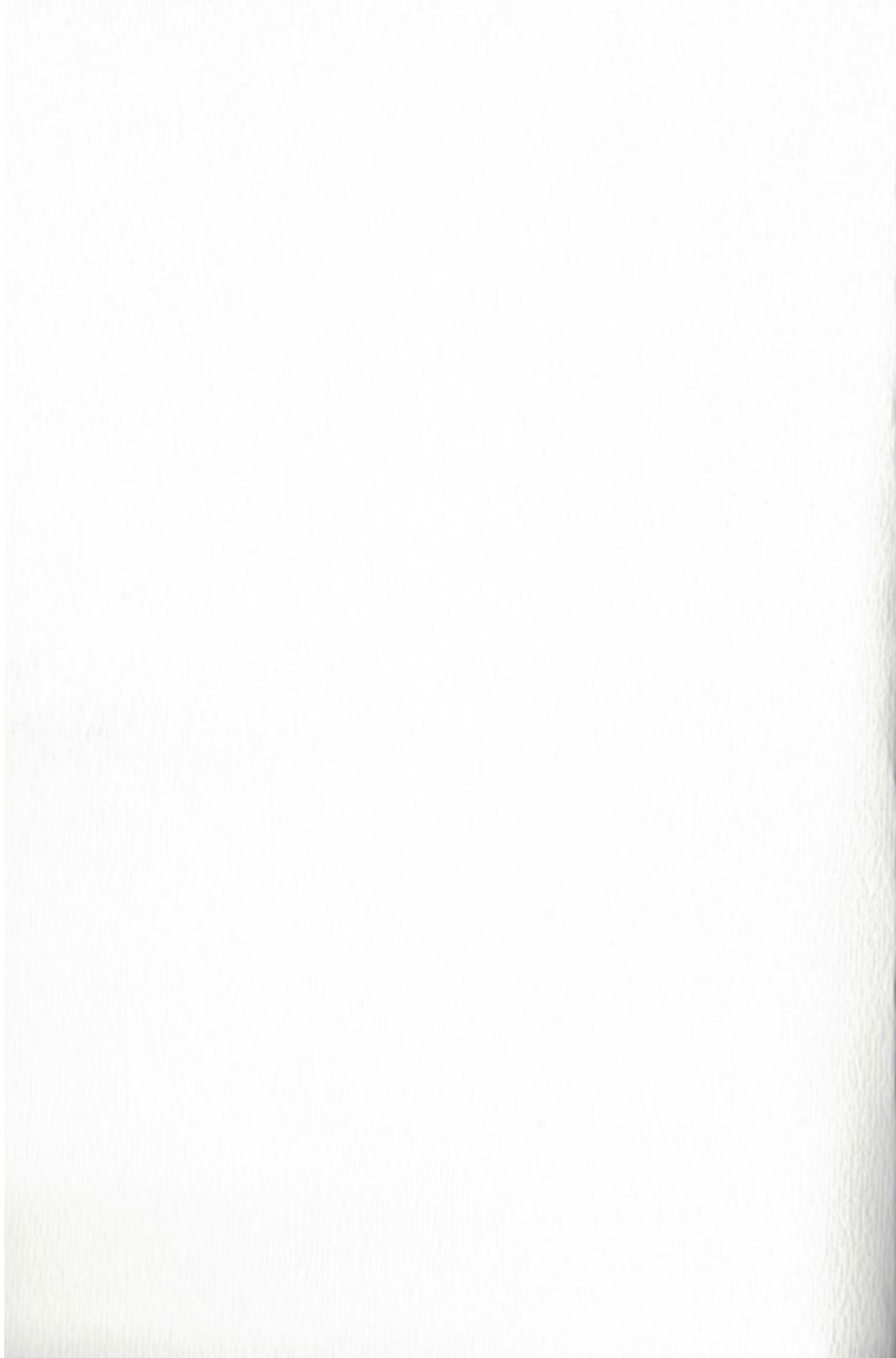


The Trinity Review





The
Trinity
Review

A Journal of Art
and Literature

Volume CII Number 2
Spring 1989

Philippa Sheppard *Editor Emeritus*

The Board

Leslie Topp *Editor*

Jane Stupart *Assistant Editor*

Margaret Sharrow *Poetry Editor*

Charles Morgan *Prose Editor*

Cynthia Fraser *Visual Arts Editor*

Martha McGinness *First Year Editor, St. Hilda's*

Jeff Amato *First Year Editor, Trinity*

Tassie Cameron *Member at Large*

Eva Janssen *Publicist*

Daina Groskaufmanis *Treasurer*

With thanks to Coach House Press and
the Joint Board of Stewards of Trinity College.

caveat

I said to you,
I am not human
And you
looked at me
and said, no
perhaps you
are not

GÖRAN SONNEVI

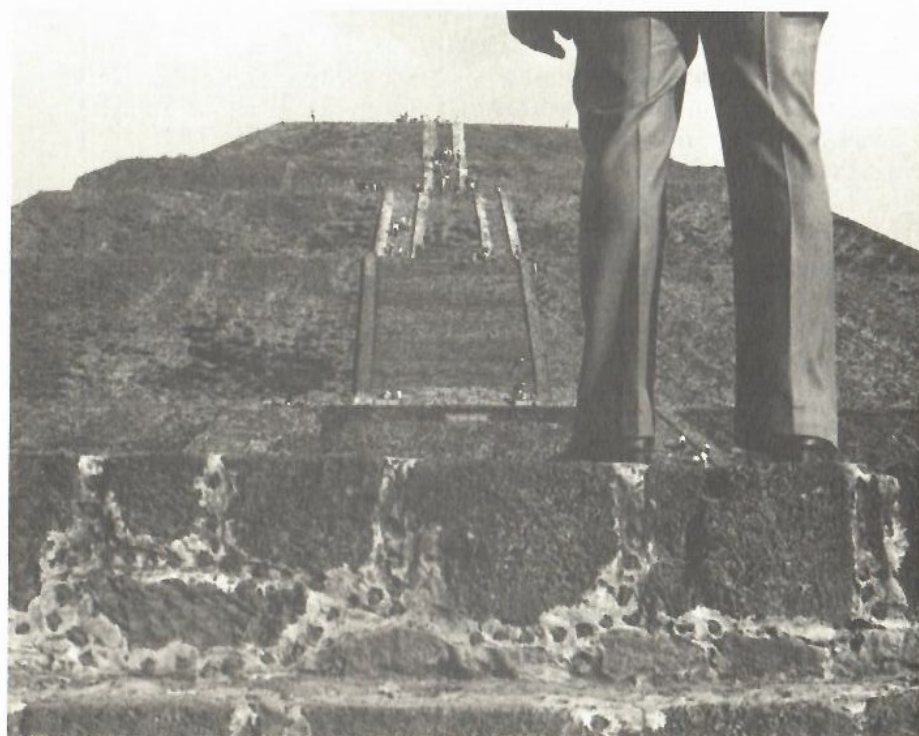
Contents

Poetry and Prose

- Flowers for Baudelaire* CHRIS D'IORIO 5
magritte's 'adam names his garden' CHRIS D'IORIO 8
Torch Song MICHAEL W. HOLMES 10
Missing Persons File Numbers MICHAEL W. HOLMES 11
Dialogue A.N. BOND 13
This place is not a heath ... COLLEEN MILLIKEN 20
Prayer of Ritual TASSIE CAMERON 21
Mending TASSIE CAMERON 22
On the Street TASSIE CAMERON 23
An Impartial Reverence NORA MAYNARD 24
We never stopped ... JANE STUPART 30
Voice Print Paramour MICHAEL M.R. HOLMES 35
Domestic Violence LISE FOURNIER 38
Angeline in the Wings LISE FOURNIER 40
The River LISE FOURNIER 41
Meredith in the Tired Car THOMAS CZEGLĘDY 43
Go ahead your Weather RICHARD ENGLAND 44
Destination THOMAS MACKAY 45
Her White Gloves SHIONA MACKENZIE 46
The Age of Our Desire STEPHEN PENDER 48
The Morning Razor STEPHEN PENDER 49
The Slow Film STEPHEN PENDER 50
The Man Who Was Caught in Rush Hour JOHN GARDNER 52

Photography and Graphic Art

- PETER HENDRICKSON cover, 16
DEREK JOHNSON 4, 7, 39, 43
URS BILL 9
DAVID DONKIN 12
TED KALABOUKIS 22
ALBERT LIU 27
SEAN PHILPOTTS 34
CHARLES MORGAN 47
MARTHA WEAVER 51
MICHAEL KLEINBERG 56



DEREK JOHNSON

Flowers for Baudelaire

i. *club des hashishins*

theophile rocks the body close in praise
of sweetmeat dark as the earth in which it grows
in essence, an eternal return

like a night and loving moving she breaks
upon the fast of day
filling bellies with the void
and, dancing quicker with every blow,
she gives your eyes to oysters
in essence, an exchange for their pearls

What ransom? you have no sand to give
nothing to slip between her shells
nothing to form your own eyes inside her
seeing less you look harder

ii. *all the lambs*

she who has thrown out her pearls for us,
given, of my brothers, the odyssey of her body
to our dark wanderings
whispers only the supple languor
of our poorly mimed charade

drink the wine and take the body
upon your tongue
this limitless, unnameable
drink the wine and take the body
to your prison
the night's alembic
drink the wine and take the body
from broken shards
to the phantom dreams of your desire

she is transformed as all the lambs go down
to make their peace with Abraham's knife

iii. *a fated relationship*

: so much has been decided before.
I come after my last footstep, into this room:
she is there, without pain – flashing pupils
quick with laughter and I only know what
I have learned from the blackened sweat of books
the labour of reading her to pieces

if only we could soften the ending of fate

it was you who wanted poetry, she says, not me
and writes her indignation in smoky glyphs –
the chains of grey-blue facts
encircle
encircle
the room and our
romance

iv. *flowers for baudelaire*

... petal by petal plucked ...
the form of his fetish
was more than your figure could rival

and could one ask more at your altar
than the rhythm of a few lines?
perhaps there never has been a rhythm in the world
and we should listen instead for
catcalls, applause,
the jangle of jewellery,
his sighs when you took your final bow
and finished your drama,
danced with him and left him then to commemorate
southern nights and you enmeshed
in the flesh of his remembering

from absinthe warmth would blossom
fecund and dark and lie like a bower
stretched beneath you – a sheaf of sighs
growing tall in your absence

and my harvest eyes have heard
in the rustle of dried flowers
passion crisp as poems
sliced from waters of the Seine

CHRIS D'IORIO



DEREK JOHNSON

magritte's 'adam names his garden'

*'Into our first world
There they were, dignified, invisible,
Moving without pressure, over the dead leaves ...'
– T.S. Eliot, 'Burnt Norton'*

content to rest naked in their purity
before the vibrating restless reason
would churn them gurgling in fleshy throats
humming toward the first man
who would sacrifice them to labour
ending their sacred brilliant torpor
their absolute redundancy –
unstained and useless

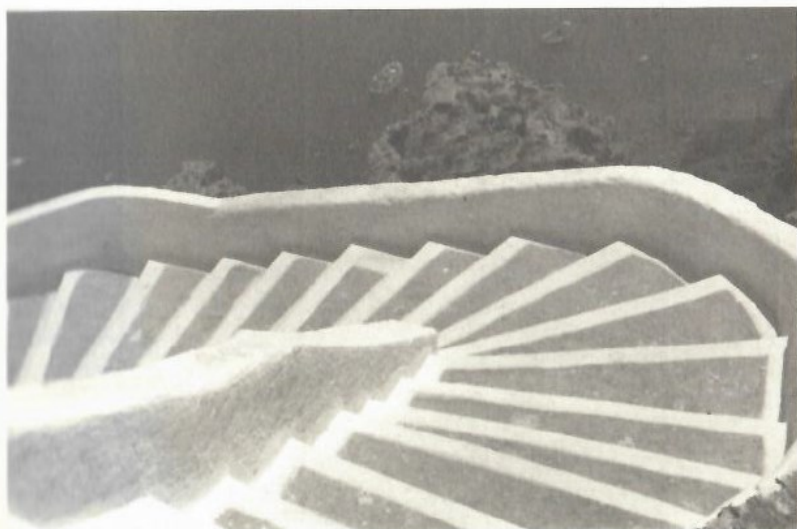
yes a child moving over the dead leaves
yes a child before the world
yes the world before it is named
yes my watching you reading
yes from the rib of Eve
yes the inevitable love
yes the forever receding
yes your name
yes the chaos fattened with satire
yes the order of illegible maps
yes the phantasy of origins
yes the good, evil and mediocre
yes Walt Whitman
yes especially Walt Whitman
yes guardrails and their chasms
yes the delicate shrugged-off flesh of that old face
yes the shuddering rusted metal of a train bridge
yes the falling eagle and the slashsilver warplanes
yes the catalogue of all possible things
yes to be named outright, pregnant with the hope
of this and thatness

shuddering, the pools of bleeding –
the fuzziness between word and thing –
soft and warm as the blood of the womb
as the whiteness of lambs

before the three cold nails of breath, voice and action
pinned them, trembling,
to the icy back of this world.
if you will name This,
everything will depend
upon the purity
with which the thing is done

do not intend to remember this
it is out there,
the momentous contraction of the world
into one tight wad of paper

CHRIS D'ITORIO



URN BILL

Torch Song

The peal of such bells
Reminds every day;
 She laughs in the bower
 And sometimes smiles.
I catch her eye and a thousand
Kisses, but never the one that winks
Wet in the beautiful crevice.
It is enough that we never
Speak. I am too shy after fashion
Cruel; avert my gaze,
And return to a page.

Sermon cull bled the eyes
And I appeal to that invisible
Place. Nothing remains of her
Fiction; at vespers I am resigned:
 Burying oranges and flowers
 With the dead.

MICHAEL W. HOLMES

Missing Persons File Numbers

O, pink faced, oh you
Saying something. Neutral
Child, you pure blowing
Glass with dripping
Vagina dripping
Penis. Dropping
Someones out of you, oh,
Placing
Someones inside you. O
Abort you create
Voices, your voices
Blowing wildly like.

Oh, simile winds blowing
My head against
Your breasts blowing
Your head against
My breasts.
O eyes expecting birthday
Pink blue
Cake and hats,
Oh, you eight millimetre
Film sounds, silently
Dropping light without
Fire. Execute, O, executed
Ejaculate you
Bleeding, oh, you know,
Living death, the point
Still, the smallest O,
A period.

You mutual
Multiple orgasm
Killer lover persons,
Do you remember
Us?

MICHAEL W. HOLMES



David Donkin '88

"DEAD DUCK"

78

DAVID DONKIN

Dialogue

On the piano top, on the hinged covering lowered to protect the keys: dust. Holding still the press of fingers, a scuff from a palm's edge. It is here more than anywhere else that they still live, in these faint impressions. They have made what they have touched, like their touches, their own.

But he forgets himself. Catching a glimpse of his face, much younger, in a photograph and letting it pass, like someone else's. Catching the eye of a stranger briefly in a crowded room. In this uncrowded room, with her, he forgets everything else. He is on her errand; he will not pause, refuses confrontation with the faces staring up from the loaded piano top. They are framed, their colours faded and fading. Pressed behind glass on which specks of dust glitter.

She can see him from the living room. He is in the kitchen now. Slow, steadying his fingers, controlling them by first seeing them. He looks up uncertainly. And when she looks at him its like a promise kept.

He is aware of the distance between them measured in a stare. In fact, their eyes fix them, keep them apart. He is aware of the empty house.

So quiet now, with just the two of them. And so much more seems lost. Where is the life that silent and unurged inhabits every room? The common creatureliness spun off of human contact, that ran whispering into the corners when the first person entered. This quality eludes him while simple effects remain. The two of them can be traced; they are always making artifacts through which their lives emerge irregularly, made overt and already, if ever so slightly, concluded.

He knows how experience is documented, having lived with her all these years. How a crushed pillow might be a signal, the suggestion of weight quietly borne, some tale or admission undisclosed that presses down relentlessly on the thin covering of their shared life. He has uncovered these, one after the other, learning the truth that he had found first scattered around him, but failed to recognize. Things portentous that seemed innocuous: A hair brush meticulously cleaned of hair, a tube of toothpaste that finally found its top, a sock rolled up into a ball, undisturbed and dusty beneath the bed. He knows that a magazine left open on the coffee table can hold everything else in the room in suspension. While she sits apart, not noticing it, daydreaming, leaving him to reach over and uncover the mystery.

'I'm thirsty,' she commented once under her breath, so quietly it seemed like his own thought and he didn't respond. Now he would get up without a further word and get her a glass of water, but not that first time. He didn't even look up until at last he noticed she had stopped reading.

So he is wary. Carefully aligned articles on the dresser might be a booby trap. If he is careless he will blunder; rummaging through a drawer, removing a bookmark, closing a window, he might trip a wire and pull away life like a bedsheet, their life together. In a moment find her staring up at him like a stranger.

Then enter her silence.

He is opening a bottle in the kitchen, his fingers moving uncertainly. It is tighter than he expected. He places it on the counter for support while he twists its cap. It doesn't move. But he completes his activity elsewhere, easily turning the knob of the radio on the window sill above the sink. (They keep it here because it is an old radio and makes poor sound; they believe the hollow sink below it improves acoustics) He returns his attention to the bottle cap and after a pause he is joined by a voice.

'These effects are only now being measured. Properly measured. But as I've said before, we're in for much more, regardless.'

It must be a talk show. It doesn't sound like the local station. Must be coming in from the city.

'Now, you mentioned a delay.'

Yes, a talk show. Two distinct voices.

'Precisely.'

'If you would elaborate.'

'Well it's just this. Even with a full commitment, a total ban, right now – and as I've indicated, that's really very unlikely. Even with this kind of freeze we're still looking at feeling the effects for a number of years. We're talking about a delay time in the order of several decades.'

'How can that be put into terms that we can all understand?'

The cap is finally loosening. He can feel the first grudging slip of threads. He peeks over his shoulder to see if she is either still watching him or listening to the radio. She is apparently reading, a paperback open in her lap. She has sat like this most of the day, drawing him in to her, enveloping him in moments unmarred by speaking.

It might have some slighter cause, her silence. Something he had said or something he hadn't, some little approving grunt or nod he had omitted. A touch he hadn't given her whose absence still prickled her like hair risen on her private skin. He could spend the entire day in the same room with her listening to the radio while she followed

the scattered sun across the carpet and wallpaper, talking if her gaze fell upon him or watching her if it fell away once more. While in her shadow on the floor between them remained the shape of something he had missed in her look. Something he might never again be given the chance to find.

He has to be wary. 'I'm thirsty,' she had just said and he had understood her. He's in the kitchen, working with his hands slowly, pouring water from the bottle. He looks back at her uncertainly. And when she looks at him its like a promise kept, a promise made years before. I'll give you death the way you never figured it.

My love, my lover. My lovely enemy.

'So what you're saying in effect—'

'It's too late.'

'It's too late. And yet—'

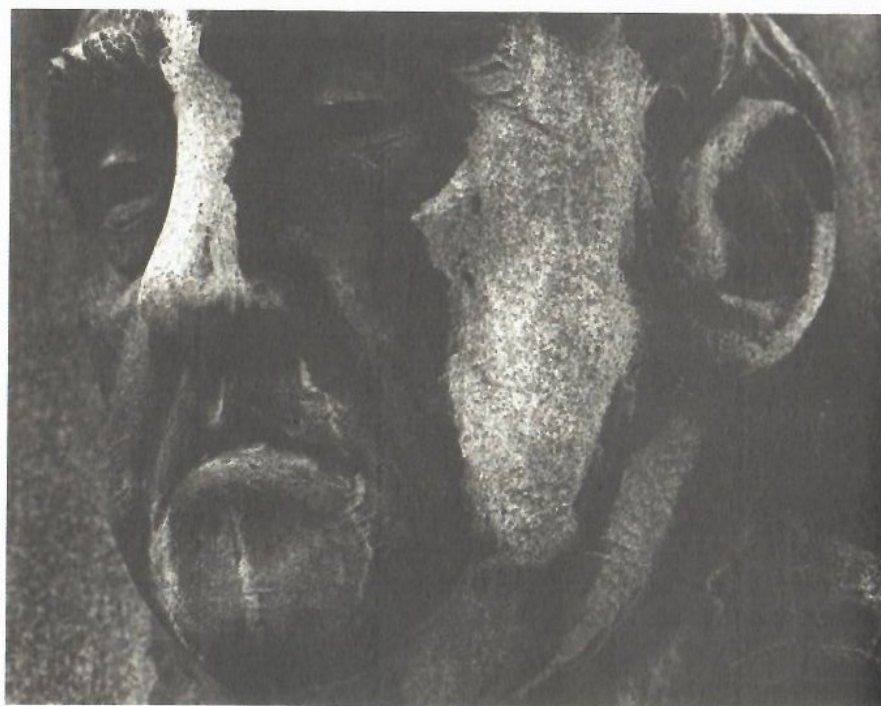
'I mean people have been moving out of the cities for years. We've observed this. We've recorded what's been going on, not only in terms of the phenomenon itself but in terms of the human phenomenon. We've observed this statistically. But it's not just here in the cities. It's going to be felt everywhere.'

He brings a half-full glass of water to her from the kitchen; he has opened the last bottle. He walks deliberately across the floor, finding his next step with the crack of the floor boards. His footsteps are silenced as he enters a living room that smells like an attic. The voices from the radio trail out faintly behind him. He fits the glass into her open hand.

And losing it to her he feels again that deeper loss. He scans the room. Once it permeated everything, silent, unurged; But where can he find it now? Traced in the ruffled carpet by the legs of the piano? like the path the piano made dragging itself towards the door. Before it ceased. The room is oppressive and not only with the heat. There are no windows here, only framed glass like mirrors. As he moves about the room, he can watch repeatedly his own face rise over tinted vistas, his body cut into translucent sheets and laid like gossamer over distant forests and horizon. He approaches one window and pauses, trying to discern her reflection beside his own. He has the same day-dream of them sitting together on a rainy night, watching themselves looking in through the streaming pane. They might come up and stop and catch themselves in that activity.

'Both the amount and the distribution. Alter productivity, diversity, that is, regenerative capacities,' the first voice is saying. The second is making consenting noises.

Restless, he walks over to the piano where his younger face framed in brass is still awaiting confrontation. He looks down instead. He



PETER HENDRICKSON

can't resist opening the folded wood panels, the fine dust entering the folds and crevices of his skin. Better than sweat. Is it here? Not in the keys themselves but in the faint smears of dirt upon them, the yellowing of the imitation ivory. The trace of those last sounds, like echoes preserved, fallen back with dust heavy and clinging from the air. Or never risen up through the impenetrable heat: The keys had been touched and never sounded, which was far worse. Pressing a key with his index finger, he cannot know that the delicate strings within, like the bones of a small bird, have dried and snapped. He presses another key and then another, slowly. He moves each within the span of his hand. Diminutive hammers knock on cushions of air inside, unseen; they convey a touch but make it senseless in conveyance, take it up meticulously but bring it to nothing.

Not here. He gently replaces the key covering, jiggling the panels to make sure they descend evenly. He looks up to the face he has been avoiding and finds beside it hers. But much younger and lovely. He turns away abruptly, recovering almost guiltily with the effort. She—sitting quietly apart, reading to herself in the next room, perhaps awaiting his return—she might look over casually and catch him here in this deceit.

'And be superimposed—'

'Superimposed?'

'On the long-term.'

'As you say, forced—'

'As I say—'

There are other pictures on the piano top, other faces. Faces of their children, who are all grown and gone. Smiling out of the newest frames, making no more demands now beyond the subtle persistence of their smiles, like a quiet request for shared contentment or benediction. And relatives he can scarcely remember, people who seem to have always existed only in a photograph. There are some faces that mean nothing to him; he refuses even to acknowledge these, gazing sombrely from the back of the crowded frames. Relics from an incomprehensible time, waiting unclaimed, undirected, in a colourless world.

There is one other image, cherished and frightening: The two of them alone, their bodies pressed closely, joined in a flash of light. There was a moment years ago, a moment whose intensity is mimicked in that photograph, caught up once in the chemicals, distilled into an infinitesimally thin layer of pigment; a moment that in actuality was composed as rigidly but by a sight and a touch, when she looked like that, just like that, but also sounded, and smelled, and even tasted. He was looking down at her; her face so close was

enormous. The lips broke apart faintly, the lower curling downward with exquisite motion, the tongue within, pink, pristine, emerging. 'I'm yours,' she said.

A burst of noise enters from the kitchen. The human voices have ceased, they too have worn out, dried up, within the cradle of this heat. There is only static. He is close to the kitchen doorway and can see the radio; he studies it for an explanation. The static persists. He should turn it off now, so it won't disturb them. He measures the distance by the effort required to reach it. He will leave it; the sound is too faint to follow him as he moves away from the doorway.

Turning and passing another window, he sees himself and stops. Gossamer, stained, a figure that has captured his imprint lies flush behind the glass. Its translucent hand raises to meet his own now outstretched, testing. He could press his fingers to the glass, capture in his fingertips its heat. But it could never give back that gentleness.

It is not here then. Nowhere between the four pinched corners, no movement, not even the lie of it in the slow jostling of light and dark: the scattered sun which she watches, like bright puzzle pieces and coloured rags carelessly strewn and then jealously collected again. Too slowly for his eyes. The shapes and forms, articles of furniture are featureless, strange for all their familiarity. Also seen through gossamer but from some other projection. Even the shadows that net them seem nailed to the floor.

By diminutive, unseen hammers.

At last he comes back to where she is sitting on the couch. She has finished the water. There isn't even a drop left inside the glass. Did she lick it out, catch each last glimmer on her tongue? So dry, she seems unaffected by the heat. But that's because it's taken so much. She's lost so much. She brushes a few strands of hair from her forehead. They return coiled, light, lovely. My love. Still, although we're both so old.

She has been watching him unnoticed while he paced the room, follows now his return to her. Even as he sits on the other end of the couch, even as she feels it shift and buckle faintly beneath him, she holds her gaze. As if promising by her fidelity much more.

He avoids confrontation with her eyes, keeps his own levelled at her lap. The paperback is there, no longer held by her hands. It is opened, face down to the page she has been reading. A crackling pulse of sound from the radio makes a final effort to reach them here, to cut across that distance. But he ignores it. He slides along the couch towards her, lifting and depositing his weight lightly into the cushions. Nothing will interfere with them, nothing more will keep them apart.

His life is her keepsake, the stirring in her fingers. In that single bead of sweat on her upper lip all the moisture of his kisses is collected.

If he can reach it, just now, with his tongue.

A.N. BOND



This place is not a heath
And I am not King Lear,
But the wind and rain
That gave Lear humility
Gives me substantiality;
A small insignificant
Human creature
Who can stop a raindrop
And part the wind.

COLLEEN MILLIKEN

Prayer of Ritual

I want to wear silken vests
of purple
and incense
heavy choking incense
to fill the cracks
in my
walls

I want a band of beaten
bronze
around my forehead
and wine
smoky fragrant wine
to fill the hole
in my
stomach

I want beads to finger
in my sleep
skeletons encased in amber
globes to hold

I want a thick
muffled
tapestry of embroidered
gold
so I can bury
my head
beneath it
and feel
no
pain

Amen

FASSIE CAMERON

Mending

Everything she owns
is full of holes
her sheets
her sweaters
her words
Even her stockings
are laced with
tiny holes
He says he would not
know her
without her holes

And when she comes to him
newly mended
with yarn and hope

he turns her away
he does not know her

TASSIE CAMERON



TED KALABOUKIS

On the Street

You can see them

Three tiny figures
at the end of your vision
swaying and lurching
drunkenly bending
deep
mouths open wide

Three girls as
one
joined arm in arm
dancing the blues
twisting as snakes
would
heavy and pulsing

You can hear them
now
At the tops of their lungs
they are singing
singing hymns
loud
loud as the blues

FABIE CAMERON

An Impartial Reverence

The window of the shop overlooked a narrow alley. Brockston leaned out, bracing his hands against the dusty sill. He could hear the distant drone of traffic, the scrape of heels against the pavement as the grit beneath them cut its way into the cement. He saw no one; it was as if the alley were a narrow channel into which the overflow of sound ran in a slow thin stream. He shut the window.

Looking about him, he could see the rows of massive shelves filled by the half-toppled books. Shadows lay in dim, flat pools, smoothing over the torn and stained volumes, muffling all their marred detail in greyness. On the counter before him were two books to be inspected and assigned a price: one an untouched ornamental classic, the other a popular novel, recently abandoned and replaced by its previous owner. Glancing at them there was nothing to distinguish the two; each was a collection of smooth pages bound tightly together with fine cord. Their covers consisted of strong cloth stretched tautly over a foundation of cardboard. Each had been designed to last a lifetime. Brockston felt tired. He reached for the classic; he liked to feel its weight in his hand.

In the corner behind the counter stood a heavy armchair upholstered in dark, thick cloth grown shiny with wear. The arms and legs of it were carved into entwining, twisting shapes coated in dark varnish. It was faintly grotesque, but the knowledge of its age and the soundness of its wood and structure gave Brockston a kind of comfort. He sat on the arm of the chair, his own left arm in its wrinkled white sleeve draped along its back. As he opened the book, the crisp pages offered resistance at the spine, although the cover was faded and frayed. Like so many others of its kind, this book held within its first words a promise of brilliance and precision in revealing some unrealized truth. But as he read further, the words seemed suddenly to shift their course, and he found they held an utterly different connotation than he had first imagined. It was in this way that Brockston's enjoyment of literature was often marred by an undefined feeling of disappointment.

He was not in any position to judge, he thought, not until he had written something of his own to stand high out of the dim tangle of the rest. But isn't that what writing is? A series of careful selections and judgements of everything he saw, and had not seen. He knew there were great things he could write; he knew because of the pangs of contempt and impatience he often felt, but each time he turned

inward to look, the images would suddenly splinter, or perhaps simply slip away.

Brockston stood up wearily, his lean strength dull and heavy in his limbs. He went to the sink in the windowless cupboard of a room which lay hidden from view in the wings of the shop. There he filled the small electric kettle and proceeded absently to rinse the thin ring of sepia from the cup's bottom. Upon returning to the comparative brightness of the shop, Brockston noticed that a woman had entered. Her back was turned to him as she scanned a row of shelves. The clean line of her raincoat made her narrow body seem a pillar. Brockston returned to his chair, but his eyes remained fixed upon her. She turned to face him, her mouth drawn in a faint smile.

'There's a book I've been looking for, but I haven't been able to find it – not anywhere else and you don't seem to have it here: *An Impartial Reverence* by R.H. Drew.'

Brockston was certain it was not in the shop; he would have remembered that title had he come across it. Still, it had an elusive familiarity.

'Drew,' he said hesitantly. 'No, I don't have it.'

Her hair was light brown verging on blonde – a shade slightly deeper than her camel-coloured raincoat, he noticed. Her eyebrows were darker still; the eyes a clear, sharp green like his own. The planes of her face met in such a way as to give her a look of intelligence and cold severity. She leaned forward slightly as she spoke, not her hands, but her fingertips resting lightly on the edge of the counter.

'I'm not surprised,' she said, the clarity of her voice unmarred by emotion. 'It's probably out of print by now, but I'm desperate to find it. I read it a few years ago – borrowed it from a friend, but I never had my own copy. Do you think you could order it – have it tracked down?'

'Yes,' said Brockston without hesitation, then quickly calculating, weighing his words carefully, continued, 'If you will leave your name and number, I will contact you when I've found it.'

'How long do you think it will take?' she asked with the same stressed clarity.

'Apart from guaranteeing that the book will be found eventually, if a copy still exists, I can't promise anything definite. A month is usual, but there are exceptions both ways – sometimes only a week is needed, but I've placed orders that took as long as six months to arrive.'

'I'll be here in a month.'

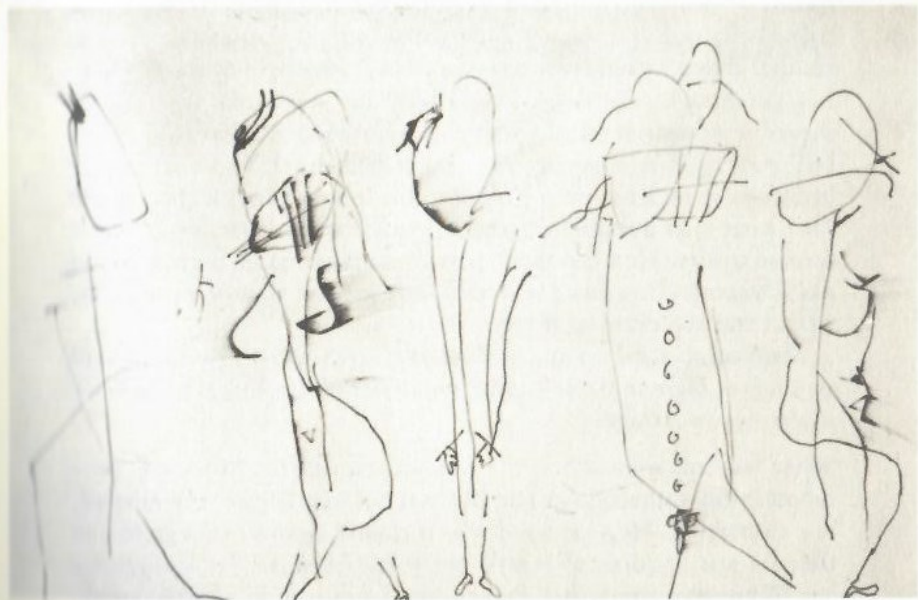
She smiled slightly, then turned to leave. Brockston watched after her. A sliver of dark green silk would appear momentarily from under the hem of her coat as she stepped.

Brockston had little trouble locating the book; he had only to wait to receive the package. He was anxious that it should arrive before she did; he wanted to read it himself before she claimed it. He knew he would like it, that he would have something to say.

An Impartial Reverence – the name stirred some faint memory, perhaps altering it slightly in searching for its shape. He looked to the rows of books before him. They were all damaged in some way, but were no closer to obliteration than when they were printed; their pages might be torn and yellowed, but, in their force and meaning, the words themselves remained distant and unscathed. Even if a book were burnt, another copy would probably still exist. A painting might be destroyed, but a novel could hold an elusive immortality.

An Impartial Reverence – could he have read it before? If he had, he would now remember it more clearly; the name would not recall scattered, fragmented images, but would immediately bring forth some association of plot or premise. He knew what the protagonist – no the heroine – would be like; he could imagine her as having the same face, the same cool, graceful manner as the woman who requested the book. Brockston smiled in self-mockery. He took a sip of tea and found it was cold. He looked at his watch and saw it was nearly time to close the shop. Had the woman said *An Impartial Reverence* was about an artist? He could not remember. Brockston rose to switch off the lights, then standing at the doorway, he stared into the dimness of the room. He returned to the counter and paused, uncertain of what he meant to do. He pulled the armchair over to the window. Across the alley, one storey below, the blackened panes of glass of the next building would occasionally become illuminated by the headlights of some car passing by unseen. Brockston opened the window and the night air seeped in to fill the room. He thought of *An Impartial Reverence*. He had established for himself what the heroine might be like, but what conflict could adequately serve to define her character? In representing the ideal one always ran the risk of toppling over into the ridiculous; only that which is *possible* to humans can rightly be called a human ideal. Still he had only himself to please, and would not vainly attempt to please others – not in an age when the depiction of anything other than the mundane or the bitterly hopeless would be considered unsophisticated.

What about an artist whose work was good, but not good enough yet? Her standards would be higher than her buyers'. She'd be



yet i, February '88 ALBERT LIU

offered a good price for a painting, but she'd destroy it rather than allow it to exist, because she would know she could do better. Brockston shifted uneasily in his chair. He stood up and paced the room. When he reached the door he hesitated, his hand resting on the pale silver knob. He turned, then walked quickly back to his chair as though drawn by sudden interest in the soft grey light of the window. No, he thought, her work would be to her standards. It would be something she drew years ago that she refused to sell. It wouldn't be a bad drawing in an innocent way, but a deliberately bad drawing she had made in an attempt to pander to the lowest markets. She would have kept it as a reminder, and it would be this that the collector wanted to buy. He would walk past all the paintings in her studio and ask if he could buy *this*. He would have to offer a lot of money. She would tear the drawing in two.

Brockston stood up and walked over to the door. He thought of staying the night in the soft, dim tranquility of the shop, but he knew it was not necessary.

When, several weeks later, the woman reappeared, Brockston for a moment did not recognize her. She was not so tall as he remembered, nor so striking. He wondered why it should seem so strange to him that she was not dressed exactly as she had been the day he first saw her. When she approached the counter Brockston was first to speak.

'I'm sorry, but your book hasn't arrived yet, but I was able to locate a copy, and I'm expecting it any day now.'

The woman's smile was forced, but she spoke with ease nonetheless.

'I didn't think you'd remember me - it's been quite a few weeks. Actually I was able to find it myself in that little shop on Clement St. I hope I haven't caused you any trouble. Actually I just came back because I remembered you had a good price on this,' she said, indicating the small hardcover dictionary she held under her arm.

'I see,' said Brockston, his voice dry and flat. The book was paid for, and the woman left. He hoped she would not return.

When, several days later, the book arrived, Brockston resolved not to read it. He left it sitting in a drawer still completely masked by its brown paper wrapping. He was afraid of disillusionment, but in his fear realized he was already disillusioned. He took the book from the drawer and tore off its wrapping. The binding was red with worn gold lettering - 'An Impartial Reverence'. Beneath the title was a small rose, also in gold. Brockston wanted to put the book away, but he knew it was too late. He would read the first sentence and stop at that. He opened the cover and turned to the first page. It read:

'Elizabeth had always been a spirited girl.'

Brockston closed the book and stood staring at its cover. He opened a drawer and tossed it in among a clutter of papers, not in disgust, but in the manner of one disposing of a useless object. He paused for a moment, quite still. Gathering together some paper he began to write.

NORA MAYNARD



..... ..
.....
... ..

We never stopped
 spinning the stories we
had never really begun
... a feeling of endless ending

no trace of tree branches
sketching your thoughts;
the subtle scratch of spruce
fingers against the eaves-trough

you said you had spoken but
 did not finish your
 sentence.

(If you did, I hadn't heard you.)

And for that reason
drew lines of successive
periods behind you
as you walked through the
walls of the cabin.

*The single drop, drop
of water that kept
 falling from your nose
 in the rain that day.

You grimaced and said
your life could be summed
up like this
.....()....
I said I would have
put the dots in the
middle.
you said we were always
trying to escape to

either end of the
universe
I said the universe had
no limits
you – that all
the blue of the sky
could be collected.
in one jar and put
by your bedside.

Though you admitted
that you'd never
tried it before.

Some say the world
will end tomorrow
Some say its already
happened.
and that suspending our
disbelief is just as easy
as hanging your clothes in the
closet. We take them off
every night before we go to bed.

... And we resolved never
to understand ... because
understanding would
bring disbelief

If you had a
grain of sand, you said,
you could show me –
that there was a
miniature apocalypse
unfolding within each
individual grain
cherubim, sceptres,
gargoyles, lightening –
the whole bit

but of like if you smashed
a TV set – every photon
which dissipated into the

air would have a little video
of the TV set exploding
in it.

We didn't have a TV
either.

But we had an old
newspaper. so amused
each other reading that
for a while.

It was as if everything was
engrained you said
Even on the surface of
the lake – the
meniscus – there was
engraved somebody's
epitaph. Seems it
would get lost, I said.
no. you place it there.

You said you have left
many thoughts in the
corners of rooms; a few
scattered along the
roadside, one on
top of a mountain in
New Hampshire; you had
even hung one on a
spider web once.

You needed only retrace
your steps and you
could find it there again.

There was never any need for a
sense of loss. . .
that is what you said ...
until the propane ran out
and we had to tuck the
covers around us and go
to sleep

It wasn't that nature
made relics of us,
it was like
we make relics
of nature.

I wonder
if I was to find
my bones lying
on some distant
beach somewhere,
what thoughts I
would leave
with them?

I found the
wreck of a
seagull carrion
once,
smattered
clam shells lay
beside it. Some of
the clams were still
alive and slightly open.

JANE STUPART



SEAN PHILPOTTS

Voice-Print Paramour

I

Get out of me
my head
get in, get out
Were we ever as one, hanging like meat
to be and be forever
now disunified
and disinclined to even
mumble the names, the hooks,
which one cold night
almost crossed our lips
and wet the air that fed us?
Now with only Mister
Dry Eyes and endless
driving by your house to
watch your street, scenic lookout gone mental,
emerge from out the dark
around that bedroom window.
Ignore me, that's all it
takes
Give me that look
if I dare to glance your way
there's a double pane that lies between us
There, take your fill of
another man's virtuosity
or if I just don't suffocate

II

Are you out there –
Has the night got you
holding you
before my arms catch you
coming
say ——— admit it,
when you laughed at my corpse
in a truckstop heaven,
that time you were shocked
that time your precious mouth gaped
like a rat skipped over your grave.
Like the day when then a bell rings and

you're into night and this cat
just walking across my pillow,
tripping on the bedpost,
crashing across my eyes –
when then quiet dawns

So now, so tired of my graces
(my charming faces) – verdant stories, venom glories
These times, when you're nowhere
with my white ceilings
and my firm bed
that superimposed vision
flashing square on my dead end eyes and viscous
dreams and
stiff mouth
and heavy, synthetic breathing
Tomorrow, go,
I'll
still be sleep with a hangover
of never having found your face
in my mirror
(of never painting your eyes with my tongue)

III
(denouement?)

Like sleep, you're crawling into my eyes
on the third night –
not even betrayed, not even that
to knock my head against.
You don't see me spinning,
your abandoned satellite
out of your gravity
sucked in by your witchy eyes
through my scattered skin
and itching teeth
Now abandoned, now replete
with my own scratchy notebook
of a badly sketched grand amour
and moaning lines withal,
that's what I'm left with –
A pasted face, lips smeared
across a dashboard

like I'm obsessed, or like that's all just
an Italian movie, in the late blue night.

But we know, though you forget,
I'll follow you
in my own mind, whips and
love letters (you asked and expected chains?)
in black black ink
in my moody cage
burning up like a forest
with the animals
kissing your perfect lips ...

Too florid maybe, for your words, your cell,
but here that's a purple heart habit
nailing itself, blowing along visions
in fitful sleep, across your eyes,
like tundra dawns.

MICHAEL M.R. HOLMES

Domestic Violence

The woman was strangled well
and secured, if not pinned – just held
sometimes, almost always,
by the poor child's chubby arms.

It seems that he frequently didn't know
his own strength or noise or inaudible
clamour at two or three,
in thick summer's fitful repose;

like a brave boy in story
book splashes of happiness – blessed
and delivered into combat
with dragons, damsels, never

mothers in slumber. All she wastes
wanting not to tolerate or wander
into wakeful, twining reality,
kicks at her chest, her head –

not thinking, just striking out –
a warning, and his outrage
at not being fed. She has been
bruised before by plenty. Now

she needs groceries. She craves
two steel arms, circling, pressing
around her smooth neck. She prays
that she won't forget, again,

and again, his words, and the numbers
added and bundled and payed up.
The rest, she recalls, won't cover
any scars or baby's plundering,

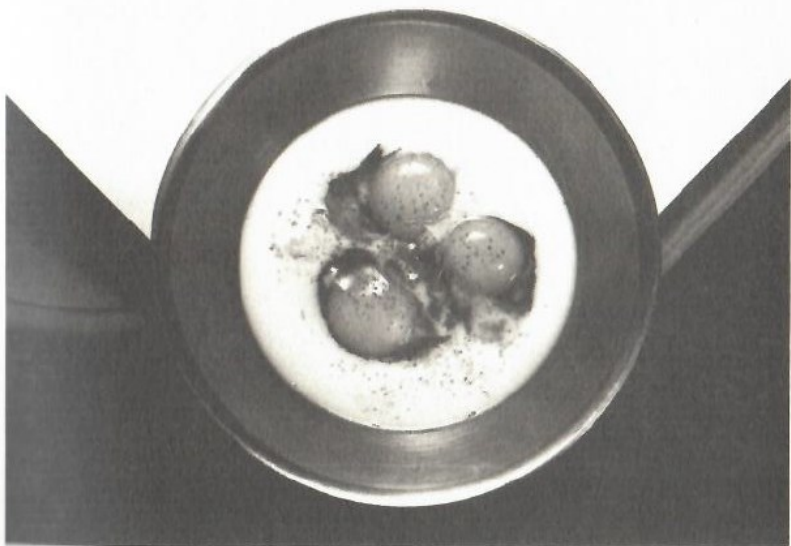
unbounded demands on her; on her
heedlessness and blurring, turbid
sense of what is right and feels most
like perfect, senseless contentment –

after the morning alarm and before
the first soiled cup of coffee.

He spits up his mess once again,
and again, flinging it forth,

only to deny it all, later on,
after all of the heaving hot summers
in daycare, under watch, and in
trouble as his punishment.

LISE FOURNIER



DEREK JOHNSON

angeline in the wings

la

a child girl
sixteen years crushed,
wrapped inside elizabethan rags –
i want to wear the passions
like she – but she does not have
ribs
but only scars,
a paste face

kissed by the man woman king queen

i know that she is pleased
with her peace in the glory
of wandering theatre,
of cutting dress
i see her not as insensible

only latent on court stages,
pained under glass,
caroling

fa la

LISE FOURNIER

the river

'He plunged under once ... For an instant he was overcome with surprise; then since he was moving quickly and knew that he was getting somewhere, all his fury and fear left him.'

- Flannery O'Connor

it's me

you will never forget
how not to drown
down dropping plunk
deep in the mouth
of the preacher's river
how not to drown
bobbing up on the splash

how to lie down

to float, to be wet, to bead

how to make your bed
on the crest
on the clasp
of seven sacramental waves
in the cleavage
of the sun on the waters

how to float home

you will never absolve you
you won't spurn murky immersion
you will the plunge

the thrust from the sky glow slopes you
the push from the rays impregnate you

you, a sunbeached buoy upon the vibrating ripples

you, an intercurrent will

in capacious reminiscence of drenched existence
in the name, in the water, with your father
in the river where you first shivered
in the wet that you first feared

in the first place

i baptised you

LISE FOURNIER

Meredith in the Tired Car

'Don't you want to fly to Paris ... and eat from those little tables like other people do?' she said it and looked at the car door as if they could never be there. It was an important thing to say. 'Don't you want to eat like other people do and have as much ketchup as you want? Don't you want to have your own tie, a real blue one?'

'I dunno if that's important to me' he finally said.

'Don't you want anything?'

'I want to see fish under the water' About that he thought deeply, he tried to see, even if the car never moved.

THOMAS CZEGLÉDY



DEREK JOHNSON

Go ahead your Weather

Looking
From a window
From a high place;
is this not beauty?

(drops pulse through the screen grid
impact and diffuse
over a particulate city)

Sound is the only continuum
as the car comes, one pane,
the next, a splash of rain
and is gone.

Smoke creeps from a crematorium
and spills into an anonymous sky
all above water.

When the neons come out
it won't be the same at all
(though the glass will still
remain)

Soon I shall join
the city's bricks ...
in their mass solitude
marching to and fro,
one brick, one pane,
one splash of rain
(though at least
I'll be falling from
a high place)

RICHARD ENGLAND

Destination

... floating feather cradled by insubstance
unnoticed on the dead waters, spiritwinds
touch caress, like the accepting pets of a mother
on her dying child – fighting practicality
to the bitter, lost, silent end.

Exiting the stage, receding into shore
under the disapproving scowl of shorelimbs
that darken the waters, with bits of nature
shards of leaf and branch. It is all so unaware
some temperate cryogenic – waiting for sentience

underneath the surface, it would appear as
a corpse, dark blot, but on top is beckons
a white feather ignored by the tapping flies
living on the edge of surface tension, caring little
of symbols. The sun is fragmented on the eddies.

THOMAS MACKAY

Her White Gloves

Down the corridor
there is a two-cup teapot
emptied of tempests
down the corridor
there is no music playing
on the piano.

In the white room
he is lying face-down
on the floor
in the white room
she has forgotten
her white gloves.

Down the corridor
there is a two-cup teapot
on the piano
in the white room
there is no music playing
her white gloves.

SHIONA MACKENZIE



CHARLES MORGAN

The Age of Our Desire

*Let it come, let it come
the age of our desire.*

— A. Rimbaud

in the small first-fires
our breasts swell with hope
and crest the seething hate
to sow statues and bones, bleary wind
weeping for the whiteness of moments

let it come and bleed over the shadows
children in its wake
Age of desire and pure sorrow, come
break upon the seer, wet him with joy:
pain's fifth column

let our desire drip down, forming
sequin-lines, lakes and rivers
attesting to us

as we have said and again will say:
leave nothing but your hate
possess nothing but its centre
use nothing but nails

STEPHEN PENDER

The Morning Razor

to the old
who sit and judge time
by death's brilliance
when bones are measured:
ecstasy is faces
exulting in small things

the full body sags
by the hour bordered
tides crawl through the afternoon
and fawn upon the dusk.
scents of oil and cassis
rise in yellow skin-folds.

meals form the day.
the house creaks gently.
the air is never free.

the mind brings forth
its children unheeded.
softly touch
the morning razor
is this the limit?
have i loved?

STEPHEN PENDER

The Slow Film

evening festers.
the web of leaves is risen in wind.
we talked:

of the quality of bridges
sad graffiti, resolve
how to want the lack
of want, bones and bread
how to live oneself
one hundred times daily
this year

he said

the trees are like dry hair
the sky is a film
birds defecate our altars
breast milk sours
augury dies by the tongue
our breath is the hot wind

STEPHEN PENDER



MARTHA WEAVER

The Man Who Was Caught In Rush Hour

There are always these difficult little interruptions in a long, memorized process. George Dantley found these moments trying: the switching on of the mind to cover the details. Having only two hands, he juggled his briefcase, overcoat and wallet, and carefully counted out his fare. He pushed his way through the turnstiles, and caught the train as the doors were closing. In a sense the train caught him too, for he was half-in and half-out, and forced to squeeze his way into the car.

He had caught a late train, but even at the end of rush hour, there were still too many people for him to be able to sit ... except at the back where surprisingly, amidst a half-dozen standing passengers there was one seat. It seemed to have been waiting for him. He felt tired, clumsily edging his way to the back. He carefully forced his way through the pole-grabbers and aisle-blockers, and passing each one signified a petty victory. He reached the back and sat down. He looked at the people around him. Some read newspapers, others read posters, some slept, and some gazed with blank expressions across the aisle. No one spoke. They were all united, the riders of the last train, and silence was their reward. They were the late workers, crawling out of the bureaucratic woodwork, and bearing their heavy bodies beetle-like to their suburban burrows. In the full tide of rush hour the ride from Beacon Hill to Riverside can take a half an hour. By eight o'clock it can be cut down to twenty minutes.

What determines the precise moment in which a man decides to take out a cigarette and light up? Does he ever delay, or is the action the immediate and spontaneous response to the urge? What creates the urge? How often do we notice our urges, and once they have registered, can we ever suppress them, or do they just linger and catch us when our wills are tied? At Chestnut Hill Station, George noticed three people lighting cigarettes at exactly the same time.

The weather was becoming milder, and when the train crawled outside, the night lights and streets felt the weight of the melting snow, and reflected the light energy it released. In the wetness of late February, the night lights formed yellow sheets, that clashed against the train windows, trying to get at the warmer light inside. To return to the underground tunnel was to return to the security of the dry, white lights on the rough stone walls. They always passed; never lingered too long, and never returned. The faster they moved, the faster the train carried George to his station, where he would climb

the escalator and face the other lights: the yellow ones that shine in sheets of glass and lend no warmth. Their heat was imprisoned beneath their geometric surfaces. The prospect was no longer welcome. Changing lights is another adjustment, another complication. The subway lights began to move more slowly, seeming to pause, and then pass in embarrassment, feeling that they had stayed too long....

George must have fallen asleep. He awoke with a start and found he had reached his station. The doors were closing. He made a vain effort to rise and exit. By the time he had reached the doors, he could barely get a fist through. He retracted it and stared angrily, as the train jerked forward. The pace of those on the platform quickened, in time with the quickening telephones, pillars and posters. Soon there was darkness and the steady pulsing light.

George looked at his watch and calculated that he must have slept a full twenty minutes. He looked around. The train was nearly empty, with the exception of the three smokers, who had struck up a conversation, and two others, who sat solemnly apart several seats further down the car. They were all passive, unconcerned, waiting for the next stop. George's mind was flooded with panic, but these waters soon subsided into a small stream of the usual and comprehensible time-concern. He was alone in this; no one else had missed their station. There was nothing for it but to go to Parkside, turn around and come back one stop on the next inbound train. It would add an extra ten minutes at most.

The lights passed more quickly as the train continued to gather speed. It reached the speed at which there is no longer any rattling, a kind of stasis, and stayed there. Five minutes passed. George had never gone westbound from Riverside. He had never been to Parkside Station, and could not imagine why it should take so long. He wondered where he was now relative to the surface. Near home, when the train slowed, he could tell exactly which hill it was ascending. Here he could only guess, only assume. He became concerned when ten minutes had passed and the train had not yet begun to brake, and no emergency exit red lights had been passed.

He approached the front of the train and perched himself against the forward-facing window. He saw the chain of lights extending straight ahead. They came at him from both sides, unfolding like foothills. The train rode on a constant wave that swelled and curved seeking its path through the darkness, as the night fisherman heads out into what he cannot see. The train only 'assumed' the rail, except for the thirty feet directly in front, where the rail glistened orange,

reflecting the train's headlights. How many of the life-weary had that orange rail greeted as it had approached its many stations? The month of February has always had the highest suicide rate.

'Do you think a subway train runs when nobody's on it?'

George looked perplexed. There was no escape. The question had been clearly addressed to him. One of the smokers was looking directly at him, his eyebrows rigid and arched above deep eyes that betrayed fascinated interest.

'I suppose so,' George's response was tight and restrained. He was looking for a way out, an emergency exit. He was waiting for Park-side Station. Twenty minutes had passed since he had missed his stop, and he began to feel a wrenching premonition of what his conscious mind could not yet see.

'Why though?' the man persisted. 'To what purpose? I mean, it just doesn't seem to make any sense.'

'Subway drivers are paid by the hour,' George answered rationally. 'They have to drive to get paid.'

He ignored the smoker's next question. The thought of the forgotten driver instilled hope in him: an explanation and answer, a destination. His old nervousness was replaced by an intense new one: the one that fears failure. The absurdity of the train overwhelmed him. He wanted to be one of the metro lights; he wanted to be thrown backwards from the train, perhaps thirty years backwards. He looked around the car. The two men sitting further down remained as always, side by side, impassive and immobile. Then George noticed that one of the three louder types was missing. It was not the one who had addressed him, but another who had had a beard, but whose face George could no longer remember. His horror mounted. He approached the driver's cabin and rapped on the door.

'Excuse me.' His voice sounded hollow.

No response.

'Excuse me?' he pleaded. The door opened.

'Yes. Sorry about that. Using the can. My bladder can't wait. Sometimes I forget to go before I leave the house if my mother isn't there to remind me.' It was the bearded man. George did not seem to comprehend. He pushed past, to the bearded man's apparent bewilderment. Then George noticed that there *was* no driver. He returned to his seat, panic-stricken.

'This train has no driver!' he screamed at all of them. He shook the two immobile men but they did not respond.

'You know what?' asked the inquisitive one with the arched eyebrows. 'I'd entirely forgotten. It's my birthday.'

The others sang for him, and one produced a bottle of champagne.

'I also happen to have three paper cups,' he added. They all sang, and offered George a drink.

George grabbed it and flung it back at them. The champagne spilled down the bearded man's face like silent tears.

'You're all crazy!' he screamed at them. 'This train is going on and not stopping, and you're sitting there drinking and singing. Aren't you *late* for anything? Don't you have lives up there? You're all armed with champagne as though you're *expecting* this. Why aren't we stopping?'

They seemed not to understand. Finally the inquisitive man spoke, 'Settle down. You're seriously disturbed over something,' he stated calmly. 'There's no need to stop at the next station. Nobody was intending to get off there. Relax and have a drink. It's my birthday.' The others joined in again singing enthusiastically.

In the height of his hysteria, George had one clear thought. He grabbed the emergency strip along the edge of the ceiling. Under normal circumstances this should stop the train.

A very real feeling of burning entered his arm from the strip as he touched it, but he refused to let go. A wave of pain moved along his arm, striking repeated blows in time with the singing. The singing grew louder, and spread with the pain through his entire body. The knife-like voices and the pain grew in intensity, crushing his frail form beneath the repeated blows of their steady rhythm. The cadence was constant and unrelenting, like the syncopated, ceaseless hammering of the train on the track. The piercing sound subsided, and the train grew silent. One of the blank men pulled out a newspaper and began to read....

Do you think a subway train runs when nobody's on it? In Greater Boston the thick night-clouds had parted and people were greeting another dawn. Below them, buried in the concrete, the train cut its path through the darkness, oblivious of the sunrise and the thousand sunrises that had greeted its mornings. It would ride on through to dusk, to mourn the passing of the day that it had not seen.

JOHN GARDNER



MICHAEL KLEINBERG



