

PORTABLE WALL No. 25

# LOTS A GOODIES



ISSN 1083-8554

\$5



# The Portable Wall

Issue Number 25

Fall 1996

free press since 1977

|   |                       |
|---|-----------------------|
| Letters & Health Hints.....                                       | 2                     |
| Lame Deer News and Book Report.....                               | 5                     |
| Thoughts per hour, poem by L.D. Hirshberg.....                    | 10                    |
| Catacomb, poem by Beret E. Strong.....                            | 11                    |
| Reminiscence: Alan Watts & Alfred Hitchcock, by Gabriel Neruda..  | 12                    |
| Come Spring, poem by Nellie Garnet.....                           | 28                    |
| Falling Away, poem by Betty Waddell.....                          | 29                    |
| A Night in Al & Vics, poem by David E. Thomas.....                | 30                    |
| June in the Rockies, poem by David E. Thomas.....                 | 31                    |
| Garden of Eden, story by Ruben Dario, translated by Tom Feeny...  | 32                    |
| Woodengravings by Dirk Lee.....                                   | throughout this issue |
| The Check, story by June L. Roth.....                             | 33                    |
| The Urge, poem by L.D. Hirshberg.....                             | 34                    |
| Tour Guide, story by David R. Eastwood.....                       | 35                    |
| Tough Act to Swallow, interview by Nat Hirsh.....                 | 43                    |
| Her 'n Bill, poem by Terry Thomas.....                            | 45                    |
| Constellation: A Series of Sonnets, by Todd McNamee.....          | 46                    |
| Monkey Man, poem by James Jay.....                                | 48                    |
| Billy Graham Crusade, poem by David Vincent.....                  | 49                    |
| non all is augured t the mooring, poem by Todd Brendan Fahey. ... | 50                    |
| Pictures of the West, poem by Angela Edwards.....                 | 51                    |
| Light a Candle, Please, prose by Shawna Mesenbrink.....           | 53                    |
| Autumn, poem by David Athey.....                                  | 58                    |
| A Lesson in Economics, poem by Ross Yates.....                    | 59                    |
| Back in business.....   | 60                    |

Correspondence to: The Portable Wall c/o Dan Struckman  
215 Burlington  
Billings, Montana 59101

Copyright © 1996 by The Portable Wall for all authors  
ISSN 1083-8554



# Letters & Health Hints

August 23, 1995  
Missoula, Montana

Dear Robert,

...Now that a new *Portable Wall* appears, I'd better get off my ass (or get on it, I guess, stop shuffling to and fro, and sit down with my pen and writing pad) and compose a letter. First of all, the magazine is great, full of fine stuff — nice cover — a couple of points 1) Mount Sentinel is on the eastern border of Missoula. Blue Mountain could be said to be on the western, perhaps— though the population influx of recent years has nudged all our borders into weird shape 2) proof reading — this is something that's fallen off industry wide big time in recent years — due, I suspect, to an unhealthy reliance on computer programs. I seldom read a publication of any sort that doesn't have glaring errors in typography and basic composition. I don't mean to single you out, it's just a growing peeve I have.

There's an element of the "same old same old" that attends living in any one place for a period of time. The drama of noticing becomes dulled by repetition and you begin to lose your claim on the place — your sense of it. Realtors count on this — I've been helping an electrician friend of mine for the last few weeks so I've been able to get away from my normal Montagne Apts, Charlie's Bar, Greenough Park axis and see some of the "progress" afflicting the area. It irritates me but it pays the rent and buys the groceries more often than writing does. So what can I say (I still don't like it but everything does change).

Yeah, I know. Fred Haefele, good guy and a good writer — You ask about Hugo — ~~we~~ were never close but I was always aware of him as a presence. I think when I was younger and just beginning to write I was intimidated by him as a person and by his writing style as well. I can remember he'd occasionally stop by Eddie's Club to see what all the fuss was about, scowl over a mixed drink awhile and leave. He was more at home in other places. It wasn't until I had a few years writing under my belt and had seen a bit of success and developed some sense of

style of my own that I was able to read Hugo with some detachment and understanding and then of course I learned from him **as well** — but we never became close. I was never his **student the way** many of the writers strongly associated with this **town and state have been**. But there's one more memory I have **of a Christmas party** at Charlie's when he lived on Van Buren (the address was a cross street) and burned the Christmas tree and the cops came. Though I was oblivious by then — But Hugo was there and for a moment we stood next to each other and I summoned the gumption to tell him I liked "Degrees of Gray In Philipsburg" pretty well. And he said, "well, you know I like it pretty well myself" and a few months later he was dead — That's where I'm at with Hugo, I guess. Don't know if it provides any illumination for you or not.

Dave Thomas

Oh yeah, Peter Koch is in the process of designing a book of my poems — we hope to have it out by Christmas — It'll be called *Buck's Last Wreck*. I'll try and send one your way.

*We found the following letter, several sheets of burnt notebook paper long, on the bank of the Yellowstone River. Here is the unedited text. A portion of the letter is missing because the paper was burnt.*

Dear Lover,

How's life? Mine's even better, now that I know you want the same thing I want. Yes, I would have sex with you, and I would not get bored or sick of it. I would really enjoy it. What the hell do you think I had in my pocket and coat the last few times I have seen you. I didn't know how to approach you about it. That's one subject that it is going to take both of us to talk about. Now that I sit here, I think I'm gonna cry. Cause Kaci was there with us, and ruined all of our fun. Oh well, there is next time. That is another thing, you are not going to sneak out of Kaci's house. Jen said that there is a good chance of you being caught. Either you ask your parents if I can come there or you here, or we will have to wait for the next time. I'm so horny



#### 4 *The Portable Wall*

---

for you right now, you can ask Robert. Him and Jen said I'm the horniest little bastard they know. Your sexy was very sexy it made ... your beautiful... excites me to see your nice ass in...I'm really glad that you didn't get in trouble. So I wasn't the only one prepared these last few times. That means then, that the whip and hand cuff talk was real. O yeah! can't wait to see ...I miss you and love you and am horny for you ... so badly. I'll write to you next period. C-ya  
Love me — I love you

I love you,  
miss you &  
want you!

Love always, Rocky

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

#### Memorandum

July 8 1996

From: Institutional Environmental Health Officer

To: All Service Unit Directors

The FDA has just issued a Public Health Advisory concerning the apparent spontaneous combustion of powder-free chlorinated latex patient examination gloves. Within the past year, these gloves have caused fires in four different states. The gloves were labeled "Made in China" and have serial numbers that indicate they were manufactured between 1992 and 1994....

#### A Barb:

Re: "Therapy and the New Age" in PW No. 24: Where's the rest of it?? Great Editing!! If you're going to dismantle my poem without asking me at least try not to make it worse.

*My sincere apology for misprinting the poem! We placed a complete version as an insert in PW 24. —Dan Struckman*

## Lame Deer News and Book Report

by Robert J. Struckman

Received: three consecutive issues of the University of Montana's Cutbank; several chapbooks; and a few odds and ends.

On the whole, regular small press fare. Some sharp writing. A few interviews. The chapbooks tell more about the authors than the characters in the stories. The words on the pages are secondary to the printing of the things, the stack somewhere of extra copies.

Odds and ends are Free Press.

Speaking of Free Press, I ran into some out east in Montana last summer. Montana, you probably know this, dips down out east.

East, to my mind, starts two hundred miles east of Billings. Past Billings the landscape stretches and drones on in repetitive dry, sandstone rises and pale skies much farther than seems possible. Eventually, the ridges and coulees become rolling, grassy hills beneath and deeper, bluer skies.

Sidney is in a crease in the palm of this shallow dip. Sidney is a town of a few thousand, laid out in two slightly opposing grids, circled by hills with new farmhouses and glistening silos. Cantaloupes grow in Sidney; the nights are that warm.

Dolly Williams, a strikingly handsome elderly woman, lives in Sidney. Her white, wooden house is on a corner with a tree in her yard and a reddish pickup at the curb. A screened porch hides the front door.

Last July a sweeping political canvass dropped me on Williams's porch. The woman's personal habits are meticulous. She has cataloged thousands of photographs taken over a fifty or sixty year span. A clean silver platter and matching cups have, on the word of a reliable witness, my grandmother, remained in the same place on her mantle for decades.

In her oldest pictures she's a spry teenage girl with an engaging smile. Her hair is black in those pictures, and her cheekbones make me think of proud men standing at attention.

In one picture, the woman is posing with a group of friends. The photograph was taken in the late 1930s. All the girls have long dresses. Williams, the Slavic beauty with the



cheekbones, stands a little to the left of the center of girls. She stands tall, her face lit with a tremendous smile. When you look at the picture, you can't take your eyes off her. Her face is alive, as if she is about to say something.

The MonDak Heritage Center in Sidney, Montana publishes the county register. The second edition of the register will, with luck, return from the printers in time for Christmas.

Williams volunteers at the MonDak Heritage Center in Sidney. She wrote an entry for county register. Her account includes a hodgepodge of gossipy items.

The register is a large, brown volume, full of homesteading stories on thin paper and double columns of print on each page. A number of black-and-white photographs of families and houses mix with first person accounts.

Carol Poppenga, director for the heritage center, sent requests for stories and questionnaires to nearly every family in the Sidney telephone directory. She brought her press to its most basic, local denominator by having people report on themselves.

On the subject of local reporting, I don't know if this term, "civic journalism," means anything to you, but in North Carolina it means quite a bit.

Some newspapers and radio and television stations polled audiences to decide how to cover the recent political campaign. The idea: polls let the news services address voters' needs and wants.

Editors in North Carolina said that the new "civic journalism" will keep the news coverage out of the manipulative hands of the politicians and in the hands of the public.

Foolishly, the editors and publishers miss the fact that political campaigns pioneered the use of polls. Plus, who's more manipulative? Television stations vying for ratings? Or politicians vying for votes?

On the other hand, small presses spring from the bowels of the populace. (Or in the case of the Portable Wall, the basement.)

Small presses, as I define them, would fold if five people suddenly died. Small presses could otherwise be described as without stockholders and without the backing of a major institution.



Small presses are important because they produce the a story that an individual who wants to tell. The story does not have to be popular. All it has to have is one determined, interested, bullish individual.

The Portable Wall commonly receives a number of publications that fit this description. Usually The Portable Wall has a book review section with some thoughts and observations on the books and periodicals collected since the last edition.

This fall the county register has been on my mind. The North Carolina news agencies, too. The news agencies forgot that people are individuals. The press at its best is gossip. Gossip can be true. And it can be intelligent.

Okay, so I was at my cousin's house in Bozeman. Chuck and Chris, brothers, live in a brand new condominium in that sprawling, new development on the western edge of town.

I stayed there with them in early August. Every night I'd leave my job on the political canvass and get to their house around eleven. They'd be working on their third bottle of rough, Croat pinot noir (pronounced "pee-know know-are). The wine was crude, tasted of automobile coolant and battery acid.

The lights of their dining room were harsh. The table was littered with crummy food and dirty glasses. The rooms were sparse, and the furniture was separated by large spaces of nothing. The dining room table sat directly beneath a hanging light with a bare bulb. It was like an interrogation chamber. And when I got to their home, Chuck and Chris would be sitting at the table, drinking wine and playing cards.

On this particular night, a strange, barrel chested man knocked on the front door and came into the kitchen with a case of beer under his arm. Chuck and Chris welcomed him in and took the beer. The guy lived next door. He, also named Chuck, opened a beer, drained it, then opened another.

He drank that one and a next. As he stood finishing his third beer, I asked him how he was, and he said, "OK, considering my wife left me and took my baby girl."

His reply seemed so improbable, that I didn't believe him. Chris and I exchanged glances. Over the next two hours the guy drank nearly the entire case. Amazingly, the alcohol did not seem to alter his behavior.

The man had long arms and pale hands. The more he drank, the more he talked of the cause of his binge. His wife had left him. His wife had left ~~while~~ he was at work. His sister had come to take his wife and child.

As time went on he built a vivid picture of himself and the events surrounding his wife's departure. He was a vacuum cleaner salesman, but he did not sell regular vacuum cleaners. He sold rainbows, which is a thing altogether different from a vacuum. He said things like, "Since I've become a rainbow...."

Chuck, the man whose wife left him, was obsessed with personal protection. He had a number of guns and other, as he called them, bad-ass weapons. He described how he wished someone would break into his house and try to rape his wife so he could kill him. About 2 or 3 in the morning he started talking about getting his wife back.

Chuck went next door and came back with an old, double-barrel shotgun. He visualized punishing an intruder. He pointed the shotgun at the wall and said, "I'm gonna hurt you with this one, and I'm gonna hurt you with this one."

My cousins, Chris and Chuck, and I took the gun from him and tried to reduce tensions by moving into the garage. I made a suggestion that we call it a night, but the Chuck whose wife had left him suddenly begged us not to leave him alone.

We went out into the garage. We started to talk politics. Chuck from next door trumpeted the free-enterprise of vacuum cleaner sales. But the conversation quickly led back to intruders and their just punishment.

The cause of his wife's departure began to be revealed by him out in the garage.

Two days earlier my cousin Chris took the bar exam to become a lawyer in Montana.

Another guy, currently working as a city planner in Bozeman, also named Chris, had taken the bar exam as well. The two of them and my cousin Chuck had celebrated after the exam at the condominium.

Chris, the city planner, had been drinking, and, Chuck my cousin thinks, taking Quaaludes or something. He was so wasted that he stumbled into the other Chuck's house, the vacuum cleaner salesman's, to use the bathroom.



Chuck, the vacuum cleaner salesman, had been sleeping on the sofa. He woke up and saw Chris beginning to mount the stairs.

The next few minutes are unclear as Chuck relates them. He picked up a toy baseball bat, he said, and yelled something. But something fundamental in his idea of his role as a man, a husband, and a protector, went wrong.

He had been helpless maybe, maybe he had been too scared to do anything. I don't know, but the event involved a huge failure on his part. That event triggered the split.

The wife left a day and a half after Chris blundered into his house to use the bathroom. She left in the day, with the baby, while Chuck sold vacuum cleaners.

Chuck, the salesman, repeated a wish that Chris, the one who had come into his house, would come to my cousin's house. Chuck said he wanted to buy him a drink. He hinted that my cousins should call him and invite him over.

There was no way that they would invite him, because Chuck's real intentions were obvious.

Time passed and eventually Chuck was led back to his house. Then my cousins and I locked the doors and went to bed. That night as the bed was spinning, I lay still and listened for the huge crash of the shotgun.

Morning came without incident. My hangover, though severe, passed. Chuck's house stayed shuttered and dark all that day and the next. Eventually one of my cousins went to check on him. He was still in bed, suffering from a horrible hangover and deep depression.

That's the news from this small press. Send along your books for next issues reviews when this column will go back to its former usage.

---

Headers

---

From STRUCKMAN@rosebud.berkeley.edu Fri Nov 8 12:42:19 1996

Return-Path: STRUCKMAN@rosebud.berkeley.edu

Received: from nak.berkeley.edu (nak.Berkeley.EDU [128.32.206.21]) by e

L. D. Hirshberg

### Thoughts Per Hour

Along U.S. 2 in North Dakota  
an Eastbound traveler can top  
a nameless rise and see nothing  
but sunflowers. Toward evening  
they face West, longing  
for the glow in the next state.

If you stop, and go down and face  
the ripening black bounty at the center  
of one of those large-as-light sunflowers,  
and you begin to count the seeds, packed  
like birds, like fish, stars, stuffed like  
rain in a cloud, like thoughts, voices,  
each one declaring a name—  
If you start to count you might stop  
and gain the rise again.  
Easier to tally the wind.

Later, skipping from seed to seed  
you drive toward the yellow rim,  
remembering across the dark face of love.



Beret E. Strong

## **Catacomb**

Down under the freeway,  
there's a cement sleeve  
with daylight at both ends.  
A stream pumps through the sleeve  
like blood in a man's arm  
and we run through this blood  
hunting for crawdads and skeeterbugs  
among the smooth brown stones.

You could fit a web of grown-up bodies  
in the dark bulge of this sleeve.  
The air roars like a hundred brothers calling,  
like a thousand embittered birds.

We want to go underground,  
down where the bad men lie at night,  
the faceless ones into whose cars  
little girls must refuse to climb.

Here in the sleeve  
we've splashed through the blood and the bones,  
and there's no one, no one home.

## **Reminiscence of Alan Watts and Alfred Hitchcock**

by Gabriel Monteleone Neruda

Although I was among the most penniless and the most inconsequential of men in the late 1960s and in the early 70s I was a personal friend of the famous philosophical entertainer, Alan Watts. Everybody else in the world appeared to consider him to be contemporarily eminent among philosophers and yet with a wry grin which I thought always appeared to be rather faux-self deprecating he would correct whomever called him such and call himself a philosophical entertainer.

He lived at the end of Camino del Canyon in the town of Mill Valley, California, across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco. Muir Woods was in the valley immediately below, on the way to Highway One.

Working as a laborer in the area I had delivered lumber and concrete to his landlord, Roger, and after a time Alan and I had become friends, first rather difficult friends and eventually rather comfortable friends. When I was with him it was customary to feel that natural ascendancy which seemed to emanate from him toward whomever he was with, and he was vigilant to maintain that natural ascendancy, or at least to maintain the perception of it in others.

To be with him was often to feel his servant, but it was an easy service mostly. I am naturally proud and yet I am comfortable with my pride and it is not easily ruffled. His personal proudness seemed to be too tight a fit and occasionally it choked him.

On days when I was free sometimes I would drive out to that splendid knoll he lived on and I would park my car in the communal parking area and I would stroll or traipse about, hunting the inhabitants of wildness with my camera which I had found one day in an intersection while delivering lumber to



Stinson Beach. It had been new and in its case when I had come upon it, and I was in love with it. I was hunting images that would lodge in the mind forever and my favorite had been that of a deer who had been killed by traffic and had crawled to die beside the road. Only birds had disturbed her beside the road, and they had pried open the area below her rib cage and had plucked inefficiently at her viscera, being continually disturbed by the traffic, and her untroubled viscera had dried and mummified in the salt air and in the salt wind, and the camera had focused exactly on those twisted ropes of gut. The photograph was as coldly beautiful as it was profoundly discouraging, and required an ability to deliver oneself inside the abstraction of imagery to be appreciated.

I enjoyed stalking the hawks and the dusk owls and the foxes and the infrequent bobcat, and though the luxuriously beatnik house he lived in was something of a hub around which orbited artists and a colony of lesbians who mingled not always sympathetically or pleasantly, I was usually left alone to wander discreetly as I would.

The house was constructed among several similar houses (each of which housed or had housed folks who chose both to be beatniks who had renounced worldly superfluities and to be folks who eagerly sought those pleasures which can only come from an indulgence in those identical worldly superfluities) and among a multitude of tiny cabins which Roger had constructed to augment his income.

Some years ago the entire property had been purchased generously by the Department of Forestry on what is called a life-lease, which meant that though Roger had been given full retail value for the property he could live in it until his death freely. He had placed the full lump of money received into property located in downtown Ukiah, rental property of course, and this combined with those rents accrued from his dozens of living-units on this knoll earned him a good bit of loot.

So he had done well after only a dozen years or so, for when he bought the knoll it had a few cabins on it and it had neither water nor electricity. For a loo they had had to use the woods, and he told me that once his wife had wiped herself fore and aft with a brightly red-orange leaf in the autumn which was very quickly and uncomfortably revealed to have been poison oak.

In my strolls I had come upon poison oak vines which climbed a hundred feet into the trees and which at base were broader than my thighs. With a chain saw I had removed a three foot link from many of them and had watched the poisonous black blood drip drip drip onto the floor of the wood.

Soon I learned that Alan was a peculiar man who could recite poems and quotations and quaintly obscene limericks to fit any occasion, that he knew the lyrics to every song which had been penned during this twentieth century, that he was incurably lonely and socially hypochondriacal. He could act naturally when with a friend or when with a few friends, and he could perform easily behind a podium when standing before a thousand or a few thousand faces, but when confronted with a group of six or seven people he would become oddly anxious and would implode within himself. From my own experience I knew that when a famous person is in such a group almost invariably he must contend with what I called a headhunter, some obnoxious useless fellow who attacks everything he says in an attempt to wrest some measure of apparent superiority, an attempt to embarrass him. I suspected then as I suspect now that this human frailty of ours was a cause for Alan's implosive behavior, a cause that when within a group he would virtually disappear, would become vacant.

It was customary for Alan to wake at precisely 7:11, precisely eleven minutes past seven each morning, without a clock or with, so he would set his alarm for 5, two hours early, so that his body would not rebel and he would automatically fill a waterglass



with chilled vodka, seldom a good one unless it had been a gift, for he had no taste buds, and he would pour the vodka into his throat and then he would return to bed. He explained that if he waited till nature woke him he would be unable to pour the vodka into a glass without spilling it shakily onto the counter, and it would be an almost intolerable frustration trying to

unscrew the top.

One morning when I arrived upon my customary jaunt just to traipse the area I found an old milk bottle in the wood, that said MARIN COUNTY MILK CO. on one side, and on the other side it said GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE WILL BUILD A MORE MARVELOUS MARIN COUNTY.

I continued to lag about and then ambled up to his house and displayed it to

him. He was unimpressed and said that once there had been a mountain of antique bottles located by the nearby woodshop which was used by the local artistic community who rented those wee cabins from Roger, and that the mountain had been bulldozed to build a rock garden. Rock gardens, he explained were more pleasant to sit upon while ingesting the fragrance of the cannabis and the berries of the juniper.

He asked if I would care to jaunt down to Brentwood the coming morning to visit with Alfred



Hitchcock, the movie director. Rather serendipitously, I thought, my vacation was to begin that day so I said I'd love to go, and a few minutes past 8 **we went**.

Of course one of the principal reasons **he** invited me was because I had a car and would be willing to drive without remuneration, and he could loll the entire way, feeling no guilt about not asking if I'd like him to drive awhile, about the cost of gas, (though I am fairly certain that he was far richer than I,) or about anything whatever. Guilt wasn't among his burdens, lucky fellow.

On the way down the coast I asked Alan if he knew what Hitchcock wanted to see him about, and he shrugged evasively and replied that it had something to do with making a movie.. But I knew, or thought I knew (which is the same thing contemplably,) that Hitchcock was done with movies, so I replied rather archly that perhaps B. Traven would be there also and that they were to collaborate on a more psychologically explicit and a more philosophical version of THE TREASURE OF THE SIERRA MADRE, whereupon doubtless they would discover that B. Traven was Ambrose Bierce. Alan only gazed at me wearily, wishing, doubtless, that he could misbehave, as if to say. For him, being was always difficult.

Miles past, miles passed beyond the windows of the roaring steel womb we drove in, and each of us fondled his own particular thoughts, probing, kneading, shuffling. I felt Alan's furtive glance and his distant voice appeared. "I'm experiencing tectonic difficulties, my entirely real friend. Assist me."

I asked him, after a wee pause, if I'd ever told him about the fellow at work who'd always wanted to be a macho animal, yet who'd spent his whole life with an almost hairless body except for the top of his noggin. One day he noticed that a mole on his chest had sprouted a single hair that had suddenly become almost an inch long. He was as proud as a daddy so he named it Herman. He was a wonderfully amiable and pleasant fellow and everybody like him extremely,



and sometimes he'd ask women he scarcely knew if they'd like to meet his friend Herman.

Usually they'd laugh and say yes, wondering what he was about to show them, and being invariably surprised when he'd pull up his shirt and introduce Herman to them. Then they'd giggle delightedly and he'd lower his shirt, or he'd have Herman speak to them as he wiggled it with his finger.

One day he introduced Herman to a buddy who laughed raucously and who reached forth abruptly and snatched Herman away with his fingers, dropped it into the air and laughed again. My poor friend was disconsolate for days, mortified, aghast, utterly disconsolate perhaps for weeks.

He still mourns for poor Herman, his only claim to an incontrovertible machismo.

Alan laughed, said thanks, and gazed out the window. Mood is everything.

Finally we found Bel Aire and the famous country club and golf course, north of Sunset Boulevard, and because we had detoured and we had dawdled it was late but the house was illuminated so we knocked and a fellow answered smelling of lavender and of garlic, rather tippy-toed and prancing, and he said he was Michael and we were expected. He suggested that we might do better to retire to the bedrooms which had been prepared for us, and to meet Mr Hitchcock in the morning. We heard that famously lugubrious drone in the background, and a shrill pecking of a woman, and a yipyapping of some ridiculous pooch, but we accepted his suggestion and we followed him in and down a hallway.

Alan and I were each shown into our respective bedrooms, which were fully furnished with individual baths and wetbars and sliding glass doors onto the capacious gardens. Through the glass doors I could hear schmaltzy pacifying music, and coming in through the windows, and it wafted through the night like the scent of nightblooming jasmine. It was Frank Sinatra from the late 50s, and Ella Fitzgerald from a bit earlier, before they were destroyed by Nelson

Riddle. And, oddly, I heard Al Bowly.

Being unfamiliar and therefore a tad nervous I was out early the following morning and I wandered the hallway toward the aromas of the kitchen. Michael was there (None dare call him Mike.) and he was sitting by a window sipping coffee and reading a paper, smoking a Kent cigarette.

He was completely pleasant, completely unselfconscious and unbitchy, and he insisted on making a breakfast for me. I'd have preferred oatmeal, but instead ate a generous plate of potatoes and poached eggs and pleasantly lean bacon. The gods of cholesterol were placated, and I drank coffee hugely.

Michael was no chatterer and neither was I. Being a working man all of my life I had learned never to speak of things that interested me, and I was pleased to be so pleasantly excused from speaking of other matters. So we shared the newspaper and we alternated sections. I noticed that he read the whole thing, including the gossip pages and the classifieds. I did not read those areas and I only read the first page of the business section (to see what the bad guys were up to) and I seldom read the comics or the sports pages. While reading the Dow Jones he joked rather absently that he wished vitally to be aligned with the Tao.

Alan displayed himself a bit after 8, appearing not to have availed himself of the bathroom, wearing eye-boogers and frumpled locks and with smeary gaze. His breath was hot as kerosene and his mood was rancid. A frog rasped in his throat, and stale scotch floated out confusedly.

He drank a niagara of orange juice, declined the offered eggs et al, and munched a piece of dry rye.

When Alan and I were alone (and Michael was so adept a waiter that Alan and I were soon alone,) he felt no constraint upon him to assert his natural superiority and he was only a pleasant pained man, painfully gifted, and he was easy in his nervous



said silence.

A single tap on the glass door and the gardener stood there, and before I could respond Michael appeared from nowhere and opened the door. Michael introduced everybody and the gardener sat to a breakfast of coffee and bread and a mass of scrambled eggs, which Michael dumped atop the sizzling bacon in the pan once it had accumulated a sufficiency of sizzling grease.

I had always made it my habit to ask people about their jobs and I asked the gardener about his. He said that he planted his plots seasonally according to what bloomed when, planting circuitously around the house. He loved colors, and Hitchcock seemed not to notice his physical atmosphere in the least, so he could garden as he pleased. It was a fortuitous job indeed, allowing him to do what he loved most and to do it exactly as he wished.

I remembered, and I mentioned, that George Bernard Shaw had opted for scents, and had his garden planted with mint so that as he trampled the mint the odors would waft up into his nostrils and, perhaps, aid his ruminations.

Immediately upon the entrance of the gardener Alan exhibited that piece of his overly developed psyche I appreciated the least, and he mounted his pedestal or his podium, or his soapbox, or whatever one might call it. He strode his little stage and attempted to dominate the conversation and was miffed when the gardener would have none of him, ignored him utterly as if the space he occupied were vacant and his energy field null. He shut up and sulked, pretending not to care, pretending not to notice.

A knock upon the door, and the chauffeur entered. He was oldest of our group and a very pleasant vivacious Italian fellow, introducing himself as Tony. He worked ostensibly for a chauffeur service in Hollywood but his only customer was Mr Hitchcock, he said. He settled in a rocking chair with his Lucky Strikes and his own paper, and he read and

smoked, and smoked, and smoked. He said that Hitchcock woke at ten precisely, every morning, and that at 11:30, eleven thirty precisely, he was to drive Hitchcock to his office at Universal Studios, where he did nothing except to show his face to the troops, to assure them that God was still in heaven and all was right with the world.

Michael explained that Mr Hitchcock would be unavailable to us until a few minutes past one, when he and Tony returned from the studio. I thought it seemed a rather vacant life, though I would gladly exchange my penury and my days of mindless labor for his affluence and his ability to do what he chose.

Soon we heard a dog, one of those long-haired yipping irritants that resembles an agitated ottoman, yipping and squeaking and doing its best to be suitably obnoxious, yipping somewhere in the house. Michael explained that its noise meant that Alma, Mrs H, had stirred and that the animal was signifying that it wished to dottle the lawn. I have always appreciated such dogs almost as much as I appreciated poison oak and fleas and aneurysms.

Tony rose and left, through the door he'd entered by. Soon the car started, moved, and stopped. It was late in the morning for fog in Los Angeles, I thought, but the fog appeared to be dissipating rapidly.

A knock on the inner door and a small nervous morose woman appeared in the doorway. She was Mrs Hitchcock, "Please call me Alma." She had been a famous movie person in England, an editor of some sort, I had been told. But in America she was relegated to the role of background material, along with the drapes and the fire hydrants and the china. She was nervous as a mouse in a cat-house, and kept glancing anxiously into eyes. I thought she appeared to suspect everybody of trying to see her bottom, and she kept swinging the thing away from eyes as if she were its dance partner.

I remembered what had been said about Alexander Pope, that occasionally he would laugh but



that he never smiled. This woman too was so exceedingly bitter and so relentlessly disappointed, and she appeared never to smile. She could be civil, but never pleasant. She could be gracious, but never charming. She was constricted, clamped.



She asked if she might show us the house, and Alan (who was her only interest among those present) said yes. She walked us through the public rooms, showing us sculpture and impressionist paintings, libraries of well-heeled books and expensive french wines, a precolumbian mask of something-or-other. Money money money, I mused. I noticed that the wetbar was stocked with expensive

everything but that the dollar had been the purchaser's only consideration, and that personal preferences had been meaningless and that quality was ignored in preference to recognizable expense.

She wearied of us quickly and asked if we'd care to prepare for lunch, and Alan got the hint and said his thanks and we returned to our bedrooms and baths. By now Alan must have recuperated sufficiently to feel poorly and soon I heard his shower running and him singing lugubriously, tunelessly, the saddest and sweetest song in all the world, about Danny Boy. He had always loved the song extremely and always called it what sounded like *The London Derriere*. He had often announced that it was a song to bring a strong man to tears, and as usual he was right. When he spoke he often announced, and sometimes I was amused by this, for I had long since forgiven him for such a bad habit.

I strolled through the glass doors of my bedroom to the garden and found a woman talking with the gardener. She was dressed in the classic white garb of a nurse, which she was, and smiled easily to me as I approached. She resembled some movie star whose name escapes me, having beautiful long reddish hair and flashing clear eyes that might judge but did not, and she had a figure that could cause a lonely man to cry. She moved with a dancer's natural grace and when she felt playful she was a delight and a privilege to see and be near. She was in those best years of a woman's ease, her early 30s, and I envied her husband inordinately. Her name was Paisley.

We had an immediate camaraderie and so I asked her what it was like to work for so famous a man, for so talented a man. She was the sole and the balance of discretion and I was compelled to infer far more than she implied or stated. We walked the grounds together and I pried as amiably and as inconspicuously as I could being by nature a curious fellow.



Alfred Hitchcock was a sensitive and a disappointed man, and he was a caring man toward those he cared about, and he was a generous man toward those with whom the fates had made him intimate. Every third day he gave each of his household employees a hundred dollar bill as a gratuity. Once as he extracted a bill from his billfold and handed it to her she had asked him why he did it, saying that although it was certainly appreciated it was unnecessary. He had glanced with an exaggerated derisiveness at the remnant bills in the billfold and had said, "O, I have lots of those." What an enjoyable derision, I thought.

Mr Hitchcock, I gathered, and my antennae were carefully and fully extended and carefully and fully engaged, had offered to give her anything she wanted, a yacht, a house, a journey, a stables, a restaurant, if only she would do something specific for him. Being sexually inclined, my eyebrows raised and I gazed at her with my interest piqued, and I was fairly certain what was to come.

What he wanted, he explained, was for Paisley to cause his wife to smile. I felt appropriately embarrassed and hoped that she had been unable to read my face, though I realized utterly that my face had spoken plainly and that women are wizards about such things.

In his closet were forty black suits, every one the same, and forty pairs of black shoes every one the same. He had forty white shirts and forty black ties and forty white boxer-shorts and forty white sleeveless undershirts. He also had a dozen pajamas which were identically light blue, and which he wore around the house on weekends. He had no other clothing.

Alfred (a name he was called only to his face and then only by folks who dared or who had been instructed to do so. She had been instructed thusly, but could not divest herself of Mr Hitchcock) and Alma were Leos, born the same day, a fact I thought bode ill.

Alfred and Alma had no intimate friends except for their daughter Pat who visited once weekly. They had a table permanently reserved at Chasen's Restaurant.

Price Waterhouse handled all of Hitchcock's finances including employee pay, except that he carried troves of centuries in his billfold, a hundred hundred dollar bills or so.

All of the meat he ate was deep-fried, and consisted mostly of deep-fried filets mignon, and he ate no veggies, calling it "rabbit food." He had scurvy, bloody cracks around his ears, and his teeth moved.

His doctor, Dr Phlug, was a cadaverous shill who was paid to tell Alfred that scurvy was normal, that anemia was normal.

When Hitchcock was in his cups he told Paisley the same story endlessly, over and over, night after night, that when he was seven he had committed some horrendous booboo and his father toted him to the local jail and the bobbies locked him away for a few hours. Then the bobbies and his father returned and let him out of the cell, explaining that if he erred even once again he'd be locked up forever. This was the experience that scarred him psychologically, that described his childhood's psychological experience.

I have had a couple of those, I thought. Age seven was when I began serious contemplation of suicide, though I have never dared to tell a soul.

Every actress who ever worked for him had offered herself to him sexually, and afterward he had despised them for it though he had never availed himself of the opportunity. It is not easy to hide when you're naked, I thought.

Paisley saw that I was watching her as I was listening to her and she smiled, I thought, several times at the insight. Women can be irritatingly perceptive, I thought.

She mentioned that Mr Hitchcock and Tony would return from the studio soon, and she suggested we go have lunch in the kitchen. I had become so entranced with our conversation that I had forgotten



that such a thing as lunch existed or was probable, but instantly I remembered and so we returned into the kitchen where we found Alan and Michael chatting around a buffet of artichokes and thinly sliced turkey and coarse sour whole rye bread and olives. We ate.

About 1:30 a car purred into the driveway and I heard a muffled doorslam. Through the window I could see Mr Hitchcock waddling like a penguin toward the house, carrying his hands palm-outward behind his body. I heard him enter the house and the clock on the wall continued to tock.

We remained in the kitchen until Michael, sometime about 2:30, told us that we might see Mr Hitchcock if we chose. He spoke in an undertone, as if seeing Mr Hitchcock were the most normal thing in the world, and as if Mr Hitchcock's peculiar timetable were the most normal thing in the world. He was used to it, I thought, and for him Hitchcock had become the eye of creation. Nothing was surprising, I thought.

The hour had become just shy of 3 as we left the kitchen and were dawdled into the living room. Alma was there and consciously so, and she prattled at us for a few moments, and then the great man himself emerged from somewhere. He reminded me of Sidney Greenstreet because of his physical bulk, but seemed to be hiding a cleverness and an innocence and a psychological smallness, and that repulsive little dog went yapping all about him as if to chase an invisible aura.

Hitchcock asked us to sit after he had introduced himself with an appearance of egalitarian grace, and after holding Alan's hand for an extended period in his own massive right hand. Every time I looked at him I fancied that his totem would be a bigmouth bass, as his wattles bobbed and his mouth gulped. Soon he inquired if we'd enjoy a tiny libation, and dutifully we acquiesced with a feigned exclamation of glee, of relief.

He waddled to the wetbar and placed his enormous girth between the wetbar and ourselves



of the creative ... 1996

and he filled a **glass with icy refrigerated vodka** and he poured it into his throat, thinking perhaps that he was unobserved. Then he swung about and asked what we would like and he made our drinks dutifully, one by one, pouring for himself a vodka over ice with a deft splash of orange juice, his concession toward the sun god, his vitamin c.

I had noticed that as he turned away from his lingering handshake with Alan that somewhat surreptitiously he scraped his palm across his massive shirtfront, as if to dispel cooties. Somehow as if by osmotic messenger we knew not to sit in the master chair and we did not sit in it and soon the great man sat in it himself and held his gently querulous court with us. The chat began desultorily.

Cleverly he avoided saying anything in reference to what might have drawn Alan for hours down that Pacific coast, and might have drawn me to drive on these days of my only annual vacation. It was understood that only Hitch was to speak. Cary Grant phoned and was ably thwarted, and Hitch resumed his mastery.

I had spent much time in the company of great people and so I was unsurprised that the conversation proceeded in so unlinear a fashion, in such a stream of consciousness manner, and I only listened, as I was supposed to do. No compromise was



endeavored, to pull one's thoughts into a civilized reasonableness, to tame them. Hitchcock stated that "life is a masterpiece of malevolence."

Alan retorted that Einstein had claimed that God was indeed too subtle for men's apprehension yet was not malicious.

Hitchcock responded that "as far as the mass of our species was concerned, Mr Einstein didn't contribute so much as a fart in a windstorm. Indeed, he never farted an audible whistle."

Alan replied that because of Einstein's inaudible fart the entire world might be contradicted in an instant, in a puff.

Mr Hitchcock responded that everybody was to die anyway, so what did it matter how we died?

There was an obligatory pause, and I could hear the gardener's shears clipping in the garden beyond the windows, which resembled upturned and vertical streams or perhaps the windows of an ancient church, mottling the accustomed lights which filtered through. I could smell the descending dark. I could smell coffee in the kitchen, thrumping on the stove.

Alan began very deliberately to speak of "the higher path of man's ascendance" and Hitchcock began to wave those enormous mitts of his (actually the fingers were not uncommonly long but were only tremendously thick like so many escaping pigs, and it was the diameter of his palms that was so spectacularly huge, like men's bald heads if viewed from above) and to chuckle dryly.

"Really now, Mr Watts," Hitchcock began. "Both of us are drinking powerful potations, Stolichnaya vodka, mine with a dash of orange and yours with a dash of water, and the vodka was made in Russia by slaves and sold in this liberated country for exorbitant moneys which benefit only our American slavers, and yet you have the unmitigated temerity to speak of things so frivolously whimsical as spiritual values. Tut, tut, and let us not be babies until we must be."

Nellie Garnet

### Come Spring

I, naked in warm water, sit  
Absorbing heat a little bit.  
Outside it snows, but not to last  
As March imposes Lenten fast.  
Our penance is our recompense.  
April is kinder to the sense.

My knee is going. I can feel it testing my weight  
Of two minds about whether to let me down.  
There's a tooth that flares like an old dog  
disturbed from sleep,  
Ruling out Popcorn as a snack.  
Not that I ever ate much popcorn.  
Too plebian, I thought.  
Humility is creeping up on me with old age.  
I've put aside the skis my husband got me  
In hopes that there was something we could do outside  
Because of a heavy deductible on our health insurance plan.  
So what if my tummy arcs in front.  
Maybe that last never-say-die romp  
After what may have been my last show of blood  
Resulted in fertility March twenty-third.  
A December birthday. Christmas, even.  
But I don't think so.  
The Lord doesn't give us more than we can bear.  
If the cat has her kittens in the oven  
That doesn't make them biscuits  
And putting on appearances  
Only tells me we've got a long way to go.

Betty Waddell

## **Falling Away**

Rock piles protrude on every section,  
monuments to dinosaur amphitheaters.  
Sagebrush and cheat grass struggle  
between shale. Scrub pines find  
moisture in shadows and crevices.  
Flat rock designed with rusty lichen  
are hauled to someone's patio, leaving  
fewer for future scavengers.

Crumbling columns not viewed as pretty  
except by the rancher who owns it and  
cannot make a living from it, but who also  
loves his barren cow, his broken down fence,  
his wife's weedy garden filling in with  
overgrown dill. This monument marks the  
corner of his land, his refuge to hide within,  
much as the black beetle on the pine.

Centuries could pass before other creatures  
come to lean on, to crawl under this tomb,  
but today the movie crew moves in, or  
the gold mine which begins its leach pad —  
the once ignored sandstone is marked and  
remarked upon, becoming famous with its  
slight difference — and in the process is  
destroyed, no longer what was, changed.



David E. Thomas

**A Night in AI & Vics**

I mention

To Kaw-Liga

That I feel

Like yesterday

and then

I look in the mirror

and see I forgot

to make a turn

somehow

“sounds like  
a song”

he says

and Micheal Story

blows harp

across Jay Rummel's

Guitar

and Tim Martin's

bass

while a child yet

to grow

hair makes

steps

on the tiles

of this bar

once

known

for blood

guts

and that rank

disinfectant

nearly

made you

swear off

drinking.

d. thomas

18 May 95

missoula

David E. Thomas

## **JUNE IN THE ROCKIES**

Yesterday's storm  
                  consumed but  
a few minutes  
                  lightning  
                  flash!  
thunder  
                  boom!!  
quick torrent  
                  of rain  
and this morning  
walking  
about with left-over  
                  Friday night  
                  pain  
I see  
on the corner  
of Pine and Adams  
a fully leaved tree  
                  twisted  
from its trunk  
                  cottonwood  
                  snags  
in Greenough Park  
laid out  
on the lawn  
                  big branches  
                  torn loose  
on Spruce Street  
as I hike  
to Charlie's Bar  
for a beer  
                  to soften  
the blow.

d. thomas  
17 June 95  
missoula

## In the Garden of Eden

by Ruben Dario

translated by Thomas Feeny

In the Garden of Eden, on that glorious day when the flowers were created, and before Eve was tempted by the serpent, the evil spirit approached the prettiest new rose just at the moment she was offering her lips' red purity to the caress of the sun.

"You are very lovely."

"Yes, I am," said the rose.

"Lovely and happy," the devil continued. "You possess grace, aroma, hue. But..."

"But?..."

"You are not useful. Can't you see those tall trees full of acorns? In addition to being leafy, they provide food for countless animals who stop beneath their branches. You see, my Rose, to be lovely means little."

At that the rose—tempted in the same way which later on woman would be—wished for usefulness so much that she turned pale.

The following dawn, the Lord stopped by.

"Oh Father," begged the floral princess, trembling in her perfumed beauty, "Would you please make me useful?"

"So be it, my daughter," answered the Lord, smiling.

And at that moment the world beheld the first cabbage.



## **The Check**

by June Levin Roth

When he had not phoned for a while she phoned him. His number was there, penciled into her little green leather book. He said come to my party. A fund-raising party for the cause that once brought them together. He said don't dress up, it won't be dressy. He said I do want to see you. I've missed you.

She entered the date in her green leather book. Then she wrote an extravagant check to the cause.

On the day that he named, slightly later than he stated, she stood in the corridor in front of his door. She wore a black suit and a long strand of pearls, handed down from her mother. He had once said he liked pearls. She stood and she listened to the voices inside. She smelled food smells, grilled meat, something smoky and herbed. She stared at the familiar 24C in black-outlined gold on his door.

When she rang, a man in a white waiter's jacket and black bow tie bowed her in.

Filled with people, the room seemed even larger than she had remembered it to be. She did not see him.

Bare-shouldered women in jewels and three-piece-suited men stood in groups. She moved through the groups in search of his face.

The black-bow-tied man asked what she would drink and a waitress in white-aproned black passed a tray of skewered beef, grilled Thai-style. She told the man white wine and she picked up a skewer of beef. As she continued her search she examined the faces of his friends, one by one, friends she had not met in their brief time together. She looked at the faces of the women, smooth, flawlessly made-up, like her own; and the faces of the men, lined, not quite firm. As she looked at the faces and looked for his face, she felt a touch at her elbow and she heard his voice say, so nice of you to come.

He brushed her cheek with his lips and he led her to a man and a dour-looking woman and he made introductions. The woman's eyebrows went up at the sound of her name. They had heard of her work. The woman smiled as she said, "We would have expected you to be much older."

When handed the wine, she took a long sip. She followed as he led her from one to another.

She saw, by the fireplace, a tall, blonde woman, the approximate age of her daughter, in low-cut garnet velvet, watching as he led her from person to person.

Two men, a couple, came forward to meet her, to tell

her how much they admired her most recent project.

He put a hand on her wrist and he told her to mix, to have a good time. He walked to the fireplace, to the young velvet-clad woman, who ran a manicured finger down his cheek, from temple to jaw.

She talked for some moments to the two men who knew her, or knew of her work. Then she turned toward the door without casting a glance toward the fireplace. She walked through the too-crowded room and she opened the door to the corridor.

While she waited for the elevator she pulled the green leather book from her bag. On the page with his name penciled in at the bottom, she smiled to note other names had been written in ink. She erased his name and address and his telephone number before the elevator door opened on the twenty-fourth floor.

L.D. Hirshberg

### The Urge

I want to make something perfectly clear.

To make something.

I would like to make something

perfectly clear.

(a furnace opens

ripples in the room.)

I want to make something.

Make something perfect

Something perfectly clear.

Want to make something clear?

Absolutely.

Perfect.

"What do you want?" someone asked.

"To make something perfectly clear,"

replied the

glass

blower

"And to sit with it

cooling in the dark."



## **Tour Guide**

by David R. Eastwood

If thou beest born to strange sights,  
    Things invisible to see,  
Ride ten thousand days and nights,  
    Till age snow white hairs on the. . . .  
    —"Song," John Donne

Speaking as an expert who has lived and worked in the Big Apple for over 35 years, let me reassure all of you that the danger of being mugged here is far slimmer for people of our ethnicity than for literally any other group. Yes, go ahead and smile if you like. I should caution you, however, that there is a slight but very real danger in stores and restaurants, in hotels, especially in elevators, and out on the sidewalks and streets. Furthermore, very very rarely, some of us have been deliberately run down by nut cases in their cars. Rarely, I say, because the state officials have taken some precautions to keep such folks off the road. However, as you'll appreciate, no system is perfect—they miss some, are bought off by others, and a few will drive cars even if their licenses have been revoked. Realistically, though, you're far more likely to get a few bruises simply because somebody bumps into you inadvertently, especially during what they call the rush hour here.

I will be taking all 23 of you out for a stroll from here in about half an hour. Please feel free to eat from your box lunches while I give you this orientation. This office overlooks Penn Station and what is now called Madison Square Garden—although for some quirky reasons I will explain during our tour it is nowhere near Madison Square. In case you would like to look out the windows and compare what you see with the street maps you were given or the skyline photo on the wall here, this window is facing west and that one, of course, is facing north.

As you were told in our brochures before you came here, we will not be making any comfort stops during any segments of the tour, so please, if you have any needs of that kind, take care of them before we leave. The facilities are through that door there. Please do not wander off, however, to explore. Although we do "own" this entire floor, and indeed have done so since the building was constructed 63 years ago, most of the rooms are unoccupied and contain nothing but thin drapes and lamps set

on **timers**. When we return after today's outing, **my assistants** and **I will** show you where your bunks are. The **accommodations** **are** **quire** Spartan here, but no worse than you've encountered **elsewhere** if you've traveled before. One of our economies, of **course**, is we hired no bell hops because none of you brought **any** luggage or change of clothing. Yes, thank you for smiling at **that**, ma'am. Usually at least one person laughs aloud. Seriously, one more thing: let me emphasize that the elevator which you came up is to be operated only—for reasons **connected** vitally with the safety of you all—by *official* personnel.

The chief danger in New York City, as some of you no doubt already know, is down in the subways which I'll be guiding you through personally tomorrow in groups of five or six. I don't recommend that any of you go down there alone while you're visiting the city. Always take at least two adults with you who know their way around. This sounds like an augmented version of the buddy system, but it has been found to be effective. Make no mistake: this is especially true at night when the Menace Quotient or M.Q. goes up by roughly 37 percent!

I'll get back to the dangers of subways and subway stations in a few moments, but first I want to remind you that New York is hazardous to your health because of its sheer filth. Other places you've lived or visited no doubt have their own problems including a little litter on the ground, but this will be like nothing you've ever seen before. You folks who came down here from Quebec and Toronto are especially going to be in for a real shock. People here seem to consider it their constitutional right to discard whatever is in their hands wherever they please. To digress briefly, I was leading a tour of our people from Munich around last autumn, and one elderly chap was so outraged each time he saw a New Yorker toss a newspaper or food wrapper on the sidewalk that he strode over and punched them in the side of the face and said "Schweinhund!" in a gruff voice. He was fairly frail, so he didn't hurt them much, but, as you can well imagine, it startled them plenty. Now, I did have to restrain him, and I will restrain any of you who get out of hand like that. Just remember where you are and who you are, please. As for the litter and filth, be aware that it is all around you and that the wind is **often** blowing it about. You do not, for obvious reasons, wish to become "papered" even briefly, and I would strongly recommend that you brush off yourselves fairly thoroughly at half hour



intervals. I find that even with such brushing I need to wipe myself down with a damp cloth every four hours on a normal work day here—and the whole cloth is totally black with grit, grime, dirt, soot, whatever. I wish I could provide you with breathing filters, too, because the local saying here is that a day's worth of city air is as noxious as smoking two packs of Camels. Little joke—because I know that none of you smoke.

Do any of you have questions so far? All right, then. . .oh, you do. Are we going to see Times Square? No. No, it isn't one of the places we'll be going to even though it is fairly well

known around the world. We will be circling it tomorrow night about a block or two away from its center just so you can see its lights, and the reason is the high risk factor you would be experiencing if we were to walk right through it, whether singly or in any groups. I know this from experience. There are just too many weapons in the wrong hands there, which makes it dangerous in ways that the famous subway system is not.

Any other questions? Have I ever been shot at or personally injured? Yes. **Yes,** I have. Three



times I've been slightly slashed by people in the subways—people like those we'll be seeing tomorrow. And once near Times Square some user or dealer or user-dealer fired off a burst from an automatic pistol—aimed deliberately at me, I'm sure—and parted the hair of my buttocks and left me with that two-inch scar you seem to be staring at with such fixation. Just minor scratches, so to speak, and I've never been badly hurt yet.

Others? No, we won't be seeing the home of Mr. Lovecraft—chiefly because it would be in Providence, Rhode Island, if it is still standing, which I don't know it is, but even if it were here in New York it would be too chancy to visit because of the unbalanced cultist mindset of most of his fans. A lot of 'em are borderline cases, but they have far more credibility than a bunch of junkies or "subbies" do. Not *really* high, mind you, but why look for trouble with a group of five or six of 'em? No, we *didn't* have anything to do with his death, at least not so far as I've heard.

What am I talking about? All right, this young man was just asking about the American author H.P. Lovecraft, one of the sighted kind, who is best known to us for his story, "The Dunwich Horror," which he based partly on three sightings he made in Brooklyn back in the mid 1920s. He was what we call an F.P. or Functional Psycho who lived chiefly in the capital of Rhode Island most of his life and even mailed his shirts and shoes back there whenever they needed a button or sole fixed. This youngster was wondering whether we were responsible for offing him, and I said no, probably not. I *am* in a position to have heard, and I'm sure we didn't bother. If you ever take the time to look up his story, you'll see that he got only the germ of an idea from his observations and, as the raven quoth, nothing more.

Whoa, now! One at a time! You heard that we did that crazy Frenchman named Maupassant in the 1890s for writing "The Horla"? What is *your* evidence? I've heard that, although he *was* one of the sighted people, that particular story "proved" he'd gone 'round the bend completely and led to his being put into an asylum—where he died of syphilis or some other perfectly natural cause. Whom *did* we do, then? All right, give me a few seconds to collect and sort out my thoughts on this. Don't press me: "You can't push a chain," as they say. Let's see. . . . This is just off the top of my head, because nobody has ever asked me about this before, and I don't have anything



prepared in a formal way.

All right—so far as I can recall, we *did* kill an Irish immigrant writer named Fitz-James O'Brien. He wrote a little piece called "What Was It?" based on a personal sighting in the late 1850s, and we got him during the American Civil War and destroyed his background **notes and diary**. And there was another fellow named Ambrose Bierce who published "That Damned Thing"—no, *The Damned Thing*"—in the 1890s, based on a sighting made by an F.P. aunt of his. He never did see anything himself for another 20 years or so, but he was compiling legends about us in the southwest and was experimenting with peyote, and when he suddenly saw four of us one afternoon in Mexico and reached for his rifle, we finished him off, burned his notebooks, and buried him where he lay.

No, no, no, we *didn't* do in Judge Crater or Amelia Earhart—or Buddy Holly! Or even Elvis. At least I haven't heard about it. I *did* hear, however, that Rudolph Diesel, the



45/7r

Street Jeweler

— C. W. 1936



fellow who invented the engine, you know, suddenly began beating on one of us with his walking stick while crossing the English Channel and had to be summarily pitched over the side of the boat.

Usually, of course, we don't need to do anything. Let me give you a recent footnote, so to speak, about one of the 1992 presidential candidates who reported seeing would-be assassins in his yard. That was just a couple of our Texas teenagers, larking around. Since no one else saw them and this fellow—a congenitally sighted F.P.—already had a credibility problem, there was no threat to us at all. Besides, most of the folks we've eliminated have been comparative nobodies—most of them are like the people I'll be pointing out tomorrow, and they simply end up on the third rail or under some wheels in a very prosaic way. There's just too much bogus, melodramatic folklore about celebrities being spread around, and some people seem willing to believe nearly *anything*! My personal rule of thumb is to maintain a skeptical attitude. Let's have a different, more relevant topic, please.

Yes, we will be going to the Tibetan Museum in Manhattan—as well as the one on Staten Island. You'll all enjoy the ferry ride, I'm sure, and the price is right, as the saying goes. Just so we're all “up to speed,” as they say, and “reading from the same sheet music,” let me confirm that the paintings, the statuary, and the descriptions in *The Book of the Dead* are indeed based on mystics' close encounters with our ancestors. Incidentally, the parallel sightings of the so-called “Yeti” by Himalayan laypeople are indicators of what inbreeding and/or altitude will do to peoples' minds over an extended period of time. Of course, because their mindset is peaceful, indeed even reverent, unlike that of the majority of people in this city if not the whole country, we've never been concerned about sightings or even close encounters there. You will no doubt be amused to see these paintings and sculptures first hand and full size. There is something totally charming about them that never fails to bring mistiness to the eyes of most visitors I show them to.

We don't have any Tibetan monks doing a sand mandala in the city at this time, but I will be playing several video tapes for you tonight before we go to the uptown museum tomorrow. I actually attended the “painting” of one of these last year, and was quite touched to see several of the monks—one in

particular who was in charge looked up at me and without a single word give me the sweetest, most loving smile I have ever seen. He said nothing to the others, but they each, independently, looked up briefly from time to time and smiled to signify that I was completely welcome. Of course, I am not **on** the video tape, but I will point out the smiles as they occur. I taped this myself off a PBS program that was shown just last month.

All right, now. I see that it's almost time we got started. Does anyone need to visit the facilities one more time before we leave? We will all wait. No? I'll lead the way to our elevator and will finish my orientation about the New Yorkers we call "subbies" as we descend. Keep together, please. Oh, as you board, notice that the number thirteen is above the door there. This will probably be the only time in all of your stay in New York that you'll see that number for a floor. In the lobby, which I'll be leading you through in a couple of minutes, you'll note that both of the elevators there have dials over them which read 11, 12, 14, 15. It's based on some sort of irrational holdover of a pagan superstition, I've been told.

Down, please—basement. Just another little joke: this elevator only runs between the basement and this floor. We'll have a short flight of steps up to the lobby, and after that I will be "signing" my commentary to you. I don't know how much longer we can continue tours like these—perhaps only for another two decades unless something changes the direction of this society. In the past dozen years, apparently because of greed-polluted water and air, job stress, bad diet, and snowballing homelessness—especially when the "care-giving system" dumps non-functionals into the street—the number of Threat People or T.P. has made a quantum jump. Their brain chemistry is changed somehow—that's all we know. I have glanced over three or four medical books and articles about schizophrenics and drug users, not for the details, of course, but for the general bottom line. And the bottom line is that their bodies, because of heredity and environment both, put out greater and greater amounts of perception-altering enzymes. As you've all probably heard or guessed, like dogs, some of 'em can hear sounds that their kin are deaf to, and, like butterflies, some can see far beyond their kin's normal spectrum.



Most of these, of course, don't impact on us at all, one way or the other. But when I take you into the subways tomorrow, you'll be amazed at the dozens of people down there who will suddenly look up at you and shout at you and even scream in terror at you. Some will even rush at you and try to touch or hit you. Most of them are harmless—malnourished and pretty weak—so there isn't much danger of getting more than a scratch like these on my chest and shoulder and thigh—just fly bites, comparatively speaking, as you can see. A few are more aggressive and will have to be dealt with by me or one of my two assistants here. The amusing thing which will surprise you even though you've been told about it, however, is that the present majority of "normals" will at first totally ignore these screamers, then they will move away from them because the screamers are deranged and defective in their view—shouting as it were into empty air—and finally they will often summon one of their transit police officers to deal with these loud public nuisances. They see their own sighted kind as the menaces and, for now at least, look right straight through us large "demons," who are invisible to their "sane" eyes.



## **Tough Act to Swallow**

(Harry Crews and Terry Southern)

by Nat Hirsh

Harry Crews

Interviewed by Phone 10-31-95

about 4 p.m. at his Gainesville, FL res

CREWS: Well, I have five or ten minutes, bud, but I don't think I can help you with Terry Southern. Because, the truth of the matter is, I don't know the man. I don't know the man, never been around him. I know Rip Torn, the actor, who is a good friend I know of Terry Southern's and I know people that are good friends of his. But I don't know the man.

NH: Do you remember anything Rip Torn might have said about him?

CREWS: Not a thing, bud, 'cept he drinks too damn much or was, I mean when Rip was talking to me.

NH: Southern said he had a phone conversation with you. Do you remember anything about that?

CREWS: Well, I don't think it'd be of any interest to anybody else. It's a pretty straightforward conversation that had to do with business. I got a book called Car, and a producer had it for a very, very long time, hell about sixteen years, writing, buying options on it, whatever, never bought the book outright, I wrote a screenplay for it. No, let me back that up. Terry Southern wrote a screenplay for it [—1982?] and the producer asked me if I'd read it and I said yeah, and he sent it to me and I called him back and said, "I don't think you have anything here you can shoot with a camera." And he said, "Would you write a screenplay for it?" And I said, "Sure, if you'll pay me." And he did, and I did. And, since then, uh, the director's got it now, uh a woman who is a good director and a good filmmaker and her first name is Sola Mae [?]. And, I can never say her last name. It's a screwy, strange name. And, never met her. Talked to her on the phone, and she's probably going to start into production January 26th. But Terry and I had, you know, we had nothing—we talked about the screenplay, talked about the novel and problems you might have turning it into a screenplay.

NH: Okay.



CREWS: But...he's done some good screenwork, good screenplays, stuff made of his screenplays, But, in recent years, and I don't know how long this has been, but Terry's not getting any younger and his drinking, from what I hear, and that may all be lies, seems to be getting worse. You know when you get of a certain age, your body just can't stand that much alcohol.

NH: He passed away Sunday night. Sorry, I would have jumped in sooner, but I didn't want to interrupt your thought.

CREWS: Waitamminute, run that by me again. He died?

NH: Yeah.

CREWS: Recently?

NH: This last Sunday night. I just got the news yesterday.

CREWS: I'll be a son of a bitch. Ever'body's gotta go sometime.

NH: The one time I made him laugh was about Harry Crews. He was talking about Car and I made up headlines: "A Tough Act to Swallow." Hard Day at the Orifice."

CREWS: Yeah.

NH: I told him my dad read his last book and it made him think of Harry Crews. I remember Southern's eyes lit up at the mention of your name. He was awfully fond of your work.

CREWS: Well, I had heard that. He never said it to me, but I'd heard he said it to other people and like anybody else hell I'm always glad that somebody likes my work. But here it is. Simon and Schuster's trying to run me crazy on this fucking tour with this book I just wrote called The Mulching of America. And I'm ground down and exhausted, and I gotta leave town again tomorrow for a fuckin' week and then I come back and I get to stay home about a day and then I gotta go again this madness goes on till November 18th. And so, I'm pretty beat down.

NH: Southern said something about, when he asked you what it would take for you to agree to let him make Car into a screenplay, he said something about "Rebel Yell."

CREWS: Something about what?

NH: Rebel Yell. He said you said get me a bottle of Rebel Yell.

CREWS: Oh, well, yeah. I thought you—I didn't know if you meant Rebel Yell bourbon or what.

NH: Or the song.

CREWS: Yeah, yeah. Well that was just by way of saying that, I admired his work, and he did some damned good work. Like a bunch of us, he was a little uneven in his work, but that's all right. All the best writers are uneven from time to time. So, you know, I was just saying to him, hell if you want to do it, man, I'm all for you.

Terry Thomas

## Her 'n Bill

She was easy under the peach pits,  
In and out, the tilting mouse,  
    Night under the single  
        Dame let me wail and climb,  
    Golden in the haymount of her signs.  
Dishonored among flagons I was prince of peach gowns —  
Once beneath, a time, I sordidly had the pleas and heaves,  
    Tail with daisies, and gnarley,  
    Down the trickles of the sinfull night.

Everything I scored, in the limb white days, that crime would take  
me  
Up to the wallow bonged loft, by the paddle of my hand,  
    In her moon that is always rising,  
        And riding her to sleep  
    I heard him by the rye fields  
And woke to the farm fever, bled from her childless hand.  
Oh! I was young and teasy in the mercy of her means,  
    Time held me ripe and trying  
    Though I sank in my chains like a tree.



Todd McNamee

**Constellation: A Series of Sonnets**

one

My watermelon head is too big for  
my body. The gray matter is pink from the ocean of  
blood which creeps in and soaks

my cells, nibbling on my neurons dancing with the  
endorphins in an electric  
chemical tango. And yes there are seeds

there. Little black thoughts like tumors that want to  
be spat out on others and plant deep within loved  
ones. And yes, my complexion

has turned green. And yes, the only fit thing is to cut  
up this skull and share it in the summer. Please feed  
some to the sparrows.

two

My heart is carved into a misshapen  
acorn—afraid to attempt oakism.  
Passed around by rodents and then thrown by  
wind onto asphalt. The shell is hard and

callused but has kept a crack from which its  
one eye peers fearful at the three blades of  
grass forcing their way through the pavement,  
and the tree which casts a shadow over it.

Planting would be a good thing, yes, finding some  
space in soil and tucked deep in that  
brown sweater. But there is something else it  
needs. How can it crawl into earth and crave



light at once? Now there is only concrete  
and the thin veil shadow from nearby oaks.

three

My penis is a dowsing rod for females.  
A branch cut apart from some other thing's tree. It  
works in solitaire— it does not care about my moods  
or what may be best at any time. Conventions mean  
nothing— and big tits are not needed. Some

times just a smile in sunlight. But yet at times it is the  
only part of me I can depend on. My head can fly off  
on anything and can never seem to stick to the  
subject. My heart speeds at sex  
and fear as if they were the same thing. At

least my penis is predictable. Though  
there are times when it points too proudly.

James Jay

## Monkey Man

Sweat beads on his brow and his chest  
swells to take in deep breaths.  
He sits on a fresh crates amongst the swirling  
smells of plastics, cardboard, and coffee;  
break time, ten o'clock sharp.

In the chill air of December he dreams  
of the times when he was the monkey man  
ripping his chest open, looking in  
for the heart cave, swinging from city to city  
on highway vines, those times.

Those times so far gone when monkey man  
washed dishes in Kingman, Arizona.  
He loved every spoon and bowl  
until someone stepped on his tail.  
Then, he zipped off to Barstow,

Needles, Redding, Reno, pumped  
gas for everyone because he knew  
we're all the same in the heart cave,  
if we can only tear through  
the thick bones and strong tendons.

But now, some things are too thick  
and some things start out strong  
and are getting stronger. And he knows  
that it was all of us that engaged  
in monkey trials until our tails were long

and our arguments were screechably powerful,  
and we swung past purpose and clung  
tightly to our own vines, those times.  
He sits on a fresh crate amongst the swirling  
smells of plastics, cardboard, and coffee



and hangs onto his ropes, sticks to his guns,  
ass in a bind, and tries to keep from hanging  
himself in the mess of it all. Sometimes  
he stirs up a memory, and for the day  
makes out a memoir of sorts in his head.

A memoir of an atheist who wants to believe  
but knows it's just not in the cards, the stars,  
not in the work days that last longer than sunlight.  
Sweat beads on his brow and his chest  
sinks and lets out;

break time finishes, ten twenty sharp.  
Amongst the swirls of plastics, cardboard, and coffee,

he presses on boxing, stacking, loading,  
emptying the sun.

David Vincent

## **BILLY GRAHAM CRUSADE**

I could not ever decide:

truth and beauty — discount flight to Reno,  
grandmother's eyes — sister's diary under pillow,  
make homemade bread — get it already enriched,  
bicycle — seatbelt,  
creek peppermint (soppy, cold tennis shoes/muds up with field  
dust -  
feet itch) — Lifesavers (bits of wrapper/screw up your pockets -  
gets in your change).  
give love — find approval,  
God! — god.



Todd Brendan Fahey

**non all is augered t the mooring**

non all is augered t the mooring  
skis foam on the whiteout  
prelapsarian blue a thin nail (toenail moon  
you a troubled guy, know it?  
)course he do, you be he  
*into the same river no man steps twice*  
form follows function, it is sd  
who sd  
and there's the issue of  
feel a cough coming on  
when was it that we  
*A little privacy, for Godssake!!*  
it starts out snot green, pretty predictable  
Zippy the Pinhead could factor in here somewhere  
it's a knot, a ball, a fullness, clog, my  
albatross catches as ,only, catch can  
"I can't come" mad  
road, slot-track low and inside  
sturdy legs, sted-dy, aisle 7 gives  
m what for; Di gets it  
straight (peppermint pattie "*vulgar vulgar vulgar*")  
the deferential nod, headlines say  
**NICOTINE RULED ADDICTIVE; TO REMAIN LEGAL**  
just right, he  
say, ubiquitous  
swill (if slightly unorthodox  
hear Van say "O the warm feeling"  
agree  
but  
let's take it from the top

*: the troubled head rolls free*



Angela Edwards

## **Pictures of the West**

There they are: paragons of legend.  
Settlers from near and far:  
Swedes and Chinamen, Mormons,  
Mexicans, Irishmen, and Negroes.  
Sophisticated Bostonians who left  
Behind the sinking vestiges of civilization  
To strike out, as in a storm,  
into a quagmire of  
Prairie grass and Indian hatchets,  
Sod huts, salt pork, and newspaper cut-outs  
hung in windows to make their  
Holes in the ground  
Look sweet.

You see the courage in their eyes. I wonder...  
Do I live a courageous life?  
Who is my paragon? A mentor, a  
Marble statue grounded in timeless virtues, like  
Courage, steadfastness, and hope?

Maybe these women rip-roaring on  
Sleigh footed horses over the plains of Kansas.  
Or this stoic, unsmiling brood of Scandinavians,  
Mother at the helm, holding on to her  
Cooking spoon as if it is  
The last thing linking her to the newness, the  
vastness,  
Of the unknown West—  
And everything she's left behind.  
Perhaps my marble statues are  
Anchored in prairie grass, in yawning expanses  
of sky  
Swallowing clouds that come by to  
Float on western breezes.  
Perhaps.



But the look of the woman with the spoon is haunting.  
I've seen it in my own yellowing pictures  
Of a girl, a young woman, who shot across  
The foaming grasses of the Atlantic  
To strike out, as in a storm,  
into a quagmire of  
Skyscrapers and liberty statues,  
Button hooks, white bread, and chalk marks  
          signifying  
Who stays and  
Who gets tossed back.

An innocent who navigated New York  
in ankle skirts and laced boots,  
slowed by arcane notions of family honor, *omerta*,  
and Etna's smoking fury.

You don't need to cross a prairie in a wagon to know  
what courage is. You don't have to  
Cross an ocean in a sallow bellied hunk of steel;  
You only have to think of the ones who did these things:  
Look at their pictures, ponder their lives.  
And, yes—wonder how you will live your own life  
          without their  
Steel-anchored hearts and  
Wisdom weighted words  
To guide you.

## Light A Candle, Please

by Shawna Mesenbrink

How many times have you heard a statistic and thought, oh, that's just numbers crunching? What does it have to do with me? A woman is three times more likely to be battered than raped in her lifetime. Now that's sobering, isn't it?

According to the Missoula *Women's Place Training Manual* domestic violence is abuse that can be physical, sexual, verbal, economical or social.

Well, you might say, some women just seem to find themselves in these awful situations. (Images of poor, young, uneducated women being beaten by their drunken blue-collar husbands might come to mind.) Truth is, domestic violence is an indiscriminating and debilitating disease affecting all classes, races and ages. No one is safe, not lawyer's wives, not preacher's wives, not laborer's wives.

I know. God, I know, because I am one of those numbers we prefer not to think about, a domestic violence survivor. Perhaps my story will shed some light on this otherwise shadowy subject.

My first husband left no physical scars on me, a child bride of 16. His weapon was emotional and sexual abuse, as physical abuse would have jeopardized his military career.

And after all, it wasn't rape, you know, because he had the "right" to have sex with his wife. One in three women will be raped in their lifetime, usually by someone they know. Awareness of spouse rape has resulted in recognition of this act as a felony in some states.

There appears to be a universally accepted male (and for a long time, female) belief that might makes right and it is a man's right to beat and abuse women. Where did this atrocious behavior and thinking originate?

Answer: domestic violence has deep historical roots. Look at religion. Eve may have bit off more than she knew when she ate that damned apple of knowledge in the Garden of Eden. She unknowingly unleashed a legacy of oppression and sanctioned abuse against women. Adam's dominating Hebraic patriarchal brothers quickly expelled Eve's sisters from their tranquil matriarchal garden.



Religion has been consistently used to keep women in their place. While Islamic tradition openly veils and isolates Muslim women in purdah, Christianity veils women in the dress of restrictive sexuality and isolates them in docile submission to male authoritative doctrine.

The Church's apparent endorsement of domestic violence has helped form the norms and policies shaping the political and cultural correctness of domestic violence historically and within society today.

An antagonistic attitude towards women permeates the Old and New Testament and other early Christian writings, reflecting the male and cultural bias of the times. Women were the property of their men, to be disposed of accordingly. The husband, the lawful head of the household, controlled all aspects of his wife's life, including her death.

Death as a result of domestic violence was common. The first Christian emperor of Rome, Constantine I, had his young wife, Fausta, killed by slowly scalding her in boiling water. Men still exercise this ultimate "right." Last year more than 3,000 women were killed in the United States in domestic violence incidents.

Our judicial system still reflects the bias that men have the "right" to beat their wives; although the laws are slowly changing. A recent FBI report stated that wife beating occurs at the rate of once every 10 seconds in our country.

British Common Law and early colonial American law had sections regulating wife beating. A 19th century British reformatory law stipulated that women could not be punished with any instrument thicker than the man's thumb. The "thumb law" can be seen today in the informal "stitches rule." This designated how many stitches were needed before a woman could press charges against her husband.

### **One stitch is one stitch too many.**

Unfortunately many people still believe that men have the legal "right" to beat their women as long as it doesn't require hospitalization or police intervention. You know, of course, that they say that if she was a good wife, she wouldn't get beaten. Others turn their heads, perhaps thinking that what they don't see, can't affect them. Perhaps we need reminding that *spouse*



*battering is a felony!*

The Road to recovery and health from suffering domestic violence is long and hard. Women who leave their batterers will often choose a new partner similar in personality to their previous battering partner if they do not learn how to identify and understand the dynamics in an abusive relationship.

In my case, however, knowledge was no guarantee. Thirteen years later I again married. It became a six-month trip through hell. It still amazes me how a mature woman with a masters degree and a profession could allow herself to fall prey to violence. I had even worked as a counselor in a battered woman's shelter. You would think I would know better.

In the aftermath of a broken relationship and in the midst of a dark blue depression, I fell victim to a con artist who nearly killed me. He beat me, isolated me from my family and friends, thrust me in social situations with drugs, threatened to hurt my family, made me economically dependent and tore apart my self esteem and soul.

I couldn't tell anyone because I was deathly afraid. I wore clothes that hid the bruises on my throat and arms. Finally I scraped together enough money and support to get away. Yet I went back.

Why?

Because he needed me. He said he loved me. He said that he would change.

And he did change. After the brief honeymoon respite he became even more violent. I wasn't aware that he was using drugs until it was too late. One evening after I had already gone to bed he brought home three men. I knew only one of them. They were all drunk and high.

My husband told me to come and join the party. When I refused and told him to make everyone leave he called me a cold bitch and started hitting me. He pulled me out into the living room, tearing off my clothes. My husband beat me so hard I fell to the floor. He raped me in front of the others and held me down until I passed out as I was gang-raped and sodomized.

What had I done to deserve this except trust and love someone who had violated my soul. When I awoke he held a gun to my head, threatening to kill my ill parents if I told anyone. He said we were leaving town, and we did.

**Why did I go with him? What more could he do to me! I was lost in a black hole of pain, but I'd be damned if I'd let him hurt my parents. They were hurt and confused enough by the changes I had undergone these past six months.**

In my mind it seemed logical that the farther away I got him from those I loved, the safer they would be. After seeing him to his old haunts, I escaped. He lost himself in the drug dens and had no further interest in me. I had no money, no car, nothing, and I was still hurt. I managed to call my father who wired me a plane ticket to return to Montana.

My family was devastated by my condition. My daughters thought I was crazy. My step father, who was dying, had had a heart attack when I had disappeared. He told me I should have told them, that he would have protected me. But in my mind, I was protecting them. I didn't want to see my step father go to jail for killing my husband.

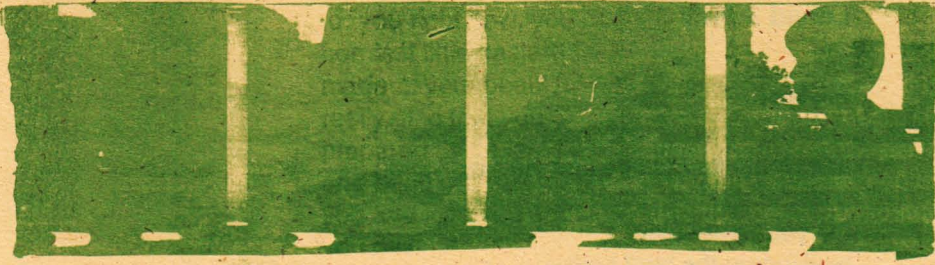
Ultimately I had the marriage annulled and my "husband" wound up in prison for an assault and drug conviction. I never pressed charges because I have to live in this small town and I felt my life to be in danger from his old acquaintances. Imagine, if you can, working the night shift in a C-store, alone. I had to live with this fear.

Finally I pulled myself together. As in many rural Montana communities there was no shelter or support system. Three years later we got a county help line. With no transportation or money it was hard to get the psychiatric and medical help I needed, as help was an hour's drive away.

Everything had to be done in secret. I couldn't risk my family knowing the truth. I got STD and HIV testing at Planned Parenthood. A nurse practitioner sent me to the public health clinic to get assisted medical care and told me about Women's Place. Thank God I am a strong woman. Anyone who could raise two children alone while going to school full time and working part time has to be strong. Yet even with that inner strength, I was still vulnerable to domestic violence.

Don't be fooled into thinking that battered women are weak willed or weak spirited. Sometimes it takes all you have just to survive one day at a time. Two to four million women a year are victimized by their partners while trying to keep their families safe.





Women have a good reason to fear love. One in four women will be battered. An estimated 20-30 percent of emergency room injuries are from domestic violence, not accidents.

The reality is that spouse abuse is a crime. We cannot blame the woman for being a victim. If a woman suffered the atrocities at the hands of a stranger, you can bet there would be immediate aid and moral support for her.

We respect and zealously guard the individual's right to privacy and non-governmental interference to the point where we are reluctant to involve ourselves in the affairs of others. Who are we? The morality police?

Simply closing the curtains on domestic violence, leaving the woman in the dark, helps no one.

What can I do? you ask. I'm only one person. Well, someone once said it takes one candle to light the darkness. Just think what a thousand candles of truth and awareness could do to extinguish the dark pain of domestic battering.

The options and opportunities for helping battered women and their families are increasing. The torches of public education and a growing awareness of domestic violence illuminate the need for more shelter and safety houses, women's support groups and help lines, financial assistance, housing aid and counseling.

If we do not want our daughters to fear love, then we must change the prevailing attitudes and laws. We must educate ourselves and others, working on the prevention of domestic violence, and helping women to come out and stay out of the shadows. This story is my pink candle, a candle of healing and love. I hope it ignites a candle in your heart.



David Athey

**Autumn**

Was it our first year when we made love  
a lost word?

Do you remember  
walking on the land bridge,  
our conversation  
rising like smoke from our lips,  
and how I struggled  
to catch from your mouth  
the loveliest word? How wonderful it felt  
in my calloused hand, then  
I brought it down to the hobo's fire  
and rolled our secret  
in ashes, formed it into a life-  
sized figure, and returned  
to the bridge where you watched me  
let the word fall

hard as Adam to the earth.  
It was autumn, had been for centureies,  
and over in the park  
some girls were gathered  
around a colorful mound of leaves;  
they were playing with flint  
and singing about the one who wanders  
barefoot along the byways,  
carrying a bucket of water. They sang,  
"His name is Remember,  
man of ashes,  
and he is the keeper of the bridges  
we have tried to burn."



Ross Yates

## A Lesson in Economics

When beards of ice formed on the eaves  
and snow packed down the skirts of firs  
I fed the birds.

I put out seeds and suet balls,  
enough for everyone,  
titmice, sparrows, cardinals, chickadees,  
mourning doves, juncos, finches and the rest  
excepting raptors. Hawks appeared  
on topmost boughs and proved  
by lethal swoops another  
meaning for the goal,  
enough for everyone.

Well, storms piled snow upon the ground  
up to my waist. The little birds  
became more wary, and the hawks  
bore down on helpless cottontails.  
A neighbor (talkative to anyone)  
complained of finding rabbits' feet  
upon the snow. She picked them up  
as flotsam on a wintry shore,  
ignored the hunger of the hawks  
and took the loot into her house.

Whatever might have been the end  
of those appendages, I'm sure  
they lost whatever luck they'd held  
and could not possibly have been  
enough for everyone.

**Martha Weaver Adkins** 1076  
Hwy 89 S. Gardiner, MT  
59030-9312 **David Athey** P.O.  
Box 1624 Iowa City, IA 52244  
**David R. Eastwood** 70  
Sagamore Hill Drive Port  
Washington, NY 19941  
**Angela Edwards** 1988 Rock  
Lake Loop Virginia Beach, VA  
23456 **Todd Brendan Fahey**  
621 Stevenson St. Lafayette,  
LA 70501 **Thomas Feeny**  
306 Chamberlain St. Raleigh,  
NC 27607 **Nat Hirsh** P.O. Box  
1952 Lakeville, CT 06039-1952  
**L.D. Hirshberg** 2322 South  
Ave. W. Missoula, MT 59801  
**James Jay** 2700 Woodlands  
Village Blvd, Suite 300-180  
Flagstaff, AZ 86001 **Dirk E.**  
**Lee** P.O. Box 7661  
Missoula, MT 59807 **Todd**  
**McNamee** 10126 SE Stanley  
Milwaukie, OR 97222  
**Shawna Mesenbrink** P.O. Box  
670147 Saltese, MT 59867  
**Gabriel Monteleone Neruda**  
P.O. Box 792 Larkspur, CA  
94977-0792 **June Levin Roth**  
44 Gramercy Park North New  
York, NY 10010 **Beret E.**  
**Strong** 1360 Fairfield Dr.  
Boulder, CO 80303 **Robert J.**  
**Struckman** 468 41st St. Apt C.  
Oakland, CA 94609 **David E.**  
**Thomas** 806 Poplar St.  
Missoula, MT 59802 **Terry**  
**Thomas** 2007 Acorn Prescott,  
AZ 86301 **David Vincent** P.O.  
Box 20293 Billings, MT 59104  
**Betty Waddell** 31 Berg Ave.  
Billings, MT 59101  
**Ross Yates** 1885 NW Alder St.  
McMinnville, OR 97128

## **About Dirk E. Lee:**

Education: University of  
Montana, University of Oregon,  
Vancouver Museum of Art  
School, Vancouver, BC,  
Eastern Montana College.

Military Service: U.S. Army  
1971-1972 Graphic illustrator.

Established: Naked Man  
Press, 1985, variety of printing  
projects from broadsides,  
posters, to invitations. Dirk E.  
Lee, Fine Sign and Design,  
1975 to present.

Employment: Spiker  
Communications

Publications: *The Last Best  
Place: A Montana Anthology*,  
Illustrations, 1988. *Fine Print:*  
*The Review for the Arts of the  
Book*, Wood engravings, Vol.  
14, No. 12, April 1988.

*Northern Lights Magazine*,  
Wood cuts, Wood engravings,  
Drawings, 1986 to present.  
*Phantom Silver*, by William  
Kittredge, Frontispiece,  
Kootenai Press, 1987, *Yellow  
Silk Magazine*, water colors,  
1986, *The Muse*, 1986-1987,  
*Seattle Art Paper*, 1986,  
*Perceptions*, 1986, *The  
Spokane Art Paper*, 1985, *Spirit  
Flesh*, 1985, *Montana Rag  
Review*, 1983-1984, *Dead Start  
Magazine*, 1983, *Print: Journal  
of International Printmaking*,  
1982, *Gilt Edge Magazine*, 1979  
1981. *Borrowed Times*, 1978-  
1980. *Missoula Comics*, 1978-  
1979. *Montana Gothic Literary  
Magazine*, 1975-1978.  
*Portable Wall Magazine*.





No PW's until 2000. We are working on  
a number of projects which must take  
precedence. dstruckman at aol.com

