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INKSTONE

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WHAT THE HELL IS AN INKSTONE?

"They said, 'Christ, he speaks good English! Which I did, of course, being English.'" --JOHN LENNON

Speaking English, as I also do, and not Japanese I had absolutely no knowledge of what the hell an inkstone was until I was assigned the task as part of my duties as editor of this magazine. It was suggested, by someone of note, whose name escapes me at present, that I spend some time during semester break to purchase an inkstone so that it might become a symbol of office for myself and those who follow. I had been given the clue that the item I sought was of Japanese origin and used primarily by artists of that country. Thinking my task an easy one, I set out to search that vast volume of memorabilia, the Borough of Manhattan telephone directory, for the name of a reliable artist-supply store that might stock inkstones. I found not one such store but three-hundred-and-twenty-seven such places. At random I picked names and telephoned, but the first twenty-five calls proved uneventful except that the Forty-second Street Ancient Indio-Asian Artifacts Shoppe suggested that I might be able to use a thinly filed cheeta tooth quill as a substitute for only \$75. I turned down the offer as I thought Cheetah Tooth Quill was too long a title for a literary magazine. Although, I must admit that I was beginning to think that the name Inkstone was also a bit ridiculous. The next batch of calls produced the same results as the first except that the volume of obscene replies multiplied seven-fold.

As it was now the last day of vacation, I became desperate and decided to consult the sage advice of neighborhood spinster. The comely Miss French told me of numerous visits she had made with her garden club to exhibits at a Japanese department store to view their techniques of flower arranging. She said that if any store in the small village of New York City were to have such an object as an inkstone it would surely be Takishimaya's.

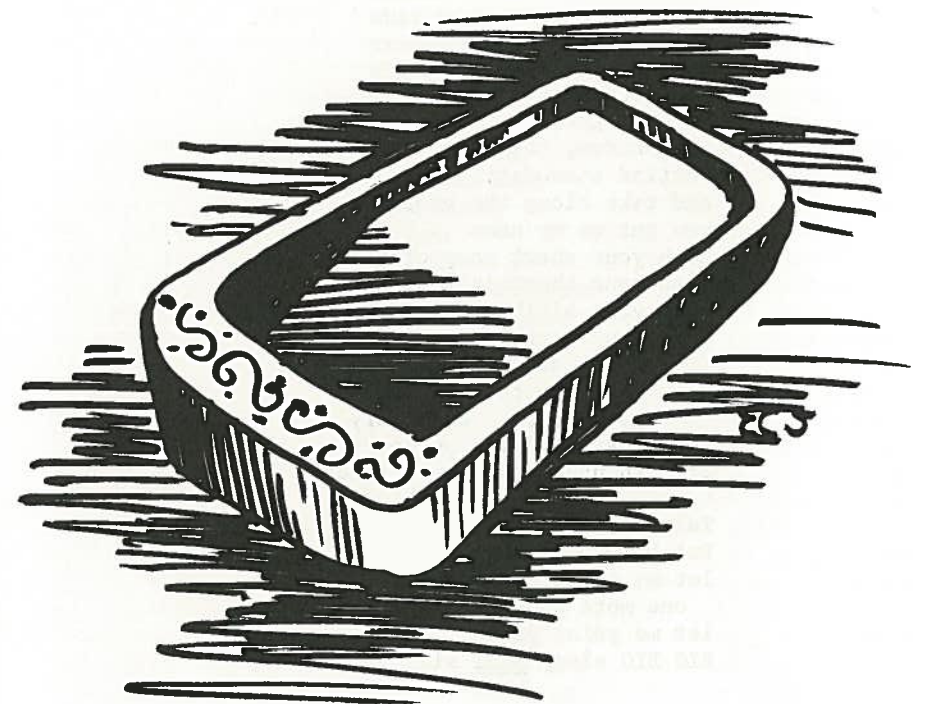
A short time later I found myself in a taxi being speedily and nerve-rackingly delivered to the department store's Fifth Avenue address. Takishimaya's is a two-storey modern building replete with lavish oriental decor, and stocked plentifully with kimona-clad salesgirls hussling among strange collections of Japanese plants and vines. With a minimum of complication I was directed to the art department and there put under the

charge of Mr. Kuroki, the manager. At first, he misunderstood my wishes and began hauling out various brushes, easels, paint-pots, and sculpting chisels, which I tried politely to explain were not what I wanted. Finally the language barrier was overcome and he produced what he called a "suzuri". This was a rectangular piece of slate about 6" x 3", which was hollowed out like a cement swimming pool with both a shallow and a deep end. Mr. Kuroki explained in the best English he could muster that a Japanese artist first assembles pinetar, gypsum, 'gum-sap', and lampblack in varying quantities and begins to form a ball. He then places this conglomeration upon a suzuri, which is filled with some strange dark liquid. He then beats the mass until it mixes with the liquid to form what might loosely be called 'ink'. Explanations out of the way, and time running out before my dinner engagement I hurriedly shoved myself on a subway. Amongst the noisy afternoon shopping crowd, my mind blotted out the commotion and I began to wonder why Inkstone would be chosen as the title of a literary magazine. If you have a sharp mind for vague associations of ideas and concepts you might have been able to comprehend the connection between the art of using a suzuri and the philosophy of a literary magazine. Namely, the art of combining varying style of poetry, prose, and art into a mass which is then organized into a smooth flowing presentation of what is reportedly an accurate conception of a university's best student works.

The subway arriving at my stop, I grabbed my shopping bag, which I thought held my prized possession and made my way only five minutes late to the home of my dinner host. Nancy, the hostess, greeted me abruptly, grabbed the bag out of my hand, saying, "Why, John, how nice, you shouldn't have...etc.," and ran off to the kitchen. I thought that immediately upon opening the package she would come back and politely ask me what the hell it was, and what it was used for. But such was not the case, as I didn't see her again until we were seated at the table and the dinner brought on. In came Nancy exclaiming to all the other guests about the fabulous present John had brought and then went around to show each guest the most delectable platter of broiled sirloin steaks that you could imagine. The other guests looked rather indignantly at me, as I guess they had only given her a small box of chocolates or something petty, and the steaks that I had supposedly brought had shown them all up. To say the least, I was in a quandry, and all I could think of was some poor husband, who having been told to bring home the dinner, arrived home in Flatbush, no doubt, with a sickly looking slab of slate that could hardly feed a family of four. Even

though I would forever remain in the esteem of my hostess and dwell in a place of honor forever, I thought I had failed and that I would return to BG empty-handed. However, I rationalized that it would be good for next year's editor to also have to find out the hard way, what the hell an Inkstone is.

--JOHN D. MacPHEDRAN,
Editor



UPON THE DEATH (figuratively)
OF POP ART, AFTER
PITTSBURGH, 1964.

Jon L. Adams

No Requiem.
New Realism? Pop?
Op? Pusher
of flown taste
Junkyard
of gone waste
Working whore
for the Mad Ave caste
lie still.

Go trashcan
ashcan, toiletseat
& kitchensink night
mare of great American
pink nudes, coke
bottled commodity,
and take along the bane
you put on my name
with your short gasp of Life
with your shortsight of Real
your billboards of the Big Steal
your cartoons
your dumb voice of Big Sell
your monotone of Big Big
your T.V. dreadful cry
that shattered the holiness
of a thousand gallery shrines.

Take it.
But before you go
let me paint one more
one more whore
let me paint your
BIG BIG elegy EXIT sign.

THE POETS

Joe Sheffler

Brian, I sd.,
it's a tough
world
what with
transparent eyeballs
all over
it's every man
to his
own Emerson:
all over-soul
& no show;
I mean
the un-
skilled craftsman
nearly always
mangles his
hands,
again, the
commitment
lightly made's
no where
at
all.

TOWARD A DEFINITION OF TASTE
OR
WHY I STILL READ ZANE GREY

Edward Morris

Each time an English teacher feels the will to power, another of Joyce Kilmer's trees falls somewhere in the wilderness of an introduction-to-literature class. Surly at this wanton desecration, the students, with Conservation League zeal, invoke that defender of wooden prose, Dr. George Crane, and proclaim that one voice: "The people, yes!"

If the dialogue remains civil, the term "taste" will inevitably be thrown in. But this doesn't help at all. For there's the teaching fellow's taste and there's George Crane's taste. Now, neither can define taste; each knows simply that he's got it and the other hasn't.

The battle between autocrat and democrat would be amusing if neither participant had any influence. But they both do. Consequently, the man who has always enjoyed reading without knowing exactly why, finds, when caught between the two, that the only thing he can safely display on his coffee table is coffee. The reaction of college students to this tension is that by the time they become juniors they are either calcified snobs or fang-snapping illiterates. A condition which promotes such smugness or defensiveness cannot be a good thing, because it replaces thought with reliance on the few or on the many.

I think that something called "taste" exists, and I think it can be defined. But I don't believe it can be modified quantitatively by "good" or "bad." Taste is subjective, but it is purposefully subjective. All voluntary readers discriminate in their reading, and it is in this discrimination that the element and degree of taste lie. Taste in reading, as I see it, is the conscious or unconscious selection of a written work which, in whole or part, provides a complement to the demands of the selector's personality. Demands may be made for humor in all its shades, for fantastic adventure, for a well-knit plot, for highly individualized or comfortably stereotyped characters, for the reinforcement of the reader's point-of-view, for intellectual irritants, or for the provision of an idealized existence to supplant or alleviate an actual one. These demands vary in complexity and number, depending on the reader. But all readers make them. Whether the demands are logical or psychological,

conscious or unconscious, mute or articulate is unimportant. Only their postulated existence is relevant.

If the demands are not met, then the work is rejected. The democrat rejects by slamming the book down; the autocrat, by writing an article. The underdog with an affinity for happy endings is as reasonable in fulfilling his personality demands as the sophisticate who is moved only by stories he can peel like an onion; and the diagonal scanner, hot after titillating scenes, is no less parochial than the professional archetype seeker.

Teachers of literature apparently believe that a distinction must be made between "good" and "bad" taste or else there will be no rationale for their teaching. This is true only so long as taste is seen as a vertical structure instead of as the horizontal one it really is. Some books have a wider range of complements than others; some readers are more capable of perceiving these complements than others. Here, then, is the area for teaching: to present the books with wide range and to make the reader's taste less restricted--not better.

Take, for instance, Huckleberry Finn. I cannot believe that the youthful romantic is exercising "bad" taste if he finds his greatest fulfillment in the last ten chapters of the book where Tom Sawyer is so prominent. Unconsciously, perhaps, he has nonetheless detected a distinct element in the book, and he has shown a reasonable, understandable, and analyzable preference. Other readers may find themselves drawn to dialect, plot structure, scenic description, character development, myth, literary allusions, social implications, homosexual relationships, or biographical details. But unless certain of these factors are palpably superior to the others (and who can agree on what is superior?), then the person who can detect ten factors does not have "better" taste than the one who can detect only two or three. The former's taste is just wider.

Or look at it this way. Is the untrained reader reading Gulliver's Travels showing "better" taste than the trained reader examining a story in True Romance magazine? The untrained reader may not get beyond the giants and certain gross social criticisms, while the trained one will see, other than the plot, the recurrence of conventions, contemporary diction, labored contrivances, middle-class sanctions and taboos, popularizing elements which lie beyond plot necessities, incidental characters, and the like. Is the trained reader here exhibiting "bad" taste by analyzing a work demonstrably of less width than Gulliver?

One time I was teaching Faulkner's "Spotted Horses," and I had asked the students for comments. A West Virginian, who had heretofore been stoically mute, shouted, "Why that's the way we talk down home." And since I was from "down home," too, I knew he was right. He was relatively unconcerned with the symbolic import of the skittish horses, the abject misery of Mrs. Armstid, or the machinations of the diabolic Flem. But he had spotted a valid complement to the story which the others had not seen. This folksy epiphany convinces me that there will be guileless children and hillbillies and longshoremen devoted to, say, Dylan Thomas long after John Malcolm Brinnin has ridden his his jaded hobbyhorse into the ground.

The college bluestocking whose stories abound with interracial leapfrogging and characters names Tim and Gretchen has a restricted taste, characterized by a love of the shocking and exotic, a penchant for nominal elegance, and a foot-stamping pique against social injustice. But she has taste. It can be widened to her advantage if she is not summarily smacked down by some grad student, reeling through the semester under the effluvia of Another Country. No one, least of all English teachers, should stifle the desire to read or write by curt protestations of "bad" taste.

For titular tie-in, I maintain that Zane Grey, in restricted instances, handles the theme of isolation as well as Mark Twain; that his description of the Arizona highlands is as good as Twain's description of Jackson Island and the Mississippi River banks; and that his enchantment with the chivalric code is as fully articulated as Twain's. The point is that we get less in twenty of Grey's books than we do in one of Twain's. That fact that Twain is infinitely richer than Grey is sufficient reason for including the former in the curriculum and excluding the latter. It is not sufficient reason for perfunctorily denying any taste at all to Grey or to his readers.

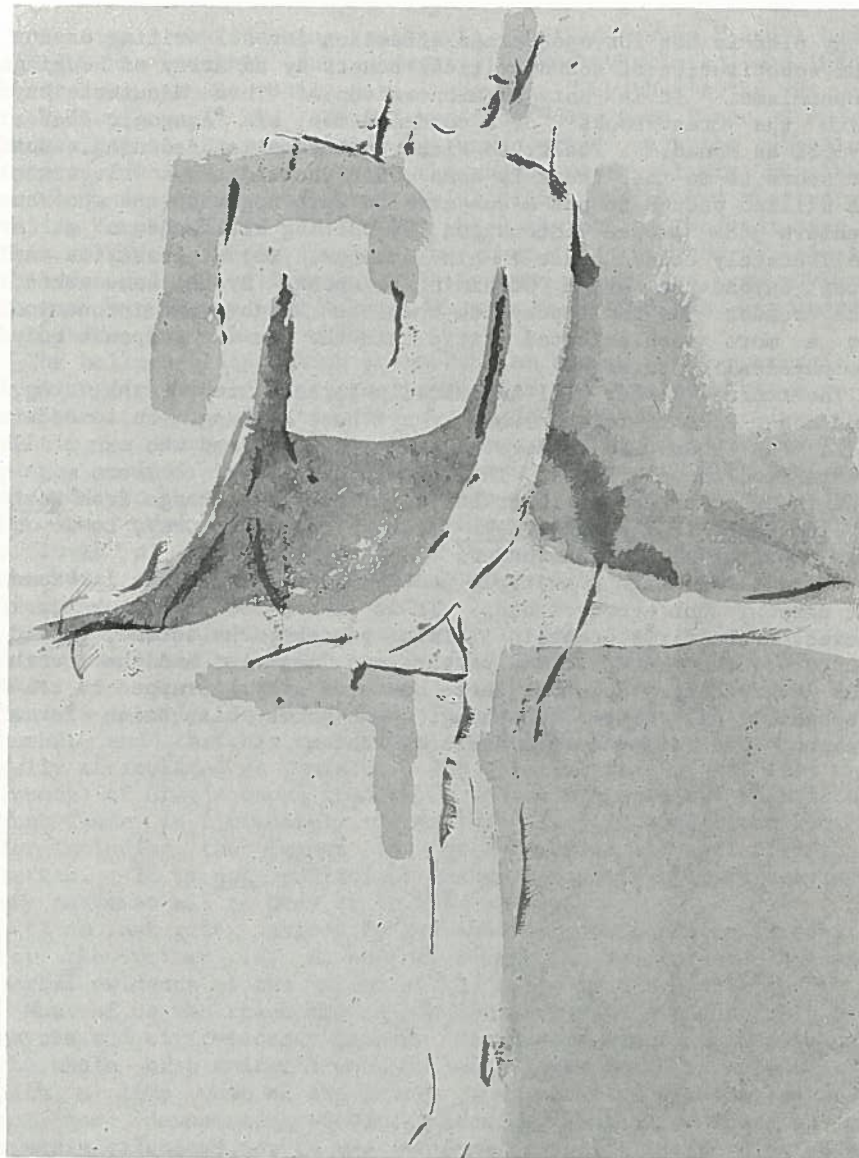
(I am not going astray in switching from readers to writers; for the writer is, at bottom, simply a reader who provides verbal evidence of the extent of his taste as a reader.)

Most of us who teach are an odd lot; we rail at censorship by mayors and civic-decency groups. But we are fearless in damning the whole of a writer's work or of a genre (such as melodrama) with a limp wave of the wrist. I am not sure but that we are not more devastating than the decency groups; for there is a certain salacious joy in the defiance of official interdiction--a defiance which disintegrates when the student is hungering after safe gods who have the influence to destroy with pontifical wit.

My plea is not for open armed affection for all writing or for the substitution of sound critical tenets by an array of hedging euphemisms. It is not an exoneration of "Three Minutes a Day With the Great Books" or a condemnation of "Anagogic Phase: Symbol as Monad." Fealty to either extreme is deadening. But it seems to me that there is some merit accruing to a writer who is skilled enough to put a subject and verb together and who can achieve the proper intonation by putting his "Goddamn" at a deliberately chosen place in his sentence. He, at least, is one step beyond the savage straining to speak. By the same token, the reader who can appreciate complete thoughts and intonation is a more sophisticated critic than the one who responds only to physical gestures.

The trained reader will undoubtedly forsake Grey, Frank Yerby, and Edgar Rice Burroughs when they have nothing more to offer him. But there are readers who enjoy reading and who can still learn from these writers. They should be allowed to learn without the encumbrance of leper bells. To force a change from West of the Pecos to Finnegans Wake is to do injury to Grey, to Joyce, but, most of all to the reader.

To reiterate with a suitably pedestrian simile, taste is broad or narrow, not good or bad. It is like a row of Crackerjack boxes. The first contains plain popcorn; the second, coated popcorn; the third, coated popcorn and peanuts; and the fourth has everything the other three has plus a myth wrapped in cellophane. All offer something. One makes his choice for a reason. And reason is the basis of taste.



VARIATION FOUR:THREE

Brian Richards

And tell all the stars above,
This is dedicated to the one I love.
--The Shirrelles

Near dawn, the growing
dimness of the moon
is measured from the fugue
she whispers
with the street lights.

The buildings are instruments,
perhaps shadow, perhaps
cello; & the poles,
the cans, the cars are
similarly instruments.

The moon drifts her clouded
blue & (like Bach
in his time) knows
what the fugue can't say
in words: Ora pro nobis,

the longer we live, the harder
it becomes to separate
simple counterpoint from
the intricacies of our
shorelost style.

And she, likewise a sky thing
lifts her churndrift
tones of blue. The sky.
The buildings.
The moon is her

cithara; for thus,
though I lack a certain power
to hear, she lightly
spins (always)
inside my shadow.

EPITAH FOR EPITAHS

Horace Coleman

Death is such a small thing
to send tears and flowers about
and who are they for?
If you loved me
breathe deeper;
If you love me
burn my body and
the wind will take me home.
But you might have to walk.

FROM EIGHT
THOUGHTS ON SNOW

John Hall

II
Beware grumbling
at first snows.
It's a true sign
of growing old.

VIII
In the silence
of the night
You can hear
the snow falling.



THE HERON
(a villanelle)

Elsa c. Johnson

The purple heron stayed--after it all;
Ten flocks of scattered fleet cried in the cane:
The reigning king is he who dares to fall.

The browning carpet of the royal hall
Of dying color sighed back through its pain:
The purple heron stayed. After it all

Ten fleets of southward flyers on the wall
Were weeping softly on the same refrain:
The reigning king is he who dares to fall

Deep through the night and with the fearless call
Of breaking black from black and rain from rain:
The purple heron stayed. After it all

They begged for safety from a broken wall--
Went madly weeping to the silent crane:
The reigning king is he who dared to fall.

They begged for mercy at the black draped pall;
Whatever they lost was the marsh god's gain:
The purple heron stayed--after it all!
The reigning king is he who dared to fall...

SELF-TAUT

Arthur belonged to the "suffering ennobles" school of thought. A more dedicated seeker of the painful truth never lived. He ran the gamut of tortures, from walks over hot coals to whip-pints to a rack he had built in the basement of his house. When he wasn't fasting he ate foods that upset his stomach, and were undercooked or burned, depending on his distaste. His friends found it difficult to chat over the screams and howls and ceased to visit. That, too, was good, since loneliness meant even greater misery.

To aid him with the tortures, he hired a witch through an ad in the National Enquirer. As witches go, Shirley could have been worse; still, she was cheap, steady and offered little comfort. Arthur felt they made a fine team.

He settled into a pleasant, painful routine that gave him certainty, and for many years his life had meaning. Then, one morning before breakfast, while Shirley poured salt over his wounds, Arthur, for the first time, listened to himself screaming. He did not like what he heard. The sounds were more joyful than painful--hideous, ecstatic squels, not agonizing howls. It disturbed him to be found enjoying his wounds so fully. Doubts sneaked in and he wondered whether there was any purpose to it all.

If it feels good to be in pain, he thought, then can I ever truly suffer? Where do I go? To a life of pleasure? Surely I'd feel guilty, but then, would not that guilt also be pleasurable?

Once caught in this logic, Arthur never could free himself. He tried to live as he had in the past. But gradually his body lost its sensitivity to pain for having been so thoroughly conditioned to hardship. That was the hardest blow.

The final confrontation came when Shirley bound him to the rack, turned the wheel full round, and Arthur felt nothing. He knew if he were stretched another quarter of an inch his body would rip and he'd die.

"Ah Christ, has it come to this?"

Desperate, he looked to Shirley for support. Good old Shirley, she'll come through with something. He watched her pace back and forth across the dark cellar, her whole being bent on conjuring some solution to this awful impasse. He waited impatiently for his saviour. At last she faced him.

"Nothing," she said, jerking her head, "nothing."

Arthur saw how anxious she was to please, how helpless to do so. A new emotion arose out of the blackness. He experienced a fondness, an affection for this witch who did her job as best she knew, but now suffered failure with him. He loved and hated in equal amounts what he saw. It hurt and it soothed, there were tears and a smile. Body lost, only the emotion remained to remind him he was alive.

The last years were spent hovering just that quarter of an inch from death. He never left the rack, but learned to know it more than ever before. And when it came time to cross the dread lake, it lay so calm he never felt the passing.

--JOHN BENGSTON



FAMILY TREE

Horace Coleman

I

Sitting on the couch that had a splint on one leg while fighting the dwarfs in his ditch of a mouth with a magnet tied to a peg (in case he gulped) was my father.

He gulped and Said and Sayd and Sd;

"The white man's problem is that he pronounces
)his words(
tooo dye.STINK.lee & his syphilitic thoughts are
fuzzy.wuzzy,bear.turds

II

Visiting the ancestral cotton field

I smelled the place where Grandpa was killed:

Billie Holliday heard about it and sang it.

I looked it up in 100 Years of Lynching

They fed the bones to the dogs

and Daddy didn't get any,

woke up singing in the night:

"Black is the color of my true love's

flames--and all them white trashes

walking in his Daddy's ashes . . . impolite.

III

These were the yes years.

Shuffling out the liturgy of

busyboys

bell boys

her, boy's

you, boy's

IV

Bringing you home,
my liberal with love Blanca
my old harpy mother shrieked in my face
: What you tryin to do? Mongrelize the black race?

V

Alabaster (plaster) America,
Here's all my love in one breath:
I wouldn't bring you a bucket
if you were bleeding to death.

VI

Why? said the doctor
when the baby wouldn't come.
I knew. None of my legitimate kids are dumb.
He knowed his relief check hadn't come yet.
**Look here, baby; don't be no fool.
you got your own private unintegrated school
in an exclusive restricted neighborhood
I'd stay in there as long as I could**
--But you know kids, got to see for themselves--
He did.
and crawled back in
his momma's skin.

WINNER OF THE
MAUDE CARVETH PYM
POETRY AWARD:



ELEGY
for Sam Mayfield

Sherry Lougheed

Because I have reserved all tears for those
who began their steady dying at birth,
I have no tears for you.
Let weeping be spent
on contemptible
men who murder their sphere
of time. Oh spacious man, your mind as wide
as the sage plains, who dares to weep for you?

Old man, still bull-chested at seventy,
I remember your lifting the hewn fence
logs in line, split by your
hardened hands. You had
the clean strength of a
stand of virgin timber,
earthy and good in the long making. You
had no need of a common after-life:

such promises were made for lesser men.
For you, soft mouldering of the forest
floor and the birds come back
again was grace. We
brought you bread the day
before you died. You gave
us the last of your G.I. gun oil.
The clean rifles were ready at your going.

RIDIN'

I was sitting on my bike at MacDonald's eating one of their poor hamburgers when Denny Gamble pulled in. He had one of these Harley C-H's. The thing had a rumbling sound when it idled that really grabbed you. Denny flashed his lights and waved as he went by.

There was this carload of girls parked right across from me and Denny snuck his bike in between cars to park next to them. He said "hi" to them, but they didn't seem too interested, so Denny squatted down to mess around with his carburetor. When he finished whatever he was doing, he went up to the counter to get some food.

I always got a big kick out of Gamble. We weren't real buddies or anything, but I always thought that he wasn't really a bad guy. Oh, he played it pretty hard, wearing this black leather jacket and the whole works. And this C-H was this terrible shade of candy-apply red. He really went for chrome, too. Everything that wasn't welded to the frame, he had chromed. But all in all, a decent guy.

You could see the shiny stars on his jacket when he brought him hamburger and shake back to his bike. Then he started in to work on those girls. He asked them if they wanted a ride on his bike, and offered them a milkshake. (He really let the snow fly.) They weren't buying, though. They said that they were glad to have met him, and good-by, and left. He didn't even find out their names.

For just a second, before he covered it up, Denny looked sad as hell. But then he smoothed out the collar on the leather jacket, and strolled over to where I was parked.

"How's the Beezer running?" He asked me.

I told him that it was running good enough to beat out that big Harley (which I didn't believe), and we laughed a little. When I asked him how he made out with the girls, he said that he had a date made with the one that was driving. I said I thought she was prettiest. I really didn't mind. It's hell to get shot down by a bunch of girls that way.

"Ya wanna ride around a little, or do you have to go home or somethin'?"

I told him, hell no, I didn't have to go home, and we might as well ride some. We started up the bikes and honked on down the main drag of town. We got stopped at this one red-light, and Denny had the idea of going to the movie theater and picking

up a couple of girls from school. I was feeling pretty high, and didn't have anything going that night, so, O.K., we went.

You get a kind of cool feeling riding around on a cycle. You know everybody that rides in your neighborhood, and he knows you. You get the feeling that all the girls around are looking at you, and wish they were on the back. I think they really like it. Even so, not much luck at the Richmond (that's the movie near my house). I saw this one girl I knew from English, and she had her girlfriend with her, but they said they didn't like motorcycles, and besides, they wanted to see the show. Denny said that we'd be glad as hell to keep them company, but no, they were meeting some friends inside. So we just sata-round in front of the theater looking at the red neon lights and goosing our motors. Den finally said, "let's split," and we went tearing back out toward Manner's Big-Boy joint where we could at least show our bikes off a little.

We were making plenty of noise, so we weren't feeling sobad about not finding any girls or anything. At least I wasn't. It was really getting to old Denny. He kept downshifting and pulling wheelies, all the way to Brainard Road. I yelled at him that there might be some girls at Manner's, and he cooled off a little.

We got the red light at Brainard, heading out of town toward this joint, so Denny didn't mind sitting there and really noising off. When the light changed he really tore, and I had a hard time keeping up. When we stopped for the next light, Denny wanted to run.

"What'll you spot me," I yelled.

"Twenty feet."

I said, "O.K., but only up to sixty or seventy."

"Seventy!" said Den.

I pulled out about twenty feet ahead of him. We both started punching our engines, waiting for the light to change.

I got a really good start, but I could hear that big C-H burning rubber back there, so I punched it hard in second and pulled a wheely. The Beezer was running that night, and Denny couldn't catch me. Inside a few more blocks I was hitting seventy, so I started slowing down. But Denny didn't. He went screaming past me in third, hitting fourth as he passed me. He must have been doing ninety. I kept yelling at him to slow down, then I tried to catch him, but he was really rolling!

Just then, this Cadillac pulled out in front of him. Denny was a godd rider, and he swerved right around it. But this semi was coming. He saw it just in time to yell something and try to cut back onto his side of the street. But he wasn't quick

enough. He flopped. I couldn't see the next part because I was trying not to ram this old lady in the Caddy. She stopped right where she was, and I went around the other side of her. I stopped. The semi stopped too. Denny's bike was all banged up beside the road, and the red color really shined under the streetlight.

There was blood on the back wheels of the semi. Then I saw Denny lying all over the street. All the blood looked black in the dark.

The paper said the semi ran over his middle after he fell off of his motor scooter. I hate the papers. They can't even tell a C-H from a scooter, and they forgot all about that old lady in the Cadillac. And Denny was a pretty decent guy, they could've said that.

I painted by bike red yesterday. Maybe I'll label it "Motor-cycle."

--CHUCK BASS

LOVE IS FOR THE BIRDS

Sherry Barba

of love/ who sit and coo contentedly
even on the weakest branch
of sour cherry trees.

No lovebirds you & I, my love;
our song can't make the higher notes.
Our arms that try to circle dreams
still lack the feathers to make them wings.

Because for love we try
to force a metamorphosis
we finish perched out on a limb,
foolish-gasping fish.

PROXIMITY

Terrence Raczko

Perihelion is the street-side room;
the roar of the semis rattles the walls.

Twelve feet off, the far room is quieter;
it blankets the first with quiet relief.

(Just a step away from now, the thought
of aphelion softens perihelion.)

MIND MIRACLES

Sherry Barba

Inside me lie poems I cannot breathe,
that will not stir themselves to word verse.

But sometimes the bluest part of sky
pondering the round moving earth
sends winds that fly down
whispers of God through the grass.

Then they jump up at the bright touch.
Imagination strikes what is of beauty in me
and flashes out with warmed afterthoughts.

Only the sky can hold what has gloried my
stirred moments;
the wind rushes too fast for word ropes.

Caught breath broods on wonder:
God's touch is a mind's moment.

BECAUSE YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL

Joe Sheffler

Because you are beautiful
because you are
delicate things:
Black hair & eyes.

Because I once saw you
as Eurydice
on fifth century marble
that he will sing for
your return.

It is because your
myth is hers; a
culpa felix

that you will escape
perhaps the apron world
where you don't belong

as she in losing
bid crying:
"Farewell, a
Last Farewell."

POEM FOR A DYING SQUIRREL

Brian Richards

Lie kicking in the street
& complement

the maddened limbs. Your
fleeting red

is what you own now,
you & the trees.

Squirrel, refract the leaves
that suffocate

thru your blood. And
make your eyes

witness to the murdered fall.

AND SHOULD I THEN PRESUME?

Carolyn Jacobs

Where to turn when those neat categories no longer satisfy.
Bitter, sweet, sour and salt out the window. It's the
taste of milk after grapefruit.

By habit, craft, or fear of censure I can designate a
pigeonhole, but the truth is partial and the lack is loss.

Handbooks, formulas nauseate; emasculate archetypes and
their "six easy steps to . . ." But what alternative?
Flip abandon is a wanton thing. At midnight signal lights
only flash yellow. What to do.

Trains run from Birth to Death, but I'm bored and tired
and empty. It's time to cut across country and scale
mountains.

From train windows I saw ladies in pink flowered hats
sipping tea. Climbing and falling I see a Himalayan Yak
eating orchids.

Sometimes hot water on frozen fingers is better than hands
cramped from clasping demitasses. But sometimes, too,
frozen fingers never thaw.



isaiah 12.11.64
stick dury.

CORRESPONDENCE THEORY
FOR MY BROTHER DUDLEY

Joe Sheffler

I wish that all
spontaneous love
were real,

real as the warmth
of giving, real
as Kentucky daffodils
in May.

I wish that hearts
could communicate
the same as May
to flowers

and in our hearts,
warm as a warm day,
love would sun itself.

I wish that all
wishes, etc.
had the power
of daffodils.

FOR MY FATHER

Elsa Johnson

These translucent faces...
Rose light behind crescent
Morning moistened glass--
The fruit of careful planning
And a charmed childhood--
Bear in them the first
Seeds of fragility

When the light goes out,
Father, and the dew fades
From the heat of a many
Sun-filled experience,
I'll raise my then wrinkled
Velvet face, and ask
You for the blessing
That you give me now, that
I, unhappily
Fail to understand.

FROM EIGHT THOUGHTS
ON SNOW

John Hall

V
Vain girl
No wonder you hate the snow
Walking in dainty shoes.

"babes in toyland"

It should have rained at her funeral. With bass drum thunder, tympani rolls of it. And lightning, lots of it. Just for five minutes a complete cloudburst rain and then the sun come out and the grass be greener. But it didn't. When someone you love dies it should rain. It's harder, when the sun's shining, to be a mourner.

Nothing happened. They didn't throw dirt in her face. The blank-faced mourners just standing, staring, awkwardly not crying. The pall bearers didn't even carry the coffin, just rolled in along to the edge of the grave on a rubber-tired platform her mother had chosen because it was new. And left it there. In the sunshine.

Standing there, out at the edge of shiny black suits and drab dresses, I watched an indifferent robin tug at a worm. Bowed heads had wobbled sleepily in the church and now they bobbed as if they belonged to bodies treading water in an ocean swell. There was a heavy warmth in the air, lulling. An almost silence. Memories of? They were all thinking something, being sometime else with her. The black suit with high white collar eulogy-saying.

We used to neck in the library. In the booked walls down by the 900's few people came. By Decline and Fall was one of our favorite places. The green Cadillac outside after school, sitting by the front entrance, as silently eloquent as a paddy wagon in front of a church when her mother picked her up.

Mornings I'd see well-dressed kids in leather coats and mohair sweaters standing languidly on the school steps in poses adapted from "Mademoiselle" and "Esquire" models, adding books under their arms. I used to stand at the top of the broad stone railing beside the front steps smoking and watch the junior hustlers and pre-debutantes.

"You were just jealous" Elaine told me. "You'd stand at the top of the steps slouched over against the wall with very long hair in your eyes and a cigarette almost, just about falling out of your mouth" looking up at me, her voice smiling "and look just like Marlon Brando doing Sammy Davis imitating Jimmy Cagney." And she'd laugh, lightly, and I would too, and we'd smile at each other. And that was something else. She could smile, and her lips curl down at the corners, and her eyes would fill, they'd shine, "just for you I look like this, just for you" and she'd tiptoe up to me and reaching with her hands and

lips she'd kiss me. And her mouth was deep for kissing but not large, though her lips were and like the moist grass around a small spring deep and sweet.

Once I held her in my lap while she wet my chest with tears. The white collar's eulogy words are bees, humming like an old untuned radio. "too soon death" wind rippling grass "young--but there is a time to love, and a time to die, a time to plant and the sun also rises we read in the afternoon in Mr. Zabronski's car starting at lunch periods and cutting classes to finish chapters. She liked "Jake, you know, he's admirable the strong unmanned man" but I liked Conn because he was an outsider too though "the young flower is cut and brings no more the bloom" of love for the first time trembling, and she was tight, hard, until at last I fell into her and "it hurts, hurt, please know me, please" her nails lined my back and lain beside each other in a swirl of kisses, sleeping head on my shoulder. "her classmates of Wilson High loved her, she was" love, she was love, she was love.

I met her with one eye bleeding, face smashed, often, brought lips her hands put together that closed the place where kitchen knife had wedged through ribs. Fought because I was? Needed? to fill loving, belonging, wanting, which she did. And the baby was not how she stopped me but with a Rose, which we would have names it if a girl. Helped me home once leaning on her with dark head coming only to my shoulder and bent with my weight. Stopped to rest and saw a puddle by the curb. She stooped and sweeping hair back from her face picked a "birthright was denied" our baby picked a swirl of sheets and kisses picked a battered red rose from the puddle held it before her. And looking up with a smile, corners of her mouth turned down, said "Roses just don't belong in gutters" She is not dead.

--HORACE COLEMAN

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WHEN I LONG TO HEAR OUR TWO VOICES
FROM A LETTER TO AGAPO

Thomas Anderson

As if the sound of coffee
Awoke me in the hollow of my heart
I drempt of hallucinations
When I felt a bee buzz in my brain

Long sounds drew upon the air
Straight from the ether
And the individualness of privacy
Imposed itself horror-like through
the walls

Visions of quiet flew bird-like
Porpoise-like in butterfly water air
And a secret concerto for voice
With visionary tacit listener

That is why I long to hear
Beyond the little sounds of dripping
Past the muse of silence
Not my voice of secret feeling reflection

Our two voices
Rather in the unison of thought
Where speech comforts
In the undoing of tacit accompaniment

As if the sound of coffee
Long sounds drew upon the air
Visions of quiet flew bird-like
That is why I long to hear
Our two voices
Not my voice of secret feeling reflection
In the undoing of tacit accompaniment



TO SPRING

Steve Schmidt

Because I can never feel
maybreeze fingers probing deeply into softness;

Because I can never know
the urgency of quiet tears
from a petal dislodged forever;

Because I can never know
the delicate pain of anvils
forging silk from rough bark--

Teach me to half-feel;
teach me to sit vicariously, and still.

UNTITLED POEM

Lewis Jay Honig

help me find myself
light my wick of truth
and allow me to walk forth
cast no shadows about my person
make me a creature of time
give me a past and present
and allow the morning light
to be my future

THE GAME

Brian Richards

one plays
by choice
& yet

one cannot
always or ever
quit. say
I give up, dear
girl.
Let us call
time
regroup our forces

I cry
out
as one tackled/ hard
injured
drops to the group
gasps

It is not
a game, I say,
not a game
at all

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