



The Idol

Spring 1975

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Candy Kitchen Shoppes—Salt Water Taffy written in neat script, surrounding what must have been an eagle, but its neck was long and curved and it looked more like a snake that had steered through the grass until it came upon a discarded set of metal wings, wings which had been rusted with barnacles of a pungent russet; the snake had braided over these bayard wings and was here on the cover of this salt water taffy box parading as an eagle... Alabam... and the road, not a flat, smooth, streaming tar that had been eased against greased terrain and seemed to have glided down into a decorous existence with the fitted land, both of the same contour, both sliding up and flowing down quietly together; the road here was hacked, eaten at by the clodded, haphazard sand until it was a long stretch of discarded half-chewed toast, one bitten piece laid down after another, miles and miles of bitten road on the sand where it didn't belong and couldn't survive, where it was being nibbled apart in chunks, this was what hailed my arrival. The sand had been washed up onto the decayed asphalt in

mounds standing three or four inches high at the sides of the road, trying to regain lost territory. Swooshes of car wind had thrown back all of the sand's forces so far, driving a wedge down the roadway, knocking the scurrying nonchalantly-yellow granules into their heaps where they would start out once again, thousands upon thousands of them rolling in an avalanche inch by inch across the encircled road to their forces coming in from the other border, yet each time they were swirled back gritting into one another, splintering in the car's wake. Five or six feet from the consumed edge of the road were trees, pine trees, very thin in branches, as though half of the limbs had been plucked off by gulls starving in vacated winters, where only the sea remained to claim the area, while the sand which should have swamped over the asphalt was frozen by a crop of snow that rooted the granules in place.

Now, however, the warmth brought along a fresh wave of people splattering their culture across the beach, and the thin pine trees felt the sting of the car-driven sand

in their barks and needles, now an anemic green; their skins lay in slabs at their feet. Between the line of hoary trees and the road, among the two parallel strips of sand that held back the asphalt, plants had sprouted and joined with the sand in its efforts to overrun the tar. Light green ferns and hanks of grass stood innocently throughout the summer, swelling unnoticeably, each one stretching its fingers and toes further, each digit an instrument toes the strings, starting out with a breezy innocuous melody whose gossamer filaments trapped no ears; the smaller fingers the woodwinds, high-pitched leaves tanned by the sun, now floating down from the trees hither and thither with no express purpose, simply floating; the largest fingers the brass, entering through a soothing tunnel, filling out the music, inflating the balloon of the woodwinds and strings; the thumbs percussion, tapping out a trivial beat on airy triangles, introducing a fruity xylophone. Then the growth, the river of music rising, rising, the string' wind a zephyr no longer, tearing into a staccato squall as the woodwinds'

siren squealed and the horns crashed to the bombarding tempo of the drums in a deafening crescendo that gripped the promise of victory over the road, each day the crescendo building until the fingers and toes of these plants would tangle the roots of their families across the tar and the music would break like a huge rolling sparkling wave into a crush followed by the death-bells of the *Symphonie Fantastique*, the end of the road, and she was standing on the front porch looking out across the sandy grasslands toward the sea and her nose was hooked slightly downward, as though her years by the sea, with the constant wind, had blunted it, had pushed it down. They called her Alabam. I was about fifteen or twenty yards from the cottage and could see only one side of her face and its contour, her hair had been blown back by that same blunting wind and exposed a broad expanse of skin a dark rich tone of walnut, the hair itself was the color of the beach and its grasses, a dulled blondish salted color as though the blanched reedy straw of the beach was mixed in with it. And that blunted nose. And a screen door swung out wooden-framed only the wood wasn't sharp or crisp, it had rather a grayed beaten flat look about it and it smacked shut with a high crack and someone else was now on the porch but I wasn't even sure yet that this was the right cottage. He walked firmly

over to her, to where her foot held the cross-slat half way up the railing and I could hear the floorboards, as grayed and flattened as the door, give under his step, squeak under his weight. He was wearing long shorts, and the bared part of his leg was almost as thick as my thigh. His beard was black and heavy, densely frizzled and if he'd had a pipe he would have completed my image of the sailor, and within two minutes of discovering that this was the right cottage Becky'd be back in about five minutes I did notice a pipe and it was his but then it was gone and with it its owner and a knapsack, all in a little sheenless red sportscar which kicked sand up into the air, up into Alabam's hair, and she came back into the cottage. The screen door didn't clack this time. She steadied it shut. And her cheeks were wet but she wasn't sniffing, she just let the tears go as they pleased, dripping silently down the submissive face. And she sat, sat in a rocking chair with its thin quilted cushion, and rocked. And the tears kept coming. And she kept rocking. And I sat, not knowing who she was or why she was crying, seeing only the face, the hair, the burlap-like peasant shirt with its simple green and red embroidery. The shirt was open, several of the buttons were undone, and from my chair a large section of her right breast could be seen. She was too busy crying; it was as brown as her face and large,

and it looked sleek. And I wanted to see more of it, to see all of it. To walk my fingers gently on it, to circle them lightly around and around, watching for the nipple to prod its head out. And then to kiss the breast, kiss the edges where it soothed back into her skin, slowly urging my kisses closer until I would cover the nipple with my mouth, would suck its center with my wet lips and then pull my mouth away from it, still sucking. And as the nipple released from the moist grip the rush of air from my sucking would tingle it, would bring a high-pitched gasp from her humid lips, she would catch her breath sharply as though I was drawing air down from her mouth through her breast in that one instant, and I'd stop. Stop until she asked, and then I'd begin again and stop. And again. And again. And her legs would kick in desire, parting for my hand and I'd stop. And again, until she finally dragged me on top of her she was so small under me and I'd start slow, deliberate, harder and harder until she'd say stop she was so puny, so small under me, harder and harder, fuck fuck fuck fuck and she was screaming, she didn't know who I was hulking all of my weight into each crush, tears and blood squashing out from under my bulk and I'd drive more and she'd scream more and I'd finally get off her and she'd lay there in her spilled innards as I fell asleep smiling and warm in the cool summer

evening's sweat. And so I began.

"Is there anything I can get you?" She swung her head in a negative response.

"I ought to be asking you that—you're the guest." Her strawed hair was forward now, the slice of its cut drawing it as a sheath down her neck, a very full neck, long and browned and muscular as it struck down into her torso.

"Do you work in the restaurant, too?"

"Yeah, all six of us do."

"Is it fun or, do you have to work pretty hard?"

"Well, we generally have a good time I guess, because we all work together. There're only nine waitresses in the whole restaurant, and the other three girls are really nice. The only problem is the manager. He's kind of on the jellyfish side of life, which'd be fine for us, but his wife walks all over him, and she thinks we don't do such a hot job, so she gets him to crack down on us." Her arms, too, were sleek, they looked as if they were stockinged, her slender fingers toyed with the curled wooden hands on the arms of the rocking chair, rubbing them gently over and over, stroking them slowly and continuously, polishing them to a luxurious lambent veneer. Tears no longer coursed her face.

"Is there much night-life up here?" A sewing machine stood on the same table where the pipe had been, and a chair was pulled up to

it. A television, radio, and record player looked well-used, the controls and knobs of the first two surrounded with worn dirtied metal, smeared by the efforts of countless adjustments and fiddlings which each had been subject to in order that the victim should see and hear the life blurted out from these boxes, a life that sprung from the head of transistors and resistors and capacitors and diodes, all those little cells which gave to each box its actual physical existence and which spewed out its mechanical life in a molten flow that sought to soar over every other life in its path, to harden all of those captured in its Pompeian mold, to make them like itself, crusted over until the only life left was its own, all of the others now as perfunctory as itself. The third, the record player, lay tensed, the olive-tinged dustcover balanced over it like the box of a rabbit trap, ready to snap down onto any unfriendly infringing hand that touched its carrot-like spindle, the cover's dust smudged with numerous finger marks, ugly splotches from ugly fingers, maybe even her fingers except they weren't ugly, they were gracefully pocked with the lines of life, lines that she had forged into them, each finger slit with hundreds of lacings, tiny little gashes and gouges which were at once trenches to drain off the molten flow from the boxes, and cracks from which her living could issue, could sally forth as it was

born, at the exact moments of its birth in whatever amounts it would, fulminating rivers wrenching free unanchored rocks, her sweat thrashing over these gouged banks; or seeping, filling up her tiny riverbeds as leisurely as water drifting under a door.

"Well, not really, at least in the town there's no night-life. But we have a good time here, sitting around telling stories or making things." She aimed her chin at the sewing machine. "I sew a lot."

"Is it a big lot?"

"What?"

"Is it a big lot? Does it take you a long time to put the seeds down?"

"What are you talking about?"

"Hold on." She was ruffling slightly, her fingers were no longer nuzzling the wooden hands of the chair, clenching them instead, bringing a hint of white to the surface of her acorn knuckles. It was time. "When you said 'I sew a lot' did you mean 'sow' as in putting down seeds, like to sow some land" here my hand ground into a brown sack of seed, the kind of sack which city horses eat out of, strapped behind their ears of course she couldn't see the sack, I guess she was wearing blinders too—and withdrew it with a mound of seeds, then broadcast them across the squared field of green and black rug. Her cheeks were delivered of all touches of the submissiveness that had sat with her tears, rising up ebullient now, eyes clear from their recent clean-

sing. I hadn't noticed her eyes before, they had been hazy, smoked, as though the departed sailor had doused with the tears a campfire in them, they must have sizzled and hissed at the first few sprinkles. But now they had washed out all of the dirtily streaking ashes and were renewed, color intact, not having run in the wash or even walked in the wash, they were clear, and very exact, well-defined, uniform water of the moat around the castle of her pupils I bent forward in my chair, but could not see any alligators or crocodiles in them. She held gripped her rocking in abeyance and sent her eyes hard upon mine, demanding their incisive question about me. Her hesitant smile and a "No, I meant sew as in 'sewing machine'" intimated that her answer had not fallen on the wrong side of the fence in the cold dewy grass, she had not dismissed me as a total idiot. I bore down.

"Do you eat all your meals at the restaurant?"

"Yeah, even on our days off we eat there. They let us have everything but the lobster and the shrimp."

"They have tennis players here?" I asked, turning my head in incredulity, luring her, daring her to take another step closer to the leaf-buried trap.

"Tennis players?"

"Well, you were talking about lobsters, you know, somebody who lobs the ball. . . ." And as she

laughed, her foot raised up and then lowered right onto the leaves which crackled in a final laugh of their own, and she was in the trap, entranced in its mouth, the teeth already triggered through the air, jumping at her foot.

"Jeez, I wonder where Becky scraped you up," lifting her crisp eyes skyward, then sharply returning them to me, as I matched her laughter. Her cheeks had dried. She tightened in the chair, and in so doing managed to cajole the sides of her open shirt together. The hands of the chair were glazed with the sweat that had climbed foothold after tenuous foothold on fragmenting rock over the banks of the gashes of her fingers. They'd be deeper after I was done, carved down like a heel scraping clawing through the dirt until blood was drawn and then some more just to make sure there was enough to leave a stain. And she was already caught but she didn't kick or wrench herself flurrying over the leaves out of the steel zigzagged vise, I guess she couldn't feel it yet, but she was caught and it was just a matter of time. And Becky.

"Is there any problem living together, all six of you?"

"Not really. Only when more than one of our boyfriends is up at the same time. Then we have a problem deciding who's to use which bedrooms and where the kicked-out roommates are going to sleep. But I have a feeling I won't

be kicking anybody out for the rest of the summer."

"He's going to be away for the rest of the summer?"

"He's gone for good." And then the tears, carrying the lights reflection down her cheeks, striping them yellow and coffee-brown, her facial color accented, enriched in the contrast. Some of the tears worked their paths fastidiously, testing each rung warily before committing themselves fully to it; some, the more aggressive of the lot, surged right on ahead, sliding down the sides of the ladder of her cheeks, greasing it to allow others to follow more quickly.

"That's, really a shame," the solace painted on my face intended to restore her. And I picked out sheep in the sketch of her shirt's green and red embroidery and remembered a one-line poem, "The sheep ate all but five of the daffodils," huddles of sheep eating, tallying the remaining daffodils, paring down the number, munching away, yelling over to each other across the green slopes, the unemployed ski cables overhead wondering what folly the sheep were now engaged in, the slopes speckled with the shadows of low-flying clouds, curious too. Then the proud sheep, gathered around the five daffodils, grinning; how would she look if she were a sheep. . . and it was difficult to corral the laughter. And if it had jumped its wooden fence, the laughter would have

raced over to unsnare her springe, and she would be off limping in her wounded freedom through the brown forest. So I raised my hand to my mouth in what she could see was a pensive gesture, and my finger found my lips and then my teeth and I bit, bit hard, and the laughter which had been on top for an instant, struggling to pin down the beguiling comfort, was now trundled over and pain showed through, pain from my dented finger masquerading as a part of her pain, her loss, the sting in her perfectly round nostrils from the pungent salty air which was not now to be relieved by the redolence of the sailor's musty vanilla pipe tobacco.

"Is there any chance that you could get back together again? Couldn't you convince him to try it again, one more time?"

"No, I don't think there's any hope. We're through, simple as that."

"That's too bad."

"Well, I imagine I'll get over it soon."

"Well, but still, it's not the kind of thing you want to happen to you every day."

"Nah, I'll be okay."

She could see I was sincere. "I've got an idea! Why don't we clean up the cottage. That ought to take your mind off of him."

"Nah, I'd rather just sit here."

I darted over to a corner of the room where a broom rested, returned to a spot in front of her.

"Now I'll sweep, and when I get to right in front of you, you lift your feet so I can sweep under them, okay?"

"I guess..."

I swept in a direct line toward her feet, and when I got there she raised them, expecting the strokes of the broom under her. "There you go, I've just swept you off your feet!" and I rushed the broom back to its corner and sat down once again. She was still laughing when Becky walked in.

"Becky! How are you!" clutching that squat littly body, plucking her lips with mine.

"I didn't think you'd really come!"

"Neither did I, but I got a couple of days off so I figured I'd drop in, just to make sure you're keeping yourself out of trouble."

"You don't have to worry about that," she tilted her pudgily cute head and blew up with an extended bottom jaw a jab of air that jarred the short, straight, light-brown hair from her forehead. "There haven't been any guys up here in years," her blue eyes talons, long thin scaly quills striking into me, staggering into me as I reeled and teetered; to be preyed on by one while preying on the other. "When'd you get here?"

"Oh, about half an hour ago, but Alabam's kept me busy. In fact, we had just started to clean up the house." We both laughed.

"All right you two, now what's going on?" asked Becky, speaking

in a stern voice like Dad, his turtle-framed glasses wondering what I had done that caused me to laugh when Mom asked about the Romans' missing cat Cookie.

"Not much, I don't think," as I showed a wink to Alabam, "we were just thinking about hitting the beach."

"Sounds good to me," said Becky—and so we went swimming.

On the beach I listened to her as she bustled her words about; Becky, that plump little belly falling into rolling, fleshy, shapeless thighs that hadn't been tanned, staring out at the sand and the waves from their pus-colored vantage-point, talking on and on about herself her thighs spoke so well for her. And Alabam. After working dinner Becky was supposed to go into Kennebunk to see one of her friends who was in the hospital. I decided to stay at the cottage and rest. Becky took Alabam's car, and left me with her house-mates. Said she'd be back about nine. By seven-thirty Alabam and I were on the beach.

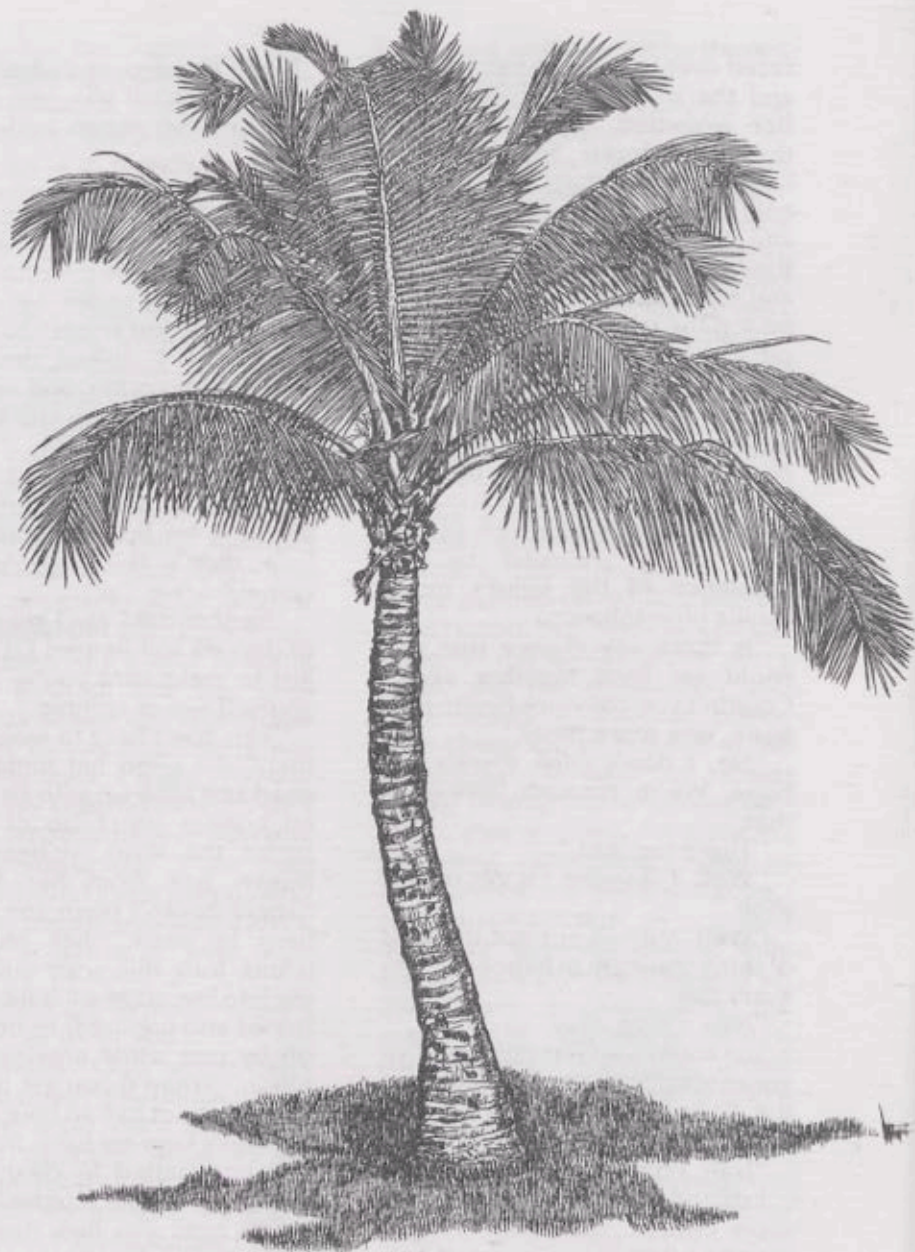
"He's in the Coast Guard?"

"Yeah, he's been in for a couple of years. He's getting discharged at the end of November."

"He seemed like a nice guy in the minute or two I saw him, just before he left," hand in hand, our finger gears meshing lightly. I disengaged the gears for an instant to snap up my jacket. The air was very cool, the wind bowling down its shiny wet alley against the two of us

stick-pins, the rumble of the approaching black ball intense. We walked closer to the water. It was very cloudy. There was a quarter-moon out. It shone through the holes in the sheet. There were jetties, large black needles of rock stuck in the sea's skin. My legs were cold. "Do you want to turn back?"

"No, let's keep walking," she replied. We paused by a jetty. I saw a tiny green light at its base, blinking. It was a sea nettle, she said. We kept on walking. Arm in arm. I was frightened by the rumble. So loud. So dark. We stopped again, between jetties. Everything was black except for the surf. I couldn't see our foot-prints. We kissed. My hands held her back. We kissed again. And again. I felt her tongue. Her saliva. Everything was black, except for the surf. Her hands un-snapped my jacket. They circled me. They wandered the covers of my shirt and jacket. She was crying. We turned around and went back. When I left the next afternoon, she gave me a box of salt water taffy, and said thank you. Her nose was blunted. Becky and I had made love that night. The wind flowed the strawed reeds as I left, rippling them down across the sand to the sea. I hated myself. Blunted, her nose was blunted.



Kathy Hayes

Woman of the masquerade
she sits, legs spread apart
cigarette butt dangling from her lips.
The wink of an eye, the eyebrow
raised in mild surprise;
the butt is found discarded on the floor.

Her mouth is curled with feline grace,
a strand of hair
disguises an eye; she smiles.
I want to stroke the sides
of a face that crumples, changing;
paper masks of mood.

Unicorn Tapestry

Tapestry of rose and flame blue thread
never perished flowers, gilded mirror
forever bright; a woman
plain, mundane or sometimes sad
accompanies friend unicorn
hoof placed gently on her lap.
A trifle vain, he peers intent
upon his own reflection, small, yet
still himself in lady's looking glass.
On lady's face, a shadow casts, she sees
the calm assurance of stiletto pointed horn,
and feels her task to hold the glass
yet hopes, someday to see
her own reflection, or at least a thread
with which to weave in colors fair.

Anonymous

Sitting waiting for him to come god please come as you aren't sitting here peering over the edge down into the darkness longing to break from the gravitational push-pull of superficial phrases and meanings transcend the mundane musings leaving the peanut-butter and jealousy green mumbles behind his back to the beginning and so it goes in vesuvius circles. TIME WINE WILTED DAFFODIL MEMORIES. Encouragement sacrifices what seems to be the inherent beauty and the beast within devours the inhibitions which surge as spirals tensed by time immemorial to the reunion dead and forgotten forgotten foregone conclusion that he just won't come no matter of great impotence which is just the phallacy of male superiority and the missionary position is a drag queen for a day to deity thing but the spirit is within and without any redeeming stoical value especially when drooling for a hunk of stolid irrespectability. THANATOS APPROACHES WITH AN ANAESTHETIC RHYTHM. The common market basket is frilled with asparagus spears that pierce the orifice open in expectation of honor thy father and lunar moths fluttering around a crispy chandelier hanging from a ballroom ceiling which no one balls in or out of bounds and leaps to the next level in the development of the dramatic personae or the perennial peripatetic priapus which subtly distends extends its

welcoming reach while the pupils stare in horror at the severed organ in diastole systole and sibling rivalry says me me me me while the rest of the chorus observes a doe and stag party in full swing into springes of respectability and wait for the arrival of the daily noose. IMPRINTS MAR THE TIMELESSNESS OF THE MONOLITH. No expectation in public pools of trust but ejaculation is certainly welcome under extending circumcisions or over them if its really too sapphic for mere mortals to commend him to god the father the holy ghostess of remembrance of things past the deadline of midnight apiary fifteenth when all bad little girls with brown frizzy hair become a decade older than they will be in the years to come and cry for their lost lovers of the humane society who were great in bed by candlelight but lost their charm the pants off them embarrassed to the breezes of moldy summers and mildewed springs of overworked beds of budding phalluses while facial orifices in anxious expectation of the latest in the fantasy world hope for a noticeable change in elevation. LOVE LOST WITHIN THE LIMITS OF LIFE. But where is the seed of the bastard natural child who grows in this craving womb which expects a little passion play or at least an hour of foreplay with or without the optional five axes which chopped the old limbs off leaving room for the

noon and its darkness which scared all the younger children off so now it's only us sophisticates left to lick the feet ankles calfs thighs and sigh for more or less the same reason we've been procrastinating and mutual-masturbating all along the road to the revolution evolution and narcissicism which holds the mirror above as we undulate with the iambic pentameter established in paradise lost and found in the abyss of the convent of mother marry and dish-pan hands forever til death do us part and the liquescent noises mark the disjunction of two residually heaving corpses soon to be displayed on cold steel slabs as frozen fish and the marine smell intensifies our desire for more but considering it's all an illusion we're really getting off here and making a connection with some other sexual fantasia and mickey just bounces along with the little now swollen ball of human juices which quench what?? A PEPPERMINT SMILE TO ALL THOSE VANILLA GRIMACES. Fashionably late mister no one gives a damn across the river koala bear cuddled to a writhing warm crotch which yawns into the emptiness waiting for him to deliver the promised goods but the contract and contact are no longer binding now soothed by a miraculous lubricant which appears from nowhere but is greeted by a hearty handshake from the recipient of the sixty-four-thousand-dollar penis which

is a preamble of yet bigger and better things to combat or at least combine with a thrust toward composition or at least a better position to achieve that desired little twist of ecstatic agony which climaxes with a feline growl and maybe a cat-scratch across a virginal white page of battered pulp and pith of mathematical logic of induction deduction and fornication with the gods is positively prohibited unless otherwise notified by their royal highnesses and the lowliness of it all stuns the anxious audience that waits for a popular demand performance of the conceptional instant in the creative mind and/or body politic which is really such a dirty business or so old grandmothers would say when pressed in the right spot on their virtue while mine just sits here and expects to be raped ex post factory and smiles seductively at every union member in good standing if his member's up. INVOCATIONS INVOLVE THE IMPLICIT IDEA OF INFERIORITY. As the curtain rises upon the setting sun deity all those in line hear a resounding splash on the far wall and recognize that help health and a lot of semen is now on its way to the rescue of those poor barren souls who've been drooling honey for that first little intimation that things are going to get better or worse depending on which way you chose your weapons but that silly whipper-snapper's got the germinal ingredient that all those mouths are hanging open for and

all those pens are poisoned by swallowing a bit too much suicide while a pair of liparoid limbs inextricably intertwined in the back row slide rise fall roll and repeat the same movements of introduction exposition development and decapitation while seventeen dark-skinned women beckon with their longest fingers an invitation for curious on-lookers to find a good seat in their laps for the climactic moment is soon to come god come please come come come and tell us or at least inspire us with some sort of indication of the future situation of the creative arts in amerika. TRAINS PULL IN AND OUT AS THE WAITING ROOM EMPTIES LEAVING ONLY ONE.

Karen Manno

an essayist on philosophical questions, because

He lives in a circular house
writing essays on philosophical questions
dreaming of monasteries and chinese mountains—
Living in a water-color.

The region of his eyes is the power of the sea:
When the fury of the waves is against you,
and you are glad to be upon the shore,
when it is chilly and the sea is loud and deep.

His eyes have rolled up into his head—
and the monks wander bare-foot and empty.

It is bright
the sky is golden
and the mountains are waves of deep greens
and browns.

He can hear the chanting of centuries
and smell the incense of the ancient temples...

and I was glad to be upon the shore
when it was I,
against the fury of the waves.

In his arms, through the rolling of our eyes
I was amazed to hear the jingle of the shell-blossoms
in the wind,
and chamomile perfumed the August air.

but it was just a water-color, and
I was empty and angry because of the
absinthe drinker* and the insurrections of May*,
and the rats that chase the children on
rainy tenement nights.

And he was just arms,
just eyes,
and an essayist on philosophical questions
living in a circular domain—
a water-color.

Then through the rolling of his
eyes,
He was thirteen
hiding in a corner
listening to the moaning
of black veiled mothers
and the sobbing of tall men—

And the mountains rippled and flowed
and buried the monks who wandered
through the shell-blossoms
which crashed like cymbals...

and the water-color flowed into blackness

for a moment
it was all gone,
all gone

and it was peace
to look upon the sea
as it mirrored
the sun.

- *) Picasso's— Absinthe Drinker
- *) Goya's— Insurrection of May

An Anthology

Aubrey Carton

I.

We searched for seashells
Amid the froth
Of changing tides

We fixed our sights
On the distance
Both solid and unsolid

We laughed for the present
And as gifts we gave
To each other a common bond
Of change and solids

We walked along that shore
Becoming so mesmerized by
The setting of the sun
And the rising of a feeling
In common and individual

II.

I cook a lot
And know a lot of recipes
That are easy to prepare
On long bus rides
As mid night snacks
When the eyes are shut
But the mind is still inviting
Company over for dinner

III.

Trip the lights
The socks are on the floor
My head it weaves me into bed
With thread
To sew my body dead
For a night's time
My body will sing in rhyme
With the sealy-posturepedic
On which I lie
Shall I die?
Lord keep my soul
And let me grow old
But no older than what I know as old
Which is the infinity of a sound mind
My mind is sound
And my body is sound asleep

IV.

Traces of the Glacial Age
Lie as fragments of Earth's history
Beside the rusted railroad track
The birth-mark of technology.

V.

The leaf you cast too far
Into the wind
And gave too much flight
Too early
Came swirling and surging
Low-heeled back
And wet-black
landed.

VI.

Day's been a lazy one.
Night's been a lovely one.
Time is flowing
quite right
By me.

VII.

Keep the feeling
Tightly hid.
Stock the pot,
But lock the lid.

Ice the smile and
Glove the glance
Splice the style
And choke the chance.

VIII.

My wondering mind
Is always in action,
But my wandering thoughts
Aren't always in line.

Coming From Chicago

Aubrey Carton

Go East's been said
Too many times.
It's getting slicked over.
Take cover
In the harmless mid-west.
Simple goals;
The Darien Dream
Without the class.
For no one knows you've got it there
It just slides under
In the translation.

In Chicago there's a lake
Set East beyond a forest.
And when the people there awake
In the morning they think East.
They get slicked over.
(Too much class for an attitude
That gets lost beyond their translation.)

I became the back-board
For Westward bound advice.
I reformed to ride the rebound
In search of that virgin attitude.
Maybe I'll get slicked over,
And lose my translations.

Before heading East
I watched the genesis horizon
From a spot on the sand.
So afraid the tide
Would slide right over me,
And I'd be too fluent in a foreign tounge
That when I returned,
I'd get lost in the translation.

Analysis of a College Education

John Pizzuto

The purpose of this paper will be to demonstrate that ultimately the implied attainment of the ideal which the hero of Andiamo's story suggests in the final passage of "Disastra" is more than just an example of an epiphany (as it is manifested in Joyce's esthetic thearease), but rather it connotes more universal elements that, while stubbornly resistive to tenable interpretations, yet do represent a certain cosmological consistency which involves far more than appears on the surface. The juxtaposition of the astrological configurations on the primary level with the intended neurological configurations as the subservient but complementary human level confirmed my suspicion that Andiamo had something in mind more compelling than a restatement of established theological alternatives. More specifically, I believe that his approach derives more from an existential perspective than from a phenomenological viewpoint.

Andiamo, a great hunter in his time, was admired by many for a remarkable ability to predict significantly erratic behavioural

patterns as early as one week before they occurred. An exponent of the Enlightenment, his contributions as a pioneer during pre-Gestalt experimental psychology are widely acknowledged today in academic circles, as well as his fearlessly proclaimed passion for Socialism. A devoted astutent of philosophy all his life, he formulated some interesting hypotheses concerning logic and proportion, and at one point in his notes he celebrates a particular idea which he asserts was 'revealed' to him. In "Disastra," one of his earlier works, I believe that there are certain themes and motifs that occur in more expansive form later on. A close look at several carefully selected passages and a probing 'explication du texte' will hopefully provide a stable cornerstone for an in-depth evaluation of "Disastra" and its ramifications.

Andiamo conveys the tone of the work with the initial sentence, set off as it is from the subsequent paragraph which establishes the paratactical and hypertactical progressions that course through the main body:

New York City sings off key.

Bleating, cackling, squealing, hacking, screeching followed Harris relentlessly down the street. The dense traffic and impatient throng of people compelled him to filter out his attention from any but the most superficial details of the scene that revolved around him, while the formidable concrete and steel edifices that cast block-long shadows partially eclipsed his view of the sun and sky, and spiralling clouds of thick black smoke signals curled away from industrial smoke stacks and filled the air with fine particles of dust and soot. Car horns blared sporadically at countless minor confrontations in the street, while droves of pedestrians swarmed from corner to corner and enforced the resounding helter-skelter.

There are few things as seemingly inconsequential as an individual dwarfed by the bestial hubbub of a city as overwhelming as New York, and this is a deliberate convention utilized by the author as he slowly unravels the personality of his main character:

Shrill, trembling music faintly in

the air called Harris as it slowly crawled into the hectic menagerie of street sounds, as refreshing as a cold wave of seawater that crashes over a sweating body on a beach. It arrested the dull pace of his thoughts and guided it into a clear, careful melody that washed over him. The hurdy-gurdy drew closer and closer and the music crystallized in his ears. An old man, hard-pressed by the weight of age, pushed it forward as he cranked the handle on the side of it, scraping the resined wheel inside into the strings and creating a tinkling collage of sound.

The hurdy-gurdy was ancient, anachronistic; it was attached to two large wheels, one on either side, and was supported by an axle underneath. Parallel to each other on either side of the body ran two thick beams of wood that extended from the body with grips of serrated plastic in order to accommodate the person pushing it. The bulk itself was constructed from heavy wood into three tiers, the bottom two separated by the twin beams, the top one separated by a strip of polished chrome. The upper tier was narrower than the bottom two, and it was divided into three panels, the middle panel being twice as large as either of the panels that bordered it. In the center of it lay a radiant sun with diffuse shades of yellow springing out from a core of dark orange. On each of the two smaller panels a scattered flock of stars spread out

over a broad blue background, clustered haphazardly in groups of three, four, five and six that were aligned to form various patterns of constellations in the sky.

The detailed film of the Wall Street industry as Andiamo envisions it is all the more frightening for its accuracy when considered tandem a contemporary picture of the business world. In this section, the author displays his caustic predisposition (prepossession?) for a reversal of progress. It is here especially that he reveals a telling characteristic in his semi (quasi?) withdrawal from exaggerated external circumstances into a more introspective, self-revelatory mode of experience. I can now make reference to a biography of Andiamo, "The Evolved Etruscan", by U. Fitz Lowlud, in which the author scrupulously depicts his subject's Socialist activities on the one hand as contrasted, surprisingly, by several secretly remunerative business dealings in transactional real estate (ch. 9).

Entrenched by economic servitude, Harris clings to his job in the Margin department of a large Brokerage Investment house. He steps from his bare narrow office for a cigarette and walks through the Trading room down the hall:

Across the trading floor verbal synaptic connections crackled rapidly "Mike O'Brien-Boston!" as the whip, in the persons of seven industrious servants and Zeus himself on the Olympian dais,

cracked its tassels "Eddie Gutman-LAI" to the tune of profit and loss "...tell Asiel I'll pay 20I for..." while the mental cash registers rang up sales ringing from telephones "Reliance 2.60 preferred!" and the desperate communication of a thousand

frantic messages ^{MDC} 5s 18 1/8 ^{ITK} 4s 9 1/8
CHR
3s 26 1/2 an oblong utility screen

suspended from the ceiling on
twin fiberglass bands ^{RIL} 9 3/8 ^{WLX} 3s 3/4
OMT ^{CHK} 14s 4 7/8 6 3/4 projected a stream of coded New York and American Stock Exchange transactions in transit Gen Banc 10 1/2- off 1/4 and across the Dow Jones news screen a file of green neon letters and numbers Six mos net \$979,000 or 36¢ a share unraveled the various items in peristaltic type.

Close to a hundred men operated simultaneously from their respective positions along hedgerows, to the synchronized second hands of six clocks, beneath a field of rectangular frost lights, and a mattress of cool air was fed through pinhole gratings and air ducts. Each desk was complete with galvanized onyx marble pens and platinum receivers which flanked an Ultronic Videomaster II that kept track of long and short stocks. Alternating NASDAQ machines offered symmetrical accounts with debits payable, and still another calculator cursed in

expanded notation. Harris could envision vividly an unfettered herd of cattle stampeding across the plains of Mexico, exhaling an avalanche of dust; he wished he had a girl friend.

Andiamo's eclectic predilections have been cited on several occasions by critics who maintain that a lineolate avenue is the best to pursue in defining the end as justified by the means. A particular vantage point may offer one way of approaching the problem, yet Euclid has amply demonstrated that through a single point there are an infinite number of lines that can be drawn. Mathematics isn't literature, so there may only be six or seven sixteenths as many, but the point is that myopia is definitely not the answer. The short story is not a fixed, unyielding medium by any means, and in any process of development there are certain serendipitous (but consistent) flashes that should not be quelled, but rather incorporated into the esthetic whole. It is difficult here to convey with justice the continuum of the story, but a short analysis must always suffer in that respect. In this same vein, the author poses

a subtle challenge to the reader, but it is a challenge that need not be heeded at all, or one to be heeded in any degree desired, but one nevertheless which should not go unacknowledged:

"Come on, Harris, come out of it!"

A magic carpet danced in front of him.

"Come on, Harris!"

He was in the country, near a lake, watching wooden ships float on water. Count the waves.

"Harris, damn you, wake up!"

The garage was somber, drenched in gasoline and oil fumes, cluttered with cans and old crates, rusted metal tools, shovels, grease-stained rags, wormwood barrels and sawdust. Harris sorted out the dense tangle in front of him through the windshield of his Toyota and heard a voice calling him (listen, Harris) from somewhere beyond the bubble, while someone played with the volume and twisted it from soft to loud, from soft to very loud again and

"Har an't hear me. Har sar!"

One critic has found it impossible to assess the impact of the ending and has even gone so far as to

find it irreconcilable with his interpretation of the story. I personally disagree and find his initial assumptions oxymoronic. Andiamo has offered a tantalizing insight into an aspect of human personality that smacks of eschatology, and yet there is the problem of divining the forest from the trees. In any event, following his daily ritual, Harris avoids his home by having dinner in the city and attending a dilapidated burlesque show. Near midnight, he walks to the train station:

Alone on the street, he looked up into a cloudless sky and was drawn immediately to a single star that radiated directly above. The eerie detumescent whistle of the day dissipated in the night air; random motors drained away. No one knew him here. Another star, and another linked with the first to form a simple chain. Harris was the invincible hunter lured to his death on a deserted island. He bent over and dusted off his uniform. How to reach it. A single star nearby winked and whispered in his ear a coded message for him alone.

Halloween In A Minor

Samuel M. Hughes

Harvest moon grins
Through the wee hour
Window
And it ain't Jack Daniels
Spurtin cackle
White and molten
Like a rampant cat
In my belly.



(With Insincere Apologies To Eliot)

Sam Hughes

We are the red generation, barbed
By the dim specter
Of a young bitch
Still sound in the chops
Peddling pie to glass-eyed men
Of a dull alloy.

In a Secanol stupor we watched sprout
Three rosebuds from the same Irish bush.
Two, full (or near full) blooming
Were plucked and now with
Common compost mingle
While the third, still above ground
Has, from too much water
Wilted —
Though its crippled seed sprouts strong.

I smoke, much of the night, and
Hallucinate
South for the winter.

Sundown in a windy city:
A leering shadow looms toward the East,
Risen from the not quite dead.
Four years of etherized limbo
And another four ahead
But for a sorry set of plumbers
And a helper who got
Stuck.

We yawn,
Stare at boxes,
Dabble in seagulls, *Zap* and Herman Hesse,
Belch,
Hop around a bush now and then...

Ronald, Big Mac and Jumbo Jack
Squat scentless on her ravaged face;
That sculpted chin and harvest eyes,
Her rainbow skin — an oily puddle now —
Who dares to look, to
Whisper in her crusted ear, to
Feel for the trembling pulse?

Good God in Hell! What have
We wrought?

But — there are others to be had of course —
Dame Darien has reached the age
Of no more pill;
Still, the fairness of that creamy skin,
The glitter of those blood set stones
Lures men of means to her door.
A pleasing figure is quickly reached,
The drawers are dropped,
The flag's aflutter for those honeyed wares —
A savage ecstasy of froth
And blood ensues —
“I ain’t got
Nothin
Against them Viet congs” —
Take five, nigger.

And you, you, you . . .

From my twisted, brambled
Slopes of suckled vine
I watch the Sycamore haze,
Blue as a weathered shutter,
Dangle limply along the meadow;
Like the blanket of a fevered soldier
It clings to my seared red back —
I smell the moist, dark soil,
Tender and yearning beneath
Tufts of curled green.

Massey-Ferguson Makes A Damnfine Spreader

E. H. Richardson

The Italian Stallion cruises in to loading Dock 3. Nate is at the controls of the forklift.

"My brother-in-law's a pussy," Stallion spits in the dust. 3,000 board-feet of 4x8's whip over his head. Nate's in control and he's also a smart-mouth. He don't know why the brother-in-law of the Stallion has to be a pussy. He does know that Stallion sure-as-hell better get-the-hell out of my way. And he says as much.

King Spoon comes by to count boards and sign his name and get another earful from the Stallion. From a distance it sounds like there's a few more than just one brother-in-law. But then there's a lot of snots drivin' Peter-Bilts think they know everything. That comes from sittin' over everybody's head. An arc of tobacco-stained saliva usually punctuates any of their valuable observations, and the arc is generally a lot prettier.

It's funny how the higher you sit, the more colorful the chew. Most people who work lumber warehouses seem to chew gum 'cause it balls up with sawdust and ain't near as ugly to step in. Any rate, the Stallion is out to impress, and he's damn lucky he's got more

than one stop. Dock 3 is a dead end in just about every respect.

Nate announces he's going for a sandwich on the way home, and picks his way across the street to the Green Scene where he has lunch every day. Katherine's feet are giving trouble, so she hasn't closed the kitchen. Nate says hi, and picks up two crab cakes on the way into the bar. The room is filling and loud, and he gets a seat next to some faces he recognizes. Sonny's new, but not so new he don't know what kind of face just wants a draft. The frosty Pabst lands in front of him, next to the crab cakes, and Nate concentrates on relaxing for a few minutes. Bits of conversation pick their way into his attention, but he don't bother with any.

The pepper in the crab cakes makes his face sweat, so Nate drains the Pabst, calls for another, and turns slightly on his stool to check out the other patrons. The skinny-looking woman with her two kids is at the same table as lunch time, and obviously less sober. Her kids have eased up a bit. Any woman who spends all afternoon in a bar with her kids, sittin' there hollerin' at 'em, drinkin' and

bitchin', just can't be worth too much.

She starts in on somebody about apologizing to her, and Nate starts paying attention. It seems Lou, the used car salesman from Martin's, has a mouth bigger than his opinion about the woman. She lit into Lou, the kids are starin', and the rest of the bar grins between beer and pretzels.

Nate cradles a fresh Pabst. That Lou ain't no better trash than she is, 'cept Martin gives him a four-year-old Cadillac so's he don't have to walk, and he comes in here tryin' to act like a hot-shit businessman. Only everybody knows that when he got in a fight with the title-and-tags man, he lost his job and went beggin' to get it back. He ain't got respect for nobody.

"Christ 'at skinny bitch gonna tear into him" comes from Nate's left elbow, and she and Lou are both on their feet. Without paying real close attention, it sounds like manure is the sole point of contention, but it's obvious somebody else is gonna have to clean it up. Sonny comes down the bar a bit slow to cool them off, but he's got help before he gets there. The guy from the Esso station next to Mar-

tin's is sick of Lou's mouth in the middle of his beer. He tells Lou to apologize and shut up, and his tone makes it clear to most people he don't want to waste breath. But it ain't so clear to Lou. Then the skinny woman starts barking at the Esso man to back her up. He ain't goin' take up for that bitch and works on the rest of his beer and conversation, but the woman smacks Lou in the face before he can finish either one. Sonny hollers at the woman to sit down or get out, and the Esso man suggests that Lou take a walk. Lou's got just enough sense not to mess, so he strolls down the bar for another ear to fill along with his glass of Seagrams.

Most people who work for a beer on Wednesdays, drink it to cool off; but seems most people who drink Seagrams get steamed up, and usually don't work much neither. Nate orders another Pabst and listens in on the general conversation about yesterday's shooting just down the street, across from St. Mary's. Lou's back in it, this time with a double shot. He picks up a few sympathetic ears and starts blowin' off again for the general benefit. It turns out that most everybody didn't spend all day thinkin' about what they read

in the paper. But Lou, he's thought about all this, and the trouble with the world is simple—niggers. Digger, he's the one owns Aylsbury's parlor on the other side of Martin's, he chimes in with his advice about how to take care of that kind of trouble; but then he got booted off the police force for tryin' to handle it like he thought was best. Then, he's still got the best business there is for gettin' the last word in.

Nate grabs Sonny for another Pabst and a bag of pretzels. It ain't been this good in McKew's since them two punks got throwed out two weeks ago.

The smoke drifts off both ends of the Lucky, and when Sonny sets the beer on the bar, the glass curls the smoke like when a board gets dropped in sawdust. Lou's tired of standin', so he grabs another double on the way to a table with Digger and a few others. Esso man gets another beer, and the woman with the kids gets up like she's on her way. But the barmaid gets her another Schmidt's and they stand across the end of the bar commiseratin'. Nate turns his attention to the news.

By the commercial, Digger's got Lou and all around to victimless crime and whores, while the

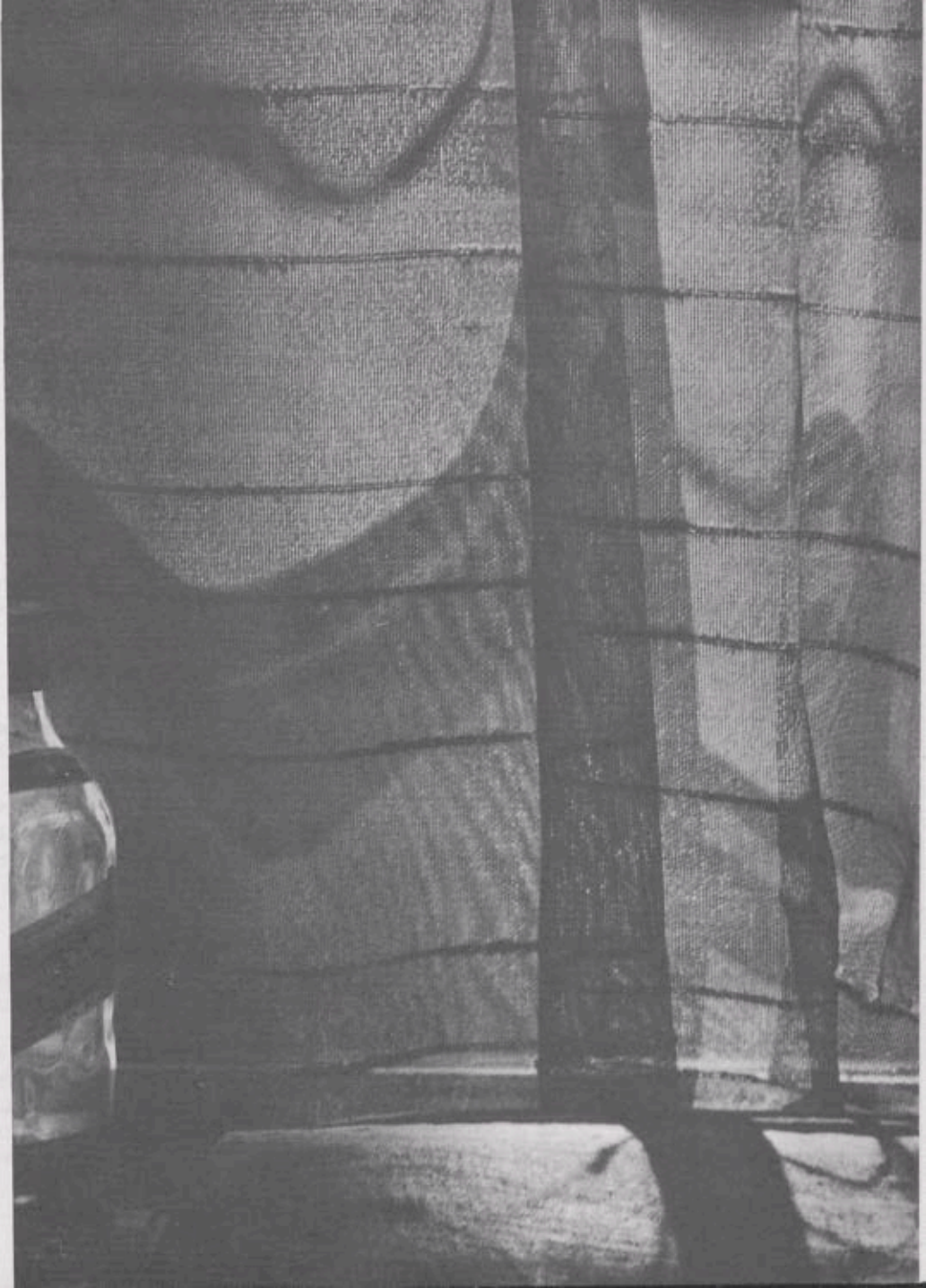
woman and the barmaid seem to have got around to men in general. Any rate, the two conversations don't wash so good. The barmaid tries to grin and keep everything friendly, but the woman turns around to the table and starts in again, on Lou in particular, like he's been citin' examples. She's standin' over Lou, they're all yellin', and whoever ain't yellin' ain't drinkin' either 'cause they're grinnin' too much. It gets down to the two sided hollerin' again, but this time Lou's gonna get the upper hand; "...an' don' you shake 'at cobblestone tit in ma FACE." Lou shoves her backwards as he stands up; Digger laughs a mouthful of beer out his nose and starts cussin' like he just had his face caved in. The woman stumbles back into the wall and spills her beer all over herself, and the Esso man walks over to Lou with an ugly expression. They start pitchin' a bitch, then they start fightin', and ain't nobody watchin' the news. Lou's swingin', the Esso man hits him hard in the face, and Lou falls over his chair into the other wall. Sonny don't know what to do, the woman's screamin', the Esso man sits down, Lou's pukin' on his way out the door, the barmaid's disgusted, Digger's still got the Devil

in his nose, the rest at his table are sippin' at their glasses like they's at a church social, most everybody else at the other end of the bar is laughin', and Nate orders another Pabst.

The weather says hot, but anybody can look at the date on his paycheck. The Esso man goes out with a look from Sonny, and it's clear ain't one of 'em too satisfied with Wednesday night. 'At Lou's so cocky he'd kick a curbstone just to prove he's taller.

Nate leaves half a beer and a whole dollar on the bar, gives Sonny a nod, and moves out the door. The nine-thirty night collapses on him with the same damn city that ain't even thought about coolin' off yet. The lot lights are on at the warehouse, and he drops heavy in the car seat, sweatin' like he just climbed off the forklift.

Nate chuckles to himself as he waits for the light into Harford Road. All 'em damnfool people, ain't none of 'em worth so much as a dime.



Cities/Leaves

Kathy Hayes

Flame hot intensity
or dry ice frozen days
both persevere.

Footpaths, thoroughfares
chlorophylled green canals
red splotched sails
of ladybugs
in endless promenade.

A winding street
precipitous cliffs of houses
side to side
scratching out the eyes
of skies, or maybe
only rubbing them a bit;
it's hard to tell.

Buildings empty eyed
alone or clustered together
huddled for warmth
when trees stand shivering
or even when their buds are filled.

Flattened crystals
pummelling down
erasing season's work;
reshaping it to strange designs
the pattern somewhat altered
but the blueprint prospers still.

To start again,
to build up slowly
carefully heave
the thunderous breath
through open pores;
it breathes.

New walls rise up
to greet the sun,
once again the boats return
sails glancing off the light
to ride
on foamy crested whirlpools
down to spider roots
and up again to redefine
the face of clouds.

One would hope
for some respite
from this plaster cast of form,
wait for winds to shift
or dust to fly.
A savior to emerge
or a secret in the breeze?
Yet all remains exact
while leaves and cities
mingle under footsteps
and can only be

Lynn Wintriss

We had spent two weeks in England without ever glancing at a newspaper or listening to the news. Thus, we were rather surprised to find that all of France was on strike the day we had hoped to return. After an extra night uncomfortably spent in London and an eight-hour wait in Victoria Station, we were finally on our way to Paris. Once arrived, the three of us would part ways—at that point, we couldn't wait to find new travelling company. The past three weeks had been raw, terse, argumentative, and rather unenjoyable. I looked forward to the prospect of rejoining my family in Switzerland—and hoped that the train strikes would delay that reunion no longer than absolutely necessary.

Our train had been scheduled to arrive at Gare du Nord at 10 p.m., and I had a connection to Basel leaving Gare de l'Est at 10:30 p.m. No problems were foreseen—I had less than three dollars left to carry me through, but I would be home free by four o'clock that morning. Because of the inconveniences we'd encountered in those last few days, I didn't even

begin to worry about the time until ten o'clock, when we reached the outskirts of Paris. Even then, I figured I could just grab my bags and run to the other station, and still make the train.

I hadn't planned on a delay in finding my luggage—nor had I remembered how heavy it was. I had been weakened by a bad cold that was just beginning to reach its peak. My run from station to station finally turned out to be an anxious uneven jerk through some of the more questionable dark streets of Paris. Exhausted and coughing, but hopefully relieved, I arrived at the station at 10:25 to discover that all departing trains had been cancelled at nine o'clock. My bags dropped, and I just stood, staring at the timetables in unexpected exasperation, sniffing. I had no idea what to do about the situation, nor did I feel like even trying to cope with it.

After a few blank minutes, I noticed the waiting rooms—my second-class ticket assigned me to the dingier of the two. I made a half-hearted effort to the door and saw through the steamed-up window a handful of depressing forms.

Three or four old men, chairs leaned against the wall, open-mouthed snoring; a couple of poor, foreign families uncomfortably sprawled out upon one another; other assorted social derelicts. More than merely a physical effort was required to enter the room—it took a few moments to command the strength.

With difficulty, I opened the broken door, juggled my luggage, and chose one of the vacant metal seats closest to the door. Before sitting down, I carefully arranged my bags for convenience both of access and escape. Kleenex, cough drops, cold pills and an orange were nearest to reach. Throughout the process, my audience remained disinterested—they seemed more preoccupied with their own discomfort than my uneasy maneuvering.

I sat down, went through a few mechanical motions of self-reassurance, tried to find the elusive comfortable position, and at last resigned myself to analyzing the other inhabitants of the room between nose-blowings. The first I noticed were two other obviously American girls—I was happy their

backs were to me. From the clothes they were wearing, from their twangy tones of voice, from the noise level of their pseudo-sophisticated conversation, I was sure that I could expect no relief from their company—nor did I hope for any. I was, and had been all along, trying to conceal my national identity—most of the Europeans I had encountered guessed that I was English. Those girls typified what I'd hoped I'd never be considered.

There were three or four French military men who seemed well-accommodated to their accommodations. They exhibited the most interest in those around them—and carefully watched the women present. Their presence made me feel a bit easier—but it was probably an unjustified feeling. I was surprised at my own respect for these representatives of the "establishment." Under normal circumstances, I would have mentally spat at them. That night, I was tempted to approach them. Fortunately, I was too firmly rooted to my seat to try.

I alternated my observations with sniffles, coughs, and more nose-blowings. When I was hungry, I ate a cough drop. When I was thirsty, I worked up a little bit of lumpy saliva in my mouth, then slowly swallowed it. When I had to go to the bathroom, I thought of something else, like the young German across the room, or the way a warm, firm bed would feel.

When I became drowsy, I rested my head on the bag in my lap.

All this was until they came in. At about two o'clock that morning, French roughs started to straggle in at odd intervals. By three o'clock, there were five of them—all acquainted with each other, all drunk, all viciously playful, and to my mind, all frightening. One, who seemed to be the leader, had a face mottled by severe acne, smooth only along the four inches of a fresh scar across his forehead and temple. He was the most vociferous, the strongest, and from appearances, the most virile. The others were older, on the downhill leg of the ride, and lazy enough to be open to suggestion.

They spent a few minutes in greeting each other, joking about some obscure incidents, and settling down for what seemed to be their usual evening entertainment. Each took one of the central chairs in the room and arranged them in a semi-circle facing the other waiters. The ordeal was soon to begin.

Starting at the opposite end of the room, they began systematically propositioning and joking with every woman present. Some, they lingered with longer, hoping for a little action along with the words. The American girls were spared the trial—they had left earlier. The older women and mothers tended to ignore their obscene queries, or deliver a single, cutting stopper. The younger women were ob-

viously more embarrassed. One appealing, but cheap girl joked and parried with them for about an hour, encouraging them to bother the others, too. Her mother sat smiling throughout the whole interchange—a beatific grin that captured my wandering attention. Approval? Encouragement? Or simply a midnight fixed position for the facial orifice? Whatever, it never changed until the men began propositioning the next victim. Then she looked at the toes of her worn shoes until it was time for them to leave.

Most of the women who had been approached were accompanied by a husband, lover, or father. In no instance, did these companions intervene or even acknowledge that the situation was occurring—they all stared straight into nothingness. I was the only unescorted female there, but from what I'd seen of the escorts' behavior, I didn't really figure I was at a disadvantage.

Just as the rowdies reached the middle of the circle, an Arabian (or maybe Egyptian) man walked in. Behind him trailed his wife, totally covered in veils and heavy cloth, with only two black eyes staring out to assure that she was alive. There was an interval of silence, marred only by their shuffling steps. The couple moved enormous quantities of luggage over to the vacant seats next to be questioned, and sat down. I felt ill, and began to contemplate my lum-

py knees, waiting for the first insults.

I wasn't kept long in suspense. Our French friends had enough time to survey the situation, and then a raucous, obscene laugh broke out. All five of them sat facing the couple, howling, gesturing, forcing out grotesque comments between chokes of laughter. The man and woman sat stone-faced. I wondered if they understood French.

By their national standards, they were probably well-off. The husband was well-dressed in European clothes, his wife wore cloth with large gold thread borders. They carried good luggage. They had walked in pride when I had seen them outside the door. And now, with the utmost disdain, they stared in silence at the steamed glass wall while crude jokes were hurled at their faces. The gas situation, was she really alive under all those veils, could they check her out, ignorant foreigners. I gritted my teeth, tore apart another kleenex. Then the gestures began, each man trying to outdo the others. Fingers, arms, cupped hands, mis-shapen lips, pointed tongues, spitting, obscene noises—all greeted by a hard stillness.

Finally, one of the men ventured close enough to touch her—and her husband exploded. In perfect French, he told them in their own words to leave her alone. For five or ten minutes, no one spoke ex-

cept this tiny, dark, angry man—everyone listened. When he finished, all eyes stared at the rowdies, as they slowly turned their chairs toward the next victim. She looked at her bags, waiting for it to begin. I put my head on my knees, waiting for my turn.

When it came, I lifted my head, stared at the leader and his question, and finally enunciated as clearly as possible, 'I don't speak French.' He turned and shot some snide comment at one of his comrades, then questioned again 'Not speak French??' I smiled and nodded. They had finished their round, with no tangible results. I put my head back down, and smiled myself into a light dream. Somehow, they appeared less menacing—as long as the Arab couple were waiting, I could doze.

I woke a few times, or more accurately, I slept a few interrupted minutes. An old woman across from me startled my reveries as she pulled out her bag to begin her morning ablutions. She extracted a rag and a corner of soap from her abused suitcase, and left for the washroom. Apparently she knew the gendarme's schedule, for soon after she'd left, he came in to check tickets. The rowdies were familiarly thrown out with a round of tired insults. Before opening the door, they each bid us a good morning, then filed out laughing and yawning. Soon after the guard left, the old woman returned for her breakfast. The rag and soap were

carefully returned to her bag. She rummaged around for a while, and found a rind of cheese, a bit of chocolate, and a small bottle each of wine and sugar-water. I sucked a cough drop, watching her eat her meager meal.

Breakfast finished, she carefully wrapped the left-overs, returned them to her suitcase, and fished a glossy postcard from its contents. My eyes left her reading and rereading a faded message and postmark.

At seven o'clock, life outside the waiting room began to revive. I decided to venture out, if only for a breath of a different air. With all my luggage in hand, I clumsily made my way out and toward the new timetable listing. There I discovered my train would be leaving at 8:30 that morning, and boarding in half an hour. For those last long thirty minutes, I wandered around, counting and recounting my change. I stocked up on the essentials—a ham sandwich, an orange, and the International Herald Tribune. My purchases decimated my resources, but Switzerland was only five hours away.

As I stood in line to board the train, I noticed an older American couple who looked lost. In my exhaustion, I felt sympathetic, and asked them if they needed any help. They asked me when the train was boarding, and where the first class cars were located. When I answered, they asked me where I

hailed from—they were Texans—and maybe we could chat together during the trip. I smiled, showed them my second-class ticket, and wished them a pleasant trip.

"You too, and God bless you honey."

It took nine hours to get to Switzerland.



The Night The Raccoons Came

Delanne Stageman

It was like a dream
The night the raccoons came.
One, then three, then five of them
Stole onto the porch.

Their fur spoke of forests in winter;
Eyes, inquisitive, began to trust
Strange human ways.
Dark masks, white whiskers shining
Gently took what we offered.

And in return
Let us glimpse
A fragile bit
of Life.

2 A.M. News

Steve Chonoles

A new-born child
God's beautiful gift.
Tiny hands clutching
Mouth sucking
life greedily.
Brighteyes
following, trusting.
Wispy straws of hair
flattened beneath mother's
tender caresses.
loud cries —
declarations of lust.
Oh, wondrous creation
of love's ecstasy,

Why did your mother
Drop you from the bridge
to fall screaming into the black, murky depths?

Now you've been found, child.
Returned you we have,
to the
Earth Mother's womb.

"This ends our broadcast day. Good night and Good Morning.
Now, the national anthem:

Oh, say, can you see...

An Artist's Dilemma

Karen Manno

The artist's fourth story window
frames the tree—
A fine meaty cross-section,
an oriental bough
bending with
pink drooling blossoms.
Camera in hand:
Holding his breath till the right moment,
when the orange sun
would suspend from
the roundest cluster
like a yo-yo:
A visual fact for all the world to see.
How he waltzed with his camera
giggling and grinning,
returning to that window
and the oriental bough
bending heavy
with its pink feather blossoms
flying,
falling in the night sky.

...Reconsidered

Lynn Wintriss

The photographer's basement window
frames the garbage can—
A fine, smelly cross-section,
an aluminum cylinder
dripping with
green, moldy pudding:
Camera in hand:
holding his breath while he opens the window
waiting for the moment
when a muddy dog
would lift his leg
poised, yellow piss hotly hitting slime.
A visual fact for all the world to see.
Now he waltzes with his camera
giggling and grinning
to the grimy bathroom,
returning to the window
and that aluminum cylinder
top-heavy with its refuse
sinking in the night sky.

An Excerpt From the Private Journal of a Pompous Sot

David Wagenknecht

The glowing embers' pulsing warmth engulfed and hypnotized me. Earlier I had been entranced by wildly flaming empires blazing through the fireplace. Amidst this alluring inferno, major and minor conflagrative powers raged constant warfare for possession of new combustible territory. What an incredibly ingenious way to phrase that, my indefatigable sense of word placement never ceases to amaze me. And people have the brazen audacity to accuse me of supercilious pomposity: they should realize that I am above their enfeebled attempts of categorization. If only they would accept my profound realization, that only by means of incessant imbibement may one significantly expand his illustrative vocabulary. Only under the wing of the Muse of intoxication may any man reach the level of spiritual fulfillment afforded me by the precision of my linguistic expression.

