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1907
Sept

the Poolmaster

"Yes," my mother says, white-faced

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entirely back into the eighteenth century
Williamsburg, Virginia. Watch craftsmen work
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the *lighter*

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September, 1967

Staff:

Editor: Charles Mintzlaff;
Assistant editor: Jan Karsten;
Fiction editor: John Stahnke;
Feature editor: Racy Princess Peters;
Poetry editor: Joan Davis;
Review editor: Pat Sullivan;
Copy editor: Mary Jane Nehring;
Business Manager: Craig Filip;
Advertising manager: Dick Wamhoff;
Faculty advisor: Professor Walter Sanders.

Contributors:

Lynn Bicknell, Bonnie Birtwistle, Eric Boys, Cheryl Breitenbuecher, Elizabeth Burkhard, Luther Esala, Phil Gray, Susan Huber, Joan Koenig, Pamela Lang, Paul Ross, Mary Ann Schenkey, George Shibata.

Design:

Tom Brauer, Penny Johnson, Karl Kerrick, Kathi Kuhn, Dave Rybat, Harry Schmidt.

Cover:

A paper mounting with ink designed by Miss Pamela Lang.

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the lighter

*the literary-feature magazine
of Valparaiso University*

* asterisk

. . . by Süsc

RETURNING with more of her poetry, Bonnie Birtwistle contributes to this issue "Street Song," a piece which she has subtitled, in an admittedly half-serious moment, "A Sibling." While first glance may dismiss it as lacking the eschatological sweep of "Prospero," "Street Song" bears a relationship to that earlier poem that is more than an external similarity. "Street Song" is the song of the marketplace, the dirge and ditty of life, much sung but little heard. Miss Birtwistle's swift imagery takes us on a tour of slices of life sandwiched between curbstones to suggest that longing and fulfillment, reaching and grasping are accomplished in the same gesture.

Far from echoing "Street Song's" revel, Luther Esala's first *Lighter* contribution takes a mocking turn. "An Essential Ingredient is Humor" not only for facing the darkness and uncertainty of life, but also for making any sense out of this amusing and disturbing monologue of a mock hero, written with encouragement from Mr. Musser of the English Department. Mr. Esala may be presenting a probing comment on man's search for purpose, or he may just be having a tremendously good joke at our expense. We really don't know which.

Junior Joan Koenig may be less grave in motif, but a similar cynicism runs through her story, "A Needle in the Haystack." Any bed of roses is bound to have its thorns, and here a young couple takes a second thought that their roll in the hay may not be so com-

fortable after all. The Quixotic savior of youth and virginity is not lengthily, profoundmoralizing, however, but rather a convenient *deus ex machina* in the form of a folksy married pair who trip over their self-imposed respectability.

Evil can be more drastic and subtle, and is not always defeated in its own clumsiness. The duplicity developed by Senior Paul Ross in "Momentos" spreads a chilling shadow over the sleepy innocence of a Mexican village. Mr. Ross handles language and theme with a finesse that is outstanding in his first appearance in the *Lighter*.

On a more personal level, Susan Huber brings us back to the Midwest with her reflections in "Chicago, Cedarledge, Ladd." With a sensitive use of detail that heightens the quality of her essay, Miss Huber convincingly blends the fabrications of self-grandeur and the romantic illusion of daydreams with the truth of the everyday, the reality of actual experience, to pose an honest question and give an honest answer.

In "John Cage — Sound and Silence" junior Phil Gray enters the realm of aesthetics to examine the unconventional views of a contemporary musicologist and composer who regards music and its elements with a radical subjectivity. Mr. Gray's lucid presentation and critical evaluation of Cage's musical theories reveal a perception that should not escape the consideration of *Lighter* readers.

HUBER



ROSS



GRAY



ESALA



KOENIG

* *et alii*

PHOTOS / George Shibata

Editorial Comment:

ALONG ABOUT the time your mother first started lying about her age, a giant musical comedy opened at the old New York Hippodrome.

The play was a circus spectacular called *Jumbo*, and its two big stars were an elephant and Jimmy Durante. One of its most memorable scenes involved Durante caught by a policeman in the act of stealing the elephant. We have never seen the play, but as the scene is often retold, it goes something like this:

Durante enters from the shadows upstage, trying to quiet his enormous companion. At the moment it seems that he will cross the stage safely, the policeman enters.

The policeman glowers at Durante. "Where did you get that elephant?"

Durante does a double take, then blinks, shades his eyes with his hand, and scans the audience. "Why officer, what elephant?"

Being caught, you might say (go ahead, say it), in the act of trying to sneak through under the wire with one more issue (ignore this column if we fail to make publication) and erstwhile trying to pretend that everything is fine and dandy, we have been sitting up half the night trying to think of some convenient excuse for the delay.

But our staff members have been heroic in their efforts, the ever elusive contributors have made their fleeting appearances, and after all, the printer has a wife and family to take care of.

So rather than try to shift the blame, we would first like to express our thanks to all the people who have helped in any way to make this volume of the *Lighter* possible.

And if anyone should be so bold as to ask why our last issue is appearing three months late, we will simply smile and say, "Why really, what elephant?"

Chicago, Cedarledge, Ladd

Susan Huber



WE LEFT for Chicago at six in the morning. Jarred from our half-sleep by the early morning cold, we stepped into the red cab and were driven by a surly, sleepy man through the deserted streets to the train station. We joined two commuters inside, laughing self-consciously as the wooden floorboards creaked beneath our feet.

A Viceroy on an empty stomach made me dizzy and I looked for a rest room or a drinking fountain. I found the room, but no light switch and so returned to one of the four hard benches and glanced at yesterday's *Tribune* by the dim light left burning behind the ticket office's frosted glass. Promptly at 6:28, the Pennsy roared in and accepted the meager clutch of Valparaiso-forsakers.

Susy had never been on a train before, so I led the way up the steps and into the car to the right. We passed frowzy women, sleeping babies, workmen with grease-spotted paper bags on their laps, and an elderly, dozing couple on our way to the empty seat. We settled ourselves as the train lurched to a start. We were away.

Susy, sitting on the aisle side, finished the funnies and society page. Looking past my reflection in the grimy glass at Gary's spectrum of grays, I crossed my eyes and made the mill lights blur into a kaleidoscope. To the right was the lake with twinkling ships set on the slowly lightening horizon. I envisioned Deborah Kerr in chiffon and Cary Grant in tweeds, kissing good morning on the upper deck to the soft strains of "An Affair to Remember." "Ore boats," grunted the greasy man across the aisle.

I quickly turned my head and stared at the wrong side of the tracks. I was free. My mother had no idea where I was. I had bought the \$2.12 ticket by myself. I had \$40 to spend on whatever I wanted. I laughed in my heart.

In Chicago, we had steaming pancakes at Stouffer's and lingered over cigarettes and coffee. We gawked at the Prudential building, the El, and the towering stores. We smiled at the scrubbed, polished, knife-pleated sailors.

ART / Mary Ann Schenkey

When the stores opened, we spent our money and guiltily resolved not to tell our parents. Hours later, on the way back, I slumped in the prickly seat, sodden with fatigue. I was sick from too many cigarettes, too much walking, and too much spending. As I stared into the velvet, whizzing darkness, I remembered when I had felt like that before — six years ago.

I was twelve. It was July and we drove down the shimmering asphalt and rutted dirt-gravel road to Pevely, Missouri, and Camp Cedarledge. I had sold Girl Scout peanuts for five months and, as a reward, I was to spend two weeks in “the foothills of the Ozark plateau, gaining badge credits and the sisterhood of other Scouts.” My family left me at Timber Trails unit, piling the scuffed blue suitcase, duffel bag, aluminum mess kit, and galoshes beside a fir tree.

I seemingly nonchalantly said good-bye, enduring my mother’s hugs and my father’s parting advice. After sticking a dollar bill into my blouse pocket, Dad herded Mom and Steve into the light blue Fairlane and drove away. I dragged my gear to Tent # 3, put blankets and sheets on my sagging cot, lay down, and cried. I was alone, on my own, by my lonesome, just Susan — or number 11 when the whistle blew.

Those weeks, a moist, balled handkerchief went with me on the ten-mile hike, to cookouts, to the archery range, and on latrine duty. I got a letter and wrote one every day. During the hour rest period, when Timber Trails would nap on their cots in their Teen-Form bras, I lay in my sweaty blouse, ashamed of my flat chest and my wet hanky. The chunky head counselor, Sparky, yelled at me for “breaking the Scout tradition of courage.” Only the colored girl, Lucy, ostracized by her tent-mates, understood.

So I reserved my tears until night, when the katydids and cicadas kindly covered my gasps and sobs. On a Sunday, I arrived home, surprised that nothing had changed there during my absence. I bragged about how great it was to get away and be on my own, but I set the table without being asked and let Steve watch the Flintstones, instead of insisting on 77 Sunset Strip.

And then six years before Cedarledge, my mother led me up the paint-spattered, vandalized steps of Ladd School, gave my name to Mrs. Miller, and left, waving goodbye. I was in school. I got to finger-paint, write my name with a thick, round pencil, and play Flying Dutchman. But after graham crackers, lying on the rug and sucking a straw, I sobbed. The fat girl behind me buttoned a missed button and Mrs. Miller asked, “What’s the matter, Honey?”

“I want my mommy.” But I was six now; I knew the way home all by myself. Turn by Charlotte’s house and look both ways at the big street. A woman waiting for a bus laughed me across the empty lanes. I never paused

there again. I found some foil Christmas tree reflectors in the empty lot at the end of Monroe street. “School is fun, Steve. We get to paint and play all the time.”

All the time, I’m alone now. I make my own decisions, wear what I want, eat what I want, go where, when, and with whom I please. I smoke now, and, on Homecoming weekend, I drank daiquiris. I want my mommy. I’m only eighteen years old and I’m 600 miles away from home. A phone call nets me only Shawnee Mission West High School’s football scores, questions about how my money is holding out, exhortations to write more often and more legibly, and a vacuum in my heart when the nasal operator asks me if I’m through.

Striding across the tundra with shoulder bag, leather jacket, French book, and long hair, I feel collegiate. I belong here! At a Vietnam teach-in or after a Western Cultures lecture on Greek sculpture, I realize that I’m learning something. Sitting in 308’s window seat in the deserted dorm on a Saturday night, I feel inadequate. I feel superior! Something tells me I do not belong here. I belong in a murky Greenwich Village coffee house, discussing Updike or *Baby Jane*. I belong with a Peace Corps team in Ghana. I belong in Le Bistro in Paris in a Balmain gown, escorted by an exiled Italian count. I should be teaching eager, intelligent, curious students in an ivy-covered eastern college. I should dance all night with someone who will vote for Bobby Kennedy in ’72 and who comprehends T. S. Eliot. I want to get my pilot’s license. I want to water-ski — barefoot. I want a million dollars — or five. I want to see the ocean and walk in the London fog. All I want is a plain man. All I want is an honest man, a quiet man, a gentle man, a straightforward and honest man.

Then some clod asks me to a Book Break to contort to “The Chosen Few.” Hey people, I’m above all this! I want to burst with all the wine I must taste, the books I must read and write, the places I must see, the lips I must kiss, the hands I must shake, the life I must grasp. I’m almost twenty and I haven’t done a damn thing. My life is petty, trivial. Let me live, dear God! Fly me to the moon. Let me play among the stars. I want to take off my mask. Others are others; I am I. If you don’t just like me, pass me by.

But I smile for the Alpha Phis. I tell my roommate that her theme is nice, when I think a robot could have written a better one. I wear Villagers, knee sox, and Weejuns. I’m spineless. I’m alone. There is only Susan Irene Huber in this world and she is intangible, invisible. I can’t find her. God knows, I’m trying. But I don’t know how much longer I can hold on. One bottle of sleeping pills equals one nirvana.

As the Pennsy jerks to a stop in Valparaiso’s twilight, I mutter, “Grow up, Huber. Just cut the crap and grow up.”

STREET SONG

(*a sibling*)

And there are days on Michigan Avenue
(or any other)
When you can just
sit;
Lose your miniature identity in
speculation,
fascination and
careless
musing and
watching and
listening
With the hurrying, frustrated crowd on that street.
Be caught up with a querulous, curious
I
That is not really
I,
but every,
and all,
and many —
looking back from the faces in crowds.

faces across the street
impatient grimaces; tapping feet;
tapping rain off wet newspapers;
lovers peering out from under pulpy, printed palm leaves,
wondering that it rains in the Garden.

faces

busses lurching to splatter the black, fur-topped boots,
and white, wrinkled uniforms; belching forth the 4:34
gorging — Why must small boys dally when leaving busses? —
and gulping ravenously the tasty 4:45 morsels with
brief cases, groceries, bags, hat boxes, and one more
screaming, ice-cream-smearred child — the son of
Abraham was much more submissive.

faces

black with two days' beard, black fire eyes
under sooty brows, wrinkles and moles,
shriveled lips kissing empty gums, and
fingers black with the dirt of words,
 news,
 story,
 time —
He blows through them the hot, stinking
breath of old age;
 the dust of living,
covering his grisly main, shows
 etching the wrinkles and grease
 on old tatters, worn sweaters, and rags
 we call clothes
 and he wears as he croaks,
 “*Trib, Daily*, latest 'dition”
Dimes and quarters rattle into the gray tin box,
 hidden beneath the obscenely carved counter
 next to a near-empty yellow bottle —
 claiming no omega, not full of ambrosia.

faces

wet hair on foreheads; black wire hair springing
from babushkas; glasses steamed up and dripping over
hot coffee
 in a cup half-full
 and a doughnut with a finger mark
 on the white glistening frosting.
white collars grimy; ties pulled loose;
creased coats; water off hat brims drenching
the Businessman's Special.
You're sighing at the smudge on your spoon
and hope to catch the eye of the waitress
 smoothing her hair in the wall mirror;
 While the milkshakes are shaking,
 cokes cooling,
 juice sloshing,
 and grilled cheeses grilling,
You're grinning at her,
or the grubby old lady with soup-dripping bread
 half in and half out of her
 soup-dripping mouth;
laughing — a nearsighted secretary squinting,
 platinum hair dripping,

orders coffee and roll (she can't see the menu);
a father, with camera, wearily waiting for catsup,
two kids and his wife all hoarding the mustard,
a third one frightened
by the red, gushing sacrifice bleeding helplessly
in front of the hungry, fussy eyes
of childhood in its orneriest,
most tiresome stage.

With your Walgreen-clean spoon
and Rexall-Pure-Cane sugar
mingle in the healing waters of that holy river
served up by Pharoah's young daughter,
as you wonder on whose plate was visited
the plague of your smudged spoon.

faces

striped in barred windows of cells; cold, miserly
glass filled with crisp paper "gold" and gray
concrete documents; check books and stubs; the tinkle
of money and satisfied murmur of strangers,
rich people, in separate small monetary cells,
basking in florescent moonlight
and fancying it romantic;
black dirt smudges the carpet; wet passersby
marvel at bright plastic orchids,
in their idiocy beaming in eerie bank "sunshine"
where everyone saves for a rainy day;
and the third bank teller with the rhinestone-rimmed
glasses and knobby cashmere sweater
has taped on her third steel filing cabinet
a picture in crayon of a tree,
and a cow with ten udders —
all of it signed —

J A M I E

And the gentleman dozing on green plastic cushions,
by the water cooler that's stuck so it won't turn off,
He's behind the artificial bushes and brambles,
his yellow shirt grimy, still half wet and clinging,
pointed shoes scuffed gray now squeaking wet and black,
and balding head nodding —

His savings were stored in his teeth by his dentist,
And now he saves ticket stubs off the streets
where he lives,
And hoards lifesavers from the ashtrays in
this bank where he sleeps, unnoticed —
Perhaps dreaming,
Like Jacob,
of some miraculous ladder
and giddy spiral ascent

faces faces

And the crowds keep on moving,
Past the store windows;
Deaf by the croaking old man;

Blind to the hate and the love
peeking from boys' long bangs;
Dumb to the wants in insolent hearts
clothed in thick P-coats,
high boots and white levis,
long, flowing tresses —
unadorned, coursing over shoulders
and glistening in drizzle;

An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.
Words are for those with promises to keep.

Bodies packed close and sweating together under rubber;
Numbly forgetting their soul in the pounding noise,
street tumult;
Playing possum to self in the psuedo-self,
progress;
And clicking precisely into the
Promised Land —
future

The world is full of us, us with our
Eyes eager to listen;
Ears anxious to look into
Aching hearts pulsating, hoping to know
the desires and the objects
locked
in the minds that are trying to feel,
To return the throbbing, mysterious souls
Of these chilly, eerily Farenheit bodies
recklessly caught up in the sad business of life.
They're lonely betters —
hopelessly, mutely
in love with each other.



A Needle in the Haystack



HE OPENED the door and she preceded him in. While he turned the lock and fastened the safety catch, she looked around the compact room. "That fellow said not to mess up the other bed," he told her.

"Did he expect you and Fred to sleep in the same one?" she questioned, turning around to face him. With a shrug he walked to the lightswitch and snapped it on. She moved toward the closet and unbuttoned the single black button on her white coat.

"Here, hang this up," he said, handing her his coat and disappearing into the bathroom. She laid his black herringbone jacket on the bed and proceeded to put hers on the wooden hanger. "Tremendous job!" he observed

as he walked out of the bathroom tucking the tail of his white shirt into his heavily-creased suit pants.

"I've only got two hands," she reminded him, reaching for his coat. Ambling to the window, he lifted the bottom corner of the curtains to peer out. He quickly replaced it and drew the curtains closer together.

"You sure do travel lightly."

She smiled at him and got up from the chair. "Would you believe my suitcase is all packed? It's lying on my bed back in the room. I just forgot it."

Turning around, he reached into his back pocket, removed his wallet, and laid it on the dresser. "Well, when you ran your nylon you went back to the room.

ART. / Dave Rybat

Why didn't you bring it down them?"

"I was too embarrassed to admit that to you," she confided, lithely stretching herself across the width of the bed and extending her arms above her head.

"Oh, you!" he said. He bent down and kissed her wriggling fingertips. "What did you think I was going to do? It makes more sense to have gone back for it than not to have it at all."

"Well, after you snapped at me for catching my nylon on Fred's car door, I thought I'd done just about enough to upset you," she said as she stood erect.

"Snapped at you? When?"

"'Fine way to start an evening' was your terse comment."

"Oh. I just thought. . . Well, I was just sorry that you ruined your stocking."

"Oh, I see. And what were you concerned about when I suggested Fred go get Sharon and then come back again? You were obviously quite disgustedly reluctant to wait with me."

"Well, we were late already then," he said, walking into the bathroom. She sighed deeply as she bent over to take off her white patent leather shoes. Pulling a tissue from her purse she wiped at the black scuff marks on the sides. She sighed again and put them under the dresser.

The phone rang. She let it ring three times and then called out, "John, should I answer it?"

"Well, that's the usual procedure."

She picked up the receiver, "What? . . . er, yes? Uh, I mean, hello? Who? Whoo?" she repeated. "Oh yes. Yes. Yes, of course." She ran to the bathroom door and whispered through the crack, "Are you Mr. *Smith*?"

He jerked the door open and walked to the phone. "Yes? Uh huh, nine thirty will be fine. Thank you much . . . uh, very much. He's going to wake us up at nine thirty. OK?"

"Yes, sure, Mr. *Smith*. John Smith, huh? Real good choice."

"Did you want me to use my own name? Put down the right address without thinking, though," he yawned.

"Fine," she said, sinking down into the chair.

"Let's see if the T.V. works." He flicked it on and off and on and off. "Guess it doesn't." he concluded while pulling out the top drawer of the heavily-marred dresser. "Oh, good. We've got everything we'd ever need for a true existence on earth: a beer can opener and a Bible." She smiled at his back.

"Com'on, let's dance," he suggested, pulling her out of the chair. "I'll sing."

She stood on her stockinged feet and looked at her slender fingers as they retied the black velvet bow at the neck of her low-cut dress. "I thought you said I didn't know how."

"Uh, well, I'll have to teach you some day."

"What do you want me to do?" she questioned as she folded her arms in front of her and looked at his rhythmically-moving feet.

"Like this," he said, jerking back and forth in time to the music he was humming. "Loosen up! You've got perfect beat, but you just never let go." With her eyes always on his face she moved with him, never uncrossing her white velvet-covered arms. "Boy, you're stubborn." He observed. He danced over to the mirror above the dresser and executed a more difficult step. She stopped her feet. He looked at her and said, "God, why can't. . ."

"I'll learn some other time," she interrupted. "Since it seems to be such an essential thing in your life, I'll make the effort. I don't want to embarrass you in public."

"Well, what else does one do at parties? I take you to enough of them. Seems you ought to be able to do this. . . ." He left the sentence unfinished.

"The light's on. Guess they're still up," came a masculine voice from outside.

"Yoo hoo! Anybody home?" was the following female inquiry.

"Oh no!" the girl whispered, backing into the dresser. In three long strides the boy was at the door. He turned the knob and pulled. Then he unbolted the safety catch, flicked the lock, and opened the door until it hit his foot.

"We was jus' passin' by when we noticed your lights was all on, so we thought we'd say howdy."

"Herb and I happened to be looking out the winder when yawl came in. You're such a cute couple, we jus' wanted to extend some of our good ole Southern Hospitality. We're from Tennessee, you know," finished his wife. "We've got the room next door."

"Well," the boy began, "We. . . ."

"Are you decent?" interrupted the male visitor.

"Well, we. . . ."

"You came in with 'nother couple, din't ya?" continued the woman, pushing at the window-less door that was lodged against the boy's black oxford. "Jus' passin' through?"

The girl moved swiftly to stand behind the boy's back. Resting her hand on his extended, white-sleeved arm, she said, "Yes, we're decent, and we'd love to have you in; but it's been a long trip and we were just going to go to bed."

"Oh?" questioned the green and pink flowered form that was standing sidewise in the small opening. "Where're yawl from?"

"Michigan," she replied. The boy allowed the door to be opened a little further and watched the female visitor walk past him.

"Your room's jus' like ours," she observed as she wriggled herself into the vinyl-covered arm chair. "Even got the same colored bed spreads." As the boy silently began to push the door it was slammed against his hand with the entrance of the man.

"Yep, shor is," Herb agreed. "Same dresser, too. 'Cept, your'n looks like it's in pretty bad shape. People jus' don't know how to take care of things anymore."

"More'n likely wasn't made too good in the firs' place," added the woman, widely crossing her legs.

"Youse think these days, with modern machinery an' all, they'd be constructed better. Yessiree, it ain't gonna take much to knock this baby over," Herb speculated, grasping the top side of the dresser and shaking it with his brown, weather-worn hand.

"Mah, what pretty lil' white shoes — and to be travelin' in 'em too!" began Herb's wife.

Glancing under the dresser at her shoes she said, "Oh, yes. Thank you. Uh, we went to a wedding reception this evening. I changed clothes there."

"Too bad you soiled them."

"Oh yes, I know. Someone opened the door just as I was going out of it. It scuffed my shoes. I felt so ungraceful — and I was so embarrassed."

"Embarrassed? Why? It wasn't your fault. You can't help wha' somebody else does."

"Yeh," her husband agreed. "Take my Clarice here. She don't let nothin' embarrass her. And she's the happiest lil' ole gal in the entire world."

"Why, once," remembered Clarice, "I went to a square dance and while we was doin' the promenade I stepped right square on mah pardner's foot. But I jus' laughed and kep' right on dancin'."

"And I married her anyway," concluded her husband. "Matter o' fact, I didn't even notice it. She looked so happy and pretty. But those were the old days. Yawl

don' square dance anymore, do you?"

"No," confirmed the girl, "We don't dance that way."

"Say!" Clarice brightened up, "Was that *your* wedding reception?"

"No," the young couple quickly informed in unison. "We've been married a while," further explained the girl.

"Any little feet paddin' 'roun' at home?"

"No," smiled the girl, "Not yet."

"Aw, that's too bad. Kids is the biggest blessin' the good Lord ever gave us. Awful big 'sponsibility, though. Gotta teach 'em so much afore you let 'em loose in the world. You want 'em to grow up so's they'll be respectable people, and you can be proud of 'em. Want 'em to be a good reflection of their Maker," theorized the man, resting his solid hand on the boy's shoulder, shaking it for emphasis.

"We don't have any children," volunteered Clarice, uncrossing her legs.

"Our son was killed in the invasion of Normandy in 1944," Herb explained.

"He was a fine boy," they smiled in unison. "But," said his wife walking toward the door, "I'm sure your folks is jus' as proud of you as we are of him. A lil' Vaseline will take them marks off right away, Sugar. I have some if you'd want it."

"Thank you, no. I know where I can get it on my own," the girl replied, looking at her shoes. The couple walked out of the room and softly closed the door.

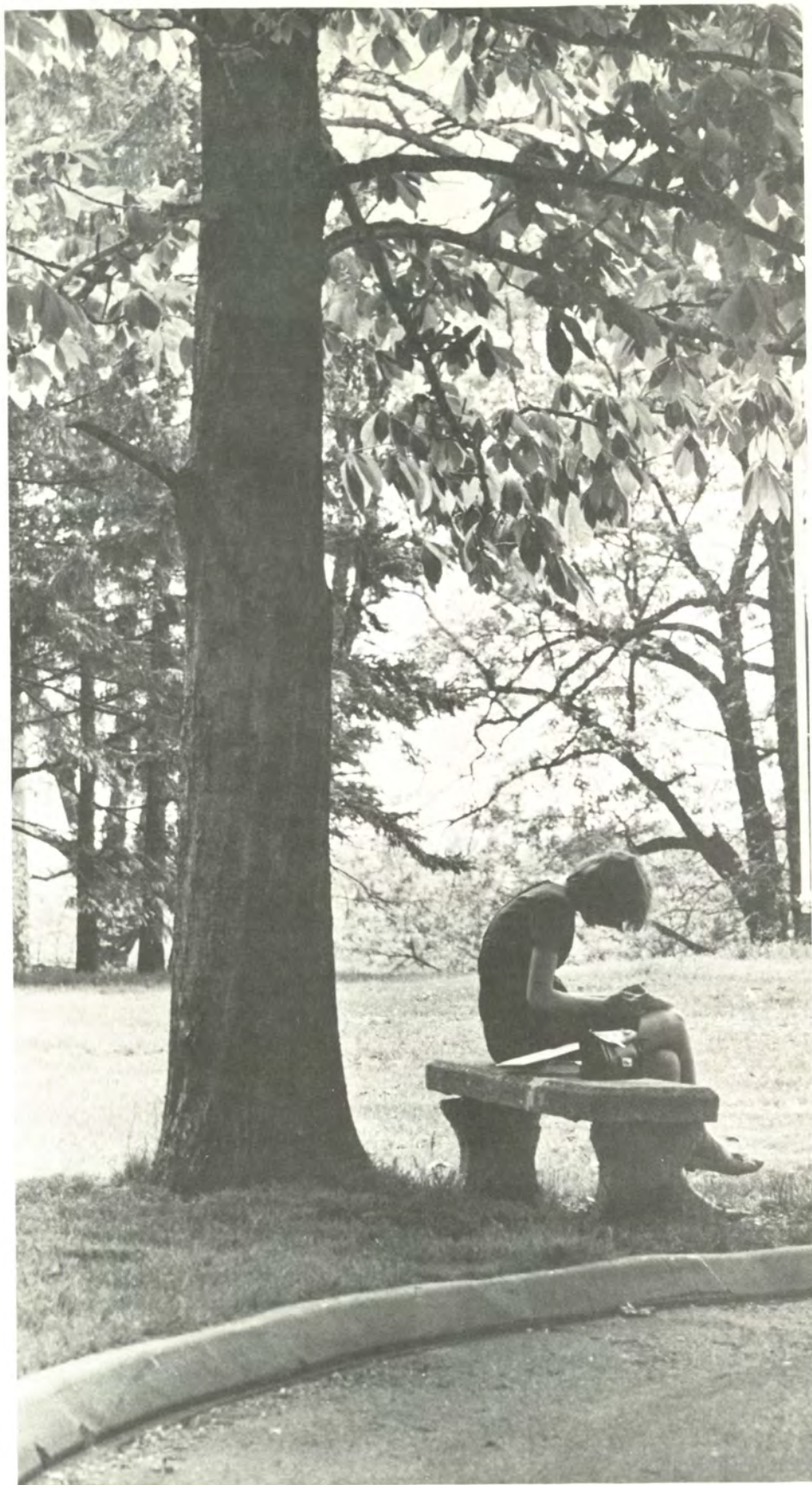
"Well, how's that for a little local color?" the boy laughed weakly. Motionless, the girl remained on the bed looking at her shoeless feet. He walked over to her and sat on the floor. Putting his tanned hands on hers he said, "That fellow told us not to mess up the other bed?" She leaned forward and kissed him.

"Tell him Fred snored."

Dawn begin. Day awake. Sun start to rise.
Come light — for your poppies, your roses,
The rubies with dew on their lips and tears in their eyes.
Come to the gypsy who kept the night weeping
Over her children eternally sleeping.
Give her your blessing to have for this morning;
Throw gold on her pillow before she has flown,
Or she'll wander forever through other men's gardens
Never to have a love of her own.

— Cheryl Breitenbuecher

Summer, as my friend Coleridge
waggishly writes, has set with
its usual severity.
— Charles Lamb.









PHOTOS / George Shibata

A Letter of Apology, *somewhat lately received.*

January 15, 1967

Dear Hortense,

I have not written for three weeks,
But now my pen expression seeks.
Pray let me for so long a time
Apologize in coupled rhyme.
Unprincipled though it seems,
I'll pen excuses by the reams
And sag the mails with burdened weight
In hope that you'll appreciate
This foolish waste of time and sense
As something of a recompense.
My purse is empty, so my mind
Is nothing but a fruitless rind,
And yet, I pray you not disdain
The echoes of this hollow brain.
Though pointed thoughts would be a strain,
My point is but to entertain.

The writing of frail verses lightens
That reality which frightens
Me each morning when alarms
(Forboding of still greater harms)
Would seek to rouse me from my sleep
With still more promises to keep.
(That last, I honestly confess,
Was said by Frost with more finesse.)

Enough blasphemous introduction;
Now to put forth some production:

My days are drab and dreary plain
And frankly something of a pain.
Justice done could hardly be
To nuisances of such degree
As searching texts of tedious lore
And writing papers by the score.
And so it goes and goes, although
Enthusiasm's running low
And irritations tend to grow.
I might expect life should be so,
But the outcome of it I don't know

Unless I ever onward go.

(Such syntax makes me think it's time
For variation in the rhyme;
Perhaps it further indicates
That here and there the meter syncopates.
But weight and dearth in this transgression
Are little lifted by digression
So I give up these liberties
And here must close parentheses.)

But I regret it, for I deem
No ounce of worth in any theme
Of: "Hi! How are you? I am fine,"
And then perhaps insert a line
Of hackneyed comment on the weather,
A listing of who goes together,
And gossiping in speculation
Of what others do sensation-
Al, and then go on to pry
In privy matters like a spy
Enumerating love affairs
Of couples for whom no one cares.

— In short, I should find something better
Than what makes up the usual letter.

And here I find I'm stymied for
My pornography's all hard core,
The jokes I know are all too shady
To be decent for a lady;
And who should care if I feel drousy?
Or to hear: "The weather's lousy"?
Why take time and ink to say
The useless things I did today,
Confide some gauchness I regret,
Or mention all the friends I've met?

(Which, as either of us knows
Is likely better said in prose.)
So rather than go on with this,
I send regards and add a kiss.
Go put your pristine form to bed
And sleep off all that I have said.

P.S.

"Sir, I admit your general rule
That every poet is a fool;
Yet, you yourself may serve to show it
That every fool is not a poet."

— Blatantly plagiarized from
Alexander Pope



MOMENTOS

by
Paul
Ross

A WHITE Chevrolet pulled off the glaring gravel road next to a Pepsi-Cola bottle cap sign. Nothing else was printed on the sign but a crude painted arrow pointing unsteadily toward a little white frame store. Beneath the overhang of the store's roof were pots and pans, shoes, axes, and other tools dangling from dirty lengths of cord. On the ground, under the only front window, were several little cast iron stoves and sacks of coal and seed. The inside of the store appeared lost in darkness.

The young man at the wheel of the automobile sat sweating in the heat for a moment after he had switched off the motor. Then he got out and stood by the car; he stretched under the brilliant sun and looked around. The road ran off endlessly in the direction that he had come, but further on the other way it abruptly vanished around a curve and down a hill. Green and brown fields of young corn on either side of the road were punctuated by stands of trees and a dozen shacks in sight scattered on the flat land. An Indian with a faded print cloth grocery bag came out of the store and began to trudge down the road. His eyes were invisible under the brim of his felt hat.

At the entrance to the store the man removed his sunglasses. There was a gentle movement of cooler air out of the store. He hesitated and then stepped inside.

"Greetings, my young friend. Travelers are always

welcome."

"Oh, hello. Couldn't see you — it seems so dim. . . ."

"Yes, the sun, it is so bright. Come in — let your eyes rest. It's better inside."

A very fat Mexican sat on a stool behind a counter cluttered with fresh vegetables and hardware items. His face was dark but it glistened greasily. The white of his eyes and teeth sparkled with light from the bright outdoors as he motioned with flabby arms bared by his sleeveless undershirt. "Come in," he said again, "and sit down."

"I'm glad you're fluent in English. Sometimes, here in the country, with only my bad Spanish, I haven't been able to communicate."

"O hell yes," said the fat man with a big grin. "I can talk to the Indians and the Mexicans and the Americans. I can talk to the French if they ever come this way again. *Parlez vous?*"

The American hesitated. "Ha — well, no. I don't *parlez* very well," he said. "But you do impress me with your language abilities."

"Paff," snorted the fat storekeeper still smiling. "I am born in Mexico — I know her languages from then. I worked for many years in New York — you gotta talk to work. French is — French is a game. Sometimes I have time for games."

ART / Pamela Lang

As the Mexican talked, the young man looked around the store. Canned foods — vegetables, fruits, meats — were randomly grouped in dusty disorder on crude plank shelves. A small cooler with dirty glass-fronted doors held three bottles of milk, several cartons of soft drinks, and four cans of beer. There were also some eggs piled up in a carton and a few poor pieces of beef, unwrapped and brown. Flypaper, darkly spotted with flies, dangled from the rafters.

"Are you Mister Varedez?" asked the American.

"Yes, yes!" he beamed and slid off the stool. He was shorter off the stool than on it. "Did one of my friends send you here? Should I know you?"

"The priest — the young one, Gilbert, at Ganavua — told me about you and sent me here. I have some business to attend to here and I think I'll need your help."

"My help! I am overjoyed to help! Anything — anything at all. We will have some Carta Blanca for a start. If we will work together."

"This is rather serious business as far as I am concerned, Mr. Varedez."

The fat Mexican paused at the cooler and turned. "Eh? Well then we certainly must have a can of beer." He got two cans out and punched the lids with a rusty opener. "Here, my friend," he said. "And now tell me your business."

"Did you know an American who used to live about a mile west? He died seven months ago — I saw his grave at Santo Stephano in Ganavua."

Varedez nodded animatedly. "Yes, yes. He was Mister Crane — and my good friend. He bought here and we talked. He was an educated man — we talked about everything — not like the Indians who just point and complain. I miss him — we were friends for five, maybe six years." He took a long drink. "That is a long time," he said quietly.

"I found his grave outside the cemetery. . . ." said the American.

"Yes, yes, of course. He was a good man but not a church man. Your beer — your beer will go flat and warm if you do not drink. Father Gilbert buried him because he was a friend to all his neighbors. But not a friend of the church like a good member is."

The young man took a few sips of beer. "The priest had none of his personal effects. No one at home was informed of his death," he said. "Do you know much about it all?"

Varedez took a deep drink. Then he rushed around the counter to a dark corner of the store and returned with a tubular metal chair with red plastic-covered cushions. "Please sit down," he said. He scurried out of sight behind a cloth hanging to an invisible back room. When he returned he carried a large metal cash box and was followed by a dark, heavy woman. "My wife," explained

the Mexican. "This is Julie." She smiled and nodded slightly.

The American rose stiffly and said, "Pleased to meet you."

"She does not speak much English," said Varedez. The woman looked around the store and walked slowly out into the sun.

Varedez perched on his stool again opposite the young man's chair. He opened the box and began searching through it.

"Sit down, sit down," he said to his visitor. "And now tell me who you are. Are you his son from Cleveland?"

"If you knew his family is from Cleveland, why didn't you let us know?"

"If you are interested, I know you will get in touch."

"He left his wife and family over twenty years ago."

"So why worry now?" The pudgy man smiled and spread his hands wide.

The young American sipped his beer. Varedez brought a paper sack out of the box and laid it on the counter. "I am in charge of many things for the neighborhood because I know everybody and because I am in the United States. I have Mister Crane's things and have him buried at my own expense. I know your worry and concern; you are a son of Mr. Crane."

"Well, I'll be glad to pay you for any expenses you incurred."

"No, no," said Mr. Varedez, holding up his hands. "He was my friend. I have sad news to tell of his death." He tipped his head far back to drain the beer can; then he tossed the empty into an already overflowing box of wastepaper. The young Mr. Crane settled back in the chair.

"You did know your father?"

"I have a few vague memories of him. My mother told me most about him. And a few of his old friends around town used to stop and talk about him to me."

"You did not know him? How can that be? I knew him like this. He was very scientific; he read everything — books, magazines, newspapers. He was sad but he did funny things to make us laugh. He said to drive dull care away and he said he was a silly old fart. We drank here together — he began to drink my tequila and I drink his whiskey. This was until six months before he died."

"It was his drinking that separated him from his family."

"Eh-h-h. Well, maybe his drinking. I drink and I am father of a great big family. I have seven little ones — they are at school now. I make sure they keep in school so long as they can."

"What about how he died?"

"He was sick once. I found him at his little house, asleep on the floor. I put him in bed and in a few hours

he wakes up — but he is strange. He does not talk so good and he had great trouble walking. But soon he walks all around again — but he is strange. He does not come down here. He drinks alone in his little house or alone in town. It is worst to drink so much alone all the time. He was dirty all the time and does not take care of himself. I did all I could. He is in town, drunk, at night once. Some young bandits robbed him and hurt him. This is when he died."

"Did he have so much money?"

"We all know he gets two checks in the mail every month. He always gets them in Ganavua. He is generous — he gives people things. He gives neighbors food and beer and his old books. One time he gave all seven of my little ones shoes. . . ."

"All right, all right. What about when he died?"

"After he was sick he only talked to himself and was very dirty. He had much money hidden in his house, under the floor. Have you seen his little house?"

"No — Gilbert told me that it burned down."

"Yes," sighed Varedez. He spread his hands, palms up, on the counter. "He had so little on him when they robbed him. I think they go right away to rob his house. They find money and wrecked it all. When his neighbors know he is dead, they also go to his house. The police from Ganuvua looked and searched."

"Yes," said the young man, "I know they tried."

"We don't punish his bad killers because we do not know them. His neighbors — they are just good people who need many things — we cannot punish them. He could not use what they take. He was their friend — he was a friend of us all."

"When did the house burn?"

"Only a few months — two or three. More bandits, I think." He shrugged. "A thing left empty always burns down or falls down. Houses, men, horses."

"We left him alone because he wanted it that way."

"Of course, of course. Here, in the bag, is all that I have of him, which you must have." He gently shook the bag over the counter. A worn leather wallet and a few papers slid out. "The purse was by his body and the papers were in his pockets yet."

The young man began to examine the wallet.

"There is no money in it," said Varedez. "It has papers with his name."

The American looked through the various cards inserted in the pockets of the wallet. Then he began to unfold the soiled papers.

"These papers," said Varedez, "are nothing." When the young man had spread them out, Varedez continued. "They are a grocery receipt and an empty envelope. There is a note from me, asking if I can help him. I knew he was very sick even when he walked around again. He never spoke to me then. I think he is better

dead. There is a letter from California. He did not open it or read it. Will you go where his house was?"

"No, no," he said frowning over the papers. "I found out all I could in Ganavua; this is the last stop. I'm satisfied enough that there's nothing to be done. I would like to be back to the border this afternoon."

"You will make it," said Varedez. He consulted a pocket watch on a string. "It is six hours to the border and it is now at noon almost."



"I would like to thank you for your help. Can I give you this?" He offered two five-dollar bills.

"Oh, for a friend, one does not need money," said the dark, pudgy man, accepting the bills with both hands. "But thank you, thank you. Sometime business is hard and your kindness will be in my memory. Your father will be remembered all over here too."

The young man put the wallet and papers back into the bag. He stood up and Varedez slid off his stool.

Over the counter the two shook hands; they started for the bright rectangle of the doorway. The young Mr. Crane put his sunglasses on again.

"Everyone knows your father," repeated Varedez. "He will be in many memories."

Outside in the blinding daylight world a dozen dirty children stood around the Chevrolet. Four dark slender men in broad brimmed hats stood in a silent knot by the road. The other men, nearer the store, squatted on their heels. Mrs. Varedez stood by three very fat women with the pots and pans under the overhang of the roof. They were all still and quiet and watching.

The young man nodded to Mrs. Varedez and she nodded back. He walked slowly to the car and the children moved away. He smiled at them and they looked back at him. He slid into the car where it was very hot. He licked his lips and reached for a vacuum bottle under the dashboard. He just touched it and set it back with-

out drinking. He started the motor and backed slowly onto the gravel road, facing the way he had come. He started out onto the road. Varedez, in his torn undershirt, was grinning broadly at the entrance to the store and waving.

"Come back some time, my friend," he yelled hoarsely. The young man waved back and accelerated, throwing gravel and dust. The car was visible for a long time and then it faded out of sight.

Mrs. Varedez moved from the shadow under the roof into the noon sun by her husband. She looked directly into his face without speaking. The fat man pulled the watch out of his pocket and glanced at it.

"He will be back in his own land tonight." He spoke loudly in the language of his wife.

As the little group drifted apart in a dozen different directions he turned the watch over in his hand and studied the initials N.J.C. engraved on the back.

Crawling in a sea of mud —
not through it for there is no end
to this monstrosity of mind
and visions of a land not known —

Where I'm choking on a continual
stream of vomit
Children are being smashed by trucks

I cannot stop, I must look at a
crushed bloody face
my own, yet not mine
For there are no signs of life
only death-ridden cells that contain
no intelligence

but stare:

As a fact of life. I cannot face this.
Is it but a senseless race
no beginning no end
A hell of bitterness and hate
disgusting

but endured?

I will place my hand here.
Please touch it.
Do you see it?

—Lynn Bicknell

Fear Not to Knock

Eric Boys

I am now no longer afraid. I have broken silence's chains. And I fear not your stones nor your kisses.

I am man released. I am man unrestrained. I am knocking at your door. I seek entrance. I have walked far and am farther from home. I am man restless, wandering, hungering for a fire to warm this life's wet and thinly-clad coldness, to soothe this soul's empty searches for vain comfort, to stroke my waning cheek weak from other's draining lips.

I saw your flame's light for lane's end. I have nothing of worldly value but these few seeds. They are old and worn, but in the hands of others I have seen them grow. I know they are fertile and would grow fast and strong in your rich land.

For all my stays and moves and returns, it was not until that night of broken silence that I dared disclose those few seeds I had long been carrying. My knocking released me, allowed me entrance, and gave me opportunity to plant those seeds. I have been fed, warmed, soothed, and stroked.

If a fellow traveler should perchance see that flame's light at lane's end, then take the path I walked, and today see the rows of oak and elm and pear and apple and wheat and corn swaying to a soft murmuring breeze of early autumn. Fear not to knock. For we are all waiting, listening, hoping, praying that someone, from somewhere, from anywhere, will soon seek entrance into our heart and plant the seeds which will raise our spark.



an essential ingredient is humor

by luther esala

Every deep thinker fears more to be understood than misunderstood.¹

YOU MUST have seen it before. See, right over there by the tracks. Let me explain how it all happened.

When the child must be weaned, the mother blackens

her breast, it would indeed be a shame that the breast should look delicious when the child must not have it.²

It started out like a small pimple. It just appeared there — small and inoffensive. Everything looked the same on the outside. Everything was the same as always, except. . .except, it seemed as if the mortician noticed.

PHOTO / George Shibata

The mortician is perceptive like that. He watched that pimple as if he knew. No one else seemed to see it, but he noticed it. It seemed the pimple was something just between me and the mortician. He watched it — yes, he could see it grow. It grew until one day it popped up like a blister. It was a red sore right in the middle of my cheek. I used to try to flap my ear over the front of my face and cover it. Still, due mostly to my precautionary measures, most people didn't notice it. Sometimes my ear would slip and someone, someone very perceptive, would look twice — then walk away glancing sidewise at me.

*When the child has grown big and must be weaned,
the mother virginally hides her breast, so the child
has no more a mother.*³

One night it happened, the sore, crazed like fire, spread over my body. It happened so suddenly that I didn't completely realize the danger of the leprotic disease. My whole body began burning with the flaming heat of the red blisters. I writhed in hot pain, but still stunned by the suddenness of the whole business, my mind was not completely aware of the extent of the disaster. I thought that I had always expected it. I knew what the expression on the mortician's face had meant of late. It had to happen, I just didn't know when. Except, I knew it would happen at night, and it did. The cool of the night bit in sharp contrast into my flaming body. The relief of some of the pain made me more conscious of it. But, now that I was aware of it, the piercing, throbbing pain affected me even more. I started to run. Running always lessens some of the pain.

*When the child must be weaned, the mother is not
without sorrow at the thought that she and the child
are separated more and more*⁴

I twisted and wriggled in agony. The pain burnt completely through my body when I rolled over on the already blood stained and dry-blood hardened sheets. I screamed in bloody bitterness, "The damned. . . oh, the pretty. . . ." I screamed, "The mortician no more!" and died.

*. . . but Abraham's eyes were hardened, and he knew
joy no more.*⁵

The mortician shut the casket abruptly and sealed it. I lay in my grave resigned to my death. Living by the tracks wasn't so nice — especially when I was dead. The trains went by (and so did the world) and they rocked my grave — but not enough to open it. Even the trucks, yes, the trucks rocked my grave (especially when I was sleeping) but they lacked the rumbling power to crack

the lock placed there by the pretty, perceptive mortician. You know, it was easy to sleep in my grave. Sleep was always an easy way to escape. Neurasthenia, psychologists call it, but I prefer to call it "grave activity" I remember when I used to go for weeks with only five hours of sleep a night. That was when I was living. In life, you've got to go without sleep — it's necessary to stay ahead, or even to stay even. But, in death. . . in my death. . . things. . . seemed. . . to. . . s l o w d o w n. . . so that. . . 14. . . 15. . . ah-h-h, maybe even. . . , say 16 hours . . . a day. . . isn't. . . too much. . . s l e e p. Studying — now there's the thing that was really hard to do in a grave. The gloomy blackness of the cold grave used to keep me from focusing my eyes on the words. The words would stay there, but my eyes would wander — wander to a spot 19, maybe 20 inches in front of my face and then dart to a spot on the other side of the coffin. Then grave activity used to set in and I'd slip back into the position of infinite resignation.

*. . . and yet thou dost reward thy lover more gloriously
than does any other; hereafter thou dost make him
blessed in thy bosom; here thou dost enthrall his eyes
and his heart by the marvel of thy deed.*⁶

It happened in the morning. The casket lid blew open, throwing back the loose, three-day dirt from my shallow grave. The sun rushed in, blinding my subterraneanly accustomed eyes. I had to see the mortician. I looked up to see him. There were glimpses. I caught the sparkle of his long hair waving in life. Squinting, I drew back in fear, but then the warmth of grace spread over me. From the grave I saw the sun glimmer off a shapely calf. I had to get out. I pulled myself out of the grave and lay on my back in the wet, lush, spring grass. I lifted my head to the smiling sun. Sunbeams danced on me, bounding off my cleansed head, glancing off my hind legs, and caroming off my tail. We are happy.

*And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he had
spoken with him, a pillar of stone. . . .*⁷

Yes, there it is. See what it reads:

IN MEMORY OF OUR
FAITHFUL CAMPUS DOG
GEORGE
1937-1947

1 *Beyond Good and Evil*, Fredrich Nietzsche.

2-6 *Fear and Trembling*, Soren Kierkegaard.

7 Genesis 35: 14a (RSV).

LONELINESS

Loneliness is a time of becoming.

It is a time to take a solitary walk;
to see the snow banking and turning, seeking
a place out of the wind.
to watch the rain bouncing in the sudden
glare of a headlight.
to see a violet tucked away, hoping and
dreading that someone will find it.
to watch the trees being stripped of their
joy of life.

Loneliness is a time to see yourself;
a time to write a letter
a time to flop on your bed
a time to sit back, gain perspective
a time to embrace the emptiness to see what
it says about you.

Loneliness is a time to wonder —
why God keeps dying
about that family behind the open curtains
about what it means to love.

Loneliness is a time to experience.
a time to listen with your whole body to
people and things
a time for poetry
a time to get drunk on rain or snow
a time for music
a time to set the rain free from its
confining puddle
a time to scuffle the leaves.

It is above all a time when one becomes what
he might be.

— E. Burkhard

JOHN CAGE — SOUND and SILENCE

Phil Gray

JOHN CAGE is a determined man, determined to express to others the profound effect which sound has made upon him. This is the content of all his writings and his musical compositions. The sounds which have so radically influenced Cage are the everyday sounds that surround all of us, and to which we normally ascribe the term "silence." Cage asserts that there is no silence, only sound, and out of this assertion comes a conflict with almost all accepted musical theory. There also comes a fresh, new music, strange, but always intriguing.

I wish, in the following pages, to explore the content of Cage's theory and to briefly consider what is lacking in that theory. Allow me at this point to coin a new term — Conventionalist. For the sake of convenience, Conventionalism will stand for the mainstream of musical thought. Obviously, there are many differing viewpoints within traditional musical thought, but all have important similarities relative to the unorthodox view

of Cage. Thus, for contrast, I wish to lump orthodox views under the term Conventionalist and use Igor Stravinsky as the major representative of this group.

The dispute between Cage and the Conventionalists begins when they approach the question, "What are the raw materials of music?" Many of the further controversies arise because of this basic disagreement. The Conventionalists, here represented by Stravinsky, would say that music works with two objects, sound and time.¹ Sound needs no detailed explanation; it is merely those tones (audible phenomena) which are either produced naturally, such as a lark's song, or artificially, such as the clear note of a trumpet. But sounds, or better still, tones, are occurrences in time. They take up time, and it is the arrangement of tones by a composer in terms of time that makes up music. "We affirm — affirm in all seriousness — that time can produce effects."² The Conventionalist, then, is intrigued by the various ways

in which he can manipulate tones in differing durations in order to produce effects.

The function of time here is, then, no longer that of the empty vessel, which contains the tones, or the bowling alley down which the tones roll; on the contrary, time intervenes, is directly active, in the musical context. It is time which makes differently directed cyclical phrases out of beats of equal length, which transforms equal measures into different degrees of intensity. Music is temporal art not in the barren and empty sense that its tones succeed one another "in time," it is temporal art in the concrete sense that it enlists the flux of time as a force to serve its ends.³

Cage, on the other hand, would attack both the Conventionalist's definitions of sound and time as well as their interrelationship. "In the new music nothing takes place but sounds: those that are notated and those that are not."⁴ The notated sounds are no more important than the others; they are just one part of the total sound, which is music. Furthermore, if all is sound, there can be no silence: "... the situation one is clearly in is not objective (sound-silence), but rather subjective (sounds only), those intended and those others (so-called silence) not intended."⁵ Thus, the importance which manipulating or arranging had for the Conventionalist definition of music loses its value in Cage's interpretation, since an intentional tone is no more or less meaningful than an unintentional one.

QUESTION: I have asked you about the various characteristics of a sound; how, now, can you make a continuity, as I take it your intention is, without intention?

ANSWER: ... by not giving it a thought.⁶

So goes Cage's denial of arrangement of tone. Since, therefore, music is nothing more than sound, time loses its Conventionalist place as co-partner in the definition of music. Time is nothing more than the medium in which sounds, which are actually events, occur. More accurately, sounds occur in space-time; they are two-dimensional. Cage reveals his attitude toward the two-dimensional domain of sounds in his explanation of "Imaginary Landscape No. 4" and "Music of Changes":

My recent work [the aforementioned pieces] structurally similar to my earlier work; ... Formerly, however, these lengths [of tones] were time-lengths, whereas in the recent work the lengths exist only in space, the speed of the travel through this space being unpredictable.⁷

A natural question that would arise from a perusal of Cage's sound-silence theory is: "Why write music, then? And why perform or listen?" Before enquiring as to how Cage would answer, let us look at the Conventionalist response. Stravinsky would say that the composer turns

images into organized sound. "What concerns us here is not imagination in itself, but creative imagination: the faculty that helps us to pass from the level of conception to the level of realization."⁸ Thus, the composer is a craftsman, working with the raw materials of sound and time in an effort to create from them an organized work which pleases himself and others because of its *creative* character. The performer, very simply, is just a medium through which the musical creation is transmitted to the listener. Finally, Stravinsky says of the listener:

A work of art cannot contain itself. Once the creator has completed his work, he necessarily feels the need to share his joy. He quite naturally seeks to establish contact with his fellow man, who in this case becomes his listeners. The listener reacts and becomes a partner in the game initiated by the creator. Nothing less, nothing more.⁹

Cage, however, wishes to remove the element of creation from music. Music, to Cage, is merely an exercise in listening. The composer's awareness of sound leads him to try to duplicate technically the conditions which in nature allow sound to occur as it does. The performer enacts the sounds which along with unintentional sounds heard during a performance, add up to music. The less intentional the performer makes his sounds, the closer to natural sounds they approach. And the listener listens.

We normally think that the composer makes something, the performer is faithful to it, and that the business of the listener is to understand it. Yet the act of listening is clearly not the same as the act of performing, nor is either one the same as the act of composing. I have found that by saying that they have nothing to do with one another, that each one of these activities can become more centered in itself, and so more open to its natural experience. Referring to what we said earlier, about people generally thinking that something is being done to them, well, when they listen, they think that the composer, through the performer, has done something to them, forgetting that they are doing it themselves.¹⁰

What they, the listeners, are "doing" is just what the composer and performer also do, only independently. They are being aware of sound, they are listening. This is the only type of activity that music requires. Thus music has no purpose beyond evoking an awareness of sound. "I believe that by eliminating purpose, what I call awareness increases. Therefore my purpose is to remove purpose."¹¹ "Then what is the purpose of this 'experimental' music? No purposes. Sounds."¹²

Cage's theory of music is also contrary to the Conventionalist view of form in music. For the Conventionalist,

form is of the utmost importance, since if music means rationally organized sound, it must fit into some recognizable form. "'Significant Form' is the one quality common to all works of . . . art."¹³ In the very concept of form, the idea of human creation is embedded. "From the contemplation of a beautiful pot (this holds true of a piece of music as well), and as an effect of its harmony of line and texture and color, 'there comes to us,' he (Roger Fry) says, 'a feeling of purpose.'"¹⁴ The raw materials of music, when in nature, are formless; they behave according to the law of chance and no discernable pattern can be drawn from their occurrence. But through the molding in the hands of a composer, the raw materials gain a form born in the creative imagination of the artist. It is this form which is thus transmitted from composer, through performer, to the listener, and which becomes the basis of all meaning and pleasure derived from the work.

Cage's objection to the Conventionalist's form grows out of previous parts of his theory. The purpose of music is sound; sound is formless in nature (even a Conventionalist would agree to that); thus music must be formless.

Form wants only freedom to be. It belongs to the heart; and the law it observed, if indeed it submits to any, has never been and never will be written. (Any attempt to exclude the "irrational" is irrational. Any composing strategy which is wholly "rational" is irrational in the extreme.)¹⁵

Cage does not deny the presence of structure in music, but this is totally different from Conventionalist form. Structure is merely the ability of sound to be analyzed (broken down into parts) and this can be done whether the sound is natural or artificial, intentional or not. This is completely separated from form which is the conscious result of a creative mind producing rational relationships of sound and time.

And what about the meaning of all these sounds, or as the Conventionalists would say, these "Significant Forms"? Some Conventionalists would give to music a meaning beyond form, saying that the music creates images or symbols translatable into either emotions or ideas. These "associative values are those which give esthetic objects a meaning which can be expressed in words, which become attached to the objects because they remind the spectator or listener of things, ideas, or events which exist (or have existed) outside the esthetic domain."¹⁶ Other Conventionalists, such as Stravinsky, would place the emphasis of the meaning of music in the intellectual "game" which composer, performer, and listener play. Music in this sense is "speculation in sound and time."¹⁷

Cage again disagrees. Sounds have meanings as symbols for Cage only in the sense in which each sound

points to, or represents, every other sound. Sartre supports Cage when he says: "The signification of a melody — if one can still speak of signification — is nothing outside the melody itself, unlike ideas, which can be adequately rendered in several ways."¹⁸ Zuckerkandl reiterates: "In the strictest sense. . . what the tone means is actually and fully contained in the tone itself."¹⁹ Since Cage sees sound and man's awareness of it in completely subjective terms, there can be no consensus as to what, if anything, the sound signifies, and thus sound is meaningless, just as music is purposeless.

Although his music may not, the ideas of John Cage mean something in terms of the contemporary musical scene. He is a naturalist, enthralled by sound, and devoted to making music as natural as possible. Cage sees two ways of approaching composition.

One has a choice. If he does not wish to give up his attempts to control sound, he may complicate his musical technique towards an approximation of the new possibilities and awareness. Or, as before, one may give up the desire to control sound, clear his mind of music, and set about discovering means to let sounds be themselves rather than vehicles for man-made theories or expressions of human sentiments.²⁰

This awareness of natural sound which is characteristic of Cage is a valuable new emphasis in music. Conventionalists too easily forget the natural materials which they manipulate, forget the power, the mystery of sound itself. Cage stands transfixed before the very event of sound, constant natural sound, and all his music and theories are the natural outcome of his love affair with sound. Cage has helped man listen again, become sensitive to his surroundings. No wonder theater, which is a total sensual experience, is the queen of the arts for Cage — here man is forced to be aware of his complete environment, especially in both sight and sound. Cage's cry is simple: "Forget the form, the purpose, the intention, the meaning. Listen!"

To validly criticize Cage, one must ask not where Cage is wrong, but what has he left out. And in his attempt to glorify, purify, sound, Cage leaves out himself, his own part in the sound event. The Conventionalist knows the part he plays in music — he is creator, the one that stands as crucial in the definition of music. Just as this awareness is the Conventionalist's genius, it is also his downfall. He becomes too easily wrapped up in his own importance and his ability to manipulate, and ignores the value which lies in sound itself. Cage, of course, avoids this pitfall, but to be more effective, he must affirm that music is not only sound, but also a human creative event, involving (in some relationship) the composer, performer, and listener. There is human control in music, even if it is only used in attempting

to make music as unintentional as possible. The underlying intention will always be present. For music to exist, there must be human participation as well as the sound event. A more elaborate thinking-out on Cage's part of this concept of the place of man in music would help him as a composer to construct a more effective instrument for instilling awareness of sound.

Furthermore, Cage would also have to rework his theory of non-relationship between composer, performer, and listener, if he were to revise his view of man's place in music. The weakness here is the same as the problem he encounters in leaving human creativity out of the sound event. Cage seems to desire to make every person involved in the music-event, be he composer, performer, or listener, to have an equal part in the very creation of the music, each one doing a different job. But Cage says instead that there is no relationship whatsoever between the different functions of people involved in music. To deny the relationship, however, destroys the possibility of independently transforming the same materials in order to reach the full awareness both of sound and the creative element of humanity, which is what Cage's music seems to try to do. For example, a composer works creatively with sounds; a performer takes the result, acts upon it, and comes up with a different, yet related musical entity; a listener takes in what the performer presents, along with indeterminate sound, and voila — new musical entity, similar, yet different. That is Cage's music in a nutshell.

Cage will never hear silence, and his entire musical output is an attempt to make others aware of that startling fact — there is no space-time without sound. But in his effort to retain the purity of his concept and to make others aware, he distorted the human element in music. Nevertheless, the value of the sounds he discovered and transformed creatively (and still is

discovering and transforming) remains. His conception of music will probably never overcome the Conventionalist view, but will instead co-exist with it. The music of Cage will be a place of refuge for the man, sick of complex, intellectual musical constructions, who wishes only to listen.

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1. Igor Stravinsky. *Poetics of Music*. p. 144.
 2. Victor Zuckerkandl. *Sound and Symbol*. p. 184.
 3. *op. cit.* p. 181.
 4. John Cage. *Silence*. p. 7.
 5. *op. cit.* p. 14.
 6. *op. cit.* p. 17.
 7. *op. cit.* p. 57.
 8. Stravinsky. *loc. cit.* p. 55.
 9. *op. cit.* p. 137.
 10. John Cage. p. 48.
 11. *op. cit.* p. 48.
 12. Cage. *Silence*. p. 17.
 13. Susanne Langer. *Philosophy in a New Key*. p. 174.
 14. *op. cit.* p. 175.
 15. Cage. *Silence*. p. 62.
 16. Hunter Mead. *Types and Problems of Philosophy*. p. 373-4.
 17. Stravinsky. *loc. cit.* p. 144.
 18. Aschenbrenner and Isenberg. *Aesthetic Theories*. p. 479.
 19. Zuckerkandl. *loc. cit.* p. 68.
 20. Cage. *Silence*. p. 10.

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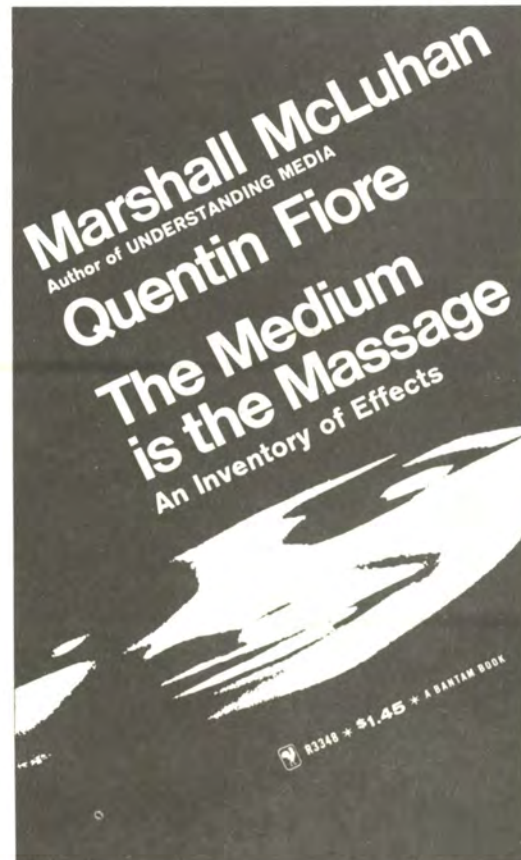
—Bob Dylan

"...and who are you?"

"I—I hardly know, sir, just at present—at least I know who I was when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then."

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My self stiff with loss of my light
stumbled in shadow-memories:
your loud logic
kisses in a fist.

Then from darkness
his silent eyes
his open hand.

— Jan Karsten

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a knee,
Or shapely hip that swings and sways
And wiggles in the nicest ways.
The shorts that summer weather brings
Are some of life's most lovely things.
The pleasant thoughts that they inspire
Are dreams of which I never tire.
Shorts look bad on fools like me,
But on a girl they're nice to see.