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V. 43

# FLAMINGO WINTER 1961



*Winter Issue 1961*

# *FLAMINGO*

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WINTER 1961

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## *lines on our times*

bad

times.

Cities and women are Organizing.

see how

they shrink a man: broken

finger on a broken

hand.

Sufferage is short-skirted

big-boned

brazen and

speaks loudly.

Cities are big around the waist,

women are big-footed.

let us go to the woods

the woods

are peasant:

They wear their skirts long and innocent.

KRISTEN BRACEWELL



# ***FABLE***

KRISTEN BRACEWELL

Once upon a time there sat in a house in a chair on the porch in a town smaller than yours a most wondrous grouch. Everyone who tried to make friends soon went away feeling bitten.

He sat all day complaining. He complained of trees, clouds, and dogs in the yard. He growled at the way the plants leaned out of the pots, and the creak of the gate of the parsonage next door, the hours that the bell chimed, the cat that sat in the corner, and the children in the street. He could grouch quietly or out loud. If he complained in his head, he could do so much faster, adding several more complaints per minute.

People who passed on the street often could tell how furiously he was complaining by the twitching of his eyebrows.

"Why," someone said accustomed to giving his opinion, "he must be the grouchiest man alive."

Soon he became famous. Crowds gathered to stare at him.

"He is marvelous! wondrous!" cried the businessman who owned stocks in the circus.

"He must be mentally ill," said the town psychiatrist, scribbling. He fingered his nose.

"Oh," said the parents.

"Ah," said the children.

As the city limits of the two adjoining towns ran centrally down his front porch, public opinion over which metropolis could claim his as its own necessitated that he straddle the line with his rocking chair.



Some of the wisest men in the land gathered to ponder the situation of a man who was pleased with nothing. They stood on the steps and divined why the cat **was** in the corner, the dog in the yard, and the children in the street, and how it all related to God, man, and the Blessed Economy.

When the parson approached one day, tipping his hat, the grouch decided he despised nothing worse than hearing the squeaking of tremulous shoes; he hated black, he disliked hair parted in the middle. Then, too, he was extremely grieved to find the parson blocking his view of the robin he was watching bungle the nest it was building.

The nest fell down. The grouch began to laugh.

A small boy who wanted with all his heart to be just like him was watching terribly close, as he always did, from his vantage point near the cat in the corner, heard the laughter.

"Oh," he said in a small voice. His face fell. He went away crying mournfully:

"He laughed. I heard him."

And everyone looked at each other in amazement. Then they said, nodding in agreement:

"Why, he isn't wonderfully and wholly evil. He's only terribly bad-natured!"

The parson sent him a pamphlet in the mail.



*I*  
*contentment*

I dream here  
    with wind-blown thoughts  
        of plesantries.  
These graceful visions  
    which, smiling,  
        dance so breezily  
absorb me  
    from the outside world.

I look at me  
    just for an instant  
        and a moment later  
I am  
    far away.  
        It is so vague  
            ahead of me  
hazy  
hazy  
    my mind begins to fade.  
So  
    This is how it is  
        no thought at all  
no past  
no dream  
    The Happiness of Nothingness.  
It remains  
    long enough to say good-bye  
What was it like?  
    I cannot remember.  
    I was beautiful  
But back they come  
    skipping—  
    even tumbling.  
        the ones of past  
            entangle with the future  
        beginning motion.  
They bring me what I need  
    hope—plan—faith.  
So I am glad I took the time  
    to let it happen as it did  
        because  
    They let me see  
        by momentary blindness,  
and I am ready now.

SALLY SCHRIEBER

## II

# *accomplishment*

I sit here  
    with a fluffy idea  
and time plays leap-frog  
    in the next room.  
How can I put these wisps of thought together  
    they come so fast  
    and in no pattern  
    and flash—away  
    like those electric particles  
    traced by a cloud chamber.  
My mind begins to strain—  
    fighting to recall; sort; organize;  
    feverishly groping for some exactness.  
thinking

Thinking

THINKING

intensity radiates  
BUT WHY CAN'T IT RADIATE ORDER.  
    it's there  
        there it is again!  
    I'll Catch it this time.  
Now—all those that flew  
    are coming back.  
They add  
    and multiply.  
They all fit in!  
The idea is now solid  
    and it attracts more and more  
    it grows—upward—outward  
Expanding  
    to an end which shrinks  
        every expectation.  
It stands proudly completed  
    before my exhausted mind.  
What joy there is in its accomplishment;  
How lovely it looks  
    now that it is done.

SALLY SCHREIBER

## *disc of light*

Disc of light that sends the warmth seeping  
through the skin creeping deep,  
and spreads filling  
does he gather deep-sweet  
smelling hyacinths, narcissus?  
Their bulbs in fleshy scales breed flushing shame.  
Putty-soft they rot in muck of daring to exist.

Wind whips the twigs on grey  
and shuffles the shocks  
where gleaning mice foray.  
Ice is pure and stays the fruit;  
A world of ice is numbingly unchurned.

Bathe in Irish pools where fat-brown cattails  
plush-line the iris-scented throng along the croaking  
non-shore.

Algae-covered light-bulbs, raft-like, with violet spikes  
of yellow cyclops choke the icy inlet.  
Mermaids twined in slimey fingers rooted thickly.

Who is deity of snow?  
His patrons would be willing if he were not ice-chilling.

TED BRADLEY

As cricket

it was cool that night, I took my shawl and went carefully in the  
cow path. cricket As far as intangity the clear palidity of moon  
light tempered the dew. cricket The reflected light of water;  
thin, soft, filmy cloth on the meadow, I shyed from. It made me  
cold when I touched it in pushing gently by. cricket I sat on  
the shawl in the hollow of the track, the track like a finger furrow  
in a gigantic, frosted, pistachio cake. cricket I knelt and touched  
noses with a thistle flower, and he left a damp kiss that was thanks.

E. R., JR.

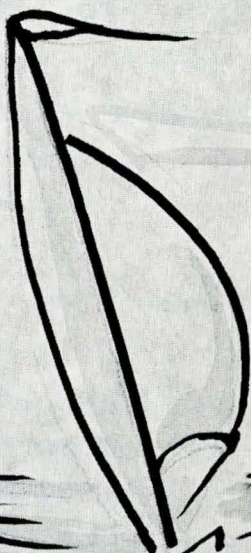
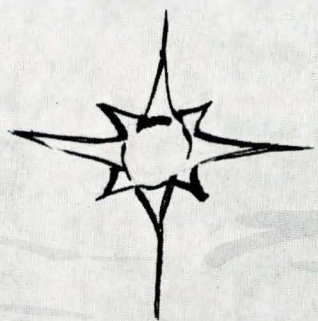
## *sea-free*

ANONYMOUS

Let me sing; give me  
The sensuous, silent surge  
Of taut sail and knife hull  
Splitting defient, racing seas.

Let me love; give me  
Tan, spray-stung skin  
And a glad, sea-free body  
That, singing and proud,  
Is akin to the lusty water  
And rapes her sea-green soul.







# *night*

The traditional cities  
Parapeted in the ancient architecture of custom  
Superimpose their monumental strength upon  
The tired brain.

Light the thick fires  
In the ragged moral canyons  
And grovel in the subways  
With the citizens retreating from the flame.  
In the sinking, stale battle of the mind  
Among the avenging forces  
The soul becomes  
The ashtray of the world.

Walk the grooved streets.  
Realization comes hard.  
Kick the feet at the nebulous settling ash of the city,  
And kick at the dying dust of my furies.

Travel  
Down the road from which there is no escape  
On the wheel that never stops turning  
To the doorway where nobody stands.

ANONYMOUS

## *hate*

You have not supped in Pluto's world  
Or drunk his cup you seem to say.  
But there you've been—and will go again  
For Hades is a hub of black  
Around which spins the world.  
Its axis is a giant tree  
From ebony marble roughly hewn.  
Wide-spread roots grip the earth  
And barren limbs spear the mist  
That hides the striving sun.  
These twisted boughs conceal a lair;  
A sole inhabitant hiding there:  
His spittle drips from hungry jaws  
And lancet claws slice narrow  
Grooves into the bark.  
His breath is hot and quick.  
His fangs are sharp and white.  
Eyes of jade, alert and keen  
Pierce the blanket of the night.  
His ears reach out; his nostrils flare.  
All his senses are aware. For  
he is the panther—waiting patiently.  
And on this road to Satan's door  
We all have walked  
Have gone astray and fallen prey.  
He pounces and a scream is heard.  
Even you now wear his scars.

BUTCH GIBBS

# CRY OF FUTILITY

ELEANOR WISE

You know the poem, "I Died for Beauty?" Well, I didn't die for anything. That's what bothers me so much. If only I had died for something. I would rather enjoy screaming with a bunch of damned souls in everlasting fire than just lying here, listening to those crickets.

Nothingness—do you know nothingness? I feel quite justified to speak on it. No life, no death, not confined, not free—grey, all grey—grey life of sleep, of eating, grey death of lying here, wishing to go back and do something. Not anything special or beautiful, maybe only make a basket for my team. I was never on a team. I never made one lousy basket.

Don't get me wrong. I don't have a burning passion to save the world. I only wish I could have made an impression, or even have insulted someone, or have knocked somebody's teeth out.

You see I had this idiotic smile, sort of a grin and frown, which I showed a world that didn't look.

I wasn't born that way. I was a real neat kid. I used to hop on one foot and hold the other, and never, never step on a crack. But they put me on an anvil and hammered until I became a strong, compact nothing.

They pointed when I sat partly submerged in a warm spring rain, smiling at a rainbow. They were embarrassed for me when I climbed a tall dark cyprus and allowed the tangled moss to sweep against me and encompass me. They said I outdid Thoreau, and called me a phony.

I was in college at the time. I didn't study very hard as I threw all my strength into searching for the truth. I surmised a truth-seeker couldn't be a phony.

I listened breathlessly to them "nibbling at stale metaphysics." I stopped buying red licorice. I laced my feet and my heart. I stopped crying, then laughing. I was the epitome of nothingness.

My friends smiled at my progress. They couldn't deny it. I was well on the road to normality. I loved their approval, even if I had to say "Goddamn" to appease them. I hate that.

Then I died. I didn't really have to die, but why not? I knew there was no heaven, no God, no hell. I died without fighting.

I am able to hear the world above, the crickets, the children, but I am not able to speak. Oh God, what would I give to touch the damp moss that covers my tomb . . .

## *eggheaded people*

Eggheaded people milling about,  
Center-sitting and stupid talk—

Beanery food, and who dates who.

Khrushchev—"Big guy." Laos—"Where?"

Satellites and little dogs . . .

"What! . . . Fighting in Algiers?"

"Beanery food's not good this week,  
The G.D.I.'s are **out**."

Mickey Mouse—god of the campus,  
God of the idiots, god . . .

VICKI BOGGS



## *lover's quarrel*

I wandered through the dark one light,  
and heard a plaint of lover's plight  
From young, some querulous wight:

1

"If you can't gitch, then please don't goo me  
Or I'll desert you for your Roomie  
Roonie-reenie Nofretete."

"Bald iggles are a beastly line.  
Fair thee well, my Valentine.  
Fair thee well, and tread the lightly,  
Iggle eggs is damn unsightly!"

The maid then was heard to utter:  
"Holy-healy hone the butter,  
Mother's in another flutter!"

"Let's aroint us from this ointment;  
Blow this popstand, leave the jointment!"

CHAS. J. McDERMOTT

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