing discouragement.

He became a prowler. He spent his days and nights foraging for sex on the waterfront and in bars—"a citizen of nowhere," as he eloquently remarks, "but an animal of the world." Back in his cave he would prowl through his mind and find the material for his notes.

He did not wish in those writings to give accounts of happenings. Nor is the coherence there in the general propositions, though he formulated many of these and with a breadth of interest typical of his always-active mind. Goodman was quite right to use quotes when he referred to the notes as "thoughts." Rather than ideas, they are intellectual doings, acts of the intelligence, performed for their own sake in the wake of the events he had gotten tangled up in, once again a reappearance of desire after the "bout."

Perhaps here the desire was for something resembling what Baudelaire called "hygiene," the wish to set things straight for the intellect, if they couldn't be for the moral sensibility.

Goodman prowls not like a backyard tom but a gentle housecat stepping softly and a little lost. He wants tail but he wants stroking too. Perhaps he wants the stroking more. In any case, he's scared half to death, expecting any minute the brutal swipe of rival male claws ("real tough guys") or the boot of the householder (the police.) But the window was open and he had to go out.

That "got to go" was the basic issue of Goodman's thought. Why did he have to go? Because a cat that refuses the open window has condemned himself forever. He has accepted domesticity, being house-broken, obeying the routine of the dish. In surrendering his freedom he surrenders also his vitality, in the end even his health. "I have a theory that it's good to perform animal functions without delaying."

Goodman had no alternative but to leap after every opportunity to satisfy himself. He was bound to happiness by doctrine: he was not free not to be happy. And this happiness had to be sexual happiness, or it was false. Let one feel playful as a breeze, let his spirit blow where it listeth, if he go not to kissing and hugging, sucking and screwing, it is fake joy and delusion.

Goodman did not dare to be a fake or to run the risk of being taken in. He was convinced that a constricted life is immoral and a drain on the vital energies. He could not imagine that resistance to the nudges of sensation might be as strong an instinct as the source of the nudges themselves. For him the self was not, as for Montaigne, an equilibrium. In his image man was built in layers, with the most vital ones at the bottom and graded up to the head, which was only allowed to be

DIRECT ADDRESS

for S. T.

You said,
"I am afraid
I want to be a woman"—

I think it only fair to warn you
it is not what you think
trailing your skirts,
brow-pencil, night cream—
these aren't the feminine
or any softnesses you were denied
but some extreme costume of the heart.
Steve, you wanted to be a queen.

I think it only fair to warn you
the heart is sexless.
It lies undressed in the dark,
and under the silk
or the single earring of gold,
the many-sexed apparel,
the heart, naked, is beating
need need need

—*Joan Larkin*

light and to twinkle—if it had any authority, and the power to enforce it, it would be a fatal mistake to resort to it. It was, then, for the sake of truth, of reality, of salvation, that Goodman was compelled to cat around, as others dedicate themselves to a Cause.

Like all Causes, this one, too, demanded sacrifices. Goodman was fully conscious that the program of satisfying his "lust" (the word belongs in Gay Nineties lettering) was making him miserable. "I undo myself," he writes, "because of a theory that I, alas, believe: that happiness, satisfaction, is the necessary ground for the full exercise of power." He was, he recognized, the victim of a sexual determinism as rigid as the determinism of history or economics. First, he had to take care of the "ground," then would come the capacity for the fulfilling act. The hunger must be appeased even when doing so goes against the grain. "If only I could fail to show!" he lamented when, to his relief, his date stood him up. The hunger must be appeased even when there is no pleasure in it—and even, finally, when there is no hunger. Goodman tells of lowering his standards in order to multiply his chances, and notes that "*unfortunately*, my lust has also diminished."

In time it was the absence of hunger that he suffered from, and this led him to denounce his martyrdom to appetite. "My sexual behavior, void of both lust and satisfaction, may now be fairly and strictly equated to a false cultus-religion, an obsession. My seeking and waiting are its pieties and austerities; and the sexual act itself has just about the meaning of a ritual sacrifice, and is about as delicious as a communion wafer. This is a false religion, an idolatry. . . . Religious observance is what I have been doing. . . . It all has a promise of Paradise in it. But the idolatrous promise is an abstraction and a fraud, which I dare not, however, expose."

But he did dare. And he accepted as a result to enter into "the most disconsolate state that I can recall." He had lost his idea and with it even his incentive for getting into trouble. He had less to do than ever.

In conveying Goodman's distressing practice of his cult and his painful rejection of it, *Five Years* is a book of edification that should be studied by all who still believe in the sexual "ground" theory of intellectual potency. It is the memoir of a victim of ideology, of a man who wrecks his comfort and his sense of seemliness for the sake of an idea. With Goodman Eros turned into a vengeful Jehovah who condemned him to a *law* of hunger and flight.

Was it Goodman's philosophy that made him raven as he did, or was it his condition? The question of whether one is wrong or sick probably cannot be answered. To some degree an intellectual, particularly Paul Goodman, *is* his idea, and to separate his conceptions from his urges is foolish. Let the psychiatrists apply their primitivist measure to people whose minds wake up for the first time in their doctors' offices. Yet Goodman had no doubt that his error was the effect of being pushed by nonconscious forces. In decrying his search for the sexual paradise, he asked, "what am I obsessionally warding off?" Though he repudiated the psychiatric dream of strength-through-love, he still clung to its myth of a hidden determinism. This absolves him, but it fails to do him justice. Courageously choosing to act on his bad idea (unlike the millions who keep this "false religion" safely in their heads) enabled him to see through it. He was helped also by the fact that he was functioning in the world again, was being sought after and listened to, and had more than enough projects to fulfill. Given enough meaningful action one can forget the need for paradise.

Since the notes that constitute *Five Years* partake thus of events, are themselves experiences, I regret that Goodman removed them from their order of occurrence and arranged them under topical headings: "God," "Art," "Method," "Myself," etc.—headings which don't fit anyway (how many of the notes belong under any heading but "Myself"?). Perhaps organizing them in categories does "make it easier for the reader," as Goodman says. But it does so at the expense of the spontaneous rhythm and spacing, the intervals of recurrence, which are the chief formal attractions of note writing.

The inner movement of a journal is recurrence, the natural refrain of thought, within the randomness of daily thoughts and happenings. An idea occurs to the author and, because he does not endeavor to develop it into a work, it subsists for a period determined by its own energy. Thus the length of the note becomes an aspect of its meaning. The idea vanishes, then some days or weeks later it returns in another phase, or perhaps merely reworded, but quantitatively different. Each time the thought turns up, it echoes in the reader's mind like a refrain and he recognizes it with pleasure.

In this instance, keeping the actual order of the entries would have been especially desirable. Drawn so directly from the author's living substance, they would tend to carry his beat and to be "notes" also in the musical sense of the word. Their effect would have been modified by the interruptions, if any, between the various reflections on a single subject, say those on Lord Acton. Instead, the tension of the interval is sacrificed for the classification, though the refrain effect is partially preserved through keeping the notebooks themselves separate and in chronological order.

If Goodman's social behavior seemed to many outrageous—there was a period, before *Growing Up Absurd* made him famous, when it was common to hear him reviled—it was less because of any harm he did than because his values did not fit those of his critics. He was the traditional outsider; for a time, other outsiders enclosed him, then he became outside to them too. Goodman recognized that he was oppressed not by any restraints put upon him but by the condition of being incommensurate. "My usual gripe has been," he wrote in "Finite Experience," "not that I am imprisoned, but that I am in exile or was born on the wrong planet." This sentiment of an adolescent was expressed when Goodman was sixty—evidence that though his desires were not extreme they remained unadjustable.

In the impulse to remodel his environment to fit himself, the "autonomist" becomes a revolutionary. But not a rabid one, for he is aware that his task is hopeless—even if he succeeded, success would come too late. Hence his radicalism consists in urging the advantages of a society that would fit him, in contrast to the present society that fits nobody. In being the projection of a single person, utopias, no matter how far-fetched, are humanly more real than societies arising from organizational processes or the schemes of ideologists.

Perhaps it was his sense of being exiled from the world that made the idea of handiwork, of using tools and materials, so important to Goodman—I never met anyone with less talent for handling a hammer. His enthusiasm for group activity must also have been a means to overcome isolation. Given his

brilliance, he was certain to be a leader, but his superiority was equally certain to leave him disappointed. Human interchange was his axiom, and among his few fixed ideas was the therapy of bursting into tears.

In sum, he conceived his uniqueness as a burden as well as a duty, in the sense of the Old Testament Jonah, about whom he wrote a play. He wished to be divested of it, to be released from the command. But his ego, subtle, proud, complex, and fatally introverted, could not submit to his yearning to migrate to "the other planet" of people and things. In the end, his "finite experience" became the experience of loneliness and fear of death. Against these, he raised the theological slogan of "patience and fortitude," and with the bravery of a true man of ideas fought back by writing a book.

"And what if Jill Johnston doesn't like younger women?"

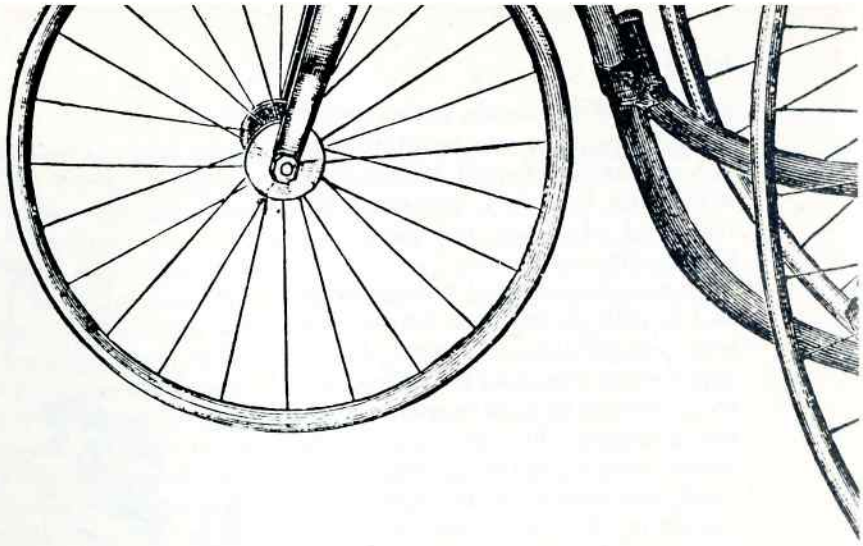
For a time Goodman could have been America's foremost radical. Who else was set so intrinsically against more forms of socially expected behavior? It tires me merely to count the fronts on which he kept himself engaged: the economic system, the moral system, the educational system, the sexual system, bureaucratic smugness, censorship, drug laws, the literary setup, the work setup. What favored him was that he saw all these as one, with which the living person was compelled to deal simultaneously. Everything is everybody's business. Goodman considered himself a citizen and a patriot. Nominally, this deprived him of the title Radical. He was only living in the America, he discovered, and reporting on its mistakes and lacks.

His struggles were directed not toward a new institutional condition but for what he came to call autonomy, the privilege of going about things in the best way one was capable of. What's to prevent it? Not anything in particular, just everything. Some time in the sixties Goodman and I delivered a dual lecture at Wayne State University in Detroit. The topic given us was: "The Rebel, Is There a Place for Him in Our Society?" The managers of the program had assumed that we would both be on the side of "the rebel" and tried without success to get a "conservative" to oppose us. It turned out that we *were* on the same side, but both of us against the rebel. I objected to the stereotype of the role, to some of the people who had assumed it in order to capture public attention, and to the failure of rebels to change anything. Goodman offered as the alternative to the rebel his idea of the autonomous individual. A young man who wants to practice medicine, he contended, ought to do his utmost to obtain a good medical education; under present conditions, this effort is bound to put him into conflict with the medical school, not because he is a rebel but because he loves medicine.

Autonomy is opposition *in action*. You either do it your way or "their" way. That there is nothing to prevent your way and their way from coalescing makes the position of autonomy all the more difficult. You have to take on the classical task of knowing yourself and being true to it. For instance, Paul liked dogs, and it is the duty of a rebel to purge himself of trite sentiments. Breton, for example, declared it to be a scandal that Trotsky was a dog lover, and cited his affection as an illustration of uneven development. An autonomous person disregards historical imperatives, takes his feelings as he finds them, and expresses them to suit himself. Goodman's dog was an ugly mutt, large, shapeless, a barrel on legs, and to me a pain in the ass. It was inconceivable, however, that Goodman would own a handsome terrier or a standard poodle or that he would transcend liking mutts.

For one who believes in self-affirmation, the kind of self one happens to have is of the utmost importance. One might agree with Goodman's philosophy but have a self easier to deal with. On the other hand, it may be that the idea of doing everything one's own way comes from the consciousness of having too many inacceptable inclinations, so that unless one defiantly insisted on asserting oneself as a whole as a matter of principle he would be obliged to extinguish the greater part of his personality.

Paul Goodman was no Marquis de Sade; the delinquencies he embraced were not of the kind to make him a menace or put him in danger of being locked up. The worst were merely bad enough to keep him in trouble with himself. Theoretically, his desires were not inconsistent with the general good; in other circumstances they might even have been considered virtues. (It was his more obvious virtues, e.g., his ideal of community programs, that I found least to my taste.) With a degree of luck he could have lived well—"fortunately, I have low standards of what is excellent as happiness"—and in all probability he did do better than most.



Superwoman and the Wheelchair

By Galley Rhett

A week ago, I dreamed that my psychiatrist was sitting in a wheelchair that was like a throne. Her hair was wound up into a tall blonde beehive. A woman named Yoko Ono Ono Ono knelt before her, kissing her crotch and masturbating against her leg. Not long after that, a lot of things began to happen to me.

For one thing, my mother left me, and so did my girlfriend. My mother left me in a dream, by dropping boards around my head. We were all in a store, buying eggs. My mother's apartment was on the second floor, a long skinny room no one would take seriously. While we were paying for the eggs, her apartment began to self-destruct, spontaneously. I knew what was happening as soon as the noises began, but I climbed the ladder to make sure. The walls were caving in, glass was shattering, a hole appeared in the floor. I went back down to pay for the eggs. While I was standing at the cash register, two pine planks dropped beside me. I knew the situation was dangerous, but I was calm.

My girlfriend left me on a train. We had just made our lesbian debut. I have since decided that publicity in these matters is a mistake. I made my first debut at eighteen, in Charleston, South Carolina, in a slightly different context. My girlfriend left me on a train at eleven o'clock from Brattleboro, Vermont. I was not calm. I did not want her to leave. I took forty-five aspirin to soothe my headache, but she left the night I got out of the hospital anyway.

I watched the love of my life ride away on a train. I was crying. Glass was shattering everywhere. I could not live without her. She was the kindest, the nicest, the most beautiful, the smartest, the most sensitive, the tallest. . . . I put three projections on the tracks to save for souvenirs, but later I couldn't find them. When the train galloped off in the distance, I saw that once again, she was just Another Person, and I was just Me.

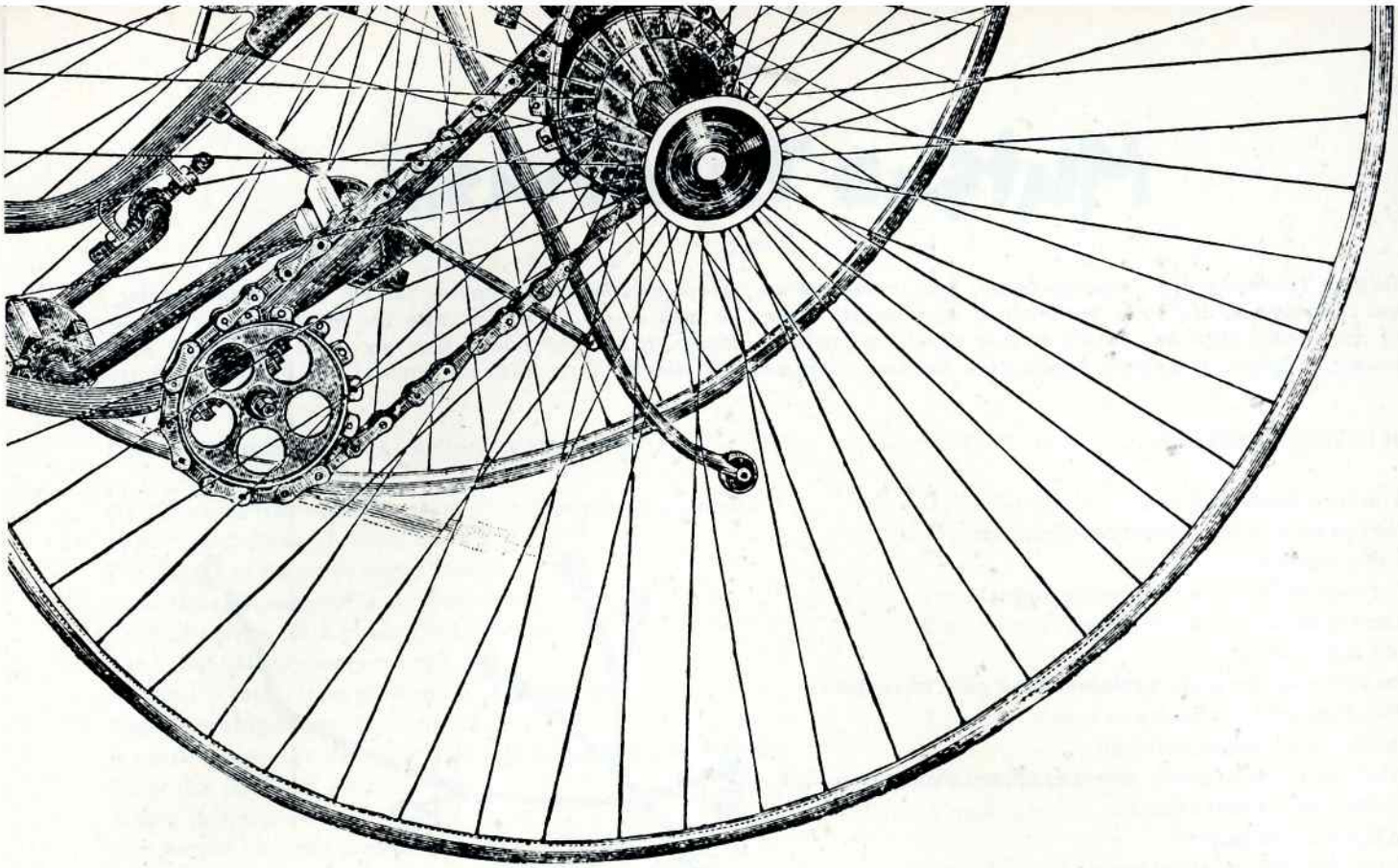
Me. What can I say about myself. I am the kind of person who giggles at Beethoven. I once made a debut and I once belonged to a sorority. I grew up in love with Wonder Woman and Lash Larue. I have always considered suicide a question of integrity, but now I am not so sure.

The new Wonder Woman can do yoga, slow her heart beat down to nearly nothing, in case she's trapped where there's no air, but the old Wonder Woman, the Wonder Woman of my youth, had a red white and blue outfit, a golden tiara, and a golden lariat. The new Wonder Woman can do yoga, but she wears a white stretchy pantsuit. This question of aging is complex.

When I was sixteen, my mother once woke me in the middle of the night pointing a gun at my head. The gun bobbed up and down in her shaking hand. She said somebody had jumped through the dining room window and landed on the silver tea service. My mother was afraid of the dark, and heard noises in it. I am not afraid of the dark, as long as I am careful not to sleep in it.

My mother reminds me of a ferocious old bulldog, but she has a nice side, like any healthy fascist. She means well. I tend to avoid her, but she means well.

My mother now lives with her new husband on the fifteenth green. She drives a yellow golf cart, and a Lincoln Continental. When I was growing up she wanted me to be a professional golfer or a beauty queen. She gave up the profes-



sional golfer when she found out that I played barefoot and jogged between shots. Too much embarrassment was involved in perfecting my game. My chances of being a beauty queen, she said, were marred by bad posture.

I believed in bad posture, and I still believe in it, the lack of congruence between right and left, between fore and aft, between up and down. Without bad posture, what would I do? Anyway, I never wanted to be a beauty queen, I wanted to be Superwoman, and carry a whip like Lash Larue.

My friend Ellen made me a purple glass dildo gun with a barb on the top like a fish hook, although she told me not to use it. She is going to make me a white glass machine gun so I will feel more like Superwoman. It is good to have friends.

I should say that, despite my mother, I am a college teacher. I teach self-defense, and practice self-exposure. Though I am not as exposed as Yoko Ono Ono Ono.

And my shrink does not sit in a wheelchair. She sits in an armchair, and I have never masturbated against her leg. My shrink is near my own age, good-looking, and overweight in a solid, frightening way. A secret power lurks in her huge haunches. I watch the power move in her ass when she walks across the room.

When I am not at therapy I pace up and down my apartment, drawing my purple glass dildo gun out of its hand-made leather holster. When I am not drawing my gun or in therapy, I am practicing self-exposure.

Such as I practiced with my girlfriend, who left me on a train late at night. My girlfriend was not fat. She was skinny and tall and very pale. Often I had her confused with the Virgin Mary. Having gotten to know her old lover, I see that this projection was not peculiar to me. Though it *was* peculiar in that my girlfriend was Jewish.

My girlfriend taught me the story of the Great Cosmic Fist. She said that life consisted of building a solid, comfortable wall, and once safe behind it, peeking over to be socked by the Great Cosmic Fist. I thought it was a parable. I thought it was about the past, or the future. Such was my innocence, which I give up gladly in favor of the quest for the golden wheelchair.

When I was a child, my mother was in a wheelchair for awhile. The doctor said she was crippled because her tonsils were poisoning her body. They removed her tonsils and she walked again. It was a real doctor, not Oral Roberts, and they took out her real tonsils. She sat in a wheelchair until the poisonous tonsils were put into a jar of formaldehyde at the hospital. I was a small child. I thought that somehow she was in that wheelchair because of me. And maybe she was.

I am now on a search for the throne. I know it is on top of a mountain made of glass, but I will take my glass gun and I will wear my white stretchy pantsuit and I will slow my heartbeat down to nearly nothing so I can breathe in the thin, lambent air. I am stalking the throne, the diamond wheelchair in the sky where the Terrible Mother rests on her huge, benevolent haunches. I have planned my attack, I am set for all eventualities. I know not to look at her face, I know to approach her in deference. And I know to keep my purple glass gun, my golden lariat, hidden. I intend to kill her, reverently. It is my wheelchair. In fact I think I may *be* the wheelchair, so I want to sit in it myself.

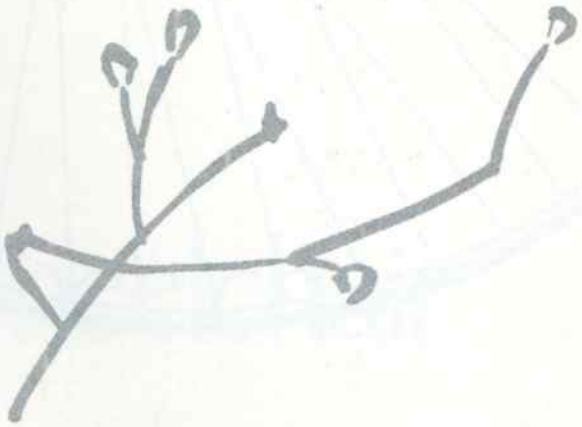
Mutsuo Takahashi

Poems

Mutsuo Takahashi is a Japanese writer, still in his thirties, whose voluminous output so far has been both startling and controversial. His open treatment of homosexual themes as well as his fascination with the landscapes and legendry of the ancient West has caused intense debate in Japanese literary circles. The poems here are from Takahashi's first volume to appear in English, Poems of a Penisist, *translated by Hiroaki Sato, with an introduction by Burton Watson.*

SLEEPING WRESTLER

You are a murderer
No you are not, but really a wrestler
Either way it's just the same
For from the ring your entangling body
Clean as leather, lustful as a lily
Will nail me down
On your stout neck like a column, like a pillar of tendons
The thoughtful forehead
(In fact, it's thinking nothing)
When the forehead slowly moves and closes the heavy eyelids
Inside, a dark forest awakens
A forest of red parrots
Seven almonds and grape leaves
At the end of the forest a vine
Covers the house where two boys
Lie in each other's arms: I'm one of them, you the other
In the house, melancholy and terrible anxiety
Outside the keyhole, a sunset
Dyed with the blood of the beautiful bullfighter Escamillo
Scorched by the sunset, headlong, headfirst
Falling, falling, a gymnast
If you're going to open your eyes, now's the time, wrestler



THE HEAD ON CYPRUS

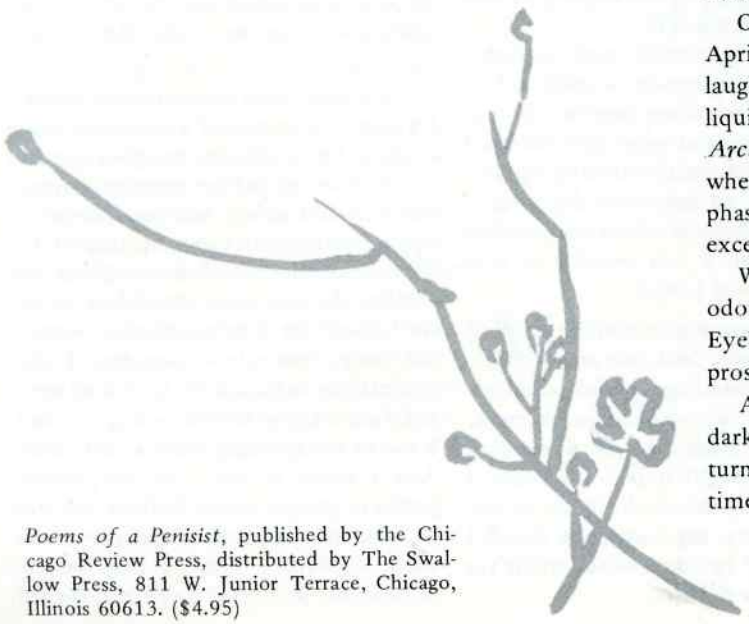
What these serene apricot-shaped eyes reflect—is it the water-like Asian sky that was flowing obliquely over the field of grapes, or a fragment of the Mediterranean Sea like pinged glass beyond the gray quarry?

The forehead with no impertinence of intellect incised on it. The arch of this eyebrow that does not know any distortion belongs to an age when doubts did not exist. The nose swelling leisurely from the eyebrows founders near its bottom. The lips—on both sides of the somewhat tightly closed lips extending no farther than the span of the nostrils, the word classical is pleasantly shaded.

On the sea the sails of Minos' fleet were taut with winds. Apricots bloomed, the soil grew warm with the sun. This face laughed as if untroubled, fell in love, and the translucent liquid of procreation overflowed from the head of the phallus. *Archaïque.* It was a time of miracles. For there exists a time when beauty, gradually growing out of naiveté to reach a phase, fills the invisible silver cup, neither scantly nor excessively, but exactly to the brim, plentifully.

When that time passes, beauty begins to emit an unbearable odor of rotten excess. Philosophy. The golden section ratio. Eyebrows distorted in a skeptical manner. Rage of male prostitution. In other words, Phidias' degradation begins.

Around the head that has already begun to incline toward darkness, grapes until now replete with healthy harvest swiftly turn sour, and the sky that was aquamarine turns into the time of downfall, of that decadent purple.



Poems of a Penisist, published by the Chicago Review Press, distributed by The Swallow Press, 811 W. Junior Terrace, Chicago, Illinois 60613. ($4.95)

DREAM OF BARCELONA: MY ANCIENT WORLD

My Barcelona—the stone pavement shaded deep with weariness
The dry eyeballs are threshed down
The surface of the stone begins to turn
From there, flowing out in turmoil, darkly
Gradually giving forth luster, Diana's ocean
The ancient Mediterranean world
Wrapped in foam, from the bottom of heavy tides
Rising, growing clearer, bronze Hermes
A streak of light shouts on the dark half-face of this god of Hades
His profile devoid of the eye
A wide fig leaf covers
That part of his, once the shining center of fertility
Waves turn, coming closer, the voice of hard labor, of bitter rock salt
The salt, pungent, painful to the lips, the whips of burning heat,
cruel to the young flesh
The galley with two decks of oars has sunk
The sunk plates, sunk slaves, sunk necks and armpit hair
The cry that disappeared, Silenus' vain song
Shadows, sailors, pass, the sea wind, Agrigentum
The turquoise sky between shattered columns
The island of palms and olives, the beach for wraiths
The wine that disappeared in the tideways
Rome, people swarming in the Forum
The thick eyebrows of young men selling melons
Jews selling dreams, Athenian male prostitutes
Crucified magnificent slaves, muscles twisting around the nails
Sunset, the wrestlers die
The sandals departed, the Colosseum in shadow
A breeze, the blood and mud greased on the coarse hair
High among their thighs, the fragrant areas wrapped with incense grass
Twin-horned ancient bulls lick the blood spilled on the ground
One of them cries sadly at the sky, the astrolabe
The bulls disappear, and the wrestlers
In my imagination, the ocean, Hermes' face of sorrow, spreads over the map of Rome
Near his ear, filing out of night's gate
Expeditionary soldiers in an interminable line
The road leads to the four ends of the earth, the aqueduct spans heaven
Spears glint, in the dust, armor clangs
To Macedonia, to Numidia, and to Hispania, where the sun dies
Here, Hispania, the western limit of the woodblock map of the Roman Empire—
When I think of Barcelona, my dark flesh trembles
—Barcelona, the hidden gold
At the heart of this odd decadent labyrinth
The Ancient World is found unexpectedly innocent
Lamps come to reflect in the sweaty pavement—
Two young men holding each other in the inn's stable straw
Under their soiled underwear, become armored Roman soldiers
Become one shining flesh

WINTER: 1955

Cold morning, in a public men's room
The warmth settling like haze

I was loitering
Dirty, lonely, hungry

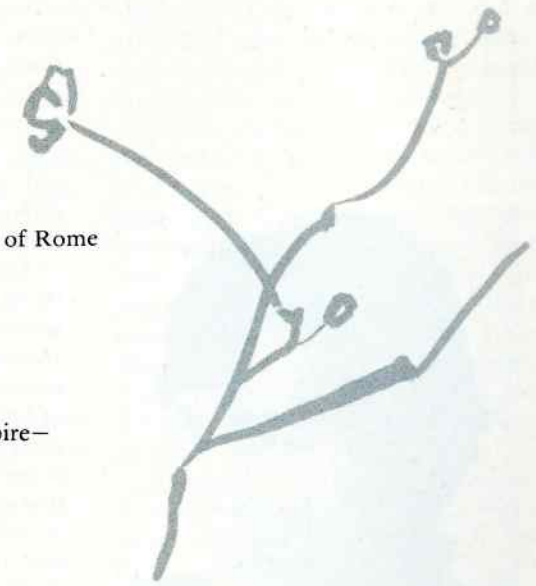
The sycamores were bare
The street almost empty

A dog followed
A trash cart

My right hand slipped in
Through the hidden hole of my pants pocket

I was imagining with a hungry heart
One to love like a flame, in a public men's room

Light sliced in like a knife
And made the mud ahead blaze



ELAINE NOBLE & RITA MAE BROWN: A DIALOGUE

With Bertha Harris

Elaine Noble, running as an openly gay candidate, was elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives in the fall of 1974 and is campaigning for reelection this year in the Fenway/Backbay district of Boston—an ethnically mixed lower-middle-class community composed most noticeably of old people, gay people, and students. Rita Mae Brown is a novelist, a poet, and a feminist theorist. I wanted them to talk about money, power, and sex.

Rita Mae is thirty-one years old. She has snapping dark eyes and black hair and a small, highly-disciplined and muscled body that does not betray her addiction to Coke and Snickers bars. Lecturing to an audience on feminist politics, she winds them up and sets them off with the hell-fire intensity of a Southern evangelical preacher. Many women—most frequently those from well-mannered homes in the North—fall in love with her through her fiction and verse: they've never seen anything like it. Rita Mae has published two volumes of poems, *Songs to a Handsome Woman* and *The Hand That Cradles the Rock* (Diana Press), and a novel, *Rubyfruit Jungle* (Daughters Inc.). Her new novel *In Her Day* will soon be published by Daughters Inc., and a book of political essays, *The Plain Brown Rapper*, is scheduled for the fall.

Elaine is thirty-two, blue-eyed, blond, tall, radiating energy. One senses that she gives her undivided attention to the people she's with. She exudes a tremendous physical warmth, and combines an outrageous wit with compassion: one feels she would move heaven and earth to help—and entertain you along the way with imitations of the Kennedys. She declares that it was the old people—the "senior citizens"—in her district who put her in office; that they were the first non-gay group who rebelled against her rival's smear campaign. They thought the "pervert" a wonderful girl and began to actively support her candidacy. One old lady refused Elaine's offer of transportation to the polls on election day, craftily deciding to accept a ride from Elaine's opponent—"spend *his* money"—but vote for her.

Elaine and Rita Mae now live in a pair of old Boston brownstones, full of mahogany paneling and polished parquet. It seemed to me, when I visited them with some friends over a Thanksgiving that included Rita Mae's birthday, that those who are working to effect radical liberation and who have also been very poor, as both Rita Mae and Elaine were, need the comforts of elegance more than anyone. Rita Mae's workroom, as huge as a ballroom to the eyes of a cramped New Yorker, is at the top of her house. It reflects her love for beautiful objects, her obsession for neatness and cleanliness. She has two old cats: Baby Jesus and Frip.

Elaine seemed to be everywhere in her own house. It was impossible to pin her down to a particular room, or picture, or piece of furniture. They were beseiged, and had been for some time, by attacks from what they wearily described as a "lunatic fringe" —BB gun shots through the windows, damage to Rita Mae's car, threatening phone calls—but they refused to burden their guests with the strain, the fear, and Elaine cooked and served a huge, sumptuous dinner for all of us.

When did you start to see your fate as women, as lesbians, in political terms? Particularly, how did being poor, being without middle-class "advantages" contribute to your urgency to achieve?

Rita Mae: All I had to do was look around and see what happened if you didn't get out of poverty—the destruction of beautiful people; how being poor made them sometimes even incapable of taking care of themselves; alcoholism, violence—women and men

Photo from *In Shock and Loving It*, by Laima.

beating up on each other. I don't like the way poverty is romanticized these days. But I was lucky. My parents—my adoptive parents—loved each other. That made a difference, showed me that life wasn't all battle and pain; although they couldn't get out materially. Now, even though I send my mother money, I can't send her enough—I don't make enough.

Their poverty had a lot to do with my drive to better myself. We had a sense of economy, of preciousness, that middle-class America is just learning, now that the whole world is being depleted. But with all the . . . carefulness; you still never looked as good as the other people, the ones with money. That creates ambition . . . because you *know* you're just as good as they are; even better. You want people to see you're better; you want your own kind to be proud of you. As a child, I'd dream that I could learn to jump fifteen feet in the air; and this remarkable ability would get me into state fairs where I'd make a lot of money—and then I would feed my parents; and they would have the prettiest clothes in the world. A lot of poor children have dreams beaten out of them. I didn't.

I got political because of my mother. She knew how to take care of people—feed them, organize things. I learned from her that politics was a special road. In high school I went to Girls' State. That sounds funny. But it made all the difference to me.

Girls' State?

Rita Mae: Two girls from each high school in the state who are "outstanding" in their junior year are selected. It's sponsored by the American Legion. You run the government for a week—a mock government, but you have to go through all the processes—get yourself elected, run your town. I went all the way to the senate and was party whip. I didn't make Girls' Nation—though I was an alternate. But I'm sure if I'd gone I would have become president. Such is my overwhelming confidence in myself.

Then when I was seventeen, I wrote a letter to the governor of Florida, Farris Bryant. I said, look, Farris, I want to be governor for a day. I'm in touch with young people; you're not. Let me be governor for one day. And, by God, he did! Flew me up there. I carried on—wrote bills, went to all the cabinet meetings.

How did it feel, sitting behind the big desk?

Rita Mae: I loved it! I pressed a button and a big bar rolled out—brrrp! Out it came. I'll never forget that as long as I live. It was in all the newspapers. That's what crystallized things, I think.

When did you first understand the conflict between being a lesbian and pursuing a political career?

Rita Mae: Early on. I didn't know the word gay, but I was very open about caring for my girlfriends in high school. And I did sleep with one of them. She talked; said I jumped her. The reverse was true—but that's an old gay story. She talked to cover her ass. It's in *Rubyfruit Jungle*. It happened just after I came back from being governor. It was envy, too; ugly envy. I had to give up all my posts in school, got thrown out of groups; ostracized. That's how they made me pay. The same thing happened in college, except then it was all wrapped up in the civil rights movement. I was accused of sleeping with black people. I rose to the bait, told the dean that not only did color not make any difference but neither did the person's sex. So I was out. They packed my bags for me.

So you were really being punished, both in high school and college, more for political activity than sexual activity?

Rita Mae: A good mix.

*

The whole story—being a bastard, white trash, and gay in Florida; living on her wits and little else in New York—is told in Rita Mae's comic novel *Rubyfruit Jungle*.

*

Rita Mae: I was brought up with poor people who helped their own kind. I naively assumed gay people would be the same—there's a lot of real down-home girl in me. If you're serious, you take care of people materially, you help them learn to take care of themselves. . . . I got into NYU. It was that wonderful period when the left was in its twilight time and the feminist sun was beginning to rise. When the women began leaving the left, I was there—but on the fringes; they didn't want any lesbians, either. So we formed Radical Lesbians and got going.

What's the first book you remember?

Rita Mae: The Bible.

Then what's the first book that really influenced you?

Rita Mae: *Huckleberry Finn.*

You're very much like Huck Finn, aren't you?

Rita Mae: In some ways. Yeah. I think I'm prettier.

*

Tom Sawyer; Huckleberry Finn; Rita Mae Brown. She's on her way to establishing herself as an American folk hero. She has her trousers tailor-made—but is utterly persuaded that it's what's in the heart, not on the back that counts; that moral stamina, hard work, and innate good sense can win over the city slicker. If she's ever troubled by self-doubt, it never shows. Ambivalence is not a characteristic of the frontier saga.

On Thanksgiving morning, Elaine told us that she was expected at a holiday bash, and would we come? With one hand, Elaine had organized the gay men in her community; with the other, the old people. Some of the first group and most of the second had been prepared to face the holiday alone, and Elaine's remedy for that loneliness was to have the gay men wine and dine the old people. The banquet was held in a local gay bar. Its dance floor was packed with tables seating about two hundred people. There were flowers and pumpkins. One old man had brought his little granddaughter.

When we arrived, the bar regulars—in leather jackets, studded belts, boots, tight jeans—were running back and forth from the bar to the tables with enough drink to stave off arteriosclerosis for another decade. The guests were merrily looped. A young woman was

playing "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling" at the piano. Everyone seemed to know all the words. A ten-foot table was covered with everything from turkey to pumpkin pie. "The pie is homemade," a young man told me. "I made the pastry myself, from scratch. No mixes." Two other politicians—very old-line Boston politicians—took advantage of the occasion to drop by for their free drinks and some free handshakes. Except for a few holdouts, in tune with the music and the whisky, the guests tired quickly. Elaine stood at the door, hugging and waving good-bye. I think she called everyone by name. Several dykes, driving the "Senior Citizen Bus"—another Noble innovation—then got them home.

Elaine: I grew up in a coal mining town of seven or eight thousand people. We were the valley people. The next town was the hill people. It was made real clear that we were the poor people. I got a much better education at home than at school.

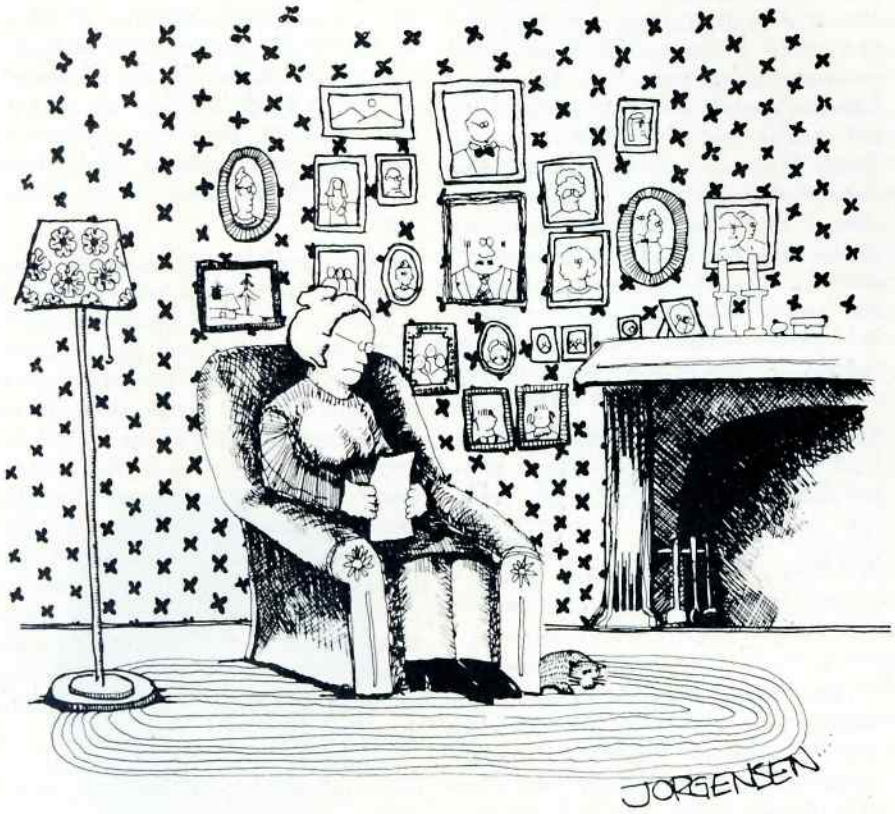
When I remember school I remember the smell of piss and peanut butter.

Elaine: Yeah. My father got through just the eighth grade; my mother the twelfth. He was an old Thirties Marxist. They taught me reading, writing; taught me history and art. It was spelled out to me that the only way I might excel was through education. But I didn't think much of formal education; it didn't seem meaningful to me in terms of my survival. In many ways, both my parents are far more radical than I am. My father's fifty-five years old, and he said to me that he's not so sure he wouldn't be moved to pick up a gun now. My brother Jim was sick a lot, so it fell to me to take care of him, help fight his battles.

When did you become aware of your sexuality? When did it make political connections?

Elaine: It was the year after high school. I was working in a factory. I got into an argument with a woman who accused my friend Kelly of being a lesbian. Her accusation and what it seemed to mean was frightening to me. Later, after work, Kelly told me it was true; that she was a lesbian. That was the first time I discussed it with anybody.

So in defending Kelly's honor . . . ?



"Dear Miss Barker,
Congratulations! This is to inform you that, with the recent death of Miss Gracie Ellsworth of Cape Girardeau, Mo., you are now the oldest living lesbian in the United States. . ."

Elaine: I was really defending myself. After a year in the factory, I went to a state college in Pennsylvania. But there was a lesbian purge going on—the dean was the biggest dyke going, by the way—and I knew they'd eventually get around to me. So I asked for a scholarship to Boston University and transferred there. Economically, until I won the election, my life consisted of holding down at least two jobs at once, and going to school—eventually getting three degrees. From the state school in Pennsylvania—where the students were mostly poor, where big-time city was becoming a high school teacher, I got thrown into BU, into the School of Fine and Applied Arts and Theater—because their scholarship was bigger. The dean explained that they didn't have enough poor kids going into the fine arts; hence a bigger slice of pie. But when things got going it became real clear who got the goodies. It was the men who were rewarded, time after time. I learned then that art, like everything else, is political. But in real politics you know where you stand: your enemy will say directly, I don't like you and I'm going to get you. Not in academe; not in the fine arts.

What was happening to you as a lesbian?

Elaine: I really came out when I was teaching for a year in a New Hampshire college—an all-women's college, the first all-female environment I'd been in. Marvelous. Many of the students there were lesbians, and their example made me more comfortable with my sexuality. Most of them had gone to boarding schools, were from the upper classes, had led very privileged lives. And they were guilt-free, or so it seemed. Another thing I gained from them: my hatred of their class became blunted by personal knowledge of some of its people. Of course their fearlessness about their lesbianism probably came from their class backgrounds—they were secure in the knowledge that daddy could buy them out of nearly any trouble they happened to get in. Not true for me, of course.

When did you go back to Boston?

Elaine: In 1967, 1968; and started working with others to form Daughters of Bilitis—and gradually it all started coming together. Since I was a little kid I knew that you are born political,

but it took me a while to learn how to translate that knowledge into real work. More and more I was seeing, and hearing of, madness settling in among women who called themselves feminists. And I had to decide how to avoid biting my own flesh. My way of dealing with that terrible anger was to become involved in community politics, as well as lesbian politics. It was not unusual in Boston to be in DOB, or part of a lesbian group fighting NOW, and also be working in the tenants' struggle, for instance. My getting involved in electoral politics was simply taking another step forward; another step in getting control of my life.

In your relationship with your constituents, I get a strong sense of your "taking care" of your people.

Elaine: I'm very close to an old-fashioned political tradition—in the sense that I believe in taking care of my own. My first priority is to my people and to my issues. A lot of my people don't necessarily agree with all my issues—but they know they are mine, and I'm theirs—it's an act of faith and trust. Most people in this country don't really feel that way about the people they elect. But women in particular understand what a constituency means. Some political women—like my friend Ann Lewis and Barbara Mikulski and Senator Betty Hudson in Connecticut—are building an old girls' network based on traditional "taking care" politics. We understand very clearly that it is in our own interest to support one another.

Women outside of electoral politics suffer from a lack of task orientation. If you don't teach people—particularly the young—how to direct their energies toward specific tasks, their level of paranoia goes up; then they turn on the leader. In the electoral process there are specific tasks, trades, and tools. And if we should ever want to build a third party we have to learn all that. Another thing women outside the electoral process have to learn is how to reinforce each other—and that it's in their best interest to do so. Women tend to get their whole identity from their task—like being Chief of the Lesbian Task Force for the Cockamamie Daily Rag; or Big Cheese in Mother Bear's Rap Group—and it's hard for them to learn to give up their little piece of action, stretch their identities, learn something new—and let another woman learn from them. I won't let myself be ripped apart by women who resist this necessity. I'd rather be out there doing battle with the goddam men.

You're both strong, successful women. Does being a lesbian have anything to do with your strengths, your achievements? Or are you simply "exceptional" women?

Elaine: I don't think there are exceptional women. But there are women who want to get control over their own lives. Although being a *political* lesbian hurt me when I was trying to be a college teacher, my lesbianism has made me focus, psychically, spiritually, so that I had to deal with my center, with the circles around my center; my family, my friends. And in many ways "straight" politicians find it easier to deal with me because I'm not buying or selling the kind of thing heterosexuals are buying and selling. They constantly feel they have to respond and perform within a prescribed sexual behavior pattern. I say I won't participate in that hustle. And I think to some people it's a great relief.

Elaine, I met you briefly a couple of years ago at Mother Courage restaurant. We spoke a minute; then I went back to my friends and told them that if anyone was going to make it out there—in that other world—you would. Why do you think I felt that about you?

Elaine: Because I had one hand on your crotch and the other on your wallet?

Rita Mae: It's because she's tough—and you have to be tough to survive in a patriarchal world. She shows an ability to take care of herself that men recognize and prize. She survived *clean* in Massachusetts politics—one of the cesspools of the United States. She won't give ground to that system. They have to pay attention.

It gives off light, that kind of toughness. When either of you walk into a room full of people, they immediately turn and look. It seems more than attraction, more like a recognition of power.

Rita Mae: Recognition cuts both ways. People reduce you to a one-dimensional figure they can love or hate. Since they often know I'm a lesbian, part of the recognition involves their sexual projections. That I can live without. But the good part of being a lesbian is that I own my own soul, that I am myself—beholden to no man or woman on the face of the earth.

The way I've been hurt—other lesbians in the women's movement ripping off my work; straight women in the movement who are nice to me in private, then refuse even to speak to me in public—it's painful, always, when the women cut you out, don't even have the decency to shake your hand when you've worked your ass off for them on their issues—abortion, child care. I don't care how tough I am. It hurts.

Do you think it's fear of sexuality?

Elaine: Maybe it's just that they're closet human beings. And, you know, one of the things we haven't accomplished yet is creating that old-girls' network—if we had one, that kind of woman would be cut out pretty damn quickly. Male networks don't tolerate that kind of shit.

Rita Mae: You see, they can't do that to Elaine. She's got institutionalized "legitimate" power now. And I have no legitimacy—not in their political institutions nor by birth.

It seems to me that when heterosexual women back away in fright from lesbians, from the idea of lesbianism, they're in fact running from the notions of self-determination, power, responsibility implicit in such a sexual definition.

Rita Mae: Sex is just the metaphor—a symbol for a choice. Heterosexuals never have to make that kind of choice, nor are they forced to think about the system heterosexuality is founded on. Obliterate the full meaning of our choice to be lesbians—turn it into a strictly personal issue—then you might as well go home, lock the door, and spend your time doing old Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers routines. When lesbians retreat from the political and spiritual significance of their sexuality they might as well be straight. They're really no different from straight people then. And they fling themselves at people like me and Elaine—love letters, photographs, phone numbers.

Elaine: They perceive Rita and me as people having more power than they do—which is silly—just because they see us taking full responsibility for our lives. They haven't done that yet, perhaps they feel they can't do it, can't make the connections.

So you'd agree that the sexual turn-on to both of you is primarily wrapped up in the power you generate, especially the power you seem to have over your own lives? That people translate this—perhaps correctly—into sexual terms?

Elaine: And there's another way of looking at it—that those who feel intense emotion for people like us—whether it's love or hate—are often reflecting something that they themselves are doing, or have done, are capable of doing. When they're excited by us it's because they're excited by what they sense is their own potential.

What, for instance, attracted you to each other?

Elaine: Oh, obviously, her humility.

Rita Mae: But I'm serious. Listen, women are attracted to Elaine because she does work that is central to her life. She doesn't try to live her life off her lovers—a devastating thing among women. They still keep trying to marry each other, live vicariously off each other. I'm attracted to a sense of . . . life triumphant—certainly not to women who complain, who endlessly whine of pain. If we can't make a political victory in our lifetimes, we can at least bear witness to personal triumph.

What about power? What about women refusing power, choosing to fail, choosing to keep it all on an amateur level—where you're unpaid, unacknowledged. Where it's cozy. And hating other women who do insist on power. What about those problems?

Elaine: When power has been used so brutally against you it's hard to associate any positive experiences with that word. I want power for myself, for my sisters—and women get upset when they understand what I want. They seem to think they have something to lose.

What about loss? What about gay people, even now, remaining in the closet?

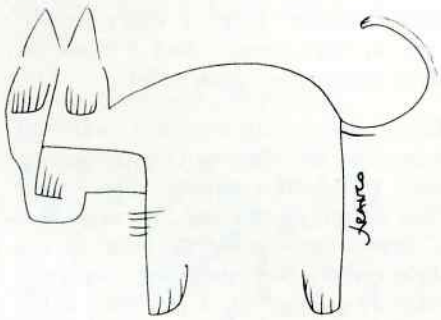
Rita Mae: Five years ago, there was much greater risk in coming out than there is now. There *has* been change. A lot of people still in the closet are acting on old fears, fears that a life of oppression have crystallized. We've done a good job with gay liberation. There's much more room now. But people have to take the risk. We need them. And we're paying with our lives for their refusal to take the risk—in the political sense particularly. But in the personal sense they're destroying themselves. They're endangering themselves in a way we're not. They are lying. And a lie—no matter how innocent, no matter how self-protective—eats your guts away.

But what about the nature of this fear? Why, if they understand how it's affecting them, do they continue hanging out with the garment bags instead of us?

Elaine: It's easy to understand. It's tied into the American Dream, the American culture. If you run high risks and win, wonderful. But if you lose, it's all over. No American wants to be a loser.

Indeed, we invented that word, "loser."

Elaine: Exactly. Gay people who refuse to take risks, who refuse to come out totally, are very hooked into that



win/lose pattern. They perceive people like Rita and me as *lucky* . . . we risked a lot, but we won.

I've noticed that women who are lesbians are frequently women who work and achieve, who want something to happen, who want something to get done. Even motherhood doesn't seem to interfere with this process. What do you think is the relationship between a woman's sexuality and what her brain is up to? How do lesbians happen?

Rita Mae: There's an early recognition of never wanting to play second fiddle to anyone—no matter how wonderful he may be. It's funny; I knew that very young, perhaps because I saw that my mother didn't live in my father's shadow. I do think that for most women the price of heterosexuality has been the subsuming of the female spirit—but I'm not saying anything new.

It's new to many women. That's why we're going into this.

Rita Mae: So I decided that I was the important person in my life, that I am second to none. If a man says that, everyone nods. It's taken for granted. When a woman says that, there's a sudden vision of grasping selfishness. She has to answer insulting questions that would never be leveled at a man. All I've ever asked of other people is to give me room to do my own work. I have no desire to take anything from anybody. I want to make my own way. I don't want to be *beholden*—that word I was raised on—I don't want to be beholden to anybody for anything. I'm willing to help, lend my body, my time—really the only two things I own in life. I'll help male as well as female as long as there's an equal exchange going on. But my experience is that women have more to offer me than men. Men don't want an exchange; they want to take.

Even the men who have loved me at some point have found it necessary to try and assert their will over me. One of the most telling moments in my life happened two years ago. There's a man I lived with off and on for three years. A gay man, a very fine human being. We went through thick and thin together. We starved together. I know this person in a way that I know few others. We met when he was nineteen and I was twenty. Eleven years of friendship now. Whoever had money took care of the other one. Even when we weren't living together. We were connected as kin; a strong blood knot. Two years ago he became ill and was in a lot of job trouble—partly because he's homosexual. He had never made a pass at anybody. He's very. . . .

Elaine: Discreet.

Rita Mae: Picky, to be plain. His job involved managing others. Some of the ways he perceived human relationships had been greatly altered by his having to cope with my feminism. His turning away from the commanding male role, trying to establish some democracy at work, cost him his job. They accused him of being a heroin addict—which is absurd. It's like calling me an alcoholic, and I don't touch the stuff. But they got rid of him, and he was breaking down. I had just published *Rubyfruit*, so I went to take care of him, but he couldn't accept it. I understand that—desire for dignity. I'm the same way. But he needed care.

I was hanging around, doing what I could. And I remember—he was close

to tears, but he still couldn't cry—I remember he was sitting on the floor, and it all just blurted out of him. He said, "I love you, I'm closer to you than anyone in the world. I wish I were a lesbian. I hate men. I hate myself. I hate what men have to be." But then he turned to me and said, "But I'm afraid of you—you're stronger than I am, and smarter. I feel like I have to compete with you. I don't have any options." After all those years, it finally came out. And I had never felt that competitive way about him. There it was, the ugly face of sexism. Even between people who love each other. Somehow he felt he had to keep pace with me—or be a loser. The price men pay for being men. And the price heterosexuals exact from one another—though you don't have to be straight to be forced to pay up. Our friendship changed after that. He had been vulnerable in front of me, and now I notice all the things he does to cover that up. He doesn't have to feel that way. I want him to be free. But there's no way on earth a woman can tell a man that. They can't hear it. The knowledge has to come from within themselves—and they must give up the opinion of other men.

Elaine: The male psyche is so fragile. I work with men all day, every day, and that's my insight. They make a whole fetish of setting up situations of control so that they'll never know rejection or vulnerability. They need all those institutions to hide and protect their frailty. It was a shock to learn this. As women growing up, we're taught that men are anything but frail. Some days I come home after watching what men do to each other and I want to weep. They try to justify, cover up, their frailty by taking it out on others—perhaps cut 100,000 people off the welfare rolls, for example.

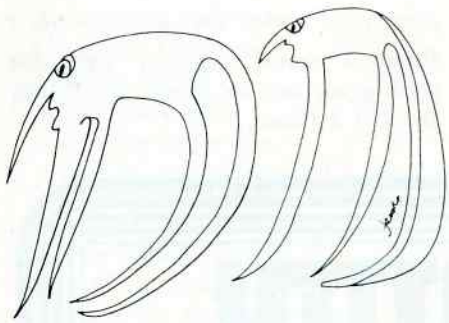
Why do you think people love you so much? And hate you so much? What inspires the adulation, what inspires the attack?

Elaine: It's a form of self-hatred—as feminism teaches us—to put someone on a pedestal. I see it as a form of fascism—that crazy "either/or" thinking. I see it as a flood of emotion with no connection to thought. It makes me nervous even to talk about it.

Rita Mae: For some reason, it doesn't frighten me. I expect people to be irrational—and then to use rational jargon to cover it up. I could pretend that I'm a saint come to save women, or gay people. Or I can look at it for what it is: I want to save myself. But on the other hand I know we're all in it together. The real connections are made out of self-love, not from the way it's generally presented to us, which is self-denial. Self-denial is the first step toward killing other people.

Elaine: I just want us to die of old age, and in our own beds.

Rita Mae: Yeah, sure. But you have to remember that this country's in an unraveling stage—and a lot of people are unraveling with it. I accept irrationality, the fact of violence, but I don't have a martyr mentality. I don't find people who die in the saddle particularly heroic. It just means that they got hit—a simple problem of physics. I see a desire for martyrdom almost perversely embraced by some women in the movement. It's like they're embracing



a feverish lover; they want to catch the sickness. And somehow if they die of the sickness it means they've had true love. The victimized mentality—martyrdom equals love.

Violence . . . once confronted, it can be channeled; it can be turned into constructive energy. But the only way that can start to happen is by not denying it. I haven't been speaking publicly until now of the attacks Elaine and I have suffered in Boston—because I don't want pity, because I don't want to feed into that victimized mentality. I don't want people to focus on me. I want them to focus on the idea. And I really want to stop that female trip of personalizing every issue. I'm attacked in print; I'm physically attacked. But I never counterattack—that would be legitimizing the initial attack. I'm writing a book on violence. This is the kind of thing I'm thinking about.

Elaine: I think you have a lot more faith than I do in the possibility of redirecting hostility into positive energy. I think people are much more evil, intrinsically, than you do. On the other hand, my office protects me—somewhat like a shield—from the kind of raw emotionalism that's directed at Rita Mae. If people start coming at me, they'd better think twice; because they're sure as hell going to have the attorney general's office down on their ass.

It must be a terrible shock for middle-class children when they get out in the world and realize that their parents have lied to them, that the world doesn't run on "nice" principles. They're devastated by reality. So in their loss they tend to create something equally as unreal. People who really perform well—whether they're mechanics or artists—are not rewarded in our world. The rewards in this society are to the freak, or to the extremely brutal person who frightens people.

There was a kernel of truth in what Agnew said about the media—they focus on the really crazy crumbs and validate the insanity by covering it to the near exclusion of the sane, the creative. I feel I know this very deeply simply from having lived through the desegregation order in Boston—of seeing people go out and create violence just because the cameras are there. And there is the problem of women who feel tormented when the camera and the microphone are directed on people like me and Rita and not on them—they suffer a kind of grief and torment. There's another kind of monster, too, that has been made by class, that has resulted in the death of the poor and the survival of the rich. The male left is its perfect example. In the Sixties the talented young men from Harvard were screaming in front of the Lincoln Memorial—and behind them, supporting them, was the best legal advice possible on how to avoid the draft—how to get into the National Guard instead, for instance. But it was the poor—my constituents—who were being driven off like cattle to Vietnam—the poor young boys from Chelsea, the poor young boys from the South End, those from my district in Fenway. The melodrama of the handsome young men with their mustaches and long hair—the melodrama of peace and love—drove the wedge of class in even further. They talked of peace; they scrambled to take care of their asses first.

Will you talk about sex, laughter, and money?

Rita Mae: Sex. I've tried to be attractive, just physically, because unattractive people aren't paid any attention. You're not supposed to notice this, or say it—and the whole feminist rap, of course, is that such things don't matter. But those ladies in workshirts are checking each other out just as hard as those ladies in the Valentino blouses. I'm not conscious of having slept with people to get what I want. It could be that I did, but I'm not aware of it. But I do know one thing, I'm attracted to women who succeed, not to women who fail.

I do not find whining and complaining—and failure, even if they're connected to looks and brains—aphrodisiacs. But women like Alexis Smith or Florynce Kennedy walk into a room! Alexis is so sensitive to her environment that she will pick out the different greens in one tree. And Florynce—I don't want to upset Florynce by saying I find her attractive—but she fights back; and while she's fighting she's laughing, and because of that she's one of the sexiest women in the whole movement. A couple of my gay male friends were talking about who they found attractive. And I said I thought Ronald Coleman was attractive. Because he was responsible. They couldn't believe it. And women like Lily Tomlin and Janet Flanner and Josephine Baker; and Gloria Steinem and Carole Lombard. And some others, who, like Flanner, are *old* women—and they couldn't believe that either. I said, "Look at a photograph of Janet Flanner's head and tell me if that isn't one of the most beautiful human beings you've ever seen."

Because of the spirit and intelligence in her?

Rita Mae: Because she's lived. It's written all over her face: I have lived life. I have tasted the inside of life. And that is pure sexual connection for me.

Do you have anything to say about that, Elaine?

Elaine: No.

Have you "tasted the inside of life"?

Elaine: I would certainly have the good grace not to speak that loudly about it if I had.

Do you have more to say on that subject, Elaine?

Elaine: Yes. You can talk all you want to about the lines in a woman's face and her spirit and sensitivity, but there's also just pure sexual attraction. Lust. Which is something women by and large are very reluctant to admit. Lust: to just walk up and say, "You know, I'd really like to make love with you."

Rita Mae: Women punish you for that kind of directness. They may sleep with you, but they'll get back at you.

Elaine: The whole message being, "I gave you my body, now you give me your soul."

One of the things I've learned about lust is that I don't necessarily have to do anything about it. When I was younger I thought I would die if I didn't.

Rita Mae: My attractions are fewer but much more intense. I just can't turn my body off—although I *can* not let the other women know what's going on. That's the difference for me now. But sometimes it gets so bad I just have to leave. My jaw hits the floor when women tell me they don't experience these wild physical responses when they see someone they like. It makes me hurt. I literally hurt with it.

Elaine: Rita's talking about her feminist hard-on.

Rita Mae: I don't like my responses confused with a man's. I want to talk about money. I love money. If I were so rich that I didn't know how much money I had I would fund a third party to try to come to power legitimately—a party for our people, the poor, the gay, the women. If I had limited money, but was still stinking rich, I'd start a film company—a real one capable of competing in the neighborhood theaters. With even more limited funds, I would just do two things—take care of my personal friends, which I do, in any case; then settle on a farm in Virginia, look at the Blue Ridge Mountains and write books. But no matter what, I want to live in Virginia. Maybe I'll just settle for a sharecropper's tent.

Elaine: Money. I make $12,500 a year before taxes. And every two years, like now, I have to run again for reelection, and that costs money. So far I've not known money well enough to get to love it.

MIRRORS

i.

I put my fear in mirrors,
windows, deep water: my hands reach
under. When I saw you,
a woman among the reeds
climbing away, I knew
a broken image, seven years
bad luck.

ii.

I would give away my eyes,
take back my hands and fold them
like a dowery; I would wait
for stones to cover me,
graft the apples back
because I saw you
because I'm here.

iii.

Once I let you cut me
open as an apple
for the hard slick seeds,
the star; I couldn't
say what you did, I fell
through myself
like a knife,
sky diver, trusting
you'd catch me
as the earth is hard.
In the steel knife—
blade I see you
shining, smiling
like someone who is hurt.

iv.

I would give you
all my anger to hide
for me; touch you
as gently as air
moving as you dance; give you
space for each word
to rise, would catch them
on the surface as they break:
I would give away
my anger, give you
what I can't.

v.

Arvalea slit her wrists,
wrote on the walls in blood
I hate you, I hate you,
a perfect mirror.
She left the knife
somewhere in her vein.

Zabe dreamed she could break
the mirrors, but as she looked
she saw herself forever.
To break an image breaks us
into nothing. I keep one hidden,
under my skin.

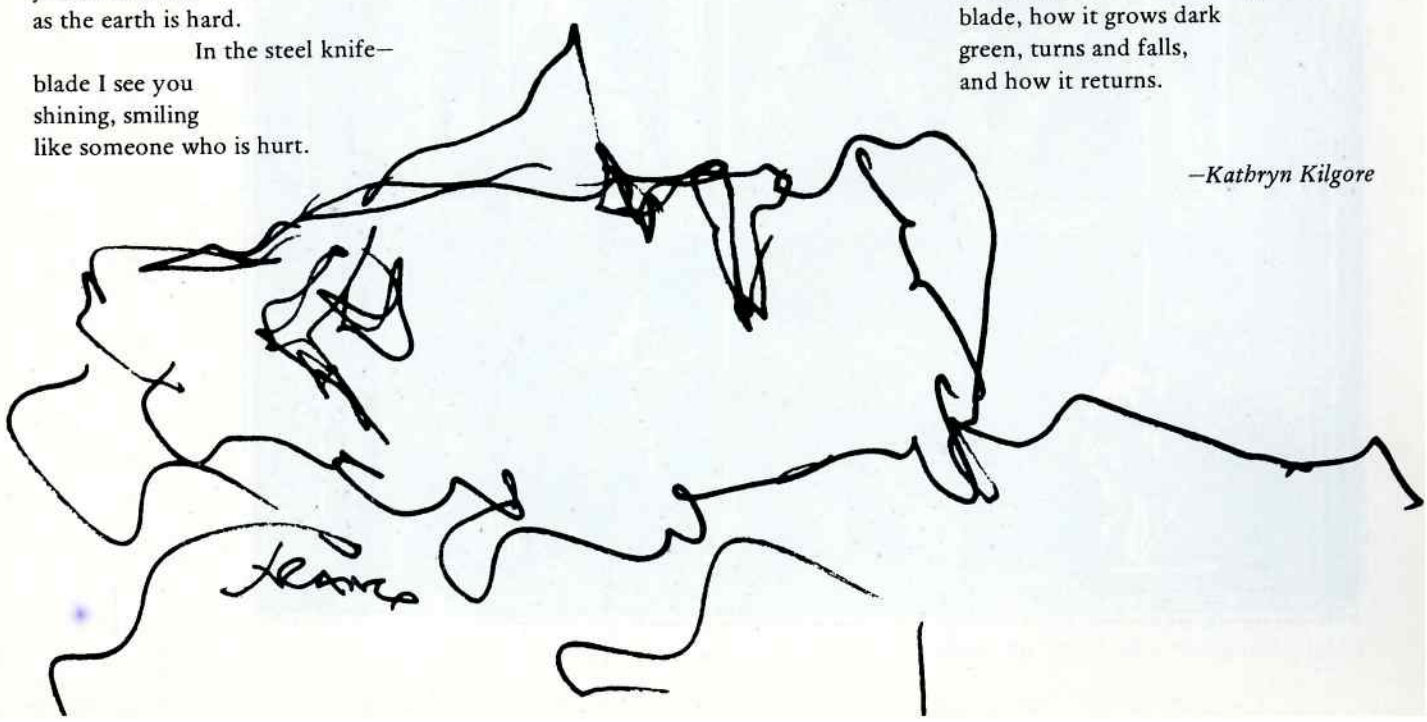
vi.

We unravel ourselves
in order to hold our names:
we grow in rings
like trees, each ring
a dark edge against the next
beginning.
Whatever we are, we touch
like accidents
and pull back. What breaks us
is light on a mirror
light like no name, running
up the spine.

vii.

I am a light on the surface
turning. I am time.
I slide across
your life. My left hand
is your right.
I am the law
of solitude. I slip
down years of change.
I am my names,
the fragments. I am hidden
things. You are not
as perfect as I want.
I look for windows, watch
the colors change: I know
what happens to the first light
blade, how it grows dark
green, turns and falls,
and how it returns.

—Kathryn Kilgore



A Nocturne

By Edmund White

Craig and I spent so much time at the theater that finally we began to live there. Moving in wasn't a decision (at least not on my part); to decide anything would have required a moment when I stood outside events or peered down at them all floodlit from the pin-rail—and no moment like that came along. We brushed our teeth and washed out our underwear in a sink off the star's dressing room. For clothes we had the whole costume collection to work our way through, though Craig kept the building so warm that we could stroll around it naked. We ended up sleeping naked onstage in a hammock slung between two coconut palms, our bodies entwined like yang and yin, pang and sin.

Sunsets in the tropics are conveniently quick, a fast fade on the master dimmer, one smooth, continuous descent of a shadowy hand on the rubber grip. Across the nightime cyclorama shone as many stars as Craig had managed to pierce holes in the metal pie plates clamped to elipsoidal lights.

Days and nights slipped into one another as electricity was released—or throttled to a comforting hum in the transformers. One long night we passed on the terrace of a penthouse upon cushioned wrought iron porch furniture beside paper geraniums in papier mâché planters. The horizon gleamed with the spires of skyscrapers Craig had stamped into a template that afternoon. And the moon was a huge and incandescent old-fashioned limelight perched just behind the cheaters; the block of burning lime kept twisting and rising into the jet of ignited gas—dangerous, all terribly dangerous, I'm sure, but which full moon is not?

Restless that night, I got up and went wandering backstage, down into the open dressing rooms. Beside a union notice on the bulletin board is a telegram congratulating "Fred" on an opening now ancient. A border of small bulbs outlines the communal mirror in which I can make out my own dim face but can imagine a host of brilliant fools, at once impudent and sober, staring into their gleaming reflections—Tartaglia, Scapino, Trivelino, Mescolino, Scatolino, Colafronio, Pulcinella, Burattino, Gradelino—above the still-seated Argentina, Rosetta, Columbina and Pasquella, who presses red satin circles to her cheeks, then grinds out her cigarette in a shallow, silvered disk of an ashtray. Only the ghost of a handprint, rapidly

fading, distinguishes the mirror from the room. I run a finger over a leather mask on the table: bulbous nose, a wart as big if not as cool as a robin's egg, an open mouth in the horsehair beard. A box by the door sprouts ten wooden swords and a pair of stilts, one pushed deeper down than the other, their braced footrests the tentative steps toward heaven in an ascent forgotten or in any case abandoned.

Down a long, low-ceilinged corridor I make my way, accompanied overhead by pipes hot with compressed steam that hisses, condenses and drips to the concrete floor from a loose fitting. A metal door lined with asbestos trolleys opens at my touch, a cylindrical sandbag hung from a greased pulley wire doing the work. In the storage room beyond are racks of painted flats. I can see only their borders: a Doric column against a stormy sky; the corner window of an all-night diner framing a seated customer in a trilby, his back to me but his face turned to address whom I'll never know; maroon wallpaper cut off by a cream chair rail highlighted and shadowed to appear thrown in relief; the tan brush of a lion's tail suspended in mid-flick against the distant, murderous leaves of a yucca. The whole theater, save for the rush of steam that suddenly rattles the loose joint in the hallway, is silent and I fancy myself the midnight prowler until I stand on tiptoe, lift a shade and see a pair of nyloned legs scissoring through a cold, wet, metropolitan afternoon.

I didn't like that glimpsed reminder of people in shabby street clothes victimized by weather and time, the world of errands done on lunch breaks—and I fled back to the penthouse, the starry cyclorama and Craig. It was night. It was summer. We were lovers. It was night. It was summer.

Craig had a beautiful indifference to human attachments, longings, jealousies, all of which he considered "sticky." To him it was enough to exercise, eat well, build sets and plot lights. If I told him I was becoming fond of him he would go vague and polite, as an atheist does when forced to bow his head for grace at the annual family dinner. He must have sensed that my feelings were beams trained on you that had spilled over on him, and he asked me to talk about you.

I did so reluctantly. This hesitation wasn't prompted by reticence—as you know, I'll tell anyone anything. But (surely you understand) I had tried so long and with so little success to forget you. Craig's contempt for love, or rather his dismissal of it, had struck me as modern and sensible, and I had yearned to imitate him. He would teach me; I'd be his scholar. And now, here I was, beginning our story again, an old role I knew too well and had played too long if not lately. The lines came back to me, one by one, their intonations guided by the familiar verse, the gestures and smiles perfectly timed, automatic in the delivery but once expressed recalling the emotions they had long and, yes, will always signify.

Craig and I were sitting on a bearskin rug (dyed nutria over a thickening layer of sponge rubber) before a fire (the reflections cast by a rotating drum of crinkled aluminum foil spotlit with amber and red). Although he was intelligent so long as he was in flight, hovering around a thought, tugging at it, poking, wresting it free, then snapping it up, the moment he had to sit still to listen he began to frown and his lips parted as if, when he was grounded, he lost his talent to understand. His face was a charming compromise between the graceful girl and the hairy, aggressive boy within him, but when he tried to attend what I was telling him the compromise broke down into its warring opposites. The girl, too timid to concentrate, gained control over his eyes, cloudless blue heavens darkened by twin lunar-eclipsed suns. And the girl also ruled his forehead, thin, taut silk worried by wind ripples—a girl one could picture being led by her parents up the staircase to the swelling din of her first dance, a moody, fragile girl lifted out of her daydreams and instructed to say clever things to adults and to expose her shoulders to tall men; or a rich, protected girl glancing for the first time into a dark shack teeming with children and hungry animals—a girl, that is, being reluctantly and without preparation initiated into an active, alien world.

But the boy had his own surlier reaction to the debut when his angry eyebrows, black grease marks joined above the nose by a passage of gold stippling, lowered into threatening horizons above those tremulous skies or when his shaved but heavily-bearded upper lip twisted into a snarl and exposed a wet canine. Then he chewed on something and, save for the frightened eyes, the entire face, bristling with male force, exposed its elaborate rigging, as though the pale skin were a topsail turned transparent to show me its diagonal clew lines attached to a bulging tye and

2nd MEETING: MONOGAMOUS FANTASY

Concealing weapons
we sit among
my scarred furnishings.

You sip one bitter cup all evening
& tell me that people come
in time to hate you.

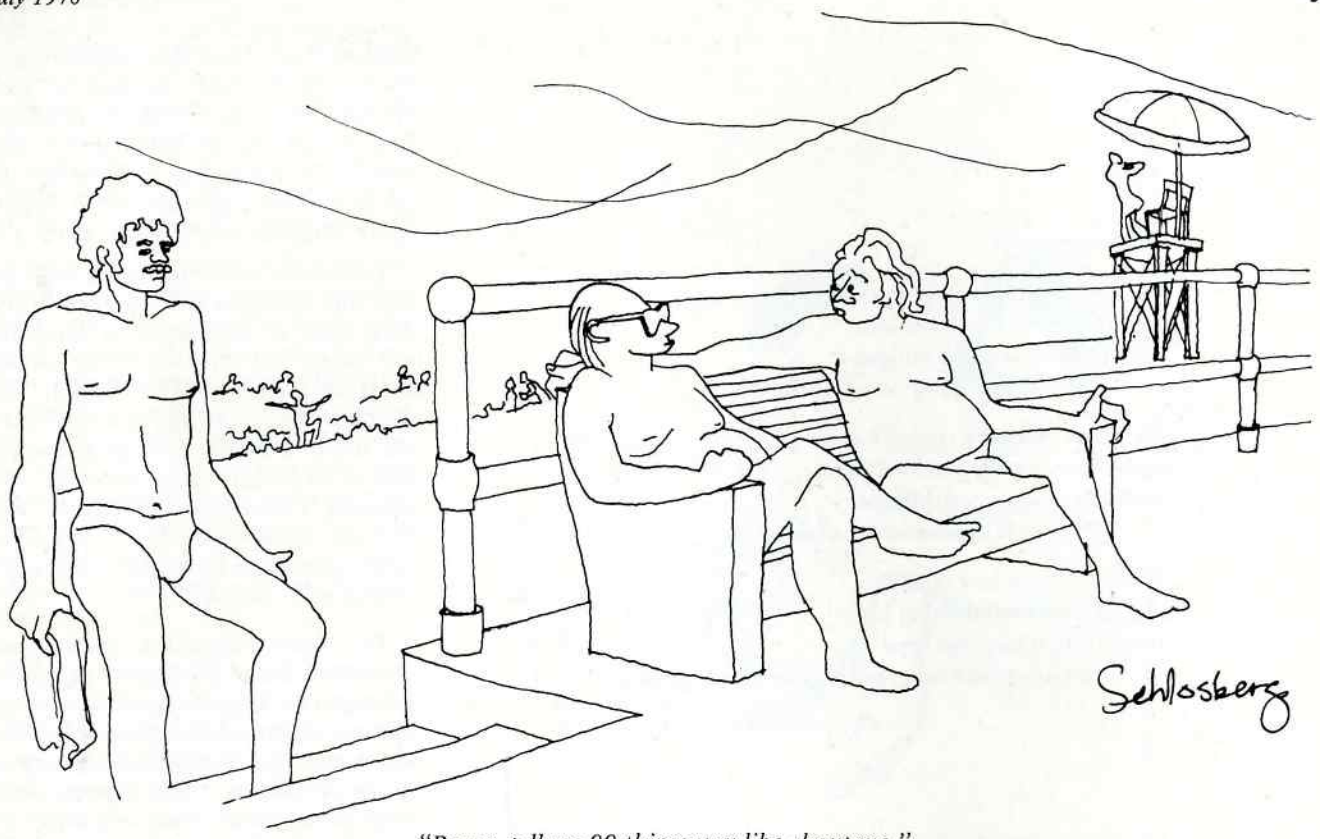
I drink three cups, black.
I have always done everything to excess.

I imagine a future
with you moody
smoking & always near me—

& again I try
behind my back the double knife:

Mine. Alone.

—Joan Larkin



"Roger, tell me 99 things you like about me."

matched yokes, its bracing reef points suspended between earings, the whole guided by the sheets, those sinews running up his neck. And indeed his body, tormented by my demands, seemed to strain away from me, to run before the wind I had become, the gust of my desire—oh, he was a trim ship. His high instep was a ballerina's, but the hairy legs not a boy's but a man's, and the slender, smooth waist feminine but the low voice masculine, and if I compare him to a bird or a ship I do so only because he is that elegant, that fleet, and that avid of flight.

"I'm sorry," he murmured, when I interrupted myself to ask if I was annoying him. "But I don't understand you. Perhaps—" and he moved up to the footlights, which silhouetted his slim body with purple gloom and his rising, open hand—"perhaps if we staged it. Put it on somehow. Then I could see it." Now I could see his features again; he'd returned to my side and the revolving cylinder simulating flames.

The theater gave a performance and on that evening I hid up on a catwalk and shivered, a water-damaged velveteen robe of royal blue clothing my nakedness. When the play was over, the theater bore no traces of the departed invaders save for the smell of crushed-out cigarettes and snow-soaked fur coats and the sight of discarded programs littering the floor like the paillettes ripped off the dress of a woman fleeing the ball. Craig had worked on the production in a technical capacity and I found charming the indentations of weariness impressed on a face whose youth seldom betrayed exertion or even emotion. From his tenderness I could tell he was worried about how I had fared. His solicitude gratified me at the same moment it made me wary. We love to give help but only to those who have no need of it, or more properly to those who desperately need it but proudly or despairingly refuse to accept it. We reach towards unreachable men in distress and toward no others. Self-sufficiency may inspire admiration but not love; frank, hungry need excites pity but tranquilizes desire. Why this should be so I have no idea, but I knew my eager distress simultaneously rendered me more sympathetic to Craig and less attractive. Experience has taught me (I'm not bitter, really I'm not) something about these *hydraulics* of passion.

But of course nothing can be learned nor is there anything to be learned. Memorizing any lesson is an abnegation of the moment, which may fill the molds we've fashioned but then floods them, spills messily over them, eats through them, time being an acid. And even this observation is suspect because it fails to look at the face in front of me and the ever new, always abundant and ordinarily enigmatic signals it emits.

"Where would you like to sleep tonight?" Craig asks me. And I, not wanting to confess anywhere will do so long as I'm in his arms, murmur, "On the moon." We empty the stage and he covers it with two piles of fiberglass rocks and a muslin dropcloth that flows down into a crater (a platform lowered a foot below the floor); on the cyclorama he projects a large, crisp earth. Beside our crater he plants the national flag and into the hole we crawl, naked, freezing, gasping for oxygen and so light that, were there air, a wind could whirl us away. The cast image of the earth becomes your familiar face, rounder and more marked with age than I had remembered it, watching me even now that I'm way beyond your gravitational pull.

Somehow I've failed to work out and Craig, a little disappointed in me, invites Thomas to live with us. Once before I'd seen Thomas at a party, unshaved and speechless, brooding in a winged armchair but thrusting cleated, orange boots out into the room. The boots were caked with mud too raw to be from this part of the country; his waist was circled by a belt made of sil-

DOMESTICITIES

We ate from the dish of eyes
and as eyes met, making out
light by darkness, we hungered:
the dish is a questioning of the dish.

We drank from the cup of hands
and as hands met, reaching down
for what was up, we thirsted:
the cup is a questioning of the cup.

We slept in the bed of flesh
and as flesh met, melting back
to the lost action, we kept
forgiving, and for good: no questions asked.

—Richard Howard

ver medallions laced together which, if the observer squinted, fused into a luminous, turning ring; in the depths of his chair his face was pale and long, the already high cheekbones raised higher by the cross-hatched steel engraving of his beard. The silvered waist was the zone I preferred and described to myself as "aristocratic," coming as it did between the feudal splendors of his face and the modern brutishness of his boots—"aristocratic" as the salutation *madame* must have been in the seventeenth century when it no longer meant the medieval "my lady" but had not yet degenerated into the ugly "Missus," that moment when Versailles itself, though the most royal of residences, still seemed to older courtiers a converted hunting lodge and was a long way from relaxing into the urban sprawl of Paris. But his face, despite my determination to prefer his waist, kept drawing me back. One eye was blue, the other green, the magical result of a child's chemistry experiment. Beside the green eye was drawn a curious birthmark on his temple, which I saw variously as the lair of those blushes that so often raided his cheeks or as the stinging imprint of the first hand that had slapped into breathing an infant who, though now a man, still resented delivery.

The situation at the theater quickly stabilized into a familiar and excruciating structure. Far from being the defiant and distant young man he appeared to be, Thomas had the capacity and desire to consign himself completely to us. We were the big brothers, or perhaps the parents, he'd always longed to interest, and now our interest in him was compulsive. Craig was held by Thomas's beauty and innocence; Thomas received the attention in confused but grateful silence; Craig prized and matched his silence, as though it were an original mode Thomas had invented rather than the simple, inadvertant expression of awkwardness I judged it to be; the vault of ice congealing around the lovers begged to be broken, and I did the breaking. Just as open scissors suggest snipping, an idle knife stabbing, coffee scalding, so their faces, inclined toward one another but not touching, called for the closure of the kiss, even if I had to arrange it, even if by arranging it I engineered my own suffering.

Now I loved Craig and he loved Thomas and Thomas loved Craig, but both men could communicate only through me, as though one were the airwaves striking the eardrum and the other the fluid vibrating across the triggered hairs of the basilar membrane; for air to touch liquid it had to pass through the anvil, stirrup and hammer, and I served the function of those delicate bones, converting disturbances in one medium to those of another, amplifying whispers and dampening shouts.

To console me, Craig would draw me aside and assure me that Thomas was no more than an infatuation, a delightful boy from the provinces, an indoor amusement during the cold spell. And wasn't it funny the way Thomas could not finish a sentence without sinking into a mumbled "And whatever and whatever"? And had I noticed the way Thomas, embarrassed by a tarnished molar, pursed his lips unnaturally when he laughed? I had not.

The other misguided tactic Craig adopted to assure me how trivial his attachment to Thomas must be was his repeated insistence that their only bond was sexual. That their ardor might be all the more intense, Craig dressed us in wing-tipped collars and cutaways and placed us in a Victorian sitting room, me in a horsehair-stuffed rocker and them on an ottoman. A grandfather clock ticked inexorably (or rather a tape just behind the flocked flat looped around and around past a magnetic head, feeding its solemn knocking into the house speakers). A gas lamp glowed on the table beside me, its penumbra boosted by an overhead spotlight. From a distance the antimacassars under my elbows appeared to be lace, but up close they were clearly plastic sprayed to dull their sheen. I wore age makeup, but their faces were cosmetically young. We spoke in unnaturally loud voices in order to project to the top balcony of the empty house. Behind the frosted windows (glass sponged with Epsom salts and beer) the cyclorama darkened from sunset pinks and flamingos into the massing blues of dusk, blood transubstantiated into wine. I kept pouring an empty teapot into empty cups as we made witty small talk with such fastidious diction that the explosive *p*'s, *t*'s and *d*'s sent sheets of spray flying from our mouths into the cross-lit, shadowless room. After this (presumably humorous) spat of polite chatter my guests stretched conspicuously and feigned yawns and begged to retire. I led them downstage left along a path designated by tape on the floor to a bedroom that Thomas surreptitiously tugged in from the wings by pulling a thin lead of fishing tackle that had been left lying on

the floor. When I asked the young men if they thought the quilt would provide sufficient warmth on such a bitterly cold night, Craig comically tugged at his collar to indicate embarrassment and Thomas, equally uncomfortable, stifled a cough in his hand. Blushes flew down from their haven, the birthmark. Once the door (flimsy plywood stained and grained to resemble massive oak) is closed into its unsteady frame, the guests collapse into each other's arms, groan with pleasure, draw apart to place a warning finger to their lips, undress with ecstatic haste, dive into the four-poster and draw its curtains shut. Just before they vanish from sight into this sea of ruffles, the high-spirited lads pop their heads out of the surf, one head above the other, and wink at the non-existent audience.

Back in the parlor I seek distractions, first lifting a book, then discarding it in favor of a stereoscopic viewer, finally tiptoeing back to the bedroom door, to which I apply a guilty, greedy ear. Up to this point the scene is staged as farce and timing, miming, vocal tricks, double takes and innuendoes are played strictly for laughs. But now the style of the piece shifts. The character I'm representing dons a child's sailor suit and sits in the hallway outside the closed bedroom door and cries. He talks to himself. A smile flickers across his lips, only to vanish when the eyes go big and dead and the jaw drops into a sob. After starting on a high whine, the sob rumbles into the bass register and breaks off into a succession of muted yelps. The body lengthens on the floor, face down, then rolls to one side as the knees contract towards the chest.

"Who would ever have thought that the treasure at the end of your rainbow would turn out to be me?"

Okay, okay, that's enough for today," Craig says, helping me up. He is in his jeans though still shirtless. A light just behind Thomas's head prevents me from reading his expression, but I can see he's pushed back the bed curtains and pulled the sheet up to his shoulders. He's smiling, the cigarette held in a tapering hand rendered longer and lighter by its subtle tremor. Craig, supporting me, leads me to a dressing room where he makes me tea with an electric coil in a mug. Much later, returning with Craig to the stage, I observed that Thomas has changed the scenery before leaving. In place of the Victorian sitting room is a misty forest, layer after layer of foliage sewn to half-lowered scrims, one dropped behind the other. The many lights are gelled blue or green and all held down to only a few points of illumination. Paper flowers are strewn across the floor and the ogival shadows of leaves play across our moving hands; the sound of our footsteps through underbrush is simulated offstage by Thomas trampling a burlap bag filled with flake glue. As we approach an old tree, thick as a giant's waist, the trunk opens to admit us to a secret bower canopied with luscious woodbine, sweet muskroses and eglantine. Craig places an animal's head over my own and sheds his clothes until he is as smooth and pale as melting candlewax at the moment it brims over its oily cup and slides down the firm taper. And indeed, in just this way, he seems to grow, burn, offer warmth and pliancy but promise, if the moment's missed, to be cold and rigid. He bends toward me and opens his mouth to kiss the snout of my mask. He gazes into my, or rather the animal's, eyes, though mine are just behind the empty holes he adores. He whispers phrases loving and passionate and they are just the words I've longed to hear but cannot, muffled as my ears are by the thickness of the costume skull. Now he rises, stands over me, and if I lift or lower my head I can scan the length of his lean body through the peepholes of my papier-mâché mask. Should I bray my praise? Lights within our bower have dawned to make him clearer, brighter, and he is still speaking. I can't decide which I want more—to hear him or to look at him, to enjoy my blissful torment or to gauge by his endearments my chances at future bliss . . . or torment. I feel that he must return, at least to some small extent, a devotion that has become my entirety. I know that he basks, smiles, thrives, sleeps, wakes in the sea of my devotion, that I am the tide that sluices nourishment into the hard pair of shells he's become. Hasn't he noticed?

Yet now, though I am confined in a trumpery mask and he has donned cellophane wings stretched over veins of wire and a diligent and not very bright but repentant and frightened Thomas is running the lights, awaiting his next cue, Craig fans my bestial cheek with painted butterflies and offers a bunch of plastic grapes, outsize for visibility, to my black leather lips. Although my real mouth is compressed with chagrin and the lust of a true lover—which is metasexual, since it longs to possess the sternum, femur, cranium and the muscles and skin that bind one bone to another only if that union will further his

chances of owning the soul, that would penetrate another body only if that invasion would reduce the distance between one being and a second—though my true mouth is a hard line of pain, I oblige him by nuzzling the fruit and batting the beast's huge lashes (I've found the exact angle at which the weighted lids close). Much as I resent the mask, the crepe flowers, the hot lights, and the small overhead branches faked out of twine sized, wound in cloth, painted and stiffened with wire, I recognize that no lover ever presented himself with any fewer impediments, and that this setting at least has the merit of proclaiming the inevitable sense of unworthiness and artificiality.

But now Craig has become inspired and he rises ever higher above the animal at his feet; he paces around me with the tact and forebearance of a god or goddess who knows that, in answering a mortal's prayer and appearing before him, the gift may blind the devotee or strike him dumb and will certainly unsuit him to the rest of his ordinary days. Yet the daring god believes that the visit must at least be memorable. If it is to bring so much loss, it should be worth losing and therefore, as the air above the altar takes on flesh, as the neck emerges out of the smoke, white wisps curling into the curve of these precise shoulders, blue haze concentrating into blue eyes, gray scarf of burned incense layering thicker and thicker into the lifting, outstretched, beckoning hand, the god cautiously steals up on his supplicant, at first a visual trick, no more than the result of the late hour, the secret ritual, the prolonged fast, the very need for some sign, an illusion to be blinked away, only later a palpable suggestion, finally an undeniable reality. He speaks to me; I cannot understand him (why did I assume I would know a god's language?). He is immense and pale as ash blown off the cold blackened log, fierce with his own strength that he prefers to veil . . . to spare me. And at every moment my mind flickers back and forth between thinking no, he is a representation, surprisingly tangible, of a power that can never be seen and yes, he is in fact here, seen and seeing. To lay to rest my doubts about his literal appearance in my room, he touches me, pushes me down, makes love to me, but too slowly, with too much control to satisfy my need. It is an act that we are engaged in, and I do not have the reserve or the fortitude to proceed, step by delicious and aching step, through an act. I stiffen at the wrong moment, gaze up into his healthy face with despair at the impersonality of his desire (no matter that the desire is for me) and the only consolation I can formulate is the thought that, since he is a god, he already knows and has forgiven my panic. The weighted lids tip shut. I need not be a good lover; he is an echo to his own shout.

When I awaken, stiff and humiliated, last night's costume disgusts me. I kick the empty head away and sidle, disgruntedly and nursing a sore right shoulder, down a corridor toward the green room. There I walk in on Craig and Thomas, both of them sprawling in canvas chairs, chewing gum and looking unpleasantly smug and idle. As Thomas listens, Craig rambles on about his own amazing muscular coordination and acute kinesthetic sensitivity, a discourse I've heard before in which he will refer with awe to Energy. Thomas is prepared to speak to me and does wink with the green eye and wave feebly in my direction (though with a cowardly hand hidden from Craig by the back of the chair) but he's taking his cues from his companion, who has apparently decided that to ask me how I slept or even to greet me would be an admission of guilt. From his loud, cheerful voice I deduce that any complaint I might make would draw from him a studied, overly polite expression of incomprehension. "Please begin again at the beginning. Now, you're *offended* about last night? Yes? You are? But *why*?" Morosely I plunge the electric coil into a dirty cup.

I knew I had to leave the theater, but before I did there was one more thing I wanted to explore. Now that I'd resolved to go, Craig, whom I'd pursued so long, metamorphosed out of a warm, panting escape from Apollo, bare feet rustling through fallen leaves, into a hard wooden memory I could finally embrace, had I wanted to. I watched his feet take root, his legs fuse, his fingers exfoliate.

I drew him aside and said I'd be going away in a few hours. He swallowed his gum, took my hand and lost his slouching, leg-swinging insolence. He attempted to dissuade me from going; he apologized for everything; then he agreed to help me. I told him that when we lived together you had loved me with the impious desire I had felt for the first time only last night, felt within the bole of the giant tree—a desire that I had felt for him, Craig. Of course, as I made clear, I must have loved you all along, even from the beginning, but for me the sentiment had been careless, lazy, devoid of passion, the infant's hand, translucent fingers and meaty palm, stretching into the milk-rich, meshed twilight, confident of touching the mouth of its adoring mother. We are born with only one fear, the fear of falling, and that primeval anxiety now held me as I plummeted farther and farther away from your indifferent hands, which are tucked under your arms, visible (since you've turned your back) only as slightly protruding fingertips, polyps pulsing in the sluggish water of night. No chance of stopping my fall, of being hovered back up to you by a squadron of pink and gold cherub heads outfitted with wings but not with bodies. Falling, scintillating, a diminishing star shifting, as I recede ever farther, into the red band of the visible spectrum, I can only rehearse my time with you, the blue, hazy days spied through gauze curtains exhaled and slowly, thoughtfully inhaled by the open windows. You loved me as I loved Craig—with this difference, that your face was masked only by glasses always slightly askew, one pane smudged with a thumbprint and both dusty, and your love endured for years, silent and patient.

"I want to live through those days again," I tell Craig, "but with me playing his role and you mine. You look as I did then—small, blond, too young for your years. There were moments that meant so much to him that I never could fathom."

The first moment we re-created was that time you let yourself into my rooms and found me asleep. Hastily Craig and I assembled that dingy apartment as best as I could recollect it and we could approximate it from among our props and flats. In one room on a narrow cot covered with an army blanket Craig lay dozing fully dressed in the button-down shirt and ironed chinos of that era. He was exhausted from his studies. There were inkstains on the index finger of his right hand. I entered silently, sat beside the sleeping boy for a moment, then wandered about the other room. A fluorescent study light on an extension arm shed the cold blue glow of lonely concentration on an open Latin book turned to a list of ir-

regular verbs. And here is the open wardrobe and the few proud, impoverished belongings—the other pair of chinos, two shirts on hangers, the thin winter coat. And there is the kitchen cabinet stocked with staples and lentils, the nutritious meat "substitute." Oh, my friend, so you saw me, and you later told me you had been moved by the gallantry of my tidy poverty but even more so by the evidence that I led a life of my own, apart from you. You had loved me so intensely that you'd convinced yourself you had invented me, that when you left the forest the falling tree made no sound—did not fall, in fact, but rather leaned, creaked, ripped roots out of the soil . . . and waited for your return. That banal moment while I dozed, however, convinced you that my sole purpose was not to torture you, that I was not merely an agent you had appointed to ensure your own downfall, the axe to fell you, that I had other interests. Latin, for instance. Ironing my chinos. Baking a lentil loaf. Beside my bed, on the floor, was a looking glass. As I slept you lit a candle and held the mirror up and studied my reflection in the glass. Now I did so, watching the flame brighten and draw Craig's childlike face out of the shadows, then dim and float him back into darkness, just as the sun during a polar winter rises only to set.

There was that summer I can scarcely recall but that for you was our sweetest season together. You were living across the street from me. We had only just met. In those days I was always dressed in baggy white shorts and a high-school T-shirt and always out for a spin on my English bicycle, the gift of another admirer, I think. You and I slept together almost every night, but I, confused and frightened by all the men in my life, had taken a vow of chastity. For me it was little more than a joke (remember I'd founded the Society of St. Agnes and designated myself president, secretary and sole member?), but you took the vow terribly seriously. You were content not to make love to me so long as no one else did. We had a *marriage blanc* and you explained what that meant.

Because there was no sexual release, everything became erotic for you. Even the sound of my approaching bicycle. You'd be walking along (as I was now past a backdrop of buildings) and in the airless heat of that deserted summer street you'd hear the sound of my revolving rear wheel tick-tick-ticking, slipping over the stationary gears as I coasted to a halt, one foot standing on a pedal. A block away the whirr was so faint you'd sometimes turn, a welcoming smile on your lips and greet—the empty street; you'd mistaken for my approach the accelerating wheel of your own circling thoughts spinning around the fixed idea of you, me, you, me, you and me, unity. . . .

"Say, didn't I pick you up during the Eisenhower years?"

To me it was nothing, nothing at all. That bike I junked ages ago. That summer I was worried about my weight, which I had to fight to maintain by consuming whole loaves of bread, slice by gagging slice, each heavy with honey. And I had wanted to travel but couldn't afford to and was probably feeling sorry for myself. You were merely the kind man from across the street who pleased me with compliments I didn't trust and who startled me with inexplicable bursts of affection. Now, as I try to understand you by impersonating you, as I seize Craig's hand and press a kiss to his dirty palm, I am more struck by his accurate portrayal of my old embarrassment than with any new understanding of why you made that demonstration there, in the middle of the street at noon. You said, "See, they've emptied the city just for us. It's ours. Everyone's gone away out of politeness," and I say those words to Craig, but he retrieves his hand and uses it to hoist the bicycle to his shoulder (time for an afternoon session with the bread). His precision in recapturing my exact response is uncanny; I haven't prompted him. If your odd kiss and whimsical words can evoke the same reaction from him as from me, then can I be blamed for what I did? Could I have behaved otherwise?

And the recognition that I never had a choice, yet have had to suffer the consequences of a decision I supposedly made, angers me. I've searched for you and not found you, attempted to forget you and found you everywhere, in foreign children, in my own childhood memories, in the faint cough I once heard behind my closet door, in the bodies of hundreds of men I've ransacked, tearing them open as though surely this one must be concealing the contraband goods, only to throw them aside, meaningless raffia, and I've watched my own face age as I waited for your return, fearing I'd no longer attract you should I ever see you again—

"Stop," I say to Craig. "Let's not go on." He comes back down the stairs with the bicycle and sets it on the ground, propping its weight on the kickstand, searching my face for an explanation. The curtain, lowered till now, rises swiftly and in the dark auditorium I fancy you're sitting, watching me. You're pitiless. You think that now at last the play is beginning.

Election Year

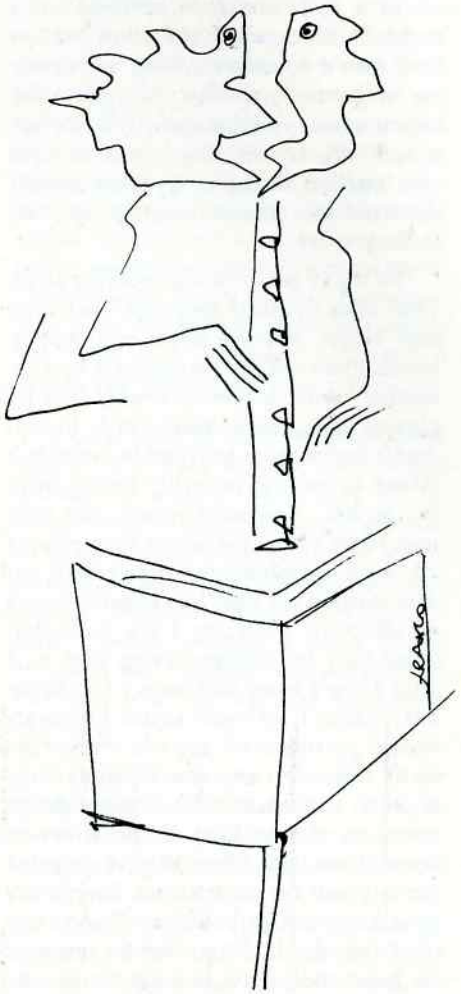
By Charlotte Bunch

What is the gay political perspective for the Bicentennial year? Red, white, and blue closets or a red and lavender star? I trust I'm not exposing any national secrets or washing movement laundry in public if I say there *is* no gay political perspective in 1976. This year, more than ever—since gays went public in a big way some six years ago—it has become clear that there are as many divergent politics in the "gay community" as in the straight. And if one also asks how gays relate to straight politics, we wind up with an enormous array of issues, perspectives, and options—a multitude of positions on important questions. Gay people in this country share an exclusion from legitimate channels for expression, not a particular politics.

Most gay political opinion clusters around one of four basic positions: assimilationist; civil rights reformist; socialist; radical feminist. As with any spectrum of political categories, individuals are not necessarily pure types but are often expressions of various combinations. Still, an examination of each of these positions should be useful for understanding gay politics in 1976.

1. The assimilationist position is best characterized by the statement "gay is just like straight." It attempts to outstraight the heterosexual middle-class American way by proving that gays are not different. Those making this effort are embarrassed by faggot culture and outraged by dyke separatists. While not necessarily in the closet, they certainly do not view gay people as distinct and are often uncomfortable to be identified as gay. In falling all over themselves to deny that there is anything peculiar or special about being gay, they commit their greatest mistake—they lose that very thing that distinguishes us and saves us from the great American malaise: the sense of difference that comes when one is not just perpetuating what is but is actively involved in the creation of what is to be. They are like travelers scurrying to get on board the *Titanic*.

2. Civil rights reformists go further than the assimilationists. They are comfortable being identified as gay and sometimes admit that there may be differences between gay life and straight. They say, "Gay is just as good as straight." Many people support gay civil rights but this political position as I define it is that of hard-core reformers who are distinguished by their abiding faith that achieving civil rights for gays will end oppression—an astounding notion that flies in the face of all the evidence of the Sixties. This hard core works for legislative, electoral, and judicial victories. They seek recognition of particular gay concerns (e.g., a mention in the Democratic party platform); above all they labor to prove that queers are good enough to hold any job or any political responsibility and fulfill the dream of middle-class America. The ideal might be seen as a forever-running TV series, "Marcus Welby, Gay MD."



This position represents the mainstream of gay politics. In addition to the core with faith in the American reform tradition, there are others whose politics goes beyond reformism but who work on civil rights for practical reasons. Civil rights reformers, like most other liberals, have a variety of opinions about their radical counterparts—ranging from a view of them as "gay spoilers" to genuine allies using different methods.

3. The gay socialists are the leftist counterparts of the gay reformists. For them the motto changes to "gay is just as revolutionary as straight." By and large, the gay socialist works for acceptance in the heterosexual counterculture or in a particular leftist sect, seeking to prove that queers are good enough to hold any job or take any political responsibility in the left: "Marcus Welby, Gay MD" becomes an underground film about a gay, socialist-activist law commune.

Efforts spent defending gays from being defined as products of "bourgeois decadence" or unnatural side-effects of capitalism are not unlike the defense mounted by reformists against claims that we are immoral, un-Christian, and/or sick. Once more, gays are on the defense to establish credentials for political leadership on straight terms. While gay people may be socialists for many reasons, the gay-socialist stance is firmly embedded in the notion that homosexual oppression collapses or can best be ended with the advent of socialism—*if only* gays work hard enough, prove their revolutionary ardor, and don't let the kinky or feminist elements get out of hand.

4. This brings me to the gay radical feminists (and obviously I am one of them) who say, "Gay, or lesbian, is proud," and insist that we *are* different and that our differences should lead to changes in straight society. Primarily developed by women, the heart of this position is lesbian-feminist politics. Lesbian-feminists assert that homosexual oppression is intricately connected to women's oppression through the patriarchal institutions of male supremacy

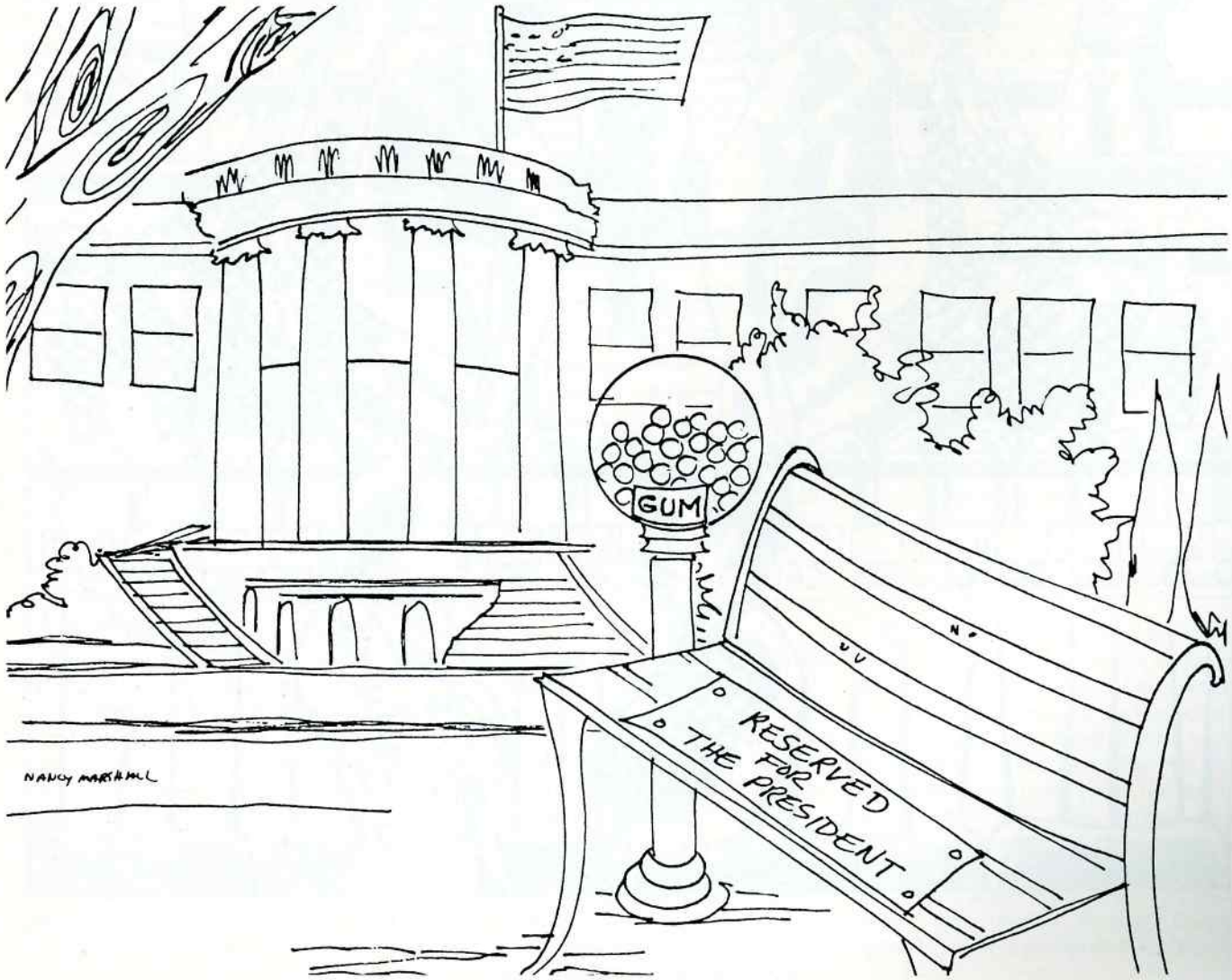
and heterosexuality, and therefore heterosexism and sexism must be fought together. The lesbian-feminist maintains that gays, particularly lesbians, are not like straights—will not be like straights—since straight society is synonomous with male supremacy, heterosexual roles, and woman-hatred.To deny the difference is to deny our power and potential for change.

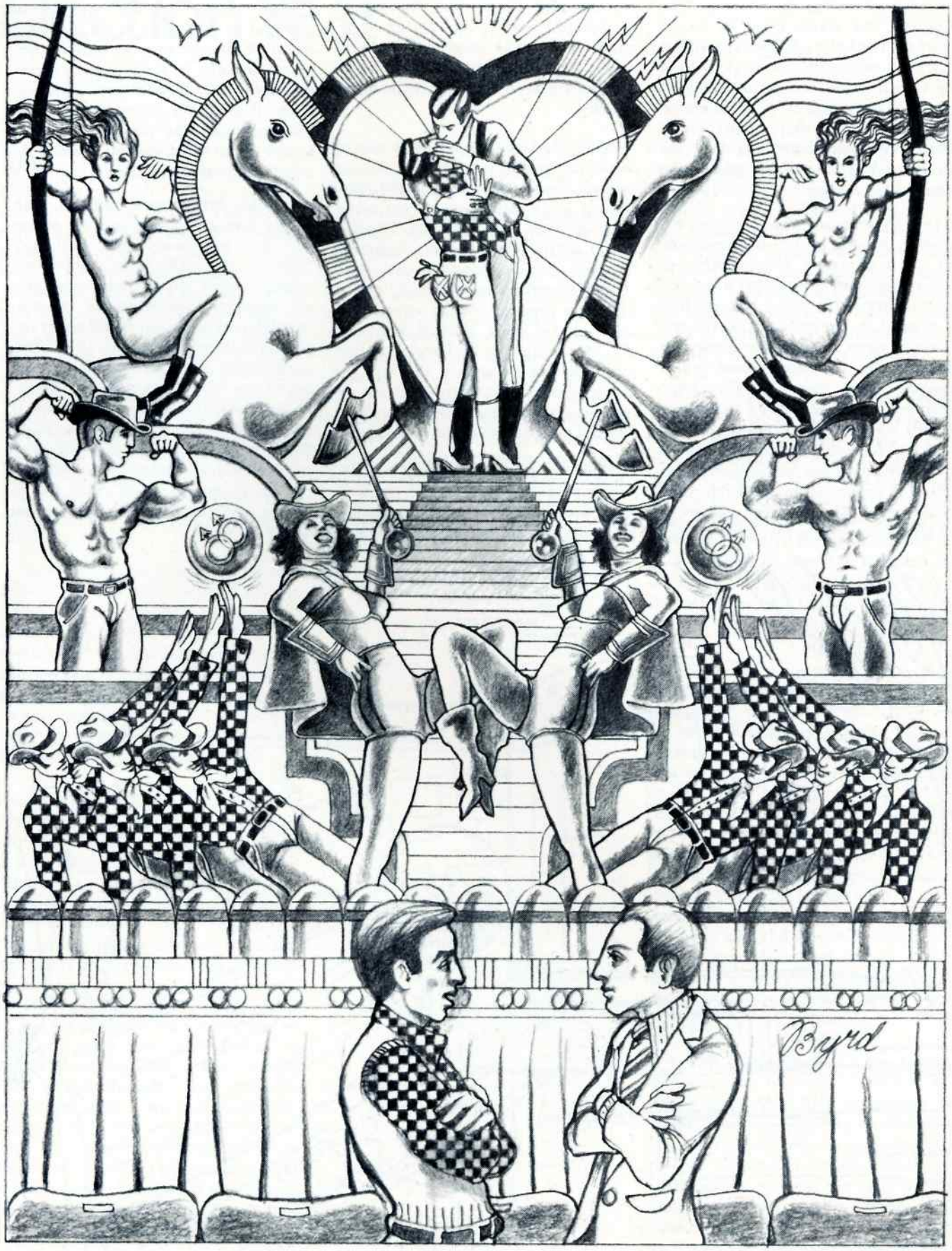
Lesbian-feminism founders on the question of what to do with these politics. Most of us are concentrating on building our own institutions and developing strategies for power that can lead to changes in the structure of society. However, views on questions like separatism and how to relate to men, gay or straight, vary. Some totally reject separatism. Some see it as a strategy to be used when necessary. Some proclaim it the goal for lesbians. Attitudes toward reformists vary from cordial working relations to denunciation of all reform as collaboration. The male counterpart to the lesbian-feminist is that small but significant band of gay men who accept the feminist analysis and try to understand how male supremacy works against their interests and how gay men can participate in the destruction of patriarchy.

While individuals may have a mix of particular views, involvement in any political activity is usually based, consciously or unconsciously, on one or another of these four positions. The particular activity that a person engages in, however, does not always locate them on this spectrum; many issues, such as legislative changes, can be approached from any of these political positions. But the arguments and methods that someone uses in making the case for change and its consequences usually do reveal one or another of these four basic political perspectives as the premise.

While agreeing that lesbians and homosexual men are oppressed, each of these groupings views that oppression, its causes and its remedies, differently. Therefore, individuals within each grouping tend to find allies in the particular sector of straight society—conservative, liberal, socialist, or feminist—that shares their political attitudes and approach, rather than within other gay positions. This minimizes the potential of a gay united front: consequently there is no united gay position in 1976.

As the election year rolls on, with debate over gay planks and the nature of the gay vote, the real gay "politics" nationally is the competition among leaders and activists over who the legitimate representatives are who will define what straights will see as *the* gay political perspective in 1976. This competition can be as exciting, diverse, instructive, and vicious as the Democratic presidential lottery. How much is learned from this struggle depends on how well we understand the underlying political issues. Whatever else happens, one thing should remain clear: Gay is not the same as straight but we are also not all the same.





"We're calling it 'Oklahomosexual.' "

A Letter by Gregg Kilday from

HOLLYWOOD

To understand Hollywood, recall if you will those Walt Disney nature films that use stop-action camera techniques to hop up the life of a plant. *Pnnggg*, a tiny periscope of green, *strumm*, the stalk lurches into life, *blamm*, the flower explodes like a biological A-bomb. Most people marvel at the obvious illusion of it all. Not here in Hollywood. In Hollywood such an effect would probably be mistaken for life itself. Hollywood has no respect for anything unless it happens very big and very fast.

At the moment Studio One, a discotheque-cum-nightclub, is enjoying the kind of glitzy, neon-glazed success that Hollywood finds so irresistible. Elizabeth Taylor dropped by the other night to catch Frances Faye's act in the Backlot, as the showroom at Studio One styles itself. Whenever he is in town, Elton John will be rumored to have been seen on the dance floor just the other night. (In truth it is Paul Lynde who is more likely to have been there.) If you prefer *real* gossip, though, you should know that it was Suzanne Pleshette who was turned away at the door for lack of proper ID. Her chauffeur had the only driver's license.

But to repeat the local chatter about "the Studio" is to oversell the club. By all objective standards, the Studio is just another loud, crowded, flashy gay dance bar. Out-of-town visitors, however, are invariably enthralled by the Studio's passing charms; they leave convinced that nowhere on the North American continent are the boys so presentable. And why not. The Southern California sun has done its bit for narcissism.

Disappointingly, though, sexual energies almost never run high at Studio One. There is convivial socializing, and there is dancing. (The LA Hustle—basically a group Busby Berkeley routine—still comes and goes in dismaying variations.) And there is inevitably a good deal of posing. But cruising per se is kept to a minimum. It is considered almost rude. Perhaps the regulars have invested too much into cultivating a self-contained attractiveness to admit to being on the sexual make. Or it may be, as one disenchanted witness decided one night, that everyone is simply afraid of fucking below themselves.

So then what distinguishes Studio One? Not its waiters' tight basketball shorts—copied from New York's Le Jardin. Nor its California Deco interior (i.e., an excess of silver on redwood)—that was seen a year or so earlier in San Francisco's Cabaret and LA's own After Dark. What makes the Studio a continuing hit is that it is the first gay bar in Los Angeles to have gone public in a big, jazzy way.

Studio One opened two years ago, a lifetime by Hollywood standards, and it is still going strong. Of course, given Hollywood's pretended sexual laissez-faire, if this particular club hadn't arrived on the scene when it did some other bar would have been pressed into service to amuse the restless and the young. But none could have been more appropriate than Studio One, because Studio One is the old Factory gone gay.

The Factory, housed in a two-story hangar-like building where munitions once were made, was a private club concocted by Peter Lawford and a few of his pals in the late Sixties. Membership, alas, was more coveted than exercised, and after a couple of years the enterprise folded. It is said that Barbra Streisand became too much the star to mix with her old Factory friends, who were then lured to Pips in Beverly Hills with the promise of a never-ending game of backgammon, and, show business folk being cavalier about such things, unpaid bills were all that was left behind.

In the stars' tracks followed a string of entrepreneurs. Nobody could figure out how to turn the old Factory into a paying proposition. It was successively re-outfitted as a meeting place for neo-hippie craftsmen, a spaghetti restaurant, and, under con man Bernie Cornfeld, an abortive discotheque. Then Scott Forbes, a Boston-born optometrist, came along. While the Factory was still in operation Forbes had rented it on Sunday evenings, called it the Odyssey Club, and opened it to a private, gay membership. (On Sunday nights, cognoscenti remarked, the Factory became the Faggotry.) Citing his past success and backed by a small group of gay professionals, Forbes convinced the building's owner to allow him to open a full-scale, seven-nights-a-week gay discotheque, complete with showroom and restaurant, electronic pong, jewelry concession, and random laser beams.

Forbes, a personably tanned young man who wears nothing more calculated than jeans and an official Studio One T-shirt, is very much a businessman, even if at times he seems to be affecting the sentiments of a social reformer. "I opened this place so that the gay kids would have a nice place to go," he insists, rather as if he were a latter-day Father Flanagan and the Studio a new-age Boys' Town. The club, Forbes points out, is a source of employment for gays. It has also become Hollywood's major point of contact with the Los Angeles gay community.

Let LA's gay leadership squabble among themselves about who is to attend the intermittent gripe sessions staged by the studios and networks to exorcise gay complaints. All that adds up to is three or four column inches in the trades, the daily entertainment journals that spoonfeed a diet of gossip, stock indexes, and fantasies about the outside world into the entertainment industry's consciousness. In contrast, Studio One takes out prominent ads every other week to trumpet the performers appearing in its showroom.

Studio One is becoming as much a part of the Hollywood scene as the Polo Lounge. For the LA premiere of *Tommy*, professional party-giver Allan Carr took over the club for a night of elbow-wrenching slumming that was videotaped by David Frost for replay as an ABC late night special. Don Kirshner followed suit by staging a disco special starring Tommy Tune. And when Kaye Ballard, just released from New York's Persian Room, opened recently, producer Ross Hunter

threw a party for a rolodex sampling of his friends—Zsa Zsa, Martha Raye, Debbie Reynolds, Rona Barret, Rod McKuen, et al. This precipitated some cultural confusion. In what was misguidedly intended as a salute "to our newest minority, the gays," Kaye belted out a novelty number about "Bruce, the Gay Policeman" complete with jokes about Gucci handbags and lavender patrol cars. The Hunter party applauded loudly.

Leaving aside the question of whether such celebrities lend their prestige to the club or whether they are just on hand for a little voyeuristic titillation (somehow, when David Jansen and Dani Greco come parading through the club one can only suspect the latter), there is still some unpleasant confusion about Studio One. While it craves respectability, it is unsure of how to handle its success.

Take the problem of the Door. There are two doors actually. One feeds into the showroom, allowing celebrities to enter without having to brave the dance floor's crush. The other, the main door, is for general admission, except that admission isn't necessarily all that general.

Forbes knows he has a problem with the Door. It is his single biggest headache. But you have to understand his position, he explains, this is a club for gay kids and if straights invade the place they'll drive the gays away. It has happened before. Straights catch on to what's happening, they take over a club, are rowdy, drunk, and worst of all, since they only come out on weekends, they leave the place empty during the week. "This is a club for gay kids," Forbes repeats, "and I'm going to keep it that way. We don't discriminate. We just ask for a driver's license. The gay kids know enough to bring it. The straight kids don't always have it with them."

The argument sounds tenable until one realizes that when Forbes speaks of gay kids he is speaking only of white, male gay kids. Studio One has become notorious for hassling women, Chicanos, and blacks who want in. It is following a pattern established by the city's other, smaller dance bars, but Studio One's status as the Gay Bar of the Moment only makes the practice all the more annoying.

Forbes refuses to admit that any discrimination has ever taken place, even though a sign above the door

used to call for *three* pieces of age and picture-bearing ID, a requirement from which only gay white males could be sure of being exempted. Last summer, after monitoring the situation, a small group of gay leftists occasionally picketed the bar. Some patrons waiting in line to enter found the constant arguments at the door distasteful enough to send them off to less fashionable alternatives. Most simply paid their cover charge and joined the dance.

With time tension has lessened and the entrance requirement has been reduced to a California driver's license (specifically prohibited are such substitutes as school ID's and library cards). Undesirables appear to have gotten the message, and the line now inches forward without complaint. "I'm much more upset by the fact that they don't allow large hats or open-toed shoes," sighs one of the men on line.

So what's a poor boy to do? Women's bars often discourage men from entering; why should men's bars be more generous? And nobody wants a lot of heterosexual sightseers from Orange County trouping two by two through the hall. But then what do you do with your college roommate and his girlfriend who arrive from the East and want to see LA's idea of a night on the town? It's super that the club stepped in to fill the vacuum, establishing itself as Hollywood's premier boite, presenting everyone from Gotham, Craig Russell, and Wayland Flowers to Chita Rivera, Bernadette Peters, and Alexis Smith. But how does one respond to a dinosaur like Kaye Ballard, who really should be performing in some staider establishment where jokes about poodles still pass for wit?

There is something about LA, something in the way the natives tend to fade as soon as the sun dissolves into the Pacific, that inhibits the town's night life and reduces the possibility of effective competition. And as long as Studio One is the only game in town it will be forced to cater to a confusing jumble of patrons. The club can be applauded for forthrightly implementing gay capitalism, a relief after years of syndicated franchises. And one can thrill to its wall-to-wall sound and its beautifully bronzed boys. But Hollywood success stories are heady, hyper numbers, so one shouldn't be surprised if this one doesn't bear up well under frame-by-frame analysis.

Books

The Very Rich Hours of Adrienne Monnier

Translated, with an introduction and commentaries by Richard McDougall (Scribner's, 544 pp., $14.95)

By Bertha Harris

Recently, in St. Augustine, Florida, a young woman reluctantly abandoned her bridal magazine to conduct me through Potter's Wax Museum, where "the pages of History and Legend come to life." My guide wore long yellow hair and a rump-sprung blue velvet gown, whose lace collar I have seen around the neck of Dorothy Wordsworth in textbook photographs of the immemorial sister; she delivered a word-perfect lecture and allowed herself to be photographed among the American Authors. Herding our group from figure to figure, she declared George Washington (Great American Founders) famous as the Father of Our Country; she said that his wooden false teeth weighed a pound and a half; that Queen Elizabeth I (Olde England) owned a wardrobe of over 3,000 dresses and in a fit of temper beheaded Bloody Mary (who stood unstained, not-yet-beheaded, three feet away); that Joan of Arc (uplifted eyes, suit of mail, pageboy cut) was a Catholic and Heard Voices; that Pope John XXIII was a peasant; that Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves. John L. Sullivan drank strong liquor and smoked, but never lost a fight.

Recent lesbian biography and reminiscence is very much a Potter's Wax Museum. Dimly illumined figures stare down at us; we look up at them. Our feet hurt. We wonder what difference 3,000 dresses made to a woman who consolidated an empire and what effect roast chicken had on a mouth heavy with wooden teeth. But I've learned to expect the worst when faced with either American folk entertainment or the lives of dead-and-gone "great" women. The first almost always involves an instructive moral and/or a banjo; the second are almost always elucidations of the work of great men.

Adjuncts to a man or men, Nineteenth-century Daughters and Twentieth-century Wives and Lesbians are given distinguishing features not so much through any work they happened to do but through the details of personal circumstance—facility or not at the piano, access or not to money and books; the way they wore their hats. I watched the story of Eleanor Roosevelt on television. In one episode Eleanor R. is being dressed to marry Franklin R. when Theodore R., beaming, barges in. "Oh, how beautiful!" he crows. Then, a pregnant pause. T. takes E.'s white fingers and declares, "Y'know, when you wrote me from school, you were always saying, Oh, how I wish that I could grow up and get married so that my life can begin!" (or something like that). For all the Eleanors life begins with Franklin. We might presume that the digs at lesbian sites would produce a difference: What is life without a Franklin? Without Franklin *is* there a life? Neither the lesbians who supposedly lived the lives nor the biographers writing them up seem to think so. It is the same old same and the same old different—to paraphrase a voice from one of the busiest biographical sites. Refusing husbands, the lesbian great have husbanded male genius—tending it, paying for it, typing for it. They have burned with that same gem-like flame that inspired the naiads of the young Dionysus; that still brings the young faculty wife to her knees before her husband's dissertation on the use of the comma in Jane Austen; that teaches the eager fag-hag that beauty is a Brentano's reproduction of "David." Gertrude Stein, who was the one who recognized that it is "the same only different," gave up being a woman in order to become a male in order to become genius herself. Her character Adele, in *Q.E.D.*, declares (nicely perverting the Jewish patriarch's prayer), "I always did thank God I wasn't born a woman!" To work, one must be a man; I work, therefore I am not a woman: q.e.d. (and so what?) I am a man. In the Twenties and Thirties—that final flowering of the male situation in literature—Stein's perception was unique. It led to her creation of a literary form with fewer ties to the phallic tradition than anyone else's, male or female. It was for herself; it provided no womb for masculine reminiscence nor for seed to grow masculinist progeny. Stein would not marry men, nor would she marry their culture. But by and large those lesbians presently proving themselves grist for the biographical mills did. And in those areas where the subjects themselves fail to conform, their chroniclers may be relied upon to close the loyalty gap.

Meryle Secrest, for example, recently published a life of the painter Romaine Brooks. It is a biography equipped with the most arcane in psychological jargon and the latest in nervous heterosexual awe. George Wickes has staked out the Natalie Clifford Barney ("A lover of women and a friend to men") terrain. Jane Rule, mistakenly believing that lesbian cultural heritage has linear form (i.e., that we transmit genes in a familial pattern), wrote *Lesbian Images*, a gallery of vignettes with near-Oriental overtones of ancestress-worship. Lovat Dickson has recently propped up for view the remains of Radclyffe Hall, who died—or so her fiction leads us to believe—of Christian self-pity. There is hardly a new novel published without its obligatory bit of titillative lesbian sex or fantasy. The only viable image of female independence feminism has developed has been co-opted into a museum of curiosities whose star attraction is an exhibition of the Red Cross of the Arts Emeritae.

A lover of women and a friend to men." Natalie Barney has about summed it up for all of them. Love, while it may be showered with gifts while it comes, inevitably goes. Friendship, like a nourishing cereal, sticks to the ribs. W.G. Rogers writes in *Ladies Bountiful*, his financial exposé of how twentieth-century art happened, "With the women it is just a year-round Christmas spirit. They are not organized; it's a hit-or-miss proposition; they meet someone who wants a meal, they invite him in, and behold, a masterpiece. . . . A

"If you ask me, I think we had more fun when it was unnatural."

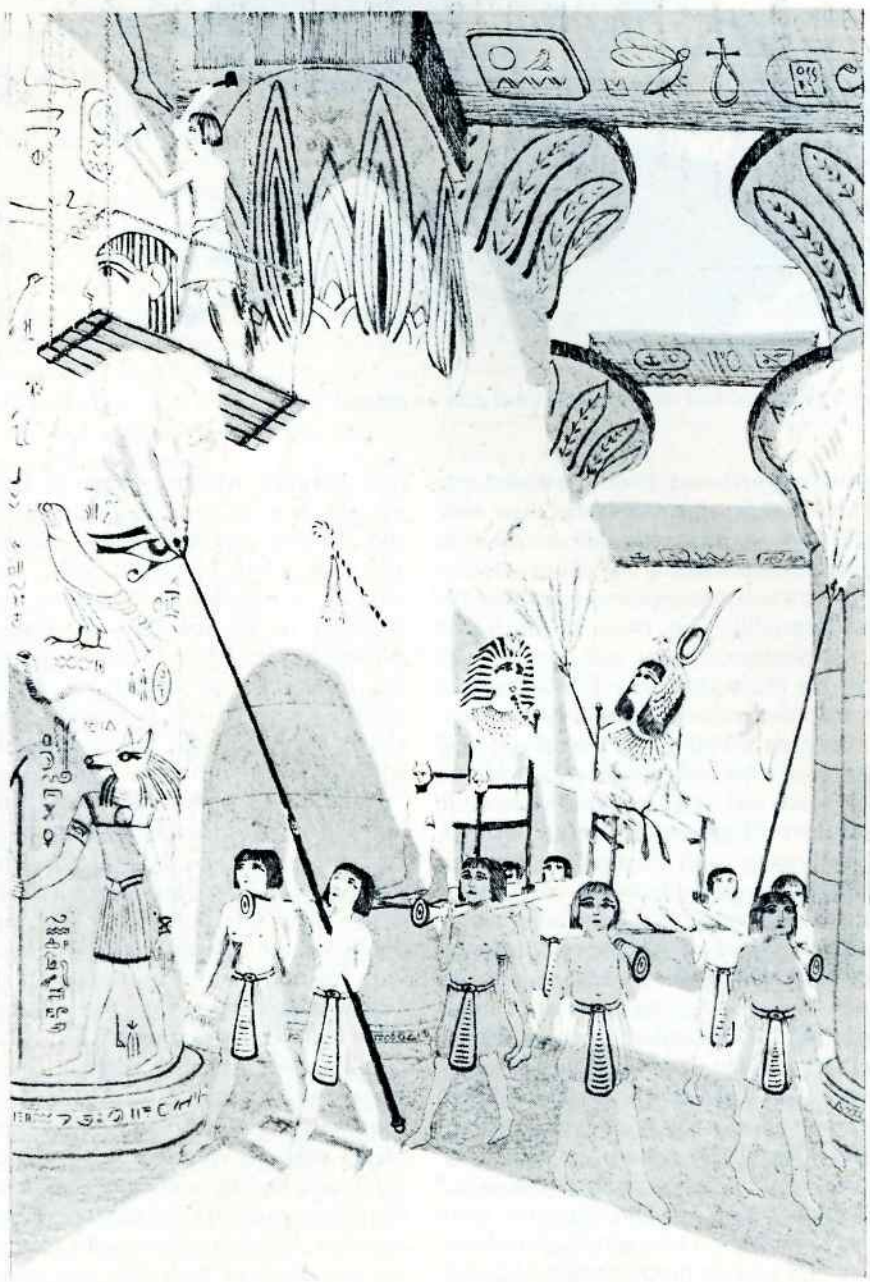
Lady Bountiful may put up five dollars or five thousand or more yet get back little besides scars and bruises and at best, years afterward, some intangible satisfaction. . . . She bets on an unproved novel, an unread poem, an unseen or unheard painting or symphony. She is a bread ticket, a shoulder to lean on, a friend to cry to. She is home base, she is sanctuary." "That catastrophe: being a woman!" Natalie Barney wrote; "Thank God for the women," D.H. Lawrence responds. Even the redoubtable Gertrude was not immune to Picasso. Indeed, it was her talent for "friendship" (Picasso, Hemingway) that eventually permitted vindication of her genius. The photographer Berenice Abbott had the wit to discern the pattern: "It was a one-way operation, from women almost always to men, rarely to other women."

In Chicago, for fifteen years, beginning in 1914, Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap lived primarily on Romance ("To Express The Emotions Of Life Is To Live. To Express The Life Of Emotions Is To Make Art") in order to give the world the new writing of Williams, Anderson, Pound; Apollinaire, Williams and Pound, Pound, Pound in their *Little Review*. They are the same, their only difference is that they did not do it in Paris. Sylvia Beach, the daughter of a Presbyterian minister and a Francophile mother, did it in Paris. In 1918, she "distributed pajamas and bath towels among the valiant Serbs." Shortly afterward, she cabled mama in Princeton: "Opening bookshop in Paris. Please send money." She had already met Adrienne Monnier, and she describes the scene in her own "Lesbians Bountiful" memoir, *Shakespeare and Company*. Entering "the little gray bookshop of A. Monnier," she spied "a young woman. . . . As I hesitated at the door, she got up quickly and opened it, and, drawing me into the shop, greeted me with much warmth. . . . I was disguised in a Spanish cloak and hat, but Adrienne knew at once that I was American. 'I like America very much,' she said. I replied that I like France very much. And, as our future collaboration proved, we meant it." So much for love. The rest is the story of "friendship": one whose general outline has now as much household familiarity as women's liberation—a collaboration between lesbians meant to bring out the best in men. Together, Beach and Monnier distributed—not "pajamas and bath towels to valiant Serbs"—but idolatry, a garment of far greater consequence to the new lords of creation. Although Nora Joyce refused to go near the manuscript of *Ulysses*, it is presumed she kept her husband's linen clean. Sylvia on the other hand did without such intimacy and instead "worshipped" James Joyce and published *Ulysses*; Adrienne "brought to literature the faith and the dedication that she might, had she been born in an earlier age, have directed toward God" and published the French translation. Much like the Anderson-Heap ménage in the United States, their amatory bliss provided both altar and soup kitchen. While Sylvia served in American style (she is Protestant and to the point—her bookshop was her "career") Adrienne pursued a religious vocation: her image and her sensibility are embarrassingly saintlike; her eyes are eternally uplifted. Berenice Abbott's photographs of them are evocations of both style and intent. Sylvia is hawk-like and butch; her in-

tensity seems caught in a high wind; she is more aviatrix than shopkeeper. The jacket she wears is black; it appears to be made of leather. Adrienne lacks only a coif to appear to us as a nun. Plump and purse-lipped, she is gathered up in a long gown and cape; her eyes are two round pools of devotion.

Even more than Sylvia's, Margaret's, Jane's, Adrienne's story is essentially that of the great men around her; it is, therefore, dismally appropriate that her memoirs are served to us between thick chunks of introduction and commentary by Mr. Richard McDougall. I haven't done a word count, but it appears possible that more of *The Very Rich Hours of Adrienne Monnier* is by Mr. McDougall than by Mlle. Monnier. Between the two of them, we are given yet another tour of the makers and shakers of twentieth-century culture. Adrienne's little story wends its way through names like Valéry, Larbaud, Gide, Fargue, Claudel, Breton, Cocteau, Romains, Hemingway, and (yet again) Joyce. All the Lesbians Bountiful group converged, at some time, at point Joyce: Harriet Weaver in England, as well as Anderson and Heap in America, had attempted publication before the worshipful Sylvia succeeded in 1922.

The book's epigraph is the most effective guide to the way Monnier sensed her life, felt France, thought on pleasure: a stasis of color, noble gestures, idealized beauty, miniaturized sensations: "Before *The Very Rich Hours of the Duke de Berry*," she writes, "I seemed to perceive as through a magic emerald the very nature of France: our land and its people dressed in bold colors; gestures of work, as pure as those of the Mass; women in flower-like dresses; fanfares of leisure; living water, branches; desires and loves; beautiful castles in the distance. . . . The sight or sound of perfect things causes a certain suffering. . . . it is as if one were burned by a fine rain of fire. . . . Such works . . . draw from the world of forms a kind of jewel, a fairy-thing." She writes throughout with a sort of ultra-girlish grace—Colette without teeth—always admiring, always wondering; McDougall plods behind her, explaining, lecturing (I don't know if he wore long yellow hair and a blue velvet gown for the occasion).



"I just love his column—I read it every day."

McDougall starts us out with both a mystical and geographical description of the interlocking of "the country of Odéonia" with the rest of Paris. *The Very Rich Hours*, he explains, "is in large part a chronicle" of that country, which "survives timelessly as a country of the spirit that is embodied in and disseminated by books." The two bookshops—Monnier's Maison des Amis des Livres and Beach's Shakespeare and Company, of course—were not only shelters but also the "archives" of Odéonia citizenry, who were Claudel through Saint-Exupéry (see catalogue above). Adrienne Monnier, "the founder and chronicler of Odéonia," opened her bookshop at the age of twenty-three, in 1915: thus, she took her final vows. In 1921, Sylvia Beach moved Shakespeare and Company across the street, to number 12 rue de l'Odéon, the move representing, according to McDougall, "the enduring friendship between the two women"; the consolidation of "the physical region of that country of the spirit." McDougall approaches "the country of the spirit" as if it were Lourdes and he on crutches.

Without an equivalent dose of blind faith, it is quite possible to learn all one ever needs to know about Adrienne Monnier from McDougall's relentless introduction. Before we reach Monnier's honeyed words, it is first necessary to live through a purgatory of the *Mercure de France*; Fargue; Jules Romains; Valéry; Larbaud; the *potassons* (a cozy literary circle of which Fargue was "our *papère*" and Monnier the *mère*); the

Thirties—in which we witness the break-up of the Beach-Monnier liaison: Sylvia "yielded her place to another"; war, peace, the birth and death of little magazines, and death by suicide.

But the coward's way out (leaping before looking beyond the introduction) will leave the reader always ignorant of how Adrienne Monnier felt about Italian Men and pre-Raphaelite art. Italian men "are, no doubt about it, the most practical and the most artistic people on earth. . . . The gallantry of the men is exemplary." About the pre-Raphaelites she expresses "unspeakable delight" and then proceeds to speak at length on such as Watt's "Hope" and Burne-Jones's "Aurora." With faultless chronological progression, McDougall begins with birth and Mother (every time papa left home for the evening, mère hustled Adrienne and her sister—the three "ideally companionable"—off for an evening with the arts: "Debussy and Maeterlinck were our gods"); gathers in first love (Suzanne), proceeds to ambition ("I aimed at the kingdom of God" for "the sake of her 'brothers' "); documents friendships (mostly the "brothers"); and proceeds toward death.

But it was love that drove Adrienne, in the first place, toward her appreciation of bad art. Suzanne goes to London, so Adrienne follows. Her passion, or so it seems, is a model of sublimation: sex, the way she tells it, is nothing compared to painting that "restored to the English the sacred feminine world that had been banished. . . ." Adrienne loves Suzanne who loves Zélie: "Zélie," she writes, "had been the passion of her fifteenth year; she no longer had such ardent feelings for her, but by her own admission she loved her better than she did myself, who often bored her to death. There was a time when they used to spend their nights writing letters to each other . . . which I found staggering. . . . I who slept like a log, even with the fires of passion in my heart; but I had only more strength to torment myself during the day." The sort of passion that existed between Zélie and Suzanne escaped Adrienne's sensibility. The intensity that inspires all-night letter writing she reserves for a hodge-podge of France, food, T. S. Eliot, the coronation of Elizabeth II, Marlon Brando, and the translation of *Ulysses*. All are accorded the same uncritical esteem; and that is why she was, and is, greatly loved—in much the same way the Gold Star Mother is among other segments of the populace. The final image that emerges from this careful portrait is that of a schoolgirl in love with books, and with Adrienne as a servant of the men who wrote them. With McDougall's help, she elaborates a ritual in which mediocrity and greatness are the same as long as she tends both. But perhaps it is not bad that T. S. Eliot comes to mean at last no more, no less, than Elizabeth II.

Mr. McDougall's attitude toward Monnier's lesbianism is casual, as though it were entirely inconsequential. It is a proper attitude. Adrienne Monnier has been remembered with "reverence, sorrow, and love."

Monsieur Proust: A Memoir

By Céleste Albaret, recorded by Georges Belmont, translated by Barbara Bray (McGraw-Hill, 387 pp., $12.50)

By Joseph Mathewson

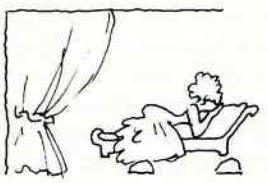
Marcel Proust and Céleste Albaret were made for each other. Even now at over eighty, more than half a century after her master's death, Mme Albaret remains his peer in total recall. She remembers, for example, that "he always used Sergeant-Major nibs, which were plain and pointed, with a little hollow underneath to hold the ink. I never saw him use a fountain pen, though they were becoming popular at the time. I used to buy stocks of nibs, several boxes at a time. He also had fifteen or so pen holders within reach, because if he dropped the one he was using it could only be picked up when he wasn't there, because of the dust. They were just little bits of wood with a metal holder for the nib—the ordinary kind used in schools, like the inkwell, which was a glass square with four grooves to rest the pen and a little round opening with a stopper."

And so on. A nice touch that, about the dust, which was not to be stirred up for fear of bringing on a fit of asthma. But in the museum of Mme Albaret's memory, the dropped pen holders exhibit is given equal space with the Sergeant-Major nibs display. After a while, and not a long while either, the attention begins to wander, the feet to edge toward the door.

Granted, there is a certain fascination to such a heap of detail, a certain value in the recollection of any major figure by one who knew him well. And Céleste Albaret knew Proust—for a number of years, from shortly after she moved to Paris as a bride in 1913 until his death in 1922. She lived in the writer's apartment, kept house for him, made over her life to suit the vagaries of his, and probably saw him more than the rest of his acquaintances put together. But Mme Albaret was born a country girl. She was never really at ease in the big city and seems to have taken refuge in Proust's hermetic world with considerable alacrity. Accordingly, one does not doubt her memory for facts, even at such a distance in time, but questions rather the acuteness of her perceptions.

After a lifelong silence, Mme Albaret was persuaded to speak, according to her "recorder," Georges Belmont, because "she has come to the conclusion that others less scrupulous have betrayed Proust grossly, either because they lacked her access to the truth or through excessive imagination or the temptation to promote their 'interesting' or self-interested little theories." But is it gross to suggest that asthma can be psychosomatically induced or that the manifestations of psychosomatic ills can be frighteningly real? Mme Albaret is apparently unaware of the latter point; the former she acknowledges long enough to dismiss.

Nor does she have much truck with the theory that Proust "turned away from women to seek other kinds of love." And here, perhaps, Mme Albaret is on safer ground. She was aware of everything that happened under the writer's roof. On the occasions when he left it, occasions rare in themselves, he was generally driven by her husband, Odilon. Besides which, "M. Proust told me all about his evenings." And indeed she recounts one of his tales, of dashing out to a house of evil fame where he watched, unseen, while a traveling industrialist was chained to the wall and whipped to the point of orgasm. (The gender of the whipper may be clear in French but is not in Barbara Bray's drab, monotone translation.) Proust, the outer man, was perhaps monastic. It scarcely matters. What is important is that, to Mme Albaret, this incident says no more about his inner life than his preference for Sergeant-Major nibs. And therein lies the failure of her work. Good daughter of her age, she served her master well, but could hardly be expected to see him whole.



Theater

Edward Albee the Feminist, by Ed Valentine

It's been thirteen years since *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* received its first performances in New York, and the recent revival of the production makes us realize how much our thinking has changed in the interval. The play was originally denounced by several critics as a homosexual diatribe against heterosexual marriage, or as a male homosexual attack on women, or even as a covert and rather nasty attempt to put homosexual relationships on the stage by disguising two of the men as women. All of these charges now seem quite daft. And the feminist revolution has clarified for us the deeper reasons the work was subjected to so much critical animus, a hostility that almost kept pace with the continuing popularity of the play and later the movie version.

The critics' attack was launched on April 28, 1963 (more than six months after the premiere) by Howard Taubman in a lead article in the Sunday *New York Times* entertainment section. Taubman's essay, entitled "Modern Primer," set out to teach naive heterosexuals the telltale signs of the insidious homosexual sensibility. "Since this column is a public service of sorts," Taubman wrote, "it will undertake to be Virgil to your Dante. We shall not emerge with deathless poetry, but possibly we can come up with helpful hints on how to scan the intimations and symbols of homosexuality in our theater. . . ." In a list of suspect theatrical situations that might flow from the tainted gay pen, Taubman advised his readers to "look out for the male character who is young, handsome, remote and lofty in a neutral way. . . . Beware the husband who hasn't touched his wife for years. Beware the woman who hasn't been touched by her husband for years. Look out for the baneful female who is a libel on womanhood. Look out for the hideous wife who makes a horror of the marriage relationship. . . . Be alert to scabrous innuendo about the normal male-female sexual relationship, particularly if the writer is not a filthy-minded hack but one of demonstrated talent."

Taubman did not mention Albee by name, nor any other playwright of "demonstrated talent," a curious omission in an essay that intended to unmask conspiracy. Yet Taubman did not mean for his "Dante" to assume he was referring to Coriolanus, Lord Chatterley, Lady Macbeth, Hedda Gabler, or Shaw's Mrs. Warren, though these five characters perfectly match his descriptions of those we should "beware." No, Taubman clearly had in mind the plays of Albee, Tennessee Williams, and William Inge. And he was initiating the reader into the supposed Albertine strategy underlying Albee's masterpiece: "If you feel that there is something strange in the climactic development of a male-female relationship in a play, try imagining what a change in sex in one of the characters would accomplish. Would the friction and tension between two men—or two women—give the scene or the play the ring of absolute conviction?"

The following August a guest columnist, playwright Joseph Hayes (author of *The Desperate Hours*), spoke with much more candor about Albee. Without specifically calling Albee a homosexual, Hayes felt free to ask: "Does the waspish bitchiness of the dialogue in 'Virginia Woolf,' for instance, correspond to a recognizable pattern of the speech in a marriage or to some other relationship out and beyond the experience of most of us?" The "out and beyond" was transparently homosexuality in this context. At the end of his piece, Hayes took a fervent moral tone: "We cannot escape the possibility that if we respond positively to these visions, there may be some hidden corruption or sickness in us that would, of course, make these symbols valid. If so, the forces of darkness and despair and destruction have moved that much closer." Curiously, the only reply Albee made to this appalling diatribe was a rather weary, "Well, if the theater must bring us only what we can immediately apprehend or comfortably relate to, let us stop going to the theater."

But as the years went by the irritation with Albee's portrait of marriage became more acute, though the approach became more subtle and Jesuitical. On January 23, 1966, Stanley Kauffmann, then the chief drama critic of the *Times*, again took the front page of the Sunday entertainment section to print his essay "Homosexual Drama and Its Disguises." Kauffmann's "liberal" position was that homosexual authors are *forced* to put their homosexual characters into heterosexual drag by a public unwilling to confront the filth in all its original foulness: ". . . the fact is that the homosexual dramatist is not to blame in this matter. If he writes of marriage and other relationships about which he knows or cares little, it is because he has no choice but to masquerade. Both convention and the law demand it."

This liberality, however, turned to wrath when Kauffmann discussed Albee, Williams, and Inge: "We have all had very much more than enough of the materials so often presented by the three writers in question: the viciousness towards women, the lurid violence that seems a sublimation of social hatreds, the transvestite sexual exhibitionism." For those heterosexual simpletons who had not learned from Taubman how to tell a woman from a homo, Kauffmann patiently repeated the lesson: "To me, this distortion of marriage and femininity is not the primary aspect of this matter; for if an adult listens to these plays with a figurative transistor radio simultaneously translating, he [*sic*] hears that the marital quarrels are usually homosexual quarrels with one of the pair in costume and that the incontrovertibly female figures are usually drawn less in truth than in envy or fear."

Enough. I have presented these documents not only because they are historical curiosities, reminders of a grim era, but also because they reveal why Albee's play was considered so threatening. The sacred heterosexual relationship that homosexual writers were supposedly defiling was not motherhood or patriotism or blood sports but always and only *marriage*. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* drew heterosexual fire not because it slyly sneaked homosexual experience over the border into the United Mates of Hysteria but because it dared to say what thousands of liberated women were on the verge of announcing far more forcefully—that

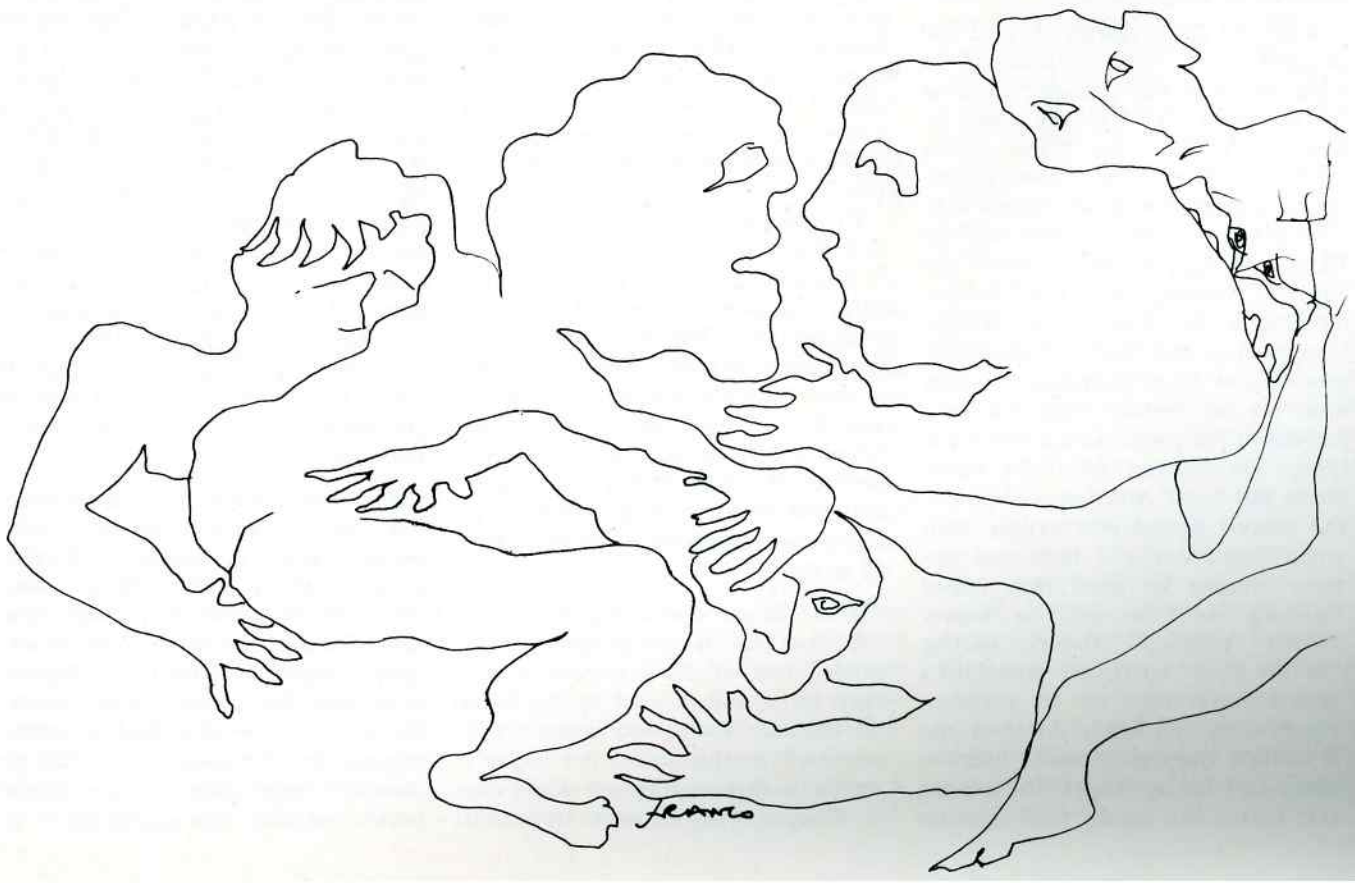
marriage is a corrupt and corrupting institution. Homosexual paranoia could easily mislead us into imagining that Taubman, Hayes, and Kauffmann were determined to suppress homosexual playwrights. But I don't think homosexuality, even when disguised, would have awakened such anxiety. Albee was being pilloried because as a homosexual he was removed enough from marriage to be able to describe it.

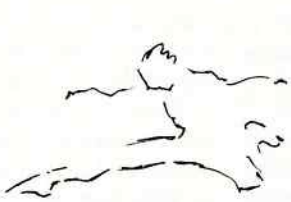
A new look at the play confirms my argument. Martha has two, and only two, lines that are lifted out of campy homosexual chatter. She imitates Bette Davis saying, "What a dump!" and she refers to Bette Davis's "fright wig." Considering the enormous store of urban homosexual witticisms and catchphrases that Albee *might* have used in composing dialogue for the murderous George and Martha, I think he was extraordinarily restrained.

Not just restrained. He was faithful to the very sort of relationship he was depicting, and the fidelity is audible in every line. Typically, Martha says during the long second act: "You can go along . . . forever, and everything's . . . manageable. You make all sorts of excuses to yourself. . . . *You* know . . . this is life. . . . The hell with it . . ., maybe tomorrow he'll be dead . . ., maybe tomorrow *you'll* be dead. . . . All sorts of excuses. But then, one day, one night, something happens . . . and SNAP! It breaks. And you just don't give a damn anymore."

It was Albee's gift to make the subtext of marriage explicit. The game playing and one-upmanship of so many couples Albee converted into actual charades ("Get the Guest," "Hump the Hostess," and so on). If Martha is a bitch, George is more than her equal; he wins the final contest, after all, by "killing" their imaginary child. And Martha's nastiness is very carefully motivated. We learn that her father never loved her, that he annulled her first marriage, and that he coaxed her to marry a professor in his university, someone who might inherit the presidency. She has not only been used by her father but also by her husband. When George complains about Martha's treatment of him, she shouts: "YOU CAN STAND IT!! YOU MARRIED ME FOR IT!!" A few lines later she adds, "My arm has gotten tired whipping you." Interestingly, the other couple also exemplifies male exploitation of women. Nick married Honey for her father's money. As an unrepentant opportunist, Nick is now courting Martha in order to rise in the university hierarchy. If Martha is "the hideous wife who makes a horror of the marriage relationship," as Taubman put it, she at least has good reason to be a harridan; the unmotivated bitch was the invention of the certifiably hetereosexual Strindberg.

Whereas Strindberg—and so many other "decadent" heterosexual writers of the end of the century—saw Woman as Evil, pure and simple, and the husband as a pitiful, deluded innocent, Albee has taken pains to document the sources of Martha's hostility and to give her a husband who outdoes her in bitterness and vituperation. And Albee has, still more importantly, revealed the function of children in marriage. The child is a supernumerary upon whom the parents can project their own conflicts. The child, however, not only intensifies the battle but also prolongs it, since the child is a bond, a responsibility, an obligation, a summons to sacrifice. Now, in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* the child is imaginary. Since George and Martha have not been able to forge in flesh the bond, they have made one up out of thin air. At the end of the play, in the third act, called "The Exorcism," George "kills" the son—and thereby frees himself and Martha. As George assures Martha, "It will be better." Having recognized that their marriage—possibly marriage itself—is based on illusion, George and Martha are free to create a new relationship. Albee, we now see, has written a major feminist play.





Dance

Tharp Throbs

By Peter Anastos

For the last ten years Twyla Tharp's innovative choreography has been known to small, avant-garde audiences; her success with a large dance public has until recently been confined to the dances she choreographed for the Joffrey Ballet (*Deuce Coup* and *As Time Goes By*, both in 1973) and for American Ballet Theatre (*Push Comes to Shove*, in 1976). In late March, a ten-performance run of Tharp's own company at the Brooklyn Academy of Music played to enthusiastic audiences and made clear that Tharp's synthesis of the larger dance tradition and "pop" dance culture is so successful that she can, indeed deserves to be, compared to Balanchine, even Nijinsky. Tharp's incredible imagination is firmly grounded in a variety of traditional techniques, even though most of her rhythmically isolated choreography seems based more on what is unseen than seen.

Give and Take, sharply defined and wrapped tight, had its premiere at BAM and was the strongest piece in the repertoire. It is closely allied to Balanchine's *Stars and Stripes*, both tenth anniversary gifts to their respective companies. The dance opened with a dreamy and self-contained solo by Tharp to Gregor Werner's Prelude and Fugue in C-minor. Tharp was joined in the Fugue by Rose Marie Wright, Jennifer Way, and Shelley Washington, who danced zippy contrapuntal variations on her prelude. The following sections of the piece had a bicentennial spirit. To marches by John Philip Sousa and other American composers, the dancers moved into wedges, with group formations and individual gestures bringing to mind high school marching bands as well as beauty contest "parading." Dancers starting "on the mark" alternately resembled a berserk soccer team and its attendant cheerleaders, and finally dissolved into a muffled craps game and a hilarious Simon-says led by Wright. The dancing here looked like rapidly fired vignettes about sincere little adolescent hopheads. It pointed right at tenth-grade rituals. Shelley Washington's solo was particularly admirable, with creamy *port de bras* and cleanly snapped balletic faces. But Rose Marie Wright's solo, although interestingly placed in summary at the end of the piece, seemed marred by Tharp's moving into a rather feckless sentimentality.

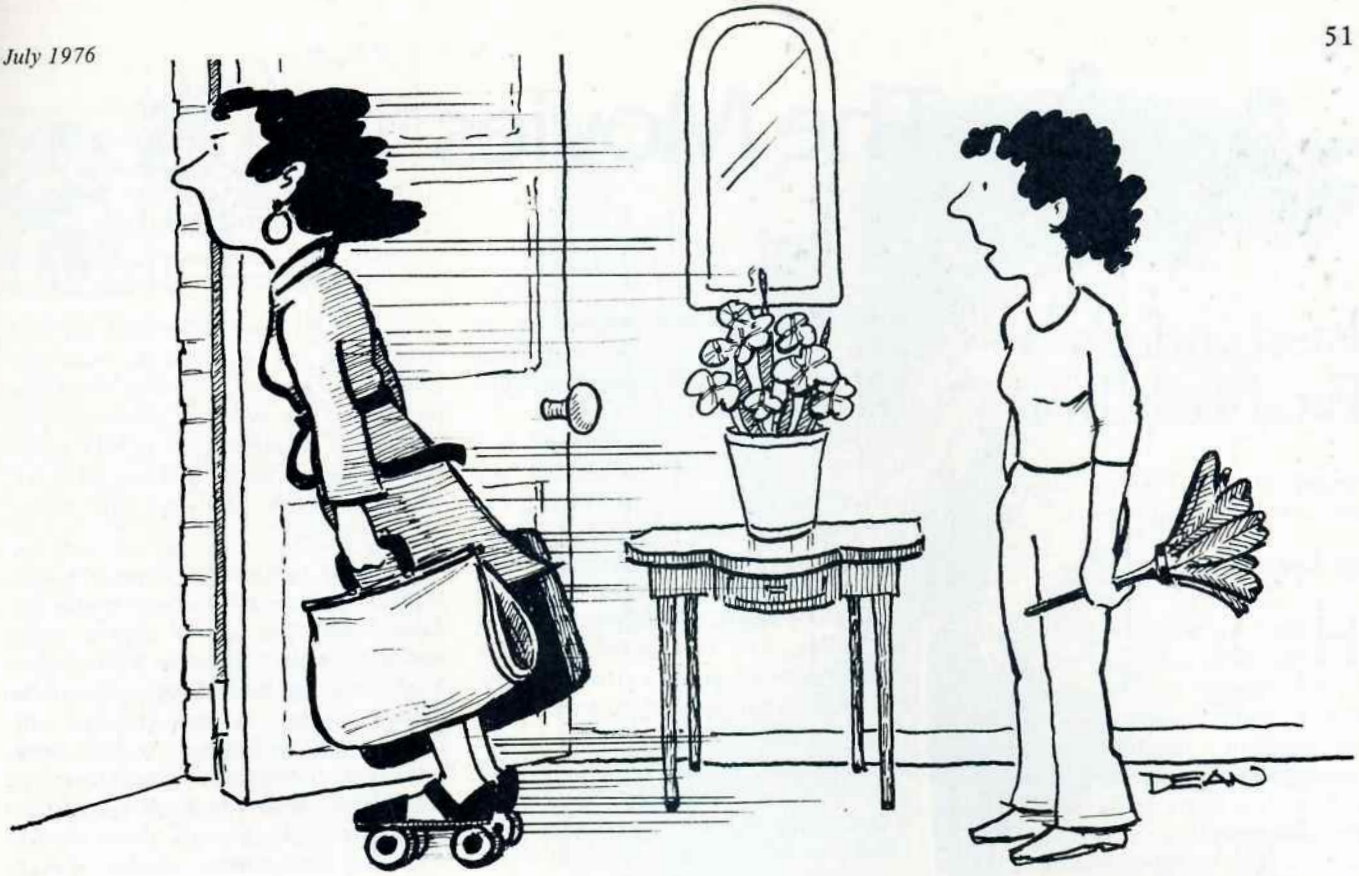
Two pas de deux, *The Rags Suite* and *The Bach Duet*, were nicely balanced on the first of Tharp's two programs. *The Rags Suite* (excerpted from *The Raggedy Dances*) was more identifiably formal than most of Tharp's pieces, and was perfectly suited to Tom Rawe and Jennifer Way, who danced together with wry competitiveness. Rawe and Way seem less androgynous than do totally Tharpian dancers such as Wright and Kenneth Rinker; in the center Mozart section for example, Rawe's movements intimated a "male variation," and his puckish antics contrasted with Way's lacy graciousness. The comedy, however, didn't always work. For example, Rawe's Groucho Marx references (mimed coattails and cigar), while they recalled Balanchine's use of concrete gestures in an abstract choreographic context, were nevertheless a bit too broad.

In *The Bach Duet*, however, Kenneth Rinker's clownish myopic groping fit better into the context of the work, which was, as a whole, more stylistically subtle than *The Rags Suite* and a better piece of choreography. A group of conventionally dressed musicians in clear view at the back of the stage played a charming rendition of the Cantata 78 while Rinker and Wright, costumed in white satin bathing suits, danced like companion pigeons imitating swans.

The *Fugue* was a departure from the rest of the program; it reminded one of Tharp's more austere early works and pointed up her stylistic latitude. The oldest piece (1970) presented in this series, the *Fugue* is written with a severity one doesn't see in Tharp's recent dances. Its martial arts quality, with stomping second positions and karate-like *port de bras*, was juxtaposed with vulnerable collapses and serio-comic pregnant pauses. One's attention in this piece became fixed on the close concerted boot work, which often was the most interesting part of the choreography. The sound of the dancers' booted feet against the microphoned floor provided a sharp, percussive "accompaniment," and at the transition points in the piece when the dancers walked casually across the stage to new positions their movements took on the aural dimension of musicians warming up. The amplified squeaking during the pirouettes in Rinker's solo particularly pointed up the "musical" possibilities of this device, and Tharp might consider using even more rosin should she decide to further orchestrate this piece.

Eight Jelly Rolls was a delightful excursion into the seedy underworld of American entertainment, although it didn't hold up as well as it did in performances of several years ago. On repeated viewing the piece appears to depend more on slapstick than inspired choreography. Accompanied by a live ensemble playing Jelly Roll Morton, the company's six women dancers in ersatz tuxedos danced with kinky, show-biz theatricality, and the effect was of watching a performance in a nightclub *and* some of the club's rowdier patrons. Tharp was suitably disreputable as a dancing drunk, and her extended, stumbling cadenza, beginning with high frequency jack-hammer DTs, was an astounding tour-de-force to which the audience responded with the enthusiasm usually reserved for a Baryshnikov variation.

The final piece in the BAM series, *Sue's Leg*, was featured on a recent "Dance in America" television segment which juxtaposed the work with old newsreels and dance films and illuminated many of Tharp's "pop" influences. Ballroom dancing, show dancing, dance marathons, and the actualities of what Isadora Duncan misguidedly fantasized as "America dancing" were shown to be Tharp's source materials. Her genius lies in the



"At least you're not walking out on me!"

terseness and beautiful roughhouse humor of their synthesis, and in using them nostalgically, but never sentimentally.

The slumping fall gag, for example, used repeatedly in *Sue's Leg*, refers to marathon fatigue. At some point in the work every dancer had to be supported by his/her cohorts, and the business emphasized the thread of group supportiveness working throughout the piece. In the first ensemble entrance the dancers looked like an R. Crumb street gang—cohesive, if slightly askew—and, later, when grouped in hand-holding lumpy knots, it was obvious that the community wouldn't let any of its members down even if it looked like they couldn't stand up another minute. Similarly, in a line-up for "I Can't Give You Anything But Love" (I), the dancers paused, teetering side-by-side (reminiscent of Porky Pig's "e-thetha-e-theta-e-the-tha"), each unwilling to break the group allegiance, until finally someone freed them by making a lateral move. And there were no weak links in the company's dancing here. The individual work was very strong throughout, although Tharp again shone brightest. In her exquisitely funny solo "I Can't Give You Anything But Love" (II), it was difficult to distinguish where her brilliantly wrought *da capo* of (I) actually began. Following the sly *da capo* segments in Tharp's choreography is a recurrent challenge for her audiences. In "Ain't Misbehavin'," a *pas seul* marathon of its own, Tharp was wonderfully exhibitionistic in her go-get-um *jetés* and in a *piqué* turn spoof that melted down like ice cream on a hot summer day.

In the face of undeniable artistic triumphs, reservations about Twyla Tharp may look like quibbles. However:

To people not entirely devoted to Tharp her dances can often seem too much like one another, and as a result her evening-length concerts can cause sensory fatigue. The music as well sometimes wears thin. As a whole it is too accessible and very light, and one sometimes wishes that Tharp's choreographic complexity were more often matched by a corresponding aural richness.

Twyla Tharp's company was six years old when, in 1971, Kenneth Rinker became its first male dancer. Perhaps by this time Tharp had crystallized a style that precluded a specifically "male" technique; in any case, one of the company's essential features is its androgyny. There is no strong differentiation between the sexes; male and female dancers are strikingly interchangeable. They often wear identical costumes, and they have, at various points in the company's history, been literally interchanged (for example, women previously danced the roles now done by Kenneth Rinker and Tom Rawe in *The Fugue* and Sharon Kinney has replaced Rinker in *Eight Jelly Rolls*). The androgyny of the company is piquant and somewhat childlike, for children all move in the same way until they are taught "role" movements, and here it allows Tharp and Rose Marie Wright their jaunty, tomboy élan, and Rinker and Rawe a sweet, ungainly delicacy.

The stylized male-female contrast of Western classical dancing allows for dynamic possibilities that Tharp's androgynous mode precludes, so it is possible that Tharp has, in this respect, lost more than she has gained. However, Twyla Tharp, in opting for a near-complete erasure of the male/female contrast, has not merely experimented with choreographic androgyny but has successfully effected it. This is perhaps the most revolutionary aspect of her work, and perhaps the most revolutionary development in twentieth-century dance since Nijinsky's *l'Après midi d'un faune*.

The Movies

Fassbinder's Fatal Fox-Trot

Faustrecht der Freiheit directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder

By James McCourt

Happily retitled for general release, the film called *Fox and His Friends* opened for two weeks at the Waverly in midwinter, then moved to the Quad for a short while. Because of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's growing reputation, it is likely to be turning up on specialty programs at places such as Carnegie Hall's elegant basement movie lounge for some time to come.

The title change was wise, but not perhaps as perfectly fortunate as might be wished. Although "Fist-Right of Freedom" was atrocious, suggesting some of the darker aspects of the currently ragingly popular exhibition joy-in-pain follies about town, *Fox and His Friends* sounds just a little like a kiddies' nature matinee feature (consider the possible confusion among tots and grannies of a rainy Saturday). In any event, as the sayings go, with friends like these, Fassbinder's poor Fox didn't need enemies.

Fassbinder has gone on record (in *Film Comment*, September 1975) as a champion of the German-expatriate maestro of Fifties Hollywood melodrama Douglas Sirk (*All That Heaven Allows, Magnificent Obsession, Written On the Wind, Imitation of Life*, etc. etc. etc.) Viewing *Fox and His Friends*, one becomes immediately aware of a dazzling, if perhaps risky, catalogue of effects derived from Sirkian cinema—principally the "divided screen" technique, in which characters who are meant to be at odds (for Fassbinder because of caste, for Sirk because of spiritual inequities) or involved in symbiotic codeception are positioned in frames into which columns, pillars, and pieces of furniture intrude as barriers; the flamboyant use of symbolic primary colors; the employment of mirrors as second screens, screens against screens; and (echoing *Written on the Wind* especially) the use of cars as extensions of persons, as habitats, not merely convenient motor vehicles.

That said, it must be reported that the film is all its own, original and seductive on its own terms—even if the advertised political thematics (Fassbinder's vaunted prol homoeroticism) seem naive and gratuitous. The best thing going on on the screen, happily, is the acting. The lead is taken by the director himself, giving a strong, gamey, quirky, and defiant performance as the carnival sideshow hustler, whose lumpy given name is Hans Biberkopf, but who goes by the name of Fox (the English F-O-X), and fancies himself *that way*. Fassbinder manages the trickiest attempt in movies—directing oneself—and manages it well, with an eerie mixture of the self-effacing and the self-obsessed. "Fox" could have emerged as a very dumb slob; instead there is a dogged dignity in the playing which suggests something like a contemporary urban Woyzeck.

In *Fox and His Friends* a young, sluggish, toad-like son of the working class takes up unwisely, in a dance of death, with the last-gasp offspring in a long line of played out middle-class nasties (father is a lush, lives in the bottle behind the glass walls of his book-bindery office, while mother is always deferentially distressed—about Stravinsky and "contemporary" music, about table manners). Fox is taken in by these swanky swine, is taken to the cleaners to the tune of one hundred easily-won (in the municipal lottery) marks, is wiped out, worked over, strung out, and hounded to a degrading, predictable (or, in Marxist terms, ineluctable, neccesitous) chemical end—in a Munich subway station. Along the way, viewers are treated to a little rhetoric, some (mirrored) attitudinizing, a lot of ghastly *just*-now-rich decor. There are some beautifully manicured performances—Peter Chatal's lithe and loathsome Eugen, Adrian Hoven's pickled papa, Ulla Jacobsen's soignée-bimbo mama, Karl Heinz Böhm and his retinue of lookers as the Upper Crust, and in the rougher and tumbler department Christiane Maybach as Hedwig, the prol sister. Last but none of the least, the gang in the gay bar, crowding that bijou birdcage in the middle of München, just reeking of *Stimmung*. It is here under the red lights, that Fox-Hans cries out his own epitaph: "I always have to pay for everything!"

A moral melodrama. From the very moment when poor Fox begins to dance with the dressy Eugen (who would have been called in Fifties' New York "very pink-tea") and commences shoving money at him (to save the faltering family business, to buy them a new car, to set them up together in a new flat—bedroom in English baroque, with mirrors) it is down, down, down, until the dénouement in the subway station, where the dead Fox is fleeced of his wallet and his studded-faded denim jacket by urchins on the prowl.

The first word out of Fox's mouth (when the carnival he works in is shut down and the barker—Fox's lover-protector—is busted for outrage or something) is "*Schicksal*." Fate. Next, when he wins the lottery—and he *knows* he will that very week—that too is Fate, the real thing, the personified force of destiny, the will of the gods, or the norns, who weave it all. The fox-trot is certainly toward no freedom.

After Fassbinder's own performance, the most purposed, stunning work in the film is done by Karl-Heinz Böhm in the role of the obligatory and obliging older gent who first cruises Fox in a sidewalk toilet, introduces him to the fast set, and acts throughout as a sort of sodomite Sarastro-cum-Uncle Max. Their best scene together is in the Stygian, mirrored men's baths. They are reclining up to their chins in some sort of cosmetic slime—the mudbath as metaphor in gay Munich—talking about their weight, and boys, and calling one another "*Schatz*," dissecting Life-you-know. Böhm manages to sustain a gaze and a mood, here and throughout, centered in a triangle whose angles are trepidation, desperation, and eerie satisfaction. He knows how the dance will end.

The most beautiful "solo" in the

picture is Fassbinder's—in one of the "Sirkian" car sequences. Fox's tears become the heavy rain behind the windshield, and the smoke from his cigarette blurs the hurtling image again and again, as the outcast, broke, homeless, and trapped in the only machine he understands, careens towards oblivion.

The fox is hounded down and squashed, in a vicious metaphoric blood sport. The chance win of a fortune in the lottery merely sets him up for Society to devour. Along the way, his blowsy blonde sister tries to warn him, by getting drunk and disorderly in front of the friends, and later a blowsier, blonder, older travel agent flashes a look of appalled pity in a confrontation in which Eugen insults the poor slug because he doesn't quite know where Morocco might be. The other women in the picture—the vendor of the lottery ticket, and the landlady of the block of flats, stand for witnesses, offering sympathy, nodding that this-or-that is so, and there you are. Fassbinder plays throughout in the manner of one who *expects* to be wounded, but what saves this Fox from becoming just some sort of gay Sad Sack is the bravura—as when, completely overcome, alone at the wheel of the car, he appears to be literally choking to death on ignorance, fear, and animal reproach.

The epitaph Eugen bestows upon Fox is "People like that are too crude to be in despair." Back in the bar, after Fox has gone out to die, the chanteuse continues to sing on about "*Schönheit*" and "*Glück*." There isn't much of either in Fox's world, but in Fassbinder's, as film maker . . . much.

"Somewhere out there, there's an Administrative Assistant who will dot my i's, cross my t's, and comma my pauses."

Grey Gardens Revisited

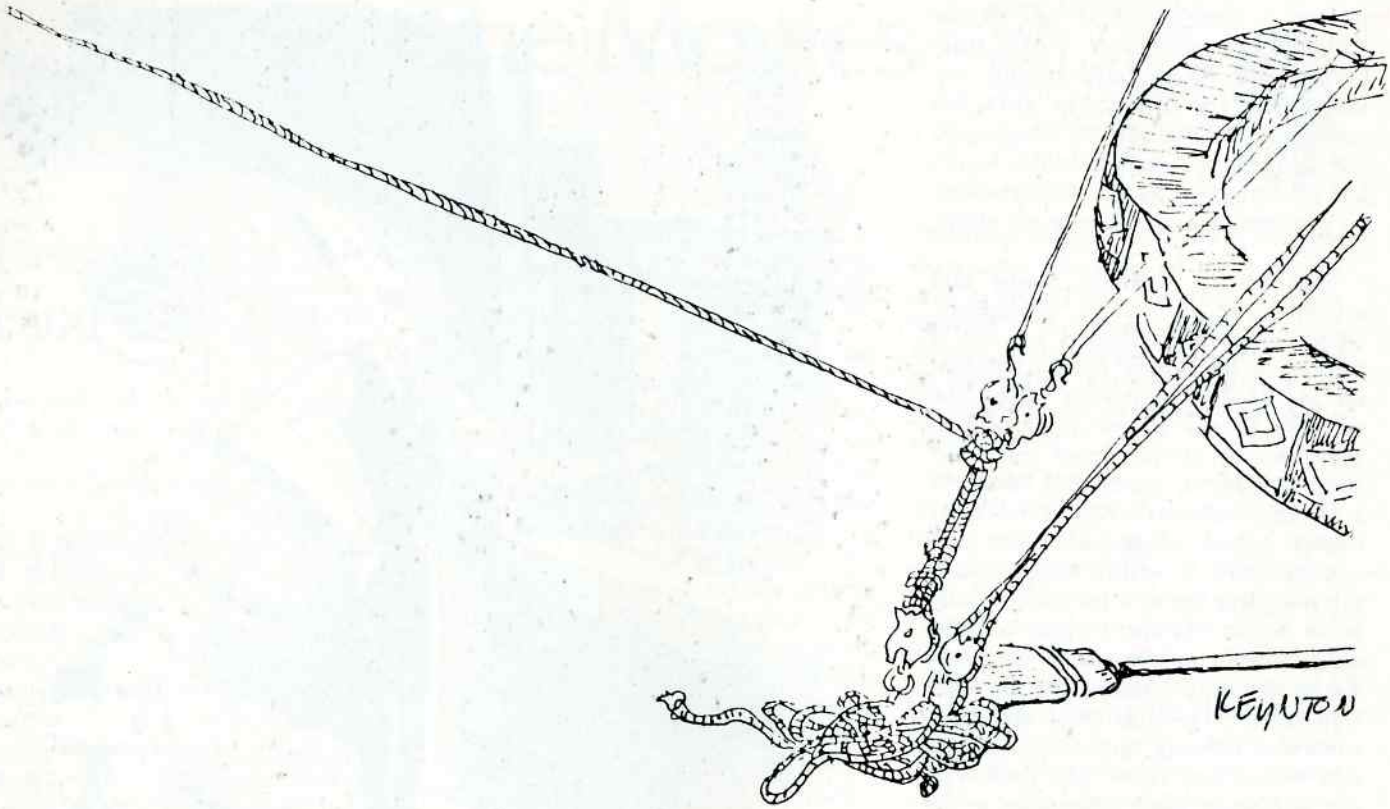
By Brent Raulerson

If you can't get a man to propose to you, you might as well be dead. It *is* a question of who you want to stay with. Cats? Dogs? Raccoons?"

Edith Bouvier Beale, lying in the classic sunbathing position, reflected on being single. Behind her stretched the grazing ground of the Bouvier black sheep—the most dilapidated mansion along East Hampton's Lily Pond Lane—and in front of her stood the Maysles brothers, collecting footage for *Grey Gardens*, a "nonfiction feature film." *Grey Gardens* documents the life of Edie, fifty-six, the quirky cousin of Jackie O, and Edie's mother, recluse chanteuse Edith, seventy-nine, in the house and garden, overrun with vines and other horticultural horrors, of what the Maysles reverently refer to as "consecrated ground." There cats defecate in the bedrooms, raccoons rummage through the attic. The township has threatened eviction.

The portrait of the Beales was shot over a few summer months by Albert and David Maysles and then put together during nearly two years of editing by co-directors Ellen Hovde and Muffie Meyer and associate producer Susan Froemke. What emerged from the hour-and-a-half film cut out of over eighty hours of original footage has been described as an exploitative intrusion into the lives of two eccentrics or, alternatively, as a charming, intimate portrait of two strong and funny survivors. In conversations recently the filmmakers spoke about how they perceived the Beales and what they had had in mind when shaping the film.

At first it appeared that the film might be structured around the question of whether Edie would leave home," says Susan Froemke. The unwed Edie had returned home in 1952 at the request of her mother, herself long since abandoned by husband Phelan Beale; and save for the Kennedy inauguration, Edie never left home again. "But in examining the footage," says Ellen Hovde, "we could see her chains." So Hovde, known for her work for NET, CBS, and the earlier Maysles's films (*Salesman*, *Gimme Shelter*, *Christo's Valley Curtain*), joined the other filmmakers in focusing



on the mother-daughter relationship itself. Muffie Meyer (an editor of *Woodstock* and *Groove Tube*) explains, "We built the film around the power struggles and the interdependencies that are laid bare."

The two Edies emerge as women just itching for exposure. "Edie is a born actress," said Mrs. Beale when interviewed recently. "And me—I've always been acting—and acting up." In the film the women perform admirably. Mrs. Beale sings a dramatic "Tea for Two." Edie, dressed all in red and carrying a faded flag, creates a patriotic marching dance, and later demonstrates a splendidly-schooled crawl stroke. Even these "nonperforming" moments seem geared for an audience, as when Edie steps on the scales—and then looks down through binoculars to read her weight.

Yet forcing through the footage are the sprouts of anger. Picking through old photos, Edie recalls postwar friends who went away and married. "But I never had that chance," she cries. The chains were rattling, and the filmmakers took note. "These women have a flair. They have a flamboyant patter going," explains Ellen Hovde. "Because they are so extroverted the camera captured them acting out what most people control emotionally. A friend of mine says that Edie is someone who doesn't know where to put the periods. For us, of course, the challenge was to place those periods, to order the footage like a narrative. A lot of directorial influence was exerted during this process. . . . First we had to set the scene, showing shots of East Hampton. Then we had to establish the characters, followed by photos of their past, but only after we know enough about the characters to care about them." The Jackie O connection for example, was "convenient at the beginning because it is a kind of shorthand for the Beales' social class."

Now, two and a half years after the filming, Edie still hammers away at her East Hampton bonds, emphasizing during an interview that "this is Mother's house" and that years ago "Mother made me come home." One decision of the filmmakers was to incorporate the obsession in *Grey Gardens*—but with a certain caution. "It proved very easy to establish that Edie may have returned home out of some weakness in herself," reports Hovde, "but the footage indicated that there were needs and weaknesses in her mother as well. To show those needs in the final film, we chose to include the footage where Edie is showing face masks in one room and her mother keeps interrupting her by calling her to come to another room. Had we left this out, we might have presented an unbalanced vision of the Beales." Thus, *Grey Gardens* gives us a ringside seat at an ongoing one-upmanship match, "featuring mutual fear and guilt," according to Muffie Meyer. The inclusion of Mrs. Beale's birthday party, for instance, shows the mother's own need for control—she lords it over Edie, implying that few of her daughter's preparations are satisfactory.

Of course the picture is not complete without mention of Edie's father—and here the film is sketchy. Mrs. Beale holds a wedding photograph of her husband, and Edie recalls her father's rage over her early modeling attempts. This is all we see and hear, though we are left with a sense that umbilically-bound ambitions have crumpled into crushed dreams. When asked about her husband recently, Mrs. Beale would say only, "Phelan came from Montgomery, Alabama, and was sixteen years my senior at our wedding. I bore him three children in four years—Edie, Phelan, Jr., and Buddy." Muffie Meyer found a similar reluctance in the footage. "Though they appear to be open about everything, believe me, there are skeletons in every closet in that house."

The filmmakers found Mr. Beale's influence important. Comments Hovde, "Society demanded that a woman be attractive and feminine, while Edie's father demanded that she be a law-

yer. . . . We see in Edie a woman who could not find any role models in her day who were both attractive and professional. She could not reconcile this conflict." Albert Maysles, discussing the flight of the father, says, "In a sense, you could say that the film is 'about men' because, had Edie and Edith been men, they would have been successful. I mean, in a traditional sense. . . . In the end, they triumph over sex. Behind their raucous behavior there was a fierce determination to break through barriers. They stuck it out in East Hampton—a subtle kind of revenge against society's mores." Ellen Hovde concurs. "There's an admirable quality about people who have been brought up a certain way and can throw that over. In a sense, the women are saying, 'We know society has roles, but we don't have to live them.' Much of their lifestyle deviates from the socialite's role."

Yet many vestiges of the age of the debutante remain. Edie admits as much, proclaiming that "it's very hard to keep the line between the past and the present." She advised the women on the film to be feminine and told them what kind of man to go after. "I'll say it again—if you can't get a man to propose to you, you might as well be dead. . . . I really think the woman's place is in the home." But wasn't Edie pursuing a career of her own when she was in New York? "I was hoping to meet the right man through the right kind of work. You know, an artist, a writer, a director. I'd never marry a man from out here. They're all stockbrokers and tennis players and bankers out here."

Upholding these values, Edie, as we might expect, is devoted to The Boyfriend. In her time she kept company with many famous young men, including Joe Kennedy, Jr., a Getty, and Howard Hughes. "She could have gotten married," speculates Ellen Hovde. "Why, I believe she even told of meeting Howard Hughes, who walked around, bizarrely, with Kleenex boxes over his shoes to protect them. . . . At any rate, she didn't marry. But her mother did, a fact that, taken with her mother's once-successful amateur singing career, gives Mrs. Beale a decided edge in the dynamics of their relationship."

In dissecting those dynamics, the filmmakers observed that Edie seeks to tip the scales in her favor by browbeating her mother for banishing Edie's boyfriends. However, Edie's bygone beaux, an issue every bit as sensitive as Mrs. Beale's loss of her husband, get a much fuller play in the film—and here the filmmakers flexed their strongest directorial muscle. The editors structured the many recollections of the beaux toward a climax. "In a sense we used Gerry Torre (the young handyman) as a 'falsehood' in order to prove a 'truth.' Gerry was with the Beales only a short time, but Edie's reactions to him paralleled many of her reactions to other men, particularly old boyfriends. Since we do not get any photos of the old boyfriend Tom Logan, but we do hear his name so often, we used Gerry as a metaphor, if you will, for the men of Edie's life long ago. . . . Gerry actually ate corn with Mrs. Beale and considered moving in weeks apart, but we telescoped the events to depict Edie's changing moods toward him—and probably toward men in her past. When we saw Edie saying, 'That's all they want,' meaning sex with her, we were tempted to say, 'Jesus she's fantasizing!'—which she quite possibly was. But such must have been a concern of hers in the past—and Gerry's presence perhaps reawakened that concern. His presence certainly allowed Edie to show her colors."

The editors chose to present first Edie's rather calm divulgence that her mother wouldn't let Tom stay for more than fifteen minutes, and later to present the same information, this time told with tearful anger. Did they do this so that Edie's disappointment in her life would ring most clear at the film's end? "Definitely," Hovde says. "Here I see her as victim—of her own nature, self-deluded. . . . We hear stories repeated several times, which are part of the obsessive quality of these women. Obsessions indicate problems that have not been or cannot be solved. We see two women caught in their obsessions as perhaps all of us are to some extent. We structured the film to include repeating elements to the point where they take on a rat-a-tat-tat quality similar to Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*—where the stories finally lose their meaning and we are left with the emotions behind them. We see those emotions."

Or as Edie says, "The film shows us. I guess."

Music

Transformations

By Frank Rose

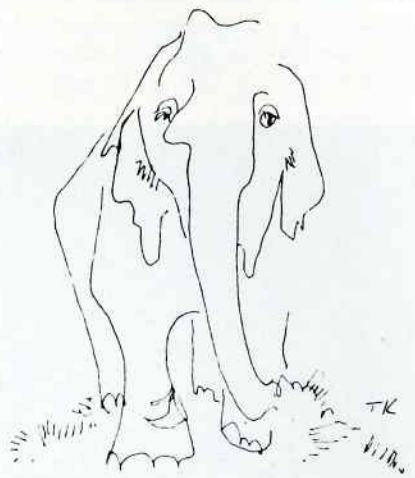
In some circles, it seemed as if 1972 would be remembered as the year the world wondered about David Bowie's sexuality. In 1973, however, the world forgot. Frivolity is its own reward.

The question was never quite as frivolous as it appeared, however. For one thing, no rockstar had ever openly deviated from the norm in this particular sexual fashion—except of course Lou Reed, whose Velvet Underground had deviated from the norm in every fashion. And for another, Bowie seemed to be a harbinger of excesses yet to be invented. He threatened the comfortable communal rebellion which rock had settled into in a way the Velvet Underground never had: he was too big to be a curio.

Rock music, like football, channels potentially violent energies into relatively harmless fun. Football has cultural approval, rock doesn't ask for it. But both are men's games, or games for boys who want to be men, and both become threatened whenever the undercurrent of sexuality which permeates them seems about to break its bounds. By admitting his bisexuality at a press conference, Bowie put himself in the position of the kid who gets an erection in the locker-room shower.

But not everyone pointed and snickered. That was the tipoff; that was what made his critics so nervous (not his elders, to whom the Bowie phenomenon was just another example of youth run amok, but his own generation, to whom its existence was a menace). If "fag-rock" could make it, all rock might become suspect. That was why Alice Cooper's avowals of heterosexuality were greeted with such relief. He might titillate his fans by wearing a dress onstage, but at least he could be depended on not to cornhole them in the dressing room. With Bowie you never knew.

Of course there was more to Bowie than that. It was pointed out at the time that he was the only star of the Seventies who aspired to the role Dylan and the Beatles and the Stones had filled in the Sixties, the role of the entertainer as cultural avatar. The distaste then growing in New York and elsewhere for the Sixties—everything about them, from brown rice to Berkeley—demanded an alternative, a catalyst which would focus its impulses and make them icons. Those impulses turned on an appreciation of style and a tendency to equate it with sleekness, a penchant for the theatrical, and a willingness to outrage—and they performed double duty, flouting the counterculture as well as the culture. So where the Sixties had stressed communalism, the Seventies, it appeared, would stress alienation; where the Sixties had sought depth and ended in the shallows, the Seventies would pursue shallowness and—who knows?—maybe stumble into the depths.



David Bowie, the first space-age bisexual Deco superstar, fit perfectly. His style was impeccable, his androgyny inspirational, his persona so new and unexpected it was guaranteed to outrage anyone who didn't embrace it. He was playing to a subculture fascinated by Art Deco and ready to live *Cabaret*, and he personified both. He was the King of Glitter Rock.

At the height of his popularity, the King of Glitter Rock assumed the sponsorship of some friends, chief among them Lou Reed and Mott the Hoople. As leader of the Velvet Underground, Reed had been a source of inspiration for Bowie; as a faltering solo singer, Reed was an ex-punk who needed a pal. Bowie was it. Co-producing Lou's second album, *Transformer*, with his own guitarist, Bowie helped him become everybody's favorite AC-DC artiste. A movement was born.

Unhappily, glitter rock proved too busy for the Seventies. All those sequins, all that fuss, and those ridiculous platforms. It had to be passed along to the teens, a pop culture hand-me-down, and Lou and David along with it. Bowie got progressively "freakier," caught up in the Ziggy Stardust fantasy he had created. After releasing one album so repellent it triggered a mental breakdown in its producer, Reed retreated into an extended self-parody, tying up onstage during "Heroin" and reinterpreting his Velvet Underground material as Tommy James and the Shondells might have done it. Finally he got another hit single, "Sally Can't Dance," which he followed with a double album of angry, ceaseless electronic noise—literally ceaseless, since it had a built-in scratch at the end of side four. "It's not done as a joke," he told one interviewer.

Lou hurled shit at his fans; Bowie "went disco." That amounted to the same thing, since the white high school and college-age kids who make up his audience have no more use for black music than for serious avant-garde compositions (which on even-numbered days is what Reed claimed his new work to be). The irony of this most Aryan of rockstars working in a spade discipline seems to have been lost on the public; Bowie's decision to explore black music was simply viewed as the latest in a series of facile permutations. Actually, it was in some ways as fascinating as his admission of bisexuality—although hardly as revolutionary.

At least Bowie had something to gain—a new following, or more precisely, the kind of following that had deserted him after *Ziggy Stardust*. The impact was lessened, however, by his decision to precede his disco album with a disco tour. Despite his reputation as a theatrical performer, Bowie had never been a truly effective showman, and the

tour which preceded his *Young Americans* album was abominable. Managing to be wooden and limp at the same time, he came across onstage as a cartoon honky trying to jazz up his act. But records can be among the most impersonal and highly stylized form of communication around; Bowie was in his medium, and *Young Americans* itself was something of a masterpiece. The only real flaw was "Across the Universe," the Beatles song on which he and John Lennon got a bit carried away with the histrionics. Otherwise, it was the album in which Bowie proved himself worthy of the attention he had gotten two years before.

Lines like "I got the suite and you got defeat" summed up the rock'n'roll paradox as effectively as Bowie's choice of music summed up his own. Is he black or white? Is he a computer programmer, or is he an artist? With disco he could be both—and, perhaps more importantly, neither. As he had with *Ziggy*—the album in which he examined the rockstar phenomenon as a potential rockstar—Bowie was trying on the suit with *Young Americans*. And what could be more American than a white man imitating a black? Especially when the result was a mechanical Superfly, sprayed with a white man's cool and a black man's funk but imbued with the life of neither?

"I always had a repulsive sort of need to be more than human," Bowie told *Rolling Stone*. "I felt very puny as a human. [Note the tense.] I thought, 'Fuck that. I want to become a Superman.' " Neither white nor black, neither man nor machine, Bowie nevertheless continues to evolve. *Station to Station*, his most recent album, is the strangest collection of love songs you're ever likely to hear, so cold and bloodless you could listen for hours and not realize they were love songs. The only emotion that escapes is paranoia, and that's usually considered a mental disorder.

In "Soul Love," a song from *Ziggy Stardust*, Bowie sang, "All I have is my love of love / And love is not loving." This isn't soul love, it's masturbation; and perhaps the reason those love songs on *Station to Station* are so cold and bloodless is because they're addressed not just to one lover but to all of them—to his audience, which is to say, to the reflection of his stardom. Singers are constantly describing their feelings onstage as orgasmic, and while it's difficult to imagine Bowie permitting himself anything quite so gushy as an orgasm, he might allow himself a momentary union with the "love" he generates. Certainly this was the case on his spring tour, in which for the first time he looked as dazzling onstage as he'd ever sounded on record. Stark and seamless, with lighting so intense its role as a power source became inescapable, his show was so self-consciously arty and yet so intoxicating it managed to justify his use of Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalou* as an opening act and to vindicate his earlier attempt to forge a rock show out of the disco sound. And if Bowie himself looked less like a popstar than an inexplicably animated cadaver, no one was about to complain; in a way, it was the most theatrical thing he'd ever done.

Thirty years from now Bowie's movie career might well consist of Christopher Lee parts. In the meantime, he's taken to telling interviewers he wants to be like Frank Sinatra.

Bowie and Reed both suffer from the *Tea and Sympathy* perplex, but where Bowie compensates for his puniness with a succession of superhuman personae (space cadet, glitter king, neo-Nazi superstar, disco robot), Reed plays the kind of hard-assed punk John Rechy could have dealt with more readily than could Deborah Kerr. Yet after delivering his primal scream into infinity, Lou has unexpectedly fashioned the most honest and compelling album of his career. *Coney Island Baby* is the album in which he drops the mask, returning to the scenes of his youth much as the Who did in *Quadrophenia*—but with a bigger jolt, because what Reed reveals is so much richer and more unexpected.

Like Bowie's latest, *Coney Island Baby* is a collection of love songs which aren't what love songs are supposed to be. Lou's coalesce to form a mash note to life, and that—coming from the guy who recorded "Heroin" and *Berlin*—is pretty extraordinary. Sometimes bittersweet and poignant, propelled by the same highly charged musical understatement that made Velvet Underground songs like "Candy Says" so powerful, they explain why Reed, for all his tough-guy posturing, remains such a sympathetic figure.

Bowie wants to be Sinatra; Lou has a more ordinary but altogether more surprising ambition: he just wants to make the team. He'll never be just a grownup tough after "Coney Island Baby," the six-and-a-half-minute homage to high

school that closes the album. "You know man when I was a young man in high school / Believe it or not I wanted to play football for the coach." He half whispers the words, and as he does the street hustler melts away, replaced by the visage of a mixed-up kid in Babylon. "They said you know something man / You gotta stand up straight unless you're gonna fall / Then you're goin' to die / And the straightest dude I ever saw was standing by me all the time / So I had to play football for the coach;" and it hits you again what it means at that age when you realize you'll never be one of them. "Remember that the city is a funny place / Something like a circus or a sewer / And just remember different people have peculiar tastes / And the glory of love might see you through."

Will Lou go back to the sideshow? Probably. It doesn't matter; his heart's in the right place. Does Bowie have a heart? After a while that doesn't matter either. And it certainly doesn't matter how he answered that question at the press conference four years ago. When he denied his humanity, his sexuality became kind of irrelevant.

Three Pianists

By Eero Richmond

The solo piano recital was perhaps the most revelatory musical experience for nineteenth-century music consumers. With the pianoforte a solitary performer could evoke an entire musical world, could convey warmth, tone color (though acousticians still argue whether either is physically possible on a piano), and personal passion. Whether an "illusion machine" (as Ernst Lévy called it) or a truly expressive instrument, the piano was the primary romantic vehicle.

For better or for worse, however, the period of romantic composition for the piano is some seventy-five years dead. Modern composers like Bartók, Prokofiev, and Stravinsky have written for the piano as a *percussion* instrument, capable of producing its own kind of dry or clangorous sound. Yet the solo piano recital still has a romantic aura about it. This is due in part, of course, to the central position which nineteenth-century music holds in recital programming, but there also remains the "romantic" idea of the single performer communing with an audience. The endurance of this tradition was apparent recently in three successful New York recitals.

Christoph Eschenbach, small and trim in his Nehru jacket, sits at the piano like a youthful suppliant. This stance reveals something about his approach to music—fresh but at the same time respectful, loving, totally involved. Eschenbach was born in 1940 in Germany, and he was soon an orphan, shuttled here and there in a bomb-devastated country and ending up in a refugee camp. It is perhaps the trauma of these early years which is reflected in Eschenbach's restless demeanor and the remarkably poetic expressiveness of his piano playing.

When Eschenbach gave his Carnegie Hall recital early this year, his finest performances were, not surprisingly, in the works of Mozart and Schumann, two composers with whom he has been closely associated. The Mozart Variations on "*Ah, vous dirai-je, maman*" (better known to American audiences as "Twinkle, twinkle, little star") were played with elegance, singing tone, and a lyricism that made this small work a delight. The Schubert Impromptus, op. 90, which followed were delivered with similar *innigkeit* and loveliness. The first Impromptu was, however, played rather fast, and Eschenbach often had to slow down considerably for expressive moments, a style which became an annoyingly predictable mannerism. And the second section of the second Impromptu was rather brutal and Eschenbach's tone became strident. It was, however, in the third Impromptu that Eschenbach gave his loveliest playing of the evening—it was pure song, with radiantly beautiful piano tone.

Eschenbach is able to produce an exquisite pianissimo (among other younger pianists only Murray Perahia is able to control such soft and gentle playing), and he presented four Preludes by Debussy with clarity, subtlety, and control, though he is not completely at home in this music.

Interestingly, the Beethoven Hammerklavier Sonata, which filled the entire second half of the program, did not always reveal the finest aspects of Eschenbach's playing. The Hammerklavier—massive, craggy, and long—requires maximum power and maturity from a pianist. Eschenbach is no stranger to this work (he has played it often and has recorded it for Deutsche Gram-

mophon). But while in his own way he "understands" the work, I feel he hasn't yet completely grown into it. In loud, fast sections his playing is often driven and harsh, and while there is great control of the line and some excitement, the total effect is quirky rather than ruminative, spikey rather than broad. Too often one gets the feeling that Eschenbach is anxiously awaiting those *lyrical* moments where he can really shine, and there he indeed does.

Rather than playing the obvious Beethoven encore, Eschenbach chose two pieces by Chopin and two by Schumann. The first Schumann piece, the "*Vogel als Prophet*" from *Waldscenen*, has never been played more beautifully.

Eschenbach is a very major talent among the younger generation of pianists, though his forte, at least at present, is decidedly as a pianistic poet rather than warrior.

The recital given by Staffan Scheja at Alice Tully Hall in March was his New York debut. Ten years younger than Eschenbach, Scheja has been studying at Juilliard and last year won first prize in the Busoni International Competition. From a purely instrumental standpoint, Scheja plays the piano amazingly well. He is able to produce a wonderfully weighted, sonorous sound, reminding one of the sound Vladimir Ashkenazy gets from the instrument. Scheja doesn't always produce a singing line at the right moment, but in general his tone is beautiful and full. From a musical standpoint, the works he performed were obviously carefully thought out and seriously practiced, but the recital in general had a kind of "preconceived" quality about it that sounded almost like a practice run-through. Perhaps Scheja was nervous, understandably, for this all-important New York debut. But throughout the evening one missed the spontaneity and rhythmic finesse that makes one feel that music is being *created* on the stage—just the thing that can give a live recital that special magic that is very rarely achieved on records.

Scheja's best playing was in the more "objective" works—the Bach-Busoni Chaconne in D minor and the Prokofiev Sonata No. 6. These he played with great power, poise, control, and musical integrity. The remaining works (the Haydn Sonata No. 33, the Schumann Faschingsschwank aus Wien, and Stenhammar's Two Fantasies, op. 11), although intelligently played, suffered from stolidness. The Haydn Sonata especially became humorless. But there was a fine surprise: in the coda of the Schumann Arabesque, which Scheja played as an encore, a spellbinding pianistic poetry emerged.

Scheja is a pianist to be watched. He is immensely talented. But what remains to be seen is whether he will develop into a more spontaneous, more communicative performer with individuality—one who can impart to us the real joy of music making.

Unlike Scheja, the Kiev-born Aleksander Slobodyanik never fails to deliver exciting and daring work. He is not, however, everyone's musician. His interpretations often veer far from the printed page with regard to tempi, dynamics, and phrasing, but are nevertheless always remarkably alive and fascinating. His recital in March at Avery Fisher Hall was electrical, the performance only slightly jarred by three separate disturbers of the peace who chose to toss things at the Soviet performer.

Slobodyanik's program was Russian virtuoso fare: Miaskovsky's Fourth Sonata, Scriabin's Allegro de Concert, Beethoven's "Pathetique" Sonata, Chopin's Ballade No. 3 and Scherzo No. 1, and Liszt's Mephisto Waltz. With the exception of the first movement of the Beethoven, which Slobodyanik did not manage to hold together formally (partly because of playing the slow introduction and interludes too slowly and flaccidly and the Allegro too fast), the recital was remarkable—filled with temperament, bravura, and interpretive ideas. The Mephisto Waltz was played with as much splendor and rhythmic verve as one is likely to hear. The brief Waltz in E minor by Chopin, which Slobodyanik played as an encore, served to sum up his playing: effortless, original, impulsive, and alive. Slobodyanik is not just a maverick, however. The story of his once having been expelled from the Moscow Conservatory for refusing to practice after placing a "mere seventh" in the Warsaw Competition only tells part of what one should know about the "temperamental" Slobodyanik. He is also a very serious and dedicated musician, and a very major young talent.

A Letter by Alan Neil Marks from

PORTUGAL

The Monsanto campsite a few miles from central Lisbon is reportedly the largest in Europe. Salazar built it for sturdy bourgeois tourists—the kind who would put everything they own on wheels and buy great quantities of beef in the camp's gourmet supermarket. The women could have their hair coiffed *à la française* at the resident beauty parlor, the men could chug beer or sip port around the pool or at one of the bars. When bored, they could file into buses to see, as the loudspeaker still advertises in five languages, "beautiful Lisboa" and eat a "typical Portuguese meal" and listen to traditional Portuguese music, called Fado—all for a hundred francs or twenty-three dollars or eight pounds.

Now, two years after the revolution, half-empty buses still run into town promptly at five o'clock, although fares are sharply reduced to accomodate the smaller incomes of the French and Italian workers who have replaced the bourgeoisie and who buy hard cheese and Portuguese prosciutto. Some of the younger comrades are not averse to pinching a can of paté or bottles of tiny tasteless, but expensive, shrimp. This quasi-acceptable shoplifting (based on the rumor that the supermarket is still privately owned) is nothing compared to the rampant theft which afflicts thousands of tourists. Next to the large outdoor café every day one sees students or young workers whose money has been stolen asking for donations to get back to Milan or Bilbao. One young couple spoke of being robbed at knifepoint by apparently sweet young hitchhikers. A young man told of having his gold chain ripped off his neck as he walked in the forest adjacent to the gay beach at Caprica, next door to a vast refugee camp.

At Monsanto, there are plenty of security guards. They were out in full force, joined by several dozen marines toting machine guns, on the night of the Portuguese/Italian Solidarity Rally. Hundreds of the Milanese and Romans at the camp came just for the rally, which began as a massive parade displaying farm machinery and other gifts from the Italian Communist Party to their Portuguese comrades. The marchers were aided and often joined by the army—a collection of bearded and mustachioed young men who, true to the legends of Portuguese beauty, were astonishing to watch as they chanted, sang, and ripped off their shirts in the broiling Lisbon heat. Unlike their counterparts in France or the US, these young men are outgoing and friendly, and it was through the offer of beer from a bearded, green-eyed corporal overseeing the crowd control contingent that I left Monsanto for nearly a week.

"And God bless Uncle Harry and his roommate Jack, who we're not supposed to talk about."

Pedro is from Evora, a poor but jewel-like city in southern Portugal, and as soon as he was old enough to be a soldier he was sent off to fight guerrillas in Mozambique. There he met and later became lovers with a young native prisoner who was unusually sophisticated and who taught Pedro to write both French and Portuguese properly and to read everything from Lenin to Genet. The relationship was generally accepted by his comrades, which may seem astonishing to those who know how virulent European homophobia remains outside of Amsterdam or Copenhagen. In this respect Portugal is an anomaly not easily explained. There are no laws protecting homosexuals nor are there laws victimizing them. Except for a well-publicized gay march in Oporto nearly two years ago, there has been no gay movement in Portugal. After that march there was some discussion in the press and on radio in which gays had to defend themselves against traditional communist homophobic polemics. But for reasons as obscure as the various political shifts over the last revolutionary months, the issue was dropped. Pedro claims that several very powerful military people who are gay simply decided that no discussion was necessary and that all military and police harassment of gays was to cease. The one thing curtailed was the rampant male prostitution in and around Edward VII Park at the head of Avenida Liberdade. On any evening during the old regime literally hundreds of men in uniform would roam this lovely expanse seeking to sup-

plement their incomes through the use of their bodies. Now the only military people around are security police searching cars for explosives and whatnot.

However, some heterosexuals here have negative ideas about the gay issue. A young woman writing for one of the Trotskyite papers put it this way, "In Portugal, it is a man's society. As elsewhere in Latin Europe, women count for nothing. From the time they are young, men deal with men socially. They end up courting each other. Most men are not gay but they may as well be since their real loyalties and respect are to each other. But to us, nothing matters except the revolution."

Pedro, who smokes grass, is a sexual gymnast, and like many Portuguese men lacks the most overtly macho tendencies one finds too often in Spaniards and South Americans, concurred with the young woman's final sentiment although he was at a loss to explain why he was attracted to men. "An American boy told me last year that you talk a lot about being gay and what it means. I guess we're not quite ready to deal with that. We have fascists and counterrevolutionaries to worry about."

After the rather tedious rally, we walked back toward the tiny flat Pedro shares with two army friends when he is off duty. Despite the late hour, the streets were jammed and, as usual in this truly revolutionary city, everyone was talking—young, old, men and women—all debating the revolution, which is remarkably short on violence but also short on agreed-upon solutions to the dismal state of the Portuguese economy. We sat for awhile at a side street café where several workers were discussing their formerly multinational company which not only paid them a third of what similar workers get in France and Germany but which closed shop without paying their final month's salary. Such workers may or may not be communists but they are united in their detestation of Mario Soares and his promise to bring foreign capital back to Portugal through the multinationals. Soares dreams of turning Portugal into another Holland but he overlooks what is known by every Lisbonite who has worked in Amsterdam, which is that the Dutch subsidize their excellent social benefits partly through exploitation of foreign workers. The more fortunate workers are hired on year-long contracts, with no pensions or medical benefits. The majority must telephone daily to learn the mysterious pick-up points where they will be whisked away blindfolded to a factory and paid a pittance after long hours of labor. The bitter irony is that these workers still earn more than they ever could in Portugal and they rarely pump their incomes back into the Portuguese economy. Thus the fervent urging of emigrant workers to come home is more touching than practical.

Further along on the way to Pedro's we passed a bank with a sign in the window proclaiming, "This Bank Is Now for the People." A block later the poster in a Bloomingdale's-type store gave notice: "We are having a final sale of our luxury goods. This store will now only sell clothes for the People." Just the tourist shops appear unchanged.

Pedro, as his apartment shows, has few material possessions and appears not to resent that. "I am a soldier of the revolution," he would repeat during the week in tones ranging from anger to bemusement. He is still in a state of revolutionary euphoria, as is much of the country. His radio is constantly tuned to one of the many stations which play nonstop antibourgeois folk music. One song will be anticlerical, the next antibusiness, and so on. Despite the fact that he's heard these songs a hundred times, he roars at the satire. "You know they used to play Amalia Rodriguez all day. She was our Piaf but she was also Salazar's favorite, so no more Amalia."

One of Pedro's roommates, João, isn't quite as progressive. His obsession with clothes surprised me. Out of uniform João looks every bit the Parisian—the look of the old regime, according to Pedro, who tells me that makes perfect sense for someone like João who is addicted to the bars. When Pedro went out on night duty he urged João to take me on a tour of his haunts. These turned out to be four bars, where one knocked to be admitted, Prohibition style. My memory of all of them is of chrome: chrome tables, chrome mirrors, chrome lighting fixtures. These four clubs appear to be anachronisms and seem to have a near monopoly on the pristine, ordered style one associates with the Grove and Cannes and advertisements in the *Times Magazine*.

Pedro was pleased that I didn't warm to the plated atmosphere. The following night, we wandered downtown into a small restaurant on the Bairro Alto which is run by a famous long-time antifascist lesbian who looks every bit Ger-

trude Stein with a bun. The patrons, besides the radical chic of Lisbon, consist of a flaming international gay coterie that uses the *fin de siècle* decor of lovely Portuguese tile as a backdrop for a theater of campy jokes in four languages. The loudest diners are the Spaniards, who undoubtedly live in Lisbon to escape the severest homophobic system in Western Europe. In Spain one can be confined to a mental hospital for being gay.

The situation of lesbians here is analogous to that of women in general and there is no bar or club where gay women can meet solely on their own. They share restaurants and bars with the men, which has made for close bonds between the sexes. At the gay beach at Caprica it is common to see mixed groups of gay men and women. One lesbian, a teacher, explained, "You know, outside Lisbon most women would want to slit our throats if they knew we were Saphique. There is no real women's movement. The *pédés* are the only ones who know our struggles."

A week later, Pedro decided I was bored and said, "Let's go to a rally." It was like saying, "Let's go to the movies," and like the movies, rallies in Lisbon come in all lengths and qualities. Since there can be three simultaneous rallies on any day, one must pick and choose carefully. Pedro wouldn't dream of attending any meetings but those supported by the Portuguese Communist Party. And at least from the dramatic point of view, the PCP rallies are far and away the most exciting. The rally of the day was called the "United Front Against the Reactionaries and Support for the MFA" (the umbrella military group). For six hours the intensity remained at a pitch which can only be described as hyperhysterical. There was cheering for everyone—the visiting Italian and French comrades, various labor leaders, and speaker after speaker.

After the rally Pedro and I said farewell, since he had been reassigned to a city in the north. Groups of men and women walked past us singing the Party anthem, "Avanti, Comara, Avanti," with fervor and an upraised fist at every chorus. When the roar of a large motorcycle added to this din, I turned to see an Italian friend from Monsanto, Giancarlo, and hopped on his BMW to head back to camp, where the guards and marines were still standing as if they hadn't moved from their spots of a week before.

Giancarlo was unusual for a young Roman heterosexual. Three days after our initial café encounter he had apologized for not sleeping with me. "I know it would be, how do you say, politically just to make love with you, but I cannot. Still, I like you very much and want you as my friend." This expression of regret referred specifically to a 2AM encounter at his tent on my instigation and led to a discussion of his recently overcoming five years of impotence. "I can now sleep only with women I like much and I am afraid that if I sleep with men I will be impotent again." Understanding this personal logic, I accepted his position and now, after Pedro, was rather glad to share the nooks and crannies of Lisbon with a fellow tourist.

Giancarlo sported a collection of perfectly worn jeans, work shirts, and a soft black leather jacket. He topped this off with an addiction to long dreadful cigars. This was not so much a radical chic stance as the practical outfit for someone whose friends were all left politicos of one sort or another. In Italy, one is not usually friends with one's political or class enemies. Thus when Giancarlo's friend Theresa, a teacher in a communist school and like most Italians visiting Portugal a supporter of the PCP, discovered that many of my friends were not even socialists she viewed me with a certain suspicion. For her the class struggle comes first. "You Americans can never understand the class struggles in Italy and Portugal. I read that Kennedy says this and that against the government and then goes on vacation or to parties with the same people he is attacking. They are all part of the same capitalist oppression." She admitted to being confused about homosexuality, which she always referred to as if only men were involved. Her attitude was analogous to Pedro's—if homosexuals are on the correct side of the class struggle, fine; if not, they are the enemy.

The next day a busload of young Australians rolled into Monsanto. They were overjoyed to find someone else who spoke English, even though it was of the New York variety. When I asked them about their experience in Portugal they said that they could barely tell one country from another, and were surprised and titillated by my descriptions of the demonstrations and activity here. They had been completely unaware that anything was going on in Portugal. It was almost like being home again.

Sport

The Lesbian Flasher

The first time I did it was an accident. You've heard that story before but probably haven't heard of a case like mine since as of now I am known only to a select few. Initiates, so to speak. When I was younger it was different of course but then it was basketball this basketball that, and I was on a softball team and had quite a good golf swing as well.

Now I am forty-two, a Libra, and spooky-looking, if I do say so myself. I work hard at it. For instance, I have plucked my eyebrows out, *all* of them, and the space above my eyes is as smooth as pudding. I wear a fur coat, fifty dollars from a second floor shop on 8th St., quite thoroughly used, the coat I mean, with a monogram on the lining that says *Elaine*. Sometimes the lining falls, very gauche looking, so I staple it back in place. I staple it around the shoulders, not uncomfortable at all when I wear a sweater under it.

I love chatting. All the people with little ribbons out of their mouths saying *chat, chat*. It's rare for anyone to speak to me anymore. You know why. I'll get to that. Thank you for asking me to write, though I am being chatty. The opportunity is rare.

I love rare meat. This *is* related. It explains the connection of the grocery stores. I mean, how it all comes together. It was because of Elaine.

You know what it's like to wear someone else's clothes, what it's like to sleep in someone else's bed, to be in someone else's space. They get you, they go right under your face and inhabit you. They take over if they can.

In a way our relationship is mutual. I mean with Elaine. It didn't happen all at once. Perhaps you will begin to understand my need for anonymity.

Okay. This Elaine had had her muskrat monogrammed. She must be pretty old, because the coat is. I imagined her with blue-blond hair, heavy eye shadow, diamonds. She wore perfume, and I thought I could smell it in the coat, under its more natural odor.

Like I said, I love rare meat. As a child I loved the sight of a bloody roast. For real or only the picture in a magazine. I have a plastic bloody roast I stole from the window of a Greek coffee shop. Stealing has always come easy to me. I also have some plastic fried shrimp and some plastic *sashimi*.

I don't mean to ramble. The first time I did it, it was an accident. I liked wearing the coat with nothing under it, except for the staples which sometimes cut me. On the other hand, a little pain can be pleasant, if you know what I mean. Anyway, I got my old craving. I have been subject to a certain meat lust since I started the diet pills six years ago. For six years off and on I've craved raw hamburger, which is not an easy thing to admit. I like all cuts, but especially hamburger. Raw turkey turns me off.

I'd been watching Celebrity Sweepstakes. I felt more comfortable with the Celebrities in my coat. I dashed off to the store to get some hamburger. I also planned to pick up supper. At four o'clock every day I take off the coat, dress, clean up, and make supper for Mike. Mike is a bank guard, and a good one too.

Anyway, I was in the Meat Section. I wanted to make it home in time for Hollywood Squares. I saw her down by Dairy Products, fingering the cottage cheese. She had blue-blond hair, lots of eye shadow and diamonds. She had a gorgeous body in a beige knit suit. I was astonished, and my coat fell open. When she looked at me, she didn't seem surprised. All of them since then have seemed surprised. She put down the cottage cheese. Her eyes were guarded. I left the coat open. I look good because of the pills. My skin has nice pink tones because of the hamburger. Finally I said, "Elaine?"

—B.B.

Classifieds

Classified advertising rate: 60¢ a word. Minimum 20 words. All classified advertising must be prepaid.

WHAT ARE YOU WEARING to the revolution? Free catalog of message T-shirts, etc. White River Company, 35 Bellevue, Elmwood Park, N.J. 07407

LIBERATED BLUE WORK SHIRTS, individually hand embroidered with 33 bright daisies. $17.00. Women's, Men's S/M/L/XL. JOIE P.O. Box 6898 Seattle, Wash. 98116

USE OUR ADDRESS-PHONE for your "private" correspondence. Pickup/re-mail. Fourth year. Discrete, sympathetic, confidential. Downstairs Mail Service—es, 167 W. 21st St., NYC 10011 (212) 691-7782.

HOMOSEXUAL COMMUNITY COUNSELING CENTER, 688-0628. New York City's screened professional psychotherapists for gay men and women and your families.

OPERA TAPES. Live performances. Tremendous selection. Free catalog. Your satisfaction guaranteed. Charles Handelman, 34-10 75 Street, Jackson Heights, NYC 11372.

MOVING CAN BE EASY. Very careful, reliable service by professional movers at reasonable rates. D.O.T. #33. Village Van & Express, 230 W. 16th St., NYC (212) SP7-8774, or, YU9-1356.

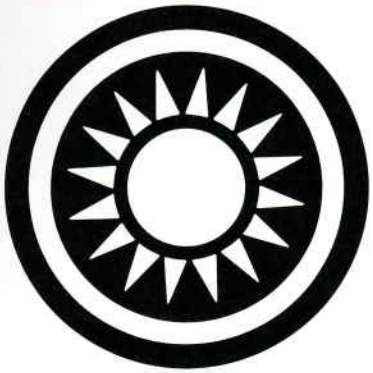
FEMALE AND MALE PHYSICIANS needed to work in an established Medical Clinic for gay people. For information, please call (212) 859-1707.

GAY WOMEN'S ALTERNATIVE: A social forum for gay women only. Thursday nights through June 10. May 20: Film maker Alida Walsh shows and discusses her latest film "HAPPY BIRTHDAY – I'M FORTY". Social hour. Refreshments served. Donation, $3.00. Meetings, 8 P.M. Universalist Church, 4 West 76th Street (CPW), NYC. Call (212) 532-8669 for other programs.

NEW YORK'S GAY SWITCHBOARD: 6 P.M.–Midnight. 924-4036. What can we do for you? Provide information on services, activities and organizations of interest to the gay community. Also rap with you about whatever is on your mind. What can you do for us? Volunteer.

"GAY ROOMMATE SERVICE" New York's only ALL GAY roommate service. Because we specialize, you'll receive personalized attention. Large selection of apartments. Low fee, only $25. (212) 787-5833, 12-9 P.M. If you have an apartment available for sharing, there's no fee for listing with us.

I TEACH RECORDER: beginner, intermediate, advanced: choice of instrument; ornamentation; transposition; general musicianship and phrasing. Evenings or weekends. Also clarinet and maybe beginning flute. Call 284-6737 nights, 977-7241 days.



the islanders' are...

the islanders ' club

luxury motor coach service to Fire Island. Air conditioning, reserved seating and booze. The only way to travel on a hot Friday afternoon (or any other summer day). Call us at (212) 679-5810

The Party People

Whether it is a party or a production, whether you need a bartender or the complete banquet staff the party people are ready to serve you. The smartly uniformed staff will do as little or as much as you want. They will set up and clean it up. If you need music, DJ's and equipment are available. Call us at (212) 679-5810

the islanders' *ENROUTE*

A messenger service staffed by attractive young people who think. No order is too tall or route too complicated. This is a "can do" service whether your package goes around the block or around the world. (***ENROUTE*** is fully bonded) Call us at (212) 889-0805

the fire islander

The magazine that keeps you in touch and up to date on the Fire Island lifestyle. Legends tells you what happened last week, the bulletin board tells you what is coming next week. Feature articles discuss local and national issues which touch on or effect this special lifestyle. Humor, pathos and solid information - its all there in the fire islander. Free to islanders' members, Twenty five cents at restaurants and retail stores.

The High Sea Islanders'

Those wonderful folks who brought you the Renaissance cruise, the Stella Oceanis cruise, Riverboat are about to bring you more adventures in travel on land and sea. Join the islanders' and recieve the mailings which give you first choice. Call us at (212) 679-5810

the islanders' 322 East 34th Street New York, N.Y. 10016

(212) 679-5810 Weekends (516) 597-6663

People of NGTF

Photo: Bill Bland

Martin Duberman

HOME: New York, New York

PROFESSION: Historian

OTHER INTERESTS: Education, the Theater, Human Rights.

MOST RECENT ACHIEVEMENT: Author, *Kerouac,* performed at New Dramatists, New York, June 1976

PROFILE: Equally effective as university educator, playwright, and critic; honors have come early to this man of wide ability and none disturbs his hospitality or his concern for the oppressed.

QUOTE: "We must refuse to talk of human beings—gay or straight—as single impulses, fixed essences, judgeable objects. In opposition to the current vision of homogenized humanity, we must celebrate human diversity."

MEMBER: National Gay Task Force.

REASON: "Having studied, taught and written about past movements for social change in this country, I've come to understand that cooperative action (with equal emphasis on both words) is the best hope for achieving needed reform."

NGTF **National Gay Task Force, Rm. 506, 80 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y. 10011, Tel.: (212) 741-1010**

Yes, I would like to join NGTF. Enclosed is my contribution for:

- ☐ $15 Basic Member
- ☐ $25 Contributing Member
- ☐ $50 Sustaining Member
- ☐ $100 Supporting Member
- ☐ $500 Lifetime Member
- ☐ $1000 Sponsor
- ☐ $25 Household Member (for two)
- ☐ $5 Limited Income Member

I understand that I will receive the NGTF newsletter, IT'S TIME, with my membership.

☐ Please keep my name and mailing confidential.

Name Address

City State Zip