Spring 1983

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Valparaiso University

THE LIGHTER

Spring 1983

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Contents

Untitled

Even when
the tulips grin
the presses run
the light peeks in
Only when
the last of all
is first again
then death will call:

Hey my children
Come my children
Gather by my side and sing

Ho my children
Now my children
Leave aside your reasoning

And after time
the sparrows nest
the harrows rust
the farmers blest
And laughter time
begins again
after a pall
a pause in heav'n:

Hey my children
Come my children
Gather by my side and sing

Ho my children
Now my children
Leave aside your reasoning

Rana Said

Arabian Mosaics

Stephen Motét

El Tocamiento de la Madrugada (The Feel of the Early Morning)

The very air has been machined, and, damp in sound and
Smell, a sky set upon us like a plague
Breathing our breath,
Returning it sullied;
An hour till light. The sound hits the ridge sporadically
Bouncing for our ears, quickening our gingered hearts,
Hands clenching our declàred way, legs
Clenching the earth, soft, green, supple
Holding, as to a horse, grappling as a climber on warm rock.
The staccato has a rhythm in the jungle.

Sleep not vanquished from our dreaming eyes
The din touches upon the sister ridge
Crossing dragonflies stirring the birds below.
And now, overhead!
We swing to face,
Run to hide
But at the shout of alarm it is gone.
The trees, thick around us, murmur with the shifting sound.
Again! We grimace, gritting faces
Waiting on the thief, ready, ready
Waiting, hearts drumming "fear" and "fly, fly!"
How the morning calm is utterly shattered, everything is
Siphoned
Into the sky.
We shoot after it.

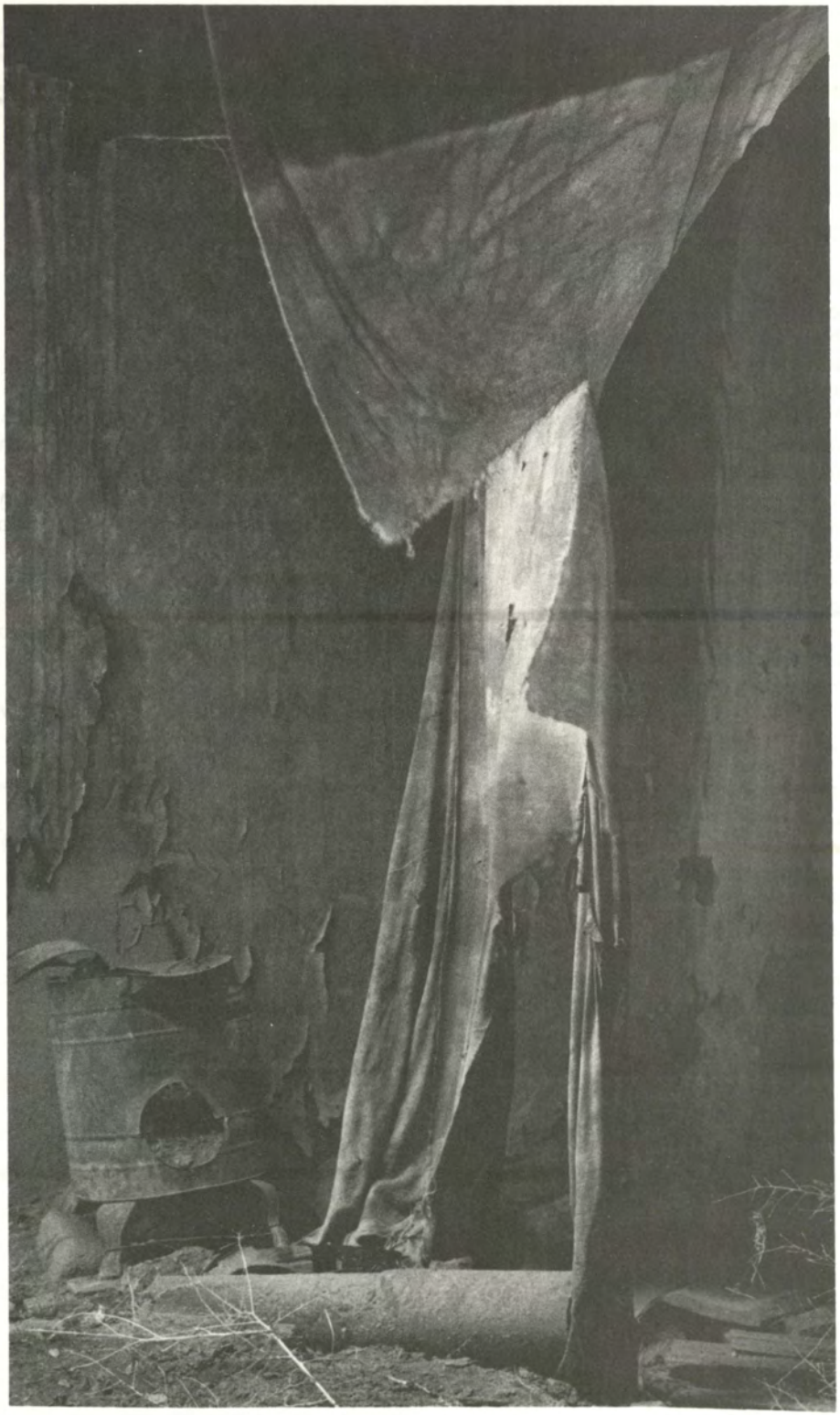
Stooping, we glide toward the road, toward a hovering ship
Dropping its young onto the banks.
"No!" we cry, "terrible crime!"
We are so angry and we charge the road, into the dust,
Tears held static in our eyes
Our hot, salted faces.
Firing from the hip, wishing for our death so that we may
Leave -- lamenting, praying, pleading.
The chopper faces to a new tact and speeds away
Smiling as a swindler in a tent.
As we run amidst the shouting wind and cast ourselves
Into the brush
Pushing our rifles at their helmets
Glossy like the leaves ...

Overhead! The sky sweeps forth another
Chopper like the last, swinging fast and low,
Turning about, sprinkling Men over the road,
Who scamper away like roaches, shining and quick.
"No!" we pray; and another, and another, they fall from
The trees, dropping to the road clearing
Sprinkling men like salt upon our supple earth.
Our good earth.

Our blood dries on our clothes, our tears in our eyes,
Wishing for the death so that we may leave
And be counted in the papers
Reasoned and regarded by arid poisoned eyes.

Cynthia Konikowski

Untitled



Daniel Avila

Mickey, He.

Mickey, he
the river-eater once drowned
next to Bertha, she the fat shoreline
with bulbous dialects and
jiggly wrinkles that, they the
waterfalls of liquor, loved to
cascade ha-ha into the
ravines within her neck and his.

Bottled me, the precious metal-
in-a-loop bearer, innocently
bystanding on the chin of the
dock, next to Father Good
chanting Ave Marias like it
was a wedding reception but
it, this ceremony, it were really
a funeral.

Well almost, because she'd
keep chortling ha-ha, and
he'd turn red in the nose and
swallow more water in see like
remember he drowned.
But them don't laugh at wakes.
Unless they drunked.

But, naah, wine and cheese those don't
be at very serious occasions
unless they, with bread, be waved
over by the good Father Good like he
was God see, who transubstantiated
everything he touch into Holy food
like that all we pray about
before we eat, mamma and us and
poppa, the river-eater.

So, laugh and shut-up kids.
Be that as it maybe could be, they'll
stand the wet mummy on its heels
and watch it, as we all supposed to say:
he die a good river-eater and deserves our love.

Bertha went first, fainted dead away,
she struck the toes of the votive lamp
all good Catholic families have
in our front room, waving the light
a little bit, it didn't wiggle too much
though, as quiet skated over her frozen
skin.

Mamma, poor Bertha, we all did, we
had to, it we cried and sobbed.
That woke daddy, Mickey, he woke
up startled Father Good into
saying a bad word, boy, he turned pink
like the votive lamp like he the with red nose,
my daddy the river-eater.

Shame on you Father.

Ha-ha we said. Us little river-eaters.

Stephen Gawronski

Sailor's Vaunt

I eats me spinach.
Scarf! Scarf!
I beats me emenies.
Arf! Arf!

Free-Verse Poem

As I sit here
Writing this poem
Recording my thoughts
As have so many others
It is my sincere wish
That the ink in their pens
Will clot

Richard Jablinski

Line

Thomas Gehring

The Beach

People who are out of work go to the beach

Or drink

Maybe they don't mean to go there, but old habits are hard to break, and once they find themselves sitting in the driveway with the motor running, a lunch packed, and no place to go; well then what the hell. . .

might as well go to the beach.

Or the liquor store.

And they leave the car running and go back inside to dig through the closet for their bathing suit and a towel and that book that they'd always meant to finish and notebook and a pen (might want to write some letters) and some sun-tan lotion; grab this week's copy of Newsweek off the couch and bumble back out to the car trying not to drop everything. . .

damn, forgot my cigarettes.

Then it's off to the gas station;

"Five dollars regular please... Yeah, it's hot alright. Guess I'll go to the beach."

Through the slow hot stoplights heading out of town they feel the sun shattering and glaring off the parked cars. Past the city limits and the tires begin to hiss as they build up speed on the hot asphalt.

Some people lean over and turn the radio on, not too loud. They punch back and forth from station to station, trying to avoid the news. Others lean their elbow on the door as they drive with one hand and stare listlessly straight ahead through the windsheild. Some drive like hell to get there, others back up traffic.

It's not the same, but it is some place to go.

Parking is seldom a problem. They pay the entrance fee and then drive slowly along the empty park roads, watching for children and hedging over the speed bumps. Into the parking lot and around they go, just to check things out. Big slow circles, feeling the pull as the car drifts lazily across the yellow painted lines. Slow circles that die in any parking space, but always the one closest to the beach...

All this asphalt; for what? Ain't nobody here at 9:00 in the morning. I mean, for what..?

and they turn the ignition off and get out, slamming the door angrily at the empty parking lot.

The women are serious. They spread their beach blankets out and set their sunglasses down on a corner by the radio. They put their hair up carefully and undress with slow, deliberate movements. The men peel off their shirts and sit down quickly, hugging their knees with their arms. They stare uncomfortably up and down the beach, as if uncertain of their domain. They stare at the sky as if it might rain. These things take practice.

It is not always like this. Soon the beach begins to fill with others more accustomed to the ambience of sand and water and sun. They bring frisbies and coolers full of soft drinks and beer. They turn the radio up and watch the graceful ripple of skin and polyester under the hot sun. Gleaming drops of sweat and water slip lazily down their backs and into their eyes. Tanned lifeguards set the tone for cool detachment and the serious lonliness of beauty. Everybody watches everybody.

And then the kids come and through the hot midday hours the beach is everything at once. They yell and scream and throw each other in the water. Parents call for their children and couples talk quietly as they shade their eyes from the sun.Time to roll over and toast the other side. The concrete of the pavilion becomes wet and slippery as long lines form before the concession stands.

And the noise; the confusion, it's reassuring. Like the sun it breaks in waves upon the ears and drowns out the smaller sounds, the sounds of telephones and interviews and fights about money and crumpled clippings from the classifieds balling up in your pocket as you try one after the other but they always say the same thing. . .

Around midafternoon, if you look closely, you can see a small exodus starting. Serious women who glance at their watches and put on their sunglasses and slowly get dressed. Here and there a man pulls on his shirt and closes his notebook as he brushes the sand out of his shoes. They walk slowly back to their cars, wondering if they've forgotten anything, and unlock their doors in the crowded parking lot. The smell of hot carpet and vinyl gushes out and they shift from foot to foot on the hot asphalt as they wait for the car to cool.

The glare from the windshield is blinding.

Back towards the park entrance, and the roads are choked now with cars coming the other way

On the highway they lean on the door and whistle tunelessly to themselves, or turn the radio on to accompany their empty thoughts. The hot wind flows through the open windows as they drive slowly back into town, stopping off for cigarettes.

"Yeah, guess I did get a little red. Must have stayed too long at the beach."

Driving slowly back into town, drifting through the lights and turning corners into quiet residential streets. They pull into the driveway and turn the ignition off and listen to the ticking of the engine as it begins to cool. Sit in the hot driveway and glance at their watch and at the empty windows of their house before restarting the engine and backing out into the street again.

Maybe they don't mean to run

but old habits are hard to break

Through aimless streets filled with busy people, coming home from work.

Through the summer air.

Braking, accelerating, staring with dark eyes as the gasoline burns away the long hot minutes of the afternoon.

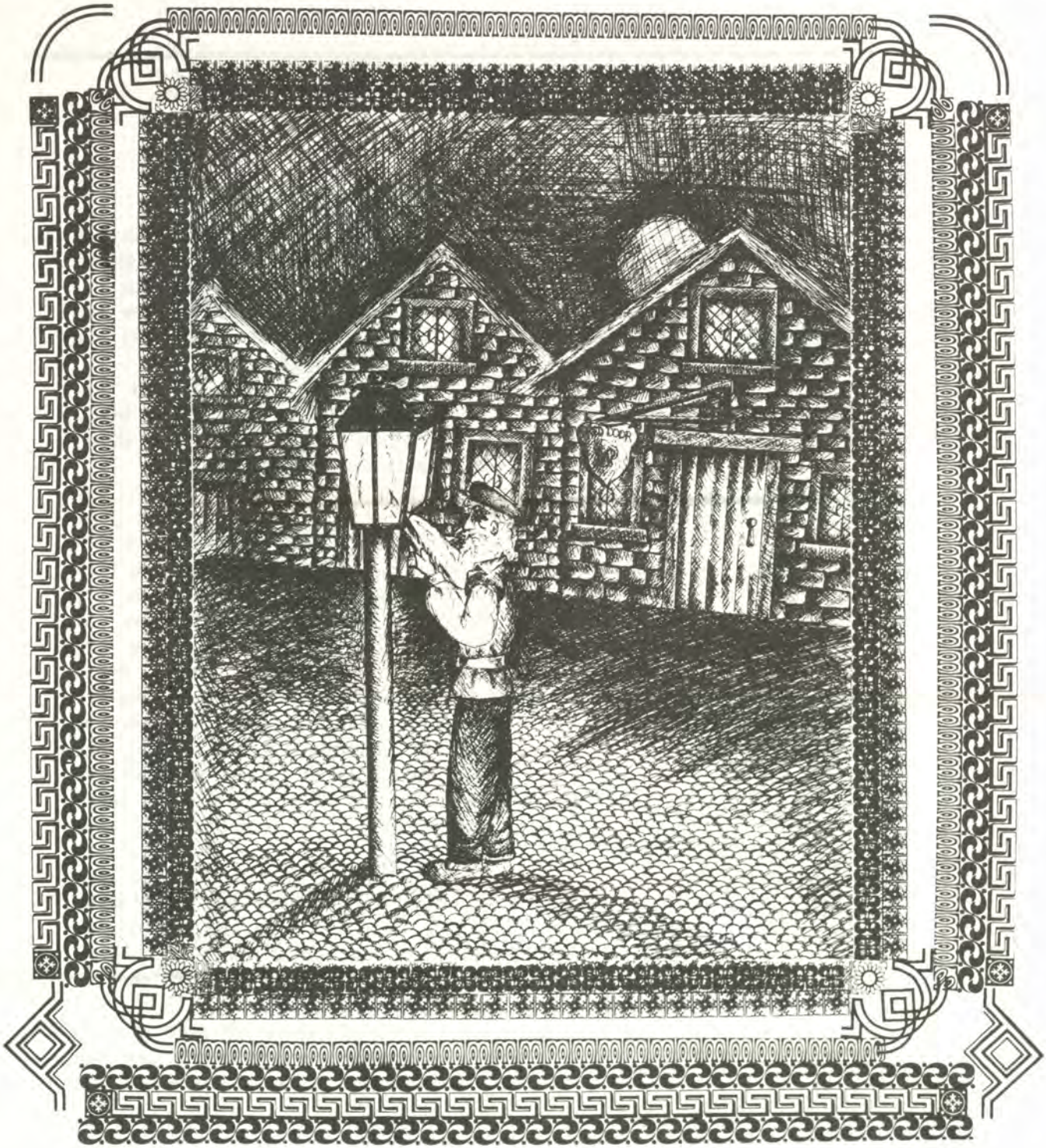
Jeff Koehler

Golfing Sunday

The devil came calling last Sunday as
I golfed with Ross and Ted.
Smoking a cheroot of impeccable extraction,
He said, "Hold your elbow in, Tom,
And don't tilt your head, like that."
And grasping both my wrists
He made as if to hit the shot, and then
It was I realized the gift
God had hidden there. I thanked him,
Probably overmuch, I admit, for his
Rare advice, adding quickly, before he could vanish,
That he had no doubt cured my slice--
At which he grinned, no bashful girl he,
And doffed his cap, "The pleasure," he said, Flashing
One gold tooth, "redounds entirely to me."

Esther Ruth White

Lamplighter



Becket Rhodes

Six Years Old

He waited. He sat on the curb feeling the hot summer afternoon warmth through the fabric of his jeans. The houses around his neighborhood looked the same: Mrs. Greely was weeding her rose garden; The oak trees around him swayed in the breeze; The hot July sun shone down and still he waited. Everything looked the same. Why? He didn't feel the same. I am six years old and I feel different, he thought.

Inside the adults talked. Them. They were big and tall and they talked about heaven and Jesus and told him to cry--he would feel better, they said. But they didn't know. They didn't know and they didn't understand that his mommy was coming back; she wasn't gone.

He was six years old. Mommy took him out on his birthday for his favorites--pizza and ice cream. But on the way home something hit them and the red car got smashed and Mommy fell asleep with blood on her head. Men came. . . men came in a screaming white car that scared him. They had strange looks on their faces. They looked at him. And when they saw he wasn't crying, (he was six years old) they picked up Mommy and put her in the screaming white car. They put him in the car, too, but they forgot him. The men were big and loud and talked in a way he didn't understand. Why wouldn't Mommy wake up? The blood looked like his blood the time he fell off his bike and skinned his knee. Mommy took him to the doctor and the doctor hurt him. But Mommy stayed with him. She was coming back. Mommies don't leave little boys they love. Mommy told him she loved him and that he was her favorite boy. Mommies didn't leave their favorite boys. She would be home soon to hug him and make all the loud, crying people go home.

Daddy is sick. Daddy's face is all white and he doesn't talk. His eyes are red like the time he had the flu. The house looked the same--white with peely gray window panels. Mommy planted the blue and red flowers in the front yard. The flowers were still here, but where was Mommy? He decided to go in and see if Mommy took any clothes with her like she did sometimes when she went to Grandma's house.

He walked inside. The loud people were still there. Strange food in strange dishes (not mommy's dishes) sat on the counter. Something felt wrong. They were trying to take the mommy feeling out of the house. He

walked into Mommy's green bedroom. More big people. Other people's mommies were taking out Mommy's dresses, why? One lady in a big red dress leaned down and kissed him and told him to go play for awhile. But why? Why were they taking Mommy's dresses? Why were they trying to take Mommy away? Maybe she wouldn't want to come back. Maybe all the big strange people were making her stay away. He went into the living room and saw Daddy sitting on the couch, but Daddy wasn't reading the newspaper or watching T.V. He was just sitting; Daddy never did that. Daddy had water in his eyes. Daddies can't cry. He was six years old. He knew that big boys don't cry. Daddy saw him and smiled, but not the regular daddy smile. It was all shaky and sad. Daddy reached down and put his hand on his head and told him to be good. Sometimes he had been bad and Daddy got mad and talked at him in a loud voice, but Daddy hadn't done that in awhile. Not even when he spilled his milk twice at dinner. The big people just smiled and cleaned it up.

He walked outside and saw a green car pull into the driveway. Grandma. Grandma would get rid of the big people; Grandma would know that Mommy was coming back. Grandma loved him, too. Grandma said he was a good boy; he was big and he was the best hitter in little league. Grandma would know. He ran to Grandma and she hugged him. Grandma was the best hugger he knew, besides Mommy--she was soft and always smelled like flowers and leaves in the fall. He asked Grandma where Mommy was and she looked at him and smiled. Grandma knew Mommy was coming back. He smiled too. Grandma said that Mommy was gone for awhile but he would see her again when he was a bigger boy. ''Mommy is like the leaves in the fall,'' she said. They have to come down but she would be back again, green and new and he would see her. Mommy was gone like his dog Sam. But he would see her again. He looked at Grandma and smelled the flowery smell and he knew it was okay. He started to cry hot, heavy tears and grandma said it was alright for big boys to cry because otherwise it would get stuck inside and make big boys feel sick. He cried because he missed Mommy and because he wouldn't see her for awhile. But Grandma knew he would see her again. Grandma gave him another soft hug and took his hand. Together they walked into the white house with the peely gray window panels past Mommy's flowers. He looked at the flowers. Some were wilted and some were dark and dry. But they would come back just like Mommy would, because mommies never left big boys they loved. He knew this; he was six years old.

Laurie Dojan

Helena


Seating

Sam the Tailor

Untitled

The futile scratchings of a dog, trapped under a fallen timber in
sub-zero weather,

The last gasps of a fish on the sand,
The whine of an elm leaf in the fire,
(The streak of a rock in the night sky,)
The puff of dust at the astronaut's feet,
Writing in water,
The life of man,
Understanding.

And they think,
"Crazy old woman, but funny."
And she thinks,
"Crazy kids, they'll learn."
And neither is right
And neither knows
or cares.
And it's life
but not importance.
And it's contentment,
peace,
happiness,
in folly overcome by simplicity.

There is cruelty in the smile
Of one
Who is more than he should be

Stephen Gawronski

Book Review: A Crack in the Pate

A bright new star in the literary world today is the Dutch author Elbillüg Diputs. His first novel, *Over the Miller* (published in the United States as *The Miller's Bride*, the original title being an idiomatic Dutch expression meaning, "behind the miller's back"), dealt with an adulterous love affair; more importantly, it provided a compelling picture of life in Holland during the nineteenth century.

With *A Crack in the Pate*, Diputs has entered the twentieth century. Appropriately, his style of writing is more abbreviated and less ornate than in his previous work. Set in the small village of Nairbdrib, the story focuses on how the arrival of an international fast food chain (Krej in the book, but apparently meant to represent McDonald's) destroys the lives of the owner of the towns smallest diner and its only employee.

Diputs makes great use of intercutting scenes, which often results in confusion, but which facilitates instant comparisons and contrasts to drive home the theme of small business and small-town life verses big business and urban life.

The plot focuses on two characters: the owner of the small diner, Eninissa Loof, and her dishwasher, Laicos Drater. Laicos is a simple-minded fellow who would never be able to operate the machines used in a fast food operation. Eninissa's tragic flaw is her loyalty to and her compassion for Laicos, which causes her to retain him as a dishwasher even after she can no longer afford him.

Some of the book's best scenes occur when Eninissa, beset by troubles, composes musical sonnets on her lute. To preserve the meaning in this English translation, the sonnets are sometimes presented in blank verse.

Diputs' sensitive style and incisive writing are largely unrecognized in the United States due to poor distribution, but in July *The Miller's Bride* will at last be available in paperback. *A Crack in the Pate* is available in hardback only, $14.95 from Doubleday and Company, Inc.

Bryan Dooley

Untitled

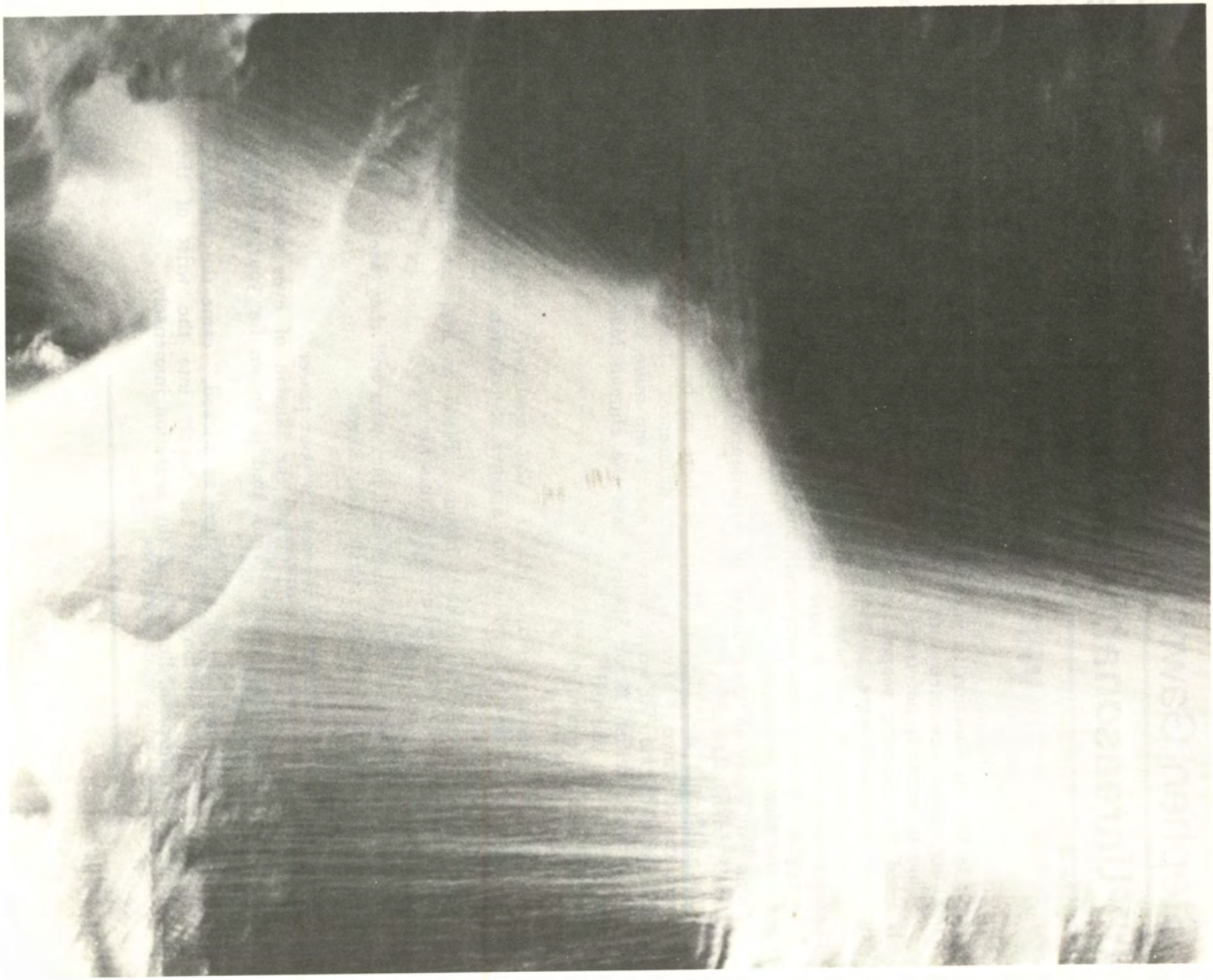
Stephen Gawronski

A Death on the Dry Plains

Killed by a buffalo.
The blood drips sweetly
From the dread beast's horns,
Filling me completely
With tears; for you are gone.
Your six-shooter failed you, my dearest,
And now my eyes' sights tear-est.
I can look no longer.
I wish I were stronger.
Sleep peacefully on the dry plains, love...
Killed by a buffalo.

Karen Morris

Waterfall



Stephen Gawronski

The Unreasonable Pride of the Razor Blade

"It is not my function in your society," spake the Razor, "to eliminate anything except unwanted body hair."

"That is certainly not true," returned the Human. "The Razor Blade is used for cleaning soaped windows, for art projects, and for hurting humans in various ways."

"Yes," answered the other, "but these are common razors, a class beneath myself. I an a pure stainless steel blade. My morals are impeccable. I work only with traditional shaving equipment and I do not drink the blood of humans."

"Can you imagine the variety of experiences you have closed off to yourself, friend Razor?"

"Do not insult me, Human Male. Is there no beauty in simplicity? I do not cut; I shave. There is a great difference. To touch your blood would not thrill me. It would disgust me. I am quite sure of that."

"You are a selfish Razor Blade," said the Human Male. "You want pleasure only for yourself."

"What else do you offer?"

"I offer glory."

"The glory of tasting humans' blood? You repel me. Hang yourself. Drug yourself. Drown yourself in the manner of common humans. You are not worthy of my bite."

"There is no romance without blood. Blood is life, and my life would leave my body. Only you can do this for me."

"For you. What for me?"

"For you, everything. When they find me, who will they see? What will they think about? Only you, dear, dear Razor."

"They will despise me."

"No. You will be blameless...revered for your power."

Light reflected from the Razor, giving the illusion of eyes winking. "Can I trust you, Human Male? Your kind is known for your subtlety, your malice, your deceit."

"An end should be made of a creature so wicked," came the answer. The Razor hesitated no longer, but bit deeply into the wrist of the Human. To his surprise, he enjoyed the sensation immensely.

Jailplay

Characters

Pete: a big, aggressive man, a little fat.

Joey: a big, quiet, passive man who gives the impression of being dumb

George: a small, insecure man.

Jailor

Motionless body

The setting is a jail cell. Along the right side of the stage is a wall of bars with a barred door set into it upstage. The door opens into the cell with the hinges on the upstage side. Across the back and the left sides of the stage are walls of concrete block. Jutting out from the left stage wall are two flat steel beds, one above the other--like bunkbeds only attached to the wall rather than each other. Slightly down right of center there is a round steel table supported by a single pedestal which is firmly anchored into the floor. Two steel blocks, also anchored to the floor, are up right and left of the table. These function as chairs for the table.

The scene opens on Pete *and* Joey *playing cards at the table.* Pete *is sitting on the left block while* Joey *is on the right block nearer the door. There is a motionless body in a heap on the floor against the wall of bars downstage from the door.*

PETE

Six.

(Plays a card and draws a card.

JOEY

(Playing a card:) King.

(Draws a card.)

PETE

(Plays a card:) Seven.

(Draws a card.)

JOEY

(Playing a card:) Ace.

PETE

How the Hell do you manage to keep doing that?

(Joey gathers the cards and begins to shuffle them.)

Playing you is like playing a brick wall.

JOEY

(Invitingly:) Again?

PETE

What the hell. There's nothing else to do. You're too dumb to be cheating; it must just be luck.

JOEY

(Begins dealing:) Must be.

(Pete makes little sounds for each card he gets: "Uh, huh," "Hmmmm," and other chuckles and grunts. They each get seven cards)

PETE

(After the dealing is done:) I'll start...Six.

(He plays a card and draws a card.)

JOEY

(Playing a card:) Jack.

(He draws a card.)

PETE

(*Playing a card:*)Jack. Double jacks!

(PETE *picks up the discard pile and throws it toward the barred wall.*)

JOEY

Seven.

(*He plays a card and draws a card.*)

PETE

How do you always know?

(*He plays a card.*)

Queen.

(*He draws a card.*)

JOEY

(*Steps are heard coming from right stage.*)

(*Playing a card:*) Four.

(*He draws a card.*)

PETE

(*Playing a card:*) Duece.

(Jailor *enters; he unlocks the barred door. With him is* George.)

JOEY

(*Playing a card:*) Eight. You forgot to draw your card.

(*They each draw a card.*)

JAILOR

You've got a cell mate, boys. I hope it doesn't get too cramped for you.

(Pete *and* Joey *ignore the* Jailor. George *is scared and silent, like a rabbit caught by the headlights of a car.* Jailor *picks the body up under its arms and drags it with him as he leaves.*)

PETE

King.

(*Plays a card and draws a card*)

JAILOR

I'll be back for you in the morning, George...

JOEY

(*Plays a card:*) Nine.

(*He draws a card.*)

JAILOR

...Be thankful you only have to spend one night in this place.

(George *stays nervously in the up right corner of the cell. The* Jailor *locks the barred door and exits.*)

PETE

Nine? You played a nine?

(*He chuckles.*)

Well, well...what the hell.

(*He plays a card.*)

Seven.

(*He draws a card.*)

JOEY

(*Playing a card:*) Ace.

(*He begins to gather the cards*)

PETE

Ah, hell. It's not worth it.

(*He runs his arm across the top of the table, sending the cards flying.*)

I don't want to play anymore.

(*He notices* George *for the first time.*)

Where did you come from?

(George *silently tries to melt through the wall.*)

Look, if you don't want to talk about it, fine. As a matter of fact, I don't much want to talk about it either. You're stuck here. Come play cards with us.

GEORGE

(*Stuttering:*) I don't know how to play.

PETE

You'd better learn fast, mate, 'cause without the cards this place'll drive you out of your mind. Why don't you pick 'em all up and we'll get started.

(George, *starting slowly, gathers the scattered cards,*)

(*To* Joey:) You up for another game?

JOEY

I suppose.

PETE

You suppose. Yeah. I'll break your luck now. This time I'm gonna be the winner.

GEORGE

(*Dumping a handful of cards on the table:*) What are the rules?

(*He crawls after the stragglers while* Joey *shuffles the cards on the table.*)

JOEY

(*Slowly:*) There really ain't much in the way of rules for this game.

PETE

We've got enough cards. Don't worry about the rest of 'em.

(George *brings the few additional cards he has found to the table and then stands uncertainly between* Pete *and* Joey *and behind the table.*)

GEORGE

But how do you play?

JOEY

It really doesn't matter much how you play. Just keep in mind that if you put an ace on a seven then whoever you're playing loses.

He'll pick it up. Just deal. .

Forget it, mate. You'll just have to stand. The only moveable things in this place are the cards and us.

I'll start...Five.

(*To* George:) It's always good to start low.

(*Plays a card:*) Eight.

Play!

Play something...There ain't no strategies; you only have seven cards. Play one.

You're not playing to win. Right now you're playing to learn...

Hell...a seven...hell. You're making fun of me, aren't you?

(*Stutteringly:*) No.

Play, Pete.

Hell.

Jack.

PETE

(Joey *deals.* George *looks around for something to sit on.*)

(Pete *picks up his cards and begins making sounds as he did at the other deal.* George *stares blankly at his cards.*)

(*Plays a card and draws a card*)

JOEY

(*Draws a card.* George *stands nervously silent.*)

PETE

(*Pause.*)

(*Pause.*)

(George *plays a card.*)

GEORGE

(George *doesn't draw a card.*)

JOEY

PETE

(*Plays a card.*)

(*Draws a card.*)

JOEY

(*Playing a card:*) Jack.

(*Draws a card while* Pete *grabs the discard pile and throws it at the barred wall.*)

PETE

Double Jacks, Double Jacks.

(George *stares blankly at the cards thrown at the bars.*)

JOEY

It's your turn, mate. Just don't play an ace.

(*After a pause,* George *lets a card drop out of his hand without changing his blank expression or his frozen posture.*)

PETE

(*Putting the card on the discard pile:*) Seven...Right...A seven... hell.

(*He is calmly furious.*)

(*Playing a card:*) KING!..hell.

(*He draws a card.* George *jumps when* Pete *says, "KING!"*)

JOEY

(*Plays a card:*) Ten.

(*He draws a card. Pause.*)

GEORGE

(*Stutteringly:*) I think, uh, I'm, uh, gonna try to, uh, to get, uh, some sleep.

(*He takes a step toward the beds.*)

PETE

(*Steps between* George *and the beds:*) Like hell...PLAY!

GEORGE

But...

PETE

(*Grabs a card from* George's *hand:*) Gimme a card.

(Pete *looks at it in disbelief. Pause.*)

Three times ...THREE TIMES he sets me up. Do I have an ace? Hell no...One rule...One rule for this senseless game, and he throws it in my face. This is a friendly game, but... Hell.

(Pete *punches* George *in the gut.* George *goes down in pain, still holding his four remaining cards.* Pete *slaps* George's *card on the discard pile.*)

SEVEN...hell.

JOEY

It's your turn, Pete.

PETE

(*Playing a card:*) Duece.

(*Draws a card. Looks at it disgustedly.*)

(*To* George:) If you play another seven I'll kick your face in.

JOEY

He won't; I've got the last one.

(*Plays a card.*)

Seven.

(*Draws a card.*)

It's your play, mate.

(George *slowly stands, still bent over, and looks from* Joey *to the discard pile and back to* Joey *again.*)

That's my seven, mate.

GEORGE

(*Backs slowly to the upstage wall.*)

(*Slowly, painfully, scared to death:*) I...can't play any...more ...I don't...want...to play any more...Don't make..me..play...(*a pained, pleading gasp*) anymore.

PETE

PLAY!

JOEY

(*Slowly goes to* George.)

Just give me one of your cards , mate. Don't be afraid. Even if it is all we've got, nobody cares how it's played. come on. Give me a card.

(*He slowly takes a card from* George's *hand. He looks at it, then glances at* Pete , *who is ready to kill.* Joey *takes another card, and then a third card.*)

PETE

What the hell are you doing Joey? Play a card for him. You want me to go crazy staring at these stupid walls?

(Joey *take's* George's *last card and looks over at* Pete *in disbelief.*)

Don't tell me. They're all sevens, right?...HELL.

JOEY

(George *breaks for the down right corner where he quivers like a kitten hiding from a dog*)

(*Slowly:*) They're all aces. (*Pause.*) We lose.

PETE

(*Coming around the front of the table:*) Hell, mate, you're dead.

(Joey *sits back down at the table and gets all the cards in into a neat stack.* George *runs back up to the upright corner and then towards the beds.* Pete *goes completely around the table and chases* George *to the beds, muttering and yelling:*)

You made a fool out of me from your first card. "What are the rules?" Hell. You knew the rules. If I want to get beat, old Joey, here, is good enough for that. I don't need you to make fun of me. Spit in my face, why don't you? This is my cell, my game, my life, hell. Get the hell out of it.

(Joey *begins crawling around after the few cards that are still on the floor.* George *dives onto the top bed and momentarily fends* Pete *off from there.* Pete *keeps trying to climb up and to land punches where he can.*)

GEORGE

I don't know your game. I don't know your rules. I don't even want to be here, but I can't get out. I'm sorry if I annoy you, if I take up your room. I'm sorry, but I can't help it.

PETE

Like hell. There's one exit the jailor can't lock, and mate, 'I aim to put you through it,

GEORGE

(*Tremblingly*:) You're crazy...I didn't ask to be here. I...I don't know...your game. Give me some respect...I can't take.. I need...respect...your game...

(*forcefully, in an outburst:*) I can't play your game.

(George *begins to break down.*)

PETE

Like HELL. You made a fool out of me with my game. Don't give me your ...your....Hell, look at this place. It's hell, it's nothing. But I've got my game and Joey to play it with. We don't need you.

GEORGE

(*Sobbing:*) Leave me alone.

PETE

We were alright until you came. We'll be alright when you're gone.

(Pete *manages to get up on the lower bed and he begins to brutally throw* George *down to the floor.*)

GEORGE

(*still fighting and sobbing:*) You're going to hurt me.

PETE

I'm going to kill you.

GEORGE

God...This isn't your game anymore. You don't know what your doing!

(*At this point* Joey *has crawled under the lower bunk in search of a card.* George *kicks out at* Pete *who falls heavily and awkwardly backwards to remain motionless on the floor.* George *cowers on the upper bed.*)

Get rid of your game.

JOEY

Ouch! Hey...hey Pete...come on mate...what's wrong?..Pete? ...hey Pete...(*etc.*)

(Joey *tries to get* Pete *to come around or at least show some signs of life.* George *fearfully and cautiously climbs down the upstage end of the bed and goes to the table. He takes the stack of cards which* Joey *left and, going to the barred wall, throws them through as hard as he can. Visibly relieved he sinks to the floor and watches* Joey. Joey *has gotten some blood on his hands which he begins to wipe off on his shirt.*)

Hold on, Pete. We don't want to get any blood on the cards. Just a second.

(Joey *takes the two cards that he picked up from the floor, to the table.*)

Hey. Where are the cards?

(Joey *leaves the two cards on the table and goes toward* George.)

You, mate. What did you do with the cards?

GEORGE

I threw them out. Your game was...

JOEY

You threw them out?!

GEORGE

They were destroying you... They...Your game was...

(Joey *takes a few long strides to* George, *picks him up by the front of his shirt, and pushes/ throws him against the back wall.*)

Hey. Stop...I'm trying to make you...

JOEY

Hell.

GEORGE

...live.

(Joey *kicks* George.)

JOEY

Threw them out?

(Joey *picks* George *up again and throws him downstage along the barred wall to the same approximate place where the body was at the beginning of the play.* George *is motionless.* Joey *looks through the bars at where the cards went.*)

Threw them out.

(Joey *sits on his metal block and begins to cry. After a long pause* Pete *moves, and then sits up, rubbing blood from his head.*)

PETE

Hell.

(Joey *looks up and begins to brighten. He starts to shuffle the two cards which are left. Pause.*)

JOEY

(*Invitingly:*) Again?

PETE

(*Reorienting himself with reality:*) What the hell.

(*He slowly gets up and goes to his metal block.*)

There's nothing else to do.

(Joey *deals.*)

I'll start.

(*He plays his card.*)

Seven.

JOEY

(*Playing his card:*) Ace.

PETE

Hell.

-curtain-

Notes on Contributors

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ROB CAMARENA, a junior photography major from Michigan City, Indiana, plans a career in photojournalism or commercial photography. Other pieces of his work will appear in this year's *Beacon*.

LAURIE DOJAN is a sophomore from Jackson, Michigan. She plans to apply her art/photography major toward a career in photography.

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STEPHEN GAWRONSKI is a freshman from Schererville, Indiana, who intends to write for musical theatre.

THOMAS GEHRING is a Valparaiso University alumnus who resides in Valparaiso. He is a regular contributor to *The Lighter*.

RICHARD JABLINSKI is a senior journalism major for whom photography is a new interest and possible career. Richard is from Arcadia, California.

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STEPHEN MOTET, the mysterious Mound Street poet, is best known to the campus community for his contributions to *The Lighter* and *The Darkling Thrush*.

BECKET RHODES is a sophomore speech pathology major from Minneapolis, Minnesota, who dreams of writing a novel someday.

RANA SAID is a sophomore from the United Arab Emirates. She plans to make use of her art design major through a career in advertising.

SAM THE TAILOR is a semi-anonymous individual who aspires to be famous (so save this *Lighter*).

ESTHER RUTH WHITE is a sophomore art major from Rockford, Illinois. This year she has been an artist for *The Lighter* and Union Board, and has designed the cover for the new freshman seminar booklet.