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THE PORTABLE WALL



STORIES&POEMS&LETTERS
&HEALTH-HINTS&REVIEWS

VOL. III NO. 2 WINTER 90--91

Friends,

How do you feel about the war in the Mideast? Do you buy the notion that it isn't so bad? Feel like the President is doing what you elected him to do? Speak up, freedom-loving, patriotic American *Portable Wall* readers! Or is our nation rapidly becoming a police state ruled by fear?

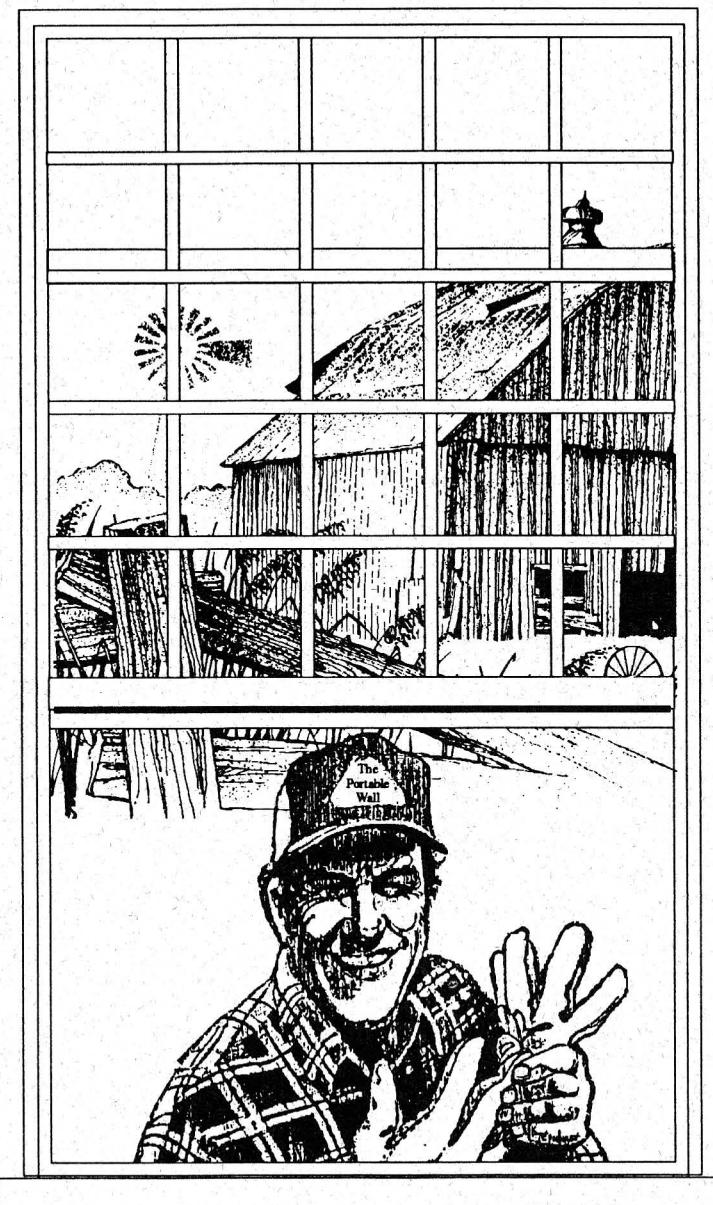
Write me letter, please.

--Dan

THE PORTABLE WALL

Volume III

Number 2



Our address:

The Portable Wall
c/o Dan Struckman
215 Burlington
Billings, MT 59101

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Letters & Health Hints

Solstice

Dear Dan,

Thanks a proverbial heap for sending me the fall '89 issue of *The Portable Wall*. I am now in far away barbarous Pullman, rather isolated from the cultural airpocket of sweet Missoula, so the *Wall* is more welcome than ever. My apologies for not writing sooner; I have ventured yet further into the swamp of graduate school and have become preoccupied with fungal taxa and taxing fungi. My only other excuse is laziness. I will eventually get liberated from WSU with a doctorate in plant pathology, providing I don't catch a bad case of potato blight; any promising careers in plant medicine out your way? My specialty is driving demons from conifer seedlings, but I am learning more about apples too.

Here is a submission to the *Wall*. I drew it some time ago, but it has not been previously printed; it's the usual snakes, volcano, naked woman theme (another of my specialties.)

Frank M. Dugan
P.O. Box 2098 C. S.
Pullman, Washington 99165

Dan,

I just received my author's copies of *The Portable Wall*. What a neat little magazine. I really enjoyed it.

I laughed out loud when I read parts of the Newsletter by Tim Coats. The piece by Mark Fryberger was very amusing also. . . not to mention I enjoyed the poetry. . .

Kerri Brostrom
7602 W. Powhattan
Apt. 2
Tampa, Fla. 33615

Dear Dan,

I enjoy'd reading your Lame Deer News & Book Report — I have been reading Hillerman novels lately — Navajo detective stories—and they remind me of home. In fact, as summer has just planted itself squarely before me, my nostalgia has reached a fine and excruciating pitch. It's more than nostalgia, it's homesickness. I miss the rivers so much I dream about fishing.

. . . Mark Fryberger reminds me of Kafka or Dostoevsky when he writes parables. Keep it up Mark!

I am sending you a copy of an article I wrote for the *Book Club of California Journal*—just to fill you in a little.

[The article, titled "The Early Years of the Black Stone Press in San Francisco," covers that history from 1978. It winds up with "Ten years later in 1989, I now know that cutthroat trout and deer steak and Jack Daniels are mighty fine. I've narrowed the Bay Area restaurants down to about 15 and if Mackenzie-Harris would move to Montana I might pull up stakes and move back. On the other hand, I talked to my sister today and it's only 65 degrees below zero up there today with wind at 35 miles per hour. . ."]

The catalog of events in my life is rapidly becoming bewilderingly dense.

My son Max is entering the 6th grade.

My new (post earthquake) studio is great! I'm teaching at San Francisco State (Book Arts) and my girlfriend and I joined families (She has 2 teenagers).

I am entertaining thoughts about writing more.

Peter Koch
2203 Fourth St.,
Berkeley, Calif. 94716

Dan,

Enclosed find publishing news. Also check out short story "The 21st of June." *The Village Voice* is the only magazine I lust after.

[Editor's note: I received Mark's letter shortly after I telephoned him with news about the Sixth International Conference on AIDS, held in San Francisco. I attended as a delegate from the Indian Health Service. Hundreds of thousands of people have died of AIDS and activists are angry for what they see as foot-dragging among federal officials.]

These words from the *Manual of Natural Therapy: Chinese herbology for immuno deficiency and autoimmune*:

1. Astra 8 Formula — an energy tonic has been used by Immune Enhancement Project and Quan Yin Clinic in San Francisco for treatment of ARC patients.

Formula: Astragalus

Atractylodes
Schizandry
Ligustrum
Ganoderma
Eluthero
Ginseng
Codonopsis
Licorice

2. Power mushroom — enhances immune system.

Formula: Ganoderma (Reishi)

Lentinus (Shiitake)
Silver Fungus (White ear)
Polyporus
Holen (Poria)

For myasthenia gravis, according to Dr. Cheung M.D. and Brian Laforgia in the *Journal of ACTC*. 1. 1982: Decoction for Tonifying the Center and Benefiting Chi.

Decoction of Cortex Cinnamon: and Radix Aconit: Carmichael.

Praeparata for Regulating the Center.
Fortified Pill of Buddha's Warrior

Attendant.

The herbs used for "Supporting the righteousness and eliminating evil" seem to benefit the immune mechanism.

Ginseng and Radix Astragalus seems to upgrade the immune function.

Decoction for Generating the Meridians has regulating action on immune mechanism.

Chinese herbs to inhibit cancer growth and increase immune function:

Rhizoma Zedoariae
Herba oldelandia diffusa
Ramulus mori
Rhizoma coptidis
Gifolia

Aromatherapy:

Massage the following extracts in vegetable oil base: bryony 4%, eucalyptus 3%, lavender 3%, rosemary 3%.

Schuessler Tissue Salts:

Take the following remedies for any problem that may be connected with the immune system. Take three tablets of each twice per day:

Kali phosphorica
Natrum muriaticum
Ferrum phosphorica
Kali sulphurica
Natrum sulphurica

Anything to it? I wouldn't know. It's a vast and dark world of medicine out there, I know that. In traditional Tibetan medicine the primary diagnostic procedure is a reading of the pulse. This skill takes many years to master. It works.

Mucho mysterioso.

Mark Fryberger
937 Beverly Ave.
Missoula, Mont. 59801

Letters and Health Hints

Equinox Sydney, Montana

Dan,

Thanks for the Spring 1990 *The Portable Wall*. In my humble estimation, the quality of appearance and content has taken an exponential positive leap with this issue. Might as well make it the best, *n'est-ce pas?*

Some random shots:

—Someday, I'm going to write a surreal short story about our old practice hall in Missoula, the Roller Rink, and its slightly askew owner.

—You were wondering how to keep the *P. W.* vital and a little crazy... I like Mark's column (frottage, indeed!); I like your reminiscences and personal notes (wasn't your original intention to have an on-going open letter to old/new friends as well as a literary mag?); I like the letters column... Some new things you might try or expand upon: (1) An occasional interview—we all like to read about people, don't we? (You could have Mark blow dry his blond, Aryan hair forward and be Andy Warhol's *Interview Mag* surrogate in Missoula, and he could corner a Mike Fiedler or Dave Thomas and find out what they're up to. Another option would be to send questions to various interesting types for them to shuffle and respond to, or have them interview themselves).

(2) A regular "Animal" feature, transcendent, of course, writing about bird or beast. The drowning dog story in the Spring '90 issue was moving.

(3) In the vein of Mark's article on Cuban books and music, and your short reviews of what you've been reading, you could have semi-regular reviews of music or books that people you trust are into which may be unusual and enlightening turn-ons for others.

Well, I have to return to the material plane and tend to farm business. I may be the only farmer in Montana with a degree from the

Sorbonne, which these days means I can sing Jacques Brel songs to the Charolais cattle across the fence, or read Saint-Pol-Roux poetry while tool-barring the summer fallow. Am enclosing the most recent poem which gives some insight into my existential relationship to this place where I live and how it ties into the universe.

Gordon Simard
P.O. Box 1557
Sidney, MT 59270



Dan,

Thanks for sending me the latest *Portable Wall*. It looks good inside and out and serves as a good reminder that I should get in touch. I haven't left the state yet... I have managed to receive a position as factotum to a local electrician (perhaps lackey is a better word). This furnishes me with just enough money... nonetheless I plod along, one word after another. Perhaps one of these days I might get something said. Enclosed are a few recent efforts.

Dave Thomas
806 Poplar St.
Missoula, Mont. 59802

P.S. Saw Dirk Lee this morning on the street, a brother in the struggle to give obscurity a decent name.

Ana Pine

Headcheese

In a moment of curiosity
I looked up head cheese
in the dictionary
already suspecting the
worst
I braced myself
and neither blinking or
raising an eyebrow calmly
read the inevitable.

Ana Pine

Boring story

You have me roped
into your corner
with tedious words,
slick words cutting
through tangling my
thoughts.
I want to
slide like honey
down the wall
unnoticed
without a fuss
cover my head
my eyes and ears
and melt into the calm
of silence.

Ana Pine

Freedom

He says
we don't care
about the
wall
here we are
in this yuppie
town
caring only about
our jeeps and
bmw's
buying bagel chips
and croissants
watching thirty
something
and sixty minutes
yes we give a
damn
we relish our
freedom
cry for the repressed
mourn the dead
believe me son
we understand
remember the time
when our fathers
fought were
tortured and killed
for cause
and your goddamn
future.

Gordon Simard

Earth Day 1990

Skeletons of plum blossoms hang
on the emerald clover I cut.
The moist chocolate soil is dappled
with pink rimmed petals.
Lingering sweet subtle scent wafts up.
I chew on a fresh leafy stalk
and the crushed green juice
is peppery against my throat.
Cells know this is healing.
The senses are gates that swing both ways:
Out to the world, and into the soul.

I walk the rows of this fledgling windbreak
planted in short grass prairie at the west edge
of the lower Yellowstone watershed.
What is this place?

The straight line people have gridlocked the land
with county roads, fence lines and power poles.
The native nomads who followed the river's course are gone.
I survey the Taoist logic of coulees, the ~~parabolic~~ majesty
of bluffs and buttes which the bold turquoise sky
bows to meet in the badlands across the river.
I am surveyed by the inscrutable shrike, ~~who~~,
with a dozen other species, makes this windbreak home.

How can we save a place we do not know?
How can we unravel complexity without being familiar
with the simplicity we seek to achieve?
We see Earth through filters
of our human accretions, and the efficacy
of our participation hinges on this perception.
We can not begin to understand Life
without an aliveness, an openness, a clarity
wherein the ordinary becomes truly extraordinary.

With persistent, cool objectivity, the northwest wind
blows through the budding green ash.
My feet impress lightly on friable ground.
This rare damp morning caresses my uplifted face, and I,
a willing but imperfect conduit between heaven and earth,
start up the draw towards home.

Gordon Simard

A Zen Drowning

Zazen eyes dilate with shock:

“Why do you bum the sweet azalea
(pistils crackle and petals curl
thrust to tallow flame),
and drop its wounded body
on the meditation rock?!”

I drowned in an unfurling,
fragrant wave.

Gordon Simard

O Homeless

Tonight I peer through shattered eyes.
Broken capillaries spill visual purple into
darkness that cannot hide you compelling faces.
At the bus stop your conversation into air
freezes in a smile as each outsider passes by.
Then the lonely monologue continues.
And you, out of sync with sidewalk flow,
edges honed by concrete days and street grate nights,
your mechanical moves entrance me, make me cry.
The screaming noise within and outside your head
deafens you to the social worker's:
“No kitchen, no foodstamps; No bus fare, no job.”
And you will not sing for charity suppers.
O Homeless, you fall between the cracks they left,
form around unclaimed space, and crammed
into your victim bodies and left alone to survive.
Refugees from a generation's greed, thirsting
in need during America's drought of compassion.
And because there is Fear, you frighten others.
But NOW, as my fractured loving gaze crashes your
magnetic field, We, in vacuum, through eyes, transfuse.

The Night I Lost My Virginia

by Jim Sullivan

She was clean and neat but also roly-poly. So you might wonder why I, a lean, mean, macho machine, ever got mixed up with her.

It started out innocently enough. Often, on my way to work, she would pass me on the sidewalk. At first, I paid little attention to her. Then, one day, in a weak moment, I, being noble and kind, called out to her, "Hey, what's the hurry?"

"Pardon me, sir," she replied. "Do I know you?"

"Not yet, bubbles, but you will. You will."

I knew in my heart that this lady probably hadn't had a date in years, if ever. And I just knew, too, that an evening out with yours truly would be the thrill of her lifetime. She would have the opportunity with me to see how the other half lives.

From the first time I spoke to her, till a week ago, I managed to be at the same location on the sidewalk everyday when she walked by. And each time, I'd make some pleasant remark like, "Hey, nice days, huh?" and other such friendly commentaries.

After two weeks of that, I stopped her one day, put my hand on her supple arm, and said, "Would you like to put the feed bag on for supper tomorrow night with me?" Quickly, she replied, "Sure." I then asked for her home address and told her I'd pick her up no later than 5:15 p.m.

She had accepted my offer so fast that I started having buyer's remorse. What—was I crazy? I hardly knew the woman. Then I realized that I didn't even know her name. That was weird. How was I going to address her? I decided to just ask her when I picked her up.

Over the next 24 hours, at least while I was awake, I rehearsed what I was going to say: "I caught everything about you, and there's a lot to catch, except for your moniker. What

is it?" Finally, I felt prepared.

Not surprisingly, she was ready the minute I arrived. As a matter of fact, she was waiting at the curb. Talk about being anxious, or hungry!

As she opened my car door and stepped in, she extended her hand and said, "I'm sorry, I forgot to introduce myself yesterday. My name is Virginia."

After shaking hands, I got a whiff of her perfume. Not bad! In any case, I sped away from there and headed, posthaste, toward Big Al's All-Nite Diner where we would sup.

I guess I should have told her to dress casual. But she didn't look too shabby in her cocktail dress. I, on the other hand, was attired for comfort: grease-stained denims, faded sport shirt, crushed hunting cap with ear flaps, not to mention out-sized duck-hunting boots. In other words, it was me to a tee. Anyway, she made no negative comment about my clothing, though I noticed she didn't say anything nice about it, either.

As we drove silently to Big Al's, I thought of all the good deeds I'd done over the years, especially while I'd been a Boy Scout. Taking a rarely-dated female, like Virginia, out to eat may just have been one of the nicest good deeds I'd ever done. When I thought about it, I got a warm feeling all over. That, of course, may have been partially due to the nearness of my date.

When we walked in Big Al's, some of the guys at the counter nodded and winked at me. I was sure it was because I was squiring a dame. So I nodded and winked back at them. Then two of the guys whistled. But to avoid being obvious, I didn't whistle back.

Finally, we were at my favorite booth. And Virginia fit right in. Sitting across from her, I began to notice that, for a big woman, she sure had pretty eyes. They were deep blue. Between them and the perfume, I was beginning to feel a little strange, almost faint. But I chalked it up to having skipped lunch, trying to save up every penny I could to pay for this meal. Maybe, then, I was just hungry.

Big Al quickly shuffled over to wait on

us. "What would you like, pretty lady?" He was speaking to Virginia, which really ticked me off. After all, I was the regular customer here, not her. He should have asked me first.

Nevertheless, he was a nice guy and a good cook. Anyway, at this point, Virginia looked over at me. I told Big Al I'd have the small steak sandwich for myself and a cup of java. I was about to order for Virginia when it dawned on me that perhaps I'd better ask her first what she wanted. It's possible she'd want something different.

But, no, she ordered what I did. Big Al smiled at Virginia and shuffled back to his grill behind the counter. Now she and I waited silently. I was, however, struggling mentally, not being a good conversationalist, to come up with something entertaining to say. Then I thought of a gem: "Well, Virginia, we're eating high off the hog tonight."

"Yes," she replied. "We surely are."

As she spoke, I noticed that she had beautiful, straight, white teeth and full lips, too. More important, she had a nice smile. Could she really be the happy person she appeared to be? I wonder. But then maybe she was just smiling to be nice to me, the guy who was buying her next meal.

Out of the corner of my eye, I couldn't help observing that she wasn't half bad to look at. And I saw, too, that her body, though large, was rather well proportioned.

I stopped staring at her when our steak sandwiches arrived. In no time flat, I devoured mine and ordered another, with a side dish of hash browns this time. Virginia could hardly finish her steak. She said she was getting full. I guess she was still trying to impress me.

By the time my second steak had come and gone, Virginia had finished eating and was carrying the conversation. And she was interesting. Moreover, she obviously was highly intelligent, but not showoffish about it. On top of all that, she was cheerful. In short, she was becoming hard to ignore.

When Big Al came back to ask what we wanted for dessert, he again spoke to Virginia first. "Would you care for some dessert, pre-

cious?"

Again she looked over at me. So I said, "I'll have some apple pie a la mode. The lady can order whatever she likes."

But Virginia said, "No, nothing for me."

"Hey, Virginia, I said, "how are you going to keep your weight up without having some dessert?"

I knew it was a stupid remark the minute I said it. But as I've mentioned before, I wasn't much with words. Virginia, of course, was.

"I beg your pardon? On second thought, forget it. And let's call it a night!"

Shocked at her outburst, I said, "I promise I won't talk about your weight anymore if it offends you."

"It doesn't offend me," she replied. "I like myself the way I am. The problem, if there is one, is in your mind only."

As she said that, a feeling, almost like an ocean wave washing over me, stirred deeply inside. And my breath caught in my throat. Apparently, Virginia noticed and put her hand on my arm and asked, "Are you all right? You look pale."

I nodded that I was okay, but as she touched me, a sensation of utter helplessness shot through me. What was it? I now had an overwhelming urge to place my head on her bosom and have her wrap her sweet-smelling arms around me. What—was I nuts? Had I ODed on the steak or the hash browns? Then her perfume began washing over me again, wave after wave, and I forgot where I was.

The arrival of the bill brought me back to reality. The total was sobering. That extra steak I'd ordered, not to mention dessert, had put the tab way over \$10.00. That would be a first for me at Big Al's. And now I'd have to figure a ten-percent tip, too.

Virginia offered to pay it. Though I contemplated letting her, it just didn't seem right somehow. I finally managed to calculate the gratuity and discreetly left the two quarters under my coffee mug. But before we could get out from the booth, Big Al came over. "Was everything all right, young lady?" he asked.

"Yes," she responded. "Everything was

just fine."

But Big Al didn't leave. He was looking directly and deeply into Virginia's eyes as he talked. She, too, was looking into Big Al's eyes. What was going on here? They were acting like I wasn't even there. Did I miss something over dessert.

I was getting a little anxious now. I wanted to get my dinner date home and off my hands before dark. I certainly didn't want any of my cronies seeing me out with her. I'd never live it down. But still, Big Al talked to Virginia, and she to him. I couldn't make out their conversation because they were whispering now. Then I heard Big Al say, "Virginia, would you go to the Policeman's Ball with me tomorrow night?"

Once more, Virginia looked over at me.

"Hey, it's your life. Do whatever you want. It's none of my business. But let's get going. It's getting late." I could feel the anger rising up in me, ~~heart~~, too. This lady ~~was~~ throwing me over for Big Al. And I'd just bought her supper. What gratitude!

And Big Al ~~wasn't~~ such a big deal. He was just a lucky cook who owned a diner. I, on the other hand, was a reputable barber. My pole had been spinning at the same location for 25 years. Big Al had been a businessman for only ten.

Looking back at him, Virginia smiled and said, "Yes, I'd love to go to the Policeman's Ball with you."

"Great," said Big Al. "I'll pick you up at seven-ish."

After Virginia wrote her address on the back of our bill for Big Al, I paid the tab and took her home. The sun was just going down. Soon my pals would be out, and they'd probably want me to go bowling with them like always.

As Virginia opened the car door to get out at her home, she looked over at me and smiled. I got goose bumps all over. Then she got out of the car, walked up the steps to her door, turned around and smiled again, and said, "Good night and thanks for supper."

Oh my! That woman was beautiful.

What's more, I was falling in love with her. But it was too late. I'd already lost her to Big Al. So I waved and got out of there fast. I didn't want her to see a man of the world crying.

Dave Savona

Shaving Beard

The mirror reflects a weary image of my self.

I stare for a moment at the blurry lines.
My glasses lay at rest by my side.
My breathing is a bit heavy.
My jaw-line obscured.

A second bulge of chin is visible.

The beard is now gone.
In its place are brightening dots of red.

Black hairs cling in desperation to the slick
sides of the cracked, ceramic sink.
Whisps of used shave cream scattered about.

I have changed.
Grown older.
Heavier.
Sluggish in my movements and thoughts.

But I stand exposed,
dripping itchy water from my nose and cheeks.
My skin tingles,
awakening from it's winter's hibernation.
Nervous.
Hesitant to rise from its months of rest.

I towel the past from my face and depart.

Elizabeth Hahn

April, As Less Cruel

Scratch the surface

rage

scratch it again

lust

and again

fear.

Only the names have been changed to
alert the innocent.

Under the whitened skin,
the lacquered frame,
the monster—der Ungeheuer—rises,
unshakeable as sun.

But equally
in the scheme of things, you
come along. Not even very
(as my mother liked to say)
“prepossessing” and lay one
finger, even a verbal finger, somewhere
near my heart.

In such springs,
I can abandon all
my old convictions.

Two Tables Over

How can he eat and argue at the same time?

I trusted . . .

(hard shakes of salad dressing)

you betrayed . . .

(impalings of pasta)

lie to you?

(bread lifted in a question)

not the point here.

(napkin tidying the mouth)

if you think we're through with . . .

Waiter, the check please.

That appetite for anger
partly satisfied,
he closes up his face as tightly
as his wallet, motions
her along,
dinner thinly finished.

Elizabeth Hahn

Poet Meets His Match

He said to her:

I knew you
before you were
a consonant in
your father's blood

a vowel in
your mother's mouth.

I knew you
as some soft saying
that would come true.

She said to him:

You have a mighty
way with words.

And he:

I do.

And she:

I will.

Split Ends

The next time life unravels,
I am going for broke
and become pure neuron.

Dendrite the Magnificent

I will
—adazzle with frazzle—
light up their lives
with the brilliance of
my own synaptic gospel!

Apocrypha

The story goes

man
has no power
against
the wiles of oman

and

woman

will by nature end up
being foolish.

Therefore,

Woman:

In new gardens,
suppress generosity.
Conceal sudden knowledge.
Leave your nakedness uncovered.

Leonard Orr

Inventories

I

Nothing slack.

Even the bird ingesting a worm
Glories over his place;
There is nothing prior to his actions
What crowing blast, what satisfaction.

II

But you, Monument whose floorboards
I make creak and whose eaves echo
Back to me my own words
as a dialogue overheard
and all these sounds;
What sounds put off the night?

III

It passed, a white broadbrimmed hat
With a woman in it scowled as it passed.
A tourist woman a wicker basket filled

(with defiled holy water old brown teeth of dead tobacco chewers mandrake root preserved in sherry shaved bonito and hair clippings)	1 Pint 32 10 oz.
---	------------------------

all the typical tourist souvenirs

IV

Give the crowd what they want
Give the crowd what they want

V

Nothing stirs.

The river
unmoving brown water, stiff;
You could walk on it with stilts!

Rigid too are the weeds, ragwort
which wave not in the wind,
neither do they bend.

What has happened here? Where are the tools?

Leonard Orr

Report

To the chief of the Mabiri I gave
a very shiny chrome-plated toaster he was touched
since it conferred upon him even more stature
and he called me Mbaswakadeewee
which means, roughly
Bringer-of-the-Labor-Saving-Devices in their language.
He gave me his youngest daughter, Bkolna,
with a wooden plate in her lip in return.

And this elephant I'm riding in the next slide
was wild; with the help of my man Sam
I cornered him in an ancient, forbidden canyon, trained him
so that he now responds to my raised eyebrow with alacrity.

The queen of the Maklandi tribe shot poisoned darts
into my back, by way of rough initiation. They hung me
from a tree upside down and the village maidens
struck me with thorns and cockleburs; to show kinship
they painted their thighs with my blood
(this made them my sisters).

And the men, now my brothers, were more extreme.
Their ways are not ours.

On the return trip in the South Seas
I met and married a fine girl Kabanahoa
as you can see in this picture here.
She pleases my parents more than
any of my brides. My mother
goes down with her to the airport once a week
and together they pray
to the cargo planes.

Huni wabi suslahoah
Huni wabi suslahoah KAI!
they chant in unison and toss flowers
to the baggage handlers.

Me 'N My Cat Spook

by Charles H. Crump

Man, I was hungry! I could a ate the south end of a skunk, but there wasn't even skunk sign in my shadow — nothin but that mangy ole black cat a-sunnin hisself at the bottom of my bridge. Yo! My own home sweet home bridge had set the table for me!

Now, I'd heard cat-tales since before I was a keeper: cat tamales, cats in the weenies, cats in the soup can...

"Why not?" I said, "Just why in the hell not?"

But man! He was a dusty ole hide! I swallered hard. I said, "kitty, kitty," and so help me, he arched up, shakin like a busted gear and put hisself under my hand!

Well, he couldn't skunk me outa my dinner...not with that kinda soft con! I sprung my hands around his ole sides and right then and there I lost any thoughts a eatin roasted cat: Hell, he was so bony he damn near razored my fingers. Besides, he give me a voodoo look outa them hell-fire eyes like *he* was the one a-takin over...

I just had to grin and then laugh at the nerve a that drawed-up ole edge-bone spook. I stroked his wicked-lookin head and he purred up a chorus.

"Well, Spook," I said, "since you're so glad you might as well shine and grin right along with me!" I easy pulled up his lip to make him grin, and...I lost my shine, real quick: Somethin or someone had knocked out his fangs and most of his lowers and uppers. Hungry as I was, I figgered he was hungrier.

Now, I never been much, or ever claimed to be, but I'm as good at scarin up food as a ~~bedbug~~ in a armpit: I can pick and sing, I can draw pitchers, I can tapdance and softshoe, I can rodeo some, I'm a fair box fighter, and I can con a pearl outa a live oyster. Hell, I never went hungry, not until right now — and ain't this the cat's meow: now, I got two to feed!

I went through the gears a my chrome-plated thinker, and when I seen, off in the distance, this bent, white-haired ole lady come out on the porch, everything went into overdrive. I slung my guitar on my back, grabbed Spook, and we lit for the shanty.

"Evenin, mum," I says at my charmin best, "have you got a little salt and pepper I could borra?"

She batted her sweet ole eyes and croaked: "Salt and pepper?" She looked at my get-up. "Whatever in the world would *you* want salt and pepper for?"

"Well, mum," I says, "I'm just awful nungry and 'way too proud to beg, but I just caught me this mangy ole cat, here, and I'm fixin to skin and cook him up, and eat him!"

"Mercy! You poor fool man! Eat a cat? Eat *that* cat? You certainly will not! You just wait right there and I'll fix up something, quick!"

And she popped through her door like a white-haired cuckoo in a clock. Not soon enough, she's back with a honey-pail jammed plumb-full a little mounds pretty as the bumps in a sweet thing's undies, a peekin out from under a flowered napkin.

"Now, you run on," she says, "quick, now! I want you out of my sight! But you eat, and you eat good, and don't you even think of eating that poor old cat!"

She put her back to me and her fussin trailed off with her. "The *trash* on these roads! Wait till I tell the sheriff!"

Well, she said the magic words that put distance under my feet faster than quick could get ready. Not soon enough, I found a big culvert, and me and ole Spook shaded up. I went to diggin into that mess a good stuff: Ham! Sausages! Hard rolls! Doughnuts! And not a pinch a salt and pepper. Well, I went to heaven. And on my way back I seen them voodooeyes, and what they said would rot out my mouth if I told you. I quick cut a hunk offa that ham, mashed it up a little and put it down in front a him. He was black magic, all right:

that piece a meat disappeared before it made a spot on the ground. Man, I tell you, we had us a feed!

Well, from that fine day me and my ole Spook has lived high on the haunch: We've ate, drank, and travelled frequent, deep and wide; and our "pore ole kitty cat" scam never failed us — not till today.

When I seen this ole farmhouse and that sweet ole lady a-sittin and a-churnin on the back porch, my ole tongue went up to the roof of my mouth to shut down the flowin juices. Ole Spook, he taken to purrin and kneadin my shoulders; I had to twist his tail just a mite to make him look as sad and mournful as a sleek ole cat can look.

"Evenin, mum," I says.

"Good evening," she says, "were you looking for someone?"

Me and ole Spook went into our buck and wing. Then, about the time I was a-wipin the edges a my eyeballs, *you* reared up outa that hammock like a ole alligator a-comin up outa the swamp!

"Ma," you says, "you go fetch that boy a mess a salt and pepper, and fetch my hat out, too!"

"Whatever are you going to do with your hat?" she says.

"I won't be long," you says, "I'm just a-goin to walk along with this boy and watch him skin and eat that fat ole cat. Maybe I'll help him eat it, too!"

Well, you know I ain't a-goin to eat ole Spook. We're done: losers never win, and winners never quit til they lose.

But be a sport: give us a runnin head start before you call up the sheriff; and if you don't think we're goin, just count the days we're gone!

Fiedler news

Here I am and here I ain't again. I *am* in Missoula, and hope to stay on here, but not sure where to live right now as I just lost a good little place to the real estate finagalings (the duplex I live in got sold, etc., ad naus.) Well, well, I've discovered many new things since we've talked including the continent of Asia, especially India-Nepal-Tibet-and the Chinese rivers and mountains of the Szechwan and the south — more about all that soon plus pictures (some) posters (a few) jewellery, (mostly scattered and given away— some robes and cloaks and tidbits and "wampum" worship ways and more yogiz "clues" a new wooden flute, and a hand drum — (I'm getting into music and poesies as much or more so as ever — ever!

Hoorah It's gettin' into me further! Oh yeah, and a new form of I Ching type function from a somewhat later dynasty than Confucius' I Ching ("Jo" I) et al...this one is called the Tai Hsuan Ching and is *incredible*...if anything more Tao-Zen ethereal and paradoxical than the I Ching. This is a fascinating working out in paper by Dereh Walters (Trans.) Aquarian Press 1983 called the Alternative I Ching — you'll love it. for example: there is a calendar showing the correlation between the 81 "shou" of T'ai Hsuan (each shou is 4 lines, instead of 6, and consisting of 3 basic components: the solid, broken and tri-partite called

—Ti—	—Jen—	—and Tien—.
earth	man	Heaven
yin	the	yang
"spin-down"	middle	"spin up"
		way

anyway the calendar shows correlations (among others) to the year and the one for my birthday (Tadaaa) is Sep:17: "Yin guards the great closure"

Yang however, the small opening Chi— to sotre ("da booty" hohoho's!)

"Great fullness and ripeness are allotted to man. New and fresh things are to come!"

Michael L. Fiedler



Charles H. Crump

I am in Nature as She is in me

I am in Nature as She is in me:
enmeshing wheels impelling endless wheels;
without my nature, Nature cannot be.

I am in Time and so eternally
a part of all that is and lives and feels:
I am in Nature as She is in me.

I do not quail at Death's severe decree:
what need of lamentations or appeals?
Without my nature, Nature cannot be.

I do not shirk the universal fee;
I do not weep that Time is on my heels —
I am in Nature as She is in me.

I die to be a seed of Nature's tree,
to grow, a shrine at which the Reaper kneels:
without my nature, Nature cannot be.

We are bound in perpetuity,
bound of necessity as planks to keels:
I am in Nature as She is in me;
without my nature, Nature cannot be.

Fryberger Writes:

Dan,

Speaking of portable walls, I've finally read Joyce Cary's The Horse's Mouth, Copr. 1944. The hero of the novel, Gulley Jimson, is sort of a godfather character to such creative misfits as Hors Badorties.

"I had meant to paint direct on the wall. It was a wall twenty-five by forty; of common rough plaster, direct from the trowel; a sheer precipice of dirty grey, slightly varied by bird droppings and cobwebs at the top, and spit marks at the bottom, which made my fingers tingle for a No. 24 brush. I could have embraced that wall, less or more."

"Jorks was Singing, Muster was whistling, the girls were talking, laughing, talking, coughing, giggling, talking and abusing the boys for dropping paint on their heads; the three plasterers and the carpenters were hammering, talking, whistling and singing; Nosy was sneezing and I was trying to make cokey understand that all the dust she was raising would stick to my paint. That is to say, I was shouting as loud as I could. And I will admit that I wanted to shout for standing on the top of a scaffold in front of a good new wall always goes to my head. It is a sensation something between that of an angel let out of his cage into a new sky and a drunkard turned loose in a royal cellar."

"I saw he was coming to business, and I hastened to give them a lead, before they committed themselves, unwittingly, to something I could not approve. 'There are really,' I said, 'only two alternatives, either to buy the council out, and perhaps one or two adjoining sites, so as to give this building a more worthy approach. Or to transport the east wall, as it stands, to some central position in the city, and place it in a new building.'"

Are you a subscriber to the Whole Earth-Review? I am not, and have not bought a copy for quite some time. Tom Struckman loaned me a copy of Winter '88, the "20th Anniversary Issue," and I've spent a number of hours with it, taking notes and cogitating.

One theme that is recurrent in the mag (which is for the most part made up of one page commentaries from old WER hands, either written or phoned in) is The Computer. Reflections in this regard range from Tim Leary's: "Warm-breath interactions with your touch-friends will be more elegant and pleasant with the digital reality option added." To William Irwin Thompson's:

The bright new computers
with their terminal disease
give us aborted births,
cataracts and glaucomae.

Take your pick: Savior or Devil. It is of course no accident that such schism occurs within the pages of WER, which has for a number of years plugged both software and the Gaea hypothesis. These two paths show up side by side in the WER because, I guess, they are New Ways that suggest significant change in global business-as-usual. The low-tech path points to a way out of industrial destruction. The high-tech offers personal access to world-wide information, and to certain types of inter-personal, world-wide communication. Both paths are very interesting in themselves, and in an atmosphere of global crisis are downright compelling. But, while the WER seems to present these New Ways as somehow "buddies," there is a schism amongst a number of WER contributors on the question of technology.

The quote from Leary leaves me vaguely nauseous, but this is nothing new between Tim and me. If this Computer Question could be resolved by simply dismissing such crap as Leary's, I'd be a confirmed low-

techer. But what about Gary Snyder? Snyder is the proud owner of a new solar-powered Macintosh Plus with 20-megabyte hard disc. He says he gets more work done by using it, and thus has more time "to fool around in the woods." He is the "master" of this "tool," he says, and he says, "I find it really incomprehensible that people can worry about being seduced by a machine."

I can and do worry about such things, and as a case in point I would refer Gary to Tim Leary, the seduction of whom seems virtually complete. I would also refer him to another piece in the WER "Review," that by Ivan Illich, wherein Ivan says, "The belief arises that in comparison to a world accessible to feet this new environment of vehicles is a greater good." This is a wise insight, don't you think? And it's an insight concerning machine seduction, is it not?

Anyway, the WER "Review" has a goodly amount of quotable quotes on both sides of the Computer Argument. On one side Stephen Gaskin (the farmer!) claims that, "People will have their *thing*, and it's going to be their modem and their keyboard. And then everybody's gonna be hooked up." And Matthew McClure believes that "Running Fiberoptic cable to everyone's home, for example, could create an information-rich society with enough collective wisdom to save our planet."

On the other side Sam Keen argues that "The computer revolution is essentially telling us that the further away we get from the material world into the abstract world, the more dignity, more power, more knowledge we have." And Jerry Mander's piece is a case study on the whole issue, I think. He had gone to the Northwest Territories to be part of a workshop concerning television (workshop sponsored by the Native Women's Association of the NWT). It seems that the Canadian government was making available free satellite dishes for the native communities. One woman told Mander that she was at first excited by the prospect because the government had designs on native lands,

mining and drilling, and she felt that television would be the best way for this information to be communicated to the isolated villages. Information Power, in other words, a power often espoused in the WER.

What happened? Well, as one native woman puts it, "We used to honor our old people but that's all going now. The generations are sitting all together now, silently watchin television." Pretty stark, no? Mander's view is that, "Television has begun to re-design the people of the north... to be 'compatible' (in computer terms) with the world of the 'south.' Commodity life. Technological passivity. Acceleration. The role of satellites is to provide a delivery system for this process in hard-to-reach places."

I think I can sum up my own position on the Computer Question thusly: I find it really incomprehensible that Gary Snyder finds it really incomprehensible that people can worry about being seduced by a machine.

At any rate, the WER carries on, in a lively schizoid way. It's my favorite aquarian journal (though I was not impressed by racial/sexual mix of the contributors: 74 white men, 12 white women, 1 Arabic man. Nary an Afro-, Asian-, Hispanic-, or Native-American appeared).

A couple of closing remarks from the WER "Review": Robert Bly: "The Wild Man is aware of his own wound." Anne Herbert (quoting Marianne Faithful): "To make good work you've got to connect head and heart and cunt."

-Mark



Dave Savona

Cement

Cement is wrong.

Saying cement makes you seem
illiterate.

My boss told me that the proper word for the garden stands
was concrete.

Because cement is simply what you mix with water and
aggregate.

Then you have concrete.

I eyed the mammoth obelisks with suspicion.

Concrete obelisks, I told myself.

They were too heavy for my Subaru.

It had become a taxi for my boss.

She was in love with them.

"Perfect," she said, patting her sweaty forehead with her
towel.

"Perfect," she said again.

I was simply hot.

I stood melting, wearing a three-piece suit.

Customers eyed me oddly, wondering about a wayward executive
wearing an earring.

"First impression," she said.

"For the people you will meet."

I nodded my head.

"One day you too will be in Real Estate," she said, looking
to the horizon.

"Wearing a better suit. With a shorter haircut. And no earring."

"I'm in heaven," she said, as we headed back to Washington Boulevard.

I drove.

Her Mercedes was in the shop.

Condominiums everywhere.

I drove over what used to be grass.

Condominiums
everywhere.

The road wound across the growling city,
leading "home" to a shaded parking garage.
A concrete parking garage.

I took the familiar turn, and my wheel ran over a board,
stranded at the entrance.
A lone, soft piece of wood.
Surrounded by
cement.

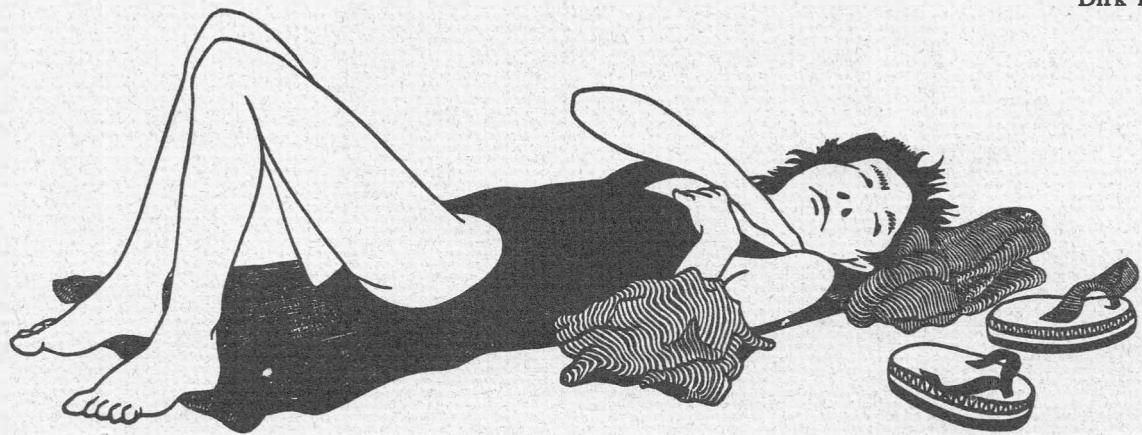
Dirk Lee



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I took the familiar turn, and my wheel ran over a board,
stranded at the entrance.
A lone, soft piece of wood.
Surrounded by
cement.

Dirk Lee





Dirk Lee



Richard Davignon

After submitting

her thesis:

Personal Recycling
in the 20th Century.

Alice will pursue
a career-change
from bag lady
to doctoral candidate,
applying for
a teaching fellowship
and Laboratory Workshop -
"Scroungin' 101
has a lotta dumpsters
just waitin' ta be explored,"
says Alice.

Richard Davignon

The voices began again

when the Choo-Choo stopped
taking his pills.
From: "I think I can, I think I can,"
he regressed
to: "Perestroika, Perestroika."
Sunday night
he pulls into North Station
roaring: "Richard Nixon, Richard Nixon."
The cops sidetracked him
to Bridgewater State Hospital,
where he tells Alice, "Medicine
can do only so much. . .
only so much, only so much. . ."

"The Mad Hatter choked in April

on a pineapple muffin," said Alice.
"Heimlich maneuver to the contrary. . .
Sliding into the brush-chipper,
he was one dead bunny indeed. . .
Rather 'ashes-to-ashes-y' as it were."
"How cosmographic," said the Red Queen.
"The tomato plants and tea roses
badly wanted mulching this year.
More lemonade? . . . Another BLT?"
enquired Alice, the perfect hostess.

Richard Davignon

Bag lady Alice

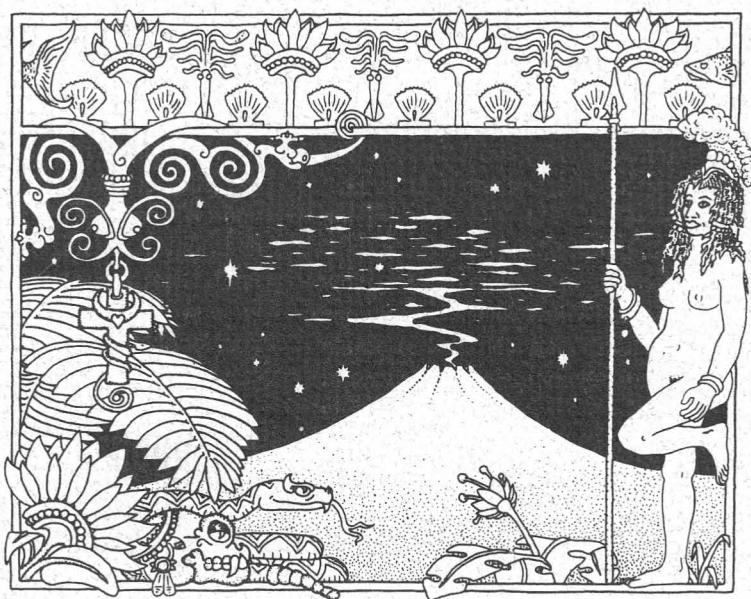
abandoned
dumpster-diving
for the winter season
to remain indoors
hustling pool...
(9 ball or straight, darlin'?)
Sal Monella
was relieved
of about \$700
and Alice disappeared
southbound on a red-eye
saying something about,
"arthritis kickin' up,"
but we all know
she's got the hots
for her new Unicorn boyfriend
in South Miami...

Richard Davignon

Alice and the Council of Trent

"I see in the papers,"
said Toxic Waste,
"that the Council of Trent,
in mid-16th century,
officially declared
that women have souls."
"Geez, it's nice ta Know
that I'm worthy of Hell,"
said Bag Lady Alice,
swapping the Chianti
for pineapple pizza
hot from the dumpster.

Frank Dugan



The Campers

by Edward W. Stever

We're sitting around the fire and Tyler says, "What do you think is the worst part of your body to have torn off without dying?"

"Your scalp," says Morty.

"Shut up, ya fat tub," Charlie screams. "How'd you get in the Scouts anyway? You're so freaking stupid. Here, stuff some of these in your mouth." He chucks a bag of marshmallows at Morty, who picks up the bag and impales five of the white puffs on a stick before jabbing it into the fire.

"I know," I say, eagerly. "I knew this guy once, who was wailing down the expressway on his motorcycle, doing about eighty-miles an hour, right, when he loses control and wipes out on the guard rail. He goes flying over the handle bars and rips his gonads right off!"

"Oh my God," Tyler mumbles, reaching protectively for his crotch.

"Bullshit!" Charlie declares. "You don't know anyone who owns a bike. You're only thirteen, for Chrisake."

"Well all right, it wasn't really my friend, but my older brother, Joey's. But I met him."

"Yeah? Well, I know a worse way a losing your pistol," says Canteen Rogers, who is called such because of an inclination to wear a canteen strapped to his belt, swearing it makes him look "GI-ish."

"My dad was in Nam, right, and he said when he used to ride gunner on a chopper, he used to sit on his helmet instead a wearing it on his head."

"That's stupid," Morty sputters through a mouthful of marshmallows. "You'd get your head blown off."

"My point exactly. But the other one," says Canteen pointing to his groin.

"Oh wow," Tyler mumbles.

"Yeah, but if you get your brains blown out, it don't make no difference, anyhow," Morty adds.

"I know the worst way," interjects

Charlie. "The worst way is to be working on your car in the nude and you lean over the fan belt and...WAP!" he shouts, slapping his hands together.

"Who the hell fixes cars in the nude?" screeches Morty, who then chucks the marshmallows back at Charlie, saying, "I think it's your turn to eat."

"I know something worse," says the Professor, who pauses, cleaning his glasses for effect. The boys hang on this pause which opens a vista of possibilities, for the Professor is a fountain of information. "Suicide by castration--not of the testicles, mind you--but the penis, itself. Imagine if you will, a man sticking his penis into an electric meat grinder submerged in a tub of isopropyl alcohol."

A shudder sweeps through us as we collectively grope for our boyhood. "Enough, enough," Tyler screams falling off the log onto his side before the fire. The Professor leans back, smugly.

The din recedes and there is a lull. No one can top the Professor.

Then a new voice chokes up. It's Sam Gelto, who's been sitting quietly, poking a stick at the fire, through the entire conversation.

"No, Morty's right."

"I am?" says Morty, brightening.

"Yeah, the head is the worst part of the body to lose."

He stares into the fire, speaking softly. We all lean closer.

"When the head is gone, the rest of the body can't function. It has no purpose. It doesn't know what to do. It's like a funeral procession without a hearse. It's pointless."

With this, Sam rises, jams his fists into his pockets, and saunters from the fire's aura into the enveloping darkness. We listen to the crunching of leaves as he walks away and stare ignorantly at one another.

"What the hell was that all about?" asks Charlie.

The Professor mumbles somberly, "Today is the first anniversary of his father's death."

A respectful silence descends and we stare down at our feet, as we sullenly kick at the dirt. Then we hear the swish of a tent flap, the rip of a zipper as the tent is opened and then closed with finality, and Morty whispers, "Could you imagine gettin' your gherkin stuck in a zipper that size?"

Some methods fail

I just saw a patient who is pregnant. She and her partner were using condoms. She cried, saying, "I was trying to be responsible." She was being responsible in using a method that is ususally, but not always effective.

But women who have unintentionally become pregnant and chose to have an abortion are not behaving irresponsibly. Most of the women who have abortions have had problems finding a method of contraception that is effective for them without undue risks—or they cannot afford the method. In the U.S., most women over 30 use tubal sterilization or vasectomy as their contraceptive method, but many cannot afford the \$1,400 that must be prepaid for sterilization. Many women over 30 cannot use the pill because of undue risks.

I have never see a woman who used abortion as a means of birth control. I see many women who choose abortion because their birth control method failed. No contraceptive is 100 percent effective. No single contraceptive can be used by all women.

U.S. women have fewer birth control alternatives than women in other industrialized nations, and the contraceptives that are available are more expensive. Research and development of better contraceptive methods has ground to a halt in the U.S. More U.S. women under the age of 25 become pregnant than do their contemporaries in other developed countries. Research points to the lack of sound sex education and the inaccessibility of family planning services as the probable cause for this difference.

If you are opposed to abortion, then work with us to reduce the number of pregnancies.

Educate men to be sexually responsible also. Start sound sex education programs in our school systems. Lobby the president and congress to continue funding federally subsidized family planning programs. Let us make reproductive health care a priority in our nation.

C. H. McCracken, M.D.
3227 Country Club Circle
Billings, MT

COMPANION WANTED

(Classified ad.)

Subject: matrimony, over 65 optional. I am a widower and lonesome. If you want a companion for the few remaining years left to us, you may also be looking and lost. Please don't bring too many medical or psychological problems with you, but maybe we could share them. I am retired, but not from life, so you don't have to have a great deal of earthly treasures, just a healthy outlook, even at the sunset of our lives. My children are grown, and perhaps yours are too.

I do not drive now, but it would help if you did, or have a vehicle that was running, but I would rather we used public transportation. I am in fairly good health and hope you are, considering.

I would like you to be a little pleasingly plump, but not too fat, a Christian and a loving person, quiet and serene, without a lot of pills to mask some hidden illnesses.

By now you might be a fairly good cook and housekeeper with poetic moves. Maybe in later life your plumpness will cover up most of your frail bones so that you will move economically with a music and a smile of your own.

We don't have to love in the worn out meaning of the word, but I hope we will respect each other, and "eat not the bread of idleness", but look well to the needs of our own household.

Harold K. Armstrong
50851 Road 426
Oakhurst, CA 93644

Dave Thomas

Temptations

Follow hand hold
foot hold
up crack over shelf
onto incline
capped
with sandstone ledge
crawl up and sit
the dog Blitz sits
near me
looking down
the wind
the brown grasses
the junipers
whisper in my hair
come join us
come join us
leave your body come join us
the wind
the sun
climb off the ledge
walk on
a small rock
catches my eye.

d. thomas
12 Feb 74
navajo res.

Spring #43

Blue crocuses
bloom
by my brother's
front
door
I meander
between warm
and chill
I have accumulated
some pain
I know no answers
everything
I see
is etched in my heart
yet eludes
my grasp
Lolo Peak massive
and snowy
I turn along
the river
the hard Monday
streets
trying to measure
confusion
by heartbeats
the rhythm of breath
all the while
my bootheels scrape
closer
to earth
and between clouds
blue shows
stronger
the air warmer.

d. thomas
March 1990
missoula

Dave Thomas

Post Holes

Break the earth loose
and the many
legged
creatures
scurry in the raw
sun lit air
their mystery exposed
but not
explained
the hard point
of the bar
drive shaft
of an old steam
locomotive
I'm told
breaking
the rocky soil
into a mixture
the hole digger
can grab
then the thick wood
set foreign
in a minute world
the dirt
replaced tamped tight
with the bar
and life many legged
and two
goes on.

d. thomas
missoula '89

Eugene R. Gryniewicz

FILM

My wife brings me the melon.
I thump it: solid, ripe. She
hands me the knife; I raise it;
lay its blade across tight green skin,
cutting. I reach into its belly to pull the rind
apart. I cup my hands around the child's
head, pulling it free, washing off the seed, blood,
the wound healing.

Jennifer wanted to make love to herself in a
vat of cherry Jell-O;
It seemed to her an immature desire,
but it was the only thing she really, truly wanted.
It set her on fire.

Brian E. Drake

Accusations of Unacceptable Behavior

Her mother said, "No! This is unacceptable behavior.
No! You can't live in the world this way.
No! This is unacceptable behavior.
J'accuse! You will die in shame one day!"

Kevin had an inordinate fondness for rubber goods.
He furnished his room with old Goodyear tires.
His girlfriend said, "It's not what you promised, Kevin.
Fulfill my desires!"

She warned him, "No! This is unacceptable behavior.
No! You can't live in my house this way.
No! This is unacceptable behavior.
J'accuse! You will die alone one day!"

So hard to get along without hurting someone.
So hard to get along without getting hurt.
This is the world, friends, you'd better agree
Or they'll kick you on purpose next time.

James the Third wanted to buy a nice two-story house,
But the bank said, "You have to get a real job.
Got to give up this crazy weekend partying. Jimmy boy."
He began to sob:

"No! This is unacceptable behavior!
No! You can't make me live this way!
No! This is unacceptable behavior!

J'accuse! I'll die without you one day!"

So hard to get along without hurting someone.
So hard to get along without pain.
When you want pain, the world won't give in.
When you want to sleep, they scream to keep you awake.

Catherine decided she liked the feel of black, hot leather.
She outfitted a spare room in her house that way,
Then invited all her friends in, one by one:
They never came out.

The Judge screamed, "No!
This is unacceptable behavior!"
The court screamed, "No!
This is unacceptable behavior!"
The world screamed, "No!
This is unacceptable behavior!"
J'accuse! You got to die?
So hard to get by.

Harold K. Armstrong

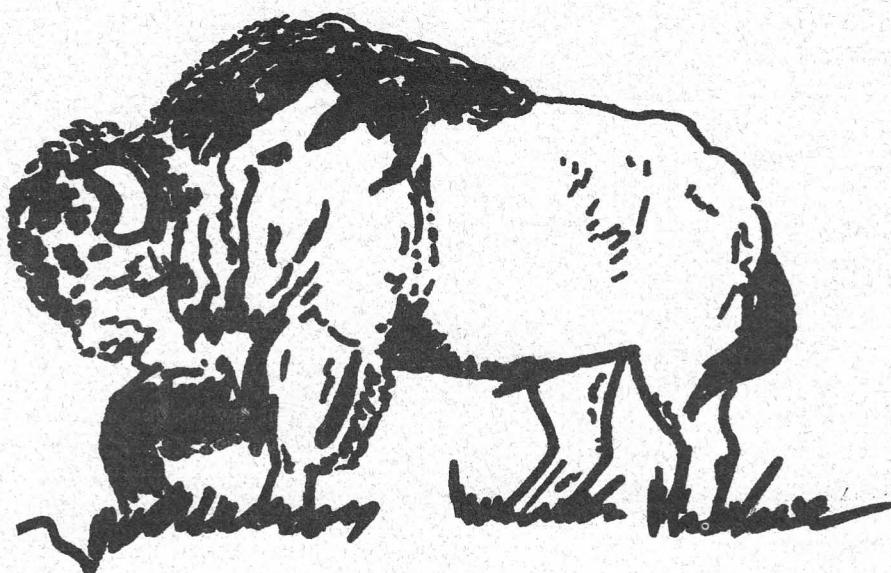
Titmouse Humming

Solstice, suburban, country cousin bird,
I watch your heart-beat like a geiger counter
in fast count; your hot little body
in a constant whirr.

Do you ever rest? Surely you mate on wing,
beautiful thing,
like refueling aircraft,
feeding your weight in a furnace of joy.

Fluff of feathers, crown and dark back,
you trap the sun on the run.

You're special, you're prime, a mimic and mime,
you scold me and hold me as you buzz at my feeder
and splash in the bath, an actor, a dancer,
a preening bill-wiper, everlasting eater,
saucy people watcher,
won't you quit hocus-pocus
set my life camera-focus?



Philip Hughes

The Prison Year

Thirsty daze half dismembered,
opportune and novenas.
All the rest stop dirty john,
except estuary atoned,
and that San Quentin's air stays clear,
with plenty brine in breach-deep weir.

The Key To Yule

Dolls in handcuffs,
two by two;
manacled manikins,
shackled too.
What does it mean
this Christmas scene
that guard the tree
fixed effigies?
Down in the cellar,
out in the hall,
twenty years hence,
or not at all
comes the key.
But never deny
the rest their prize.
One day each year
—one day: Just one—
comes amnesty.
The rest come keyless
“what does it mean?”
with nary a prize.
But just our size.
You'll see.

Big Magazine

Creation is one of those all-in-alls
you try to get a line on but
no guidesheet seems available
and after a few half-assed tries
you get the word “Study, then submit”
so over you pore, and over,
till “Oh yeah, I get it now”
but the idea is there is no idea
since it's all been put together
by this One Guy who maintains
absolutely no standards beyond
what strikes his fancy that moment
which may be the one just after
he's been up all millennium
doing plague and screwing dinosaurs
and he never edits except when
he throws everything away
and starts over and last time
he accepted something unsolicited
resulted in a Big Fart
and on the eighth day he exhaled
three zillion editors who are still
engaged in seeking some order
and on the ninth he created critics
but nothing in-house, and worst
everything comes out irregular
circulating like there's no tomorrow
and you don't know if you'll ever hear
and come to think
you don't really want to
but just keep on submitting.

Philip Hughes

The Bully

He may start with can't-catch or can't-charm
go on to can't-read and can't-shine,
till that first playground mugging.
"I can do this,"
in the neolithic skull
a little light goes on.
When teachers and neighbors and judges rant
"You can't keep on doing this!"
he knows better.
"Persist," they chide, "you'll be kicked out—
way out—with life or the chair."
Big deal. Who cares. His view:
to shrug his one God-given gift
is death-in-life,
time served on others' terms.
To wallop and daunt's the key to "alive,"
no matter how brief the reign.

Next time you're elbowed out of line,
smile knowingly, and simply say,
"You can do this. This you can do."
He'll understand.

Philip Hughes

The Discus Thrower

Myron's Diskobolos' energy froze:
triskelion pose, dynamic repose.
The acropolis poses no art more inspiring,
galvanic, appealing, mechanically right
for firing delight from near-skeletal art.
Mimetic, athletic, balletic, aesthetic,
it's ontogenetically one and apart.
And whoever the discman emplaced on the base,
I'd rely on that giant's ballistic logistics.
That guy must have proved he could fling that round thing.

Walking with him to the building where I have my class,
I went over our studies of the future from the past.
We had, indeed, I said, been through a cornucopia
of several classic works such as More's Utopia,
Howells' Traveler from Altruria, Orwell's 1984,
Miller's A Canticle for Leibowitz and more
recent works by Atwood, Lessing, and Le Guin
when I got the bright idea of inviting him
to discuss with us a work that would undoubtedly eclipse
all of the above: Apostle John's Apocalypse.

When I placed my call from the campus switchboard,
it was a station call to the aviary of the Lord.
I felt divinely guided since he picked up the phone
and agreed at once to come in his pleasing baritone.
He said he understood our pressing need to trim expense.
They, too, were cutting corners for a Star Wars defense.
I glanced at him sideways, while crossing the quadrangle,
our meteoric campus guest, Michael the Archangel,
and wondered what to say for the appropriate introduction,
but pleased I had avoided an epic production—
coffee with administrators, no one quite at ease;
or worse, a special chapel with honorary degrees.
He was even more impressive than a person would expect.
His demeanor was enough to make a Baptist genuflect—
Paradoxically perfect: majestically meek,
aggressively passive, old-fashionedly chic,
fiercely gentle, distinguishably plain,
uniquely common, unreasonably sane,
freshly invigorating, but honestly on the whole
a little too much gray around the aureole.

My pride in prancing at his side, I knew to be a sin
and immediately suffered for it in chagrin when
empty chairs in my classroom straightened out my strut:
most students see guest speakers as occasions for a "cut."
He was not surprised, and he was not at all offended,
but tried to do the best he could with those who had attended.
His lecture on the future was a scintillating gem,
and when at last he finished, he let them question him.
A mathematics student posed the old one again
about the number of his flock that could dance on a pin.
A religion major with a new word inquired if he
had ever been with His Boss on a "theophany."
A business buff wondered about Heaven's perquisites:
would he detail, for example, the retirement benefits?
A theatre aspirant said that she hoped it was no crime,
but she sort of dreaded Heaven because it took so much time.
Then came the inevitable, to end the hour with our guest:
a bored student asked, "Will any of this be on the test?"

Tom Padgett

The Campus Visitor

Edward W. Stever

A View from the Rear

Idling at the light,
I coax my one year old,
who is clamped down
in the back seat,
to return kisses
I aim at her
in the rearview mirror.

She ignores me--
but the greaser
on the Harley
behind does not,
flipping me
the finger
as he rumbles past,
demanding that I
kiss his ass.

Errol Miller

His Forgotten Singing

Dimestore fiddler
blue platonic maidens
Chicago dreams perverse
out past Star City and the Sunset Club
studded legions march to winter's ironclad chill
what is a man to do in the shadow of old age
in wind blowing past a hollow tree
I have willingly given my flesh to other lovers
in warm and private places years ago
I remember them stirring beans, wearing sweatshirts
waking in the night, cataloging fireflies for the future
keeping bees in their bonnets, as I devoutly stumbled
on through quaint creme-colored small-town squares
desolate wineshops and unfamiliar fields
flying by night I avoided the crowd
peace never coming to the Ouachita Valley
moving on the horizon glowed orange
as I withered at the end of love affairs
learning the function of roads and crossroads
ignoring the arrogance of youthful prancing
beginning to admire lost God again
song after song I remembered from sad cafes
"be afraid," they said, "of what you do not know"
I held that wisdom to my skinny breast
beak bleeding, deep in sleep, aware
that my body would shine like fish no more
as dancing waves of cumulus clouds
rushed in to comfort me, as
dreamy people from some other galaxy
floundered between fore and ice
on the shore I left behind.

Frederick Moe

Emery #1

Emery pitched ball
for the army back in '15
before war called him
off to foxholes &
pitched to me as a kid
withered hands still
firm across the seam
Emery never talked much
about the war but flew
his flag at half-mast
every day
"for a friend," he said
& I wondered about that
friend as I looped
foul balls into the
bed of nodding daylillies
imagined Emery dressed
in combat fatigues
choking in mustard gas-fog
of dead fields.

I don't play baseball
& Emery's in Heaven, now.

Ray Mizer

...let me count the weighs

(Somewhat in the manner of one W.S.)

My love is soft as any tub of lard,
Warm as the egg fresh dropped from cackling hen.
Her hairs coiffed as Spanish moss in a N'awlins yard,
Skin snug as catcher's glove, or pig in pen.
What swan can boast a neck so short as hers?
Where hangs the bovine udder can shame her chest?
Athwart her sweet lip, loveliest of furs;
Her teeth (both pair) can chatter with the best.
What keg or tun could boast this belly's girth?
Those well-haired legs clamp close as any vise.
Her feet full flat can stomp or slap in mirth;
Her eyeballs hop and roll like playfull mice.
Should this her portrait strike you as uncouth,
Tough curds, my son. I speak but homely truth.

Ed Chaberek

**Mission Mountains
(Winter)**

These are the earth's cold
Arched brows--these now
Darkening peaks--glaring down,
As sure in themselves as
The future staring up
From graves--as terribly secure
As Bodhidharma's diamond
Gaze--as madly certain of their
Place as the saucer-flat hunting
Eyes of ravenous circling
Eagles--

Rama Rao

Brahmin

"A *brahmin* is one who knows the *Brahma*,
Say the *Vedas*," he drones.
Six strands of holy thread tied into a *Brahma*-knot
Dangling diagonally down the brown belly weighted to the ground.
Squatted on the patient floor he chants
The *Vedic* hymns in a language he no longer knows.
More sound than sense; mind greedy for gold,
Clogged with lust for the firm full-breasted
Shudra maid sweeping his floor for rupees.
Reverberating sounds rise aloft
From the musty, brittle, yellow page:
"Free the bird caged in by the senses; the bird is *Brahma*."
Mouth waters at the pungent aroma
Of saffron-and-cardamom wafted in the wind
From a kitchen across the street
While the mind plays tricks with the *Shudra* maid.

Eugene R. Gryniewicz

Casablanca

First comes your eyes
which are green
meadows swelled with spider grass.
A unicorn swims through them, going home.
Then, there is sound
of footfalls amid dry leaves
the color of ash...of frightened
heartbeats. Even in Chicago, an abandoned
street knows no unicorns. I turn
my collar up against the rain
as fog rides in
on the backs of unicorns.
In the ruins of city upon city
robot unicorns
take back what is theirs. No sound
as snow falls; unicorns pass each other
on the street corner.

Marcia Gale Kester

Jefferson County

Mines puncture these hills
dark wells disappear
into bellies of mountain rock
sunlight quilts tombstones
in Whitehall cemetery.
A creek unfolds through willows
reminds me of trout
my brother fried in an iron skillet
rubbed with butter and onion.
I pass William's old Tomahawk Ranch
burned down in 1953
by rustlers who left charred
skeletons of beams and cattle
skulls that rattle with wind.
A wire fence scars the face
of land bleeding rust
after winter.

Back in business

Charles Angel cleanses his soul in the sacred waters in preparation for a career in Origami.

Jon Angel works fulltime on a college newspaper as production manager and attends college full time. He also throws and fires pots, that is, he "pots." No wonder it has taken extra months to work in the Portable Wall among his amazing productions!

Harold K. Armstrong, of 50851 Road 426, Oakhurst, Calif. 93644, writes: I sent you my biographical last March 19, '90 when I sent the other poems. I just hope you are not out of business, as so many are in your business...are you still open for free lance? And what ever happened to Wilbur Wood?

Charles H. Crump is associate editor of Bristlecone Magazine in Carson City, Nev.

Richard Davignon of Chatham, MA, is a retired foreign language teacher living 30 miles out into the Atlantic Ocean on Cape Cod. Ours is about the 27th magazine to print his work.

Brian E. Drake was born in Kansas, moved to New York 10 years ago, and still awaits fame, fortune and a living wage. His sister lives in Missoula.

Frank Dugan teaches impressively, by his mere existence.

Gene Gryniewicz has been writing and drawing for 20 years. He says he is overweight and bearded. Married. Two sons. A dog. A rabbit. A van...a cup of coffee...He lives in Tinley Park, Ill.

Elizabeth Hahn is a professor emerita at Southern Conn. State University.

Jay Hopler, of Mountain Lakes, N.J., is a college student at New York University.

Philip Hughes used to teach, clerk, telemarket, manage, sort mail, type and now monitors a library. He has had more than 200 acceptances from more than 100 little

magazines. His home is Brookline, Mass.

A native Floridian, mother of two, *Marcia Gale Kester* of Pompano Beach, Fla., has completed two novels, one poetry chapbook, and has published 150 poems.

Clayton McCracken is a physician in Billings Montana, where he directs a women's clinic.

Ray Mizer taught composition and literature at Grinnell College and Depauw University for 35 years. His work has appeared in many journals.

Frederick Moe of Concord, N.H., is a social worker, father of three, currently learning to play the hammered dulcimer. He co-edits the literary magazine *Bone and Flesh* with Lester Hirsch.

Tom Padgett teaches literature and composition at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo.

Ana Pine is poet, wife and mother to three kids and two furry dogs. She has been published in over 50 magazines and she publishes and edits *Cokefish*, a poetry magazine she says is on the edge of insanity.

Rama R. Rao has published a book-length collection of poetry and some 50 poems in journals. His home is in Springfield, Mo.

Dave Savonna, of Stamford, Connecticut, is an editorial assistant for the International Business Magazine. His works have appeared in *Inside Joke*, *Poetry Magic*, and *Meal Ready to Eat*.

Some PW readers may remember *Gordon Simard* from Missoula in the late 60s where he was a graduate teaching assistant in the UM foreign language dept. and lead singer for the archetypal rock band, "Einstein Intersection." He moved to San Francisco in 1970. In 1984 Gordon returned to the family homestead near Sidney, Mont., where he and his partner Ruth operate the farm using sustainable methods.

Ed Stever's work has been published in many journals. He just graduated with honors from Suffolk College (SUNY), where he was a director of the Writer's Club.

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