

# TOWERS

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

MAY 1964

VOLUME XXII

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

*Towers is published twice yearly by Xi Delta Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, National English Honorary. Its purpose is to stimulate creative writing and to promote an appreciation of writing and literature within the college community.*

*The prose and poetry in the following pages reflect the choice of the Staff members only, who carefully read, discussed, then voted according to what they felt to be best of the submitted material. Anonymity was observed in selecting material.*

*Prize winners were chosen by four faculty members of the English Department from the thirty-three selections made by the staff. The awards appear on page 48. They reflect the choice of the judges only and were chosen anonymously. Our thanks to the judges for their careful consideration of the entries.*

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### SABATO IN LUCCA

Fat, exuberant wo--men growling  
the price of

Dry, lifeless lemons to the passers-by

Barefooted, soiled smelling gypsies

Outcastedly trying to sell

shoestrings

Business —

men quickly advancing

Over the warm, brown bricks

Weary, peasant women haggling

over

10 lire with long nosed merchants

Students sitting at outdoor caffè tables

Drinking coffee and watching the pensive girls

hurrying by

And high above in a lonely church

Sat a pigeon next to a silent bell.

— QUIANO PAGNUCCI

## PEOPLE

Some people are like tunes.

Silly, simple tunes

Your head keeps humming.

A snatch — A catch —

Is all you get of them.

It is enough, perhaps.

And there are others —

Master works —

That sound, and soar, and crash

Across your mind,

And then are still; the stillness of an echo.

It is enough, perhaps.

And there are those —

Sonata-like —

That tinkle and reverberate,

As crystal chandeliers in empty rooms,

And then are done.

And it is not enough!

— LEE FEE

## THE D. I.

— WILLIAM UTLEY

It was August on Parris Island. Platoon 115 had just been issued clothing, personal gear, and typhoid inoculations. Our arms ached from the shots and the 50 lbs. of extra boots, uniforms, scrub buckets, everything necessary to maintain proper military appearance and bearing. Double-timing across the drill field, we halted about 30 yards from a solitary jeep and dropped our gear. From the jeep came the sound of an enraged lion in a southern drawl. "Youall peepul git that seven eightytwo gear offen the daeck."

The ungodly snarl froze us for an instant; then we gathered up our belongings and stood motionless, staring through the rising heat waves at our D.I.

He jumped from the jeep and landed like a cat on the balls of his feet. Walking in measured steps toward us, he slowly scanned the platoon fore and aft.

My arms quit aching and grew numb. The heat from the asphalt came up through the thick soles of my combat boots. Somewhere behind my right eye a dull throbbing started. The new clothing had begun to chafe in my armpits and crotch. My head ached, my feet hurt, but I didn't dare move or look about. The drill instructor was now walking up and down the ranks. He hadn't come into my line of vision yet, so I could only guess what he looked like.

Suddenly I sensed someone behind me, and a raspy voice breathed into my left ear, "Arms gittin tard, maggot?"

When I opened my mouth to sound off loud and clear, a hoarse "No sir" croaked through my dry throat and lips.

Putting his chin over my shoulder, he said, "Maggot, youall got to bellar out in combat cuz its noisy and nasty out there. Luke the Gook don't quit shootin' at your young butt jist cuz you wont to tell your foxhole buddy to haul ass outta there. Do you unnerstan me, maggot?"

This time I responded loud enough to startle the jeep driver out of his catnap. Someone to my right snickered. The D.I. barked a "Knock it off" right through my skull.

He walked out of ranks, stood in front of the platoon and said he was Gunnery Sergeant Starks. He began lecturing on Corps discipline and how he was going to make Marines out of us fat, civilian maggots.

Then I saw him in all of his glory. He was built like a fireplug, 5'10", about 190, none of it fat. His shoes shone as if they were silver-plated. His woolen khaki trousers were pressed so sharply he could have cut a loaf of bread on them. His web belt with its gleaming brass buckle was squarely centered on his barrel torso. His shirt had military creases not a  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch off center.

My eyes focused on the cluster of decorations over his heart. Three vertical ribbons of rainbow, precisely centered above the shirt pocket,  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch above the pocket seam,  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch between rows; Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Iwo, Korea. Above them all, in its own row, the Purple Heart with a star. Centered on his sleeves were the forest green chevrons with crossed rifles, four inches from the shoulder seam, no more no less.

My eyes went back to the center of the barrel where his khaki tie followed the military line — glistening tie clasp centered between the third and fourth buttons, not a  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch off. The four-in-hand knot nestled precisely between the two collar points which came out at  $30^\circ$  angles from the vertical formed by his tie.

To this day I'll never forget the neckless, bullet-shaped head that emerged from that study in vertical symmetry. With his "Smokey the Bear" hat tilted forward over his eyebrows, not a trace of hair growth was visible anywhere. His purple-veined, sunburnt face glistened as he squinted under Sol's scrutiny. Jughandle ears were on the same plane, not a  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch off. The black hole directly above a squarely cut, slightly doubling chin produced an occasional glint, reminding me of the entrance to a petered-out goldmine. His short flat nose started just beneath the hat brim, veered to the left and, as if suddenly remembering to correct itself, broke sharply to the right, balancing its original deviation. Tiny crow's feet, not a  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch off, appeared when he paused to open the narrow-set, washed-out blue eyes. He reloaded his rapid-fire vocal chords.

Then I found it. The thin livid scar that snaked across his barely perceptible cheek bone to the corner of his mouth. My eyes darted to the other jaw — no scar! He's outta line, he's human too. He's outtaline.

Suddenly it happened. My hands had been asleep for some time and the bucket slipped from my numb fingers without their consent. The clang-bang on the pavement drowned out Starks' high-pitched climax.

My heart slowly slid to rest in my belly as those barely-blue eyes stared at the still-moving bucket with disbelief. They looked back up at me and began walking slowly toward me, the black hole gasping, "I

seen good Marines die like dogs for making less noise 'n that maggot; pick it up."

"Yessir," I moaned and bent over, groping awkwardly for the handle. The last thing I remember is a razor-sharp crease flattening out over his rising knee as it squared itself on my forehead.

### DANCE

Milkweed pods pirouette  
on charred spring fields,  
exposing vacuums  
of their high stiff heads.

— ROBERTA HANSON

### THE OWL

A wise old owl,  
High above the church,  
Hooted blasphemies,  
From his ecclesiastic perch!

— BRAD BREKKE

### THE PAGANS

Stare at  
The symbols  
On the modern totem —  
They turn us to less  
Than the early polygods  
Turned their savages.  
  
Who carved the altar  
At which we are now worshipping?  
Too many hands  
Made light of the work  
And gave us a cathedral  
That admits us all,  
But that no one will admit to.  
  
Some future man  
In a private place, perhaps,  
Will worship  
Apart from the rest  
And through his thoughts  
Reincarnate  
The modern animal  
To a higher form.  
  
We must be born again.

— RONALD GILLETTE

My mornings are very early  
mornings at the bakery,  
only half-removed from sleep  
in the warm and mindless work  
that smells of yeast and oven-heat,  
with all the edges blurred by flour dust.

The radio burrs sleepily  
a music of no character  
and no offense. Occasionally,  
though, it bangs alarm, it jars  
our furred nerves with news of distant  
tragedy. Mostly we ignore it.

But this morning it just mentioned  
the burning of a chicken house,  
a chicken farm, to be precise,  
and twenty thousand chickens. They  
all died. Twenty thousand chickens  
burned to death at Illiopolis.

It wasn't in the next newscast.  
But all morning I saw them burning.  
All morning I heard eggs roasting.  
And there were feathers in the frosting.

— KATHI DAVIS

## HAIKU

A bamboo shoot twisting itself oaklike, yet  
never gaining longed for bark

— BRUCE CLAIRE

A spider of doubt, lying thumbcrushed  
by my love

— BRUCE CLAIRE

— THOMAS E. LOWDERBAUGH

Things might have been better if I hadn't taken three left turns; that's what got me into this mess. But when I looked both ways I decided it looked nicer on the left and, so, I went that way.

Anyway, there's no use in complaining; that's life. The boxwood was so lush and the grass looked awfully thick and deep . . . but anyway, there's no use in complaining. I remember one girl I met in here who kept on complaining about all the turns and blind-alleys; she didn't understand it all. It got on my nerves to hear her constantly talking; so I finally told her, "Look; quit complaining. The same thing all the time!" She didn't know how to appreciate how beautiful the boxwood is, or how nice it is to be able to look straight up on a clear night and see the stars. I told her. She got mad and left me at the next turn. I still remember how she looked when she turned away.

Of course, there's always the problem of the moon. It all started when some of us got together once at an intersection (by chance, naturally!) and someone said that there must be a something else up there besides the stars because sometimes at night there'd be a special glow just beyond the top of the boxwood. Somebody else said that that was ridiculous since nobody had ever seen it; it couldn't be. And then somebody else said that it didn't make any difference if there was or if there wasn't since it didn't have any effect on us. That's where the whole argument really started — when someone asked how he could be so sure. Eventually we separated, but since then everyone I've met seems to have heard of the problem and we always end up discussing it.

Some people here are always getting bored. I've always remembered that my mother — the last time I saw her was when I went straight ahead and she turned right — told me always to see how beautiful everything is — how thick the grass is, how dense the boxwood is, and how nice it is when the stars shine on a clear night. She always used to tell me never to get upset or use bad words if I took a wrong turn or not to get mad if the rules goofed me up — the rule that you can't turn around to go backward, for example. She told me always to control myself.

But this doesn't have anything to do with my problem — like I

said it's all because I took three left turns. (Sometimes I wonder if I'm the only one who ever takes left turns.) Things looked a lot better that way. The boxwood is always just too tall to reach over and just too thick to push through, but down that way — the left, I mean — well, it looked like somehow it might be getting shorter or thinner. Of course, I didn't know where I was going, but then nobody ever does — that's just a part of the whole thing. Some people get very upset because it's laid out this way, but there's no point to that — as I said, it's useless to complain. Anyway, the first left turn wasn't so bad; there in the middle of a big open space was a big flower bed of poppies — all sorts of single and double Shirley poppies. There was a light breeze and they waved on their thin stems. There were the deepest reds and clearest whites there. Around the outside of the bed was a border of little white flowers that had a heavy smell to them; I don't know what they're called — I've never seen anything like them. Like I said, that first turn wasn't so bad, but I hated to have to pass that flower bed — but then that's part of the rules.

The second left turn wasn't very special, just ordinary like most of the rest of them. I think if I'd gone right instead of left at the next one, I might actually have . . . But it's all because of some stupid girl I met. I should have known better — but what she could do with her hands! Anyway we split at the next turn (there was a very small apple tree planted there) when she went straight ahead and I went left and now I'm stuck in this dead-end all alone. Maybe someday somebody will end up in here with me. It wouldn't be so bad if the rules would just let you turn around and have a second try, but . . . well, that's the rules. I'd like somebody else to end up in here with me (I think I said that) but I've heard that this thing is so large and so twisted and that it has so many dead-ends that nobody will probably ever get lost in here with me. (Sometimes when the wind is stopped and it gets real quiet I think I can hear people on the other side of the hedge, but there's never any answer when I call.) Some people even talk about getting out of here, but that's ridiculous — even if you ever did get out of this thing with its damned pattern where would you be? (I was once told that there is a dead-end for everyone, but I don't believe it.) This place really wouldn't be so bad, I suppose, if I wasn't in here alone, with only the boxwood.

hours of forgetfulness

disemboweling glances

during the blazoned morning-afters

feeling ever the irrepressible need to share

i inhale your name —

as morning mist is taken deeply within

confessing its birth at my birth —

upon these lips

the hours drop slowly into eternity's blackest well —

measured by a vaporous bath, a lingering touch

ever-blooming flowers of night unfold their secrets to us

and we whisper in mellow murmurs

silencè becomes a demon

slain by the tattooed pounding of one heart upon another

we suddenly utter the syllables

of jasmine lips and groaning muscles

the shared thing

sensing incessantly

breathing hyacinthed air

living the hours of forgetfulness

— ARTHUR CHICK

I didn't know what to do with my hands. They just wouldn't fit into my pockets. I tried twice, but ever'body who walked by turned and looked at me and so I gave up tryin' to stuff them away and just let them hold each other. But they didn't like that either and kept lettin' go until I just sorta gave up and started countin' the warts on them.

Dad came into the hall just as I was beginnin' the third count. I was wonderin' if it would come out sixteen or seventeen when he said, "She wants to see you, Son."

By "she," he meant my mom. She was to have an operation this mornin' so that's why I had to scrub and put on a suit and stand in the smelly hospital hall with people starin' at me until Mom could see me. I didn't wanta come, but last night when Dad said, "You can see Mother before surgery in the morning," he didn't leave me no out. I guess he thought I was looking forward to it, so I just nodded like I was looking forward to it.

Mom looked real good. She was all smiles when we walked in and she didn't seem to care whether I'd washed my ears good or not. She asked me all sorts of questions 'bout school and all, but I could tell she wasn't listenin' to my answers so I got to scratchin' and standin' on one foot and then the other until a nurse come in and said we'd have to go. I knew I should kiss Mom. I didn't wanta — not with ever'body watchin', but Mom's eyes kinda said, "I'd like to kiss you if you can stand it." So I leaned down and we sorta kissed and then Mom held me real close like I do my dog, Sam, and finally she let go of me.

Out in the hall, Dad said I could go on home if I wanted and he'd stay to see how Mom got along. Boy! That was what I wanted to hear and I beat it out of there!

Walkin' home I felt funny. That smell was all over me and I wanted it to rain real bad. Rain would feel good, runnin' down my face and drippin' off the end of my nose — and then — I'd be clean. But I looked the sky over and there wasn't even one teeny cloud and then I was chokin' — I guess the smell of the hospital was makin' me sick — and then it got to my eyes and I had tears a-comin'. That's why I ran the rest of the way. I wasn't sad nor scared nor nothin', but I wanted to wash out that hospital smell real bad.

When I got home, I quick changed my clothes and then without anybody tellin' me to, I washed — good. The smell wasn't so strong then, so I turned on T.V. and sat down to watch.

I had just fixed a two layered peanut butter, dill pickle and mayonnaise sandwich and poured me a big glass of milk when Dad come in. He sat

down by me and I had my mouth open to ask about Mom when I saw from his eyes that I wasn't to talk — so since I'd gone to the trouble of openin' my mouth, I put the sandwich in instead. It was ever' bit as good as I knew it would be! It's the kinda food that sorta hits your stomach with a thud and you know for hours after that you've got something in it.

After a little while, Dad looked at me and said, "Son, your mother's dead. I don't know why — the doctors aren't even sure yet — she just — she just —," and he couldn't talk no more. I couldn't think of a thing to say neither, so we just sat there and I studied the floor in the kitchen. It was pretty dirty and I wondered who was goin' to wash it now. And then a minute later, I wondered why I couldn't cry for Mom.

Pretty soon, Dad went upstairs and I was glad 'cause I wanted another sandwich and somehow it didn't seem right to fix it in front of him. It was ever' bit as good as the first one and I could almost hear the thud when it went down too. But in a minute, it kinda rolled around and I wisht I'da stopped at one. That hospital smell was comin' back too so I beat it outa the house hopin' the fresh air could blow it away and besides, I knew I could get into a ballgame at the park.

It was gettin' dark when I turned the corner to our block and I knew I'd get heck for bein' out so late, but I'd forgotten all'bout the time, and Mom and ever'thin' and now all I could smell was me — and I smelled *good!*

There was a bunch of flowers on the door and I knew it was 'cause Mom was dead, yet somehow I also knew she'd be waitin' supper for me . . .

'Course Mom wasn't there, but it seemed like ever'body else in town was. They all patted me and fed me and kept sayin', "Poor boy. It's so hard for him," and stuff like that. No one asked where I'd been, so pretty soon I sneaked away and got into bed.

I closed my eyes and then I saw all sorts of things — flowers, white beds, nurses, and dogs. Just then I remembered that tomorrow Dad and I was supposed to go to the vet's to get Sam. The doc said by Tuesday he'd be all well after bein' hit by that car and tomorrow was Tuesday. I hoped Dad wouldn't forget what with Mom dyin' and all — mebbe I'd have to remind him, but I would 'cause I was countin' on havin' Sam home again.

Squeezin' my eyes shut real hard helped. When I did that, I saw black, then purple, then real bright dots which went shootin' from side to side. I was trying to figure out what shape the dots were when I guess I musta fell asleep 'cause the next thing I knew, it was mornin'.

Ever'body was sittin' around the kitchen drinkin' coffee when I come down. Dad looked like he hadn't even been to bed and I thought I'd better wait a little 'fore I mentioned gettin' Sam, so I said, "Good mornin'," and then sat down and ate ever'thin' Aunt Sue put in front of me.

After 'while, I said real quick, "Dad, can we bring Sam home this mornin'?"

He turned his head real slow and looked me square in the face. I thought he was angry and was goin' to hit me, but in a minute, he smiled kinda and reached out his hand to muss my hair and said real soft, "Yes, Son. Soon's I shave, we'll go get Sam."

I went outside to sit on the steps while I waited for Dad. People goin' by would stop and ask how we was gettin' along and three times I had to get up and hold open the screen door for some neighbor bringin' in food. I knew why ever'one was bein' so kind — it was on account of Mom dyin'. That's always when people are the nicest. They yell at you for cuttin' through their yard on the way to school and then bring chocolate cake and pat your head when your Mom's dead, but they seem so strange that you kinda get choked up and I was wishin' that Miss Haley would quit pattin' and start yellin' like she always did.

Seemed like it was takin' Dad hours to get ready, but I guess I was just too much in a hurry to get Sam and have him home. Finally, he came out, banged the screen shut and muttered, "Let's go, Boy."

The ride to the vet's wasn't long, but it seemed like forever to me 'cause I could hardly wait to hug old Sam in my arms and 'rassle' with him on the grass.

When we got there, I beat Dad out of the car and ran real fast into the office. The doc came out and I asked real quick, "Where's Sam? We come to get him. You said we could take him today. Where is he?"

The doc was stammerin' and stutterin' and then I guess he remembered who we was when Dad come in 'cause he said, "Yes, well, er . . . Certainly. I'll bring Sam right out."

He come back in a minute carryin' Sam in his arms. Good ole Sam wagged his tail when he saw me. The doc put him on the floor and I called to him, but he didn't come, so I went over and picked him up. It felt so good to hold him close. I pushed my face into his neck like I always did when I held him and nuzzled him. And then it happened!!! I started chokin' and coughin' and 'fore I knew it, I was screamin' and cryin'. I couldn't stop. I tried, but I just kept hollerin' and blubberin'. Then Dad was shakin' my shoulders and shoutin', "What's wrong? What's got into you? Why're you cryin' and carryin' on like this? What is it, Boy?"

At last with one big breath, I screamed, "Sam's gonna die! He ain't gonna live! He's gonna die!!!"

The doc come over and said real gentle-like, "Sam's not going to die, Son. No, Son, he's fine now. Just needs a little more rest and he'll be romping around like new."

"He's dyin'! He's gonna die! God's gonna take him away!! I know! I know! I *know* he's gonna die!!!"

Dad shook me again and asked, "What makes you think a big healthy dog like Sam is going to die? Why the doc told you, Boy, he's just getting all well."

I tried not to say it. I didn't want to tell them, but then I couldn't help it anymore and at the top of my voice I screamed, "I *know* he's gonna die 'cause — 'cause he smells — he smells just like Mom did!!! *He smells just like Mom!!!*"

Dad's fist come out in a hurry. I saw red, black and yellow, I think, and then for a bit, I didn't see nothin'. When I was gettin' up offa the floor, I could see that his eyes was real mad this time, but I could hush now. I wiped my nose on my sleeve, picked up Sam and carried him out to the car.

Dad didn't speak to me all the way home. When we got back to the house, he got out and slammed the car door and then stomped into the house.

I took Sam out back and we sat under a tree at the end of the lot. As we was talkin' to each other, I told him all about Mom and I coulda swore he knew just what I was sayin'. His eyes had real tears in 'em and that made me want to hold him real close.

That night, Aunt Sue made a bed for Sam on the floor beside me. She said it was so's the first thing I'd see in the mornin' was Sam waggin' his tail.

'Fore I went to bed, I told Dad I was sorry, but he wouldn't even look at me. I knew I'd really made him mad this time — worse'n breakin' the neighbor's windows with a baseball!!

Sam died that night.

In the mornin', I took a shovel and a box and buried him under the big tree at the back — where I'd held him half the day before. I didn't cry none. I cried before and Sam knew how I felt about him. There wasn't no need to cry now.

At breakfast, Aunt Sue was real cheerful. I liked her smilin' over the eggs. She brought me my plate and asked, "How's Sam this morning?"

"Sam's dead. I buried him 'fore breakfast — back under the big tree."

Aunt Sue got tears in her eyes and Dad turned around to stare at me, but he didn't say nothin', so I ate my eggs and said, "Scuse me," and left the table.

I decided to go for a walk. I knew no one 'ud want me around 'til after lunch when I had to go to Mom's funeral. I didn't wanta see none of the boys. I kinda felt all mixed up and I didn't wanta talk to no one so I headed for the south side of town to the drainage ditch where I knew I could sit with no one to pester me.

The water in the ditch was just right — so muddy that you couldn't see through it. That made me feel good for some reason. I kept tossin' twigs and pebbles in it and thinkin' all the while how much I hated my dad.

He'd always been mean to Mom and me. Sometimes, when he didn't like what Mom cooked, he'd smash his plate on the floor, slam out of the house and go downtown to eat. Mom would cry as we picked up the broken plate, but she never spoke a word agin' him.

Then I thought about the model plane he bought for my birthday one time. He was helpin' me build it, but he couldn't understand the directions and he got so mad he smashed his fist into it. I cried a long time after that.

Before I got real good at changin' the grades on my report card, he used to slap me and make me go to bed hungry ever'time I brought it home.

The longer I sat and thought, the more I knew how much I hated my dad. It made me miss Mom more than ever. Then all at once it come to me and I knew why I couldn't cry for Mom. She was the lucky one. She wouldn't have him houndin' her no more. I still had to live with him.

The sun looked about noon so I went on home. When I got there, there was a terrible row goin' on.

"A new dress? My God, Sue! What good's a new dress for a dead woman?"

Aunt Sue was cryin'. "All right! I'll pay for it! She's lucky to have got out of your penny-pinching grasp," she yelled.

There was more, but I got up to my room and stretched out on the bed and put a pillow over my head so I couldn't hear the rest.

A little later, Aunt Sue tapped on my door and come in. Time to get dressed for the funeral. You're to sit with me."

I know I had to go, but at least I was glad to be sittin' with my Aunt Sue.

When we got home from buryin' Mom, Aunt Sue cooked supper, did up the dishes, kissed me on the forehead and started for the door. "I'll go along now. Call me if you need me."

Soon's the door slammed, Dad reached for the bottle in the cupboard. He hadn't spoke a word all afternoon and now he didn't say nothin' — just sat there drinkin' and starin'.

I wanted to watch T.V. but I was scared he wouldn't like the noise so I got out a book and pretended I was studyin'. After 'while I said, "G'night," and went up to bed.

I was just beginnin' to doze when I heard him clomp up the stairs — bumpin' into the wall on both sides. Then he threw open the door to my room and grabbed me out of bed. He took holda my shoulders and started shakin' me — hard.

"Say your mother smells like a dog, will you? So she smells like a dog, you brat!! Say a thing like that about your dead mother . . ."

He started poundin' me with his fists — beatin' as hard as he could. I fell down and he stumbled over me. My head hurt and I was cryin' — still he kept liftin' his arm and punchin' me in the stomach. I couldn't move away. I was too scared. Finally, he kicked me and then jest lay still.

My eyes fell on my huntin' knife on the table by the bed and sniffin' as quiet as I could I started inchin' toward it. He was layin' there breathin' hard, and in the dark, I couldn't tell if he was watchin' me, or not.

At last, I hadda hold of the knife and just lookin' at its sharp bright blade made my stomach get a big knot in it. I didn't want to rouse him, but I knew I couldn't stand no more beatin's so I inched over to him real careful. When I got close, I could see his eyes was closed. He was in a drunk sleep. I hurt all over now, but I rested and tried to get up my strength. I knew I *had* to — no matter how bad I hurt.

I raised the knife high in the air over his chest and all at once ever'thin' went black. I couldn't see nothin'. All I could do was take in a real deep breath and then — there it was again — the smell — like Mom — like Sam. I started chokin' and the tears started comin' and the smell was right there — —real strong! Only this time — it smelled good!

### WHO HOOTS?

Only owls know this  
doubly inner ache:  
how the  
awful emotional bowels  
refuse to move.  
Only owls understand.  
It's why they howl.

— KATHI DAVIS

### BUTTERFLY

Fluttering quietly, ceaselessly,  
On sun-golden wings;  
Summer days.

— CAROL RIHA

### HAIKU

In the dirt of the street,  
Between quick footsteps —  
The sun in a puddle.

— CAROL RIHA

### THE INEXPLICABLE

Not having the brains to love him,  
She used her heart instead.  
If spiritual her love wasn't,  
It was certainly spirited.

"I can't expurcate it either,"  
Said she, in his warm arms hid  
"We just sort of boister each other."  
And, indeed, they did.

— KATHI DAVIS

# Donato

Gerald Donato is a graduate student in art at Northern. His primary interest is in the intaglio process, though he is a versatile artist whose drawings and paintings are equally as imaginative as his work in etching and engraving. TOWERS is again proud to present the work of a promising young Northern artist.

Published in this portfolio are drawings and etchings done by Donato including this year's NEWMAN CLUB AWARD winning etching, *Abraham and Isaac* (shown on page 25). The prints have been reproduced here in their original color on special paper so as to give the reader the closest approximation to the original work as possible.

Donato's recent works have been of powerful allegorical figures. His winged figures call to mind some of the mysterious, mythological monsters of Medieval man's imagination. The imagery of Donato's figures have the same element of superstition and fear of the unknown which inspired men in the dark ages, just past the threshold of Christianity, to decorate their first Romanesque cathedrals with allegorical, pagan-like figures.

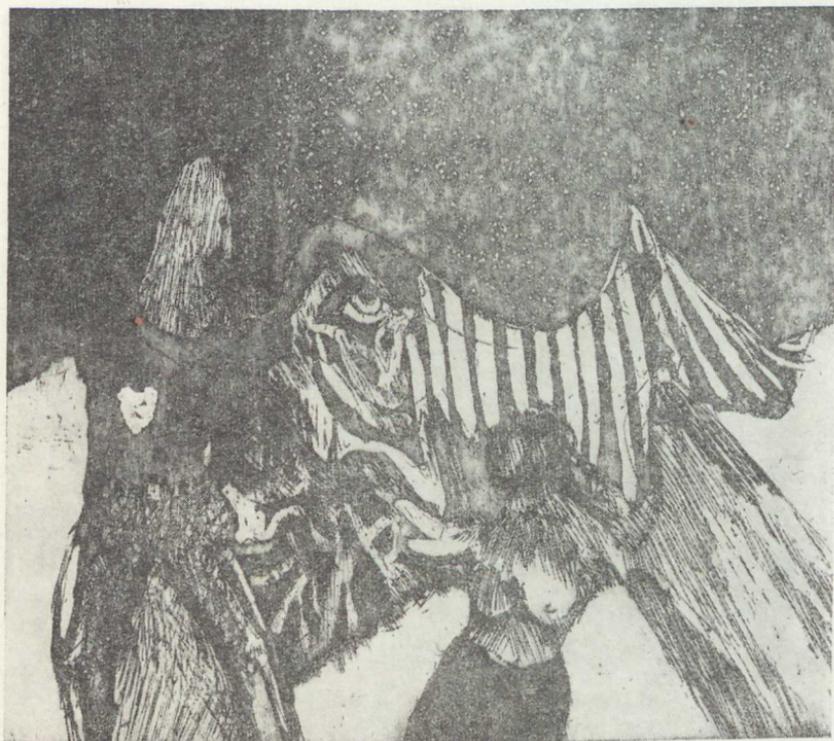
A frequent point of departure for Donato is his research of the Old Testament for subject matter rich in illustrative potential. His own fertile imagination thus intellectually stimulated by the writings of the early prophets creates highly original imagery to complement their writing.

The staff of TOWERS feels that Donato's rich imagery will give the reader a delightful and perhaps thought provoking exposure to the work of a fine young talent.

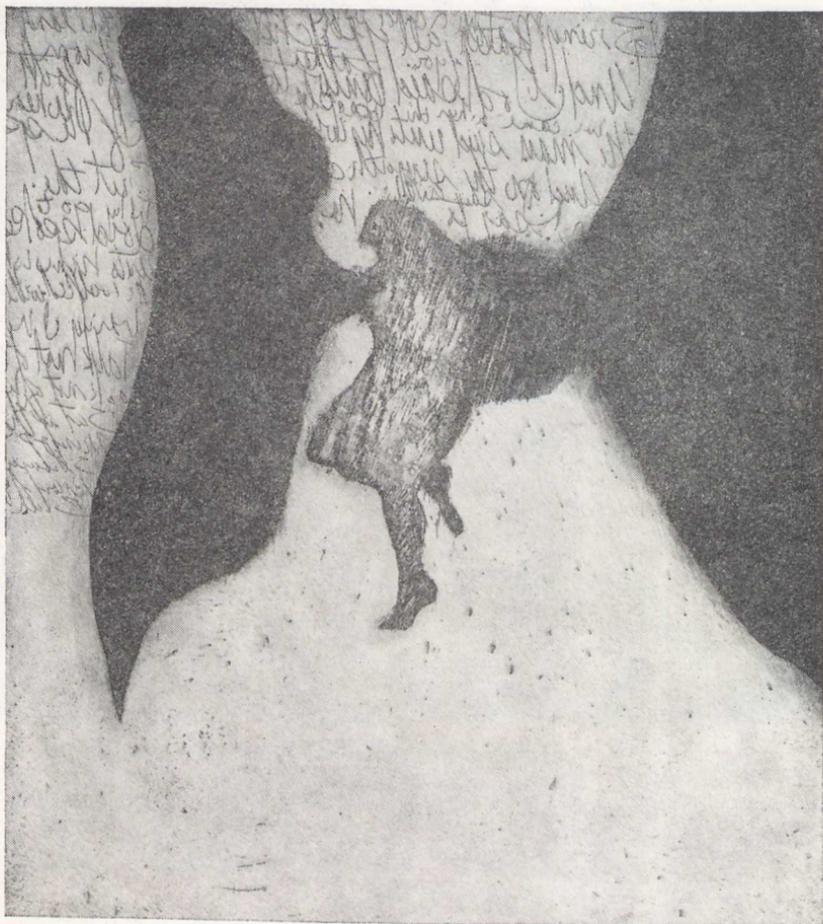




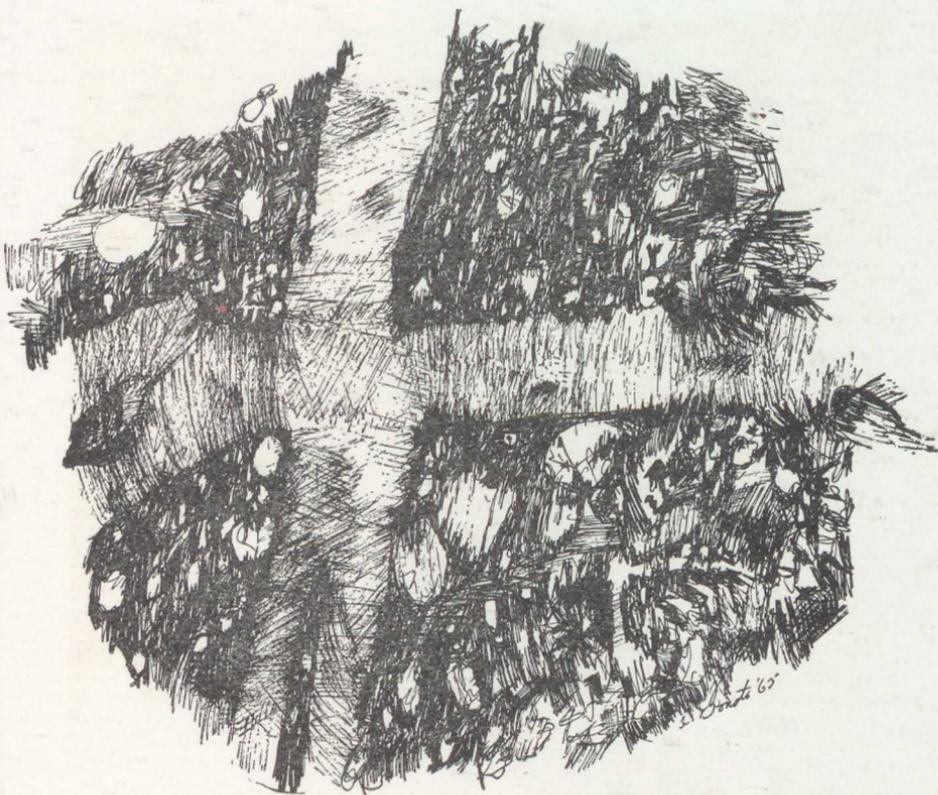
CAIN AND ABEL



ABRAHAM AND ISAAC  
*Newman Club Award, 1964*



BEHOLD THE MAN



### MORNING

Consolation remains now  
in the fact of tree-  
green next to blue;

but to indictments of dark  
can I protest, emptyhanded,  
that we loved once?

— ROBERTA HANSON

When milkweeds abandon  
their seven thousand wishes  
to unfurrowed earth,

where are those lovers whose  
dream might float them  
onto fertile fields?

— ROBERTA HANSON

## THE OLD HOME

— ULRICH WICKS

In the northernmost part of Germany, where the Danish peninsula juts out between the *Nordsee* and the *Ostsee*, you'll find a small city filled with cobblestone streets, and with a spired city hall called a *Rathaus*. To the Allies in the last war it was an important target, for it links the railroad between Kiel and Hamburg. On a map of Germany it's a small dot beneath small letters; on a map of Europe it doesn't appear at all; on my birth certificate it's spelled out: Neumünster.

On one of its widest cobblestone streets is the old stone house where I was born. It was built in the late nineteenth century in a style very popular at that time. It's of drab gray stone and three stories high. The roof, of dull red tile, rises steeply from the second floor and then makes a sharp bend from the third and climbs gradually upward, very much like the roofs of thatched cottages you find in picture books. Because of this steep roof, the third floor juts out like a gigantic dormer. Viewed from the side, the building may remind you of the silhouette of a Wisconsin dairy barn, though the house's angles are sharper and its colors not so bright. This lack of color is nicely hidden by the bright details that ornament it.

A sparkling-white wooden fence stands between the clean sidewalk and the garden. In front of this fence we were playing ball one day, hoping for a little warm sun to peek through the clouds, when an old man with a horse walked slowly toward us. Over his shoulder was a camera, and I wanted my picture taken with the horse. But in those times, there was no money.

There are rosebushes behind the fence. In spring the buds sometimes poked through the fence. The girl next door used to stick her nose between the pickets to sniff them. Once she got stung by a bee. I watched my grandmother trim it on Saturday nights, clean-up nights, while I helped sweep the sidewalk and rake the ground. Afterwards there was always the smell of hot soup and the warm taste of black bread just out of the oven.

The crisp freshness of the white windows contrasts gently with the aged mellowness of the whole scene. The windows open out in the

European style, with criss-crossed transoms. The first floor window is built in the form of an alcove, the top of which serves as a balcony for the second floor. Thin white curtains flutter in these windows.

Sometimes, when I knew that the curtains would be parted by a face calling suppertime, I would slip off to the fields at the end of the block. They were soggy meadows, really. One of them was pitted by deep scars left by bombs. The bombs hadn't hit anything — except maybe a fleeing hare or a frog. The round holes filled up with water; in winter they froze over for ice skating. I liked to sit here, but not too close because one boy already had drowned in one. I remember something about how they used prisoners to remove the live bombs that hadn't gone off. I always threw stones in, wondering how deep they were. Sometimes a frog would hop by and I'd grab him, watching his eyes. The girls told us not to touch the frogs because we would get warts.

Sometimes on late Saturday evenings we'd get to go out in the back yard and watch the moon and stars. The yard was huge, with many sheds, from the old days, when people used to keep their own pigs, chickens and horses. We would go inside when the sound of rats stirring in the garbage pile back by the vegetable garden scared us. Inside, the big light above the dining room table was turned on as my brother and I bathed in the big metal tub that my grandmother placed on it. The radio would be on, and maybe we'd get a piece of bittersweet chocolate afterward.

The house is far away in place and time. I've got the picture here; and yet the thoughts come drifting like from between the pages of one of the books you read when you're little: its warmth when seen from a distance along the shiny cobblestone street, especially when I had just gone to the corner with ten *pfennings* for a crisp cellophane surprise package, wondering what kind of candy would be in it; the aura of old-world peace in contrast to the television antenna high up on the roof now; the sauerkraut and fish smells coming from the butcher shop and the stifling heat from the back of the wooden store where the baker had his ovens.

His big store had been blown to pieces by a bomb, the same night the roof of our house was burned up from incendiary bombs. But we had a new roof now, and the whipped-cream *Torten* looked just as good in the new smaller wooden store, and the hot rolls in the morning tasted just as good.

There was the little red chimney where the grimy chimney sweep in top hat and tails would sweep out soot with his broom. We were scared of him, and once my mother made us stand before him while she told him of something rowdy we had done. I remember his white

teeth shining in the middle of his black face, and his hand rubbing smooth soot on our faces as punishment.

I remember the sound of the milkman's bell in the morning, and the housewives running with pots and pitchers to buy the meager milk that always had a water rim around it; the smith who pulled his funny-looking cart and yelled that he could sharpen knives and scissors; and once in a while a boy walked past and looked sadly at our house because he lived with the gypsies and the refugees in the metal huts outside of town; he always had a runny nose and sometimes I gave him a piece of bread during recess at school; when we moved to Canada I gave him my school satchel so he could carry his books on his back like all the others.

The house still stands on that quiet street. The cobblestone rumbles with more cars now; the milk doesn't have a water rand anymore; the bomb holes have been filled and houses built on the meadows.

But somehow, quite pleasantly, it doesn't seem real.

### OF ONESELF

if this were the essence . . .

gosling's down to warm  
soft fog meadows to wander  
ripe scented pomegranates to wean  
darkness to wear  
the child or the beast to wake  
perhaps i would know why

you exist

— ARTHUR CHICK

I kiss the snow

As the fresh, crisp flakes melt on warm lips;  
New love passing.

— CAROL RIHA

## MUPWIT

— LEE FEE

Mupwit! Melvin Mupwit! Can ya beat it? With a name like that I'd give up already. I look at the order sheet again, an I think how maybe it's a gag, cause those creeps down in the mimeo room is aluz doin' things like that. I figger maybe I oughtta check, so I go to the boss and ask 'im does he know this Mupwit character — an all the time I'm thinkin' what I'm gonna do to those jokers downstairs. Well, ya coulda floored me! This Mupwit guy is real. An efficiency expert, the boss sez, come to check are we efficient. Already he bugs me, but I figger I'll give 'im the once over. I mean, with a name like Mupwit! . . . Well, I grab an elevator, an before ya can say, "Susie Girl in the fifth," I'm there — face to face with Mupwit.

A shrimp! I mean, I seen some shrimps in my time, but this guy has 'em all beat. He must be all of five feet when he stretches, an I figger he tips the scales at a hundred drippin' wet. He has one a them skinny English suits, ya know the kind. Most guys look like stuffed sausages in 'em, but not Mupwit! On him it hangs! That's how skinny he is. An he wears these glasses — the old fashioned kind with no rims. He's aluz foolin' with 'em — puttin' 'em on an takin' 'em off. He's really sumpt'en to see. I mean, when he's puttin' 'em on, he gets 'em all lined up 'bout a foot in front of his face, and butts his head inta 'em, like he wasn't sure they was gonna stay there, then screws his neck around 'til he gets the end pieces over his ears. One time he don't do it right — just catches one ear, ya know — an them glasses hang down the middle of his face for five minutes while he tries to figger what he done wrong.

A calm man Mupwit ain't! . . . an ya don't need no crystal ball to figger this out. I mean, he jiggles! Not just once in a while, but all the time. Ya talk to 'im — he jiggles. Ya look at 'im — he jiggles. I mean, it's a regular thing with 'im.

At first the jigglin' don't bother me none, but ya see a guy five days a week go 'round jigglin' an it eats at ya, ya know? So one day, when he comes 'round to check am I bein' efficient, I say to 'im right out; "How come ya don't take sumpt'en for that jigglin'?" I mean, don't it tire ya out an all? Well, that only makes 'im jiggle worse, so I figger live an let live, ya know?

I don't see Mupwit for a coupla weeks on account he's in Spare Parts

checkin' are they efficient. Then one Saturday, I'm comin back from Schultz's an I'm feelin' good 'cause Susie Girl finally come in paying ten to one, an who do I see? Ya guessed it! Mupwit! He's comin down the street like he's doin' the forty yard dash in a strong gale.

I'm feelin' pretty good, ya know, so I figger I'll be sociable and give 'im the greetin'. Right away I knowd it was a mistake. I mean, not only does he start jigglin', but he comes on with this bobbin' business, too. (The bobbin's sumpt'en new, ya unerstand). Well, I'm feelin' pretty stupid standin' there in the middle of the sidewalk with him jigglin' and bobbin' all over the place, so I looka round tryin' to figger some place to drag 'im into, an I spot Marty's Bar an Grill down the block. I point it out to 'im, an say how maybe we oughtta go inside on accountta we're blockin' traffic an all, an then I shove 'im a little just to get 'im movin'.

Well, we get into Marty's, an right off ya can see Mupwit ain't never been in a bar before. I mean, he starts in gawkin' and sniffin' an jigglin' an bouncin', an when he's done doin' that, he starts in checkin' is things bein' run efficient. Ya shoulda seen Marty when all this is goin' on. He just stands there lookin' at Mupwit, an he don't let go with even one good cuss word. I can see how he feels, 'cause Mupwit in action is sumpt'en ya gotta get used to — an even then it ain't easy.

I figger Marty ain't gonna stay clammed up for long, so I hustle Mupwit into a back booth, an order a coupla beers, then I sit there tryin' to figger what to do with 'im. It ain't easy, I can tell ya, but finally it comes to me. I go to the bar, pick up the beers, an I say to Marty how, in a coupla minutes, he should make like a call come for me an I gotta get home fast. Marty gives me the nod, but he still don't take his eyes off Mupwit.

Well, I start back with the beers, an I see Mupwit lookin' over the scratch sheet I got from Schultz's. An I mean he's really givin' it the once over. He's got it three inches from his nose, an . . . That's when it hit me! I mean, like a ton of bricks, it hit me. Mupwit ain't jigglin'! He ain't bobbin' or foolin' with them glasses a his. He ain't doin' nuthin but sittin' there, an he's got this goofy kinda grin on his face. It just ain't natural, not for Mupwit anyways.

Well, I tell ya, I really make a bee-line for 'im 'cause I figger maybe he's croaked or sumpt'en, an I know Marty ain't gonna like havin' no stiff on his hands; 'specially since there'd be cops around an all. I get up to Mupwit, — an I mean I'm workin' up a good sweat — an what happens? He gives me this look, like I was a cement wall or sumpt'en, an he says kinda dreamy-likes, "Belinda Bell is a lovely name, isn't it?"

Can ya beat it? There I am, thinkin' he's done for, an he's sittin' there all ga-ga over the slowest nag this side a Pimlico. Well, I tell ya, I don't know should I sock 'im one or what. I'm still decidin' when Marty gives a

yell. I gotta get right home, he sez, on accounta my ole lady (which I ain't got) is throwin' a fit.

Well, with that, Mupwit's back to normal — for him, I mean — jigglin' an bobbin', an thankin' me for the beers (which, we ain't drunk). I tell 'im, "Yeah, that's ok," an I blow.

The next day I'm goin' to Schultz's, figgerin' to spread some scratch on a coupla sure things, when I bump into this guy I know. Well, we start shootin' the breeze, an pretty soon he asks did I hear 'bout the big upset at Aquaduct. I tell 'im I ain't, an he tells me how Belinda Bell, who is the longest long-shot in any book, comes in payin' forty to one — straight across the board. Well, we chew on that until he's gotta go. I keep on walkin' to Schultz's, only I don't get there, cause all of a sudden I start rememberin' Mupwit an how he stopped jigglin' when he comes on Belinda Bell's name. I start thinkin' how maybe there's some kinda connection. Then I say to myself, "I must be nuts! I mean, What does Mupwit know? The whole thing's just what ya call a coo-incidence."

Well, it keeps eatin' at me, ya know, an pretty soon I'm so antsy I gotta do sumpt'en, so I find a phonebook an look up Mupwit's address. I grab a hack an pretty soon I'm at his place — but what's to say? I mean, I can't tell 'im what I'm thinkin' on accounta he'd get wise. An besides, I ain't sure what I am thinkin'.

Mupwit musta seen me pull up, 'cause before I can come up with a line, he's outta the door an jigglin' an bouncin', an sayin' "hello-hello" — "good to see you-good to see you" — "come in-come in" 'bout a dozen an a half times. The hackie gives me a look, but I make like I don't notice. Well, I go in, an right off Mupwit starts apologizin' for keepin' my paper, an he gives me back the scratch sheet. That's when the idea hits me. I tell 'im it's ok, an the reason I come is to see would he like to go the track. Well, he jumps at the idea, an grabs this umbrella, an's already to go. I ask 'bout the umbrella, on accounta there ain't a cloud in the sky, but he just smiles an sez sumpt'en 'bout how "one never knows." I let it go, I mean, I figger it's his business, an besides he's the one gotta tote it around.

Well, we get to the track an first off I get a coupla sheets, an then I get Mupwit in a quiet corner, give 'im a sheet, an wait for 'im to stop jigglin'. I ask 'im does he want me to place a bet for 'im, but he sez it's against his principles. Well, it's no skin offa my nose, ya know, so I tell 'im I'll be back, an I head for the windows. I don't worry 'bout 'im 'cause already he's checkin' to see is things efficient.

Well, I still ain't sure this thing's gonna come off, so I play it close. I tell ya, the first three nags they come in smooth as butter, an I come back to where Mupwit is, an I'm holdin' two hundred an fifty clams in my fist, an I could kiss the guy, I'm that happy. Mupwit, he ooh's an aah's, an after he

gets over seein' the green, he starts in tellin' me how the track ain't bein' run efficient. Well, I tell 'im how that's a shame, an he should write to his Congressman an all, an we head for the deck to watch the next race.

I ain't feelin too sure 'bout this one, on accounta the horse Mupwit stopped jigglin' on is Hannibal's Harem, an there ain't a more unpredictable horse anywheres. I mean, everyone's all the time sayin' how she could be fast as lightnin' if only she'd get over actin' goofy every time she run.

We get to the deck, an I notice how the sky is gettin' dark, but the horses start comin' out, an right off I can see Hannibal's Harem ain't gonna be no different than usual. I mean, first she prances over to the fence an tries to get at some dame's hot dog, an when the jockey pulls 'er off, she starts runnin' in circles an hoistin' her rump in a air. It was pretty funny an all, but I figger Mupwit goofed on this one, so I don't bet her.

Well, they're all in the gate — 'cept Harem, she wantsa go in backwards — but they get her straightened out, an then there's the gun. The other nags take off down the track like they was makin' for a field of clover, but Harem, she's two-steppin' and struttin' and waltzin' along nice an easy in the back stretch. An that's when it happened! I tell ya, I ain't never seen nuthin' like it!

Like I said, Harem's 'bout fifteen lengths behind, comin' along nice an easy, see, an then, all of a sudden, there comes this bolt of lightnin', an it hits this here post. Well, Harem, she takes one look, lays back her ears, an takes off down the track like she's jet propelled. Ya shoulda seen it. Everyone's standin' up, an ya could hear a pin drop it's that quiet. Harem, she hits that finish line like it was home plate, an she don't stop for no backslappin' — but keeps on goin' 'til she hits the paddocks. I guess the jockey didn't get hurt too bad.

Well, the officials call a confab, an there's a lotta jawin' an figgerin', but there's nuthin' they can do but say she's the winner, an tell how many track records got broke.

I look at Mupwit, he's standin' there with his umbrella up, 'cause it's comin' down cats an dogs — an he's jigglin' and bobbin' an sayin', "My, wasn't that exciting." An all of a sudden, I ain't feelin' so good. It ain't 'cause I didn't bet, ya unnerstand, it's 'cause — well, it was kinda soopernatural, ya know? My voice ain't workin' so good, but I tell Mupwit how maybe we oughtta call it quits, an I get rid of 'im, an head for Marty's an a coupla long cool ones.

I get to Marty's, an I have more'n a couple, an before ya know it, I'm swearin' Marty to secrecy, an tellin' 'im all 'bout Mupwit an Belinda Bell, an Hannibal's Harem. I'm really shootin' off my mouth, ya know. Marty, he don't bat an eye, but every once ina while he makes with a question, an he gives me another drink on the house.

Well, the next day, I'm feelin' lousy, but I go to work anyways on accounta I gotta see Mupwit. I mean I got over that soo-pernatural stuff, an I'm thinkin' 'bout the Pari-Mutuels which is comin' up the end a the week. I find out he's in conference, givin' his report on are we efficient, so I leave word he should meet me at Marty's after work.

I get to Marty's late, on accounta some big shots come nosin' 'round, an I gotta make it look like I'm really snowed. Well, when I get to Marty's, Mupwit's already there, only he ain't alone. Trixie Tourir's sittin' with 'em. She's Big Brennigan's dame, an right off I start gettin worried, but I go over an make like everything's jake.

Well, I tell ya, after five minutes, I'm sick already. I mean, this Trixie is really givin' Mupwit the ole ya-know-what. She's squeezin' his arm, an nudgin' 'im an givin' with these little screams everytime he shows her one of them efficiency gimmicks a his, an sayin' how, "Ain't he the smart one, though." An Mupwit — well, he's jigglin' an bouncin' 'til I figger he's gonna split a gut. I tell ya, it was naw-seatin'.

I can't take no more, so I tell Mupwit how I'd like to talk to 'im private-like, an I head for the bar. Well, Mupwit, he gets up an he's jigglin' an bobbin', an sayin' "excuse me-excuse me" to this Trixie broad. I order a shot on accounta I need sumpt'en. Mupwit comes over, an I figger to do 'em a favor an clue 'em in on what kinda dame this Trixie is. He listens for 'bout a minute, then he starts gettin' all red in a face, an he starts in sputterin' an pullin' at them glasses a his, an sayin' how I should be ashamed talkin' 'bout a *lady* that way, an how I better start in apologizin' an all. I just stand there. I mean, whatta ya gonna do?

Well, Marty comes over, an I figger he'll lend a hand in makin' Mupwit see what kinda dame he's playin' footsie with. Marty, he looks at Mupwit, an he sez — real polite-like: "This joker botherin' ya, Mr. Mupwit?" I look at 'em. I mean, I really look at 'em! . . . an him — he just looks back at me like he never seen me before in his life. Well, Mupwit starts in tellin' 'im what I said 'bout Trixie, an how it ain't nice an all. Marty, he gives me this look, an says, real soft: "Mr. Brennigan ain't gonna like how ya're talkin' 'bout his *sister*."

I tell ya, I don't need no house to fall on me. I mean, I can see just how it is, so I scam outta there fast, an the last I seen a Mupwit, him an Trixie is makin' like a coupla love birds, an Marty's givin' with the Mr. Mupwit this, an Mr. Mupwit that.

Well, Brennigan an his boys cleaned up on the Mutuels, like I figgered, an they been cleanin' up ever since. The cops is suspicious, an they keep checkin' the horses to see are they doped, but they can't find nuthin. An me—well, it ain't bad enough I louse up a sure thing by shootin' off my mouth, but I'm outta a job, too, on accounta Mupwit, in that report a his, sez I ain't efficient. Can ya beat it? I mean, can ya?

### MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS

"I brought my cross and nails . . . what  
fault are we going to discuss today?"

. . . the young writer  
asks the critic.

"I get loquacious when I drink. It's like  
unzipping my skin and letting my guts fall out."

. . . an average woman  
with an average martini.

— BRAD BREKKE

Playful wind,  
Waiting at the corner to tug my clothes,  
I'm too busy!

— CAROL RIHA

Heavy summer raindrops  
On a thin tiled roof;  
Warm lips kissing my ear.

— CAROL RIHA

## HAIKU

Nights of sleeplessness,  
Life begins to leave its Spring,  
Cutting wisdom teeth.

— CAROL SOLLICH

Spring-blue union field,  
Half masted glory, but old  
Soldiers never die . . .

— CAROL SOLLICH

## A TART SOUND

Land and buildings  
slide under foot  
the sun travels  
dancing over my right shoulder  
my eyes chase it to the lane

In the far  
from the narrow  
a tart sound  
sucks forth  
panting comes  
a death red chariot  
erecting a man  
with twisted woman  
draining in his arms

I feel their empty speed  
move over my  
left shoulder  
and watch them fade

— JOAN ROOT

A shaggy granite finger rose abruptly from the sapphirine mirror  
As if the lake itself the grayish crag had born. Beyond  
The soft green hills gently rolled their pine cones  
to the water.

A fragrant drapery, dark and lush,  
where occasional silver cords of sparkling water  
cascaded laughing to the placid sea.

Further still, the misty brown Sierra promenades  
her glistening crowns

A massive wall, an outline for the powdered sky,  
A muted sweep of continuous color — save  
where rusty granite splinters pierced, and  
slanting shadows grotesque chasms sliced  
in the mountain's face.

Above all, beyond all  
The burning God of day sat  
atop the granite pillar.  
Half a mile below a tiny village  
Contentedly nestled at His feet  
where the gently curving arc of water  
lay lovingly round the rocky throne.

— MICHAEL L. MEEKER

### HER BLISS

She stands arched  
against her sky  
strung with beads  
purple and gold  
breast burning drawn  
to the loadstone glitter  
she floats above its peak  
and hangs  
with swollen load (ungiven milk)  
wishing to somersault down  
like a soft fruit

— JOAN ROOT

"Gotta light, Sarge?"

"Huh!"

"I asked if ya gotta light!"

"Can it! That's all they're waitin' for out there. One lousy, little flare and they've got us."

"They got us anyways, so what's the beef?"

"Just say I like breathin', ok? How's the kid?"

"Whadda'm I — his nursemaid or sump'en?"

"You never change, do you? Hey, kid! How's it goin'?"

"Sarge's talkin' to ya, kid? Whatsa matter — ya a dummy or sump'en?"

"Lay off, will ya? He ain't like you."

"That's for sure. That's for damn sure! Say, ya know, I bet if he was to walk outta here right now, them chinks'd never even see 'em. He'd just blend in with the dark."

"You're real funny, ain't ya?"

"Sergeant! How long you figger it's gonna be?"

"Hey! Ya hear that, Sarge? He can talk!"

"Knock it off! I don't know, kid. Maybe we got 'til daybreak, — maybe not. Sometimes, it's hard to figure."

"Waitin' always this bad, Sergeant?"

"Yeah! It's always this bad."

"It's sure enough funny, ya know. All my life I been waitin'. Didn't see how this'd be no different. Ain't that I's scared, Sergeant. It's jus' — the other kinda waitin' — I know what it was for, an maybe what'd come to. This one — I ain't so sure."

"Say! He's a real, little gabber, ain't he. Well, c'mon, kid! Don't clam up now. I'm real anxious to hear 'bout that other kinda waitin'."

"Whatta you tryin' to prove?"

"Me? Nuthin' — nuthin' at all. Just thought the kid might like some friendly talk, that's all. I mean, how much longer've we got to be friendly? Right, kid? I asked ya a question, kid!"

"Yessuh! That's right."

"Good! Now ain't this better — bein' friendly, I mean? Where'd ya say ya was from, kid?"

"Whatta you care? You ain't goin' there."

"I'm just bein' friendly, Sarge. Ask the kid, he know's I'm just bein' friendly. Ya still ain't tole me where your from, kid?"

"Macon. Macon, Georgia."

"Oh, yeah! I remember now. They know just how to handle things down there, wouldn't ya say, kid? I mean, things like people who get what ya call impatient a waitin'. Now ya take some other cities — they got all these organizations an committees, an they still don't handle things half as good as Macon."

"Look, kid, ya don't have to . . ."

"It don't matter, Sergeant. Ain't no place where it's any different. I been wishin', but wishin' don't do no good. It ain't gonna make them Chinese go way, an it ain't gonna make him act no different. It don't matter now. I guess — maybe even waitin' don't matter."

"Hey, Sarge! Sump'ens movin' out there."

"Sun be comin' up soon."

"Yeah!"

"Man, he tell me once what it's like. 'Like shootin' clay pigeons', he say. 'They come up over the rise, like at a shootin' gallery, an all ya gotta do is line 'em up, curl your finger 'round the trigger — and Bang! He say it's real easy, but I don't know. I never shot no man before.'"

"Whatta ya sayin' 'man'? They ain't men. They're chinks! . . . Lousy little yella bastards!"

"An me? . . . I'm a black bastard, ain't I?"

"Yeah. Yeah! . . . If ya wanna put it that way. You're a black bastard, an' I hope ya get your damn, woolly head blown off."

"Clay pigeons always gotta come in colors. It's like part of the sport, ain't it, mistuh?"

Ezra Pound has translated into English many of the Chinese classics, such as the *Shih Ching*, the *Ta Hsueh* and the *Chung Yung*, works which even educated Chinese often find very puzzling. He has made great contributions to the study of Chinese literature, and he was possibly the only American literary man who felt so keenly the importance of Chinese thought as to write, in 1937, such an essay as his "Immediate Need of Confucius."<sup>1</sup> It is no wonder that we find an authentic Chinese quality in Pound's poems such as "After Chu Yuan," "Liu Che," "Fan-Piece for Her Imperial Lord," and "Ts'ai Chih." Pound's talents in this area, of course, attract many writers' attention. T. S. Eliot called him "the inventor of Chinese poetry."<sup>2</sup>

Pound's *Cathay* is a collection of translations of Chinese poems, mainly from Li Po. Generally speaking, his translation is very good, though there are mistakes. Pound not only makes his translation readable but also brings out the spirit of the original.

In *Cathay* Pound's mistakes are various: the mistaking of a common noun for a proper name and vice versa, ignorance of the Chinese historical background and references, and misinterpretations. All his (or the other translators') mistakes arise from the lack of knowledge of Chinese legend and mythology, the awkwardness of the old written Chinese, and the peculiarities of Chinese grammar. Weighing the fact that many foreigners who have been in the States for ten years do not know that the *Half-moon* is the name of Hendrick Hudson's ship, and I, who have been here nearly two years, do not know what "gerrymander" means, I am of the opinion that all Pound's (or the others') mistakes are understandable. He is not, after all, a linguist but a poet.

Furthermore, it is more difficult to translate Chinese into an Occidental language than to translate one Occidental language into another one. But Pound suffers from another handicap: that is, he translated these poems with the help of Ernest Fenollosa's notes; hence, some mistakes may be Fenollosa's.<sup>3</sup> In any case, however, Pound is responsible for his *Cathay* because he is the translator.

As a Chinese, I like *Cathay* for two reasons: one is that Pound's contribution to China in this book is immense, although he told Iris Barry, a young poetess, modestly that "*Cathay* will give you a hint of China."<sup>4</sup> We can easily imagine how far and wide Pound has made China and Chinese literature known among his contemporaries and his eminent friends such as John Quinn, T. S. Eliot, William Butler Yeats, and Robert Bridges. The other reason is the value of *Cathay* itself.

*Cathay* was published in April, 1915. In the past fifty years, Chinese poetry has been repeatedly translated into English by many Chinese who

know English and by many English-speaking people who know Chinese. But none of their translations can excel Pound's, though they seem to have translated only those poems that translate best. They do not translate those that are ranked most highly as poetry in the original. Take Henry H. Hart's *A Garden of Peonies*<sup>5</sup> for example. In this collection of translations Hart has translated sixteen poems from Li Po; only three of them are among the best. But Pound does. It is worthwhile to pause here for a comparison between Pound's "The Jewel Stairs' Grievance" and Witter Bynner's "A Sigh from a Staircase of Jade."<sup>6</sup>

Pound: *The Jewel Stairs' Grievance*  
The jewelled steps are already quite  
white with dew,  
It is so late that the dew soaks my  
gauze stockings,  
And I let down the crystal curtain  
And watch the moon through the clear autumn.

Bynner: *A Sigh from a Staircase of Jade*  
Her jade-white staircase is cold with dew;  
Her silk soles are wet, she lingered there  
so long —  
Behind her closed casement, why is she  
still waiting,  
Watching through its crystal pane the  
glow of the autumn moon?

Pound's flaw is the unfaithfulness of his second line to the original text. But, to those who do not know Chinese, it may very well seem probable that the night moisture spread by the dew drops can soak the stockings. Without any note Pound's translation is quite readable and expressive.

Let us turn to Bynner's poem. He translates this second line into "silk soles are wet." Either he does not know what the word for *stocking* means, or the lady forgets to put her shoes on. His third line "Behind her closed—" has greatly changed the original ideas. In his fourth line he mistakes "crystal curtain" for "crystal pane." A careful reading of the original reveals that Pound's translation is much better than Bynner's.

Witter Bynner, like Pound, is interested in Chinese literature too. In his *The Jade Mountain* he avoids many of Pound's mistakes, but he makes new ones. He merely renders the original poems word by word into prose. There is no charm and there is no poetic diction in his translation. He lacks something that Pound has. Let us compare two translations of still another poem:

Pound: *The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter*  
While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead

I played about the front gate, pulling flowers.  
You came by on bamboo stilts, playing horse,  
You walked about my seat, playing with blue plums.  
And we went on living in the village of Chokan:  
Two small people, without dislike or suspicion.

At fourteen I married My Lord you.  
I never laughed, being bashful.  
Lowering my head, I looked at the wall.  
Called to, a thousand times, I never looked back.

At fifteen I stopped scowling,  
I desired my dust to be mingled with yours  
For ever and for ever and for ever.  
Why should I climb the look out?

At sixteen you departed,  
You went into far Ku-to-yen, by the river of swirling eddies.  
And you have been gone five months.  
The monkeys make sorrowful noise overhead.

You dragged your feet when you went out.  
By the gate now, the moss is grown, the different mosses,  
Too deep to clear them away!  
The leaves fall early this autumn, in wind.  
The paired butterflies are already yellow with August  
Over the grass in the West garden;  
They hurt me. I grow older.  
If you are coming down through the narrows of the river Kiang,  
Please let me know beforehand,  
And I will come to meet you  
As far as Cho-fu-sa.

Bynner: *A Song of Ch'ang-kan*

My hair had hardly covered my forehead.  
I was picking flowers, playing by my door,  
When you, my lover, on a bamboo horse,  
Came trotting in circles and throwing green plums.  
We lived near together on a lane in Ch'ang-kan,  
Both of us young and happy-hearted.  
. . . At fourteen I became your wife,  
So bashful that I dared not smile,  
And I lowered my head toward a dark corner  
And would not turn to your thousand calls;  
But at fifteen I straightened my brows and laughed,  
Learning that no dust could ever seal our love,  
That even unto death I would await you by my post

And would never lose heart in the tower of silent watching.  
... Then when I was sixteen, you left on a long journey  
Through the Gorges of Ch'ü-t'ang, of rock and whirling water.  
And then came the Fifth-month, more than I could bear,  
And I tried to hear the monkeys in your lofty far-off sky.  
Your footprints by our door, where I had watched you go,  
Were hidden, every one of them, under green moss,  
Hidden under moss too deep to sweep away.  
And the first autumn wind added fallen leaves.  
And now, in the Eighth-month, yellowing butterflies  
Hover, two by two, in our west-garden grasses . . . .  
And, because of all this, my heart is breaking  
And I fear for my bright cheeks, lest they fade.  
... Oh, at last, when you return through the three Pa districts,  
Send me a message home ahead!  
And I will come and meet you and will never mind the distance,  
All the way to Chang'fêng Sha.<sup>7</sup>

In Pound's "The River Merchant's Wife" he misinterprets the line "It is dangerous to get near the reef in May." In May (actually it is June) the Yangtze River overflows and the water covers the dangerous fangs of the reefs. Therefore the merchant's wife warns her husband not to get near the reefs in May. Unluckily, fourteen years after Pound's book appeared, Bynner still does not understand this line and translates it into "And then came the Fifth-month, more than I could bear." There are many other mistakes in Bynner's *The Jade Mountain*, but I do not intend to pick them all out here; I simply want to show that this translator, who worked after Pound, commits the mistakes Pound has made and at the same time makes new ones.

The value of Pound's translation is more than I can describe in English. In Chinese we have two characters to fit Pound's translation: they mean "to convey the most essential spirit of the original." Let us see how Pound conveys the most essential spirit of the original.

In the poem, the merchant's wife, complaining in her letter of the long absence of her husband, writes to tell him that she has waited so long that autumn has come, and that the butterflies born in spring, living through the long summer, have already passed into another stage of their lives, because they are yellow now. What disturbs her most is that the butterflies never come singly; they come by as mated couples, males and females. Now let us see how the poets translate these two lines:

Pound: The paired butterflies are already yellow  
with August  
Over the grass in the West garden.

Bynner: And now, in the Eighth-month, yellowing  
butterflies  
Hover, two by two, in our west-garden grasses.

The reader can easily judge which is the better, but I want to point out that the Chinese word has the meaning of "pair" in "the happy pair" and of "couples" in "a married couple." What makes the merchant's wife restless, anxious, and sad is not the many fluttering butterflies coming and hovering in the garden "two by two" instead of "three by three" but the fact that the butterflies are "married," the state of the male butterfly being close to the female. What irritates her is that the year's harvest (September) has come and the butterflies have already changed their color into yellow (maturity color). Both plants and insects tend toward the continuance of their species, but her husband is far away. This is Li Po's "most essential spirit" here. If a translator ignores this fact and flatly tells us that the butterflies come two by two, then how kood is his translation? It is very probable that in the whole west garden there are only two butterflies, a male and a female, flying side by side or chasing each other with tender passion.

Broadly speaking, Bynner's translation is adequate. But strictly speaking, a translator of poetry should understand the image, the spirit, and the theme of the original before translating it. Upon this standard, only Pound can stand the test.

There is no need to discuss further the other translators<sup>8</sup> here because despite his mistakes Pound's translation is the best in conveying the true spirit of the poem, and despite the mistakes the others' translations are mediocre in this respect.

We should not be blind to the fact that *Cathay* is often quoted.<sup>9</sup> However, as far as I have discovered there has been no scholarly investigation of the *Cathay* translation specifically. There is one good essay on Pound as a translator of Chinese generally. This is Hugh Gordon Porteus' *Ezra Pound and His Chinese Character: A Radical Examination*.<sup>10</sup> Porteus admits Pound's incompetence as a sinologist, as indeed Pound did himself, but praises Pound's rendering of the spirit of the works he translates. Pound himself has not changed *Cathay* since 1915, even though his Chinese must have improved. One must conclude that scholars think that *Cathay* is too unimportant to do anything about it and that Pound thinks it is too perfect to make any amendment. Neither belief is entirely justified.

From beginning to end, I read the *Cathay* translations with a heart full of pleasure and respect. My note-marks scattered here and there among the pages look like patches, but Pound's gown is still new and is of good quality. The sad-looking patches are, obviously, accidental and quite understandable. They will not hurt Pound at all, and they indicate that Pound's *Cathay* is not forgotten.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Ezra Pound, *Impact* (Chicago, 1960), p. 197.

<sup>2</sup>Charles Norman, *Ezra Pound* (New York, 1960), p. 100.

<sup>3</sup>For the association between Pound and Fenollosa, see Norman, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-193.

<sup>4</sup>Norman, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

<sup>5</sup>Henry H. Hart, *A Garden of Peonies* (California 1938), pp. 39-51.

<sup>6</sup>Witter Bynner, *The Jade Mountain* (New York, 1929), p. 54.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup>Shigeyoshi Obata, trans., *The Works of Li Po, the Chinese Poet* (London, 1922). Arthur Waley, trans., *Translations from the Chinese* (New York, 1919). Henry H. Hart., trans., *A Garden of Peonies* (California, 1938).

<sup>9</sup>As in James K. Robinson and Walter B. Rideout, eds., *A College Book of Modern Verse* (New York, 1958), p. 294.

<sup>10</sup>Hugh Gordon Porteus, *Ezra Pound and His Chinese Characters: A Radical Examination* (London, 1950).

### NIGHT

Ocean-winds brush past  
Parched sand-grasses;  
The breathings of my love in sleep.

### CONTRAST

Dewdrops on fresh green fields;  
The glisten of shattered glass  
On city streets.

### CANDLES

Soft-glowing warmth  
Against days of brittle cold;  
A child's December eyes.

### REQUIEM

"Perpetual light . . ."  
Outside a sun-speckled bird  
Flutters its wings and flies.

— CAROL RIHA

# AWARDS

## POETRY

FIRST PRIZE      A TART SOUND      JOAN ROOT  
SECOND PRIZE      "MY MORNINGS ARE VERY EARLY..."      KATHI DAVIS  
THIRD PRIZE      PEOPLE      LEE FEE

## PROSE

FIRST PRIZE      LIKE MOM...LIKE SAM      W. H. CARSON  
SECOND PRIZE      MUPWIT      LEE FEE  
THIRD PRIZE      "THINGS MIGHT HAVE BEEN BETTER..."  
THOMAS E. LOWDERBAUGH

## CRITICAL ESSAY

HONORABLE MENTION

PEN-TI LEE

## JUDGES

LOUIS CAMP

NORMAN LAVERS

KAY LUDWIGSON

VIRGINIA MOSELEY



