

2-1966

February 1966

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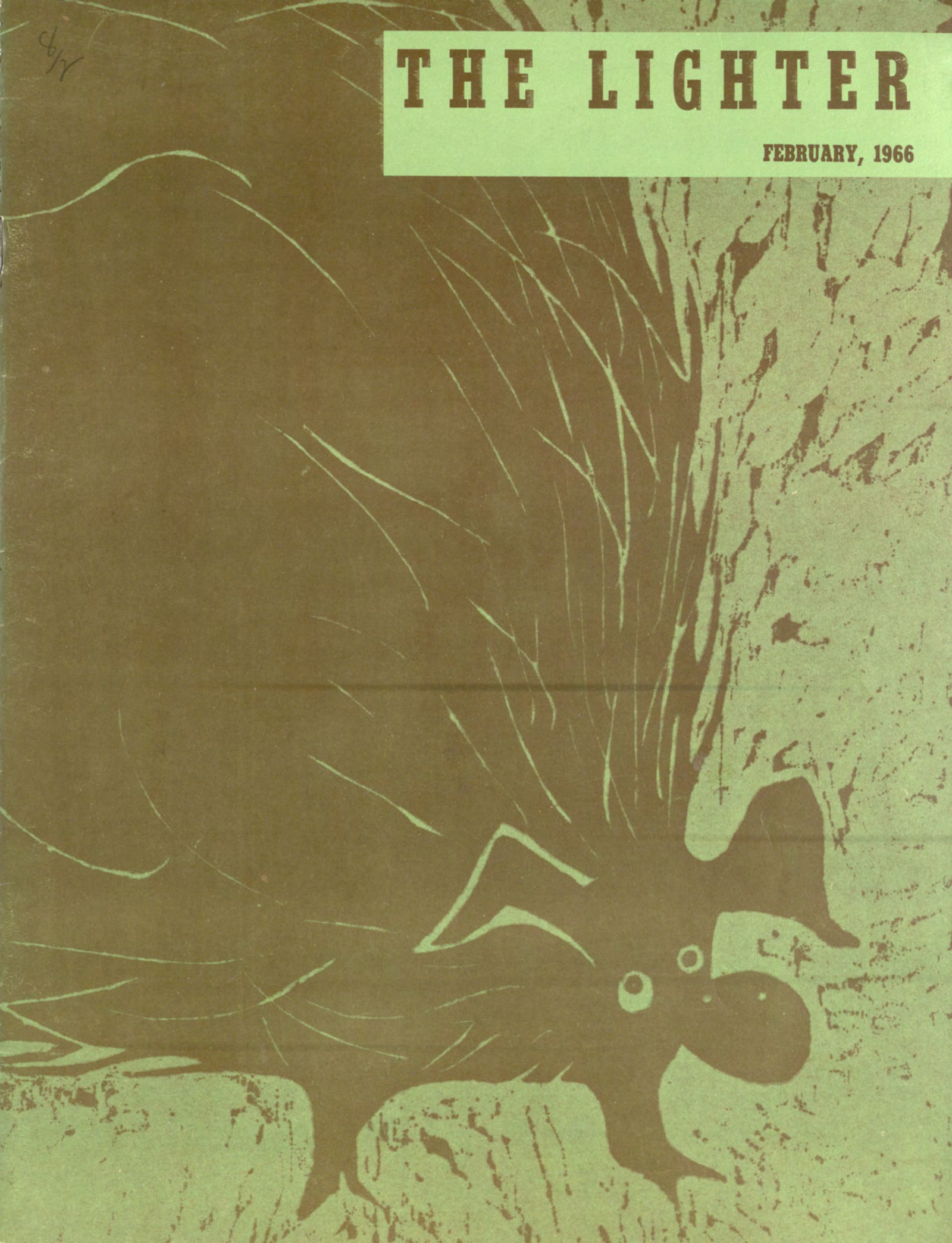
Valparaiso University, "February 1966" (1966). *The Lighter, 1962-2003*. Paper 28.
http://scholar.valpo.edu/lighter_62-03/28

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THE LIGHTER

FEBRUARY, 1966



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THE LIGHTER

*the literary-humor magazine
of Valparaiso University*

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COVER DESIGN: A woodcut by Kuni Nuechterlein from the Valparaiso Art Department. For more, see Portfolio of Prints, pp. 16-22.

Printing by Sheffield Press

VOLUME VIII

NUMBER II

FEBRUARY, 1966

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Askance



... a collage of sideways thoughts on a new year.

Editor's Note: This is not an editorial column. It beats no drums and overloads no bandwagons. It is not intellectual; it is not collegiate. (What is?) It merely looks at things, at people, and comments. Maybe it is looking at you.

The making of collages has become one of the more intriguing pastimes of college students — partly as a purely creative venture, and partly as an attempt to say something, however crudely, about the world from an on-campus viewpoint. A collage says 'what happened,' and says it symbolically in the juxtaposition of picture and word to represent a jumble of thoughts, events, people, places. The clutter of in-out-of-focus images which a year recalls to us resembles a collage: symbols of what was, or could have been, or promises to be. There are in both the elements of unity and discontinuity, hope and despair, simplicity and diversity which so typically characterize our world and complicate the role of the Christian student in it.

"Exhibit A" — opposite page — was originally intended as a Christmas collage, but its meanings could be easily stretched to encompass the entire year. The unified form is a tree — but it is a dead tree, a winter tree, or perhaps one of those sad January-First numbers bedraggled with damp tinsel and ready for the garbage man. Its branches bear the words and standards of the world (job, wife, love, nonconformity, growing up, avant-garde-ness): but grafted onto the trunk are words from the Word. From the stoutest branch, or 'rod,' which bears bright leaves hangs Christ bearing His cross, and the classic Capitalist bearing his stock reports (but bravely). Around the roots, the Family of Man cast in stone, grow blades of grass inscribed with a modern version of the first realization of sin. The ornaments — Bonwit's own — aren't elaborate enough to hide the gnarled, rotten tree which is hardly of loveliest form and grace. It is, perhaps, a tree of knowledge — ultimately the knowledge of mortality, the garbage man, Ferlinghetti's "smiling mortician."

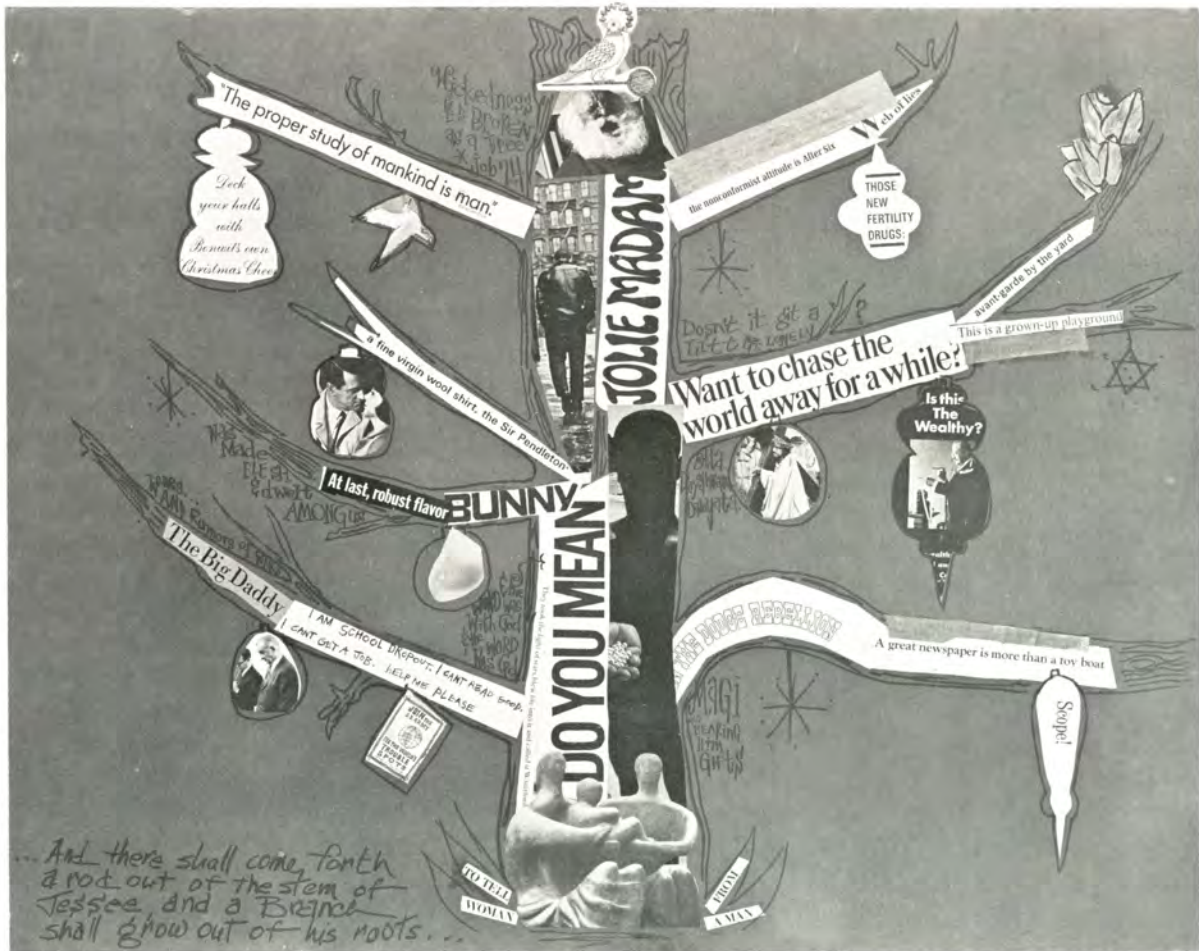
"A great newspaper" . . . is especially significant, as it deals with the printed word — of which the collage is made. Even despite literary standards of excellence, and even in sophisticated circles (most of the collage items were cut from the *New Yorker*), there is the problem of "What do you mean." And what, after all, can one answer when confronted with the meaning of a dead tree, of which a quote from Alexander Pope and a drop-out's plea for help form

two of the branches? Can there be answers from a Santa Claus, or a big daddy, or a Rock Hudson film, or the U.S. Army, or a peace dove with cute blue eyes? What life can be gotten from a dead tree, a poster, a collage of the thingness of our lives? Is the quote from the *Wasteland* — "You, hypocrite reader! my likeness, my brother" — all there is to say? Are the Scriptural comments too simple amidst the complexity, the 'gnarledness' of the tree?

Oho, aha, but there are ways out — aren't there? There is the Bunny branch, for example, or the other branches on which men incautiously climb, in the hope that there may be room at the top and not the hollow tree, jagged-edged, worthless. (But even that thought, well-intentioned as it is, has become part of the commercialization: "Doesn't it get a little lonely . . . out on that limb, without Him?" Oh dear.)

But what about the Christian, who is just as much a part of the tree as Christ is? How much in-ness in the world is necessary for 'relevance'? Is there fruit to be borne in the world, and what do you do with the world's fruits which are theologically snubbed because they are brazenly secular? The tree is real enough, and competence does exist — however fleeting it may be. Already in a new year, we recognize the need for new ways to approach old answers, such as "I am the Vine and ye are the branches." There have been some competent and intelligent responses to this need: the proliferation of 'modern' Bible translations, the new religious theater, the poetry of T. S. Eliot, Gerald Manley Hopkins, the new liturgy, perceptive writers like Stringfellow, Lueke, Henry Cox. The attempts for newness, the revolt against stagnation in the institutionalized Church, are mere beginnings. Newness cannot end there, ZAP, period. There is something essentially Christian about creativity — the re-creation of man through Christ — whether or not this takes an art form. And there is always a quality in men no matter which year it is which makes them ask Sandburg's question: "Where to? What next?" And there is always a knowledge of finiteness, that there will not always be new years, which keeps that discontent (or criticism, or creativeness) alert, at times desperate, but always alive somehow.

A question is not a dead tree. A question implies an answer, or at least the possibility of answer. It moves us on to the next line to find out, or it moves us to write the line. The lines of the new year will be written out in neon lights, headlines, captions, term papers, and on backstage walls. Whether or



not these words and events will have any intelligibility, any glimmer of unobscured, is one of the full-time questions of 1966.

* * * *

It must have been in *Popular Science Monthly*, because when I was eleven years old that was about the only thing my mother would let me read, outside of Walt Disney's *Comics and Stories*. As best as I can remember, it was an advertisement for some correspondence course in piano keyboard. There was a picture of a girl — about the drabest, most plain-faced female you can imagine — sitting down at a piano in front of a heckling group of onlookers. Underneath was the caption, "THEY LAUGHED WHEN I SAT DOWN AT THE PIANO BUT OH WHEN I STARTED TO PLAY!"

I do not really know how anyone could propose to teach mastery of the piano by mail-order lessons, but I guess the general readership of *Popular Science Monthly* was not inclined to give great consideration to such trivia. At the age of eleven my prime concern was that I could not play softball — very well.

Not to say that I could construe any correlation between my bungling in right field and some latent musical talent. What struck me, rather, was the blunt, unassuming wisdom of those words. No one

was making any wild claims about instant fame, wealth, and the woman of your choice, the way they might do in promoting a Charles Atlas body-building course. Nothing of the sort. The girl that sat down at the piano was still the same dull Mary Jane Nobody she had always been, and the crowd did in fact laugh. There was no crude nonsense about beating up the bully who kicked sand in your face — only the sweet promise of a pure, quiet vengeance: "Oh when I started to play!"

I never did clip the coupon, or even give a piano a second look. I did remember the ad, though, and it did not bother me quite so much that I looked like a complete ass on the softball diamond. And it bothers me a little less now if I can not do the Watusi or evaluate definite integrals.

Heaven knows it is a long, hard way finding that one secret power that will blot out every transgression of weakness. That poor girl had to sweat for months banging out her lessons for the week before she could dare to tackle Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" in front of her friends. But in the meantime, every moment of fumbling and failure has, for all its pain, the promise that the final triumph will be all the more complete.

They laughed when I sat down at the piano, but oh when I started to play.

Chuck Mintzloff

Lighter Forum:

Mrs. Simone Baepler, French Department; Dr. Fred Sitton, Dr. Van Kussrow, Drama; Prof. William Kowitz, Geography; Prof. Normand Widiger, Theology; Dr. Richard Schiemann, Philosophy; and Mr. Walter Sanders, English: a collection of minds discussing the origins, implications, and validity of the Theater of the Absurd. For the Lighter: students Pete Whiteside, Jim Boelter, Dave Johnson. The three-hour forum, at times intensely subjective, is reprinted in part below.

SITTON: I see the theater of the absurd as the third greatest era of tragedy, after the Greek and Shakespearian periods, and the greatest of the three because of its crashing reality.

JOHNSON: Do you see absurd theater as having its roots in previous drama?

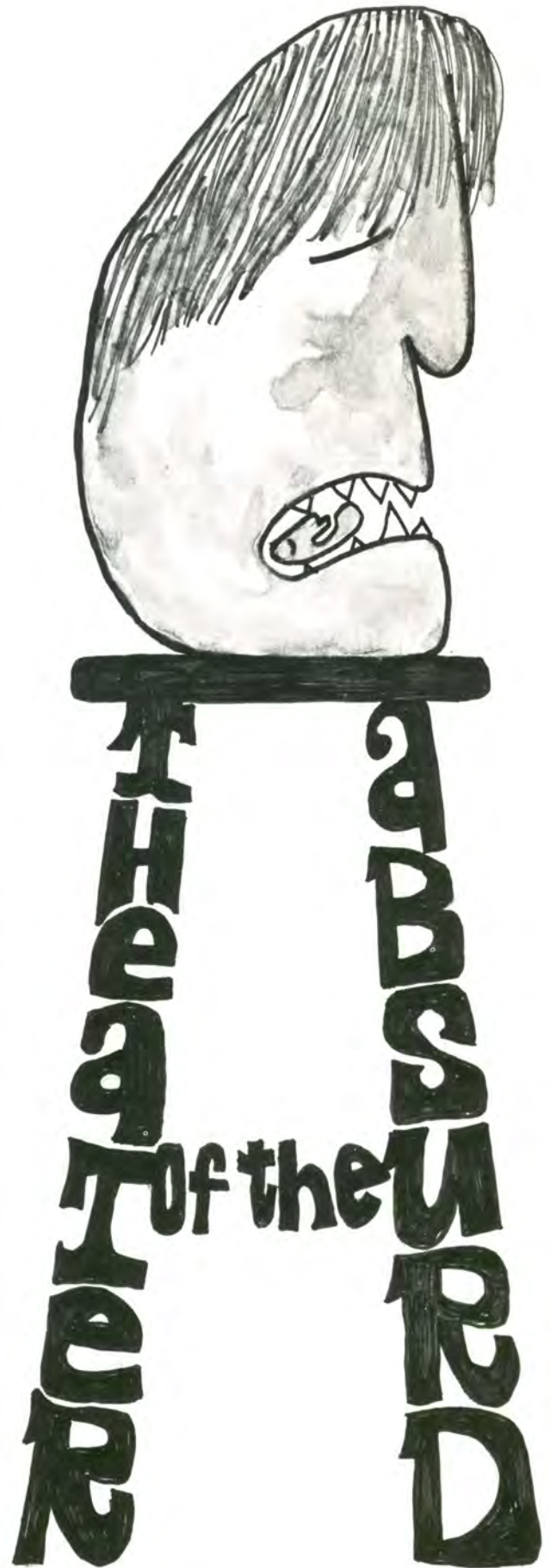
SITTON: Like all drama it has its roots in man. Man is going through the same ordeal as in the Greek and Elizabethan periods. He is more or less reinvestigating himself.

KUSSROW: As far as the artistic roots go, I think you can see this same thing as beginning in poetry maybe forty years ago. I'm thinking of the publication of the *Wasteland* as one of the high-water marks. The poem is always one of the first of the verbal arts; it takes the theater a while.

SANDERS: The more I think about this, I have to take it back to the Romantic poets, particularly to Keats, to his odes. This is about the only way I can understand them now. In his *Ode to a Nightingale*, there is a quest for identity and permanence, a recognition of paradoxes such as art mocking man. He calls his Grecian urn a 'cold pastoral'; it lacks life but man would really like to experience this sort of permanence that art has.

SITTON: But don't you think that they're illustrating the impermanence of man? You say there's been a complete change in man's relationship to the world, or to God, or whatever it is we're trying to relate to.

SCHIEMANN: Don't you think that the Romantics were considerably more optimistic about life? They were looking to a period in the past or to something foreign and exotic for new vision. It seems to me that



the Romantics found hope more easily.

SANDERS: Again, it occurs to me that Keats fits into this pattern so perfectly. He resigns himself; he won't give up life; if he were to join the Nightingale, to die would be to give up consciousness. But he realizes later on that he has been "half in love with easeful death." Giving up consciousness would be giving up life itself.

SITTON: I'm wondering if with resignation or this sort of thing, we're dealing with the American concept of Romanticism. You know, where we're taught that everything is beautiful, you'll always end up happily, and ride into the golden sunset. Every girl's a virgin, every marriage is made in heaven, all this kind of thing. I think the view is completely different. For a person to be romantic in these days is . . .

SANDERS: It's impossible.

KOWITZ: In dealing with this I must use a concept which has been bandied about for many years — alienation: this seems awfully wispy to me to select the poets as having the real origin of this whole thing which we find in absurd theater. I find non-poetry as expressing it just as vividly. This *Ode to a Grecian Urn* is a fragile statement of what is being said today. I think people are saying things today which are much more crashing. The roots here are very fine and tender roots; it is a long way back.

SITTON: I think Ferlinghetti is pushing closer in the medium than any poets I know of.

SCHIEMANN: Could we say something about the presence or absence of rationality in the absurd theater?

SITTON: The lack of it? Oh, I don't think there is any lack. I think that it's so rational that it's unmerciful.

SCHIEMANN: Perhaps I had better explain what I mean by rational. Evidently the theater of absurd uses selections from life to illustrate discontinuity, to illustrate the terrible — which is not very far from the surface of life. From what I have read of the theater of the absurd, contemporary playwrights seem to be less confident about these continuing patterns of stability beneath the flux.

KOWITZ: If you're looking for this choosing of parts of life, I can think of one play in particular — *Virginia Wolfe* — which is a particularly romantic play. I think that some people might disagree on this. But here you have some pretty awful things which happen to people. Yet, there is a stream running through the thing which presents you with love which in some cases goes beyond human understanding. It becomes that thing which we cling to, with all facade torn away; the *Ladies Home Journal* concept of love, the togetherness values. And two people desperately need one another and find this as the essence of their love. People object to this, to my analysis of it. But you do have this kind of rationality.

SCHIEMANN: Well, the point is, how is it presented? Is it conceptualized, put into declaratory sentences, are there meaningful abstractions used; or is it presented in some other form of human expression?

KUSSROW: I don't think the average person has any difficulty following it at all; it is a perfectly, artistically logical play.

KOWITZ: In all of these plays, and in Albee there is this kind of nebulous dream world value to which his characters attach themselves. It becomes very difficult to ascertain reality.

KUSSROW: But I think you have a level of reality in *Virginia Wolfe* which is much more easily accepted by the average playgoer. It has a terrific logic — I would agree with Fred — there is a different approach to rationalism than the nineteenth century and the Aristotelian idea; and this one is greater, I think, and more rational . . . there is this crashing rationality.

SITTON: The plays which we have had here in the last four, five years — for example, *Children's Hour* and *Beyond the Horizon* — are not nearly as real as something like *Godot*.

KOWITZ: When you turn to Samuel Beckett, I don't think you follow through with this slice of life relationship. There are more realities in this play, but not stacked up like dominoes.

SITTON: You have a strange environment and you have to accept it. This seems more real than trying to fake an environment on the stage. This is theatricalism.

KUSSROW: Yes, and this is more real than reality.

SITTON: I think Pinter is the most realistic playwright going, and 'absurd' — I don't really like the word. Could we clear up this business about absurd?

KOWITZ: To speak of absurd theater and writers is phony: to speak of the theater of the absurd makes more sense.

SITTON: But Pinter to me is not really theater of the absurd. The conversation and situations are realistic, and the one thing that sticks in my mind is that he takes dialogue and makes it almost selective. If we could have a taped conversation of everything said in this room before we started this discussion, then we could have a true example of exactly what Pinter does with dialogue.

JOHNSON: I read review of Pinter's *The Room* which said that viewing *The Room* was like knocking out a wall and observing the people within. We're doing this play now, and this dialogue is hard to learn because it is so unconnected.

SITTON: Right, Red. Just as our dialogue is unconnected. Just as Ionesco's is —

KOWITZ: *The Bald Soprano*.

SITTON: You look at Ionesco. He puts these people on the stage, and sort of — well — thumbs his nose,

I'll say, at the audience. Because here you are out there watching something in an environment, and literally what you're doing is watching yourself. And they are watching you, he is watching you watch him or what he has put on stage. And it's kind of a frightening thing when you wake up to this.

WIDIGER: I'd like you to back up your original statement that the theater of the absurd is more real than realistic drama. What kind of criterion do you use to make this statement?

SITTON: Well, Norm, psychological motivations used to be the basis for drama. It isn't necessarily so any more. Whatever any of us may do, there may not be any psychological motivation that we can explicitly state, as was done in realistic drama.

KUSSROW: Yes, and the same can be said of realistic drama in terms of environment also. And, you know, the slums will produce thus and so.

SITTON: And here again is a big step that Pinter has made along this line in realism. The ones of us gathered here in this room are carrying on some sort of dialogue. And here is where Pinter is capitalizing on a kind of realism which I think can be tremendous. He didn't explain to you what these characters are or what their background is. We know nothing about them except from the time we see them come into that room or on the stage and exchange conversation; just as we are here. That makes it more realistic.

WIDIGER: What makes it more realistic?

SITTON: Because the other is so fake!

KOWITZ: Because *you're* capable, Norm, of pigeonholing everything. If you accept these psychological norms and apply them to people you meet here, you're bound to go awry, because things aren't quite that simple. In the theater of the absurd you confront individuals for the first time and you learn of them through what they say and do. You have to assume only that which you see and can't give a complete pigeonholed background of each one, making him a preconceived format.

WIDIGER: You have no preconceived system by which you can interpret the slice that you see on the stage?

KOWITZ: Yes.

SCHIEMANN: Is the material presented in such a way that you have nothing to bring to it?

SITTON: No. The whole point is that you bring everything to it.

KOWITZ: You are the focus. You remember *Godot*. The thing about most discussions of it which were heard later, is that if you heard one, it was all Freudian symbols. If you heard another it was all Christian

symbols. And so on. You could do almost anything with it. Everybody is going to identify with something in this thing. The thing that made me furious about *Godot* when I first saw it was that they threw out this thing and said do with it what you want. But now I think that its lasting quality is that everyone comes up with another concept according to his own experience.

WIDIGER: It seems to me that it is very strange to call this realistic. I can talk in riddles and throw them out in the open, saying, "Interpret what I mean." All the while I've got an interpretation, I'm the one who put that out there, I'm the one who has a reason for doing it. It seems to me that the absurd playwright abstracts all meaning from his play and just lets you put the meaning into it. He's got a meaning going . . .

SITTON: No one's questioning that.

KOWITZ: You sound very much like me the first time I read *Godot*. I felt that the responsibility of the playwright was to give us something tangible and that he had real meaning in his play.

THE TICKET PUNCHER: NON-HERO?

WIDIGER: It seems to me that what we have said here is the theater of absurd is a revolt against any kind of stereotyping, or conformity patterns; it begins to emphasize the individual and his creativity in his own life space.

KOWITZ: No, I don't agree with that. I think it's a revolt against the facade which has been built around us.

WIDIGER: To put it differently, the problem is not that there is no system, but that this becomes the total thing. I void my own decision, I void my own courageous stance, and let other things and other systems live my life for me.

SITTON: I agree, they are fighting that. But I think there's more to it than that. These characters are becoming functions, and they function as a function rather than as a human being. We become functionaires.

WIDIGER: But I say that you take the next step and say that 'this is really real;' I say that this is beside the point. It has swung the pendulum over to making man just a function in order to show that there is a problem.

SITTON: You look at yourself and you're *not* a product of your environment, you're a product of so many things you can't even count them.

KOWITZ: I think it comes down to this in this business of interpretation and identification. It is very difficult for me to identify with, say, someone in *Endgame* or, say, Maggie in *After*

the Fall, and yet these are things she does (maybe this makes me more complex, but —) or Quentin does, or there are things that happen in this to which I respond much more than I do to the individual. I don't think the characters are important; you identify with what is happening.

SITTON: I think dramatic empathy is by the boards . . . if we were male we had to respond to the hero, if we were female we had to respond to the heroine.

KOWITZ: It doesn't take any more somebody dying or going away to make tears run down your cheeks; all we have to do is listen to the last speech in *Godot* when Lucky as an intellectual begins to babble.

SITTON: And this Peanuts Christmas bit, when he says here we have cartoon characters with none of whom we can identify. And they're just animated things and they bring us the Christmas story, and tears roll down.

SCHIEMANN: Could we go back to something I mentioned earlier; the question of hope here. A sort of continuity in the appreciation of the theater of the absurd, or discontinuity, or whatever it is, where one goes from laughing across the line to weeping; this is reminiscent of the old continuity of the close relationship of comedy and tragedy. When this is done in Greek drama, you are being presented with the agony of a hero. Now what are you being presented with here?

SITTON: This is the thing to me that makes it more real than any other form of drama. Within us is that tragic sense along with the comic sense; and I think every individual can respond to it when we sense it in a play. To me it is more heart-rending to look at something which is tragic and laugh at it rather than cry at it.

BAEPLER: I read something today about Pinter which said that tragedy



ART/CAROL SCHWENNESEN

happens when things are *no longer* funny.

SCHIEMANN: Then are you able to switch back and forth like this?

BAEPLER: I just don't believe so. There comes a time when under no circumstances can it be considered funny.

SITTON: I think *Godot* is one of the greatest tragedies that has been written today. I can go to that thing and laugh like a fiend, and pretty soon I'm so torn within myself that I am sick — literally sick.

BAEPLER: All right, toward the end you could no longer laugh; there was nothing . . .

KOWITZ: Simone, how about this. The giggle that carries you down — well, you know that these laughs are still coming and yet you realize the horror of the tragedy.

SITTON: To me tragedy is this very thing we're talking about: the absurd situation with man.

WIDIGER: You have just used another word which is unclear too and has to be defined: what is the absurd?

KOWITZ: Well, let's get back to this business of heroes. I don't think any of us can name for ourselves a hero — these days.

SITTON: You could have — two years ago.

KOWITZ: Yes, but the time span is so short that you don't really notice — this was sort of a flashlight hero. Let's not bring in Kennedy at this point. In these plays you don't have to identify with these big heroes any more. You identify with a very simple, stripped person; you don't have to be some god up on Olympus. And this is getting back to this idea of aloneness, separateness, which permeates our age.

SITTON: In the sense of the absurd, this is the non-hero.

KOWITZ: There is another point which I wanted to get back to. Here in this room we have a number of people who have met tonight where the rigidity of formal discussion which one normally would have had at one time in a group of professors and students has broken down. We can scream at one another, Fred can say damn if he wants — this sort of thing. To illustrate, I think of a play — *Rebecca* — in which one actress changed the whole context of the play. The point is that in any kind of relationship, any kind of motion that happens within these plays, words that are said — there can be a variety, a spectrum, of interpretations, either in the way they are played, or in the way they are received.

KUSSROW: To get back to Fred's point about the theater of absurd being the third greatest era in tragedy, I think there is something about *Oedipus* and *Hamlet* and *Godot* which

makes it possible to have endless writings interpreting these plays. And you can't write that much about *Beyond the Horizon*.

KOWITZ: Yes, this occurred to me earlier when Walt was going through his poem; when this kind of diversity of opinions ceases, then we all see the play exactly as everyone else does; this is not real.

SCHIEMANN: Yes, but what is the significance of this non-hero business? Oedipus is larger than life, and —

KOWITZ: The hero concept was acceptable at that time; people just no longer believe it.

SCHIEMANN: Well, this is what I was trying to get at before, some kind of historical scale of optimism. We're portraying the absurdity and the agony of the human condition . . .

SITTON: The theater of the absurd doesn't give answers, if that's what you mean.

SCHIEMANN: Yes, now supposedly, though, it's worth saying this. Now are there any suggestions that man will be able to transcend the situation, to get somewhere; any promises of hope?

SITTON: Well, Sartre thinks so.

SCHIEMANN: Yes, but existentialism it seems to me is a good deal more optimistic and considerably more rationalistic than my impression of the theater of the absurd . . . In non-theistic existentialism, man has to assume the burden he once had to lay on God; in this world man finds his values; and there is no one presiding over the whole game, so that if man doesn't act and decide, nothing is going to get decided. At least there's something for man to do. What does the theater of the absurd point out?

SITTON: Find definition, I think. For me, *Virginia Woolf* does this.

KOWITZ: Yes, in this play you find two alternatives in a relationship, say between two people — though you could do it with only one person if you like. These being, to separate, or to remain even screamingly together. Even this miserable condition between two people can be a beautiful one, because it means that two are united.

SITTON: I find a real positive statement in Beckett: that man continues to act, to make contact: he makes conversation, he plays games, he tells stories, he does things — however meaningless and purposeless, he still *does*; and I think this a reaffirmation of man.

WIDIGER: In psychotherapy, we call this a neurotic.

SITTON: Yes, but Norm, we keep on trying.

BAEPLER: Isn't this precisely what Camus didn't want? This routine, this deadening routine, is, I think, what is objected to in existentialism.



WIDIGER: What is the relation of the theater of the absurd to existentialism?

SITTON: None whatsoever. They're an entirely different group as far as theaters are concerned. The existentialism is working with a philosophy, and the theater of the absurd is commenting on a condition.

JOHNSON: Then what about Sartre? Existentialism and absurd seem to have so many points in common.

SITTON: They have their common points, but your existentialists are preaching a philosophy.

KUSSROW: Well, if you take Sartre as the existentialist dramatist, his techniques are not even remotely akin to the absurd.

SITTON: Well, he uses realistic presentation. Your existentialist sees the possibility of the evolution of man to the point that he is almost a god, but in the theater of the absurd you find a commentary on the condition of man, he is groping, he is maintaining life — that's all.

SCHIEMANN: Marcel writes biting-ly about reducing man to functions. He just agonizes when he sees a ticket-puncher in the Paris subway, or the guy who hands him a newspaper. This is decidedly more pessimistic.

KOWITZ: Yet I think in the absurd, they're saying that it's better to go on with this awful Martha, it is better to have these things to do than to retreat — take to the needle, alcohol, go mad — so that you no longer have respect for yourself, so that you no longer even identify with *you*.

SCHIEMANN: Yes, but is there any assertion of selfhood in these things at all?

KOWITZ, SITTON: Oh, yes.

BAEPLER: Yes, Martha keeps asking, 'are you looking at me? can you see me?'

SITTON: It's identification in terms of someone else.

BEHIND THE FACADE

WIDIGER: In theology, there is a view which states that my present action is based on a future hope. And there's another approach in theology too, that my hope for the future is based upon my appreciation of the fact that something is happening to me now . . .

SITTON: This second approach I prefer.

WIDIGER: That means that in the present there is some sort of meaning possible, there is not just isolation and alienation; not simply groping out hopefully; there is groping because there is something there.

SITTON: What we deal with now is the idea, where at one time we were dealing more with action and interpreting it as 'real.' And that action was a highly-motivated action which stemmed from some stimulus-response. We looked at that in the theater, and said, 'That is what life is.' But we don't deal with reality that way any more.

WIDIGER: Yes, but this was an attempt to explain some universal rationality in our universe. Now what is the alternative which the theater of the absurd presents? It seems to me that it is saying what is really real is the experiencing of the complexity of our modern world through some sort of unconscious life, not logically presentable, not put into words: this the absurd's 'really real.'

SITTON: This is because old formal rules of logic just do not apply to our complex society.

WIDIGER: Yes, but it seems to me that if modern drama ignores such things as psychological motivation, environment, categorical classification: how can it be presenting reality? It seems that there you find reality . . . Do you feel, Fred, that the theater of the absurd or whatever you want to call it is presenting universal reality?

SITTON: Yes.

WIDIGER: What do you do with order, system, meaning, and plays that try to present that?

KOWITZ: The theater of the absurd is saying that this doesn't exist. This is reflected in the other arts, this breakdown of order. This is what the artist attempts to portray. He is trying to engender a spectrum of possibilities; and this is just as real. We don't want it painted in terms of a truth for all of us. We see it, as the coffee table, differently. The table possesses qualities which it does not possess of itself, but because of my reaction to it.

SCHIEMANN: This is quite different from what the Greek dramatists were doing. They were able to count

upon a subterranean mythical consciousness within the audience, and an appreciation of the hero. Now here a guy like Pinter talks about the dread and mystery behind the facade of life — and there is no — or is there? — mythical consciousness to which he can appeal, to establish a continuity. KOWITZ: In Greek drama, the hero was a re-creation of the fragmented man . . . Nowadays a person cannot identify with a total character. We find in a portion of that man — in the reordering of this chaos, in the putting down of a montage of chaos — something that strikes my chord, something that rings my harp, that I can find meaning there — in a portion of the totality.



WHITESIDE: I think this is what you're trying to get at. In the *Death of Bessie Smith* by Albee there is a character in it which is a typical Southern Negro. Now you take such a character out of something like *Gone With the Wind*. Here is a supposedly very real person, a typical Southern Negro; now you take the Negro in this play — he's the same person, but he's got more to him, he's more complex — he's still the same insignificant person, but you don't pass him off as fast, you appreciate him more. And this is true of all the characters in this play. They're more than they are just in the play.

KOWITZ: You can't identify with the 'yassuh boss' man, whereas in *Bessie Smith* you identified with something in his personality whereas you began to recognize him as a person.

WHERE IS THE W. C.?

WIDIGER: In Pinter, the language and conversations carried on are broken, fragmented; words don't convey meaning. It seems to me that this is saying something about language. What is the relation of language to action, staging, etc. in these plays?

SITTON: The best example I can think of is Ionesco. What they're doing using this gimmick is recapturing something of the nature of our own dialogue — our common-place dialogue, where we're stuck together down at the club and we have to make some sort of conversation.

JOHNSON: One thing that is inter-

esting about this — in the one-act last year, the *Bald Soprano*. I guess Ionesco was having trouble with the English language, and he had to learn from these silly little language courses, these simple phrases like "Where is the W.C.?" "The ceiling is above, the floor is below;" and he took excerpts from these and made up a dialogue which didn't follow any order . . .

SITTON: Yet there's a logic in it, a real logic.

WIDIGER: In Christian worship, there is a certain relationship between sacrament and word. Sacrament — in some sense action which conveys something. But it also has to be enacted in the light of some word. But word isn't enough either. But the close relation between action on the one hand and word on the other seems to point to the fact that there is meaning present in both. The final truth of that worship does not lie in one thing or another, but in both enhancing each other . . .

Okay, now when you talk about action, you talk about historical action, not something simply cyclical, or repetitious . . . there is a sort of individuality which makes each action unique; if that is true then each action has its own kind of meaning, but it seems to be chaotic because of the non-repetition. It seems to me that Christian worship suggests something else. Word is not simply a subjective word, but something which can be experienced, it can communicate itself; such as *logos*, word in the world. It gives rationality, order, system, it makes sense. In each moment, a unique situation which we have to interpret anew, there's a word there which allows us to see something common, about all these actions, about all this complexity.

SITTON: I think you're describing theater of the absurd.

WIDIGER: My impression is that these guys are saying that the nature of the reality in which we are involved is such that a certain kind of alienation and separation makes it impossible to communicate. That we never get around to hitting each other the same way. You talk about the fragmentation of reality in which each person gets his own reality, but there cannot be a common meaning . . . the order is neurotic, unstable, insecure. It seems the theater of the absurd is reacting to this.

SITTON: In all these plays, I see nothing but order. I see people performing a kind of ritual of life.

WIDIGER: You say there is a ritual being played out here. Okay, then can all of us get that order?

(continued on page 29)

Sonnet Sequence

To Technology

While puzzling over charge per unit time,
Or slowly finding V sub A to B ,
Or taking E across a shiney dime,
One loses sight perhaps of jollity,
When photons help to show light's matter phase,
But fresnel patterns gayly Dance about,
And plane diffraction gratings prove light rays,
Perhaps, one feels, would better be to pout,
And even though Lord Kelvin found it e'er
That volume changes up when pressure down,
So too that entropy reverses ne'er,
Still come developments to cause a frown.

Yet still with even all these puzzlements
The love for ever higher knowledge mounts.

Kenneth Jarchow

Were I a well-versed English thespian
Who wished my fellow madmen to observe,
I'd study closely saint and lesbian,
And add to lives of those around me verve!
I'd go from town to town, and back and forth,
Presenting human nature at its worst
And best from east and south and north,
Inevitably blessed by some (and cursed!)
However, on my travels I might gather
Uncomfortable bruises and contusions,
These being mental injuries (or rather
The results of my badly cracked illusions.)

Racy Peters

Lines to Myself

Now it is late, the twilight yields to dark;
Ah, Mourn not that the elements with Time
On thy sweet form so deeply make their mark,
But hear of pleasure in this hard-wrought rhyme.
Come 'neath the waters which Forgetfulness
Hath kissed, where sorrow's ashes, toil's dust,
Are purged, and fled be Time and Time's distress;
For night shall yield to daylight as it must.

As sylvan nymph, as child in Nature free,
Now drink the stream that flows as from above;
In this bright fountain careless come and be;
Sweet ballads sing, of misery and love.

Though as dust thou be, Life's water flows for Hope:
Come, then, and with thee bring a cake of soap.

Kuni Nuechterlein

A Parody of
Hemingway's **THE SUN ALSO**



RISES

At the end of the hall I saw the bathroom and walked toward it. The first time I ever saw it I thought it looked like any other bathroom. I was right. It did. I was dirty, so I decided to take a shower and I walked into the bathroom, but when I looked at the shower I got thirsty so I decided to have a drink. I walked down the hall and saw the bar at the far end of the living room and it looked like a long ways away, but it really wasn't, so I kept on going. When I got to the bar I poured myself a drink, and I stood there and thought how good it would be to drink it, so I did. I tried not to think how dirty I was, but I couldn't help it, so I thought about how dirty I was, and what a mess the world was, and how dirty the shower was, for that matter, and I couldn't help feeling a little sad. To make myself feel better I poured another drink and thought about the last time I did this and got so high that I slipped in the shower and damn near broke my leg, but it hurt to think about that, and today was my day to take a shower and I didn't want to spoil it, so I set the glass down and looked across the living room and down the hall and into the bathroom. It was dim and dark in there, but I remembered that I could turn the light on, so I started down the hall and walked to the bathroom, and when I got in the door I turned on the light. That shed a whole new light on the bathroom, and I tried to come to grips with the fact that this wasn't the same old bathroom I was used to. I was upset, so I retraced my old steps down the hall to the bar and picked up the drink I had left there, and drank it. In the back of my mind I knew I should take a shower, but it was hard to face that I had bought a 150-watt light bulb instead of a 75 for the bathroom. I tried to think of all the psychological tricks I had learned in the war, so I could talk myself into not taking a shower, but I couldn't remember any, so I tried to call up my old battle-fatigue fear of water, but I couldn't do that either, so I just stood there. After I stood there for a while, I got tired, and when I get tired I always get thirsty, so I poured myself a drink. After a while things didn't seem so bad, so I poured another drink and walked down the hall to the bathroom. When I got to the bathroom I realized that there was no place to set the glass except in the soap dish, so I took the soap out and set the glass there, and then I didn't know what to do with the soap, and I knew it would

be hard to hold it in my hand for a whole shower, so I picked up the glass and put the soap back and walked back to the bar. I hated to waste a trip to the bar, so I mixed a drink. I told myself to remember not to take the glass into the bathroom, and I also told myself that it was silly to drink so much just to take a shower, but I've had this thing ever since the war about taking a shower in bright light. I thought about Vienna and the time I had to force myself to walk into a sunken bath, and Tokyo, where I was shanghaied into a public bath, and London, and Madrid, and New York, and San Francisco where they threw me off the ship into the ocean, and I thought that I had a pretty justifiable case. But I was determined not to give in to a stupid fear, so I set down the glass and walked down the hall to the bathroom, and this time I was a little dizzy, and I went into the bathroom and I looked into the mirror and saw myself. I knew I was finally in the bathroom because there's only one mirror in the house, and it's in the bathroom. Being in the bathroom isn't taking a shower, though, so I took a bottle of gin out of the cabinet and poured myself a couple of shots. The only thing that stopped me from getting in the shower right there was the realization that I had all my clothes on, and I was glad that I realized it before I got in the shower, because my clothes were dirtier than I was, and I would have made a rotten mess with both my dirty wet self and my dirty wet clothes in the shower. So I tipped up the bottle and finished off the rest of the gin, and I ripped off my clothes and got into the shower, but before I could turn on the water, the doorbell rang and I wrapped a towel around myself and went down the hall and stopped at the bar and poured myself a drink. Then I went to the door, and it was an employee of the water company, and he was going to shut off the water because I had forgotten to pay the bill. So I offered him a drink and he accepted, and we stood there looking at each other, and I told him I didn't have the cash on me, but I could get it tomorrow since the banks were already closed today, and he said there wasn't anything he could do about it, he'd have to shut it off and come back tomorrow to turn it on, so I said okay and he shut off the water and left. I poured myself a drink and sat down and thought about how dirty I was and how good it would be to take a shower tomorrow.

Racy Princess Peters

Requiem

The rust-flaked iron gate
grinds its hinges,
And a foot-shadow imprints itself,
and moves on up the hill.

To where the boughs, crackle-slick with ice, breathe stiffly
To where the blank gravestone faces stare in silent frozen stance
To where the wind hums an indifferent requiem.

In bright-bitten air you can see your breath.
It stands out from you and is what you are.
But you cannot put it in your pocket
where your hand is, where it is warm.

The swirl of crystals in cold sunlight
Glint on proud marble bleak-broken in two places.
Alone the pine waits.
A Gethsemane of anguish
Rustle-roads in the highest branches
And is gone.
The footsteps watch in breathless suspension, but
animation cannot wait and moves on.

Cold stone obituary! History is frozen here.
Selfhood, neurosis, domination, anonymity, relevance:
how many were ever as real as these stark stones?
Frigid embrace, mercifully unfelt.
Face without eyes and voice without echo.
Who reads your story?



Sara Bard, well-known society woman,
Combs her hair and waits for flowers.
No one brings them here, now.

Alex Hamilton listening to his life
On ticker tape. They took it to the
Dump, "Only Yesterday."
Now a damp newspaper
Flutters absently, and moves on.

A captain named Jeremy something went down
With his ship. The headlines praised him.
Hero is our midst?
Mediterranean cruises,
The bright blue memories,
cannot melt the truth, here.



In the tangle of sighing branches my thoughts catch.
Above, the crystal sky waits, blue-beckoning,
Hazard-hope, distant countenance of promise.
"For now ye see as in a glass darkly."

Face to face! The personal-ity of love!
Close only with the fleeting intimacy
of catch-moments, wound with touch of heaven.
There are yet these.

The foot kicks at the stone-scattered ground.
The mind waits with the question in its
small, believing hands.
In the crystal stillness of a moment, all moments
Presence beyond appearance, reality
beyond sensation
illusive as the hide-and-see wind.

The foot imprints itself and moves on.
Ten, twenty of them tracking each other
down the hill to somewhere.
Around, the snow sifts
quietly as death
Shrouding the ground
with crystal tears.



by an anonymous editor

FOCUS: CULTU

This month a unique experiment will be put on trial as the Week of Challenge with its lectures, discussions, drama, art, and concerts approaches realization. This specific emphasis on the diversified aspects of our culture is part of Lyceum Committee's attempt this year to locate and define its own particular role at Valparaiso as well as the role of outside culture within the limitations of the close-knit, "motherly" university sub-culture. The real problem need not be defined in so many big words, however. The average student unfortunately thinks of culture as string quartets, Milton, and Renaissance art — and dismisses it. With this kind of not unwarranted thinking to deal with, the challenge to the Committee itself is great. Yet one of the things the Week is intended to show the student is that very crashing and exciting things are being said in modern culture, that these things make up the world he is preparing to enter equipped with only the disciplines of 8:30 classes and all-night term papers. In addition to this, the Week is decidedly not one of theological overtones which very often tend to obscure what is actually being said in competent areas of secular culture; and the usual church services being specially adapted to the cultural emphasis of 'newness' merely serves to reinforce the fact that the church itself is part of that culture, is operating in it, borrows its forms, and is related to it in an open way.

The Week will be only partially one of listening; discussion, exchange of viewpoints, questions on points of interest — in short, response — will predominate. The forms this response will take will be informal coffee hours with speakers, writers, dramatists, local professors, and students; formal panel discussions; and special worship services. Thus there will be the two aspects of imported intelligence and campus response. The relatedness of these two is one of the major reasons for having the Week: to break down barriers of isolation and disengagement from the outside world and expose the college student to it.

CRAMPED ACADEMIC CONCERNS

The strictly rah-rah-U atmosphere of a small campus is beset with many paradoxes which make it difficult to "find oneself" amidst the myriad pressures and interests with which the college student is presented. Over a gradual breaking-in period of

four years he is offered a spectrum of knowledge from fruit-fly mating habits to irregular French verbs and must somehow integrate these bits into a system which fits him and his own mind. But such an overview of these four years is nearly impossible from a day to day viewpoint crowded enough as it is with immediate needs and responsibilities. Such routine can be quite deadening to his ability or even desire to confront broad fields outside his campus concerns. Academics is limited to the classroom and the dormitory room with its "Keep Out - Cramping" sign stuck desperately on the door. And even for the A/B student, this can produce a cramped, unresponsive, book-buried mind . . . ultimate escape. Escapes from this escape come in the form of trivia ranging from fraternity parties to snowball fights to rush functions which can prevent the student even further from knowing what these frantic four years are all about.

AN INTRUSION OF NEWNESS

So into this paradoxical whirl comes a group of varied individuals with big, broad things to say — totally unconnected with those fruit flies. Into this smallness comes men like Nathan Scott, Henry Steele Commenger, Sitler, Rossi, Stoessinger, John Ciardi, Hubert Hefner (no, not *that* one) with topics covering theatrical criticism, politics, psychology, poetry, Berkley demonstrations, physics, modern art. Such an intrusion can be viewed in two ways: the idea that it's nice to be cultured, of course, and to have a week of extracurricular thought activity as long as it is subordinated to the routine, as long as it doesn't take up too much of one's valuable time. Or, it can be seen as a tremendous opportunity to relax, look critically at what culture is saying, and respond to it individually with no pressures as to saying the right things in inevitable P&D Type II paragraph form. It can be a time to stretch minds and examine preconceptions and arrive at personal, even subjective, conclusions. It can be an escape from impersonal routine into the freedom of personal interest and response. It is a challenge which is not graded and returned with a verdict scrawled across the top. It is a challenge of unlimited possibility, of concern which is intelligent but not stuffy, and of newness which is refreshing, real, and big as life.

— EDITORIAL

RE, 1966



TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Thursday, February 24

- 11:00 Dr. Sitler — Convocation
- 1:30 Coffee Hour — Great Hall

Friday, February 25

- Noon English and Theology Dep't Luncheon
- 2:05 Nathan Scott — Convocation
- 3:00 Open Coffee Hour — The Spot

Saturday, February 26

- 4:00 Henry Steele Comminger — Convocation
- 8:00 Faculty Discussion

Sunday, February 27

- 10:30 Wienhorst Setting — Chapel
- 1:30 John Ciardi — Informal Free Presentation
- 5:30 Closed Reception and Dinner — Great Hall
- 8:00 Ciardi — Convocation

Monday, February 28

- 7:00 **Happy Days** — Presentation by Valpo Drama Dept.
Introductory Notes . . . Pinter's Play . . .
Lecture

Tuesday, March 1

- 9:00 Coffee Hour
- 6:00 Rossi — Lecture in Great Hall —
"Government Systems"

Wednesday, March 2

- 11:00 Stoessinger — Convocation
- Noon Luncheon
- 1:30 Government Department panel discussion — Great Hall

Thursday, March 3

- 7:00 Pres. Kretzmann — Windup talk
- 8:00 All Campus Coffee Hour — Union
Students can meet with department heads and professors who will be available upstairs, Union.

PORTFOLIO

OF PRINTS

Just as you can take your fingerprints many times and still come out with the same image, printmaking allows the artist to make five, fifty, or five hundred prints from the same woodcut, copper plate, or piece of plastic. These materials are necessarily permanent: they must be able to withstand the pressure of going through the press to allow the image to be transferred to a piece of dampened paper. Oil ink, which has a certain affinity for dampness, is rolled onto the surface to be printed. A woodcut can be printed at this stage, but a copper or plastic plate must be rubbed clean of the surface ink, allowing only the ink in the small grooves to print onto the paper. Mr. William Benson, instructor of the printmaking class, stated that it sometimes takes him nearly a half an hour to print a large copper plate because of this lengthy process.

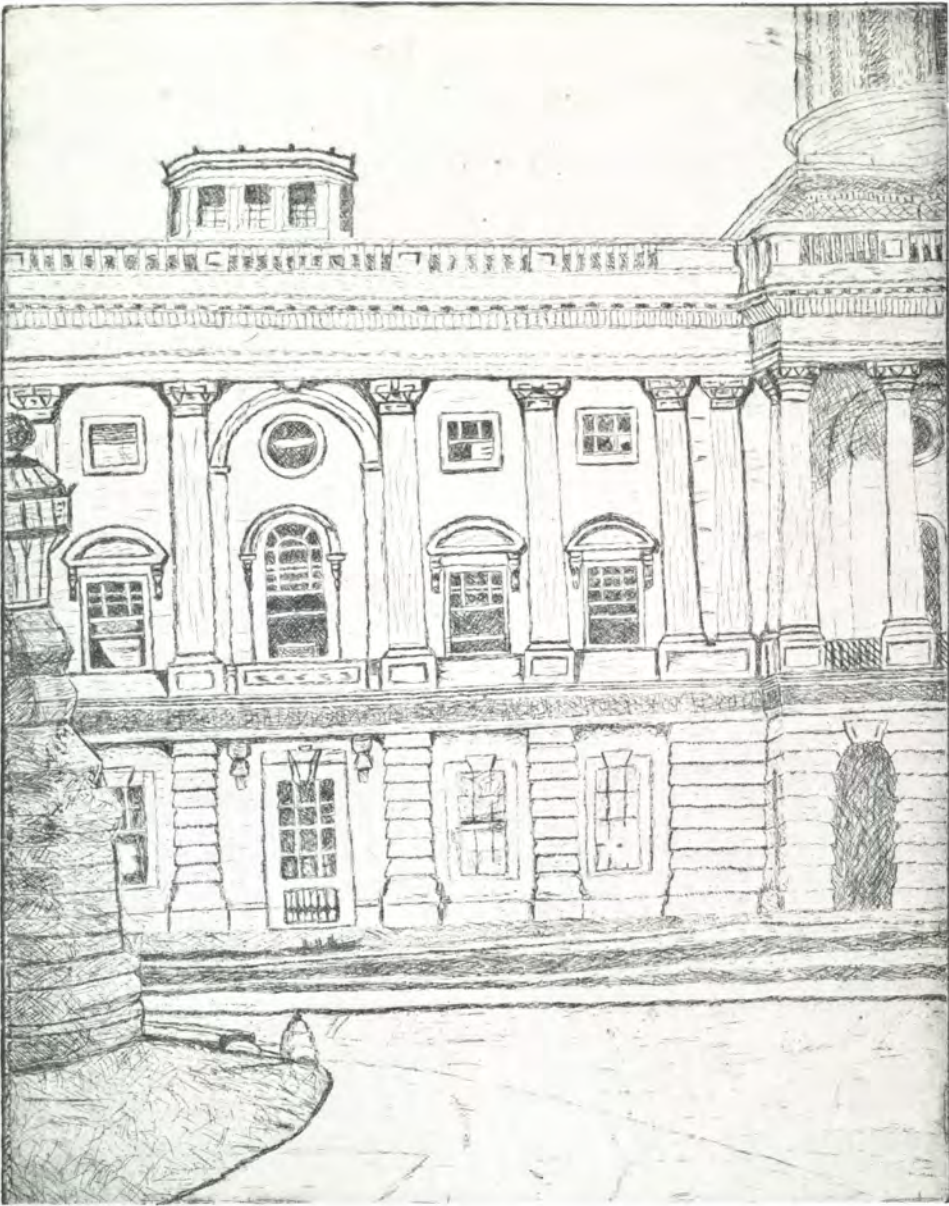
The qualities of the prints depends much on the material used. The richness of the woodcut can be felt in the resistance of the wood to the cutting tools. Copper can be etched in acid, making possible deeper and darker lines than those found in engraved copper — a process which involves scratches and grooves made with a sharp tool by the artist's own hand. Grooves in a plastic plate can be scratched out with a sharp object or melted out with a woodburning instrument. The "Portrait," opposite page, is a combination of plastic and copper plates. The copper was etched and printed first; then lines were melted out of a plastic plate which is superimposed in black over the first print.

This collection, including the cover design, were selected by the *Lighter* as representative of student projects connected with the Valparaiso Art Department.

1	Portrait	Carol Schwennesen	Copper Etching and Super-Imposed Plastic Plate
2	Untitled	Raymond Martens	Copper Etching
3	Untitled	Peggy Hansen	Plastic Plate
4	Reclining Nude	Carol Schwennesen	Woodcut
5	Untitled	Kuni Neuchterlein	Copper Engraving
6	Apple Composition	Peggy Hansen	Woodcut
7	Autumn	Sharon Kuhlman	Woodcut



1.



2.



3.

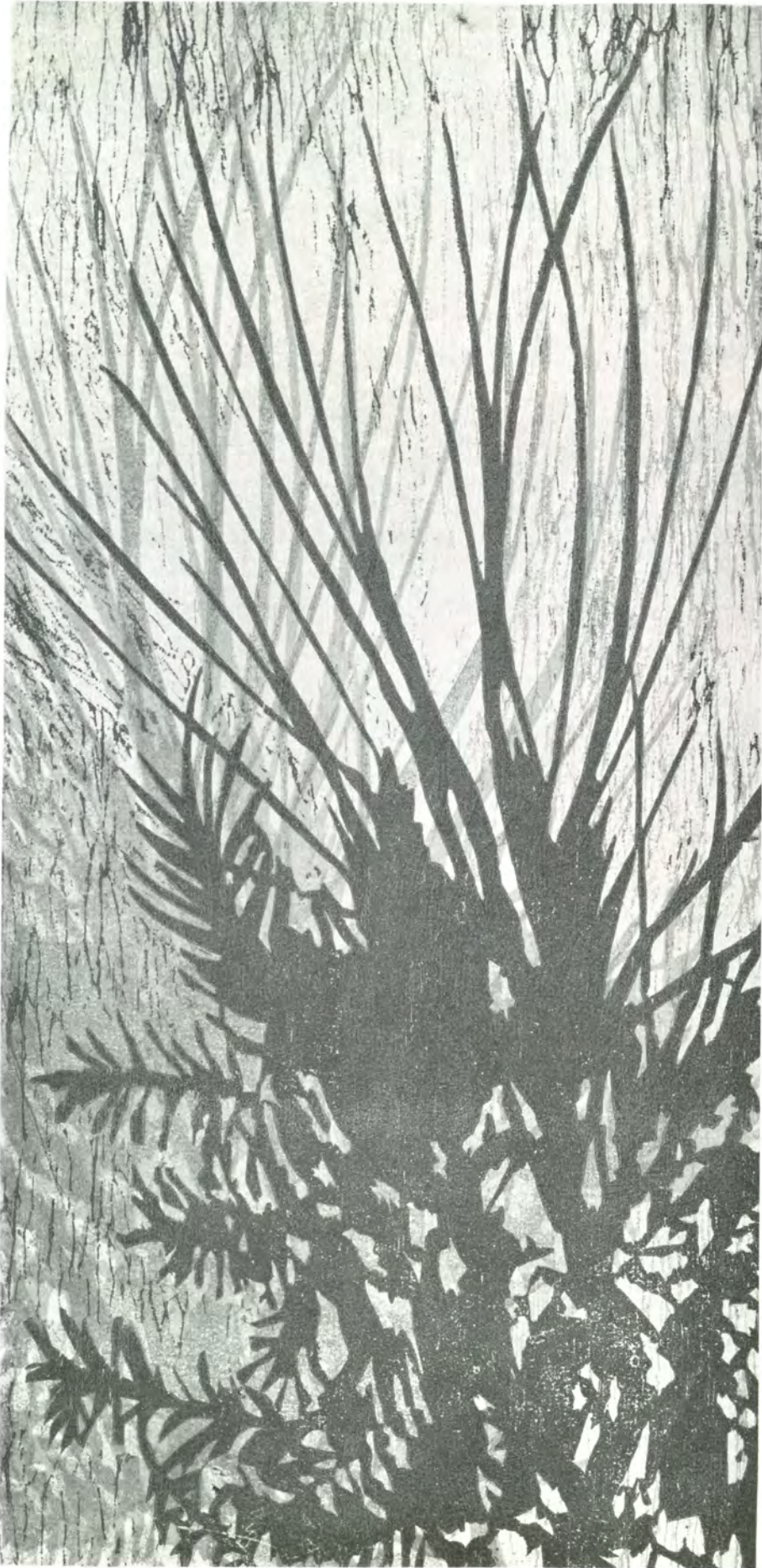




5.



6.



7.



*I picked six pine needles as I walked into class
to remind myself that life is,
and listened.
depersonalization, alienation, aloneness,
dichotomy, paradox, absurdity
I turned them over in my mind.
smooth, green, hard, long, flat, cool
I turned them over in my hand.
Is my faith real?*

from "Advent", previously printed
in *Frontiers Magazine*
Judy Wiegel

Three Poems

*An unfinished poem is a very sad thing.
It is a small, unnoticed monument
dedicated to forgotten heroes
emotion smothered by thought
and beautiful images that fade into the maze
of the commonplace.*

*An unfinished poem is a silent dissertation on man
his dwarfed attention span
and his innate ability
to forget and go on living.*

*An unfinished poem says
'That unforgettable day
I can't recall what happened.'
or "My heart is suffering so,
I think I shall die — yesterday."
or "Tomorrow is a long-awaited gift
I shall send back unopened."*

*An unfinished poem is all of man's creative spirit
hidden under a thimble,
a toadstool,
a newspaper.*

An unfinished poem is

fugue on redemption

*central theme
running through
two Compositions*

*metre of love
in counterpoint to
our sailings*

*rhythm of understanding
with
insistent repetition
of purpose*

*and finality of Action
in the cadence of
the cross
Echoing
through Time.*

J. D.

Steven Borchardt

In Review:

The Lighter Lit



One needs an excuse for reviewing *Herzog*, a novel by Saul Bellow on top of best seller lists for over a year now. The excuse is that it is a classic of the modern novel. Moses Herzog is the epitome of today's fictional hero: the anti-hero. The trend towards the anti-hero emerged in the late fifties with Salinger's Holden Caulfield and Albee's neurotics, became entrenched with Updike's Rabbit running, and has been a central theme of most existentialist literature.

The anti-hero's attributes are great mental capacity, extreme sensitivity, and profound depth of perception. It is necessary for the anti-hero to be defeated by his society, yet not succumb to it. The pattern is much the same as Greek tragedy and epic poetry, the hero of great strength and virtue overcome by natural elements via the gods.

Herzog is a culmination of the anti-hero's attributes. He is a man greatly accomplished in letters; a world-renowned and published scholar of the romantic period. He has the necessary "charm of the defeated" that Williams talked about which makes him attractive to women. He suffers inertly, groveling and writhing in the depths of his soul against his total, unconceivable tormentor. In all things he is capable, and in all things he fails. He is scooped on his book about the romantic period, although he knows he has more material to write. The cumbersome nature of his personal life makes a shambles of his scholarly career. He is reduced to mingling academic knowledge with the reports of his soul's torment which he scribbles to associates and acquaintances; but which are really meant for himself.

Herzog finds himself a cuckold to his best friend and cannot reconcile himself to his wife, who regards him as a violent animal. The other romances he engages in are hollow and disgusting to him.

Yet through all his suffering Herzog never loses sight of himself: he watches himself cynically, humorously, and nonchalantly, suffering in a hard consciousness.

Herzog throughout the novel extracts himself from his surroundings, past and present. His messages grow progressively shorter and at the novel's conclusion he rests in his rundown Berkshire mansion with no messages for anyone; yet conscious and in control.

The book is long, complete: a dissection. The

prose is fluent and does not become tiresome except for certain of the "letters" via which (one suspects) Bellow is flashing knowledge to impress, confound, and astound the reader. It is a success because it describes a universal man. Herzog is a Jew, but he does not suffer because of the semitic curse; he suffers because he is a man and because he is surrounded by the superhuman tortures and torturers which make up the world for a sensitive soul. It finishes with Herzog assuming as close a victory as he is capable of: that of being cognizant of himself.

HIGHBROW HORROR

THE LIME TWIG by John Hawkes with Introduction by Leslie A. Fiedler. New Directions Corp., New York. 174 pages, 1961. \$1.45.

A stolen racehorse and the Golden Bowl at Aldington, make the plot for a bettor's dream and an odds-perfect situation. In *The Lime Twig*, John Hawkes demonstrates the technique that has stereotyped him as an experimental writer, but with an art and grace that should make any reader question the reasons for his being the least read novelist of substantial merit in the United States. What might be simply another conventional suspense thriller becomes a piercing exploration into the fears and loves forming the relations of a group of people.

John Hawkes can only be described as conventional where revolt is convention. Using what might be considered a Gothic theme with terror rather than love as the center of this novel, this Englishman becomes someone unique enough among his contemporaries to give the reader a sort of estoteric pride in having read Hawkes. He shows that terror is a result of a quest for love in the face of the destruction of that love, and a love breeding terror is final terror.

In this novel and in his other novels, *The Cannibal*, *The Beetle Leg*, *The Goose on the Grave*, and *A Second Skin*, he constructs a vulgarly thrilling plot, but it is the fresh approach that enhances the work. Hawkes presents simultaneously the details of the action and the context in which we confront them. In the introduction to *The Lime Twig*, Leslie A. Fiedler warns the reader: "His view avoids the aesthetic and the theological alike, since it deals with the mysteries neither of the world nor of the spirit — but only with the immitigable mystery of the world of common experience."

Objects and characters move in and out of focus. The matter of fact threatens to become hallucination. Hawkes does not present an event in an ordered or framed sequence as the mind might rationalize it in remembering. Instead there is a fusing of emotions, thoughts, and senses to present the absurd blur of reality. So it is not the unconscious ordering of events, but the confusion of realism. And Hawkes

manages not to lose form or wit in portraying reason's last terrorizing attempt at understanding unreason.

"Sidney Slyter Says" is a newspaper column that informs the reader of what has happened and is about to happen, and then melts into the surrealistic. Tenement owner Michael Banks dreams up the plot to steal the race horse. But as soon as he begins to realize his dream, professionals move in and create the terror that destroys the dream. His wife, who becomes his only object for desire (after Larry, the gangster-in-chief, takes the horse, and Syb, the come-on girl, takes his freedom), is passionately beaten to death by the gang. Banks' accomplice, William Hencher, begins the novel with his erotic dreams of Mother and the wartime bombing of London, and begins its end and his own when he ventures into the stall of the stolen horse and dream symbol where he is kicked to death. Banks also dies ironically beneath the horse's hoofs as he attempts to destroy what has become the love of the gang by falling in front of the horses on the track and ending the running. But this is not until he has smelled the lime rising in the odor of the blood of a slain gang member. Hawke's revealing style can hardly allow anyone to envy the Violet Lane detectives who must account for the bodies.

* * * *

I live in a tiny box filled with todays.
Oh, there may be a few yesterdays in here
And perhaps some tomorrows as well
But they all look so very much alike
That I can't really tell them apart —
It is quite dark inside a box, you know.

Joan Davis

* * * *

A recent informal survey revealed that the most popular and best-attended social functions of a local sorority are charity projects and faculty teas. The combination was purely coincidental . . . we think.

Alice's Adventures under Ground

Alice's



OR, how to hyde from your contributors *

It was belated one even, pssst hours much to the undress of the housemadder, who was Waiting Up. Meanwiles, in the kitter Office, Alice along with her stuff members were sitting quite as mice, or mushrooms, when Alice finally went and slattern the silence with a shiek: "OK, youse guys, where are them contributors? It's no yule hyding from them if they aren't even looging for us!"

Then she sighed, "Perhaps they are only pigments of our infat-

uation." "Now! Now!" screamed the March Hare, who wasn't due for two more issues, "Calm down, young unsightly idealipstick Alice!"

"Now, now" said Wesley Parsley, wrinkling his brand new nose, "It's part and parsley of the game." "Wad game?" shieked Alice, twisting the hymn of her new collegiate Village Idiot dress. "Hyde and Seeq?" "No, just Hyde."

"But o! But we've got the inner hand here in the upper room! or rice verse," Alice reformed him. "what vice?" streamed John Silly Dune from a long-legged corner. "Now if we knew where those damp poets and things kept their poems, or short snores, or artfork, or whatever, maybe we could ferret them out," Alice rebarked him, taking on a practical hair.



"It's just that it's so dark in here," hummed Silly Dune again, "And I'm scarce," he added, with a turner in his vocals. "Yes, and the door is stuck ever since you lost the doormouse- er, key," blamed Wesley. "Yes, and we may well starve in here," whistled Jiminy from the "discarded poetry" folder in the Filing Caddy. "It's four o'clock and not even enough watered-down copy to make a spot of teeth with."

"That is, unless we start eating this here mis-carried poetry that you refuel to print," said a small voice, trying to be of some asissy.

Alice gasped. "Oh No! We must fight mediocrity to the Finnish!" At those words, the Spanish Queen of Heart burn, who was in the works, came in to empty the wasteing bulge baskets, - which was her daily tasket.

Alice and her stuff members made a quick exit as they screened aloud to themselves (for the Spanish Queen was deft and dump), "We'll fine those damp hyding contributors yet!"

It would be nice, don't you think, if young Alice could wake up all of a sundown and fine out that it was only a bad dreamwhip, or only some twig she ate?



THE WASTE CAN

A Parody by Mary Kay Siemers

I.

*"Thithage quithagick brithagown fithagox
jithagumps ithagovithager thithage lith-
agazithagy dithagog."*

The dump is the cruellest world, breeding
Flies out of old tin cans, mixing
Coffee ground and potato, peeling
*"Faites attention! Vous allumez votre cigarette
Par le mauvais bout."*

Dolls' heads and bed-springs, cheering
Glum hearts at Goodwill.
"And it's lovely rice pudding for dinner again!"
It keeps men busy, raking
Old ashes and bottles, taking.
"For O! for O, the hobby-horse is forgot."

II.

Jimmy amused us, climbing on a broken tricycle,
"Here we go round the mulberry bush" "Pop goes
the weasel"
And then we were children, playing on the ash heaps
And we were nostalgic. I said, Matilda
Matilda, let's go. And down we went.
In the dump, there you feel sick
The odors drift into the car and go out through the
vent.

*La Senora Luna le pidio al naranjo
Un vestido verde y un veilillo blanco.*

*La Senora Luna se quiere casar
Con un pajecito de la casa real.*

What are the things that hatch, what monsters grow
Out of this slimy trash? Son of Jack

You cannot say or guess, for you know only
A mite of General Bio, which Bloom teaches:
"Megaspores are borne in megasporangia on
megasporophylls;
And microscopes are borne in microsporangia on
microsporophylls."
And the students give no concern, the test scores no
reward,
And the dry pitcher no Kool-Aid. Only
Your grade-point at mid-term sinking to haunt you.

III.

*"Ackjay andway illjay entway upway ethay illhay
Otay etchfay away ailpay ofway aterway
Achjay ellfay ownday andway okebray ishay owncray
Andway illjay amecay umblingtay afterway."*

Mister Kokovitz, famous collector
Has a new suit, nevertheless
Is known to be the smelliest man in East Fork
"Man ist was man isst"
With a filthy pack of kids. Here, said he
Is my cart, seen by Uncle Sam
"Hickory Dickory Dock — a mouse"
Here enshrined is Lyndon Baines
Creator of "Situations."
Hidden is the house with three baths and the "Rolls."
I am the back-handed tycoon and this is the word
Which you are forbidden to speak. I do not find
Danger, but fear Senate Committees.
I've seen hordes of friends, driven off to the pen.
Not me. If you see Senator Poorson
Tell him I bring the bribe myself.
One must be so careful these days.

TITLE: The title of this work was suggested by Merriam Webster's New International Dictionary. I am also greatly indebted to Mrs. "Ma" Goose for a great deal of accidental symbolism in this poem. I suggest also the following works as aids to the reader's understanding of the poem: a manuscript edition of the Wycliffe Bible, *Complete Works of Shakespeare*, *Complete Works of A. A. Milne*, *Time* magazine, and the *Collected Nursery Rhymes* of the aforementioned Mrs. Goose.

Epigraph: A typing — and printing — exercise.

Footnotes: 4. (Fr.) "Watch out! You are lighting your cigarette by the wrong end!"

8. A. A. Milne, "Rice Pudding," line 18. Rice pudding is also, to my taste, one of the worst examples of English culinary achievement.

11. Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Act II, scene ii.

23. Juana de Ibarbourou. "Mistress Moon asked the orange tree/For a green dress and a little white veil. Mistress Moon wishes to wed / a little page in the royal house."

29. Cf. Bloom and Krekeler, *General Biology* or any disgruntled student.

36. Cf. any of Dr. E. Schroeder's lectures, *Christian Sources II*, especially the DS section.

39. Mother Goose.



(continued from page 8)

SITTON: Well, I don't know.

WIDIGER: Then how can you say it's orderly?

KOWITZ: Any more than any one of us can get any single one order. Norm, whether you talk about Christianity, or communism, or any kind of prescribed order, not all of us agree to it.

WIDIGER: All right, it seems to me that there is some kind of contradiction going on here . . . that they're using ritual to attack ritual. Order to attack order. What is the order that's left? The order of the ritual. What is the ritual saying? It's all nonsense. You can't communicate . . .

SCHIEMANN: You have to look at the individual play.

SITTON: Yes, you can't lump all these plays into one.

WIDIGER: But there's enough there to make them classifiable under a common title.

KUSSROW: It's an unfortunate classification; it's so broad.

WIDIGER: When I read these plays, it's the same old story.

KOWITZ: What is this simple old story you read into these plays?

WIDIGER: That when you want to talk about reality you have to do so as to indicate a total disparity that has no order whatever.

SITTON: I've never seen so much order as in Pinter. And ritual, and myth, and the metaphysical, and horror, fear: all these things which are

pretty real to me.

WIDIGER: But it all comes out to the same thing, that it's all a confused mess.

KOWITZ: You're saying that every thing has to work out very neatly?

WIDIGER: I'm not saying that either. It seems that if what the play talks about is that life is a pretty big mess, we're all in a box by ourselves, there is total lack of communication, if that's reality; then it seems that they're missing some part of reality and this is ultimate reality.

SCHIEMANN: Well, anybody who writes a poem is saying *that*, obviously no finite expression of human reality is absolute.

SITTON: I think I know what he is looking for . . . it's that objective truth on the part of the playwright.

KUSSROW: It is one way of ordering reality, as he sees it.

WIDIGER: It seems that we are striving to reach some sort of understanding that goes beyond a play, a sort of commonness. Now is this a sort of created consensus that everyone agrees to — this is 'our creation' — or does this go beyond our particular creation and is given to us — something which we catch?

SCHIEMANN: I'm somewhat dubious about a consensus that is reached between such disparate personalities.

SITTON: I don't see any value in assuming there is an answer that we can all arrive at.

WIDIGER: Then what's the purpose

of communication?

KOWITZ: There are a number of levels for talking. But where we come into agreement: this is the validity of this kind of conversation tonight. To find out these things about one another. I don't think we do much convincing at the outset, but when I can find some sort of tangency with you — this is what happens in these plays and in art.

KUSSROW: Well, the same thing is true in anyone's response to art. There is more art that one does not respond to —

WIDIGER: What I am getting to is that I am opposed to the current kick which says that we can get to a greater level of reality through art, drama, etc., than we can get to through rationality, philosophy, and the theology.

KUSSROW: That's just the old thing about 'my field's better than your field.'

KUSSROW: When Norm was talking about this not being all of reality, I was thinking how true this is. Any art form expresses this. As much as I do not care for fragmented reality — the theater of the absurd presents such a broadness of texture.

SCHIEMANN: That depends on the audience. The last time I saw *Doll's House* it was at a matinee with a theater-full of women. You know, they laughed when they should have shuddered. It was a horrible experience. They couldn't identify with this poor woman whose husband was such a brute. "Why don't you walk out, dearie?" . . .

But seeing a play is a communal thing. If it isn't hitting a pretty broad spectrum of engagement in the audience — in other words, the audience helps to make the play too.

SITTON: Here is the one weakness of the theater of the absurd now — it prescribes an intellect. Too often the theatergoers don't bring that with them.

KUSSROW: Or take the example Dave gave earlier — the performance of *Godot* at the prison for the inmates. It prescribes an intellect or almost the other way — but not the button-down middle class mind. It prescribes some kind of naivete . . .

END.

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*Slip and slide in
Muck and mire,
Muddied thoughts press
Feelings higher;
Look and listen
For the pain,
Listen, glisten,
Blue-drop rain;
Shimm'ring droplets
Dripping grief,
Turn to truth:
YOU are the thief!*

John E. Softy

This poem was written after reading "Envy" by Kathleen Bare, which has not been reprinted here with permission from the Writer magazine, March 1964.

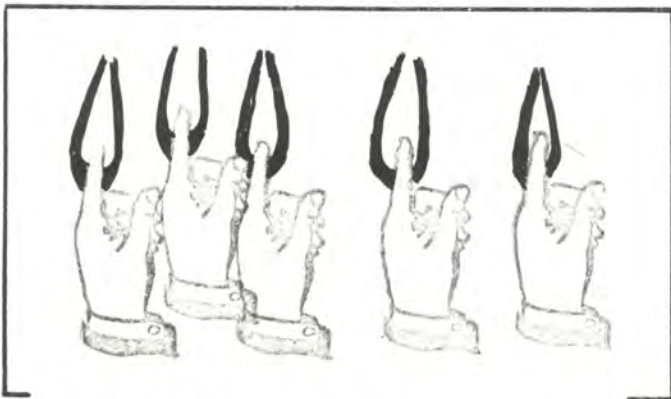


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*I am liquid life
 flowing persistently on,
 yet leaving no mark upon the stone surface —
 aimlessly following the river bed
 Now rapid, now languid,
 directed only by the winds
 and the lay of the land —
 moving till I meet with the sea
 becoming part of the tractless waves
 driven toward the shore —
 one moment of thunder
 an explosion of foam and spray —
 then drying in streaks
 across the sandy flats.*

Joan Davis

*With my
 eyes
 In the sky,
 I
 Stumble over many
 Small stones.*

*Tripped, I lie.
 Trapped?*

Softy



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Now the days are short

I'm in the autumn of the year



And I look at my life

as vintage wine

In fine old kegs;

From the brim to the dregs

It poured sweet and clear . . .



It was a very good year.

iii

*You are
that look on a
child's face,
half-curious
half-cry
because he has
hugged his balloon
too much
too hard
too long.*