

TOWERS

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Awards appear on page 64.

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MARTHA SMITH

SALLY STEWART

JUDITH WAHL

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PROPYLÆA

The opening line of Yeats' poem "The Tower" asks "What shall I do with this absurdity?" Less noted persons have asked similar questions about less noted TOWERS. These persons include most of the staff, and certainly the editor: as an enterprise dependent on powers of mind, we not only are not hostile to intelligent criticality, we welcome it, we sigh to find it so rare.

But intelligence implies, definitionally, information, and critics-in-progress should know that these pages do not represent anyone's, save perhaps the authors', notion of good literature: what is printed is simply the best of what was offered. Experience proves it not needless to say that the best is not always good. Until our cultured despisers can produce substantial evidence (manuscripts) to indicate that staff and advisors choose whimsically, bribedly or otherwise badly, complaints must drop not on the magazine, but on the artists, or dearth of artists, at Northern.

And, although it can't serve as refuge, small lenience ought arise from the recognition that these writers are amateurs, apprentices at best. Yeats himself was once an "unlettered lad"; "even Cicero, and many-minded Homer were" once "mad as the mist and snow." If we, "in the lying days of our youth" are far from the wisdom of time and the unity of art, we still ought sway our leaves in the sun until we may "wither into the truth."

— *The Editor*

AN APPROVED SUBSTITUTE

Rain spattered gusts
Soaked old newspapers
And disintegrated
Pizza cardboards along the curb.

A shattered bottle
Reflected the glow of
Articulated lights
Upward and out.

A tired eye
Yellow tinged and
Cratered in Tokay wrinkles
Searched dully.

Creaking crutches
Herald the saviour
Paper bagged, held
In ragged dirty gloves.

Right now, not later
Spreading security
Burning comfortably
The two comrades

Sharing sweet defeat
Their only anxiety
Daily mollified with
Bottles of gracious living.

While the rest of us
Bright visaged
Search in vain for
An approved substitute.

— S. I. SMITH



THE MARSH HAWK

You of long wings, quick
Tumbling into wind, are like
All things of sudden joy:
Quiet squares of sunlit windows,
Patterned wash of cloud
On buckskin fields. Your sweep
Of exultation, steep chandelles
Mock lesser hunters; survival
Has another hunger:
Stopped diapason, song sparrow's triad,
Someone's voice around a corner —
All things of sudden joy.

— MARY DALE STEWART

ON FIRST HEARING THAT EMILY DICKINSON'S POEMS WERE FOUND IN A DRESSER DRAWER

Emily Dickinson's dead. Hurray!
I cheer the day she died.
And swear by my confessor,
I wish she'd burned her dresser.

— SARA JOELSON

BETTER, CLEANER FUN

"You got the television a little *loud* this afternoon, don't you, Steckman? My head is *sick* with crazy warwhoops and drums. And all that *nasty* gunfire runs through my brain."

The small, almost dwarfish, old man looked stranded on the high-backed chair drawn up to the archaic roll-top desk in one corner of the room. Aided by a Brooklyn telephone directory, his size-five shoes dangled several inches above the warped tile floor. In slow-motion drama, Alfred Waller gestured, brittle arm outstretched, with twig-like fingers shaped into a claw, as if he were twisting an invisible lock.

"Down a little, please? I say, Steckman, maybe you could just shut the volume *down* a little bit so an old man can read his book? I plow through the same paragraphs over and over, and I come up with nothing. They tell me *nothing*," the old man repeated, dropping his hand to fondle the frayed bookmark lying on his desk. It advertised the Falton Public Library in faded green print.

"Even the sentences are not clear through the scalping and the chasing in your shows."

Having spoken his piece, elegantly or not, in a gravel voice pitched just above a stage whisper, Waller extracted a used kleenex from a pocket of the ragged, elbow-patched jacket that engulfed him and seemingly had enjoyed the same vintage year as the roll-top desk. He pressed the tissue to his red-trimmed nostrils and blew—his eyes tightly shut in preparation for the short-lived pain. Waller then glanced, somewhat timidly, at the butt of his plea: the well-fed profile of his sixty-year-old roommate who sat, not totally alert—mouth agape, eyes almost closed—staring at a spot on a throw rug just in front of the television set, the screen of which was a wilderness of dark vertical lines. No longer mollified by the rug strands, Steckman somehow sensed that he was being addressed and gained the essence of the complaint without hearing the exact words. Glassy-eyed, the heavy-set man licked his dry lips before turning his head in the general direction of the desk and speaking in a low, drowsy tone.

"Yeah, Mr. Waller, I know. The TV's gotta be turned down and then in a few minutes I gotta close the window because "it's getting a little *cold* in here, don't you think, Steckman?" " Imitating the cracked,

high-pitched voice of the tiny old man amused Steckman. He ran a pudgy hand through his full head of soot-colored hair, yawned widely and explored the back of his mouth with a finger, revealing small teeth the hue of ripe corn. Standing up, Steckman displayed an enormous midsection that was not quite concealed by his soiled T-shirt, stretched to corral a certain cubic footage of pink flesh. A pair of bright blue trousers clung to his lower torso with a relief map of wrinkles behind each knee. Barefoot, he padded to the only window in the small apartment and closed it—carefully, sarcastically—to within an inch of the lower sill, on the ledge of which Waller kept two pots of multicolored, plastic-imitation flowers purchased at a nearby dimestore. Dried fly corpses lay in the thick film of dust surrounding the flowerpots. Side-stepping an orangecrate full of hardbound and paperback books—one of three similar containers in the room—the fat man returned from the window and adjusted the volume and vertical tuning, once again bringing into sharp focus a stock, rough-and-tumble saloon of a wilder era. He dropped his hulk into the depths of the easy chair, looking thoroughly deflated, while dust rose from the deep sigh of the seat cushion. Reaching below the arm of the chair to the floor, Steckman retrieved and shook what he found, disappointedly, to be an empty beer can. He raised the container to his lips, threw his head back as if someone had just roped him around the neck, and savored the last few drops of the liquor.

“So, Walleye, you’re happy now? Sometimes I think you do all that squawking just to see me exercise. I gotta relax alot. You know you can’t sneeze at slipped discs. That’s pretty dark stuff.” Steckman patted the immense globe of his stomach with the palm of one hand. “But you ain’t got no worries. No, Walleye, you just sit over there all day reading your books and smiling like a dummy the whole time. Don’t them fingers of yours get tired always following the words across the page?” The empty beer can made a harsh sound as it fell to the floor, and Steckman noted his elder’s response.

The tiny man looked up from his gook, carefully brushed back a wisp of white hair that had fallen, quite roguishly, down over his eyes, but decided against engaging the other man in conversation. He returned to the legend of King Arthur.

“Can I help it if I like cowboy shows?” continued the fat man, thinking aloud. “And a little fresh air once in awhile. I like *that*, too! Will I be glad when I can clear out of here. Then I won’t have to share this little stink of a room with you, counting every penny because of those goddam hospital bills. Those doctors really milk you these days. Milk you *dry*,” repeated Steckman, shaking a fist at the cracked plaster on the ceiling. The sole member of his audience kept reading, his gnarled forefinger tracing the printed words while the chapped, maroon lips moved slightly. “Man, will I be *glad* to get back on the crew again.”

"Steckman," said the old man, keeping a careful finger on his place, "Steckman, what you need is to get yourself interested in something. Get your mind off your bad back and hospital bills. Look at me, seventy-three in August, and I don't gripe. Maybe a little hobby of some kind would keep you busy."

"Aw, you got *sand* up your ass if you think I need a *hobby*! Right in front of me is my hobby." Steckman pointed at the television screen, which was portraying a gunfight between two men in the middle of a desert. "Here's some more of my little time-wasters." He peered over the arm of the chair and made a careless gesture toward the five or six empty beer cans that surrounded the chair. "I do okay, Waller. I don't need anybody's help." He stared at the TV screen and saw a cowboy grip his midsection and fall face down in the sand. The victorious gunfighter mounted his nag and rode toward a backdrop of mountains. "So, uh . . . so what would *you* suggest? Read all the time like you? No, thanks." Thinking himself unobserved, Steckman leaned back in his chair and began working a nostril with his thumb. His voice became nasalized because of the obstruction. "No, no soap with that bookworm game. I went to school, you know. I read some books in my time. Samuel Smiles I used to read. My old lady used to keep his stuff laying around the house. Cronin, too. *The Citadel*. Let's see, what were the other two books I read?" He removed his thumb from his nose and squinted at the ceiling, as if trying to read the two titles from small, distant print. "Adventure books, I think they were. Well, they're gone now. All I know is that I just want to clear out of this place and get back on the crew again."

Waller inserted the cardboard bookmark into the King Arthur story and pushed the book aside. "This *crew* you talk about, Steckman, is a *construction* crew, I take it? Here we been living all this time with one another almost half a year and I don't know what your employment was."

"Construction? *Hell* no! Demolition was my line. I worked on one of them big mother hubbard jobs with the ball and chain. You know, you've seen 'em knocking down old buildings around the city."

Waller nodded without expression.

"When that big metal ball—God, it must weigh I don't know how much—smashes into those old bricks it just makes minced meat out of the whole goddam wall. Everything flies apart, know what I mean? What a feeling to come into some old-fashioned place early in the morning and have it wrecked to hell by quitting time. Last place we knocked apart—that is, the last place when *I* was on the crew—was right down a couple of blocks from here. Some goddam library on its last legs. Real condemned-looking, know what I mean? Nope, nothing but a lot of foundation scraps and a cloud of plaster dust left when we got done tearin' into

it. That big iron marble really sang that day." Steckman rolled the fingers of one hand into a fist and slammed it into the palm of the other, grinding his knuckles against the open hand—perhaps for good measure. "Just good clean fun. Forgot the name, though. Fulton or something close to that, I think it was."

Neither man spoke for several minutes. Waller solemnly opened the top drawer of his desk that squeaked, as if in pain, and began rummaging through loose papers. When he looked up again from his private scribblings, Steckman was just disappearing behind the curtain that hid a refrigerator and small gas stove, among other things. Waller heard the familiar sound. Pssst! The fat man emerged from the cloistered spot carrying a freshly opened can of beer. Dropping himself into the chair again, Steckman swished a small ocean of beer around his mouth, making his cheeks bulge, and swallowed hard, delighting in the effect.

"What you got in the drawer, Wally? Your old laundry lists? Dirty pictures? Hah!" Steckman tossed down another mouthful with his usual alacrity. For the moment at least, he found himself uproariously funny, possibly without equal in the entertainment world.

"Have your laugh, Steckman, but I do a little writing of my *own*, too. Not that you would notice." The old man cocked his head to one side to see a little farther into the drawer. "In this drawer I got bits and pieces of poems I've been trying to put together for the past couple years."

"*Poems* is it now? Holy *Christ*, I didn't know we had a real *talent* in the room!" Steckman chuckled to himself. "Let's hear one of 'em. I ain't got nothing else to do."

"I'd rather not," said the old man, finding the page he was searching for. "My poetry isn't worth reading or hearing. It just keeps me busy, that's all. Anyway, I don't feel like it right now." He began to silently read the verse on the wrinkled, yellow page before him.

"Naw, go ahead, Waller. I just been wondering what you could write poetry about in *this* dump." Propping his chin on his fist, Steckman leaned heavily on the right arm of the chair and began sneaking glances in Waller's direction. "Don't be shy about it. Nobody's around but me and I *promise* I won't laugh."

Waller reluctantly cleared his throat, for whatever that was worth, and began in his gravel whisper.

"Tonight I spied no moon
Nor from window saw no star.
All was . . ."

"You mean *that* window?" interrupted Steckman, pointing enthusi-

astically past the television set. "With them fake daffy-dills or whatever? One night I was looking out and I saw that swell-looking broad across the way strip right down. I couldn't see a helluva lot so I went and dug out my old army binocs. But it was too late; she hit the hay, I guess, 'cause her place was black as pitch by the time I got back." The heavy man had spoken very objectively, as if his comments had total relevance to the poem at hand.

"All was quiet this strange night
As lonely heavens searched for light."

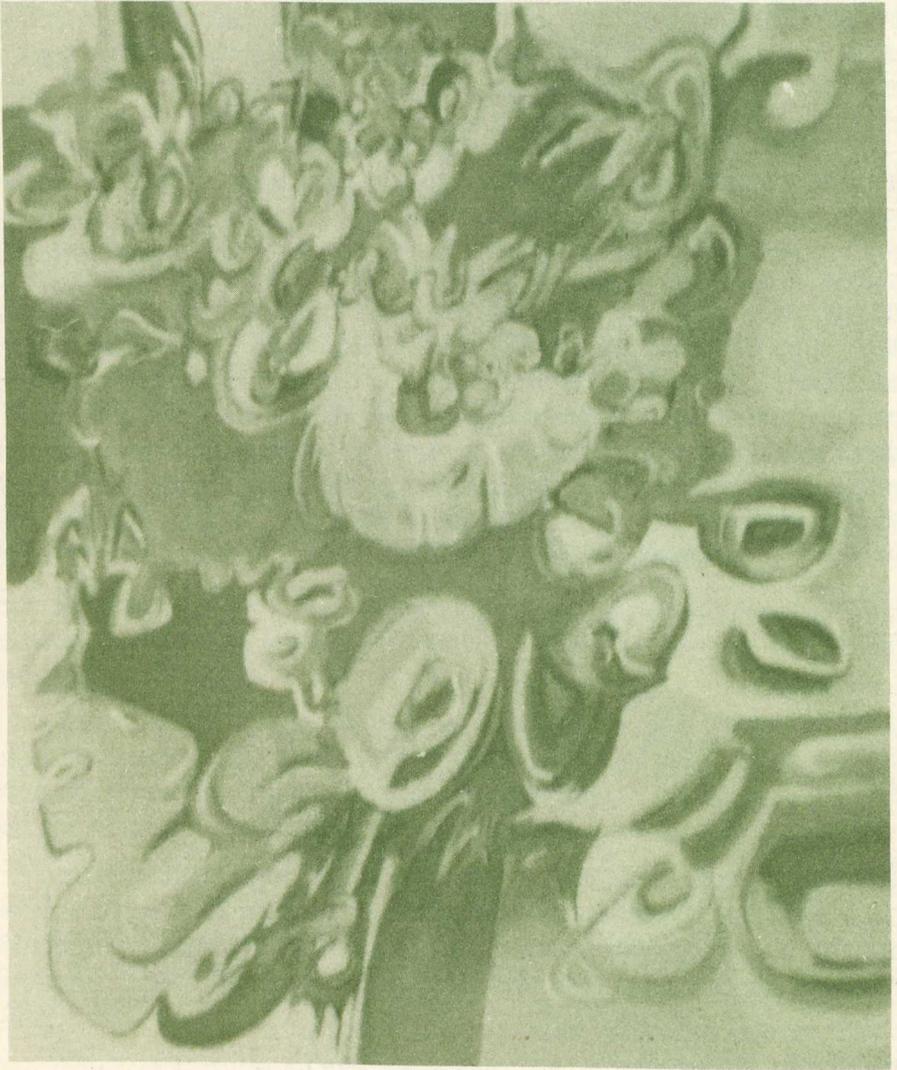
Steckman placed his half empty can on the floor, sat up erectly and belched with deep resonance. "Stick *that* in your poem if you're so goddam smart, *Walnuts!*" As the poet's voice droned weakly on, the heavy man draped himself over the chair again and was soon asleep, making barely audible mumblings with each exhalation. Waller finally concluded the last lines of the poem, replaced it in its secure position in the drawer and sat for some time staring at the sleeping man. Possibly on a whim, the tiny old man crept quietly down from his desk chair and tiptoed to a cellophane package behind the younger man's chair, who was couched like a child in dreamland. Waller then proceeded to pluck a large potato chip from the package, balanced it with great care in the middle of Steckman's full head of hair, retreated to his chair where he held his mouth, sometimes with both hands, and nearly killed himself with laughter for a quarter of an hour.

— LESLIE DAVIS

HIKE

Einstein/one stone
One stone thrown at rills,
ripples widen and shake hills:
Hiroshima blooms.

— THOMAS B. CHOCKLEY



SPECULATION

Leafing through a catalogue of books,
I happened on the writing of one Wood,
who offers to rudely urban world
How to Tell Birds from Flowers.

Does Wood suspect that girls as straight and hard
as girders in the steel complexes they
inhabit, and the men with concrete names,
don't know their birds from flowers?

*Can't tell a jay from a bluebell?
Don't know a lark from a rose?
Think zinnias abandon their fledglings,
and bobolinks fade with the snows?*

Or is the P.O. box he gave to Dover
(Who didn't read but only published him)
a cover for some still unposted forest
where you can't tell the leaves from feathers?

Perhaps the folk, though clever and observant,
yet see such animated vegetation,
that, with the quiet stalks where young birds grow,
they can't tell the flora from fauna.

*For the cardinals flock with the poppies,
and young owls shed fluff when it blows;
the marigolds sing like canaries,
and frost blackens tulips to crows,
and you can't tell a jay from a bluebell,
you won't know a lark from a rose.*

— KATHI DAVIS

SILENT SCREAMS

Not being understood
Is like
Stamping on cotton,
Tons and tons
of
Quiet cotton.

— KAREN BOVARD

A quiet time — as
Gauzy hours drift past,
Feathering down the insect hum of
Evening breeze,
So like moving mist
Before the dawn.

A quiet time — the
Darkened span is riveted with
Stars, that, with their unfelt heat
Strengthen the purple steel
Of this dreaming night.

— JACK HAFER

THE DREAMERS

I

He squatted behind a nail keg in the rear of the hardware store, waiting. Light from the street lamp on the corner filtered through the window in long, white strokes, like the moonlight which lay on the floor of his cell for years.

He hitchhiked into town the day before yesterday, or the day before that—he couldn't remember which and it didn't seem to matter—to find her. And he had, but she hadn't seen him because he hid out. And she'd show up here tonight, because she came to the store every night. (He was relieved that her routine was so regular that he didn't need to keep track of the days of the week.) Sometimes she came early and sometimes late, but that didn't matter either. She would be here for sure, and he could wait all night if he had to.

He guessed it was around eight, but it could be much later. Or earlier. He had no definite notion. If it was later then it was around the time he usually laid down in his bunk, which was, he supposed, around nine-thirty. At least that's the way it was the first few years in prison when he had kept track of the hours and days. After a while, though, he paid no attention to the clock—when they rung the bell and turned out the lights he would crawl happily into his bunk and think about her, soaking his life's energy from the memory. And, later, after everyone in the cellblock had dropped off to sleep, he'd close his eyes and the memory would follow him into his sleep, with sunshine coming through the window on Sunday morning and him and her on the rumpled bed, their noses pressed together, giggling.

They called him Sleepy. He never knew exactly why, except he had one vague memory of a morning when four or five of them were squatting in the sunshine, leaning against the dispensary wall, smoking. He looked up, and they had been asking him something and he hadn't heard and they chuckled. He hadn't been paying attention. What was it Big Red said to him? He said, "Man, one of these days you goina moon yosef right outa this world." He didn't remember for sure if that was what he said, but Big Red was his friend. He had a woman on the outside who cheated on him, and sometimes before Big Red went to sleep, he'd turn his big black face toward the wall and you could barely hear him sing, almost in a whisper—"Hey, hey, pretty woman, where'd you sleep last night."

But then Big Red'd drop off and he'd be left alone, smiling in the dark at the pictures in his head of him and her, with the Sunday morning sunshine just roaring through their bedroom window, the easy breeze stirring the curtains and him and her on the rumped bed, giggling. At first he only thought about it whenever the bell would ring and the lights went out, but then he found that he could think about her any time during the day and the prison would disappear into a blur of messhall lines and tiny pieces of conversation, the bell and the dark and then nothing interfered with his dreams.

But he wasn't sleepy now, and if Big Red had seen him in the past two or three or four days he wouldn't call him that. Not if Big Red saw how he followed Penny around, watching every move she made, waiting for the right time and place to surprise her. He first saw her when she came out of the store, here, and go down the street in the twilight. She didn't look *exactly* like he remembered her, but the more he saw her, the closer her features began to fit the pictures of her that he had carried in his head for years. And he was sure she would recognize him tonight—he had given her a picture of himself when they married in case he ever went away. He was just as sure, also, that they'd be together just like in '37.

He decided to meet her here because he knew that would give him the best chance to explain why he had left and why he was gone so long. Here they'd be alone and he could give her a surprise.

The muscles in his calves grew stiff, so he straightened up from his squat behind the nail kegs and stood a moment in the dark, looking toward the front of the store where he saw the lamplight fall dead and cold on the sharp-toothed saws hanging handle-down, like miniature sides of beef, in the window.

The woman had really done herself proud those years. There were saws, hammers, nails, screws, plumblines—anything a man'd want in this store. He ran his gaze along the glass counter stock full of jackknives, fishing tackle, reels, and shotgun shells, then admired the single and double-bit axes hanging from pegs on the pine-handled walls. The way the light from the street glinted along the edges of the axeheads made the blades look wavy, and he thought for a moment that here was some new kind of axe they'd made since he'd been in the pen at Huntsville. He probably wouldn't know how to use them.

But she'd really built the place up since last he saw it. He had heard that after he left she went to work here clerking, helping old man Tymes, then finally she up and bought the place from him when he retired. Well,

he was sure glad she had some job of work, good work, and that she wasn't hurting.

Her and him came in here after they were married so he could buy some shotgun shells. He bought the shells right over there by the counter with the shiny hammers in it, right there where her desk was snug to the wall. The shells took their last dollar, and they went hunting. He flushed three quail up in the pasture behind the wrecked shell of a farmhouse where they lived and shot them—the roar of the shotgun ringing in his ears—a hundred feet from the rusty bobwire fence, while she sat under the biggest cottonwood tree, the third from the house, in a pair of his overalls and clapped her hands when he shot them. Then they sat on the back stoop and pulled the feathers off the quail, her digging the buckshot out with an old fingernail file, and they ate them on tin plates. When they went to bed, the sunshine sang through the window and the easy summer breeze blew the yellow curtains just a little. The quail made the first meal they had had for two days.

The next day Billy Don Turrel came by on the way to find work in Houston, and he knew he'd have to leave sometime because there wasn't no work at all and he couldn't stand to see her going hungry. He told her he was leaving and she cried and told him she'd rather go hungry. Well God knows he wanted to stay, but he just couldn't sit by and watch her going hungry. So he and Billy Don walked away from the house and he could hear her crying all the way down the two-rut road to the Fort Worth Highway, where the sound of trucks howling and whining on the road drowned out her crying. He understood—he was the only man she ever had.

Later that night when that truck driver was crying in pain after Billy Don beat him in the head with a tire iron, took his money and run off, he could still hear Penny bawling, so he stayed with the driver but couldn't do nothing for him and he died just before the laws came.

All those years in Huntsville he never wrote her, never told her where he was or how he was, he was so ashamed of being called a criminal. Maybe she thought he was dead, he didn't know. Or maybe she thought he just run off and never wanted to come back. Whatever she thought he'd tell her the truth and everything would be just like it was then. Because it had to be—he spent years and years with those pictures in his mind of her and him stretched out on that rumpiled quilt with the Sunday morning sunlight warming their bodies as they giggled, nose to nose. Somehow only that was real to him; that one event had evened out the pain of the following years, and his whole life was suspended, like one of those minute particles of dust floating in the sunlight of the bedroom, on a Sunday morning in July of 1937.

"I swear sometimes I think you don't *want* her to look pretty," she heard her sister say. She slid back the sleeve of her corduroy jacket to glance at her square wrist watch. Seven-thirty already. She was late and needed to be at the store, for tomorrow she had to clear her account with Bobbin and Sons in St. Louis.

"She doesn't need any more of those, those *jumpers* or whatever they're called." She placed her palms flat on the surface of the uncovered oak table, then ran an unpainted fingernail along the open grain.

"Well, surely you can afford it." Her sister set her coffee mug on the table and looked into the kitchen where the girl was washing the supper dishes. She followed her sister's eyes, but she could not see her daughter. On the top of the aging enamel refrigerator a radio crooned *Dream, when you're feelin' blue*, and she saw her daughter's thin arm reach across from the sink to twist the knob, subduing the voice.

"Didn't say I couldn't," she finally answered. "I think she needs to spend more time studying and less time worrying about boys. She has to look to her future."

"I think," her sister offered, hesitating as though what she was about to say might sound too harsh. She lifted her porcelain cup and stared hard at the handle. Penny looked straight into her sister's face and held her muscles rigid.

"You work too hard," her sister finally declared, then, without returning Penny's gaze, she rose from the table and carried her coffee cup into the kitchen. "Always worrying about tomorrow," she heard her sister's voice continuing from the other room. She suppressed an impulse to answer, deciding that there was little use in arguing, for it now disrupted the schedule she tried to hold herself to. She was late already and didn't have time to jaw about inconsequential.

She rose from the table and stepped brusquely down the dim hallway. In the bathroom she stood before the mirror and opened her mouth, gazing into the dark recesses in an effort to discover the source of a recent toothache. She only halfhoped she would find it: it would mean a trip to the dentist, who would soak her for at least ten dollars and waste two hours of her time at that.

She turned from the mirror and stood at the window, pausing to drag a forefinger across a gray film of dust which covered the slats of the venetian blinds. She considered telling her daughter to clean them, but then decided it could wait until eight to ten on Saturday morning, when she cleaned the rest of the house.

She supposed the windows needed curtains also, for her sister and Robin always griped about the lack of color in the house. But if they wanted frills and nicities they would have to see to it themselves, for she had no time. It was hard enough keeping body and soul together without worrying about those extras that were supposed to make a house a home. And she had worried about bringing home the bread ever since 1937, in December, when Robin was born.

On the way out of the bathroom she passed the mirror without looking into it, then strode down the hall to the dining room, where she stopped a moment before an unpainted roll-top desk and swiftly collected several invoices which were stacked neatly on the desk top, then shoved them into her coat pocket. As she turned to walk to the front door, her eyes noted the flat, brown dullness of the room with its rugless wood floors, yellowing wallpaper, windows covered with venetian blinds, and the round oak table in the center of the room. She decided it was a little cheerless. Maybe they were right, but it couldn't be helped.

At the front door she stooped to inspect a bowl of passion flowers sitting on a four-legged stand beside the coat rack. The flowers were her one, and recent, concession to womanly frills, and now she bent her head down to study the intricate multicolored blossoms. They had been in the house for two days and sadly needed water. She supposed they would die soon.

"Robin?" she called from the doorway.

"Yes'm?" the girl answered from the kitchen.

"Turn that radio down," she commanded, then closed the front door behind her.

As she stepped down the sidewalk to the square, her heels tapping a sharp cadence on the concrete, something in the spring night air seemed to sink through her flesh and weaken her muscles. Her brisk steps eased into a languid stroll and she lifted her head and gazed at the lamp light that filtered through the leaves of the overhanging oak trees.

A black Ford passed slowly by on the opposite side of the street, the rear hanging low over the pavement and the gutted mufflers purring huskily. She saw two faces pressed together in the rear seat, then heard a girlish laugh, almost a chuckle, float through the open rear window. The car turned the corner behind her and the red turn signal winked slowly in the dark. She felt proud that the girl in the car was not Robin, then picked up her step until her heels again tapped a regular, quick cadence on the walk, echoing sharply in the night air. She snagged a cigarette from a package in her coat pocket, lit it by dragging a kitchen match against Mrs. Cain's cinderblock fence, then crossed her arms in front of her chest and walked quickly the rest of the way to the square.

The store fronts hung back in the dimness. On the corner of the Square nearest her, the town's lone movie house—the marquee lighted up to advertise *Love in the Afternoon*—provided the only light for the west side of the square. Her eyes hung briefly on the marquee, then dropped to the pavement as she stepped up on the curb in front of the theater. As she passed the box office she nodded curtly to the tickettaker, who, she thought, smiled as though he knew some lewd secret about her.

At the door of her hardware store she paused to glance back at the courthouse which loomed dark and high in the center of the square like the haunted castle of a childhood memory, then extracted a key from the tangled depths of her jacket pocket. She thrust the key quickly and surely into the lock and stepped through the doorway. Once inside, she closed the door behind her and glanced at the contents of the room, from the left where the two power mowers squatted on the floor, to the right where the counter disappeared into the back of the store. She performed this checking-off process methodically, her mind taking note of each hammer and saw, axe and hatchet. One of the nail kegs in the dim rear of the room seemed slightly out of place—it was a bit too far in front of the line of rakes on the west wall, rather than centered on them—but she dismissed it from her mind.

She stepped behind the counter and performed a nightly ritual of reaching up above the square wooden desk to press the button on the fluorescent lamp that arched out from the wall, then, when the light flooded the desk-top, she pulled the folded invoices from her pocket, laid them on the desk, slipped out of the jacket, and hung it on the back of the chair at the desk. After she was seated, she gently touched the barrel of the loaded shotgun standing against the wall between the desk and tool rack, then glanced at the calendar nailed to the wall. Something disturbed her prework ritual—it was the end of the month, and after noting this she ripped the month of April from the calendar pad, wadded the paper into a ball and dropped it into a wastebasket by the desk. She performed the operation with a feeling that approached pleasure.

She had just leaned forward to pull a ledger from a stack of books on the desk corner when she heard a small scraping sound in the rear of the store. She shoved her chair back and snatched the shotgun up to her shoulder.

“Who's in here?”

She heard nothing.

“Come out or I'll come looking,” she threatened.

“It's me,” a voice announced.

“Who the hell's 'me'!” she demanded, keeping the barrel of the shotgun trained toward the rear of the room.

A figure rose from behind the nail keg.

"O.D." the figure said.

"Who?"

"O.D." he repeated. "It's me. I come back." She could see his arms jerk as though to punctuate his chopped sentences. "I never wrote because I thought you'd be ashamed of . . ."

"I don't want to know about it," she shouted. "Get out, goddamn you, get out, get out, get out!" She jammed her eyes shut, raised the muzzle of the shotgun and yanked the trigger. She heard a roar, then the tinkling of broken glass, and when she opened her eyes the front door gaped open and the roaring still hung in her ears.

After a moment she sat down, lifted the receiver of the telephone and dialed a number.

"This is Miss Penny, down at the hardware store," she told a voice on the other end of the phone. "Had a . . . a burgler." She was instructed to wait a moment, then she heard footsteps and a snatch of unintelligible conversation. Then, as she listened closer she heard what she thought was a barely suppressed laugh, more like a snicker, and her hands began to tremble.

"What'd he look like?" the returning voice asked.

"Look like?" she asked. "Look like? He looked like . . ." she hesitated. "I can't remember," she finally bawled over the phone then dropped it into the cradle.

For a moment she sat numb at the desk, then her hands opened the middle drawer of the desk and searched in the back of the drawer for a key. She found herself leaning over the bottom drawer of the left-hand side of the desk, inserting a key in the lock and pulling the drawer open. Her fingers left trails in the film of dust on the upper ledge of the drawer. She reached under a tangled mass of papers and lint and drew out a photograph, which she placed on the desk top.

After staring at the picture for a moment, she dropped it into the wastebasket and began to cry for the first time since July of 1937.

— CHARLES SMITH

ISLAND

Words tip, sliding, one into another.
Elate, relate, correlate, communicate,
Smoke in an afternoon sky.
Surround, crowd around me,
And smile, but no towered bridge erect,
You cannot exit from Babel.
I am alone in a desert of non-touching parallels;
My mind will not propagate.

— NEAL MacDONALD

EMOTION NOT RECOLLECTED

I've slept till sleep is no escape:
the memories my dreams moved on
move now on my full consciousness
and keep my innards wound.

That which happened, inside, out-,
too recently for memory,
rains fresh again on cognizance
and soaks into my womb.

Time has put no distance in;
you're still more real than aching is:
from yesterday you jar my breath,
and jeer tranquillity.

— SILAS LENZ

SANDCASTLE

Somewhere on the beaches of the world
this sometimes boy and girl
(perhaps woman and man)
played and awaited the tide:
Let's, she said, gathering sand,
make something, and he said,
Love. So they piled and sculpted
with careful fingerings, in
the least permanent of materials,
a kind of tower in the sky,
and the tide, recognizing,
came up the beaches,
and the sometimes girl and boy
(perhaps man and woman)
ran from the undone work
where the sun does not mean
anything and the tide never comes.
There nothing they built.

— HUBERT F. LAPPE



ETERNITY

Empty-wombed women
Forever
Standing before hungry men,
Forever
Displaying locked chastity belts
And playing with the keys.

— THOMAS LOWDERBAUGH

JAMES BALDWIN: FREEDOM AND THE AMERICAN MYTH

*We make our meek adjustments,
Contented with such random consolations
As the wind deposits
In slithered and too ample pockets.*

HART CRANE

I first met James Baldwin through his writings during the summer of 1963 when I read his novel *Another Country*. Since that time I have read a large number of his essays. The more I read of Baldwin the more I am convinced of a paradox that struck me even while I was reading him for the first time. It is this: Baldwin, although a Negro who has suffered humiliation and hate from the white world, is not writing primarily for the benefit of Negroes. He is trying to help the white man understand the reality of life in America as only the Negro can understand it. So he is not just another protest writer. He is really a psychoanalyst, in that he is trying to save the white man from his distorted self-image. This is a very difficult and a very terrifying job, but the racial nightmare will not end until it has been accomplished.

In his book *The Fire Next Time*, Baldwin makes a vital comment. It comes at the end of a letter to his nephew: "We [Negroes] cannot be free until they [Whites] are free." And in his essay "In Search of a Majority" from *Nobody Knows My Name*, he has this to say: "We would never, never allow Negroes to starve, to grow bitter, and to die in ghettos all over the country if we were not driven by some nameless fear that has nothing to do with Negroes." These two statements taken together make a very important point. White men everywhere in their quest for security live in a constant fear of forces outside themselves. To them, Negroes represent one of these outside forces. In order to combat this fear, whites retreat from reality into a dream world of comforting delusions. This is why white men, especially white Americans, have created the myth of racial superiority. The Negro, then, is not so much a victim of the white man's hate as he is a threat to the white man's dream world and to the white man's self-image. For this reason Negroes cannot be free from white suppression until the white man is free from fear, free from himself, or to put it another way, until the white man sees himself for what he really is, not for what he fancies himself to be.

The effect of this racial myth can be seen by examining a very important concept in Baldwin's writings: namely, that by insisting upon his

racial superiority the white man is not hurting the Negro nearly so much as he is hurting himself. White men simply avoid a fact of life that they know to be true—that Negroes are men, members of the very same species as themselves. Refusal to face this fact is dangerous because it is another fact of life that one cannot deny another person's humanity without denying one's own at the same time. The natural result of this dehumanization is a loss of what is known as a sense of identity. This is a very fancy way of saying that since we refuse to recognize the Negro for what he is, a man with flesh and blood just like ourselves, we simply have no way of knowing who we are either. Ironically the Negro is in the best position to show us our identity. He knows better than anyone else what human dignity is because he must battle for it every day of his life. The white man will never admit it, but he needs the help of the Negro in understanding himself far more than the Negro needs the help of the white man.

The white man's need of the Negro is one of Baldwin's most important ideas, and it must be clearly understood. The Negro has something that the white man desperately needs. The Negro knows something about life that the white man can never hope to learn by himself. It is basically this: the Negro has a sense of reality because he knows how to suffer. The white does not know how to suffer because he can retreat from experience. Unlike his black brothers he can afford all kinds of comfortable illusions about happiness and the basic goodness of life. The Negro cannot afford these illusions because he is always in intimate contact with life's brutalities, not the least of which is the hate and humiliation he receives from the white world. The average white man knows nothing about the daily ordeal of the Negro, and what is even more pathetic, he does not want to know it. He is afraid to know it.

The harm that the white man causes himself through his ignorance of suffering is pointed out by Baldwin in an essay from the January 1964 issue of *Playboy* called "The Uses of the Blues." He says: "There is something monstrous about never having been hurt, never having been made to bleed, never having lost anything, . . . America is something like that. The failure on our part to accept the reality of pain, of anguish, of ambiguity, of death has turned us into a very peculiar and sometimes monstrous people. It means, for one thing, and it's very serious, that people who have no experience have no compassion." I think that this is the heart of the matter. We cannot understand the American Negro, we cannot understand ourselves, and most of all we fail to understand life because we shield ourselves from experience with our very advantages as white men. This then, is the great lesson the American Negro can teach us if we are not afraid to learn it—to engage, to suffer, to understand, and then to love. Not until we learn this lesson will we be able to free ourselves and the Negro from the racial myth and gain back some of our lost humanity.

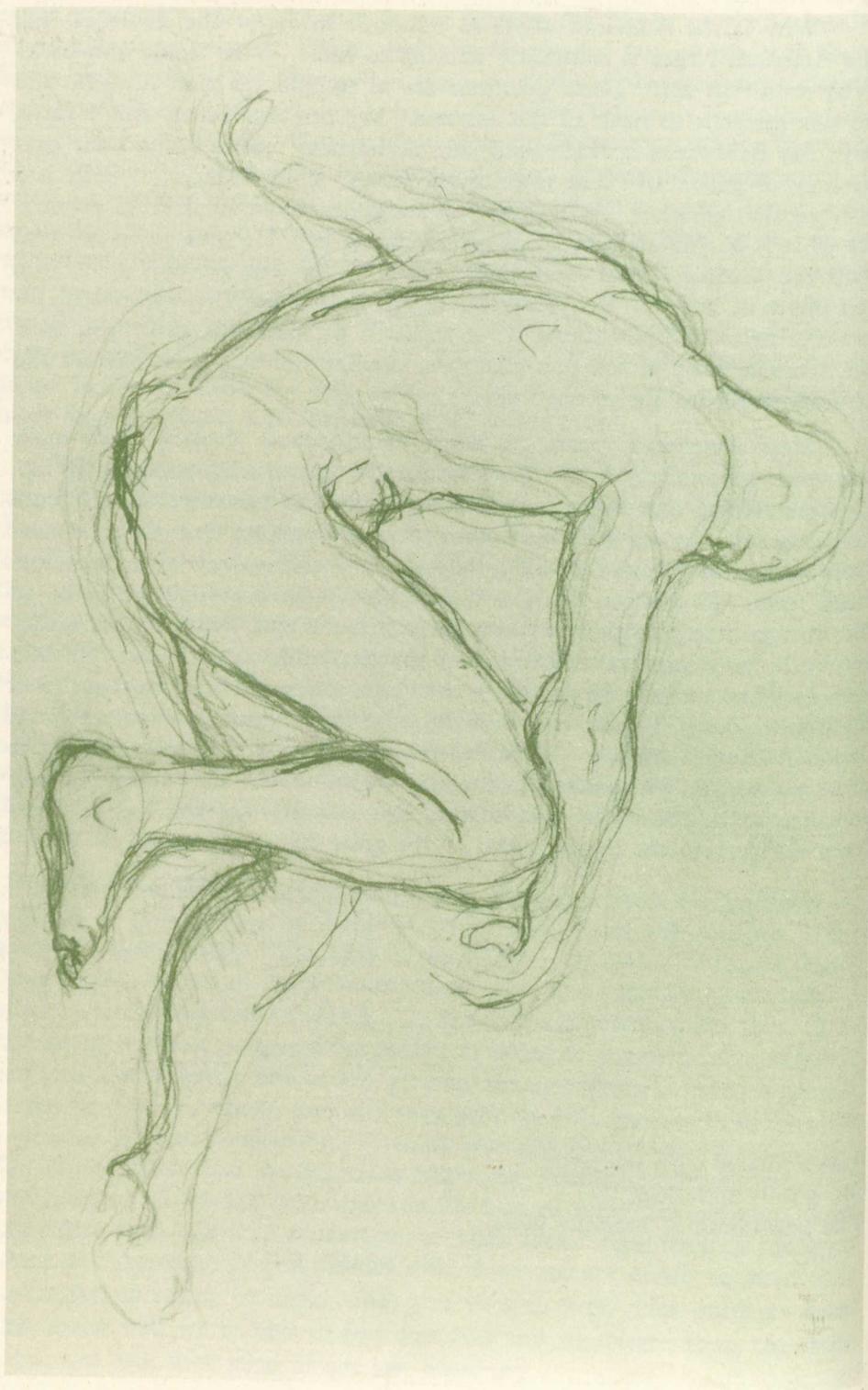
Why is the American white so reluctant to accept the challenge that the American Negro is constantly offering to him? What holds him back? Why won't he act? These questions are as complex as man himself, and no one pretends to have all the answers. My personal belief, and I think it is also Baldwin's, is that the problem somehow centers around the psychology of guilt. In "The Uses of the Blues" Baldwin says: "Guilt is a very peculiar emotion. As long as you are guilty about something, no matter what it is, you are not compelled to change it." He goes on to say that guilt can become a very comfortable thing. "You can get used to it, you can prefer it, you may get to a place where you cannot live without it, because in order to live without it, in order to get past this guilt, you must act. And in order to act, you must be conscious and take great chances and be responsible for the consequences."

Most Americans apparently refuse to take those chances. "We make our meek adjustments," unwilling to risk our security by engaging in life. The same thing that keeps us from recognizing the humanity of the Negro keeps us from living—the insidious and corroding fear that alienates man from others and from himself. Baldwin has this to say about freedom from fear: "If you can live in the full knowledge that you are going to die, that you are not going to live forever, that if you live with the reality of death, you can live. This is not mystical talk, it is a fact. It is a principal fact of life. If you can't do it, if you spend your entire life in flight from death, you are also in flight from life." Personal involvement is James Baldwin's message to all Americans. If we act upon this message now, we can end the racial nightmare. If we do not act, this nightmare will continue to be the major symptom of our insanity—of our insane flight from reality into the dream world of the great American myth.

RICHARD L. NEMANICH

Russia lingers with her teeth,
Oh, goldly unlocked,
The impression of beaming gives.

— GIL BEAMSLEY



"TOUCH HAS A MEMORY"

Short, and slightly awkward when he ran,
still he reached my toes with his,
and with finesse.

In his first love spring,
green as the buds, he knew
arts old as their roots. Naive
as I knew his hands to be,
they moved experience in me;
the early sun, pale in his hair,
moved as warmly on my thigh as if
it lay under his command.

Almost before the quick days
deepened into summer,
he ran youngly off, leaving
a short hair on my upper arm.

How could I know
that so brief a blond boy
would leave so long a scar?

— E. POTIK

FALL PLACE

(The field in the eye of the artist.)

Ah, this hushing hilly hell at last
By these falls from them on me grabs
With yelling of those yellow soft walls
Slowly slant creeping by the water,
And those demanding red yellers
Outraging over there their orange,
And the hunting cracks rushing
Into that across-the-stream place,
With the urgent bottom pitys struggled
Out of that jay's voice, and squirrel too ...
Worrying, and a second crop of devastating insects
Here, there, trying their crawl and suck techniques
More vividly and intensely than during green.
It is a deadly tan that runs with noise
Of nothing as it drags us sunnily all to it.

— GIL BEAMSLEY

SING OUT

Quadro beats a duo
Fably marv.
Yeaing fifty million
Will not starve.

Warding double golden discus
Billion spinning, selling briskus.

Quadro beats a duo
Fably marv.

— CHARLES B. SCHOLZ

OUTSIDE

The disconnect beside my bed
Rings loudly in my mind,
Trying to associate
The buzzing of a time.

A fishwrapped paper bothers me,
The smelly drives me wild,
Sitting here in cotton pad
Playing like a child.

Who is to me that I can say
Who are you man, hello ?
Lighting weed with sulphur seed
But trying not to blow.

The hot-lipped juke box nitenbird
Runs crooked down a scale;
I remain in cotton pad
Trying not to wail.

— CHARLES B. SCHOLZ



THE POLICY

The hectic pace of the past few hours finally caught up with him; Harry's mind was overrun with a flash of hurried events: the unexpected phone call, the confusion of packing, buying the last ticket on the afternoon flight, and finally, just arriving at the airport in time. Now, sitting in the plane with nothing to do but wait, he had time to think. He was actually afraid. Maybe he shouldn't have taken out that insurance policy when he was in the terminal building. The act in itself was almost a capitulation to fear. But the huge sign had hypnotized him as he was hurrying by: **FLIGHT INSURANCE — THE CHEAPEST SECURITY YOU CAN BUY.** There was no doubt about it being inexpensive, he thought. For five bucks he had insured himself for 150,000 dollars. Now that was a lot of money — more than he had ever dreamed of having. And he didn't even own a regular insurance policy.

Harry stopped thinking about insurance and looked around. The stewardess had placed him in a window seat directly over the right wing of the plane. In the seat to his left a young sailor was nonchalantly reading one of the month-old magazines that the stewardess had passed out, his perfectly crumpled white cap barely revealing his deep brown eyes. On the shoulder of his blue suit the letters **S.S. WEATHERFORD** were boldly sewn in thick white thread. Harry's eyes lingered on the boy for a moment — he was young enough to have been his own son. But Cecelia and he never had any children. He looked quickly away. Across the aisle two men in expensive gray suits were arguing confidently. A little too loudly though, Harry said to himself. He caught a few words like "market" and "price index" and turned away. Through the gap between the two high-backed seats in front of him, he could see a pair of heads snuggled close together and hear the steady banter of small talk, only sporadically broken by a burst of youthful giggling. Harry began to relax — everything was normal . . . just like taking the "7:45" to work in the morning.

But the illusion quickly vanished. Above his head a strange glass panel blinked on. **FASTEN SEAT BELTS** in bright red letters. **NO SMOKING.** He carefully ground the half-smoked cigarette into the brushed aluminum ash tray that was recessed in the arm of the chair. Then he began to fumble self-consciously with the seat belt.

The engines of the big Boeing 707 burst into a shrill whine and the awkward craft lumbered slowly away from the flat stretch of glass walled buildings and out onto the runway. The brakes on one wheel locked with a terrible screech and the plane pivoted to the south. It had been raining in Chicago all morning and the long concrete strip ahead was a mirage of shimmering water. He knew it didn't make a damn bit of difference, but Harry was secretly glad the rain had ceased. Overhead, however, the sky remained a dismal gray.

The whine of the engines was displaced by a loud roar, the plane responding with a sudden lurch forward that forced him back against the seat. He felt his stomach flattening out and his eyes seemed to be recessing into their sockets. Within seconds they were in the air, climbing at an impossible angle. By grasping the handle under the window, he managed to pull himself forward enough to peer out of the tiny circle of glass. The ground fell quickly away and soon everything outside the triple plated glass porthole was obscured by a translucent layer of clouds. Dizzy from the view and his exertion, he let go and slumped back into the seat.

When the plane shot up and out of the dense cloud bank, Harry was astonished by the sudden glare of the sun, reigning alone in the deep, lucid blue of the sky. Almost immediately after they had leveled off again a tiny flap on the wing dropped and the tip of the same rose slowly over the horizon. The plane banked and turned west. His nose pressed tightly to the glass, Harry was transfixed by the silver wing that extended out from under him. Shimmering in the sun, it was composed of thin sheets of steel, thousands of tiny rivets, flaps, hinges, and a number of weird protrudings that defied his imagination. It didn't seem even remotely possible that such a flimsy structure was capable of supporting the weight of the massive fuselage. Up and down, slowly twisting, the wing appeared ready to snap — a razor sharp edge of steel slicing through the crystal air at over 600 miles an hour. Underneath hung two cigar shaped pods — the jets themselves. They just hung — without any visible signs of their power; no smoke, no fire, or roar, only a very soft, steady hum.

Harry turned around. The sailor in the adjoining seat was grinning at his evidently obvious "first flight" excitement. He felt himself blush and looked away, but not before he had noticed that the "no smoking" light was off. Most of the passengers had also removed their seat belts. Unsnapping the cold metal buckle and quickly lighting a cigarette, he settled down in his seat and tried to appear unconcerned. Inside he knew that it was ridiculous to worry — there were at least a hundred others aboard and no one else showed any signs of fear. And the insurance was so cheap. He thought about the money: 150,000 dollars. Actually . . . if one had to go . . . At least he would be worth something.

Always just scraping along; he never got any of the breaks. Harry remembered what his father had told him when he was still in high school . . . "Of all you boys, Harry, you're the only one that worries me. You just don't have any drive — no confidence in yourself. You won't get anywhere with that kind of attitude . . ." And how right he was, Harry thought. But now — with 150,000 dollars! Cecelia could buy all those things he never was able to give her. She could pay off the mortgage on the house — or even better, buy a new one; without the leaky sinks, the rusting rain gutters and . . . He felt a little sheepish; he had been promising to fix a few things around the place, but always more bills. And the car. They still had six payments to go and the damn thing was ready for the junk-heap. He wished he had some of that "fix-it" ability of other men. Cecelia would start nagging him for being so useless around the house, and that it wouldn't be so bad if he could afford to have the things fixed. But he was incapable of either. It was always "Betty's husband just fixed her old washing machine" or "You should see the way they remodeled their basement next door." But 150,000 dollars. She could buy a new car. A good one — and all those clothes she used to have before they were married. She could buy a brand new wardrobe. At last he would show her. He would amount to something. His lips formed the amount silently: one hundred and fifty thousand dollars!

While he was figuring how much would be left after the house, the car, and the new clothes, the stewardess interrupted: "Would you like a drink?" Harry was confronted with a gleaming chromium cart filled with a colorful array of miniature bottles and sparkling glasses. He asked for a manhattan and the stewardess pulled down a small tray that had been neatly hidden in the seat ahead of him, placing one of the bottles and a glass of ice cubes on it. "One dollar please," she said with the same well trained smile. He was startled. He didn't want a drink if it cost money. But it was too late. Rather than be embarrassed, he reached in his wallet and handed her the bill. Remembering the insurance money, he felt a bit better. Harry picked up the tiny bottle and read the label: "A pre-mixed, perfect manhattan." He opened it and poured, filling the glass precisely to the rim with the evenly amber colored liquid. Instant manhattan. Taking a few quick swallows he turned again to the window — three inches of glass between me and instant death, he thought, and wondered what would happen if he thrust the manhattan through the window.

Still only the white layer below. But the drink had a soothing, relaxing effect; the dizziness he had experienced earlier was gone and when the same stewardess brought the dinner he was feeling much better. Somehow the whole idea of eating fried chicken, peas, and mashed potatoes while moving at the speed of sound, six miles above the earth, seemed ludicrous to him. A slight vibration buffeted the plane; the coffee sloshed back and forth in

his cup but didn't spill. Looking around the cabin, Harry realized that he had finished before anyone else. There had been something inside that compelled him to hurry. Reflecting on this phenomena for a moment, he wondered how many airplanes had crashed before the passengers had finished their dinner. He was surprised that no one had ever thought of it before.

After the meal there were no diversions left. Most of the others either read or slept. Only a few glanced out the windows — there was nothing to see, only the clouds. Harry continued staring out . . . and thinking.

One cigarette after another — two hours gone and only the clouds like an endless sea below. The monotony was broken when the pilot banked the plane sharply back and forth, trying to shake off a minor vibration that had built up. The wing tips flapped as if they were alive, and the horizon rose and fell with a nauseous regularity. He felt dizzy again and wished he could afford another drink. Finally, the plane straightened itself out and the monotony began anew. Still the unending stretch of white below. As far as the eye could perceive the marshmallow colored layer extended — everpresent, stretching on and on. The trip was transformed into a long blur of impressions. Clouds, the brilliant blue sky, the glaring sun reflecting off silver wings.

"Coffee, tea, or milk."

Two hours to go. More clouds. One hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The steady hum of the engines. Clouds, clouds, clouds . . . no people, no towns, no roads or trees. Only the same whiteness.

On and on and on.

Now, more vibration; shaking back and forth.

600 miles an hour.

The clouds suddenly broke. The sun peered down a small hole in the massive layer. What was it? White lines: roads? fields? . . . Gone, and only the white remained.

Outside, the constant low roar of the wind and the jets. On westward at ten miles a minute. Ten feet away the wing still held together.

Another cigarette.

Now the clouds separated — one layer above another, all moving at different speeds. But still no earth. And another glimpse. This time a short stretch of rust-colored earth was visible. At least it was down there. The whiteness again pervaded.

Another hour.

Suddenly the bottom dropped from under them; for several seconds they

were floating — there was no contact with the seat or the rest of the plane — like falling 100 floors in a runaway elevator. Most of the passengers sat up for a moment and then slouched back in their seats again. Next to him S.S. WEATHERFORD didn't even open his eyes. Harry returned to his vigil at the window.

When will it come? he wondered. He had to keep watching. Like a man facing a firing squad who throws down his blindfold, Harry pressed his nose to the glass. And waited.

An eerie change; the clouds thinned out but all was still white. At last he understood. Snow. The ground was covered with snow. Little wisps of clouds floated by, casting grotesque shapes on the shadowless plateau below. Even now everything was still white. Two-thirds of the country and all there was to be seen was one color. The whiteness grew more intense; it burned into his eyeballs. His head seemed to be swelling and throbbed with pain. Almost unnoticed the clouds stole back, closing up the gap and smothering the earth.

The deep, reassuring voice of the pilot came echoing "distantly into Harry's private world. He listened. "We are now over Colorado. Our altitude is 31,000 feet. Ground speed is 500 miles an hour, with a hundred mile head wind. We will reach Los Angeles in approximately thirty-five minutes. The weather . . ." "Thirty-five minutes!" said Harry aloud, his face a horrified mask of disbelief. But the most dangerous part of the whole trip is the landing. There is still plenty of time, he thought, trying to quell his misgivings. Again the insurance policy dominated his subconscious. NAME OF BENEFICIARY: WIFE. AMOUNT OF COVERAGE: 150,000. And within the next half-hour. Harry could see Cecelia and her parents sitting in the kitchen drinking cups of steaming coffee, their heads bowed with faces full of sorrow. She was weeping softly and talking about him. "I really loved Harry. I never realized how much until now. . . . It's a terrible thing I've done all these years; nagging him about his failures. And now it's too late. He's gone — so suddenly. I'll never be able to spend a cent of this money without thinking of how wonderful he was" A lump was forming in Harry's throat. He felt like crying.

But there were others in the plane. On his left S.S. WEATHERFORD slept soundly. The two gray suits across the aisle were also dozing comfortably. From the back of the airplane the lazy conversation of the stewardesses murmured gently through the cabin, while several seats ahead a small child was gurgling happily in its mother's arms. What if they all didn't have insurance; it would be such a useless thing, he thought, to die for nothing. But no one else knew. They were secure in the plush atmosphere of the snug cabin.

Harry began to feel dizzy again. Over his head the sign turned on

again, a blurred red glow: FASTEN SEAT BELTS. Leaving the belt loose at his side, Harry turned to the window. The small, inner flap on the wing dropped imperceptibly and the plane entered into a long, slow turn which further upset his sense of balance. The wing tip ascended slowly over the false horizon of clouds.

Abruptly, the nose of the aircraft dropped and they plunged headlong into the waiting mass of white. The engines shut off; all that could be heard was the mournful wail of the wind rushing past the plummeting aircraft. The density of the clouds increased, and the wing remained the only thing visible outside the window. Soon it too was engulfed in the swirling white foam.

The weird descent was punctuated by a nerve shattering vibration, and all the passengers, including the sailor, sat up tensely in their seats. Lurching awkwardly to and fro, the plane was tossed about like a lost leaf in a thunderstorm. The tempo of the vibrations reached an unbearable pitch. He was trembling now. Harry was positive that the wing would rip off at any moment. He began to utter strange monosyllabic sounds; soft, short gasps of breath. "Take it easy fella," the sailor said. "A couple of minutes and it will be all over." He knew that — it was really okay. If it just didn't take so long. The seat fell from under him again; the wings must have come off this time. His head began to throb more distinctly; he felt dizzier than before. Suddenly, several loud noises that sounded like muffled explosions rocketed through the airplane, and he felt himself sinking backwards into the seat.

The plane tore itself in half and the murky gray clouds came swirling into the cabin. But there was no noise. A tremendous rush of air shot by him, and seats, people, luggage, clothing — everything was floating around him, hanging mysteriously in the soundless void. Down, down they rushed — with no sense of movement. But the ground was rising faster and faster every second. Along with him fragments of steel and other distorted pieces of the disintegrated plane hovered silently. He peered over the edge of his seat. Like a huge kaleidoscope, the earth was whirling up at him, spinning faster and faster. He was being swept into a maddening vortex; the revolving scene became darker and darker until he was surrounded by an inky blackness. He felt something cold on his face. Someone was calling him. A woman's voice, far away.

"Cecelia," he cried. "Cecelia, Cecelia . . . ?" Harry's eyes opened. The stewardess removed the oxygen mask. "You fainted on the landing, sir." Still looking concerned she continued, "It's all over now — we're safely on the ground. Everything's okay."

He slowly came to his senses and looked around. The plane was empty

except for the stewardess and two blue uniformed men standing behind her. They were both trying to look grave and serious, but the laughter in their eyes belied their efforts. Through the window Harry could see the bright green and white of sunny Los Angeles. A group of men were swarming around the wing of the plane.

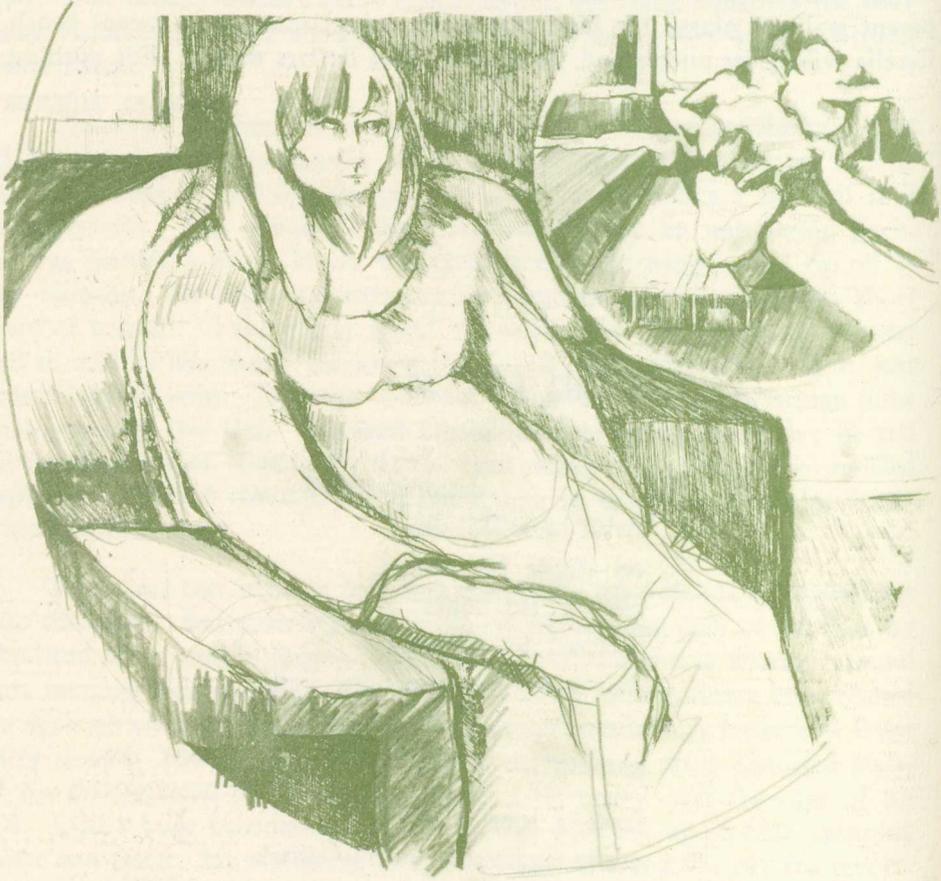
"No," he cried. He covered his face with his hands and stumbled toward the exit. "Wrong . . . it's all wrong." He could no longer see where he was going. People brushed by; he went spinning through corridors of bright white lights and long ramps where the glaring sun pierced transparent walls of glass. His head throbbing, he collapsed on a vacant bench. Cecelia will never understand, he sobbed. Five dollars wasted. For nothing.

MICHAEL MEEKER

FLUID FEASTS

Fluid feasts sordid faces
with
decrepit bodies
sweat in soiledlinen
on sterile bedsprings
over wilted floors
enclosed by cobwebs
that stick to painthungry walls
climaxing to a dry ceiling
gasping for breath
from a lone window
where aggressive worms crawl
only to see sootinfested bricks
suffocating the prostrate sun.

— ORIANO PAGNUCCI



DURATION

First day, long time coming
beginning of the almost end
green no longer is becoming
but has been
coming now no newness
nothing ever was begun here
absolutely
only invalid or exchanged.

Still, there is that

cat, who gives me great hope,
as he sits and gazes into the
cold glow that lights the night
with only a handful of stars.

— MARGO GARIEPY

LIVING ALONG THE AMBULANCE ROUTE

A morning bright as Sunday
Aunt Emma croaks behind her lace,
Pa drools his coffee.
Hush, Ma says
As little Irma irks her brother's nose
— Newlyweds lie in the backroom.
Then — Quick,
above the kitchened clank, dueting Baby's wail,
rushes the daily, daily, daily
red mechanical roar.
As the harking raider whines around our heads
our hearts, those terror-stricken pets,
flop over on their backs.

— CHARLES SMITH

TO THE DEATH OF ALL CATS

In the darkest corner
above the litter
ate all the large white cats
the molding bread
and for years no one knew
how or why those
feline fat jocundas
subsisted
until one morning
early before the day
streamed through blinded windows
someone awoke
and smiled at the stench of animal flesh
everywhere.

— MARGO GARIEPY



THE DARKLING SPU

Feedeefy the darkling spu
Softly in my portal climbs
Trailing vapors of the night
Shapeless effervescence comes.

Feedeefy the darkling spu
Wanders down the corridor
Answers every nighten bell
underneath the doorway sill.

Feedeefy the darkling spu
Play the rabbit and the owl
Thru the early ashen day
'Til the morning bustle roar.

Feedeefy the darkling spu
Fading with a brilliant burn
Cooling heels on bladed grass
waiting for the moon again.

— CHARLES B. SCHOLZ

FATHER WALT'S UNION

You stalked and supped on the scent of pansies,
whistling sparrows to tea on your lap.
Hanging your hat on sunny forest floors,
you bedded and strutted with bending poplars
that snaked to your brittle blue roof.

At thirty-seven you felt home, when, leaning
and loafing, knives of kind green grass edged
lightly into your soul with gentle savagery.
That wedding in the soft clearing of you
with untamed winds was far better and far worse:
your bride was the noiseless spider, not your soul.

I too make a pact with you: this morning
I walked under the oaks along the creek
and the cunning silence of the woods crashed
a thunderous warning. I waited for you,
but you didn't come; you had rotted quite naturally
of several different, natural diseases.

— CHARLES SMITH

It should be raining now
With stereophonic Liszt
Resounding from paneled walls,
Mingling with muted slaps of rain
As windows melt into wandering, aimless paths—
Like the paths of hickorybreeze autumn days
We roamed when golden-brown sunlight
Toasted uncovered heads through stubborn leaves,
Which have now succumbed to the dismal hangover
Of the numbing sensual orgy of burned-out summer,
Leaving their embarrassed, naked bones no shelter
From the chill, penetrating rain
Which should be falling now
And mingling with the Liszt inside.

— JUDITH WAHL

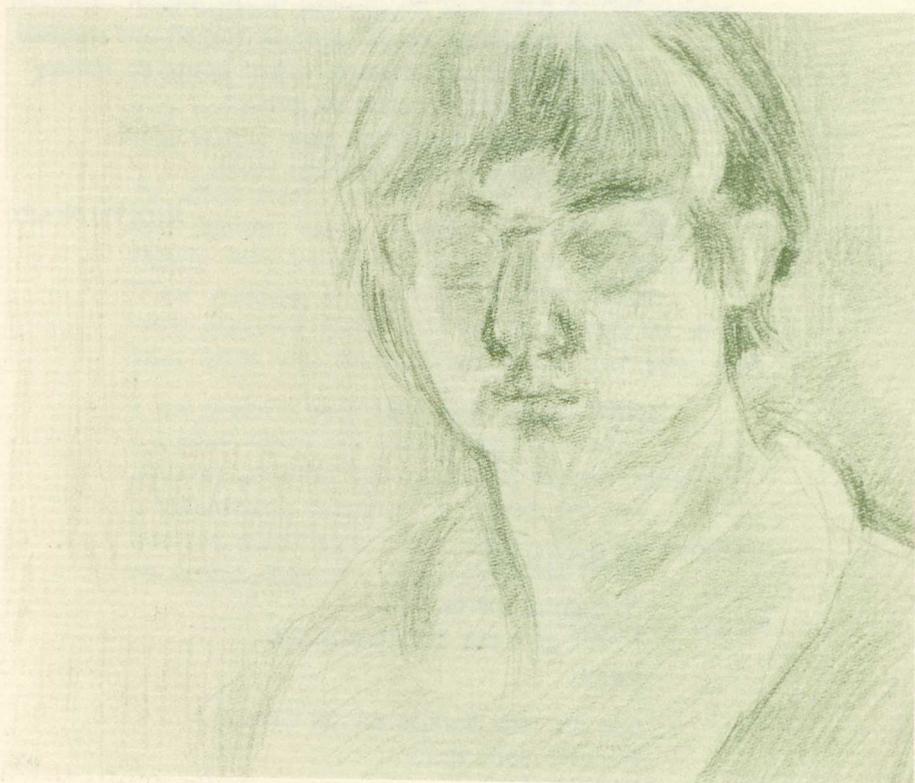
SURVIVAL

You force me to say
I will give but fourteen nights
away:

one for each *Station of the Cross*
to cover your smile
with the loss
that firmly stood
as one olive leaf in the Flood
could

when Noah sent out the dove;
and this—meek,
scrupulous as love—
brought back the plant
in her beak.

— LAVONNE MUELLER



ELEMENTS OF THE HOLY MASS: contributions to centrifugal movement in the dubliners

Jean Genet, who borrowed from religion much as James Joyce did, wrote the following in a preface to the new edition of *The Maids*:

The loftiest modern drama has been expressed daily for two thousand years in the sacrifice of the Mass. The point of departure disappears beneath the profusion of ornaments and symbols that still overwhelm us. Beneath the most familiar of appearances—a crust of bread—a god is devoured. I know nothing more theatrically effective than the elevation of the host: when finally this appearance appears before us—but in what form, since all heads are bowed, the priest alone knows: perhaps it is God himself or a simple white pellet that he holds at the tips of his four fingers—or that other moment in the Mass when the priest, having broken the host on the paten in order to show it to the faithful (Not to the audience! To the faithful? But their heads are still bowed. Does that mean they are praying, they too?) puts it together again and eats it. The host crackles in the priest's mouth! A performance that does not act upon my soul in vain. It is vain if I do not believe in what I see, which will end—which will never have been—when the curtain goes down. No doubt one of the functions of art is to substitute the efficacy of beauty for religious faith.¹

Joyce, I am sure, must have perceived the same magic and drama of the Holy Mass. To the young Joyce, who was a product of a bleak Dublin where Ibsen constituted an unread threat to complacency, the church ritual undoubtedly provided the future author with a source of glamor and inspiration.

How did Joyce react to the Mass in those early years? In *A Portrait of the Artist As A Young Man*, which is considered to be semi-autobiographical, Joyce expressed the magic and structure of the Mass in Stephen's musings:

He longed for the minor sacred offices, to be vested with the tunicle of subdeacon at high mass, to stand aloof from the altar, forgotten by the people, his shoulders covered with a numeral veil, holding the paten within its folds or, when the sacrifice had been accomplished, to stand as deacon in a dalmatic cloth of gold on the step below the celebrant, his hands joined and his face towards the people, and sing the chant, *Ite missa est*.²

¹Jean Genet, "A Note On Theatre," *Tulane Drama Review*, (Spring, 1963), 39-40.

Again, in *A Portrait*, Joyce says about Stephen:

Every morning he hallowed himself anew in the presence of some holy image or mystery. His day began with an heroic offering of its every moment of thought or action for the intentions of the sovereign pontiff and with an early mass. The raw morning air whetted his resolute piety; and often knelt among the few worshippers at the side altar, following with his inter-leaved prayer book the murmur of the priest, he glanced up for an instant towards the vested figure standing in the gloom between the two candles, which were the old and the new testaments, and imagined that he was kneeling at mass in the catacombs.³

The Mass is essentially the supreme drama, a tragedy which is calculated and enacted everlastingly. Repetition is the important key, here. Historically, the Mass was the presentation of the Last Supper, a repetition of words and deeds taught by Christ. Indeed, the Mass evolved from what was merely the dutiful repetition of what the Apostles had so carefully learned.

Henri Daniel-Rops, member of the French Academy and a leading Catholic author, says of the breaking of the Host during Mass:

According to the mystical interpretation devised in the Middle Ages, this represents the Body of Christ being broken during his Passion; but, above all, by this act is figured the distribution of His sacramental Body to His brethren. The particle set on one side recalls the old rite of the *Sancta*; a particle consecrated at a previous Mass used always and reserved until this time by way of enforcing the idea that the Mass is one; it is a perpetuation of the Mass said before, and it is continued by the Mass which will follow.⁴

The Mass that was said before, the Mass that will follow—such a perpetuation could easily parallel the *Dubliners*. Joyce might have developed the impetus for reiteration from his constant early exposure to such things as the *Agnus Dei*, *Agnus Dei*, *Agnus Dei*, or the *Sanctus*, *Sanctus*, *Sanctus*, when the diminutive bell rings three times during the prayer of thanksgiving.

We cannot have a Communion without sacrifice. The Mass can never be a Communion only; it is a sacrifice resulting in Communion. Communion is possible because of Calvary, just as we must kill animals for food. We draw the very essence of life from the Crucifixion. Thus it is in the

³James Joyce, *A Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Man* (New York: Random House, 1928), p. 184.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 170.

⁴Henri Daniel-Rops, *This Is The Mass* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1959), pp. 143-144.

Dubliners, too. In order to experience what little Communion (spiritually or physically) they have, the characters helplessly see their hopes, dreams, beliefs and loves destroyed. For it is interesting to note that all sacrifices ceased after that of Calvary, thus enlightening the believers with the assurance that Calvary was the perfect sacrifice. It is no wonder that the *Dubliners* should consciously and/or subconsciously be influenced by the Supreme Sacrifice. Therefore, the Mass is a sacrifice-substitute, a repetitious instrument bringing to Dublin and all the faithful of the world an everlasting emphasis on the *victim*.

Certainly the stories themselves, within the framework of the *Dubliners*, brings forth repeated actions and words. Even within the area of his own personal repetition, I believe that Joyce has instilled the elements of the Mass in the *Dubliners* and demonstrated what I would consider to be a "repetition within a repetition." By this effect, I view the stories as centrifugal—a rotating circle moving away from the center.

What is the center? This center is Dublin, that powerful nucleus of force thrusting and whirling all of Joyce's "victims" in perpetual, continuous orbit; and the orbit, itself, is made more repetitious by the fragments of the Mass.

In *Dubliners*, there is no escape. As long as the center provides the force, the stories must continue in orbit. If the force should stop, Joyce's characters would be flung into space—ultimately into total escape. But total escape never happens. Joyce's characters frantically ride the periphery. The fragmented Mass winds coyly in the motion, restating itself and adding a second dominating force to the endless circle.

In the remaining part of this paper, I will make two specific observations in each of the fifteen stories. First, I shall point out what I consider to be the most important fragment of the Mass as woven into each story. (There may be other fragments as well, but I shall comment on the one I found to be of primary importance.) Secondly, I shall discuss the "victim" and his half-conscious wish to escape from Dublin.

In *The Sisters*, a young boy is introduced to death. His friend, Father Flynn, dies, after a third stroke. The youngster has peculiar feelings about this death. He finds it strange that "neither I nor the day seemed in a mourning mood." Likewise, Stephen, in *A Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Man*, muses upon the idea that "you could die just the same on a sunny day."

During the Mass, while indulging in the splendor of an earthy offer, the congregation is reminded of death. As abrupt as it well might be, in *Commemoration of the Dead* the Mass provides a prayer for the deceased. Alluding to the Souls in Purgatory reminds the faithful of man's eventuality—death.

I went in on tiptoe. The room through the lace end of the blind was suffused with dusky golden light amid which the candles looked like pale thin flames. He had been coffined. Nannie gave the lead and we three knelt down at the foot of the bed.⁵

The youngster is, in effect, being reminded of this commemoration of the dead. In this story, he is as skittish about the reminder of death as a young girl resplendent in bonnet and furs during the glitter of twelve o'clock Mass.

Already the youngster is subconsciously dreaming of escape, an escape from Dublin to "some land where the customs were strange." This kind of undercurrent is a prelude to the more obvious thoughts of escape in later stories.

The Celebrant's Communion is probably the one truly subjective part of the Mass, a part not in true keeping with the ultimate aim of the ceremony—a unity of the Christian family in the liturgical action. Nevertheless, *The Celebrant's Communion* is indispensable. The celebrant prepares to take Communion by saying two private prayers of piety. In one prayer, he begs for salvation. In the other, he announces his own unworthiness.

Most of the story of *An Encounter* elapses before the young boy finally reaches this stage of private piety.

My voice had an accent of forced bravery in it and I was ashamed of my paltry stratagem. I had to call the name again before Mahony saw me and halloed in answer. How my heart beat as he came running across the field to me! He ran as if to bring me aid. And I was penitent; for in my heart I had always despised him a little.⁶

The young boy says the name "Murphy! Murphy!" He admits the unworthiness in "my paltry stratagem." He begs haphazardly for salvation in his honest confession: "And I was penitent; for in my heart I had always despised him a little." These two private prayers are said, then, before the boys are united again in what might be taken as a Communion of truer friends.

We see escape in *An Encounter* not only as a rebellion against youth, but against Dublin, too. The protagonist reflects:

The mimic warfare of the evening became at last as wearisome to me as the routine of school in the morning because I wanted real adventure to happen to myself. But real adventures, I reflected, do not happen to people who remain at

⁵James Joyce, *Dubliners* (New York: Viking Press, 1958), p. 14.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 28.

home: they must be sought abroad.⁷

In the Mass, the *Offertory* is marked by a group of six prayers. In ancient times, the congregation gave offerings of gifts; but this practice was done away with during the Middle Ages. In the present time, the collecting of money is a part of the *Offertory*. The primary essential is the six prayers that the priest offers.

Remembering with difficulty why I had come I went over to one of the stalls and examined porcelain vases and flowered tea sets. At the door of the stall a young lady was talking and laughing with two young gentlemen. I remarked their English accents and listened vaguely to their conversation.

"O, I never said such a thing!"

"O, but you did!"

"O, but I didn't!"

"Didn't she say that?"

"Yes. I heard her."

"O, there's a fib!"⁸

In *Araby*, the young protagonist stands before a stall rich with the materials of "porcelain vases and flowered tea sets." This stall is not unlike the ancient times when the deacons, at the *Offertory*, sorted gifts on a table, placing on one end those to be used in the sacrifice and on the other end those to be given to the poor. The young boy stands before such a table. He listens to "six" lines as repetitious as a litany.

The young boy yearns to escape the dreary "brown, imperturbable faces" of houses on his street. He wishes to "annihilate the tedious intervening days." He hopes for mystery, enchantment. But "Araby" is still, nevertheless, Dublin. He finds no escape. He is finally "a creature driven."

At the *Domine, non sum dignus*, there is the striking of the breast thrice with humility and contrition.

No! No! No! It was impossible. Her hand clutched the iron in frenzy. Amid the seas she sent a cry of anguish.⁹

In *Eveline*, the protagonist cannot bring herself to leave with her lover, Frank. She must surrender completely to her lover, just as one must surrender completely to the "Host." As a Communion rail, she "clutched the iron in frenzy." She is not ready; she is not worthy. There is the *mea culpa* in her anguish of "No! No! No!"

Eveline wants to escape with her lover.

⁷Ibid., p. 21.

⁸Ibid., p. 35.

⁹Ibid., p. 41.

But in her new home, in a distant unknown country, it would not be like that. Then she would be married—she, Eveline. People would treat her with respect then.¹⁰

But Dublin will not release its hold. Eveline feels the pressure of “those whom she had known all her life about her.” Ultimately, she is left “passive, like a helpless animal,” while she watches her lover leave.

It is of interest to note that the prayers given at meal times which are recited according to monastic custom all have a decided Eucharistic touch about them. It is no wonder, then, that the meal itself is suggestive of the Eucharistic action. The meal is most apparent in *Dubliners*, specifically in the story, *After the Race*.

A man brought in a light supper, and the young men sat down to it for form's sake. They drank, however: it was Bohemian. They drank Ireland, England, France, Hungary, the United States of America. Jimmy made a speech, a long speech, Villona saying: “hear! hear!” whenever there was a pause. There was a great clapping of hands when he sat down.¹¹

The above scene parallels the communion. The “hear! hear!,” along with the countries mentioned and the clapping, is an indication of the *Hand of Blessing* when the priest raises his hand in blessing after the Communion to remind the congregation that they must live under the hand of God—unity.

In *After the Race* Jimmy is mesmerized by the glamour of his wealthy companions. However, at the end of the story, he realizes that essentially all his frantic adventures with the rich have been an escape.

He knew that he would regret in the morning but at present he was glad of the rest, glad of the dark stupor that would cover up his folly. He leaned his elbows on the table and rested his head between his hands, counting the beats of his temples.¹²

In *Two Gallants* Lenehan partakes symbolically of a Communion.

He was hungry for, except some biscuits when he had asked two gruding curates to bring him, he had eaten nothing since breakfast time . . . when he had eaten all the peas, he sipped his ginger beer and sat for some time thinking of Corley's adventure.¹³

¹⁰Ibid., p. 37.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 47-48.

¹²Ibid., p. 48.

¹³Ibid., p. 57.

Lenehan has taken "bread." In ancient times, consecrated bread was put in the palm of the communicant's hand and the faithful drank from a common cup. The private thoughts that one has at a religious Communion can be paralleled here, and Lenehan secretly revels in what he supposes is Corey's adventure.

Escape is evident in the thoughts of Lenehan. He is tired of Dublin, the "dark quiet street, the sombre look of which suited his mood." He yearns for a change.

This vision made him feel keenly his own poverty of purse and spirit. He was tired of knocking about, of pulling the devil by the tail, of shifts and intrigues experience had embittered his heart against the world.¹⁴

In *The Boarding House*, Polly performs a *Lavabo inter innocentes manus meas*

She dipped the end of the towel in the water-jug and refreshed her eyes with the cool water.¹⁵

The *Lavabo* stems from the old tradition of the Judaic lustral purification. It also goes back to that ancient washing in a fountain before the church door, a washing which the people now maintain by dipping their fingers in the Holy water fountain as they enter. Polly, therefore, is enacting a purification act before she goes downstairs to Bob Doran, the man she has trapped in marriage.

Bob Doran alternately longs for escape from Polly. He realizes that "his instinct urged him to remain free." Also, he cannot escape the powers of his environment.

The affair would be sure to be talked of and his employer would be certain to hear of it. Dublin is such a small city; everyone knows everyone else's business.¹⁶

In *A Little Cloud*, the last part of the story could be compared to the *Confiteor*.

Little Chandler sustained for a moment the gaze of her eyes and his heart closed together as he met the hatred in them. He began to stammer:

"It's nothing He he began to cry I couldn't I didn't do anything what?"

Little Chandler felt his cheeks suffused with shame and he

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 57-58.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 68.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 66.

stood back out of the lamplight. He listened while the paroxysm of the child's sobbing grew less and less; and tears of remorse started to his eyes.¹⁷

The *Confiteor* is the time at the Mass when the soul needs to ask for pardon. It is the time in the Mass when the people acknowledge their sinfulness. Little Chandler is aware that he has lost his temper with the child. He attempts to make a perfect act of contrition by his "I couldn't . . . I didn't do anything." In reality, he means that he is sorry. He acknowledges having "offended Thee."

Little Chandler is very aware of his one means of escape.

There was no doubt about it: if you wanted to succeed you had to go away. You could do nothing in Dublin.¹⁸

In *Counterparts*, Farrington is a man hounded by thirst, feeling thirst again and again so that "he longed to be back again in the hot reeking public-house." In *Preparation of the Bread and Wine*, the Mass wine is an ordinary liquid of the "fruit of the vine," which Jesus Himself drank during his lifetime. Farrington is cheered by wine, much as Noah was by the wine he received after the fearful Deluge.

There is an interesting rite in the Greek liturgy of old that calls for the use of a small lancet in the Mass. The priest adds a little water to the wine in the chalice, so that the two liquids may blend, just as in Christ the nature of the Word and the nature of His Sacred Humanity are inseparable, just as the Master and His Church are one. During the Middle Ages it was widely believed, as well, that by this water was also figured that which came from the pierced side of the crucified Jesus; and, in a touching rite, the Greek liturgy prescribes the use of a small lancet in the Mass, whereby the Host is transfixed in memory of that wounded side.¹⁹

Farrington resorts to the lancet. Before the "son" cooks his dinner, Farrington must be reminded of the "wounds."

The boy uttered a squeal of pain as the stick cut his thigh.
He clasped his hands together in the air and his voice shook with fright.²⁰

Farrington is also held in Dublin's trap without any hope in sight for escape.

His tram let him down at Shelbourne Road and he steered his great body along in the shadow of the wall of the bar-

¹⁷Ibid., p. 85.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 73.

¹⁹Daniel-Rops, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

²⁰Joyce, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

racks. He loathed returning to his home.²¹

In *Clay* Maria makes a journey by tram, where she "had to sit on a little stool at the end of the car," among the crowds on the street, and finally fitted in beside an old man on the Drumcondra tram. Her destination is Joe's house where everybody always says, "O, here's Maria."

Maria is performing, by this traveling action, a kind of spiritual introduction. Maria's action parallels the *Introit*, or Entrance Versicle. "In the early days of the Roman Church," Henri Daniel-Rops tells us, "the Pope went from the Latern Palace in a solemn cortege of his attendant clergy, deacons, and acolytes, to the particular sanctuary in which Mass was, that day, to be said."²² Psalms were given by the choir. It was in this manner that the *Introit* was introduced into the Mass.

Today, this impressive rite, *Introit*, is celebrated by the use of an anthem followed by a psalm verse, with *Gloria Patri* and the repeating of the anthem. Maria's singing becomes an entrance song; she is setting the tone for a Communion (plumcake) which does not come about—the cake having been left behind on the tram. When she is to sing the second verse, she repeats herself, like the repetition of the anthem of the *Introit*.

Maria cannot break away from her life. Although she is enmeshed by her surroundings, she considers herself to be independent.

Often he had wanted her to go and live with them; but she would have felt herself in the way (though Joe's wife was ever so nice to her) and she had become accustomed to the life of the laundry.²³

Mr. Duffy, in *A Painful Case*, feels a great deal of remorse about the death of Emily Sinico. He is tortured by a number of questions. "Why had he withheld life from her? Why had he sentenced her to death?" Like Little Chandler, in *A Little Cloud*, Mr. Duffy is performing the Confiteor. He recalls that "one human being had seemed to love him and he had denied her life and happiness."

In the eighth and ninth centuries, under what was called the *Apologia*, the faithful began to bring together *excusatory prayers* in which pleading mingled with confession. In the *Roman Missal*, written in 1570, these prayers were associated with the four stages of a trial: soul comes before judgment, soul confesses, the advocates plead, pardon is given. Mr. Duffy feels very much as if he were on trial. He feels "his moral nature falling to pieces." The *Mea Culpa* is the moment when the hand strikes the breast three times, thus bringing consolation to the sinner. This is brought about

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 97.

²²Daniel-Rops, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-54.

²³Joyce, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

by what appears as "touches" of Emily. Near the end of the story, she seems "near him" in the park, her voice touches his ear," and, thirdly, he seems to feel "her hand touch him."

Mr. Duffy is well entrenched in Dublin in an "old sombre house," where from a window "he could look into the disused distillery or upward along the shallow river on which Dublin is built." There are moments when he dreams of escape.

He allowed himself to think that in certain circumstances he would rob his bank but, as these circumstances never arose, his life rolled out evenly—an adventureless tale.²⁴

In *Ivy Day In The Committee Room*, Mr. O'Conner and his cronies celebrate Parnell's anniversary. They speak of him in Christ-like images—"If this man was alive, we'd have no talk of an address of welcome." In the poem, Mr. Hynes calls Parnell "Our Uncrowned King." This story parallels the *Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus*. St. Sixtus I, while he was Pope, introduced the *Sanctus* into the Mass in the second century.

How stupendous is the Glory of God, says the *Sanctus*. It is a strong, lusty hymn with a thrice-repeated acclamation. The priest bows, and the little bell sounds three times.

Mr. O'Connor and his friends sing the praises of Parnell. Their "three bells" might be symbolized by the sound of the corks.

In a few minutes an apologetic "Pok!" was heard as the cork flew out of Mr. Lyons' bottle.²⁵

Pok! The tardy cork flew out of Mr. Crofton's bottle.²⁶

Pok! The cork flew out of Mr. Hynes' bottle, but Mr. Hynes remained sitting flushed and bare-headed on the table.²⁷

Mr. O'Connor finds enclosure from the very weather of Dublin. He should canvas one part of the ward, but the "weather was inclement and his boots let in the wet." There is no escape from the "denuded room" where the fire loses its cheerful color and the walls are bare except for an election address.

"Usha, poor Joe!" said Mr. O'Connor, throwing the end of his cigarette into the fire, "He's hard up, like the rest of us."²⁸

In a story, *A Mother*, Mrs. Kearney desires to have her daughter per-

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 109.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 131.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 132.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 135.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 124.

form upon an altar symbol—the concert stage. With hope and joy, she prepared her daughter's vestment of "lovely blush-pink charmeuse in Brown Thomas's to let into the front of Kathleen's dress."

Introibo Ad Altare Dei—I will go unto the altar of God. This part of the Mass is concerned with preparation. Prayers are said by the priest at the foot of the altar. These prayers have a fervor to them, and Psalm 42 recalls the exiled Jews grieving by the waters of-Babylon. They cried in anguish for their despoiled altar, for their abandoned Holy Place. But the words reveal a faith, too, in God. The words of the Scripture are ultimately of re-birth, or restoration, of youthful fervor.

Mrs. Kearney grieves also for a despoiled altar, so much so that she "stood still for an instant like an angry stone image and, when the first notes of the song struck her ear, she caught up her daughter's cloak." Hope, for her, does not out-ring sorrow. She demands her *altar*. Bitterness takes over so that "her face was inundated with an angry colour and she looked as if she would attack someone with her hands."

Mrs. Kearney is a typical victim in *Dubliners*. She is forced to be the wife of a bootmaker who is much older than she.

But the young men whom she met were ordinary and she gave them no encouragement, trying to console her romantic desire by eating a great deal of Turkish Delight in secret.²⁹

Grace, the fourteenth story, was for a time the final story of *Dubliners*. It is a story of *The Word*, something that Joyce might have found to be an ironic ending to a cacophony of words engulfing his victims.

Since the earliest times, the *Gospel* has been an essential part of the Mass. It was already a permanent element when religious services were held in the catacombs. The *Gospel* prepares the congregation for the sacrifice of the Mass. It highlights the fact that the death of Christ was undertaken by that same Man who taught and spoke the Truth.

This is a solemn moment of the Mass. All of the other parts of the Mass are largely dependent upon the *Gospel*; they function as commentaries according to that which has been declared, or as assurances of what shall be fulfilled by the Word. The rest of the Mass, therefore, constitutes a development, explanation, or commentary upon the Word.

Mr. Kernan is carried along by the religious fervor of his friends. He longs to *Munda cor*—cleanse the heart. He tells his wife that he will confess "my little tale of woe." He is anxious to prepare for the Word, that "difficult" Word (Luke 16:8-9) that Father Purdon will develop by means of a painstaking metaphor.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 136.

Mrs. Kernan has ceased to find escape. She is resigned. After years of marriage, she knows that she has "very few illusions left." Even earlier, after she had been married only three weeks, she "had found a wife's life irksome and, later on, when she was beginning to find it unbearable, she had become a mother."

In *The Dead*, Gabriel is reminded of death after the sharp contrast of a lively party. His wife tells him of a dead ex-lover. He is taunted by his wife's story, so much so that "he imagined he saw the form of a young man standing under a dripping tree." He thinks of death generally, and feels that "his soul had approached that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead."

During the *Commemoration of the Dead*, the Mass pauses to pray for the dead and for the sinners. The prayer for the dead dates back to ancient times. It was present in the Synagogue; and St. John Chrysostom writes that this custom has come down directly from the Apostles. St. Cyril of Jerusalem writes that one should pray for those in greatest need at a time in the Mass when the prayer is most effective. Then, suddenly, the priest passes quickly from the dead to the congregation; he begs forgiveness for sinners—*nobis quoque peccatoribus*.

Gabriel feels pity for the dead lover and for "that image of her lover's eyes when he had told her that he did not wish to live." Gabriel then thinks of his own death, is self "fading out into a grey impalpable world."

Gabriel finds that Dublin contributes to his prison. He is unable to escape. Miss Ivors taunts him.

"O, to tell you the truth," retorted Gabriel suddenly,
"I'm sick of my own country, sick of it!"³⁰

Gabriel could well be speaking for Joyce's *Dubliners*. Yet "sick" of their country as they may be, the characters accept the volatile impasse of environment. Freud tells us that denial is ultimately a sensuous thing, as Joyce no doubt realized when he had his people so carefully insulated against escape.

What, then, does *Dubliners* signify? Why the horrendous orbit? Nietzsche says that "existence is considered sacred enough to justify even a tremendous amount of suffering." Perhaps Joyce believes, too, that such suffering is justifiable. For Eveline tells us:

It was hard work—a hard life—but now that she was about to leave it she did not find it a wholly undesirable life.³¹

In conclusion, *Dubliners* might be symbolized as an orbit, each element of which is a character made a victim because of two principals: Dublin, the

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 206.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 38.

first principal, is the center of gravity from which Joyce's characters are viciously thrust out to be caught in the orbit of the second principal, symbolized by the ritual of the Holy Mass.

The Dubliners, as victims, dream. They dream of freedom. But like their creator, Joyce himself, the characters find little solace even in fantasy. Tortured, unhappy, they are symbols of what Freud alluded to in *The Relation of the Poet to Day-dreaming*: "Happy people never make fantasies—only unhappy ones."

— LAVONNE MUELLER

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JUST NOW

unconscious
of her birth
the butterfly
just now spreads her wings
against the breeze
unhurriedly drying and
stiffening to shape
in warm sun then
dives
into the next
moment of life for
she hasn't yet
a past
to cling to.

— EVA WEI



AN INTERPRETATION OF *INTRUDER IN THE DUST*

In addition to being an intriguing story of a boy's experiences with Southern race relations (certainly a topic of popular interest in 1965), Faulkner's *Intruder in the Dust* also explores truths about human beings at all times in all places.

The struggle of Chick, an intelligent and sensitive youth of Jefferson, Yoknapatawpha County, to understand and to cope with the customary rules of Negro-white relationships is really the struggle of William Faulkner, brilliant and sensitive writer of Oxford, Mississippi, to find the proper viewpoint in this difficult conflict between tradition and morality. The boy's view of the story is that of an insider who is able to see people (including himself) and events with the objectivity of an outsider; as a writer Faulkner must also strive for objectivity in presenting the people, attitudes, and facts of life as he has observed them in Mississippi.

The difficulty of divorcing oneself from the influences of one's background is almost insurmountable. Faulkner never succeeds completely. Although his writing clearly indicates a belief that the existing injustice to Negroes is morally wrong, he frequently expresses in strong terms the opinion that only the white Southerner (with no interference from "Outlanders") has the capability or even the right to change the conditions that prevail. He is unable to overcome the feeling that he must, as a son of the South, defend its way of life at the same time that he criticizes it.

As a vehicle for his message, Faulkner has written an engrossing mystery story. Through most of the novel, reader interest is strongly maintained by the desire to find out the true facts about the murder of Vinson Gowrie. However, there is no doubt that the author's intentions go far beyond the superficial level of a "whodunit."

Near the end of the novel, the mystery story is put aside. His very casual reference to Crawford Gowrie's suicide, an event that would certainly be of much interest to a reader, demonstrates that Faulkner's main concern is not the specific events and characters involved in solving the mystery. His real concerns are the eternal conflicts between human beings and the human desire for a sense of dignity.

At first glance, it would appear that the struggle for dignity is represented only by Lucas Beauchamp's continuous refusal to "act like a nigger." Actually this struggle is also present in the attempts by white Southerners to achieve a built-in superiority by insisting on and rigidly enforcing Negro acceptance of a birthright of second-class manhood. This "natural" superiority is particularly important to the poor and ignorant Beat Four people who are considered inferior by upper-class whites like Uncle Gavin. Historical events (African slave trade and subsequent common adherence to a

belief in the superiority of "white" races) dictated the differing courses of action taken by Lucas and Beat Four whites to attain the same goal of self-respect.

However, the greatness of *Intruder in the Dust* lies not just in its brilliant portrayal of Southern people and Southern mores, but in its universality of meaning. Yoknapatawpha County's compelling insistence that Lucas Beauchamp "act like a nigger" is certainly not a unique phenomenon either in the past or in contemporary times. Nazi persecution of Jews (including required display of the Star of David), the Indian caste system, and South African apartheid are other familiar examples of the deprivation of human dignity by means of legally enforced conformity.

Even more important than such special and extraordinary cases of society's demand for conformity to specified standards, the demands made of Lucas are really only magnifications of the requirements that society expects every man to comply with. Each of us tries to label people and file them into neat compartments. Teachers, students, ministers, doctors, Italians, and Jews are expected to act as they are stereotyped in movies, television, and novels. It disturbs us to discover that our preconceptions are not reality; it is a blow to Chick's self-esteem when he realizes that Lucas Beauchamp is capable of refusing to subordinate himself in the manner dictated by tradition. Faulkner is pointing out the danger of attempting to prejudge and control the complex human personality.

Intruder in the Dust successfully meets a criterion of outstanding literature; it inspires thought about the nature of man.

— PATSY KELLEY

TOWERS AWARDS

Many young authors share Yeats' ire that

*Bald heads forgetful of their sins,
Old, learned, respectable bald heads
Edit and annotate the lines
That young men, tossing on their beds,
Rhymed out in love's despair
To flatter beauty's ignorant ear.*

and no small number of the old heads themselves have expressed their sentiment that the traditional distinctions of first, second and third prizes were arbitrary or inappropriate. In consideration of this the staff asked the judges to select without further differentiation a maximum of three superior pieces in each category.

PROSE

Leslie Davis	Better, Cleaner Fun
Michael Meeker	The Policy

JUDGES:

Norman Lavers — John Somer — Cliff Probst

POETRY

Hubert F. Lappe'	Sandcastle
Charles Smith	Father Walt's Union
Mary Dale Stewart	Marsh Hawk

JUDGES:

Arnold Fox — Saul Rosenthal — David Hedges

THE SIGMA TAU DELTA WRITING AWARDS

This year the Xi Delta chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, National English Honorary, established three annual writing awards for Northern Illinois University students. These awards of fifty dollars each were named in honor of three charter members of the Xi Delta chapter and faculty emeriti of the N.I.U. English department.

THE J. HAL CONNOR AWARD FOR CREATIVE WRITING

WINNER: Mary Dale Stewart "In a Pillar of a Cloud"

JUDGES:

Virginia Moseley, Jack Gray, Alfred Shivers, Kathi Davis
and Mary Geske

THE E. RUTH TAYLOR AWARD FOR CRITICAL WRITING

WINNER: Lavonne Mueller "Elements of the Holy Mass: Contributions to Centrifugal Movement in the *Dubliners*"

JUDGES:

Lucien Stryk and Louis Glorfeld

THE MAUDE UHLAND AWARD FOR FRESHMAN WRITING

WINNER: Patsy Kelley "An Interpretation of *Intruder in the Dust*"

JUDGES:

William Seat, Warren Ober, Patricia Anderson
and Michele Campbell

"In a Pillar of a Cloud" appeared in last fall's TOWERS; the other two winning pieces appear in this issue.

Mrs. Stewart's story gained the additional honor of being accepted for publication in the forthcoming issue of *New Campus Writing*.

Our special appreciation goes to R. & S. Johnson Printing Corp. for their extraordinary patience and cooperation. Thank you.

