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Flamingo

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PREFACE

Quicquid agunt homines . . . nostri farrago libelli
Juv., Sat. I, 85, 86

Whate'er men do, or say, or think, or dream,

Our motley paper seizes for its theme.

Pope

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The editor and staff of the *Flamingo* would like to extend sufficiently emotional congratulations to Robert Young (poetry) and Donald James (prose) for winning the Angela Thirkell Literary Award.

Special Mention:

Donald James, a “bizarre” sophomore, was the co-winner of the Academy of Poets Award in 1966-1967 and has been published in the *Black Sun Magazine*.

Robert Young is a sophomore and a counselor in the freshman dormitory. He has won several high school literary awards as well as having been co-winner of the Academy of Poets Award in 1966-1967.

Mia Hanson, a junior art student and model, recently won top honors in two divisions in the Association of Mid-Florida Colleges Art Show.

THE GENIUS AND THE IDIOT

I don't know why, after all these years, such an event of my childhood should return to memory in such detail. Perhaps it is because there has remained in me a small seed of guilt — and of perplexity — from my part in a crisis in two people's lives. In any case, it has returned to haunt me in the past several days. I cannot purge it from my mind. It is disturbing; I feel there is some kernel of truth to be reached in this incident of my past if only I were able to find it. My memory seems to be trying to tell me something about life and about myself. I shall try to understand. I shall try to clarify the event in my mind. It has become important to me far beyond the usual memory of boyhood — important, and therefore precious.

Long ago, when I was only a child in the elementary school, there was one year in the same class as I a boy named Peter Tiompkin. He was of average height, but thin and dark, with intense eyes that could pierce or burn. He was always staring at things, and at people, too. He seldom smiled. His appearance was entirely immaculate, and somehow unnatural. There was something peculiar to his speech, not quite a definite accent; his parents were foreign. I can still see his face, although time has blanked the mass of faces of that time from mind, because Peter was a very singular boy. He was separated from the rest of us by a natural barrier: his magnificent intellect. He was said to be a genius. His mind worked with a comprehension and rapidity which were frightening to the rest of us. He was always the first finished with any assignment, and despite his speed rarely made a mistake of any kind. I can remember him working long division problems by merely looking at them for a few seconds with a furrow in his brow, then writing down the answer.

"No, no, Peter," the teacher would say, "that's not the right way. We're doing long division now, not short division. You have to write it out."

"Why should I write it out," Peter would reply, perhaps angrily, "if I already know the answer?"

"But you have to practice, because someday you might have to do divisions too long to do in your head."

Peter would only smile indulgently, as if a problem he could not solve in his head were a contradiction in terms.

Once he became upset and did a division on the blackboard with ten-digit numbers. For this he was sent to the principal's office. When he returned, he was very tight-lipped. He did not speak to anyone, would not answer any questions the teacher put to him, for days. If pressed to reply, he would only say, "I don't know." If he was quick at assignments before, he was twice as fast now. He worked at them with a sort of rigid fierceness. Before and after this period he would never turn in an assignment as soon as he finished it; he would wait until someone else finished and turned in his paper. Peter was always second. But now he would turn in the assignment as soon as he finished, then would sit staring at the teacher. All of us felt the tension; we all felt the crushing force of his fierce eyes.

Poor Mrs. Wilkins! She can't have known what to do. He must have confused her terribly. She was only trying to do a job. He was unlike anything she had ever known; he certainly didn't fit in with "Techniques of Teaching" or the like. She had to be proud of him as her best student, but on the other hand he was a repressive influence on her and on the rest of the class. Ah, yes, he was a great problem. He could answer nearly all the questions Mrs. Wilkins might ask, so that at last she would only call on him to answer the most difficult questions which no one else could answer. He seemed a sort of encyclopedia. If asked to give a report he would invariably speak in terms no elementary school child could understand. He seemed without pity for us, even vicious in his superiority. He was very disturbing to Mrs. Wilkins in sometimes correcting her mistakes, sometimes with open sarcasm. He said he did not like to see falsehood spread. He would also read in class, not only when he finished assignments early, but sometimes while the teacher was explaining something.

"But Mrs. Wilkins," I can hear him say, "what you speak of—I have already studied——"

And she must have told him privately that he must set an example for the other students, and pay attention.

It must have been the only time in the history of elementary school that a teacher kept order by taking *Plato's Dialogues* away from a student. Things could have been worse, but luckily our Mrs. Wilkins was really a rather kind old lady.

As I think of it, there must have been many things she said to him privately, trying to turn his talent to the benefit rather than the detriment of the class. There must have been a regular secret war between them we never knew about. But Peter resisted willfully.

Often Peter would seem to be entirely in his own world, concentrating so hard as to be oblivious of what was going on around him. Sometimes he would stop in the middle of what he was saying and write a secret note to himself. He suffered from sudden inattentions and would have to ask for something to be repeated.

His general attitude toward the world usually seemed one of haughty indifference. He lived apart. He was extremely sensitive, though, and took offense at trifles, and would fly into a rage over something he himself had invented. His attitude towards us was mostly tight-lipped, as though we would contaminate him. He was conscious of himself as someone very different, and he was impossible to become friendly with. Usually he would not give an unfriendly answer if spoken to in a friendly way, but would seem to be merely tolerant. His moods changed with the wind; he could be fiery or shy.

Peter not only seemed to know all that we studied in school, but he knew a great deal more as well. He was journeyer in realms none of us could know. He carried with him mysterious volumes. Whenever someone conversed with him, he spoke like a book, and said things we could not understand. Looking back, I believe his main interests were philosophy and history.

So he was a figure of mystery, someone incomprehensible. We all therefore disliked him. We thought him arrogant and egotistical. We laughed at his strangeness. He was more than alien; he was a different type of creature altogether. We were secretly jealous of him, although we all thought we much preferred being "regular guys." In any case, he had no friends. The boys in our class were divided into several mutually exclusive groups whose only point of union was his exclusion. He was on polite terms with a few girls. For his part, he didn't seem to care about other people or about developing friendships. It would not be fair to say we hated him; he was simply one apart.

But if I say he had no friends, there was at least one liaison he formed which was perhaps better than friendship. There was one other boy in our class who was an outcast: he was an idiot. I have forgotten his name. Perhaps I should say that he was mentally retarded. He was passed along from grade to grade, as such cases then were, without any concern for what he learned. His reading was very slow. Occasionally he was a behavior problem, but not a severe one. He was never mean or vicious, or dishonest—but sometimes he would become restless or overexcited, and disrupt the entire class, and sometimes he would simply not understand the right thing to do. He was a good-looking boy, almost pretty, but as sloppy as Peter was neat. He was always nice in his way, and whenever someone took advantage of him, seemed without the rage of vengeance, but would cry pitifully.

Far from being strange, it was almost natural that these two outcasts, the genius and the idiot, should gravitate towards one another. They were united by our scorn and their own natural kindness. Peter befriended the idiot; he took a special interest in explaining things to him, and would protect him from the rest of us. Peter was the only person with enough understanding and patience to converse with the half-wit, and the half-wit, in turn, was the only person who, not understanding pride, broke through to Peter's heart. We left them alone. I don't know exactly how they were able to become friends; I was never curious until now.

They were united by certain other affinities than the extremity of their difference from the rest of us. Peter, for all his genius, was in many ways more childlike than the rest of us. For example, he loved very unsophisticated games which we felt beneath us. He took delight in activities such as coloring pictures, which we were old enough to ridicule. And how he colored! His pictures were messes, but he enjoyed them as if they were the best in the world. Peter was also stupid in mechanical matters and unable to do anything requiring dexterity. In these respects, and in a certain naivete, he was much like the idiot.

The idiot, on the other hand, although profoundly dim-witted, was delighted by the least discovery, outside the realm of books, made by himself. This trait must have appealed to Peter, for it was much like his own intellectual curiosity and joy.

Despite his general ineptitude, there were a couple of things in which the idiot excelled. One was his ability to draw; the other, curiously, was his ability to add numbers in his head, though the rest of arithmetic was beyond his mastery.

I have an image in my mind of the two of them at recess examining some object they had found while the rest of us played softball; they look curiously alike, as though they were brothers.

The incident of which I spoke earlier occurred near the end of the school year. The boys in our class had become particularly disgusted with the idiot as the hot weather wore on his nerves and ours. We lacked understanding, but not the natural cruelty of childhood. We took a perverse pleasure in goading him to new absurdities. But it was an action of the idiot's which precipitated our ultimate cruelty.

He had been very rambunctious for several days. He and Peter had grown somewhat apart recently, which did not help matters. The two of them had some sort of argument. It was nearly summer, the time when heat and impatience make school so difficult. There was a place at the end of the playground which was considered a sort of inviolate sanctuary for one of the class cliques. They had cleared out an area just within the edge of the woods, so that it was invisible from the outside. It was this meeting place that the idiot invaded one day at recess, while everyone else was playing ball. He was seen emerging, and the leaders of the clique were angry, but could do nothing, since the teacher was present. After a while they discovered, however, that their clubhouse had been disarrayed, almost destroyed, and that the worthless objects which were their treasures had been irretrievably scattered. They knew the villain, and determined to mete out their own form of justice. It was no matter that the destruction had been the result of a playful, uncomprehending caprice (or was there, indeed, a hidden hostility in this idiot?); children do not forgive stupidity. Not the perpetrator, but the crime was judged. Plans were made during lunch. I am sad to say I was involved in the plotting.

We found a certain glee in the release of our wicked instincts. How glad we were to have a justification, an excuse! Perhaps we had been done some wrong. But our delight in vengeance went far beyond the scope of the crime or the idea of punishment. We enjoyed feeling sinister and secret, as if we were conspirators in a high affair of state. We enjoyed the concealment of the impending action from authority. We had all the trappings; we prepared the event as if it were a major battle. It made us feel important, impressed with ourselves. It was for us more imaginary than real. We were gripped by our own imaginations.

The idiot in walking home always took a short cut, following a path through a large field which was mostly filled with high weeds. It was there we decided to ambush him, and it was there we hurried as soon as school was out, leaving behind two boys to delay the idiot, deceiving him with friendliness, until we could secretly take our places. When our lookouts told us that the idiot was coming, we hid in the weeds, our pockets bulging with pebbles. Before we knew what was happening, he was in our midst, being pelted with pebbles. How we jeered at him and his helplessness! He was impotent with rage, crying with huge sobs, gulping for air. He picked up the rocks from the ground and threw them back at us, but his feeble efforts, as his arms flailed wildly, only spurred us on.

It was then that Peter came running up. He must have seen us en masse going in the same direction, and suspected trouble. He pulled the idiot over against a sandpile and there covered him protectively with his own body. The hail of rocks continued; now it was Peter we jeered at, and having begun on the idiot, we released our hostilities toward the genius as well. We were by now so carried away that we were completely forgetful of possible consequences to ourselves. But I suppose this state of affairs only lasted a few seconds; everything happened very quickly, faster than thought. Peter said a few quiet things to the idiot as the rocks kept on hitting them. He spoke aloud only once: looking up, staring straight at me, he said "Tom . . . ," then fell silent. Almost immediately someone yelled that Mr. Yarborough was coming (he was another teacher). We all started to run away into the thick weeds; but before long, I saw Billy Leades throw a stone the size of a tennis ball, and as I yelled belatedly, "Don't!" saw it strike Peter in the side of the head. We all vanished. I heard the idiot call Peter's name. The whole affair, from the time we attacked the idiot, had lasted less than three minutes.

The idiot did not come back to school. I heard the next year that he had been placed in a special school. As for Peter, a week after the incident, the principal, Mr. Yarborough, and another man we didn't know brought Peter, a bandage around his head, into the class, and he was asked to identify anyone who took part in the stoning. We were terrified. He looked at us icily, unblinking and intent, then said in cold tones, staring straight at Billy Leades, "I do not recognize any of them." Then they went away. We were lectured over and over by Mrs. Wilkins, who said she knew some of us were involved, but that Peter refused to talk for reasons of his own. She said the unknown man was a policeman. She also told us that the idiot had not spoken a word since the attack. She said that the only reason we were not punished severely was that there was no way of proving who was involved, and who wasn't, and that the whole thing was too horrible anyway, and that she hoped our shame would punish us. We suffered a collective punishment. The whole class went without lunch or recess, pending a confession. The last three days of the year were spent under a pall. Most of us felt guilty. We tried to tell ourselves it was an accident, that he deserved it anyway, we rationalized, but the guilt hung on, even if subconscious, restraining our joyfulness, even if sometimes someone forgot for a moment and appeared unbecomingly happy. We realized we had done something more serious than we had planned, something we didn't understand, that it had gone beyond a game, or boyish teasing and jeering. We didn't mention it to one another, as if ignoring it would erase the fact. But the enormity of it hung over us and destroyed all attempts at conversation. We were very cold towards Billy Leades, who thus became scapegoat for all our guilt, but I, at least, knew deep down that we were all equally contemptible.

Peter came again only on the last days of school, to take part in the closing exercises before summer. Still with the accusing white bandage around his head, incongruous with his best suit, he

walked across the stage to receive a scholastic award from the principal. He was thirty yards from our place in the auditorium at that moment, and left immediately. What was to have been a happy day for us had become a torture; I yearned for the forgetfulness of summer. That day was the last time I saw Peter Tiompkin, though I have read of him in the newspapers and in magazines since.

I have felt compelled to relate these things. I am far from being a simple-minded man. I know now how wrong I was then for my part in the act of cruelty; but I also know I am not the same person now, and I have long ago forgiven myself. No, it is not my part in the drama which disturbs me, not even the mystery of why this peculiar person saw something different in me than all the others though I was never his friend, which has caused me to record this event—there is something else about it, some truth I may be incapable of grasping. And the problem is this: I still cannot understand Peter Tiompkin.

DONALD JAMES



and death, the baritone, sings loudly as his part requires
the leitmotifs of my declining life,
as an endlessly fading echo pulsates in the monastery of my heart,
the trapped voice, ariel pining in his chamber of wood,
words entombed, the four walls soaked with silence;
and in such stricken nights, angels of nothingness
(nibbled with desire as the dream subsides, no magic word
descended) with the persistent hum of silence in their ears,
gaunt faces with dark hollow mouths opened in the voiceless scream,
giacomettifaces attenuated unto terror, with eyes sunken, staring,
impressing into the nameless night (so empty of lives lost)
the image of their fear forever, cannot mask their eyes from dark-
ness;
and all these frantic strivings to divert their dread,
the strugglings in the trap, writhings in their beds of pain,
are all to no avail as the thought returns,
obsessive thought unspeakable no net can catch
that twists its way through the corridors of the minoan mind:
hide you now a while, and think on this, to be forever nil, forgot
by night, the impossible hole, the great dark beyond belief;
life is a footnote to an angry page, a nub, a stump of time,
and we who come as though it were a solitary madness
in a cogito-ergo-sum of reverberating thought,
not knowing how suddenly life is done, how quickly
the moment comes when all past merges to one gesture
(the sudden moment engraved forever on the registry of time,
as the moment extends to all futures), one slight flicker,
the moment before the fading of the light (as the lights fade
in the annie russell theatre), are predestined doomed.

DONALD JAMES

HARLEQUIN

The sun had turned into a large red sphere and was sinking toward the horizon, and the fishermen were hauling in their nets for the last time that day. The Naples sky and bay were resplendent. Even the streets and houses glowed hotly: one almost expected to see Vesuvio spewing molten lava, but the old volcano alone stood calmly in the midst of all the frenzy below. That night was the carnival, and there was already a feeling of anticipation in the air. The women were busy preparing their costumes and masks. The pleasant smell of freshly baked bread rose from all the kitchens and mingled with the fragrant scent of leaves and fresh fruit. The strong, persistent odor of fish contended with the more delicate, perfumed scents, and these were mixed in the senses of the people with wine, cheese, laughter, song, and the vivid red color of the sunset.

A man came walking down a narrow, dirty lane near the docks. The smell of rotten vegetables rose from the filthy cobblestones. He looked at the drab houses standing on either side of him and at the threadbare clothes stretched on lines above him from window to window. Several small boys, who had been playing soccer in the streets, came running toward the man with shouts of joy. He stood still for a moment. His baggy, tattered clothing gave him the comical appearance of a harlequin, and his face was far more striking than those of most men. His skin was chalky white and deeply pock-marked, and his whole face had a bloated, diseased appearance. His nose stood out like an oblong balloon, and his lips were the shape and nearly the color of ripe bananas. One who didn't know the man could almost imagine that the face was not real, that it was only a mask, the mask of a clown with a lifeless, never changing expression of melancholy. The illusion was enhanced by the fact that only his deep, black eyes showed signs of life as they peered through the pallid mass of flesh in which they were buried. Some stared at him and merely shook their heads. He was a pitiful looking creature. Most of the children loved him though; he was gentle and sometimes gave them candy, and besides they thought he was an awfully funny fellow. One slender little boy skipped up to him. "Tell me a story, Alberto," he cried, and the man rested his hand lightly on the child's head. But the little boy's mother pulled him rudely away by the ear and dragged him into the house, all the while scolding him in a loud, husky voice and making the sign of the cross over him. Some men poked their heads out of windows and shouted threateningly at the man until he slowly made his way down the street with his head slightly bowed and his arms dangling limply by his sides.

It was still lighter at the bay than at most places in the city. There Tonio, the toughest of the fishermen, was standing bent over his net; a cigarette glowed between his lips, and smoke poured from his distended nostrils. His curly hair and beard were copper-tinged with light, and when he looked up, his eyes gleamed mischievously as he told a risqué story or sang a bawdy cabaret song. An acrid animal odor rose from the bodies of the fishermen as they worked. The laughter and singing of young men could be heard in the streets more clearly as evening advanced; and shouting, care-free children ran half-naked through the narrow lanes.

A woman came walking by the docks, her hips swaying seductively, and the fishermen began whistling and neighing like wild horses. Tonio threw back his head and with an ironic smile began to sing as passionately as he knew how: "femina, mala femina . . . woman, woman of the streets, I love you!" The woman was apparently accustomed to these antics. She regarded the men for a moment with her slanted cat's eyes, tied a kerchief around her thick, black hair, smiled slightly, and walked away.

A young shepherd, a shaggy, satyr-like fellow, came frolicking along with his herd of goats. A single bushy eyebrow stretched all the way across his face from one pointed ear to the other, and a large harmonica seemed to grow from some orifice below his nose.

"Such a beautiful woman, that Madalena," he said, removing the harmonica and raising one hand to kiss the fingertips as a gesture of approval, "but, by all the saints, she's as cold as the snow on top of Vesuvio."

"The devil take her," scowled one of the older fishermen. "She's only a woman, and, the Lord be praised, there's no scarcity of them anywhere!"

The little shepherd laughed, and his laughter echoed down the dusky, cobblestone street. "Ah, but she *is* beautiful," he whispered to his goats, "bella, bellissima!"

The fishermen left the docks just as the sky was fading to a pale yellow. They were laughing and joking, but suddenly they grew silent. Some of the men crossed themselves as if a black cat or a priest had passed in front of them. The man with the ugly, mask-like face was standing just at the corner of the street. A woman was talking to him and smiling gently up at him. She was looking into his dark, liquid eyes, and it seemed she was trying to find in them the expression, the animation his ludicrous face couldn't reveal. Tonio saw that the girl was Madalena; he spat in disgust and tried not to take notice of her.

"Hey, that fellow over there," said one of the young fishermen, indicating Alberto. "Who is he? That isn't a mask he's wearing, is it?"

"You mean you've never seen him before?" said a grisly old giant incredulously. "You're new here though, aren't you? That's Alberto, but he's often called 'il mascerato' (the masked one), because his face is so deformed and unreal looking. All I can say for the fellow is that he's quiet, but, by the bones of all the saints, I wish he would go back to wherever he came from. There's something suspicious about him. I don't understand why the children

like him so much. No, nothing good can come of it. He wasn't made that way for no reason, the rascal. I say he's either a devil or a saint, and, by God, neither one is very desirable!"

The fishermen turned and looked curiously at the two figures standing close together in the darkening street. They all turned except Tonio: he looked straight ahead and chewed at his mustache nervously.

The sad, entreating songs of mandolins could be heard almost everywhere in Naples. The streets and houses had turned pale violet. Vesuvio rose imperiously above the city like a purple-clad sentinel, and the first stars glimmered in the clear, half-dark sky. It was a beautiful evening. The smell of salt from the bay was lifted up in the cool air and blown through the city. In the streets the intoxicating scents of heavy perfumes rose from the costume dresses of masked women, who made a swishing sound with their long skirts as they hurried along. The carnival was about to begin.

Some white bearded antiques still lingered in the sidewalk cafés discussing heatedly and demonstratively the problems of modern politics over a bottle of Chianti or playing a fast game of scopa. An epidemic of boisterous laughter and red noses was breaking out in all the cafés of the city. At one café in particular, the men seemed to be having an especially good time.

"There goes a nice one, Giovanni," shouted a toothless old man waving a piece of sausage in the direction of a young girl walking past the café. A few wolf whistles and cries of "mama mia" rose from the group of patriarchs.

"Why don't you go home to your wife, grandpa, and leave the chickens for us," suggested a young dandy teasingly to the old man.

"Well, son," said the old fellow, his olive eyes sparkling vivaciously under his tousled gray hair, "our wives, God bless them, are good women, but they're growing fat and lazy now; and we men are still raring to go. When you are old like us, you will learn to get some pleasure from looking at the chickens before you go home to the old hen."

They laughed and drank and told stories and sang songs until tears rolled down their leathery cheeks. They seemed to be trying to recapture the youth that was so precious to them now for at least a few hours. Their memories must have been sweet, composed as they were of laughter mingled with tears. Pleasure is fine, but it is much sweeter, much dearer, when it is mixed with pain.

The long, restful twilight gave way to a frenzied, one might almost say hellish, night. Gaudy, multicolored lights pierced the darkness and suffused the bay, the eye of the city. The festivities had begun. The atmosphere evoked in the sensitive spectator a feeling of childlike wonderment at the fantastic spectacle. Whirls of color flew past; they were the skirts of dancing women. The men twirled them about so wildly, so mercilessly, that one could almost imagine that they were Bacchantes and not real women at all. One saw the extravagant muscular girations, the ecstatic faces, the long

hair streaming from the moist foreheads of the raving women; one saw this chaos and conjured up a picture of Dionysios standing in the midst of it with a glass of wine in his hand and a sly smile on his lips.

There were masked women with several layers of grease paint smeared carelessly over their faces. The costumes were colorful and varied; a heavy jangling noise usually announced the arrival of a gypsy. Butterflies, queens, and goddesses passed by; beggars walked arm in arm with royalty. All of Naples vibrated with loud shouts and peals of shrill laughter. The main streets were brightly lit: here satyrs, clowns, and assorted packasses cavorted and amused themselves by playing silly pranks on the more delicate, unassuming creatures. But the narrow lanes were, as always, immersed in darkness: these were the quiet, intimate, secluded corners of Naples. Here people came to smoke a cigarette peacefully, to contemplate, to engage in serious discussions, or to do whatever else people do in quiet, intimate, and secluded corners. That night especially Naples was a city of glaring lights and deep shadows.

Tonio was hurrying around swearing under his breath and pulling nervously at his cigarette. He stopped at a dimly lit street corner and looked around; suddenly he caught sight of Madalena talking with Alberto. He was looking down at her with a strange expression on his disfigured face. Was it tenderness? One couldn't tell. His swollen lips looked as though they were trying to smile, but instead they were drawn up in a ridiculous grimace. As Tonio approached the two of them, Madalena turned toward him her small, oval face: slanted eyes glowing like polished crystal, cheeks the color and shape of ripe peaches, and a tiny pair of lovely, laughing lips.

"Alberto has been painting my picture," she said, "He's just finished. Did you know he was an artist, Tonio? An excellent one too! Who would have guessed? Do you want to see the painting? It's a beautiful miniature, and Alberto has made me so very happy!"

She smiled at Alberto, whose neck had grown red and blochy. Tonio threw his arm carelessly around Madalena's waist and jerked her toward him.

"Don't you want to see the painting?" she asked softly.

Tonio pulled at his cigarette once more and threw it away. "No. We haven't time now; the festivities have already begun. Chow, Alberto."

Alberto stood still and watched them walk away. Madalena looked helpless and submissive as Tonio pushed her roughly along. He watched them until they disappeared in the masked crowd and he was alone. Then he bowed his head very low, and his whole body convulsed as if he were in agony.

A little boy ran up to him and tugged at his ragged pants leg shyly, anxiously; he glanced up at Alberto, and a small, sad voice escaped his quivering lips: "Has someone hurt you?"



Alberto straightened his body, and a window spilled its yellow light mercilessly upon his face. "No, child, no one has hurt me — no one. I just . . . felt dizzy for a moment. I'm all right now." He was not looking at the child. His huge dark eyes seemed to focus upon some invisible entity.

He walked quickly through the crowd, staring at the laughing masks and painted faces. His own face became ever more melancholy and wretched looking. Perhaps it was because they were having so much fun, all these people, and he could'nt take part in it. They were only playing at being funny, but at midnight they would discard the masks just like butterflies discard their dry, funny little cocoons.

One tall cavalier with a curled mustache laughed loudly at Alberto as he passed back into the darkness. "Hey, take a look," he cried to his companion, "that fellow there is a real clown!"

JOANNE VASSALLO

KING OF THE MOUNTAIN

That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a fother,
A trewe swinkere and a good was he.

— *Chaucer*

Edward stepped off the ladder, placing his toes on the narrow lower lip of the I-beam. Gently he swung his other leg over the top of the beam and eased into a straddling position on the rafter. It was so hot that the paint was sticky under his clenched hands, and the beam burned him through the seat of his jeans. Slowly, very slowly, gripping the beam still tighter, he gathered his legs under him, and, leaning forward ever harder on his hands, he pulled his feet up onto the top surface of the rafter. For a moment he squatted there, still clutching the beam, trembling under the hot sky. Then he edged his feet into a position one behind the other on the six-inch beam and released his hold. With a series of hesitant jerks he rose into an erect position. The breeze tickled his spine, and the whole skeleton of columns and girts seemed to undulate beneath him. His body swayed and his arms gyrated free of his will. He took a faltering step forward up the slope of the rafter towards the peak of what would be the roof of the embryonic steel building. Then he halted. He tried to crush the quivering in his limbs and gather in his bursts of breath. The shadow wind fluttered over his naked back. Edward knelt on the rafter, inhaling deeply, and gazed at the concrete forty feet below.

"Forget it, fella." Harold Wright looked up at him, army hat pushed back, revealing the golden twine of his hair, yellow smile broken by a missing front tooth. "You'll never make it on your feet. Crawl on up there and get that cable unhooked. Ain't got all day."

The sweat was streaming on Edward's face and forming sticky puddles in his armpits. Through the clustered droplets in his eyes all the world looked red and orange. He let his legs slip off the top of the beam onto its lower lip and the pressure of his pulse and the quiver of his entrails subsided. As he edged up the incline of the rafter the steel seared his hands and the sun flayed his back. Finally he reached the peak where the cable of the long-boomed wrecker was hooked around the rafter. Tommy tripped the winch in the cab below, releasing the tension on the cable; and Edward carefully avoiding the frayed spines of wire, slid the hook loose and dropped it. Then he groped his way down the declivity to the eave and descended the ladder propped against the column.

Slowly he trod the glittering desolation of the floor slab, five hundred feet long and a hundred across. It was ringed by fang-like I-beam columns which were girted together around the sides. Half of the rafters were up and also girted together now. When all the

rafters were up the sheets would go on, then the overhead doors. Edward marvelled at it. Each time he stood at the top of a column and watched the odd ton of steel of half rafter shiver into the air, suspended from the improvised boom of one of the rattletrap old wreckers, and float toward him and clank into place on the slanting top of the column for him to bolt down, he caught his breath and asked himself whatever he was doing there. It was insanity, he mused. Two functional illiterates and he and three other teenagers to erect this beast of a building? And he had never held a drill in his hand until this summer.

"Harry Wright wants me and you to put these perlings out." Tommy punctuated this statement with a gesture towards a stack of girts.

"Okay." Edward turned and headed for the stack, shielding his eyes from the glare of the concrete. Sand and sweat gathered between his toes, and a wrinkle in the tongue of his tennis shoe blistered his instep. He rubbed his raw sticky hands on the knees of his levis and stopped beside the pile of girts at the edge of the slab. Edward looked up at the dull red of the column next to him and gazed around the entire arena-like expanse. It was like a modern mockery of Stonehenge. I should quit now, he thought, I have enough money.

He looked back. Tommy meandered towards him, hands in his pockets, whistling a monotonous sequence of flat notes. "Come on, Tommy, let's get these perlings scattered out!"

"Ah, take it easy." Tommy's voice was husky and methodical. Edward decided that if an ox were given speech it would sound like Tommy. The latter stood with his hands on his hips and watched as Edward bent over to separate the girts with a screw-driver. The teams were made from thin, flimsy steel warped into a "Z," and the viscous paint applied at the foundry bound them together like paste in stacks. Edward struggled for a few moments, then looked up at Tommy, who still watched, his face settled in a slack grin. "I sure bet you'll be glad to get back to college."

"Oh shut up and give me a hand. Wedge that end loose while I hold this end. . . ." Tommy reached down and slammed the end of the perling with a pry-bar. It sprung free and Edward leaped to dodge the skipping steel as it clattered across the concrete. "You idiot! Are you trying to kill somebody?"

"What's the matter? I got it loose, didn't I?"

"Well I suppose I could've done it that way." Edward leaned down, chewing his lip, and lifted the end of the girt. Tommy looked around for a moment, whistling his fragment of a tune. Then he eased down and grasped the other end. Out of step with one another they stumbled across the concrete with the wavering beam. The hot steel burned and the edges cut into Edward's hands. Between the last two rafters to be set, and more or less in line with those already up, they placed the girt. Edward winced as Tommy simply released his end at waist height and it dropped with a sharp clap. As they turned to take another girt from the pile, Harold shouted from the rafter.

"Edward! We need another perling up here, boy." Edward hurried to where Harold dangled a rope with a hook on the end from the rafter. Tommy walked behind him toward the adjacent rafter where Ray had dropped a similar rope. Edward took the hook and slipped it through the bolt hole in the end of the girt. When Tommy had followed suit at the other end, the two of them took the other ends of the ropes and hoisted the beam up between the rafters, pulling the lines through block-and-tackle arrangements. Harold caught the end of the girt, releasing the tension on the rope, and Edward let it go. Then he walked back to the stack of perlings at the edge of the concrete. Tommy straggled along after him, but Edward said nothing to him this time. He stood silently watching Harold and Ray bolt the girt into place across the span between the rafters, his fingernails in his teeth.

"What're you looking at" asked Tommy as he ambled up to where Edward waited.

"Nothing."

Tommy chuckled. "Looking at ol' Harry Wright up there, huh?"

"Oh get bent."

"You don't much like it up there, do ya?"

"I get the job done."

"But you don't like it much, huh?"

"I haven't noticed you doing any pirouettes."

"Jesus, I'll be you'll be glad to get back to college — you and them big ol' words." He paused for a moment, his countenance still loosened in a canine grin. "I hope you're still here when we start sheeting. Wait'll you're up there with one of them sheets and this ol' twenty-five-mile-an-hour wind comes up and it's about to blow you right off the roof; or one of them sheets gets loose and goes sailing through the air. Cut you right in half." He paused significantly, then with a firm nod of his head he reiterated, "It will, it'll cut you right in half."

The tension mounted in Edward's shoulders, and all the heat of the day seemed to gather in his stomach. Angrily he sighed. "I suppose it would cut you in half as much as me."

"You wait and see," said Tommy. "You wait till you get up with one of them sheets."

"Ah, shut up, Tommy. You're always talking big like that," said Jimmy with a laugh. He had just come over with Dave from where they had been bolting rafter sections together on the ground. Jimmy was Tommy's younger brother and Dave was the younger brother of a friend of Harold's who worked for the phone company. Edward thought they were above 17, but he had never bothered to ask; Harold had told them to keep quiet about working on the job. To Edward they were rather nondiscript; the only way he could remember which was which was by the fact that Dave had dark greasy hair and Jimmy had blond greasy hair. They were typical drop-out types, he thought. At least Tommy was unique in his own slothful way.

“One of these days I’m gonna smack you right in the mouth, Jimmy,” Tommy was saying. “When you are gonna quite acting like a little punk?”

“Ah shutup, I ain’t scared of you.”

Edward looked away into the savage August sky, enamelled to a brittle blue that was only disturbed by the heat rising from a pile of dismembered rafters, painted the color of dried blood. “Hey, girls! You having a little party over there?” Harold yelled from the top of a rafter. “Get back to work!” Sluggishly they all started for their tasks. Then Harold yelled again: “Hey, Jimmy! bring my cigarettes.”

Edward stood for a moment in the pale shadow of an upright column and watched the boy cross the hot concrete, one finger in his nostril. Harold Wright stood erect at the peak of the steel rafter. As Jimmy tossed the cigarettes into the air he leaned out and snatched them with a flick of one hand. Casually he stood there, a shadow against the hot sky, lighting the cigarette. Then he dropped the pack and the matches back down to Jimmy and gazed across the framework of his building, miraculously half-formed from the scattered heaps of steel spotting the livid swath torn out of the palmetto thickets. Then he dropped the cigarette butt and strode down the slope of the rafter.

The next morning as the sun edged over the line of trees in the East, Edward waited at the corner. It was shadowy and strangely cool, and he shivered in his flannel shirt. At last he saw the one burning light of the Chevy pickup round the distant curve and bear down on him in the gloom of dawn. The truck hissed to a halt in front of him. The door was crushed in right over the orange “Melrose Metals” emblem. Harold, Ray, and Tommy filled the cab, so Edward swung himself up into the bed of the truck with Dave and Jimmy, seating himself on the rim. Harold punched the gas and the pickup spun around in a wide U-turn. The tires snarled on a patch of sand and Edward clutched the sides of the bed to keep his balance. The air was cool whipping past his face and filled his ears, rendering him oblivious to the chatter of Dave and Jimmy. Out on the highway the effect was even greater, and, clutching the side, he leaned back over the road, letting the wind ripple through his hair and eyes.

When he looked up he realized that Jimmy was shouting to him over the noise of the wind. He was not able to understand until they stopped for a traffic light and Jimmy spoke again, “Why ain’t you up in the front instead of Tommy? He ain’t your Boss, is he?” There was a trace of freckles around Jimmy’s nose which was incongruous with the elaborate waving of his stringy hair and the studied slur of his voice. Edward smiled wanly. He was not sure if he were being baited or not.

“You do a lot more work than he does,” said Dave. Jimmy snickered.

"I wouldn't worry about it if I were you," Edward answered after a moment. Then he looked away at the gas stations clustered around the intersection and, mercifully, the light turned green.

When they reached the building site Edward jumped out and quickly opened the gate of the high steel fence. He jumped on the running board as the truck passed and hung on tightly as Harold whipped it between two of the columns and it bounced up onto the concrete slab of the floor. Everyone slowly climbed out of the truck. It had already begun to warm up, so Edward took off his flannel shirt, leaving only his tee-shirt, a bright white in the morning sun. The whole group meandered across the concrete, then halted beneath the last rafter that had been raised the previous day. The cable of one of the wreckers was still hooked onto it.

"Eddy, go up and unhook that cable. Tommy, you let the wench off when he gets up there. Come on, girls, gotta work, work, work. Boss is coming up today."

Edward rubbed his hands across the front of his shirt and walked over to the ladder against the column. The narrow round rungs pressed painfully against the balls of his feet as he climbed. He looked straight up and watched the juncture of beam and column approach his eyes. He halted on the top and wiped his hands on his jeans one at a time while he held on to the column with the other. Methodically he lifted one leg over the top of the rafter and pulled the other up behind it. He leaned forward on his fingertips for a moment, then gently stood up. He began to walk forward, keeping his left foot behind his right at all times, never lifting either of them far off the surface of the beam. A girt which extended across the top of the rafter forced him to stop. A gentle breeze fluttered his shirt. There was a twitch in the muscles of Edward's abdomen, then he sucked in his breath and stepped over the girt with one foot. He paused again, straddling the obstacle, to make himself stop shaking, then he continued up the incline of the rafter with slow but normal steps till he grasped the cable. He stood there a moment, gazing across the stretch of the concrete. Harold and Ray were giving Dave and Jimmy some sort of instructions about a stack of rafter sections. Carefully he let loose the cable and wiped the sweat in his palms on the knees of his jeans. Then he sat down, letting his feet dangle. "Tommy! Tommy!" It took a moment to rouse him from his oblivious daze in the cab of the wrecker. "Tommy, give me a little slack!" Then he vigorously attacked the wrapped cable.

Joe Melrose was short and powerful, more like stone than the metal he mastered. Behind his heavy butcher's brow was the unlettered cleverness and determination that had brought him in four years from ornamental iron to major steel construction. From where he sat on an eave strut, tightening the bolts which held a column to a rafter, Edward watched the group of men: Joe and Harold,

and Ray to one side. It was easy to see their anger. Joe stood still, hands on his hips, face locked like a vise, his voice inaudible to Edward. Harold stomped back and forth under the afternoon sun, gesturing with both hands, the sweat drops glistening on the golden tangles on his head and chest, his skin flashing darkly red. Occasionally Edward could discern the high-pitched notes of Harold's complaint. It occurred to him then that his progress had been very slight and he tried to hasten his work, but it was difficult, leaning out over the concrete, to handle the two heavy wrenches and he promptly dropped one of the inch-and-a-half nuts which struck sharply on the floor.

Harold turned away from the other man and waved to Edward to come down to him. He descended the ladder and stepped quickly across the concrete toward Harold, squinting against the glare of the bleached-out surface.

"I just don't see what you could've been doing with six men only to have this much done." It was Joe's flat, rocky voice.

"Look at the men, for Chrissake!"

"I told you I'd give you more men."

"I don't want that bunch of goddamn yardbirds you've got puttering around the shop."

"Paying a little more won't cost you near as much as finishing late."

"Look, dammit, you contracted this job out to me, so why don't you let me do it my way with my crew?" Both men then became aware of Edward's presence. Harold turned to him. "Eddy, go up there and give Tommy and Jimmy a hand."

Edward looked up. Jimmy was standing on a high, shuddering scaffold, and Tommy sat on the rafter above his brother's head. The two of them were laboriously tightening the bolts that held the rafter sections together at the peak to make a single span. He turned towards the scaffold. "You and these goddamn kids," he heard Joe mutter as he walked away.

As Edward climbed the struts of the scaffold it creaked and rattled, and each time he swung his leg up to the next height it felt as though it would tip over and come crashing down on top of him. For a moment he thought the coiled rope which blocked one of the wheels had slipped away and it had begun to roll, and he froze motionless, clinging with both hands, the streaming sweat pasting his shirt to his back. "Hurry up!" Jimmy hollered from above. "You're shaking this thing!" Edward could almost feel the eyes from the floor scrutinizing his slow ascent, and he cursed the voice that harassed him. Finally he dragged his husky body onto the scaffold boards.

"Jesus, I know you'll be glad to get back to college now," Tommy grinned down from the rafter.

"Oh shove it," Edward scowled, picking up a wrench which, like every other piece of metal here, burned the skin that touched it. Rage trembled in his guts like the shimmering August heat, and he quivered as he clutched the wrench, unsure if it were anger or fear. "Come on, let's get this thing put together."

"Yes, boss."

Edward frowned and set the wrench on a nut and pushed while Jimmy pulled against him on the bolt. Tommy sat over them and worked on the bolts which were out of reach from the scaffold. When he and Jimmy had finished everything they could reach, Edward looked up, "For God's sake, Tommy, you're stil on that same bolt!"

"Goddamn! I'd like to see you do any better. Why don't you get up here and see if you can!" With his face screwed into a surly pout he set his hands on the beam and swung slowly down to the scaffold, legs flailing to find the boards. Then he stood there, facing Edward looked up, "For God's sake, Tommy, you're still on that little brother Jimmy stood off at the corner of the platform watching with a sick, titillated grin. Tommy reminded Edward of the dogs he had seen panting and spoiling for a fight. "Go on, do it." Edward exhaled slowly and glanced up at the rafter hovering over him, hot and muddy red. The sky glared like a pale blue fire. Edward reached up with both hands, still grasping the wrench in his fingers, and swung his leg up over the beam. For a moment he hung there with the tension searing his muscles. Then he pulled up, but the wrench popped out of his fingers. He snatched for it and his mouth gaped open as he realized what he had done; but the scream never sounded, and the sky whirled red, black, and crazy as he fell.

ROBERT YOUNG

La Matin

She was one who well knew the bounds reality had laid
Upon her; one who rarely felt the kiss of wind
Upon her cheek as she leaned beneath the portico arch,
Then merely brushed away the hair and smoothed her dress.

She was another, then, when the first sun at dawn
Glazed her eyes, lavished red upon her darkling locks,
And she went into the wet grass barefoot and laughed
And ran her fingers through the droplets in the crisp blades
Then very softly wept

Because the sky was such a shocking, distant blue, and
Because the feathered trills of sparrows descended so
Below the fading umbrage of the treeline . . .

Each mating cry that came and disappeared reverberated
In her heart as the taunting sunwarmth crept
Across her limbs and shivered away with each
New breath of wind.

ROBERT YOUNG



The Professor

The professor looked up — he had been making notes in his new text when the wail of a baby disturbed him. He looked out the open window of his office and saw one of his graduate students with his wife and new little girl. They moved to the shade of a full-fruited cherry tree; and, sitting down, the woman unbuttoned her yellow print blouse and held the baby to her breast. The professor turned back to his book.

He was a good-looking man with a sculpturesque face: well-defined planes: high cheekbones and forehead; a firmly chiseled jawline; the prominent, aristocratic nose; and full, sensitive lips through which came the resonant voice which captured a class' attention. Beneath the slightly peaked brows were impenetrable gray eyes — capable of changing from sparks of laughter to chips of granite. His brown hair was just beginning to gray; and, though he was not a tall man, his leanness added height to his appearance.

He smiled to himself, remembering the morning the student had called from the hospital to say he couldn't come to class that day — his wife was having a baby. It turned out to be a false alarm, though; they were sent home until the baby arrived a week later, on a weekend for the convenience of all concerned. Still it amused the professor to no end to think that the student had even remembered class.

Of course, he realized ruefully, he could afford to be amused, having missed out on marriage and parenthood. It seemed strange — he had never planned to be a bachelor and, even as a young man, had looked forward to having children.

Women had always been attracted to him, and he had thought of marrying several times. But he had always seen the obstacles: he decided against marrying until he had his Master's degree but then felt that the combination of teaching and working on a doctorate would leave no time for a normal marriage — whatever that is. By then he had lost track of the girl who was waiting for him and — no, that wasn't it; they had broken off just before he received his Ph.D.

Yes, he had loved her — there was no doubt about that and even less about her feelings; but he knew they couldn't marry — his critical, preceptive mind that had served him so well with his research revealed all the incompatibilities between their personalities, the dissonance of their ideas, and the diversity of their tastes. She knew the breakup was coming too and feigned indifference — she was terrible at dissembling — saying it was his decision, he was a free agent. However, he did bring her to see the wisdom of his decision and to agree that it was the logical course.

Of course, he had met other women— but each time had seen the disparities between their viewpoints which might prove dangerous in marriage.

And now though his life was interesting — he sought out interesting people and ideas, his papers and books were well received by his colleagues, and his social life was never dull — the professor again turned his attention to a family beneath the tree. They were getting up now and walking away, the young husband carrying the baby.

The professor looked back at his book on Impressionism, open to a reproduction of a Cassatt, and considered reminding his contemporary art class not to get off writing their papers until the last minute — but the students were old enough to know better, he decided.

VIDA JOYCE HULL

GIVEN OVER (DEDICATED) TO SALLY

Poor Sally, she was here but now she's gone
That woman was more than guys could resist
How the hell she did it I just don't know
'Cause she didn't seem to want things like that
But leaned on her conquests till she always fell, damit

Good ole Sally left us all forsaken
Once she was the prize of all the men she knew
(and vice versa)
Revoking nature's laws of conduct
Better than Canute tide's change confuted

She was no bitch except as side effect
While bent on knowing something much much vaster
Like where love beyond beyond beyond might lie
Our pride since scorched by this sun's ray
Perceives more weakly charms of other worthy girls
To us these poorer substitutes for her
Who was the once and final dream of life
Can not expect to call us forward faithfully
Constant we were to Sally, but only fickle
To these mere shattered fragments of a gem
That flicker on and off with every change in light

As I listen and the rain sounds softly
And distant shores transform themselves with weeds of fog
First frozen misty backdrops of an artificer
And see how sedately beauty rests at sunset .
While ducks fish, graceful in our weariness
Still no rest so serene, nor game such fun
That I am content. Still I wish you were here.

ANONYMOUS



INTERMEZZO

The door opened just a crack, and an anxious hand slipped in and began to grope around the wall furiously. Then it paused, and started to pat up and down, from the door frame towards the farthest extent of its reach. Then it paused again and started to comb the wall with its fingers, back and forth, top to floor.

"What are you doing, Benjamin?" a voice echoed from the hall.

"Nothing, hon', nothing. Just want to get that light on in here before we—wait. Wait. Whew. Ah. Got it."

The light flicked on.

"All right. Wait. No, put that down. No. You stand over there. Sideways. O.K. O.K.? All right. . . . Ooh! Ha-ha. O.K. Ha-ha."

Benjamin rocked back on one leg, kicked the door open and staggered into the plain room with his bride in his arms.

"Oh-ooo-oh-oh! Ah-ha!" he reeled across the room and plopped her down on the bed. She smiled. "H-hhh," he sat down beside her. "Happy wedding."

"Happy wedding," she said.

"Welp-hhhah," he slapped his thighs and got up. "I'll get the stuff."

As Benjamin brought in the bags Joan turned the television on and went into the bathroom. Benjamin put one suitcase on the luggage rack, one on the dresser, one on the floor, one in the closet, and he put Joan's cosmetic case on the bed. "Honey?" he shouted. She couldn't hear him over the water she was running for finesse. At least, for finesse she couldn't hear him. He took his overcoat and suit jacket off and draped them on the chair, turned the T.V. off, and then swished open the curtains with a flourish. It was already black out, and above the other skyscrapers the sky was like a black colander over a hot spotlight.

"Did you call me, Benj?"

"Yah, hon'. Com'ere. Let's sit and talk."

They sat on the side of the bed, looking out over the city and horizon.

"Where are we going tomorrow?"

"I don't know," he said. "I thought we'd see a bullfight, or maybe the pyramids or Xochimilco. There's a million things to do."

"What do you wear around here?"

"Ah, I don't know; a suit or something. Dress. You're a cool enough dresser."

"Gee."

"Oh, you are neatsy-keen, though, aren't you?"

"What can I say?"

He chortled and leaned over to her, rocking her backwards, kissing her. They rested on their backs.

"Cold?"

"Yeah, a little."

"Here, I'll turn it down."

As Benjamin walked over to the air conditioner Joan said, "Benj—you wanted to talk?"

"Hmm-yah."

Well . . . about—or just talk?"

"What do you mean," he asked, coming back to the bed.

"I don't know. When you talk, it's always about something."

"Whahat?" he said with a smile and tucked brows.

"Nothing," she smiled.

"No," he sat down. "I wanted to compliment you again, and tell you why I love you."

"Gee."

"Come on," he laughed. "Why?"

"'Cause I'm so cool. And me you. We're great."

"No, the key. We might as well talk this silly, movie stuff now, before we start to detest each other's guts. The key. I told you."

"Hhhh," she smiled, eyes rolling. "You love me because I'm so quiet and pretty——"

"Beautiful."

"—beautiful, and I'm so quiet I must know everything. Right?"

"Right, Chief."

"But I keep telling you, I don't know anything."

"O.K., you don't know anything. Do I still love you?"

"Ah, what is love," she mocked, "but a deep——"

"O.K., Flash," he was laughing. "Did you look at that stuff I wrote up?"

"Yes, I told you I did."

"O.K.?"

"Nifty."

"I should hope there'd be more there than that."

"No, it was very good."

"O.K. And did you look in the magazine for concerts when I was in customs?"

"Nope."

"No. What happened?"

"I was talking to that kid from Virginia."

"That blonde one—the baseball player?"

"Yeah. I still say he's very nice."

"Hon—I never said he wasn't nice. He's just kind of a nothing from what I saw."

"Well, I say he—what do you mean 'a nothin'? He was *very* nice, and rather cool, if you'll pardon me."

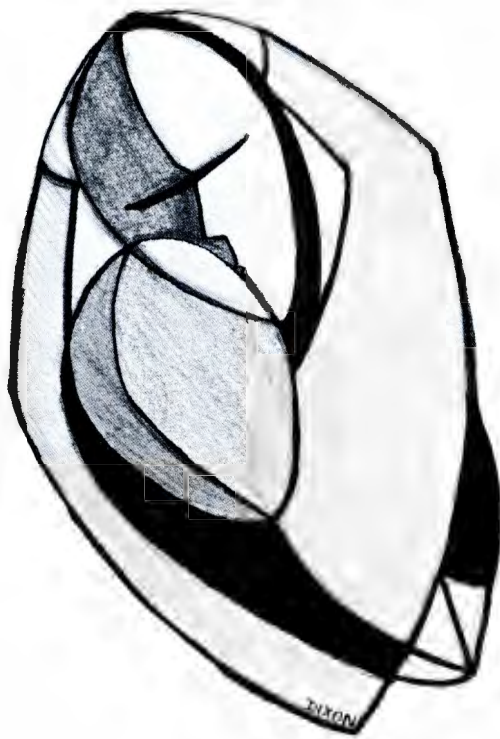
"Honey, I know. You know what I mean. As far as—well, you know. I don't want to play poetic, but . . . well . . ." (in a *basso profundo*.) "The Deeper Things."

"Oh, please. I told you——"

"You say more by keeping quiet."

"Do I?"

"Hhhh. Let's turn the light down. Here, you turn on the bed light, and I'll cut that one . . . O.K.?"



They lay together on the bed, half clothed. The dim light on the bed-stand flickered occasionally.

"Do you love me, Benj?"

"Of course I do, hon'."

"We're married now, aren't we."

"Yes, hon'. We're married."

"Yes, hon'. Yes, hon' Oh, I love you."

"Joan . . ."

"M-hm."

Benjamin got up slowly, walked to the drape cord, and drew shut the picture before them.

"What, Benj?"

He sat down on the bed and looked at the contour of his wrist for a moment.

"Nothing."

"Benj, I told you *please* not to do that — to, to say something and then 'nothing.'"

"Sorry, kid." He rolled back onto the bed beside her, smiled, stroked her face, and flicked out the light.

JON STEIN

water-falls of silence play
like church bells, across the night;
heard only by the dark ears of wind.

ANONYMOUS

Beings born of
the clouds
stagger aimlessly
Seeking order from
Chaos

Grouping, forever
reforming,
Casting multicolored stones
Each to his own
Taste

Once they drew a chalk
Line on a barroom
Floor
And divided
Infinity
They didn't quite
Understand it

So they called it god.

And the stones turned
Crimmillon;
The colors they
Fade towards
Grey

(easier to throw)

But the distinctions remained

(Easiest to throw)

As did the Clouds

Nay——

One Cloud

Only.

RIC GARDNER



One

A straw cottage has windows of air
a chimney of sand. A little grass bed
is on the mud floor. The balloon of
evening rained as we returned from the
fields with our canvas, tubes of paint
and stiffened brushes.

Too

I took some color from the icebox
and he lit tea leaves in the fire place.
Tea leaves warmed our brown bread.
We had wine, cheese and color. A leaf
of love a flower of peace.

And it was
the evening of the first day.

JANE BOOTH

Lymph's Nymphs

i

She screams to a rhythmical tune
Shouting with horror
Of being surrounded by the circling lights
Releasing no shadow.
Egyptian oil lamps light the room
A triangled wheel
Of an eternal sun
In darkest orange.

Again she yells to the Samana
To lead her through the forest
Of coconut trees and jasmine
And to walk to the pool
With its flowers of beautiful red.

Sands and bushes
And smells of lime trees
Cloud the edge of the sea
Of diamonding waves
In the drowning moon of liquid sighs
She stares at the hands
Of fingers twitching in the breeze
At her world by the water
With its look and power.
As the rain drops to its lustful destiny
Of things splattering it to infinite sand,
She wants to feel and to love;
But to be wet would be death.
In the foaming lavender surf of a crystal night
And a dawnless morn in shadows,
The waves throw her body to the sand
Of a heaven she once loved.

ii

A gray mist rises from the water
With its softly cushioned velvet
And dimly moon-lighted breaths
Reaching toward the want of a body
To caress and comfort
In its dying moments of gray.
She floats to the shore
In its midst of jealousy,
A pageant of grim and grieved desire
To drown her with it.

She now stands naked
With legs spread to pain
And sings violently of tormented ripples
In argument with the sun.
A final and desperate wave
Lunges forward at her
But she dives through the shaded gray
And escapes to the sun
Laughing and singing.
The water glides to the sand
And is conquered by the sun
With her naked body skipping behind
And her eyes weeping.

iii

She sits on the edge
Of a coral cliff
Looking out over the sea,
Splattering on the rocks
And hissing through the pores.
The blues of the water
Lamentingly natural
Hit harder and faster
While she walks on.
The sun is at noon
With tears glistening down its rays
To confuse with
The spitting of the cliff.
Puddles in the pores
Made with rain and spit
Harbor the snails
And enliven the grass
Of the oasis
That needs no sand.

She gives one last glance
To see nothing
And walks back in the gray
With her Egyptian lamp,
That commands the waves
And shows the tear stains
On the surface of the sun.
She drops her yellow Samana's robe
In the garden of beautiful red
And softly slides into the pool
While twitching her fingers
In the advancing gray shadows
And dissolving orange suns.
She leaves the pool's surface
By drowning herself
And lets a falling lime
Disturb her tomb.

ED WOODYARD

the day birds
whistled at late evening
through lips stained with dark berries.
and one bird rose,
to lose itself in the sky.

then darkness came
and ran towards the moon.
so with a crackle of matchfire
i lit the tuft of a half-parted candlefruit,
and as the candlehead grew pale
i played with my thoughts,
as with wind seeds.

it seemed a thousand nights ago,
by time on the clock,
since i had sat in the soaking darkness
beneath the oak tree.
and as the tree scratched my neck
with leaf-nailed fingers,
i watched the starfall and mating shadows.
and through the sky
cool rain began to fall.

and the rain drowned the hundred
uneasy fires of the stars.
sitting in total darkness, screamed
with tomorrow's anger at the rain.
and then i was quiet,
until the darkness forgot my noise,
and then was quiet again,
for the noise faded away
but the silence never did.

the night came back slowly
while shadows shifted on their stones.
the broad back of grass
lay white under a new moon,
as i listened to dead echoes and oaks,
and to the wind, whistler of the sea.

MARK TUMARKIN

“Shadows of March”

The snows have melted
And tears gone to dust.
Now the words you could not hear
Shadows echo.

STEVE RABINOWITZ



Ref