

12-1975

December 1975

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Vol. 18 No 1, 1975

The Lighter

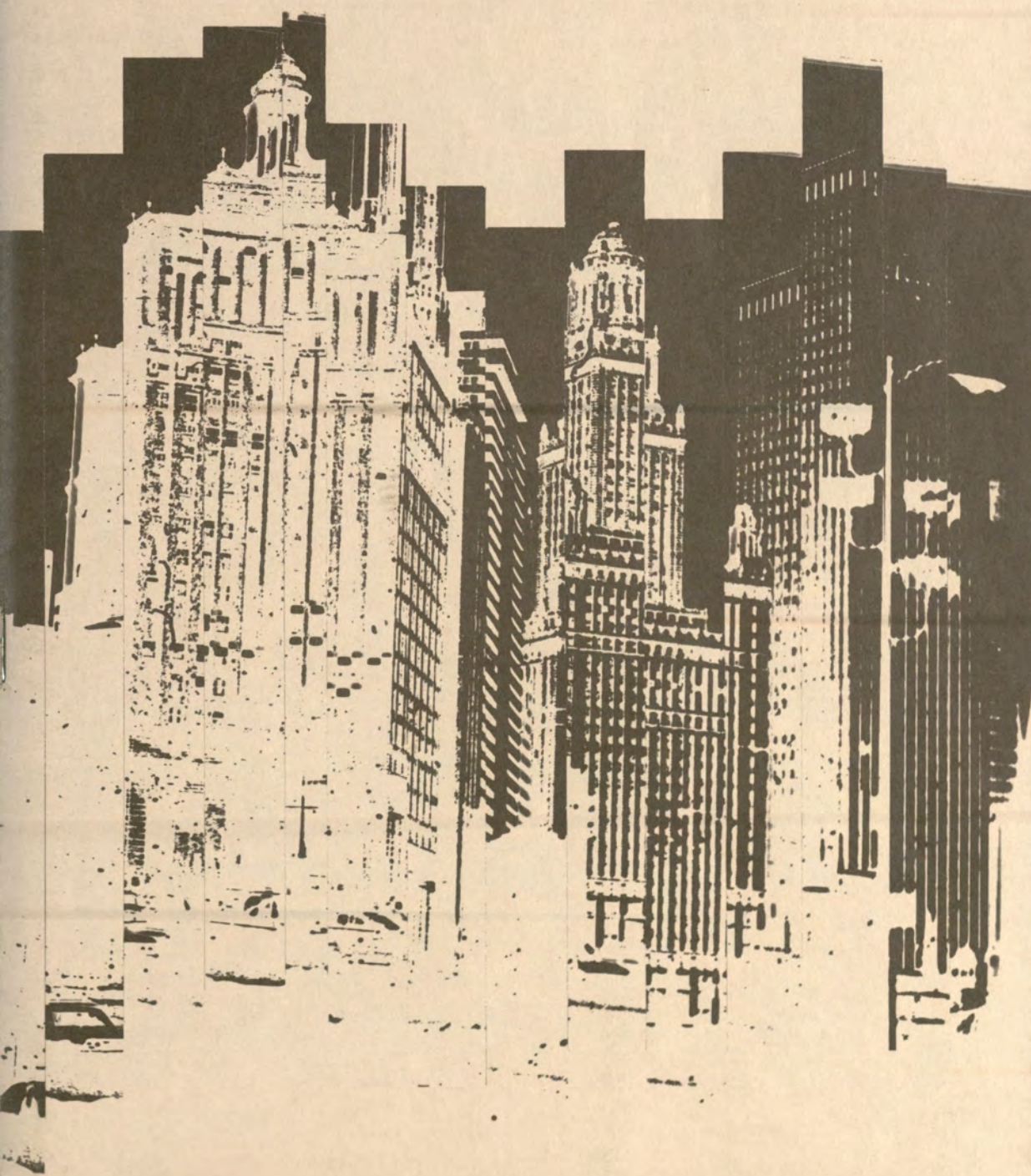


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SUMMER'S DREAM

I

The bouquet is now on the table.
Soft colors
a lighthearted feeling—
the occasion.

It is cool in here
yet it is hot out there;
the flowers in the vase
seem happier than the flowers
in the garden
This time around.

II

The children are running
Through the fields today.
Up the hill, into the corn,
Back
around the house
to sing Happy Birthday
to watch Mary blow out
All the nine candles.

Then the children shall be miles apart
in soul, in mind,
But one summer's day stays in common, if only
to mind, not to theatrics—
Mary's birthday, though they may
hate Mary now, they know too well
it had been a happy day.

III

Into a summer and out come
The complaints
Of its having been hotter this summer than
last summer
And how the ice cream is melting in the
ice box
And how the tar is black gum
And how slowly the man who paints houses
paints.

Summer past summer past summer
The same story,
And someone in the country got a new refrigerator
for his ice cream
And someone else got the Good Humor and
kept the old ice box.
Shiny white car fought spotty black tar
And fresh painted houses were still next summer's
dream.

IV

*This may be the beach of people.
I cannot tell.
It seems a beach enough.
But is it the same one we all went to before?
I know I've been away.
But I think the beach has been away, too.
I can tell we've both come back
Different, reshorelined, somewhat novel, yet older.*

V

*It is so hot
That the air itself is steaming
and trees and sky and flowers are streaming
 across the vision's canvas
as if a glass of hot water smeared a pastel drawing.
The body cannot fight such torrid pressure
and the eyelids close, into dreaming
the chest rising and falling, breathing
the warm, humid air
and the soul itself is sleeping.*

VI

*They cannot know
They cannot know
Nothing
Nothing
Is sure until it's past
Until it's past
Until it's past
Summer's
dream.*

T. Lynn Wolfe

October's Song

Before this men have learned to sing in exile.
 Why, then, bring flutes to drown the weeping out.
 We'll build our summer home on Lethe's bank,
 and not remember houses left behind
 till autumn force us with the frost's return.

The sere leaf claws against the terrace stones.
 What wind rattles the memories at dusk?
 In the daylight we could put the haltings off,
 dismiss our hesitation without qualm,
 suspicion of a past
 on Lethe's other bank.

But now there are Roses reflected in the dying West,
 now the dogwood branch is black against the sky,
 not unlike a garden we once knew.

The days are shorter and too few,
 before we leave this stream's beguiling edge
 where parched leaves clutch the terrace ledge.
 Why should they not fear moving with the wind,
 who know their future less well than their past,
 and past as this river's whim permits?
 To them the dove's detachment
 must seem unconscionable stupidity.

Make love to air, enfold elusive light,
 and you will feel as leaves in autumn wind,
 as Psyche waiting for a nameless Love's embrace,
 and in the morning cheated of his face.
 (Like Psyche, too, then, knowing but to lose?)

David Townsend



excerpt from a work in progress never to be completed

by *MEPH KELLY*

Dedicated to Professor Rex Cunningham, who singlehandedly guided the growth of my writing talent, and who must now bear witness to its willful but proper demise.

Intent was the demon which had frozen and captured his thought. From this intent his torture sprang, as a serpent out of steaming black seas, as a snake that slithers from mud of rotten time.

Upon a canal bridge he leaned across the railing, gazed into the still water below; quiet, calm, deadly in its patience. His numb cold hand felt the pistol in his coat pocket. It was here where the future gained its substance; he would take the life of another human being tonight.

Yellow lights shimmered along the canal road, their reflections constantly bright while stray dogs barked on the opposite bank reflections shifting patterns as the wind felt points of leaves and breezed past the face of a man walking. Ahead he heard noises and then saw a dark shape. Closer he came and closer it stood steadfastly in its preoccupation. The shape congealed into a definite form, the man's heart faltered and his eyes fixed: it was a dragon hunched over a steaming cauldron. It had come out late to avoid the many well-wishers and misty vagabonds who carried pity on their backs. These were different monsters who inhabited the city forests by day, inhabited the dragon's mind at night.

In the cauldron, full to the brim, simmered a thick dark liquid. It was blood—gallons of it. Every few seconds the dragon would dip down with its huge paw, gather a quantity of the liquid, and noisily slurp it into its gaping dark cave of a mouth, tongue working a circular motion around shiny smacking lips. Little trickles of blood oozed down the monster's neck; they glistened like veins of gold beneath the yellow light.

The man stood next to a tree, frozen and intent upon the scene before him. Captured by the vision of his eyes, they reflected within him no actual surprise. But he did feel very afraid, and not merely for his life. It was the kind of fear one feels when confronted with a reality always known to exist but never accepted, never actually believed in.

Crouched on its fat slimy haunches the dragon reached deeper into the cauldron, feeling around for something it obviously knew was there. It snorted in the silence; a fog-cloud of steamy breath rose in the air. Out of the cauldron it pulled a small object, boiled to a dark brown hue and covered with wrinkles. It was a corpse. The body of a human infant, a dead little girl in fact, dripping all over with hot blood. The dragon raised the corpse to its mouth, chewed into the head. A dull crunching sound infested the peaceful quiet. Swallowing rapidly, the dragon took another bite.

By this time the man's mouth had fallen wide open. His hands were clenched. A nervous chill ran across the shoulders down the spine; his body shook violently. The eyes, refusing to believe what they saw, shut tightly closed. He gagged, tilted his head back, and vomited into space.

The dragon twisted its head toward the gagging sound, and gave a great roar. It dropped the corpse into the pot with a splash, bounded through the air, and was upon the man in an instant. Immediately it began tearing at his throat with long black claws. The man lay on his back nearly dead from shock. He could feel the skin of his neck being ripped away in hot painful strips. Soon the whole thing would be torn apart, and his head would make a slow rolling exit down the bank and into the water. —My own head will float and watch, the man thought, as its own body is devoured onshore by a dragon of the city.

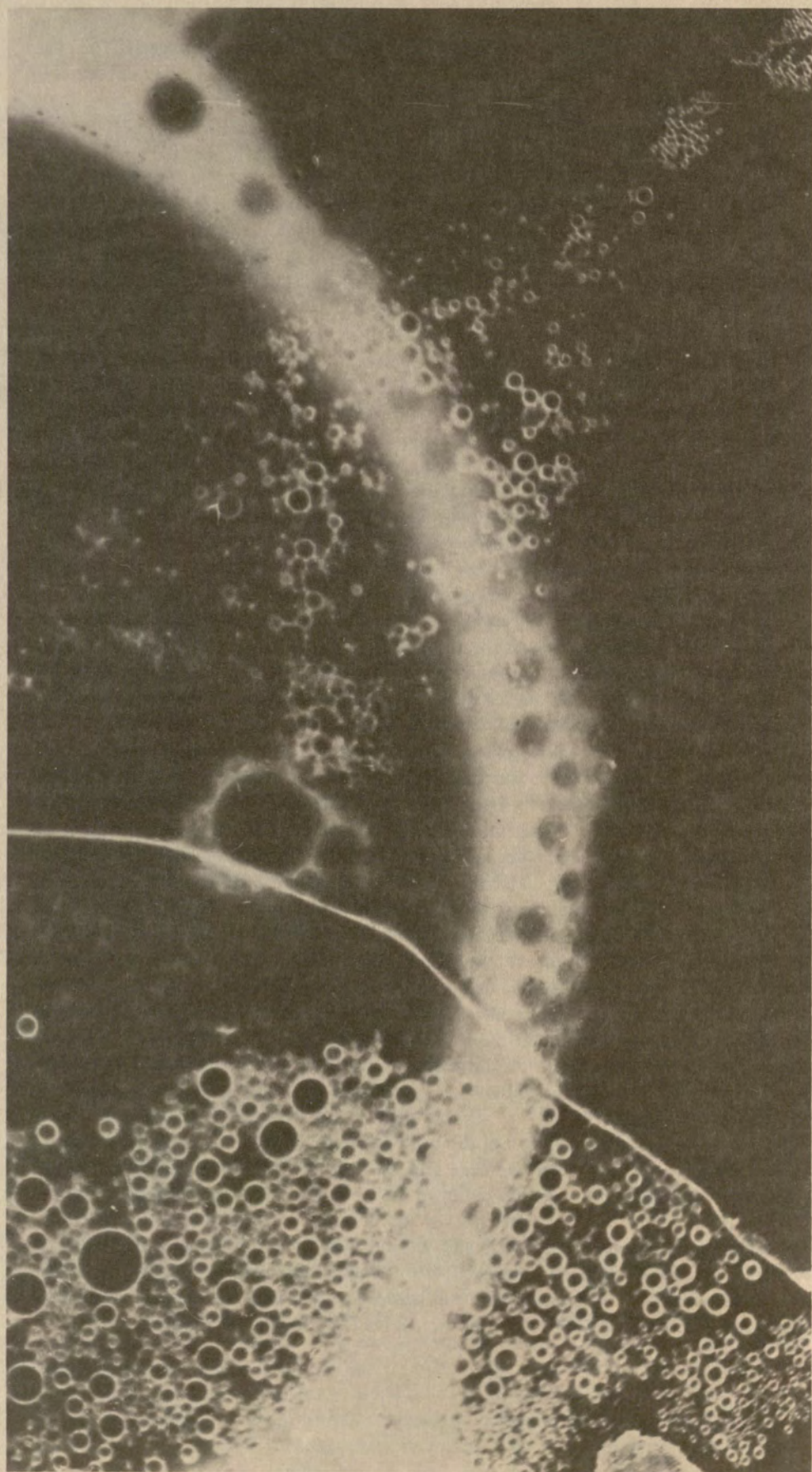
A dragon that pressed close above him, snorting next to his face, drooling warm blood and saliva into his eyes. The man was unable to see, yet disgust for the dragon he found himself being murdered by urged him on to action. The dying man reached into his coat pocket, took hold of the gun inside, tilted it upwards, and pulled the trigger.

Silence had decided to play tricks with him; there was nothing else to be heard. The man listened to his own death fading, then opened his eyes. No blood. No saliva. No dragon. He distinctly remembered pulling the trigger to his gun, yet the only reaction it caused was utter and complete silence. Checking the bullet chambers, he discovered there were only five rounds left. He felt his neck; it was very dry and smooth. Intact. Glancing to the spot where the cauldron had been the man now perceived a group of rusty garbage cans, spilling over with their foul smelling contents.

He stood up trembling. Not a single person was to be seen. Yellow lights and yellow light reflections watched as he put the revolver back inside the coat. Comments floated everywhere — through the sky, in the trees, on the water. Wiping some vomit from the corner of his mouth, the man started down the road locked between shock and disbelief. Having been spared death, he moved once again to the place of his killing.

While all this had been taking place, another event was also occurring right along side so to speak. It had happened at the same time, in the same space, with the same man: as he approached in the darkness he heard the shape rattling lids of garbage cans, bending over them in search of something and the shape became a woman a worn out woman so plain of dress so grey in her color splitting at every seam dirty on every patch upon hearing him approach she turned in fright and startled said oh good evening dear sir I was only looking for some scraps some potato peelings and such to give to my darlings so hungry you know but the man unlistening grabbed her roughly by the blouse no reason did he give ripped the cloth tore it from her skin so surprised she was standing half naked in the night the yellow light shining on her tired and drooping breasts not embarrassed not even cold but shaking with fear realized his action then screaming quite loud turned to run away but himself undaunted threw his weight upon her back forced her down to Dublin's good earth and when she did not quiet her rattling guts but encouraged yet more desperate shrieks save me my god and saviour save me the man drew out a shiny silver pistol shot her through the eye on purpose no less and what's more dragged her lifeless body down and as a peice of rubbish threw it into the canal and watched her disappear under the steaming black water and slide into the mud beneath leaving a trail of bubbles bursting and boiling gurgling and popping on the surface and turning running far into the night he never awoke not even after his last day on earth and tomorrow sun put light on the street and children in the park and all was full of well-wishing faces intent on nighttime dreams all done and forgotten were dragons half-mad with delight and gone were dead ladies half naked under light shut truthfully away they were beneath such busy streets and parks of laughterwrappedgaily across the face of good Dublintown.

September 1, 1975



and coming upon a large stone there intentioning to sit
 myself down and such strange wildly thoughts flew up
 and crowded round me from about and betwixt the centre of it
 (there)

On such a day that

 I wished the sky
 to define in new words and the snow
 on the ground (but finding no words)
 then wished I to become with the rock one so not to
 dream housewife future thoughts
 and watch curtains float in emptily upon
 summer breezes and hang for dust in winter heat;
 I knew then.

there it had stayed always since water and wind (it) had created and
 made there until decided into unmaking

P I E C E

by fraction and fraction into blue
 and how thus it would be to sit
 to watch countless motioning time
 changingly wander the substance enduring
 the rain and cold nights with no smoothing seated beings
 and to know the water be snow and drifts be but winded water,
 none praises their creation.

quietly I
 my hand to it touched
 and motioned away a bit of snow,
 and touched yet another place
 warm (of the sun)
 smiled and wished to find new words to wonder
 at the color of the sky

by RICHARD AXWELL

The Lighter

The mall in Riverside, California has not done much for business the number of vacant store windows is growing alarmingly. Two doors down from the Bank of America is one of the oldest office buildings in town, half Spanish hacienda, half turn-of-the-century warehouse. Crumbling marble steps are now covered by a red carpet which is, in its own turn, disintegrating. Dr. Hideo Inaba, Dentist, has moved on, as has his brother, Dr. Chiyo Inaba, Optometrist; but both these gentlemen are still advertised as inhabiting the premises, along with violin teachers, corporations of unspecified purpose, and colleges of business—all, needless to say, long gone.

Four genuine inhabitants remain to the building. The proprietor, who is in his early nineties, still shows up every morning. A legal aid society has rented a large suite of offices and on Thursday nights a dance studio opens its doors. Finally, behind a pair of windows advertising the law firm of Shaw and Morgan, the Society of Cemetery Aestheticians carries on its many activities.

One day in late spring of 1971, the President of the Society was stretched out asleep on the boarded floor of the office. He had been up most of the preceding night, attending to plans for the Society's June conference. Luckily, the President was a light sleeper so that when the knock came, he heard it. Up to this time, the office had served as a working area and a mailing address for the Society's correspondence; no one, not even the members actually visited there. Consequently, when the President opened the door and was presented with a card from the Riverside Monumental Company, the moment was one of crisis. The visitor asked for John Thomas, the Society's Executive Director, and the President was able to reply only that Thomas was out, that he would be back later. This was sufficient; the visitor left, and the President sat down to review the situation.

A few hours later, he proceeded down the Mall to a phone booth opposite a lavish hotel, now bankrupt. He called the number on the card and a secretary put him through to his guest of the morning.

Speaking in a clipped British accent, the President said, "Hello, my name is John Thomas, Executive Director of the Society of Cemetery Aestheticians." He paused a moment, seemingly undisturbed by this falsehood, then continued: "I'm sorry I was out when you came. The person who was in the office probably acted a bit strange? Well, he's our President, Michael Malloy. A very extraordinary young man. But I'm afraid he's not very good with people. He's rather an introvert type. Very brilliant. Very concerned with cemeteries—but not much at organizing or business. Well, about the conference . . ."

It was not easy to interest people in cemetery aesthetics. In the first place, there is no such thing. Malloy's efforts to conceal this fact had been more than ingenious, however; and the Society had achieved a modest ontological status, equalling or surpassing that of Dr. Hideo Inaba. Could the President sustain the spell, the law offices of Butler, Jefferson and Fry would soon throw open their doors to the guests of the Society: a diversity of art connoisseurs, lawyers, cemetery salesmen. What these visitors would do when they got together was uncertain before the fact. But the President possessed the faith of an alchemist, hoping, at least occasionally, for the transmutation of base ingredients.

I I

Two days before Christmas 1970, Malloy had appeared at Cypress Lawn Memorial Park in Colma, a small town near San Francisco. He explained to a salesman that he wished to purchase a cemetery plot for the purpose of subdividing it. The subdivisions, he said, would be photographed for the benefit of prospective buyers, some of whom might want to invest in the property, and who would be given a chance to do so during the course of an art exhibition.

The official did not allow Malloy to continue this explanation but rose from his seat and exited, leaving his customer to find his own way out.

A few days later, Malloy showed up at Olivet Memorial Park (across the street from Cypress Lawn) and announced simply his desire to make a pre-need arrangement. "You . . . you're so young," laughed a secretary. But this time around—summoning up all his reticence—he succeeded in completing the purchase.

That afternoon he drove up to his plot (number 680, Garden of the Psalms) and subdivided it with string and golf tees. He had forgotten to bring a knife, so he had to cut the string by burning through it with matches. The plot was twenty-seven square feet (9x3), each square foot now constituting a separate subdivision. As Malloy took pictures of the subdivisions, gardeners clipped hedges and visiting mourners passed by with apparent serenity of mind.

Back in Los Angeles, the Eugenia Butler gallery agreed to show Malloy's project for three nights in late spring. He had contemplated inviting lawyers to the event, and since Mrs. Butler liked this idea he added realtors and cemetery representatives for good measure. Now the question arose: what precisely were all these people to do when they got together?

For one thing, they were to contemplate certain legal anomalies which Malloy had uncovered in California law. "One can hold perfect title to land that is valueless," asserts an opinion of the California Supreme Court; "one can have marketable title to land while while the land itself is unmarketable." To enact such a situation is to push one's audience (and oneself) into a kind of twilight zone, where what is abstractly conceivable becomes concrete and thus nonsensical. A conceptual framework of society (the idea of property transactions) begins to break down. It was this effect (with some variations in the situation actually used) which Malloy intended to produce on his audience.

But—he began to feel—if he were to destroy one context, he would have to replace it with another. He was using the law to get beyond it, into some New Dimension where one moved freely, unattached to the structure of society or the necessities of decorum.

In early March, Malloy mailed out an announcement of the show which suggested these ambitions for a somewhat different starting point.

This is an invitation to participate in an art show. Not to come and look at art, but to apply your professional knowledge to what the artist has done. The show involves the subdivision of a cemetery plot (real property). You will be asked to give your professional opinion, not to talk about art in the abstract . . .

People from the art world, attorneys, cemetery executives, and people who deal with land (realtors, land developers, title insurance executives) have been invited. In the past art has only involved these professions in a peripheral way, usually expressed in the equation culture-big business. This show presents a chance for you to involve yourself in more than a monetary way . . ."

This manifesto went out to around a hundred people: land development professionals, cemetery representatives and all the property law attorneys in the Beverly Hills telephone book. There was no response, because no one cared especially, or because professionals usually live by their opinions; asking someone to put his living on the line in a newly synthesized world is not especially tactful.

For a month or so, Malloy persevered in his attempts to convince people to come. He had one success—the Contemporary Arts Council of Los Angeles agreed to send representatives. More typical, perhaps, was his experience with an eminent property law professor, who after listening to Malloy's pitch over the telephone decided that he was talking about ecology. "To put it bluntly, I think its silly. People do this all the time, like to save old trees. I wouldn't go unless the photography is particularly good . . .no, I don't know any attorneys that would be interested in going."

The reader of criminal instinct will have already thought of a few plans Malloy could have used to encourage people to come. But the artist, remember, had adopted a polemical pose which he

found inspiring, and he was having a hard time climbing off the pedestal onto which he leaped so bravely. In the long run he fell off. Or perhaps he was pushed, as witness the following advice from a kindly Associate Dean at one of California's arts colleges:

You are still faced with a persuasional problem, namely how to get your participants to go through with it. This requires one to be part charlatan, part real showman and part investigator. . .

As Malloy's attitude changed, so did the project, and what ultimately emerged, about mid-May was the Society of Cemetery Aestheticians. One of the Society's first acts was to move its proposed conference out of the art gallery and into the law offices of Butler, Jefferson and Fry. Mr. Butler, it should be noted, was the husband of Eugenia, the gallery owner who was sponsoring Malloy. The latter, as it seemed, had smuggled himself through the gates of Professional Opinion. Or at least, the invasion of enemy territory was about to commence, under the cover of respectability.

III

On June 1, the Friday before Memorial Day weekend, the law office of Butler, Jefferson and Fry threw open its doors to the Society of Cemetery Aestheticians. The President of the Society was on hand early to survey the scene. He was displeased by the large Warhol lithographs of Marilyn Monroe's head; these extended around the reception room but could not be removed without undue effort.

Thus the President concentrated, with the assistance of several friends, on setting up folding chairs. He was concerned lest most of these chairs remain empty; for a while it was appropriate that the Society summon its forces on this particular holiday, many cemetery professionals might be too busy to participate.

The room, however, soon filled with guests, straddling plastic chairs or peering

at each other, or attempting to mingle: friends and friends of friends plus one lawyer and one photographer and Malloy's girl friend and twelve politely interested representatives from the Contemporary Arts Council.

And three miscellaneous spectators who belonged to none of these categories. Two of these came up and introduced themselves to Malloy: one was Robert Kunz, President of the Tri-County Memorial Funeral Society, an organization providing alternatives to cemetery burial; the other, Jim Carter, was public relations consultant to Inglewood Park Cemetery. A third gentleman, nattily dressed and with jutting jaw, hovered in the background, but failed to reveal his identity.

TRANSCRIPT OF THE CONFERENCE

MIKE MALLOY: One, two, three, the machine is going. OK, I think we will start. Everybody comfortable? I am Mike Malloy, and I am president of the Society of Cemetery Aestheticians.

The conference began with a speech by Mr. Kunz; then Malloy, in the barest factual terms, described his project. Finally, the meeting was open to questions.

Q: If I buy one of these feet can I deduct it on my taxes, because it's a useless piece of land? I can't even get to see it, much less use it.

JIM BUTLER: I haven't figured out how to do it that way. I think it's just money down the drain, like bodies down the drain.

JIM CARTER: The money is going to the Society, and what's the Society going to do with the money? What's the purpose of the Society—to eliminate cemeteries?

MIKE MALLOY: No, to foster an interest in the aesthetic aspects of ceme-

teries.

JIM BUTLER: That could be . . . is it a non-profit organization?

MIKE MALLOY: Right.

JIM BUTLER: Then it can be a tax deduction.

Who was in on the joke, and who was not? The project had started as a sort of Utopian vision, then metamorphosed into a parody of its original self. The problem, however, was that only a few people in the audience —those who had been prewarned —gave signs of recognizing it as a parody. Instead of attempting to challenge a method of thinking, Malloy now appeared to be imitating that method. The puzzlement and the inquisitiveness of his guests (one of whom bought a subdivision) not only suggested but perhaps confirmed the existence of Cemetery Aesthetics, which seemed to be firmly situated in some hierarchy of Professional Opinion.

JIM CARTER: What are the aesthetic values of the cemetery?

MIKE MALLOY: What are they?

JIM CARTER: Trees, stones, no stones, buildings, I don't . . .

MIKE MALLOY: Well, everything has aesthetic properties.

JIM CARTER: Yes.

MIKE MALLOY: Right, so cemeteries therefore have aesthetic properties.

The whole affair had at first been conceived as a celebration, or creation of community; now that it had become a battle, the operative question was: 'who's winning?' The answer is unclear. Either the audience's belief that it was seeing one thing overwhelmed Malloy's intention to show it another; or else the intention dominated the belief. But there is really no means of measuring this delicate balance.

Towards the end of the meeting, two events occurred: (1) The well-suited, well-jawed gentleman revealed himself to be a Fresno State professor, who was writing a book and doing a movie on the subject of Cemetery Aesthetics. Malloy shook his hand. (2) Malloy was asked about his future.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Now, what are you going to do? Are you going to buy another plot and subdivide it?

MIKE MALLOY: Perhaps. I don't think so though.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You are only going to sell this one plot of land?

MIKE MALLOY: Yes. There might be more meetings of the Society, but they would be of a different nature. I think this will be the last sub-division . . .

ROBERT KUNZ: Why, may I ask, do you have to go through this procedure? Why don't you just ask for funds?

MIKE MALLOY: I think this is more fun. . . I guess that concludes the conference. You are free to stay as long as you wish to discuss matters amongst yourselves. And remember, the plots are for sale, and the money will benefit the Society. Thank you.

The Lighter



SUZANNE DAVIES

a' la Gawain

i had a quest;
 i spent
 a whole day searching
 and found a place
 a gallant place
 to sleep, full of a woman —
 Yes No Yes No Yes
 No way.
 Keeping in virtuosity
 Found my quest the next
 morning:
 the woman's husband.
 anyhow
 i really wonder
 if i should have
 screwed the bitch
 anyhow.
 anyhow.

T. Lynn Wolfe

Should I Subdue My Lust Betimes

The sun each morn excites the naked lust
 That in my bosom lives but never sleeps
 The songs of birds remind me that I must
 Seek food and hunt again some place which keeps
 Me safe. My hot desire makes new schemes;
 Thy innocence my cancered thoughts invade.
 To dayspring's glow my soul repairs on dreams.
 The margin of our cosmos seems to fade
 With every stranger galaxy we find;
 Then thoughts to infinite expanse are flung.
 A universe repenting comes to mind;
 To this chaste point my Heart's Desire has clung:
 Should I subdue my lust betimes, true Love
 Might send pure light from that one point above.

Thomas Penn Johnson

promised tree, little mustard seed,
and grown so wide and only tall.
rocky earth, shallow earth,
and dirt for weeds and that is all.

could you survive without the water?
did the thistles tie you down?
did you need the watch for climbing,
or some sun for branch encrowned?

though the planting be enough
and gold's unbinding did I see,
neglect by some, and smiling,
so desert leaves for bright'ning trees.

mustard seed, promised tree
one little mustard seed.

M. Albertson



The Lighter

O' City, city . . .
 With sky of promising apple blossom red
 —mythic Johnny's dream now nightmare
 now orange
 now grey
 now black

the bloom of booming industry

A young man seeks a reputation
 And here there are many he may choose from
 And if he is promising there will be promises
 If he is nothing of promise there is always
 Self Determination

If there is nothing, he may be one of the
 Democratic Many.

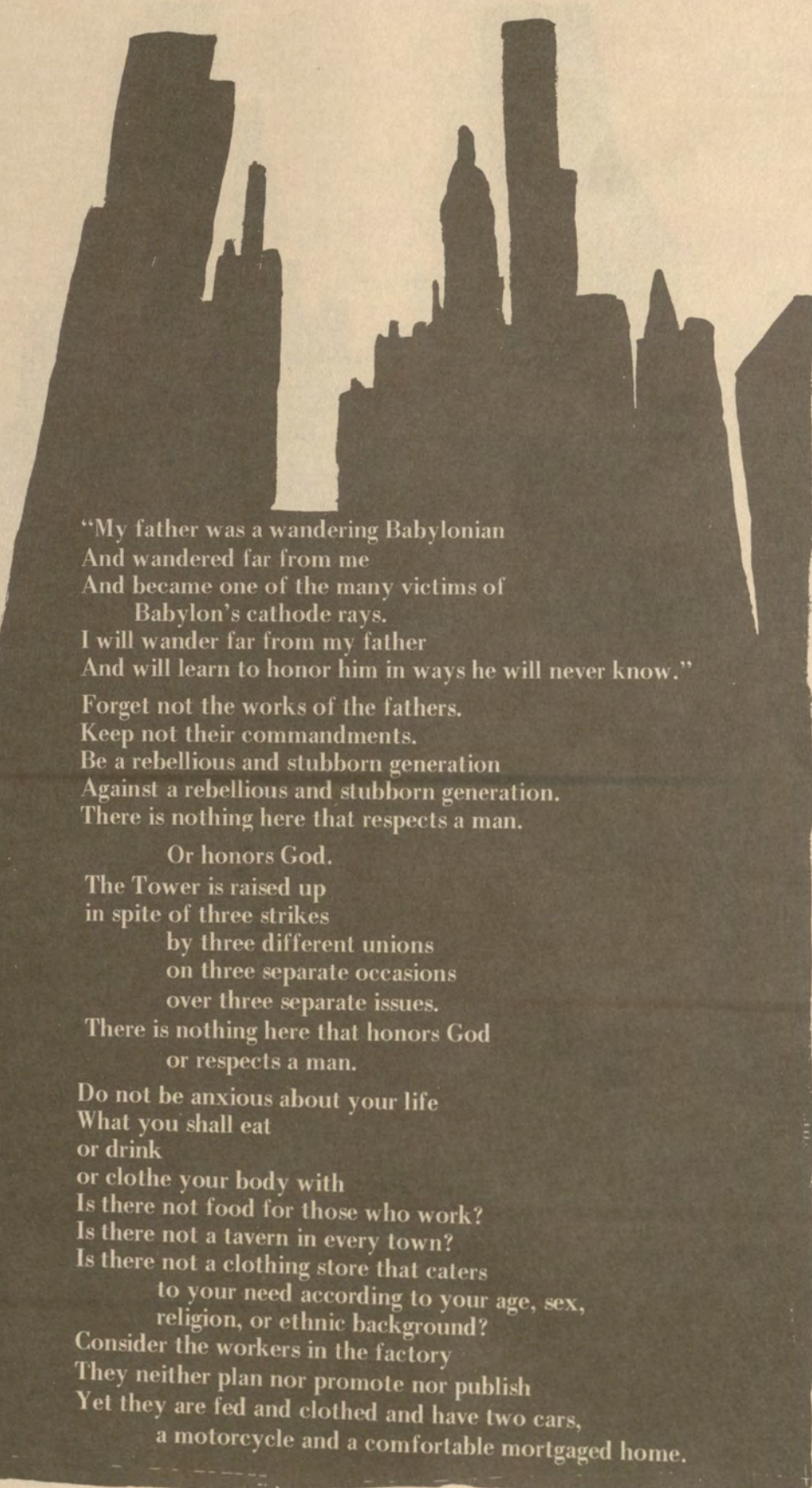
A young man seeks
 And there is the horn blowin' aplenty
 (Oh, to be young and have wheels)
 There are women to ride with
 There are clothes and music and places
 to make the suggestion

There is time
 There is time to avoid the mistake
 There is time to make the mistake
 There are sterile agencies with comfortable
 waiting rooms to correct the mistake.

A young man seeks a reputation
 And there are many to choose from
 And if he is a Man of Promise
 Promises will be made.

If he is questionable he must be patient
 —such questions take time.

A young man promises himself among
 the choices



“My father was a wandering Babylonian
And wandered far from me
And became one of the many victims of
Babylon’s cathode rays.
I will wander far from my father
And will learn to honor him in ways he will never know.”

Forget not the works of the fathers.
Keep not their commandments.
Be a rebellious and stubborn generation
Against a rebellious and stubborn generation.
There is nothing here that respects a man.

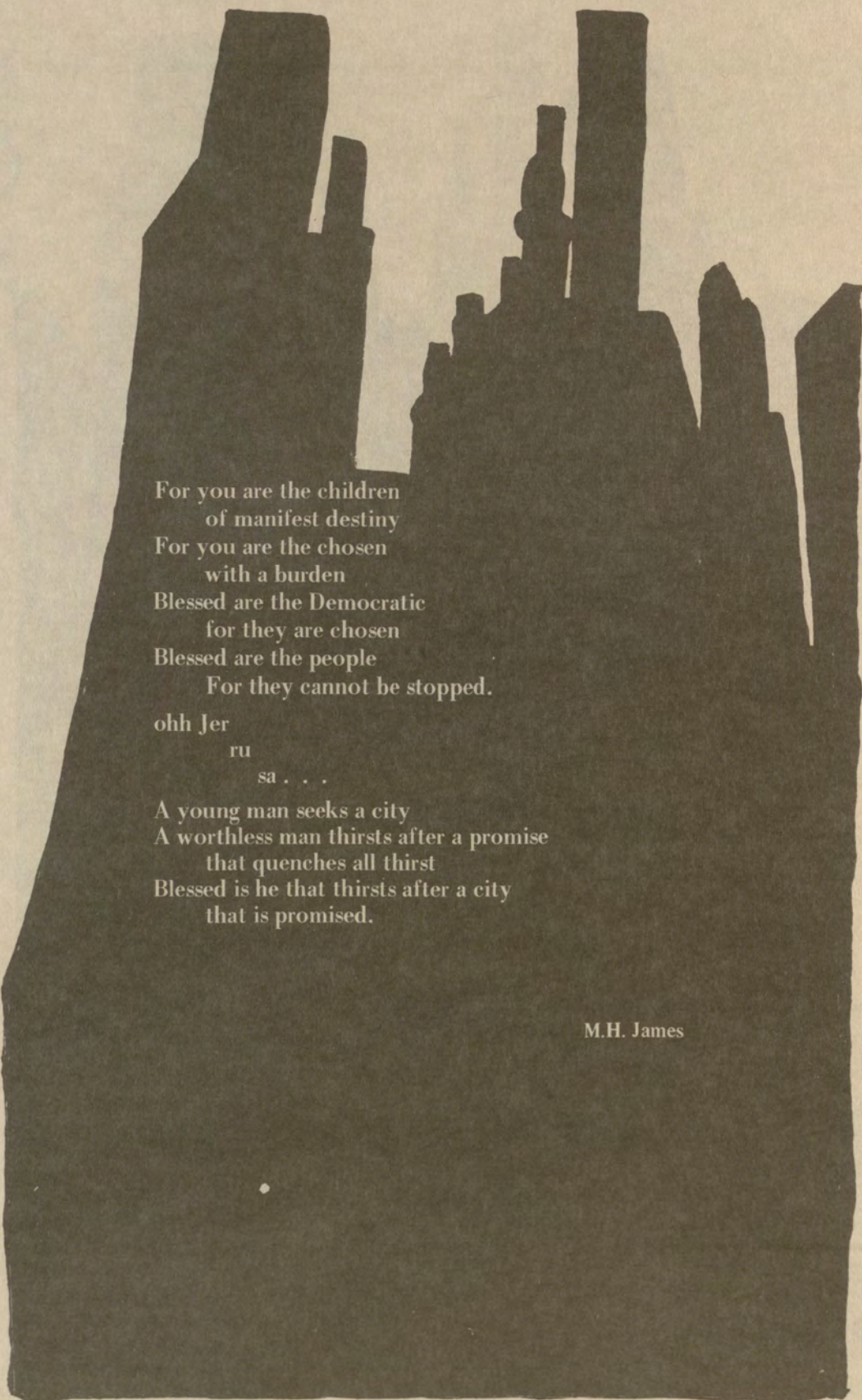
Or honors God.

The Tower is raised up
in spite of three strikes
by three different unions
on three separate occasions
over three separate issues.

There is nothing here that honors God
or respects a man.

Do not be anxious about your life
What you shall eat
or drink
or clothe your body with
Is there not food for those who work?
Is there not a tavern in every town?
Is there not a clothing store that caters
to your need according to your age, sex,
religion, or ethnic background?

Consider the workers in the factory
They neither plan nor promote nor publish
Yet they are fed and clothed and have two cars,
a motorcycle and a comfortable mortgaged home.



For you are the children
of manifest destiny
For you are the chosen
with a burden
Blessed are the Democratic
for they are chosen
Blessed are the people
For they cannot be stopped.

ohh Jer
ru
sa . . .

A young man seeks a city
A worthless man thirsts after a promise
that quenches all thirst
Blessed is he that thirsts after a city
that is promised.

M.H. James

Rahab
is one of the book's
more perplexing characters
what
(i ask you)
were our side's spies
doing in a hard working whore's house
in the first place
one suspects she did not take them in
out of the sheer goodness
of her heart
but rather hooked two customers
of broken accent
our dialect being admittedly not
the king's canaanite
who in their turn one might doubt
had happened onto the domicile
of a lady of easy virtue
by sheer coincidence all of which leads us
to the question of the precise point
at which rahab learned
that she was not entertaining just
any passing tourists
before
or after the fact
as well as to an inquiry
into the original intentions
of our boys in goatskin
forgive
any unnecessarily prurient tone
but one is curious
(i think justifiably)
oh how ya gonna keep em
down on the farm
after they've seen jericho

David Townsend

The House, the Bay, and the Sandbar

I stepped swiftly from the linoleum school bus stairway to the hard earth of my driveway. The double doors closed, slapping shut with an obscene schloop-clop, and the bus slowly rolled away on the asphalt road. In the corner of my eye I saw the bus turn at a sharp wooded bend of the road, and my ears heard the bus sputter and chug behind the wall of trees. I listened to the unhealthy noise coughed from the bus's exhaust until the trees finally absorbed every gassy belch.

With my ears free from the bus's wretched sputtering, I strutted easily along the dirt driveway. I carried my galoshes in one hand, dangling them at my side. That morning my mother had insisted I take my galoshes to school, even though I felt certain that no rain would fall. I saw no morning dew on the grass, and I felt no invisible moisture on my skin when I left for school. But my mother was determined, and I took my galoshes to school.

I watched my brown loafers scatter the dust on the driveway with every step, dangling my galoshes in one hand and holding a couple of worn and tattered seventh grade notebooks in the other. This was the final day of school for the year, and after cleaning my locker, throwing away every unwanted scrap of paper, I found the two tattered notebooks. The pages were practically empty, and I saw no reason for tossing the notebooks into a trashcan.

My homeroom teacher had given me a final grade report card, and after looking at my grades, I slipped the card between the pages of one of the empty notebooks. I received an A in English and a C+ in History, but I didn't fare so well in Science and Math. Science and Math were never pleasant subjects for me, and consequently I received a D in each subject. I didn't mind having two D's on my report card along with an A and a C+, but my mother and father would be disappointed. They had always had high hopes and aspirations for me, and any low grade was the mark of a faulty character, at least by their standards.

I looked up from my strutting feet and gazed in the direction of my house. The brilliant rays of the spring sun fell on the two story colonial house which was my home. The house looked grey and dingy in the brilliant sunlight, for the paint was peeling and fell away in large patches. For three consecutive summers, my father resolved to paint the house; and for three consecutive summers, the house remained unpainted. Beyond the house was the bay of Port Jefferson, a large inlet of water fed by Long Island Sound. The sun's rays gleamed on the rippled waters of the bay and full-hung sailboats rolled gently from side to side as they plowed through the bay. A sandbar with a large boathouse inhabited by an old man separated the bay from the rough waters of Long Island Sound. As I walked along the sloping driveway to my house, the shoreline of Connecticut became clearer across the choppy waters of Long Island Sound.

I knocked the dust from my loafers by tapping the soles on the concrete steps of the back porch. With the hand that dangled the galoshes, I pulled on the handle of the screen door and stepped into the kitchen.

"Is that you, Karl?" I heard my mother's voice call from the living room, mixed with the conversation of a television soap opera.

"Yes, mother," I answered, dropping my galoshes to the floor beside the screen door. The rubbery galoshes bounced away from the spot where they first touched the kitchen floor, and I pushed them to the wall with the tow of a loafer.

"How was the last day of school, Karl?" my mother's voice called again. "Did you get your grades?"

"Yes, mother," I answered with a small quiver of anxiety running along my back bone "I brought them with me."

"Well good," my mother said, emphasizing the word "good" by drawling on the



double-o's. "Bring them here."

I removed the grade card from the pages of the notebook and, holding the grade card in one hand and the notebooks in the other, slowly shuffled into the living room.

My mother's plump figure was sprawled lengthwise on the couch, and the television blared at half-volume beyond the couch's arm. She stared at the snowy picture tube with wide open eyes and munched on a Snickers bar. My mother ate candy constantly, and she

licked the chocolate from the fingers of her free hand before she took the grade card from mine.

My mother scanned the grade card with her wide eyes and bit away another hunk from the Snickers bar. "What's this?" she exclaimed, her words clogged by the chocolate, "two D's? Karl! I'm ashamed of you. Two D's on one report card!"

"Yes, mother. I know I got two D's." I stood very straight and tried to stay calm.

"And on the final card, even!" my mother cried, chewing two final chews on the mouthful of chocolate before swallowing. "How many times have your father and I told you that we don't want to see anything below a C on your report cards? Huh? How many?" She bit away another hunk from the Snickers bar.

"I don't know, mother," shaking my head and carefully avoiding my mother's wide-eyed stare.

"Too many times," she garbled as she chewed, uncrossing and recrossing her fat feet. "How do you expect to get into college if you keep this up? You know your father and I both want you to go to college and get a good education. Do you want to turn out like old man Cornelius and live on a sandbar for the rest of your life?"

"Mother, you don't even know him," I said as we stared at each other's face. My mother popped the last piece of the Snickers bar into her chubby-cheeked mouth.

"Don't tell me that," she said sternly as she chewed, "he's insane, that's what he is, he's nuts. I see him out on that sandbar all the time, feeding those goddam dirty seagulls when he should be feeding himself. He doesn't even work for a living, have a job, or anything. He's probably so damn undependable that he couldn't hold one even if he did have a job. He's insane, that's what he is."

"Mother --"

"Don't you 'mother' me! Your father's gonna see these grades when he gets home from work, and he's gonna have some harsh words for you! You stay right here until he comes hom," my mother commanded as she unwrapped another Snickers bar and stared at a Weight Watchers commercial.

I turned away from my mother and scuffled to a lounge chair facing the large picture window. I stood at the window for a few moments and gazed across the bay. I could see the light brown tint of the sand combine with the vivid green reeds of the sandbar, creating a beautiful collage of alternating vibrant colors. At the peak of the sandbar sat the old man's boathouse. The siding on the boathouse was weathered and darkened by the salt wind and sea spray from the Sound. One four-paned window faced my house, but no door was built into that side of the boathouse.

I slouched into the lounge chair with my eyes transfixed on the weathered boathouse. I sat and looked at the boathouse for a few minutes. Before long, a tall thin and grey man appeared from an unseen side of the boathouse and sat on a large rock in front of the one-windowed side. The grey figure pulled his feet up and crossed them over his thighs with one hand. His other hand held a small brown paper bag. After adjusting his feet, the grey form dipped the free hand into the paper bag and scattered a handful of breadcrumbson the sand before the rock. Soon, seagulls circled overhead, and some fluttered their wings and landed in the area where the grey figure scattered the breadcrumbs. The



gulls pecked at the sand, and the grey man's hand tossed more crumbs among the seagulls.

I heard the back screen door open and shut as the grey form slid off the rock and wandered out of sight behind the boathouse.

"Is that you, Teddy?" called my plump mother from the couch. I remained in my chair, and didn't turn my head to see my father walk into the living room.

"Yes, dear," answered my father. His heavy, awkward footsteps followed his voice into the living room.

"Come here, Teddy, and look at Karl's grades," my mother said, holding the grade card at arm's length and not averting her eyes from the television set for even one millisecond.

"Oh, hi, Karl, I didn't see you in that chair," my father said as he walked within my sight and snatched the grade card from my mother's hand. My father removed a pair of bifocals from his breast pocket and perched them on the tip of his nose. He held the grade card about a foot from his face, and his eyes grew as large as golf balls.

"Karl, what's the meaning of this?" my father asked sternly as he looked the card over and over again.

"I got two D's, an A and a C+," I answered, not turning my head as I spoke.

"I know, Karl," he said gruffly as he tossed the grade card on the coffee table and slipped the bifocals into his breast pocket. "Goddam it, Karl, how many times have I stressed how important good grades are? What do you think it takes to get into college? Good looks? Money? It takes grades, Karl, grades—good grades, not D's! Your mother and I both want you to go to college and get a degree. You'll get more money with a degree than without one. You want to be like that old man on the sandbar? Feeding seagulls all day long and living in a rotten boathouse? Dammit, Karl, you better shape up next year, or else." My father stormed into the kitchen. I hadn't moved my eyes from the sandbar, not even when my father gave his long and condescending speech.

The grey figure appeared from the blind side of the boathouse.

"Edith! Where's tonight's paper?" called my father from the kitchen as the grey figure climbed on top of the rock.

"How should I know?" yelled my mother as the grey form recrossed his legs with the free hand and held another brown paper bag in the other.

"Well, you should," said my father, "you've been here all day, watching these damn soap operas and eating candy while I've been slaving at the office."

"Check the front door. And be quiet!" yelled my mother, staring at the television. "I can't hear what they're saying!"

My father sauntered to the front door. "Here it is, goddam it. Why doesn't that paperboy ever deliver at the back door?" My father plopped into a large arm-chair and, after placing his bifocals on his nose, ruffled through the newspaper.

The grey figure dipped his hand into the brown paper bag and cast a handful of bread crumbs among the seagulls.

"Shit!" exclaimed my father as he dropped the newspaper into his lap. "Why don't my goddam stocks ever move? They don't go up, they don't go down, they just stay in the same slot!" My father rubbed his eyes with the tips of his fingers. The bifocals bobbed up and down as he rubbed his eyes.

"You're always complaining about your stocks," commented my couch-ridden mother. She didn't glance away from the television. "And not only that, you know you complain about everything!"

The grey figure cast another handful of bread crumbs among the seagulls.

"I've got a goddam right to complain," growled my father, still rubbing his eyes. "All goddam day, my boss is on my back. 'This isn't right! That isn't right! Bitching all the time! And those damn secretaries, they're so incompetent. You dictate something, and



they bring the letter back with fifty mistakes! Why shouldn't I bitch?"

Pushing myself out of the chair, I stood at the window for a moment with my eyes fixed on the sandbar, and then bolted to the front door.

"Karl! Where are you going?" my father yelled, startled at my abrupt actions as I ran across the front lawn. "You be home for dinner!" he yelled and slammed the front door.

I ran down to the rocky beach at the edge of the lawn and stopped beside my family's small sailboat resting upside-down on the grass beside the concrete boathouse. I righted the sailboat and pushed it to the water's edge. My family kept the mast, sail and rudder inside the boathouse, and I unlocked the door and removed the mast and sail. When I finished tying the sail to the mast, I attached the boom and slipped the mast into the square hole in the center of the deck. I returned to the boathouse, removed the rudder, and locked the door. I attached the rudder to the stern of the tiny sailboat and, with no concern for my slacks and loafers, turned the sailboat around in knee-deep water. Crawling into the hold, I pulled the sail into the strong breeze.

The breeze filled the sail, and the sailboat easily cut through the small waves. The water behind the sailboat gurgled and left a slight, foamy trail leading away from my home. I fastened my eyes on the boathouse and sailed toward the sandbar. The grey figure still occupied the rock in front of the boathouse, and a score of seagulls circled above his head and gathered around the rock as they feasted on the breadcrumbs.

My eyes looked directly at the figure sitting on the rock as I stepped over the line where the reeds met the yellow sand surrounding the boathouse. The figure sitting on the rock was not so grey as he had once appeared when I gazed at him through the picture window of my house. He was not grey at all; his long wavy hair shimmered a silvery hue, and his furry beard gleamed in the rays of the sun. The leathery skin of his bronze cheeks, nose, and forehead were tanned a deep bronze, and the hands holding the paper bag and breadcrumbs were also tanned and darkened by the sun-rays. When I was within twenty feet of the tanned and silvery old man, his eyes looked up from the feasting seagulls and fastened on my eyes. His gaze was strong and penetrating, and I froze in my footsteps. Even the seagulls felt the old man's eyes fall upon me: The seagulls surrounding the rock fluttered their wings and flew into the air, joining the remainder of the flock circling overhead. The seagulls darted along the beach, their screeching calls diminishing in the distance, leaving me alone with the silvery old man.

"The seagulls have noticed our affinity," said the silvery form on the rock, smiling a white-toothed grin as he spoke. "I have never seen you on this sandbar, but I have seen you and your family from a distance. You live across the bay, in the house which appears so grey, I believe?"

"Yes, you are right," I answered, lowering my eyes to the base of the rock.

"Come closer," the old man commanded, "and do not look away. We mean each other no harm."

I returned my gaze to the flashing eyes of the old man and hesitatingly walked to within five feet of the rock. "My mother and father call you Cornelius. Are they right?" I stammered with uncertainty as I spoke.

"Yes, they are right. But names are not important. Names are merely a form of identification and have no other lasting meaning."

"My parents also say you are insane because you live in this old boathouse, you don't have a job, and you feed seagulls when you should be feeding yourself."

Cornelius uncrossed his legs and slid down from the top of the rock. He looked into the sky, spreading his arms above his head, and turned five full circles, passing me as he pivoted. On the completion of the fifth revolution, Cornelius stopped turning and faced the bay with outstretched arms. "Who knows the meaning of freedom?" cried Cornelius,



gazing into the sky. "Who knows what peace of mind, of soul, involves when those words are spoken? Is there a universal definition for each word, an all-encompassing answer to each question? Or must a man who wants to be free as the wind seek answers for himself? Can a man turn to a dictionary for the definition of insanity, and really know what insanity looks like by reading mere words? Must he not see and discover for himself? Cornelius dropped his arms and placed his hands on his thin hips. He stepped a half circle, and burned his stare into my eyes. "If you asked me for the reason why a seagull lives, I would say a seagull lives for flight and food. But would you ask the seagull for the reason why he lives? If you did, you wouldn't receive the answer you want to hear; you wouldn't receive any answer, for that matter. The seagull has his own reasons which justify his unique existence."

Cornelius walked towards me, and stopped when he was less than an arm's length away. He placed his leathery hand on my shoulder and looked into my eyes. "You must leave this place now," he said in a quiet voice that matched the whisper of the salt wind, "your family is waiting for your return. Soon, the sun will set and I will retire for the night. But you must leave with advice. Do not heed my thoughts entirely; seek your own answers to your own questions. Do not accept that which you have not seen. Now, go," Cornelius said, dropping his hand from my shoulder, "and I hope we will meet when we may once again talk as friends." Cornelius passed and disappeared around the corner of the weathered boathouse.

I retraced my path across the sand and reeds. My sailboat still rested on the bank of the sandbar. I untied the sail and pushed the sailboat into the bay water, turning the sailboat around as I crawled over the transom and pulled the sail into the breeze.

The wind was weaker on the return trip across the bay. I had to guide the sailboat away from both the sandbar and my house to catch the wind at a better angle. When I found the wind I needed, I turned the sailboat about and glided in the direction of my house. The sailboat was almost in the exact center of the bay, and I could see both the sandbar and the weathered boathouse and my own home as I sailed on my own course.

Lynn Kessler

Where Friends of Mine Convene

Chicago holds the place tonight
Where friends of mine convene.
I arrive to tell them right
The tales of what I've seen.

Poor Ed looked deep into my eyes
And sought, I think, a prayer
Which onetime jokes could not disguise
My heart refused to spare.

But had I not so much to hide
I'd make myself his balm.
I'd stand upon my head and chide
The slowness of my psalm.

I have seen the time go by
And quickly make us old.
And though we look still at the sky
Our claims have failed to hold.

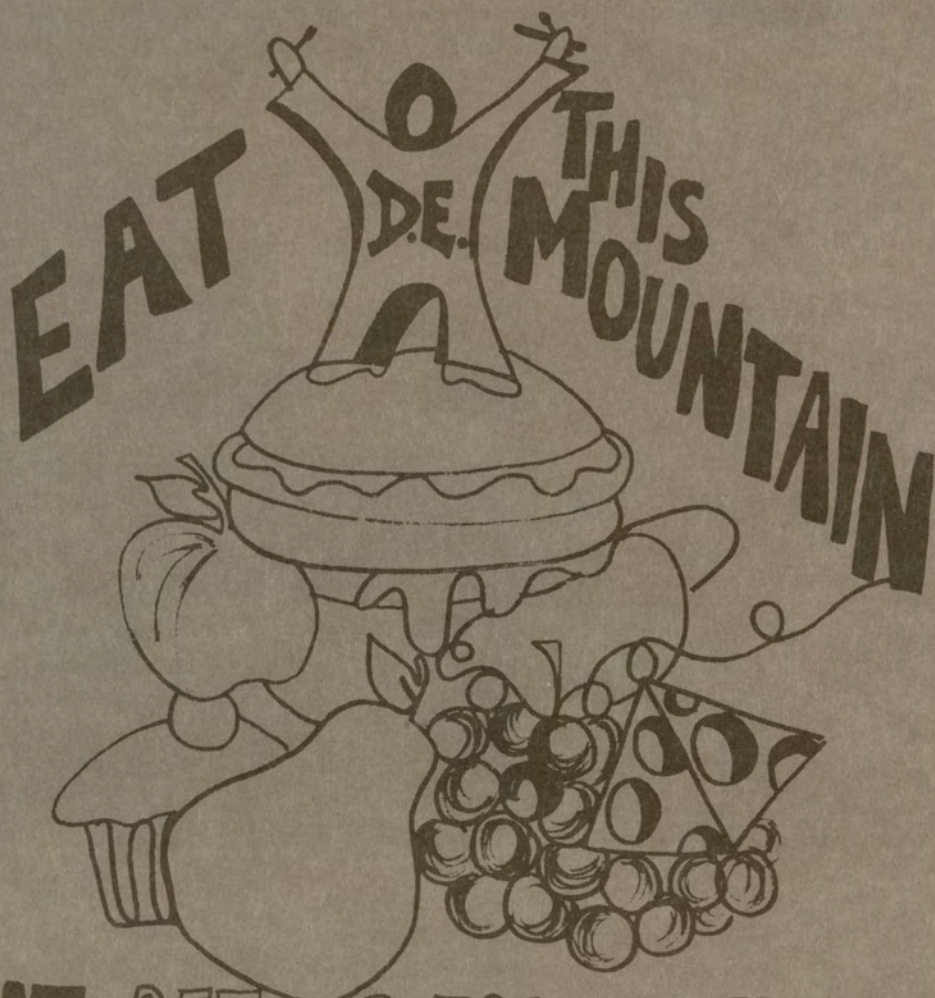
And some have fallen by the way.
Torn out by the roots
Long-since have they resigned to stray
And with friends joined in cahoots.

Farewell my dear beloved friends I hold you in esteem,
But to the Eucharist I will not go.
I pray that Heaven will redeem
How black you feel this makes me show.

Amid the hurry of our years we found today a smile.
At the end we'll gather up these pearls
To set them meekly down before the maker's certain trial.
I hope there'll be a jewel there for churls.

Thomas Penn Johnson

VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY'S NEW DEVELOPMENTAL EATING PROGRAM



EAT BETTER, FASTER, MORE

- INDIVIDUAL CONSUMPTION
- WE SUPPLY THE GOODIES
- FEE ONLY \$135 FOR THE 7 WEEK COURSE (THAT'S SOME DINNER)
- ALL COURSES MEET IN EATING LABORATORIES, MOLARING LIBRARY
- TEXTS : EATING SKILLS, BAKER
- Optional: 30 DAYS TO A MORE POWERFUL APPETITE

WE WANT YOU TO BE SATISFIED

If after attending the 7-week course you are still hungry, you may, WITHOUT PAYMENT OF EXTRA FEES, continue into the next course until you are satisfied.

V.U. ANNOUNCES NEW EATING PROGRAM

Valparaiso University is pleased to announce its exciting new Developmental Eating Program. "Actually, there is not just one program but three programs geared to different age groups and eating needs," explained smiling Prof. Smahl, Director. The enthusiastic director explained that the programs have been in the cooking pot, so to speak, for months now. "After many long meetings with the Vice-President and other administrators, we are now ready to challenge the entire community to improve their poor eating habits."

Explaining the need for the different programs, Prof. Smahl began with the Children's Remedial Eating Program. "This one is designed specifically for children who are finicky eaters. Mothers who have till now despaired of ever making their children eat vegetables and liver, take heart! Our undergraduate feeders will work on a one-to-one basis with your children, stuffing their little faces and inducing them to swallow." When asked about the qualifications of the staff, the dynamic director replied blithely, "They've all been eating for years." It seems there is no substitute for past experience.

"Many children whose eating disabilities are not so severe as to place them in the remedial class still need eating improvement training," continued the professor. "Kindly picture with me the following scene: it is dinner time at the Smith home. Mom, Pop, and Big Sis have all cleaned their plates, and frankly, would like to get on with dessert.

But Junior is still slowly, methodically placing single forkfuls of food into his mouth, chewing very thoroughly, and swallowing. First peas, then mashed potatoes, then meatloaf. Sound familiar?

"Junior is what we call a food-by-food eater. His habit of masticating only one food item at a time hinders his eating rate. Why, he can never hope to eat over 10, or at most 15 forkfuls per minute. This means that Junior is bound to spend hours and hours of his life at the dinner table; time the normal eater can spend playing, studying, exploring the world. Clearly, his development is seriously hindered unless he can break that bad eating habit." The Director smiled winningly as he said with confidence, "We believe we can help him break it with our Developmental/Correctional Program. And not only the problem eater, but the whole family benefits: they need no longer waste their time waiting on him. Pop can get in front of the T.V. set faster, Mom can clear the table and finish the dishes in record time, Sis can spend more time on the phone with her school chums. Get the picture?"

"Even the child with an average eating rate can benefit from our Developmental Program. The mother eager for her child's success and cultural development will want to bring him to us — think of all the time he'll have for extra study, piano lessons, ballet, and so on if he spends a minimum of time at the table.

"Now we come to what I think may be our biggest program," the director continued with a new sparkle in his eye. "Can you guess? I mean our Developmental Eating Program for college students! Why, do you realize the average college freshman can eat only about 15 forkfuls per minute? Joe Freshman arrives on campus in the fall facing a host of adjustments to college life, and if he brings an eating dis-

ability with him, his adjustment is that much more difficult-- or rather, that much more challenging. Joe has probably never before been faced with so many demands on his time: all the study, so many campus activities to get involved in, a budding social life. What Joe needs is a systematic program that will cut his eating time to a minimum, yielding him more time for those other activities. With our modern scientific techniques of eating improvement, we can bring Joe's eating rate up, up, up!" Prof. Smahl affirmed.

What are some of these eating improvement techniques? "Our new eating laboratories (we have two, you know) are equipped with Scoop-o-scopes and Eating Rateometers," the professor explained. "These are eating pacers which deliver a given number of spoonfuls of food per minute to the eater's mouth. Thus the student is challenged to eat, eat, eat!" the professor exclaimed with excitement.

Won't the student have trouble keeping up with his eating pacer? "No, no, no," Prof. Smahl emphasized, eyes twinkling. "Here in the Eating Program we have no troubles, only challenges. Before long the student's eating rate will step up to that of the pacer. Then we will challenge him further by pushing up the rate on the pacer even more," he sparkled. "We want every student to get his money's worth."

What about the eater's digestion? "Oh, we don't worry about that to begin with. In fact, we encourage the students to 'throw digestion out the window' and just pack it in! Of course it is important that he digests what he eats, but we feel that with the light eating material used

in the lab he can soon bring his digestion up to 70%, which we feel is satisfactory."

The professor hurried on, "May I let you in on a secret? If the program has a large enough enrollment, which I am confident it will due to our extensive advertising campaign and of course to the very need for the program, we may open a special Eating Crisis Center down on Locust Street, to serve those unfortunates who, due to financial circumstances or for whatever reasons may have to given up eating altogether. We will gently but firmly reintroduce them to food. The student who suspends eating while cramming for tests and the serious scholar who simply forgets to eat due to absorption in his studies will find the program invaluable," the director said with satisfaction.

"And best of all, the price is right! Our seven week course costs only \$135.00, a mere fraction of the fee for commercial speed eating programs like the Evelyn Food Course," Prof. Smahl concluded as he rose to go out. "Well, I must be on my way. I am meeting with the Mayor in fifteen minutes to promote community involvement in our program, I mean programs (we have three, you know). Did I give you some of our literature?" he asked, depositing a handful of "Have a Happy Lunch" buttons and "Be an Eager Beaver Eater" napkins in this reporter's lap.

"Have a good lunch, now," he threw over his shoulder as he hurried from the room. Forward to the Ate-ies!

Fern O. Evyl

In the Last Times

*Cretins subsisting on borrowed time
Watch as each sunrise slowly goes
Down like bitter dregs of cloying wine
Or thorns without a budding rose.*

*Our troubled spirits crave to rest
In the arms of Morpheus and creep
Inside that vision blessed
And Islands of eternal sleep.*

*They say, "Awaken to the dawning morn
With tears of joy to crown your eyes
And smiles to greet those lately born."*

Despair hath wrought another's demise.

*Not ever knowing where to turn
They stumble after paper signs
Crying out; the papers burn . . .*

*Above the clamor, pealing chimes
Declare the nearing final hour
While chances slip through many strong
Fingers large hearts lose courage and power –
Discovering that they were wrong.*

Paul Becker

THE LIGHTER, VOL. 18, NUMBER 1, DECEMBER

The Lighter is the literary-variety magazine published for and by the students of Valparaiso University and funded by the Student Senate. Contributions are invited from all members of the university community and are selected for publication on the basis of quality and interest. Entire contents copyrighted November, 1975, By Albert G. Huegli, President of Valparaiso University.

The Lighter thanks all contributors for sharing their works with the community and invites comments and criticisms on the selections and presentations of material.



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