

genesis

spring 74

File Copy

Essay

- THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILE OF THE
PESSIMISTIC PERSONALITY: Jay Richer 17
- IMPROVISATIONS OF ONE MAN: Michael Wells 25
- GIFTS OF POVERTY: Syomara Tindera 32

Fiction

- UNCLE WILLIE'S SONG: Fatah Daoud (Steven M. Jones) 3
- THE OLD AND THE GROWING OLDER: Thomas Hasselgrave 12
- BEST: Roger Smith 22
- ACQUAINTANCE: Syomara Tindera 31
- SNOW FELL ON THE PARSLEY: Jane Tilford 35
- DEATH OF A STRANGER: Margaret Clark 37
- FROM FLORIDA WITH LOVE: James A. Staples 41

Poetry

- GRINGO: Daniel Lucy 5
- FOUR POEMS: Christy A. Austin 6
- TWO POEMS: Jody Gollan 15
- AN OWL'S WISDOM: Rebecca J. Couchman 23
- THE EYES OF THE OTHER MAN: Ramona Faye Wilson 24
- WOODSHORE: Jane Tilford 34
- NIETZSCHEAN: Jane Tilford 36
- REFLECTION ON THE UNHAPPY CONSCIOUSNESS: Jane Tilford 40
- THE FORLORN TREE: Randall L. Lane 44
- POEM: Peggy Louder 45
- BARGAINS THAT AREN'T: Robert G. Dreeseon 52

Reviews and Comment

- THE EXORCIST: Nancy Sapp 47
- THE GROVES OF ACADEME: Michael Poston 49
- CONTRIBUTORS 2

PROPERTY OF
WOMEN'S STUDIES
READING ROOM

Genesis
Spring, 1974
Volume 2, Number 1

Genesis is published in the spring and fall of each year by English Club-Sigma Tau Delta and Philosophy Club-Phi Sigma Tau, Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis. Content is devoted to creative writing in the areas of fiction, essay, and poetry. Correspondence pertaining to business or editorial matters should be addressed to Genesis, Student Services Offices, Cavanaugh Hall, 925 West Michigan Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46202.

Editors

Dinah Rockwell
Janet Rash

Managing Editor

Thomas A. Krudy

Editorial Board:

English Club

Dinah Rockwell
Thomas A. Krudy
Lynn Holmes
Judith LaFourest

Philosophy Club

Janet Rash
David Richardson
Delilah Fugitt
Barbara Munchel

The editorial staff appreciates the support and confidence of Rebecca Pitts, sponsor of English Club and Laurence Lampert, sponsor of the Philosophy Club.

INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

Manuscripts are invited from all persons who have been students at IUPUI at any time during the last eighteen months prior to submission.

Manuscripts of essays, fiction, or poetry, on any topic, may be submitted at any time to GENESIS, Student Services, Cavanaugh Hall, 925 West Michigan Street, Indianapolis, Indiana, 46202. All manuscripts are considered by an editorial board elected by the English Club and the Philosophy Club. Authorship is not revealed to the board until a manuscript has been accepted. Any manuscript submitted too late for the current deadline will be considered for the next issue.

Manuscripts of less than sixteen double-spaced typewritten pages will be given first consideration. All submissions should be accompanied by a separate sheet of paper containing the author's name, address, and telephone number; this information should not be put directly on the manuscript in the interest of maintaining anonymity of authorship. No manuscripts will be returned to authors. Authors whose material has been accepted will be notified by mail prior to publication.

CONTRIBUTORS

- Christy Austin**, 23, will be graduated in December, 1974, with a double major in English and Spanish. She has attended the University of Seville, Spain. Her poetry won the **Genesis** poetry prize.
- Margaret Clark**, 41, has attended Herron Art School and is currently enrolled in the adult non-degree program. She is a real estate broker and the mother of six daughters.
- Rebecca Couchman**, 19, is a pre-veterinary student at Purdue.
- Fatah Daoud** (Stephen M. Jones) is pursuing a degree in Technical Theater, and is Assistant Director of the Black Arts Theater. His story won the **Genesis** fiction prize.
- Robert G. Dreeson**, 36, is working toward a B.S. degree in X-ray Technology. He is presently employed at the I. U. Hospital.
- Jody Gollan** holds a B.A. in English, and was graduated with distinction in January, 1974. Her poetry has appeared previously in **Genesis**.
- Thomas Hasselgrave**, 31, received his B.S. degree in Criminal Justice during the summer of 1973. He is presently employed as a city policeman by the Indianapolis Police Department.
- Randall Lane**, 19, is a freshman in the School of Business.
- Peggy Loudon**, 26, is a 1974 graduate in Sociology. She plans to go to graduate school.
- Michael Poston**, 21, is a junior, majoring in Political Science. He is interested in state and local government, and his future plans include SPEA and public administration.
- Daniel Lucy**, 26, is a junior, majoring in English. He has written poetry and some short stories, and has finished two novels. His poetry has appeared previously in **Genesis**.
- Jay Richer**, 21, is a senior, majoring in History. He plans to go to Law School.
- Nancy Sapp**, 20, is majoring in Visual Communications at Herron Art School. She loves films and has written many reviews for her own pleasure. Her review won the **Genesis** reviews and comment prize.
- Roger Smith**, 19, is a pre-med student, majoring in Chemistry.
- James A. Staples**, 35, holds a B.A. in English from Franklin College and was an SPEA student when he wrote his story. He is an associate faculty member in the English Department and will be doing graduate work in English at Bloomington.
- Jane Tilford** is a junior, majoring in History of Philosophy.
- Syomara Tindera** is a caseworker for Multi-Service Center and a full-time student. She is completing a major in psychology. She met her husband when he was a Peace Corps volunteer in her homeland, Brazil.
- Michael Wells** is His essay won the **Genesis** essay prize.
- Ramona Faye Wilson**, 31, holds a degree in English from Mississippi Valley State College. She is presently completing requirements for a teaching certificate.

Uncle Willie's Song

FATAH DAQUD (STEVEN M. JONES)

I have found my example. There he is over there, sitting in that dark green chair. Yeah, that's him. That's my Uncle Willie. Hi Uncle Willie, how you doin'. Uncle Willie's been trying to avoid me lately. I hadn't thought much about it; especially since I haven't been home to hear from him. I kinda thought that he had been in the hospital when I thought about it but no that was a lie. I guess I knew he was home I guess we both been trying to avoid each other. I knew that but I didn't know why.

And now that I'm in his house standing in front of him and him trying to avoid me and me trying to avoid him I know why. Uncle Willie flops me a what's happening and I swing out with a world shakin statement that I know is going to shake him up and I take a long hard swing with there's a mean concert tonight and he dodges it right artfully with a yeah, but I gotta take care of some business, and I saw it in his words. I ducked my head and tucked my tail and left the pain in my Uncle Willie's lady's house that was choking with kids and dead dreamdust.

I remember when I first met Uncle Willie, I mean really met him. He had just got out of the joint and he had a pocketful of dreams. Yessir, he had seven years of dreams saved up and a whole lotta faith in us young brothers and sisters and people. And he found us beautiful. Stoned out of our minds but beautiful and full of potent potential and he liked the feel of us when we was together. He was something alright. We would lay up to my crib way up in the wee wee hours of the morning catching Uncle Willie up on the world (as we knew it then) listening on Trane and Pharaoh and introducing him to Herbie Hancock and we would be wasted and Uncle Willie would be smiling and happy and feelin good and talkin about how beautiful the young folks is today and how heavy we is and what we could do if we tried.

And we would be encouragin him. Go ahead Willie man, get your horn out and blow. This is your chance Uncle Willie. Uncle Willie would smile and say you know, you right, soon as I get me a place and I can blow my horn like I want to. Just as soon as I get me a job. Man, I want to stay on the outside for yall man.

And then Uncle Willie would talk about how beautiful we was and how much heavier we was than his generation. We would feel proud, grown up and our dreams started dancing around the room meeting his dreams. Then they would all get together and bow and dance with each other, then dance alone, then they would commingle with each other shouting to the virtues of tomorrow and they would dance and party and revel. Them dreams would drift around with the reefer smoke in the air and would dance until they was exhausted. And we would all laugh and feel good and Uncle Willie would show all his teeth in his laughter because it felt good to laugh. And Uncle Willie would tell us how lucky we was to have such beautiful women. He would tell us how much he loved us young folks. Then he would tell us about how beautiful some of them cats up in the joint was and what all that they had taught him as far as music was concerned. Hey Uncle Willie, can you show us some scales, can you help us with our music. We got dreams Uncle Willie; we got dreams. And Uncle Willie would lay some of that knowledge on us that would blow your mind; like it was copasetic. And he did it because we was beautiful to him and he was beautiful to us. We was beautiful together.

And then I didn't see Uncle Willie for a while and I moved from the place that we burned many a wee hour. And there he was one wet lonely night. Hey Uncle Willie, what's happening; ain't dug you for awhile. I noticed it then, nothing real or tangible, just kinda there...and then Uncle Willie said, real slow like, Ain't nothing shakin. Say man could you give me a ride, I'm trying to sell this coat. Uncle Willie told me he had been poundin the sidewalks for work and the only thing he was getting out of it was sore feet and he looked tired. Then he told me has was going to have to cut his old lady loose but couldn't because her kids needed him and he had been chipping and happened to chip too big and now he had a Jones and he was sick and the cop man wasn't at home. And I could feel his pain and I had to get rid of it, of the pain. So I says to Willie, come on I got some reefer and hash and oil at home; maybe we can do something for that pain in your stomach, in your brain, in your heart, in your legs, maybe this will take care of our pain. And we smoked and drank and got sicker and we smoke and drank and our pain got worse and that blue light in that damned room. Uncle Willie looked at me through that smokey blue light and apologized with tears in his words and said hey man, I'm going to get off this shit and I said yeah man; it's killin you and he left.

And then whenever I thought about tomorrow Uncle Willie's flash of smile would shoot through my mind and for some reason it scared me and them teeth would shake my dreams and that laugh would give me some play as if to say You got to do it bro.

O Lord, let the sun shine, shine, shine in the dirty morning when all us ants is goin to pick the picknick when the day is gray and the hour is never. Hey man, thanks for the and a where ya been and I finally broke aloose from my lady and I been clean for months. I can get out at the next corner, hey come on by some day and dig my new place it ain't much but....Whew, Uncle Willie...the cat that taught us we was beautiful and could be loved. And we was embarrassed and something's wrong and I'm thinkin it was me and that I had changed and I don't.....

And I went by Uncle Willie's place five six months later cause I'm always late when I'm scared and embarrassed and don't know what to say and I figurin we can talk about music and love and how beautiful everything could be and maybe we can smoke a joint and laugh that preety laugh cause it feels good.

And I walk into Uncle Willie's it ain't much but and we talk and try to laugh and say how nice our ponchos are and can I have his and we smoke a joint and I want to cry because it hurts watching a dream die. There on the little table in the little room lies a trumpet with stiff valves from too shattered a love and on the bed sits Uncle Willie's lady sliding out of a world of too many kids and too little care and too much desperation and not much hope. And Uncle Willie coughs and tells me about his slave how it ain't good for him and I know it and he tells me about why he ain't playin his horn and how much he loves his old lady but I hear it in his eyes that he don't believe it hisself.

And I am confused and she is confused and he is dazed and I am dazed and I tell Uncle Willie that he has got to play his horn for me and for him and for her cause if he don't it'll just turn to poison and eat him up and he says yeah man, you right, just as soon as I get a bigger place and I didn't know yet what I should have known and his old lady didn't understand and I left.

The next time I heard from Uncle Willie he was in the hospital. His dreams was choking him up inside, the doctors (what they know) said it was T.B. but I knew better and I went to see him and once again we was embarrassed and kinda limp in on the friendship we once had and I don't think either one of us was aware that he is my future and I am his past and he fears for me.

I hadn't seen Uncle Willie for a long time and I think I realized that Uncle Willie wanted to go home. Wanted to go where his dreams would be protected, where his hopes would be safe. He wanted to lock them away from yesterdays and tomorrows and old ladies and kids and hospitals and mothers.

I just felt all this until I found myself standing in front of him, the martyr to dreams, in his lady's house and the air snapped and the vibes cracked and it lay before me; the answer to what I did not want, my example, and I turned and left my Uncle Willie's lady's house that was choking with too many kids and dead dream dust.

Gringo

DANIEL LUCY

i need my umbrella,
necesito mi paraguas;
for it would not do
to be wet and out
on the avenue in the summer
with a hole in my old
shoe, or an old hat,
un sombrero viejo, that
works no better than the old
barns i have seen in the countryside—
cuando viene la lluvia, when
it rains they are full
of wet pigs and roosters,
gallos mojados, and mud.

i will need my money,
necesitare mi dinero;
i can buy sandwiches
in american restaurants
on the avenue, en la avenida,
and i could buy wine, vino,
red wine, vino rojo, like
that i have seen in the bars,
en los bares, where ceiling fans
spin through the hot afternoons
and women with purses
look out through their dark eyes,
puffing on long cigarettes,
cigarillos largos—

i can buy them, too,
las puedo comprar, tambien....

Interruption in Metamorphosis

CHRISTY AUSTIN

Jonah was a fullfledged traveler.
On the nipping morning of his last time out
he was seen leaving the old stone house,
so nearly built into the countryside,
carrying a scarf satchel
loosely drawn together with a tired leather belt.
His trousers drooped a little.

On his back he carried his wares.
With small dazzling trinkets
he brought out the club-fingered housewives
who carefully inspected (or merely clutched) each item;
or the virgin milkmaids
who shyly acknowledged his salesmanship with an
acquiescent smile.

But he didn't sell much.
People were poor.
People were always poor.

He moaned, passed under the clouds,
moving, moaning under the sun and the clouds
to the next village.

Swiftly, silently the clouds wafted over the green pasturefields
making them an even darker green.
The warm sun merried over the sea;
the water darkened and left only
lacing white breasts breaking on the dim surface.

Jonah knew the twilight and made his camp in the fields.
He muttered: The evening comes. I make my bed
and eat my victuals not quite fast enough,
ha! like that brindled cow o' mine—
the last and longest chewing on her cud.
And now that cow, that old cow, is dead.
Her bones rest in some dark place
like this dark sky
where clouds chase the sun to the sea—
secret murderers that they are.

He exhaled in an opaque sky
as the firm nebula replaced the day's last light
at the horizon.

And Jonah slept and grew into the hard rock and moss countryside.

Panacea and the Bishop

CHRISTY AUSTIN

An old prostitute
puts on her last make-up,
combs the last particles of youth from her hair,
takes her place in the window and says:
What is this road that does not want to end?

A bishop hovers over towers, sleeps.
Clenching wire shoulders,
old robes, in closets cloistered,
sway to the rhythm of his dreamings.
He envisions them and he says:
Ah! Now I have costume.
Come, disguise me for this masque.

All night the sword has coupled
with the wound saying:
Go tell them I am harmless.

Everything is simple—
even dying.
But who are these absent
wanting to come back?
What is this pain that seizes on nothing?
What is this simple death that does not cure?

Counterfeiting (Amor Es Sueno Erotico)

CHRISTY AUSTIN

I dreamed of a long snake named Bonnie playing the guitar.
I saw my different self and others, wondered who we are.
Yes, are. I woke up in a darkness so strange to feel,
awkward brass or a curved sculpture made from steel
and I laughed at thoughts of certain devices
I've never had, wondered if they're as nice as
some people say. But it was a different me then too,
probably the same one that cried when you
left.

O Bonnie, Bonnie, teach me the guitar.
Tell me who we are,
Why you speak
With your small blonde head,
Why my grandmother's still dead.
It couldn't have been more than a week.

We keep fresh our painful memories,
sit and ponder with our knees
tucked under our chins
until concave warts grow
on our tongues. We count our sins
or carry threads to the gypsy so
as to rid them of us. Theft.

Somewhere in that old hag's yard
lies a fresh mound of dead warts.

Ha! A wart cemetery and a dumb bard
singing encantations of poetic sorts.
He'll turn them into crackling jewels;
Dentists and surgeons will have fine tools.

Bonnie, you are my dream and me.
We slither together. Spruce wood
And nylon strings do not sing for us. We
Merely imitate good.
Tell me who you walk with and I'll tell you who you are.
Tell me who you slither with and I'll tell you what you are.

Artifice Rex and I put Bonnie in the zoo.
He didn't believe that I could do
such a thing. He put his mother in
a looney house because of some sin
and now she draws moons on the poet's face.
I knit lace
from words and hold readings
in my bedroom auditorium.

I gather the applause from our meetings
and send them to the sanitarium
for Mrs. Rex.
She put a hex
on me and send me an eclipse.
I sit at funerals and lick salt from my lips.

Now I'm hermetic,
palsied and write sick
verse.
My lines are sealed,
terse.
But if I were to be healed,
miraculously whole and one,
I'd write you a ten-line sonnet just for fun:

When I sit across from your empty chair
I fancy I dream of warm things to share
together. We could have made better love
at times. We could have sat and spoken of

Marriage and Children. But I don't know which
me could have sat through that. You were tender.
I reeled on my haunches blazing my switch,
flogging the bliss you wanted to render.

I'm a sad bitch. I breathe lava. I need
your air, your heart, your quiet brain, your creed.

Houses of Decay

CHRISTY AUSTIN

Houses of decay, mine, his and all.
 The hundred-headed rabble of them all.
 A garland of gray pall hung above
 his head
 And rudely forced blood spilt
 red in the cups of mountains
 While the Latin-snorting priests
 clambered to the hill,
 oiled and gelded,
 fat with the fat of kidneys of roasted porklings.

Oh Jesus! Who are these hoarding
 Lords of heresy?
 Who does dance around the altar's horns,
 Oh bleeding head of thorns?
 What offense laid fire to your brain?
 Bring down the sterile rain
 and claps of thunder hosts!
 Make fury four fists of fighting bolts!

The grainy sand--no peace it finds.
 Squeaking pebbles and woodworms.
 Splashing, crashing wakes that
 stop--count the sands pass through the glass--
 then back to reinforce attacks.

He treads his soles upon the sands,
 His soles, our soles, that breathe up sewage smells
 from rotted cans
 and black-dyed rags
 draped in bushes.
 He sees the walls of heaving flesh
 made slimy under the full moon.
 The seas are green, the sands are green,
 The shoulders of the world are green.

The village of lemon houses,
 the souring societies
 adorned in shale and shell.
 He hears the small raucous of the town--
 Damn you, Thomas! Go to hell!--
 And folds away the crystal drops.

The steaming metropolis of streaming lanes.
 Elbows by belching cabmen and
 fleshpots.
 Their stares are stark and ravished nakedness.

He visits the temple where
the rabbi hangs out the same-soiled laundry
to dry,
neat soldiers hanging on a Fisherman's line.
He feels the steel of madness,
foaming mane of city....

Barking dogs no longer hear the
master's call,
But tear the skin from the rabbit's ear,
a popping pink young tongue
of plump bunny's face.
His feet march in slow cadence
through country graves of piled stone mammoth skulls.
The raw waking of country crude
light splinters air and prisms.
Strapping bodies of passing toothless faces.

He stands suddenly, his bleeding feet
begin to sing slowly in the soil.
He rides the four fists—
the horsemen of Apocalypse.
He sees the wild son of the goose,
the fluttering albatross
brought down again
shot down again
in sporting ignorance.
Hang it about your neck, and pick up that bloody cross!

The Old, and the Growing Older

THOMAS HASSELGRAVE

It was mid-February; the sky was clear blue, and a fine sun tempered the chilled, winter air. And the school play yard cracked with the melodious thumping sound of a boy playing basketball. Spring was near.

Jamie Anderson, although alone, was playing a spirited game, dribbling his basketball past imaginary defenders and arching his shots neatly into the corded netting; and all of the while he chattered to himself in a mock sportscasters voice: "Jamie Anderson has the ball fans. Only five seconds remaining. Four. Jamie cuts to the left, then right, shaking his guard. Two seconds. He's at the baseline, fakes, shoots. Hits! Jamie Anderson hits at the buzzer to win the game." And an army of spectators would leap from his imagination to ring the court and cheer his every move.

Sister Marie was watching the boy at his play from her room in the convent overlooking the school playground. She had been there for over two hours, reading and sunning herself, but mostly just watching. Hers was an upstairs window, which reflected the sky's image like a two-way mirror, and she couldn't be seen from the court below. She knew; she had checked. So she looked on unabashedly, smiling when the boy smiled and appearing pensive when the boy looked darkly towards the playground entrance. Both were waiting for a car-load of men.

"Sister Marie," prodded a gentle voice. "Sister Marie."

"Oh! Sister Ann! You surprised me. I must have been daydreaming."

"I was worried," said Sister Ann. "I knocked and called your name but..."

"Forgive me, Sister Ann. My goodness, how I drop off anymore." Sister Marie straightened in the polished-curvature of her wooden rocking chair, picked up her book from where it had been laid face down on her lap, and then turned a questioning look to the young sister. "Did you want me for something, Sister?"

Startled, Sister Ann hesitated. A warm glow was showing about the older nun's face. Oh, she had seen it before, often in fact. Like at six o'clock Mass when they all took Communion, Sister Marie's face was always alight and smoothed, pouring out a certain tranquillity and loveliness—a very defiance to her normal pallor—and on other rare occasions. But Sister Ann hadn't grown used to it; she couldn't. It was a saintly softness which filled her with an urge to reach out to touch. She quickly dropped her eyes, embarrassed at staring.

"I just came to ask if you wished some tea, Sister. And cookies. Mr. Mikel's Bakery brought..."

"Not now, Sister Ann. I really should read for this week's lessons. I'll just stay here awhile. But, thank you."

"Yes, Sister. Of course." Sister Ann turned to leave.

"Sister Ann. Wait. Do you have a moment?"

"Yes. Certainly, Sister," said the young nun, smiling.

"Look out my window," said Sister Marie. "Do you know the boy playing?"

Sister Ann shielded her eyes from the bright sun and leaned across the older nun.

"That's Jamie Anderson from the children's home," she said. "He's in your seventh grade class, isn't he, Sister?"

"Yes, but he's new and I don't know him as I should. Have you noticed him at recesses? Does he seem to get along all right?"

"I haven't noticed, Sister," said Sister Ann still looking out. "He's not a bother, though. I'm sure I would have noticed if he was. Why? Has he caused you difficulty?"

Sister Marie's hands were folded prayer-like before her face, her fingertips tapping her nose. And as Sister Ann raised up she saw the wonderful glow drain from the old nun, leaving her ashen and aged.

"No, Sister," Sister Marie said quietly. "He's been no difficulty...I'd like to be left alone now."

"Yes, Sister Marie," said the young nun, slightly bowing her head; and she left with a rustle, swishing her clothing just a bit—the way girls and young women are inclined. Once outside the room, Sister Ann stopped, breathless. The sudden change in Sister Marie's complexion had shaken her. She stood by the door, composing herself so as not to need to explain anything to the others.

When Sister Ann was gone, Sister Marie scooted her chair to catch the sun-rays which had crept to her left. And she sighed, "Jamie Anderson, Jamie Anderson. Why must there every year be a Jamie Anderson? Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I'm an old woman; I just haven't the energy...I wish the men would come."

The thumping, bouncing ball still drummed in the school yard; she was tiring of its sporadic rhythm. She lay back, thinking of the boy and of her own compulsion to wait with him. He wasn't really such an unusual child, she thought; and not the first to be shuffled from foster home to foster home, never adopted. He wasn't even the only child from the Pleasant Run Children's Home attending school at St. Francis; there were two others. And it was a good home, one of the best. She'd visited often with Mrs. Peterson, the Director. But something, a special uneasy something, made her pang from within. It wasn't just that he was an "unwanted". There were hundreds, thousands, possibly millions of children like that. Her bond with Jamie must, she reasoned, stem from elsewhere, like the secretive way he looked from the corners of his eyes, the dark mask he wore which seldom cracked in smiles or even frowns, and the way he stood alone at recesses, always alone, hands shoved in pockets, doubled in fists, head hanging, feet kicking at small pebbles, and the eyes, the dark bottomless eyes which showed so little and told all. She couldn't talk to him, or touch and soothe him. She could only be there, that's all...And she would.

The sun had slipped; its angle barely covered her lap, and she felt a chill. She eased her rocker over, placing the warmth to her bosom. Then she laid her book aside, no longer pretending to read, and she stared out at Jamie, playing much slower now. "Don't you see, Jamie," she said. "They're not going to come." She folded her hands across her waist, fingering the black and silver cross hanging there; its reflection flashed about and over her cold face, and she thought of the past week, watching the men and the boy.

Last Saturday, the men had arrived in a rush, their car screeching and they spilling from the doors, laughing and chiding one another. There were five of them; they began shooting baskets and snappily passing the ball. She saw Jamie at the opposite end of the court, his quick, shy glances revealing his interest; but he kept playing his own game. One of the men walked towards Jamie. She remembered cracking open her window then—to let in some air.

"Hey, uh, Son," the man called. "You want to join us? We need one more for sides."

She grew a little excited watching Jamie flip up the shot he was aiming; it flew unscathed through the iron rim—perfect.

"Sure," she heard him answer. "I'll play."

She recalled her concern on seeing how lost Jamie seemed when mingled with the men. But he was a good basketball player and she was soon able to lie back and enjoy the games—it was one of the few sports she understood.

As the afternoon passed, the games became sharper, increasingly physical; and, as is usual with men, what had begun as play, evolved into something much more personal. But she was pleased. Jamie gave a good account of himself; the crisp air was sprinkled with shouts of praise.

"Good pass, Kid."

"That's it, Kid. Way to shoot."

But the boy himself was the real treat for her. He was smiling, more than she had ever seen. The men smacked his backside and rumbled his hair; and Jamie, finally, seemed very much to belong.

She watched the play until the panting, gasping men filed back into their car, all the while joking with the boy and complimenting his play.

"Hey, Kid!", said one man from the car. "Will you be here next week?"

"Yea," said another. "We're going to start playing every week. You be here, okay?"

Sister Marie caught herself smiling with the boy.

"I'll be here," said Jamie. "I'll be here for sure."

"Okay, Kid. See you then."

"Yea, Kid. Good game. See you next week."

When the men were gone she closed her window, only then noticing the cold. Jamie played awhile longer, but not long; and when he left the playground, he walked high on his toes, bouncing the ball from hand to hand.

But that was last Saturday. Sister Marie shivered back to the present. Her sun was gone, covered by ominous, gray clouds, and a wind whistled, shaking the glass panes. Jamie was still playing; she heard the ball pounding its wearisome beat. She rose, not caring to look outside, and busied herself smoothing her long black habit, getting her book and moving the rocker back to its place. But then she did go to the window, abruptly. And she looked out, piercing the dusk and cold with her tired blue eyes. She saw the wind whipping the goalpost and pushing a single wadded piece of paper, lifting it, dropping it, tumbling it along. It rolled past the boy.

"We've lost," she said softly. "Go home now, Jamie." And she walked from the window to join the other sisters in chapel.

5:00 and After

JODY GOLLAN

It is time for the stopping.

Doors close and lock;

bulbs exhale one last light,

and that tyrant sun so hateful today

smudged and vengeful

blocking out lines and curves

with thickened heat

soon exhausted will show its edging

and roll orange like into the flat.

then the night begins its rounded chatter
 while the people nestle behind brick and stone
 they move slowly beyond the glass and fabric
 in electric wandering's glow
 the nights
 they soft speak of our livings
 covering us with soothing sighs
 as we merge with time in thoughtless dreaming
 cushioned between waters and fires

My light flickers too

in the lining of the dark.

Curtains move.

Leaves purr against the screens.

This body blurred edgeless
 in the quiet unknowing before the dawn

while the days come to us deeply
 in the wide weavings of it all.

Becky's Ballad

JODY GOLLAN

Becky, Becky on the bough,
L.A. Town is burnin' down;
sky so greasy, black and red;
bird and wildcat have all fled.

I'm waitin' for the King, mama,
I'm waitin' for the King;
his horse has left the pasture now,
I'm waitin' for the King.

Becky, Becky on the bough,
Chicago Town is burnin' down;
chickens squawkin', dogs all gone,
grasses tremblin', nothin' born.

I'm waitin' for the King, mama,
I'm waitin' for the King;
his horse must be in lather now,
I'm waitin' for the King.

Becky, Becky on the bough,
New York Town is burnin' down;
corn is cryin' for the sun,
doe and buck is on the run.

I'm waitin' for the King, mama,
I'm waitin' for the King;
his horse's hooves on fire now,
I'm waitin' for the King.

Becky, Becky on the bough,
ropes that swing you, burnin' down;
wind howls weary 'round the hill,
all that moves is watchin'--still.

I was waitin' for the King, mama,
I was waitin' for the King;
his horse's caught in wire now,
I'm waitin' for a dream.

JAY RICHER

All through my life I have been in contact with people, and I have had a chance to scrutinize them closely. After years of intimate surveillance and intense study, my piercing insight allowed me to perceive their deepest drives—their innermost feelings. I have witnessed the operation of the unifying traits that link all people together and that separate them from other animals. I have touched the sensitive and elusive core of their spirits. Yes, I have come to understand the very essence of the human soul.

Having reached the highest pinnacle of knowledge at the delicate age of eighteen years (as we now measure time), I became seriously bored. For the past few years I have struggled with that boredom, and I must now admit that it is getting a bit much for me to handle. It is this stifling boredom that is finally causing me to share my knowledge with the masses, as we intellectuals like to say. This essay reveals that simple but immensely deep secret that I have struggled so long to know. Read this and you will know the secrets of the human soul. Know this and you will understand the human condition. A greater boon than this I cannot grant. So listen closely, my children. I pass this way but once.

The Psychological Profile of the Pessimistic Personality or A Semi-Humorous Attempt to make an Invalid Philosophical Point

As I have said, I have examined people closely for many years, and I have discovered—and this is my secret—that all of humanity can be divided into two separate and conclusive groups: optimists and pessimists.

Now I realize that assimilating such a heavy secret must take a great deal of time and at least a few "Oh wow's," but we must move on quickly. Stick with me, truth and knowledge seekers, and I will lead you to a perfect understanding of the human condition.

Personally, I have known members of both groups well, and although I have had friends who were optimists as well as friends who were pessimists, I strongly prefer the association of one group over the other. Whereas I would not accompany an optimist over the river into the Promised Land, I would gladly follow a pessimist into the craggy depths of Hell.

I know that it is commonly believed that optimists are people who bubble over with effervescent gayety and love of life. They sparkle, they laugh, they have good times. Optimists make good companions. Ask anyone and you will receive the same answer. Everyone will tell you the optimists are happy people.

Everyone is suffering from the same delusion.

Optimists are none of those things. Oh sure, they have been passed off that way, but not a bit of it is true. All of the optimists I have known (and I have known a great many) have been the gloomiest, saddest, most miserable individuals imaginable.

The pessimist, on the other hand, is always thought of as being a dour defeatist—a psychologically maladjusted social oddity who can't seem to enjoy anything. Pessimists are always pictured as being dressed in shabby, bland clothing, sporting dark bags under their eyes and featuring a small raincloud which is constantly sprinkling their oversized noses with an evil smelling liquid. Everyone thinks of pessimists this way.

Once again, everyone is wrong.

Pessimists do not display any of these characteristics. The pessimists whom I have met have always been extremely happy. They emanate an aura of joy that is impossible to ignore. They exude a sense of inner peace that can only be tranquility epitomized. Far from being steeped to their armpits in misery, they entertain an undeniable pleasure with each moment of life they experience. It is as though every moment of their lives is a constant surprise to be enjoyed to its limits.

Simply put, the optimist is as sour as an aged dill pickle; the pessimist is as happy and as self-assured as a Greek god.

Most of you are probable blanching by now. As you can plainly see, we have encountered a paradox. But take heart. Like all good paradoxes it can be resolved. All that is needed is a little imagination, a little curiosity, a bend towards the abstract and a malleable, open mind. So buckle your seat belts, true believers. Ain't nobody said it was gonna be easy.

The first step I will take in unraveling this paradox is to define my terms. I am, after all, a student of Liberal Arts.

An optimist is a person who, because of some strange malfunction in his character, tends to look forward to coming events with expectations of receiving the highest good. He anticipates future situations with hope and faith, and he believes that the best will happen. Synonyms for optimist include buffoon, witting, dunce and fool. Not only is the optimist a gnostic idiot, but he is usually a saccharin babblers whose intellect measures well below advanced senility. The only positive thing that I can say about an optimist is that he is optimistic. But even that is hardly a compliment.

A pessimist is simply a person who expects nothing but the absolute worst from any situation—past, present, or (God forbid) future. Synonyms are cynic and realist.

You must now surely be asking yourselves "Since optimists expect the best and pessimists expect the worst from life, how can it be that the optimist is burdened with misery while the pessimist is dancing in the streets?" It is a good question to be sure, but the answer is painfully obvious. Reality, dear readers, does not favor optimism.

Some of you more advanced readers, I'm sure, have already pinpointed the key to the entire puzzle. But for the rest of you dummies, I will spell it out. The entire question revolves around one word: EXPECTATIONS.

An optimist fully believes that the absolute best will come from any situation. He may deny this to be true, and he may not even realize it to be true, but it is nonetheless entirely true. His subconscious mind forces these absolute expectations upon him. It is the nature of the beast.

I once knew an optimist who related to me his highest expectation. He stated it so honestly and vividly that I could not improve upon it. So that you may understand the optimist's character better, I offer his story as best as I can recall it. I firmly believe that it is shared by all optimists, whether they know it or not.

We were sitting together one day when he told me his dream. He said that he actually expected it to come true at any time. At any moment he fully expected to see a beautiful girl sitting at another table in a crowded room. This girl, who possessed an all-consuming beauty, was sitting at a far table with a group of friends. The optimist noticed that she had been glancing at him for the past few minutes, always looking away when he looked up at her.

He was thrilled by the cat-and-mouse game that she had been shyly playing with her guarded glances. He was captivated by her beauty, her grace, her reactions. As he watched her, he got the feeling that she was the girl who could answer his dreams for love.

His body tensed with anticipation as she looked over at him one last time before she pushed away from the table and smiled goodbye to all of her friends. She slowly began to walk in the direction of the optimist, and so great was her beauty that he could not remove his eyes from her. She peeked uncertainly at him as she stood only a few tables away, trying awkwardly to remain inconspicuous to the optimist's now-lowered eyes. Then she came again, closer to the optimist until she hesitated only two feet away from him. He could not bear the suspense of her movements, and he could not find the courage to lift his eyes to look at her. He sat quietly, crushing his Dr. Pepper can with the involuntary reactions of nervous anxiety.

He could feel her staring intently at him, and he finally forced himself to look up, hardly knowing what would happen. He looked at her face and saw the indecision that was torturing her. She smiled slightly with insecure candor. He smiled back, and her entire countenance lit up with undisguised relief and open joy.

Her reaction warmed the optimist all over. He was enchanted by her beauty, and she seemed enthralled by his entire being. The optimist was particularly drawn to her eyes. They echoed a depth of feeling that the optimist sensed to be congruous to his own. He would give his life for her, he decided.

She speaks.

"I have been watching you for some time now, and from the first moment I noticed you I felt that only you could ever understand me. And I know that only I could ever understand you. I can tell by your outward appearance that you are the most inwardly beautiful person in the world."

As her voice paused, the optimist felt that no one else in the world existed but her. She moved closer, knelt at his feet and took his hand in hers. Her soft voice continued.

"I know your needs. I understand your devotions. I love you."

Now the optimist is just eating this up. Of course he is in love with her, and the two of them immediately resolve to dedicate their entire lives to each other in the most personal sense of total communion. They will probably even get married. In any case, they will live the rest of their lives in bliss, contentment, and total peace of mind.

This is a dream that all optimists share. All of them, either consciously or unconsciously. As I have said, it is the nature of the beast. The circumstances may change a little depending on the sex of the optimist, or it may involve a dog or a mule or some other fetish item, but the form is the same. This is the expectation of the optimist.

The pessimist's expectation can be well displayed by slightly twisting the optimist's dream. The pessimist is sitting all alone in a crowded room. (To make things worse, as the pessimist would appreciate, we will have him sitting alone in the Hideaway.) He sees the girl, and he reacts the same way that the optimist did. She gets up and walks towards him. He tightens his grip on his can of warm Dr. Pepper. She is now standing directly over him, and as he looks up into her face,

he sees a look of such contempt that he recoils in terror. Instead of smiling, she reaches into her purse and pulls out a phaser set on "bruise." She then proceeds to bludgeon the poor pessimist with the most excruciatingly painful phaser-fire ever experienced by a human being. The pain is unbearable, and the emotional rejection is devastating. The pessimist is ruined for life, left by her attack in a state of painful paralysis. He is physically and emotionally a cripple.

I think that this is a fair statement of the pessimist's expectations. Of course, again the situation changes with certain factors, but I have tried to give you an understanding of the fact that the pessimist expects nothing better than the absolute worst.

Let us now look at reality, and how it affects the optimist and the pessimist. Just so I don't lose anyone, for I sincerely want you all to comprehend this incredible truth, I will stick to the example I have used thus far.

I have given the optimist's expectations and the pessimist's expectations of the same situation. It is extremely doubtful that either will occur, so for my next example I will pick a situation at random from the infinite possibilities of reality that exist between the two extremes. And because this reality is the same for optimists as well as for pessimists, it will be much easier for you to relate to. In fact, I think it would be best if I used **you** as the subject. Please forgive the inflexibility of the gender in the following diatribe, but I am going to arbitrarily assign to the subject the masculine gender, and the dream person will be feminine. I will make no apologies for this. I am a male, and I am the author, and it is a drag to write he/she two or three times per sentence. Anyone who doesn't like it doesn't have to read it, but I refuse to accept responsibility for your unenlightened stupidity should you choose that course. As for you loyal disciples who remain, I shall carry on.

Put yourselves in this position. You are sitting all alone in a room filled with people. You notice a person of consummate beauty coming towards you. You tense up, not knowing what will come of the situation. She is beautiful, you love her, and I've already gone through this twice and I'm getting tired of it, so reread the dream of the optimist until she is standing two feet away and you are about to look up. Then come back to this spot.

All right. Are you in the right frame of mind? You look up into her face. You catch the light of her eyes. She is truly beautiful, and you know you love her. She slowly bends over you and spits in your Dr. Pepper. Then she walks away laughing hysterically. This is reality, or at least a possibility of reality.

Now, how do you think the optimist feels? How about the pessimist? The optimist is crushed because he expected love. The pessimist is joyous because he expected pain and torture. Get the picture?

Scoffers must now be saying that the example was ludicrous, and that therefore my point is invalid. Don't believe, members of my flock. They are probably the same ones who were bitter about my decision to make the subject masculine and the dream feminine. To you skeptics I say that I forgive you. Even if my example was not realistic, it doesn't matter. The principle still holds true. Read on, and you will see.

The optimist, you see, is born into the world smiling and expecting the best. He rushes forth to meet the world, mouth agape in a friendly smile, ready to hug the world to his bosom with all the love his being can generate. But instead of his expectations being fulfilled, he gets kicked in the teeth. Stunned, he picks himself up, a little distressed at his reception. "Whatever happened," he tells himself, "it won't happen again." So he runs forward again, smiling at the world. And he gets kicked in the gums.

After this process has been completed a few times, the poor simpleton begins to feel the rheumatism of disillusionment creep into his philosophy. But

he does not refute his optimistic expectations even though he is now tragically unhappy.

One particular optimist I knew, after getting kicked time and time again, came as close as any optimist I have ever seen to changing his expectations. After telling himself many times that he wouldn't get kicked again, he finally broke down and decided that the next time he got kicked it wouldn't hurt as much. It would be pathetic if it weren't so humorous.

The pessimist, now, is born into the same world as the optimist, with only his expectations being different. Like the optimist, he rushes forward into the world. Unlike the optimist, he expects the worst instead of the best. When the pessimist gets kicked, he too is stunned. "I'll be damned," he lisps as he picks up his teeth, "I thought it would hurt much more than that. This isn't near as bad as I thought it would be." You can't help but notice the happiness that is inherent within that statement.

That is how reality affects the optimist and the pessimist. But now, to come to the main point behind this whole article, we must look at the effect of reality upon the psychologies (psycho-ontology, for you philosophy lovers) of our two groups.

When the optimist expects the best, and anything less than the best happens, he cannot help but be disillusioned. For the true optimist, the only reward that can be experienced is the satisfaction of knowing that his expectations were correct if the absolute best ever did happen. And believe me, the optimist is disillusioned far more often than he is rewarded. The result of this constant disillusionment of the optimist whom I described at the beginning of this work. While he is still a self-admitted optimist, he is truly the saddest, most forlorn figure imaginable.

The pessimist, though, gets exactly the opposite psychological impression from reality. Because he expects the absolute worst, anything that is even slightly better than that comes as a pleasant surprise to him. If the worst did happen, at least the pessimist would have the self satisfaction of knowing that he was right to expect it. After a lifetime of being pleasantly surprised by reality, the pessimist develops an eager anticipation for the future and an inner peace during the present.

There. I have resolved the paradox. The optimist is miserable because his expectations are never fulfilled. The pessimist is happy because reality is constantly surpassing his expectations.

And that is why I could not bear life in the Promised Land with an optimist. The milk would curdle and the honey would spoil in comparison to his expectations. But to live in Hell with a pessimist would be to spend an eternity in constant peace and happiness. His expectations would make the Devil himself seem funnier than George Carlin. After all, nothing could be more powerful than human expectations.

Best

ROGER SMITH

"Mama, you're just gonna love it there. The change'll do you so much good. Doesn't it just sound great."

"Yes dear. Now where is it you said you're taking me?"

"Now Mama you've gotta try and remember. It's the Beulah Home for the Aged. It's just so pretty. Green carpet, dark wood, and those chrome sinks. Those chrome sinks will just put your eyes out. They're just so shiny. I bet you'll like that won't you? Mama?"

"Mnh?"

"I said 'you'll like that won't you?' "

"Will this nice place you're taking me have petunias like my garden at home, Meg?"

"Why at this place they got flowers all over. Ivy, roses, rubber plants, and even 'tunias I bet."

"I'll have to water them this evenin'."

"Why Mama you won't have to. They're all plastic."

"Don't talk such nonsense. You know all my plants are real. Lands sake they better be; after all those rhubarb pies I made for you. The way your clan digs into them, I bet my bottom dollar they were real. Meg?...Here I'm bein' silly and you're not even listnin'."

"We're here Mama. It looks okay doesn't it. If you just hate it I guess we could look for another one. You like it don't you?"

"It's nice."

"Mama I've put your things in the lobby. I gotta run. And pick the kids up at school. This nice lady will help you. Bye. I know you'll just love it. It's really for the best."

"Let's go on up to your room, Mrs. Gabbert."

"I'd like to wait for my daughter."

"She won't be back 'til morning."

"That's not right dear. You see she knows I have to get home this evenin'. I've got to water my plants; and dust; and my friend Marybeth may come over."

An Owl's Wisdom

REBECCA COUCHMAN

An owl
is supposed to be
such a wise creature . . .

He is, to extent—

He sweeps down
through the still night air,
catching a ground squirrel
or a field mouse,
filling his beak with warm,
succulent meat,
the blackness
hiding his attack;

But, how wise is
an owl
who, in the broad light of day,
flies himself
headlong into a fencepost,
and, getting a concussion,
dies—
with the warm brown mouse
in his gullet?

The Eyes of the Other Man

RAMONA FAYE WILSON

The eyes of the other man see me as:

A street with no name
A house with no number
A resident with no identity.

The eyes of the other man reflect that I am invisible,
something too Black to see.
Yet, my teeth and my eyeballs are as white as the
first fall of snow.

The eyes of the other man reveal that I am lazy,
incompetent and hopeless.
Yet, my forefather's sweat, blood and tears helped
build this great earth that I dwell upon.
I can't help but wonder if there is some blindness
in the eyes of the other man.

He looks at me as though he sees nothing, absolutely nothing.

The eyes of the other man sees white power - he has it in
the palms of his hands.
He looks at me and sees no power,
whether it be black, red or yellow.

Dear Lord, give me my heaven right now
or else in the hereafter I will be trampled to death
'Cause the eyes of the other man
will surely not see me up there.

Improvisations of One Man: Not a Treatise

MICHAEL WELLS

PREFATORY NOTE

It is with some hesitancy that I write to you now. A few days ago I was sitting in my room resting, my mind at ease. All of a sudden thoughts, not my own, came rushing at me, absorbing my consciousness. My first reaction was fear, and they became heavy and confused. But when curiosity replaced fear, the thoughts became clear and distinct. Turning on my tape recorder, I became a mouthpiece for these thoughts.

After awhile it became apparent that although the thoughts may have been sent from somewhere near in terms of space, these thoughts had travelled through time backwards, having originated around twenty years from now. At an earlier time, one might have labelled my experience as "natural light." If so, this should open up a whole new realm of investigation and re-evaluation of such phenomena. (Perhaps the **Journal of Irreproducible Results** would be interested, but for now, I am submitting it to you, a journal of new beginnings). It is not the purpose of this paper to proclaim my originality, but to do justice to the origins of these thoughts.

Not having systematically analyzed these thoughts as a whole, I cannot judge their validity or reality. Perhaps the whole phenomenon was nothing more than a dream. Having transcribed from tape to paper, I refer it now to your judgment and await further comments.

He was a man who at one point in time was the mean average of everything measureable for his kind. But this had not put him in a maximum-sense-deprivation cell. It was the semi-strict observation of rules of the normal that had. For every once in a while, he made mention of the fact, in his own unobstructive and quiet way, that such rules exist. "Some rules, at times, are better left forgotten," the powers to be did say. Labelled a normal path and sentenced forever, he lives in his blah cell with walls of concrete block, floor of tile, sponge-like ceiling and fluorescent light to simulate day....

Away with the third person! There's only one here! That he is I. And sometimes around my cell there stalks an ovoidal or pear-shaped body, having a single bulbous expansion with a slightly elongated neck. The lips are metal, and from putty-gray eyes numerous meteoric flashes descend upon the

walls in splashes of lighter tones. I cannot get away from this terrifying image, locked as I am in this bell tower of ringing silence. These vigilant walls were not built with love, impressing weariness upon me as they do. As one could see, cliff-hanging as I am to sanity. Though everything that was my identity has been taken away...No!...Wait!...My thoughts, my experiences--my mind's still mine! And I'm reading (it's permitted) and holding on...

That pretty well sums up my conscious state
for the past seven-plus years since I was placed
here on the bicentennial of my country's birth.

Threatened with the vast meaninglessness of what I thought to be fundamental reality, I found myself questioning "what really is?" But with the discovery of my mind came new directions for my disconnected reading of splintering disciplines. There were those in the past who responded to, and tried to account for, a new and awesome experience ("the new science") through use of the mind, and they were called the Rationalists. I read avariciously of the three main participants of this movement, for I seemed to have a need and purpose in common with them.

Though committed to the fundamental distinction between appearance and reality (essence, substance), I could find no comfort in the dilemmas of the acute duality of Descartes (nor in his basic assumption of sanity, for I find that dubitable in myself); nor in the undifferentiated unity of Spinoza (and its subtle hints of Cartesian duality). But in the metaphysics of Gottfried Wilhelm Freiherr Von Leibniz I found these ontological conflicts resolved (or so it seemed).¹

The basic "substance" of Leibniz's philosophical writings is the **Monadology**. In this small booklet he describes a logically necessary, intelligible, harmonious universe: an individuated unity, created and sustained by a **rational God**.² I read it over and over until its covers looked like an old, chewed hound's ear.

In Leibniz's rational search for "what can be," he made use of the Principle of Non-contradiction and came up with a classification system to help answer the question: 1) The Possible—that which is not self-contradictory; 2) The Necessary—Something is necessary if its logical contrary is a self-contradiction; 3) The Actual—That is real which is (a) necessary, and (b) some of the things that are possible.

Through use of this principle, extension could not be a simple substance, for it implies complexity and divisibility. Since material substance could be broken down ad infinitum, the essential essence must in fact be non-material substance, a sort of force; and Leibniz called this the Monad, "the true atoms of nature," the real "elements of things."³ This world, these walls I experience, are only a phenomenon of my senses, for what really is, is non-extended: "The conception of the extension of a body is, in a way, imaginary."⁴ My fears, my concerns over my confinement, began to dissolve as I became better acquainted with this non-spatial reality.

The world is made up of Monads; that is what really is! According to Leibniz, these Monads are simple, independent substances (unrelated to each other) having two distinct and inherent qualities—Perception and Appetition. And as it is with fingerprints, so it is with Monads: "there are never in nature two beings which are exactly alike."⁵ That which distinguishes each Monad from another is its level of awareness, and this is Perception. Each Monad has the potential, even the "desires," for further awareness; "its present is big with its future,"⁶ and this is Appetition.

And when I stumbled over questions—"Perception of what? Appetition for what?"—Leibniz was quick to answer. His solution was mixed with the unravelling

of the ultimate metaphysical problem: "Why is there something rather than nothing?"⁷ Once again, he turned to a principle similar to the one previously mentioned, the Principle of Sufficient Reason, "in virtue of which we believe that no fact can be real or existing (and no fact can be real or existing) and no statement true unless it has sufficient reason why it should be thus and not otherwise."⁸

In searching for the ultimate reason for what is, it necessarily follows that it should be rooted in the ultimate source, Leibniz reasoned: "It is thus that the ultimate reason for things must be a necessary substance, in which the detail of the changes shall be present merely potentially, as in the fountain-head, and this substance we call God."⁹ And if one were to question God's existence, Leibniz has already answered such questioning:

Therefore God alone (or the Necessary Being) has this prerogative that if he be possible he must necessarily exist, and, as nothing is able to prevent the possibility of that which involves no bounds, no negation, and consequently, no contradiction, this alone is sufficient to establish **a priori** his existence. We have, therefore, proved his existence through the reality of eternal truths. But a little while ago we also proved it **a posteriori**, because contingent beings exist which can have their ultimate and sufficient reason only in the necessary being which, in turn, has the reason for existence in itself.¹⁰

In the above lies the answer to the previous questions—"Perception of what? Appetition for what?"—and God is the answer.

But if this be a **a priori** knowledge (intrinsic to the very nature of my Monad monading), why was there no responding resonance from within myself? Could I be a "stunned" Monad, or was it possible that what Leibniz wrote was completely oblivious to the Law of Harmonics?

Once again doubt introduced cleavage between myself and any sort of certainty. And once again that frightful specter visited my cell. (It had been absent for awhile.) But this time it carried a sign saying: "The actual world is the best of all possible worlds." Then it left abruptly, causing me to quiver in fear.

I widened my personal investigative study, including Leibniz's **Discourse on Metaphysics** and a whole cafeteria array of other possibilities which I previously considered partial truths. While entertaining the notion that I might be wrong, I noticed that Leibniz did not. This extreme hybrid rationalism had so regimented my mind, "Hup, two, three, four...this is how it is," that I would nod assentingly, for it's hard to grasp something that has no extension. What had seemed aesthetically so satisfying began to resemble, upon a more skeptical review, ontological language games.

Incessant questions kept popping into my consciousness, driven from deep inner impulses with no rhyme or reason. Had Leibniz come to a comfortable agreement with God....Had God become God by becoming through creation of this world and the whispers in the ear of certain choice **men** who were to tell of all this....That would seem to be an experience of finitude for the Almighty....If not that, then how creation...(and a whole host of other **meta**-physical problems)... for it only happened once and that was a long time ago...How strange it seems to explain obscurity through using the Absolute Obscurity....How was one to approach the unapproachable real or real unapproachable or approaching the unreal....I could find no access to the unknowable unknown....I seem to be drawn up the staircase of the Tower of Babel to dizzy heights, and babble I did....Is there something in this that requires

of me the transcending of it....the abstracts began to disappear or never existed. I know not which...moved outside of my own faculties and "moved into fairyland" I seem to be...the Devil's words to Shaw's Don Juan shattered my braining: "And is Man any the less destroying himself for all this boasted brain of his?"...I was "awakened from (my) dogmatic slumbers" with Chinese poet Hahn Shan's words ringing in my ears: "He just sets up a prison for himself...Once in he can't get out." God had become a habit of mind for Leibniz....(And I almost became addicted.)...Used as a crutch to hobble through a reasoned Meta-world....And when it became hard to compress the whole variegated experience of humanity into one explanatory channel...Invoke God!

Others still do, in the multitudinous sects of the Jumping for Jesus religions.

Montaigne suggested that man come down and join the ranks of all living creatures...and I did.

I seemed to be floating until I settled down and recovered the common sense I had suspended—my cell was as it was. The world remained the same. Who can leap from the world's ties? I—who so miss the color of the sky after the rain has fallen, or the slippery feel of a moss-covered rock lying near a brook—had been a fool to try, not only to believe, but to live, imaginative speculation.

The quality of life is disturbing, not perfect, so I laid my mind to rest in a transient camp of skepticism in order to overcome my braining. I could find no delight in being a skeptic; but nature overcame my skepticism slowly but surely, beginning with my acceptance of myself rather than the expenditure of self for other-than-self. I have no need for a philosophical poultice, for I have no transcendental problem in that I no longer want to transcend the present or this world. And I shed a tear in remembering the past while reading Roszak's "Novum Organum"...¹¹

they are killing the whales...
they are killing the whales...

Then come let us mourn for these leviathan
for great and lordly things degraded by
our vandal genius

and for ourselves
who abuse the gift of our monkey cunning
to mock the brute magnificence of earth.
Maniac craft
that devours the grace and goodness of our kind...
even the deep sea bottoms are stained with
unpitiful insolence.

Narcissus-like,
we would not love what does not bear our image
if only the print of our butchering hand wiped
over all that is passive, dumb, and grandly
primordial.
Bacon, who gloried in "that right over
nature which belongs to us by
divine bequest", now acknowledge your progeny
sunk in this culture of busy despair,
vastly empowered, obsessed, and absurd.
What is this thing, your "New Philosophy"
but Old Adam's arrogance:
to name the beasts who need no names
and muse upon a serpent's squalid lie?

Now I put to rest the past—not to reject it— spending “time” in embracing the **now**, based on a philosophy of the most ordinary aspects of life, with values intrinsically shareable. For I found a love of life here on earth which has an inexhaustible interest in the various forms of nature, and a stimulation therein for a great effort in living, following the organic rhythms of **being**. I am now experiencing a sort of primeval quietness that should be instantly and universally appealing. Whether or not it is, I cannot say; for I am not in possession of an antidote, but in the constant re-experiencing thereof. So good-bye, dear reader (if there indeed be any), for the reality of truly sharing words is highly questionable. And so I'll end this confused but resolved search with someone else's words:

We shall cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring will be
To arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
—T. S. Eliot

The last image I received was that of this fellow



throwing a paper he had finished reading into a shredder while thinking “Nonsense!” and then he went about cleaning up what looked like a cell. This couldn't be our “prisoner of reality”—more likely a cell attendant.

But is it possible that there will live, sometime in the future, a person who has “spoken” **now**?

POSSIBLE FOOTNOTES

I have searched for some possible sources which the prisoner might have used (to make this paper more academic).

1. R. W. Meyer, **Leibniz and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution**, pp. 2-8.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 164.
3. **Monadology**, Sec. 3.
4. **Discourse on Metaphysics**, Sec. XII.
5. **Monadology**, Sec. 9
6. *Ibid.*, Sec. XXII.
7. Harald Hoffding, **A History of Modern Philosophy**, Vol. 1, p. 283.
8. **Monadology**, Sec. 32.
9. *Ibid.*, Sec. 38.
10. *Ibid.*, Sec. 45.
11. Theodore Roszak, **Sources**, p. 414.

Other possible sources might be T. S. Eliot's collected writings, and those of Montaigne. General resource materials concerning the modern period in philosophy might also be useful in pinpointing his thoughts, for I have some quotes that are unaccounted for.

Acquaintance

SYOMARA TINDERA

She gave them to us in class and told us that it was our assignment to learn about them. From a bagful of rocks, we all picked one.

I placed mine on a card on top of my desk, and it has sat here for the past few days. I have toyed with it enough to discover the position and angle most pleasing to my eye. This little rock is a fraction of a bigger one not too long ago mechanically crushed for construction purposes. Its dark greyish band, outlined by a streak of white, reveals nothing about its nature to me for I know nothing about the geology of its formation.

So it has sat here in its petrified solitude while I do school work or absorb myself in writing letters.

At one time I imagined for it the companionship of an enigmatic sea shell or blue and shiny marble. I almost stopped what I was doing to go search for such things, but I changed my mind thinking that I was merely using it and turning it into the element of a composition. I should, instead, let it be.

Hermetically quiet it is; how could we ever strike up a conversation? All it did was provoke in me the awareness of our unequal statuses: the rock was the submissive recipient of anything I could say or do. I was the subject and owner of the relationship.

It has been several days now. I thought I had it sitting there, in its most becoming position, when, all of a sudden, following the contour of its grey band, all at once, I saw that as two sides met at an uneven edge, the grey bands formed a winged figure. There was the head, pointing upward, the body gaining form at the vertex and the wings open in flight. A sea gull it could be. I could no longer undo the gestalt. The little rock contains now the impression of the effortless beauty of a bird soaring high.

I know it remains the same; yet, it has captivated me... I look at it with a little tenderness now.

Gifts of Poverty

SYOMARA TINDERA

I will begin by drawing an analogy.

It was in the settlement houses, with people like Jane Addams, that the doctrine of "immigrant gifts" was started, as newcomers from Europe were welcomed to the United States and encouraged to preserve their traditions, celebrations, and language. Jane Addams was interested in enhancing the self-esteem of the incoming people, but she also believed that each group had a contribution to make to American culture and that from that mixture a more cosmopolitan society would emerge. If the ethnic "melting pot" was supposed to effect a mixing of blood and blending of races, the acceptance of the "immigrant gifts" was to add variety and richness to the over-all culture.

This idea of "gifts" has survived in many ways, but somehow it has not really succeeded in lending worth to the ethnic groups. In the present of the slums, barrios, or reservations there survive traditions that form the fabric of the people's lives, but many cannot see their beauty. I have seen this happen where I come from in Brazil. Because of the prejudices between nationalities and social classes, it seems that the people from the cultures of plenty see nothing but the lack of what they have in the cultures of poverty. They can only see what we are not, and they find worth only in the artifacts with which they will decorate their bookcases or which they will keep as mementoes of their traveling.

But it is in the fabric of our lives that the real gifts are, not in the pottery, jewelry or carpentry. So just as around the turn of the century there was prevailing disdain for the immigrants in America, today, in our days of growing schism between rich and poor on a cross-national scale, there is a prevailing indifference to the poor who are offered rescue from underdevelopment. Yet, the wisdom of poverty could be a gift to our saviors.

Our vision of the world reflects the effects contingencies have had on our way of thinking. We, the poor, do not seem to have the optimistic belief that we can design our lives; this is the attitude of the powerful. We are powerless. We find ourselves at the mercy of many forces, even the whims of weather can affect us. So the control of our destiny is very restricted. My people usually punctuate any statements on plans they are making with "se Deus quiser," God willing, meaning very simply that things unaccounted for could disrupt those plans. When something doesn't happen accordingly, we don't say "God didn't will," we spell out what we thought the intervening factor was.

Where the powerful have a sense of potentials, we are more aware of limitations, because we have less latitude for our action. We are particularly aware of man's frailties, his threshold for pain and suffering, the need he has for the relief of joy, the limits on what can be overcome. Therefore, our expectations of other people are usually within realistic limits, and our tolerance and patience are born out of this realization. That's one of the reasons why the indoctrination of progress that we are subject to is so frustrating; it creates the mirage of possessions we are unable to obtain, except perhaps for those that can be stolen. We are suspicious and reluctant about schemes for "community development"

and we lend the weight of our inertia to these projects. The reasoning behind them is very foreign to us.

People who watch us buy lottery tickets laugh at our eagerness and say that if we only stopped to think we would see very rationally that the probabilities are against us and that chances are 50 to 1 that we will lose our money. But when we stop to think we see very rationally that we are locked within a situation and chances are 50 to 1 that only by a strike of luck can we find a way out. So we gamble.

Since we find ourselves unable to steer change, we wait for the miracle that a chance event will bring. We also find relief in the rituals of magic which are other ways of coping with the powers that affect us. We are told that these are phantasmagoric creations of our superstitious mind, that there is no objective, real sign of their existence. However, our lives are full of uncertainties and fears and we seem to be, vis-a-vis the world, with nothing but sympathetic enervations. The real is what we experience in the pit of our stomach.

What we know without a doubt is that we need one another. We are immodest in the way we display our need or tears. We belong to one another; we resist the changes that draw someone away because our closeness is essential.

Such ordinary people we are; what could possibly be our gifts? What, if anything, can the powerful man find of value in us? Through the reflection of our lives, he can check his own vision of man in the world. He can consider how he has come to see himself as the maker of history and the artificial environment, and how he is trying to subjugate everyone and everything to his scheme and control.

The powerful have acted on the premises that possibilities are unlimited and that there are a variety of alternate resources to be exploited for never ending consumption. This actualization of potentials is to take place at a spiraling rate. However, the weakness of the spiral is in the core that loses its binding force as the uncoiling area enlarges and disperses. To introduce the range of limitations in the schemes of planners is to introduce the necessary negative feedback.

Perhaps planners should also learn our appreciation for chance. Planners shouldn't rule chance out of their schemes; to make room for the unexpected is to allow for the ways of nature, to recognize with a fitting degree of humility that man is a part of the universe, not its owner. To allow for chance is also to make room for imagination; it is worth rescuing poetry from the reductions of planners because poetry is a form of wisdom.

Individuals too can profit from the consideration of limitations imposed on their lives. The lives of modern men are suffocated with frustration because they don't recognize the limits to their action. They want more and more of everything. They are imbued with a disproportionate sense of their talent and with the unrealistic expectation that the roads to success are many and open. We, the salt of the earth, know that creativity and genius do not come in democratic or industrial quantities, that their frequency is comparable to the frequency of the luck we gamble on.

Unlike the powerful who feel very confident in making plans and who are often ahead of the events, we stay behind; our incursions into the future are very tentative. The past is what we are certain of. Therefore, our knowledge is gained on hindsight. A lot of the knowledge of modern man, on the other hand, is gained on foresight. Somehow schooling manages to introduce them to abstractions, to equip them with an enormous package of labels, and after this process they seem to go out in the world not really recognizing which aspects of reality match the labels they have. Our poverty, on the contrary, leaves us in direct contact with the world around.

Perhaps the most important thing to be noticed about us is the way we knit our relationships and assume our interdependence. Our needs are so basic that

they condition our communication. We are not great conversationalists; we are not very articulate. We are more eloquent in the non-verbal expression of our emotions for which there is a large vocabulary of cues. Since the language of feelings is more basic, what it communicates is more of a whole in contrast to the cerebrations of the intellectual which dissect and fragment the experience of being.

Woodshore

JANE TILFORD

sunshafts crash

slanting

white stalwart birches

brown pine needles

soften the earth

and curled brown leaves

random dry grass patches

gray and stiff

anchor us

keep us from drifting away

Snow Fell on the Parsley

JANE TILFORD

Matthew woke up wondering if today they would come for breakfast. He scooted over the side of the bed to see. His toes touched icy-cold water under the open window. The outside world was shaken up, snowflakes falling and yawning in early white daylight. Now he knew. Today would be the day they came for breakfast.

He must get the orange juice out, and the peanut butter. And the pretzels and the pepper. What else to remember? Oh yes, parsley. Certainly, parsley. Because when snow fell on the parsley they came to breakfast. In the kitchen where snow never fell, of course, parsley grew in little pots. Matthew knew why they came to his house for breakfast when it snowed outside. Hurry, hurry!

"Peanut butter in plastic spoons,
pepper on the pretzels.
Orange juice for everyone and
parsley parsley parsley."

He heard hungry whispering near the kitchen. Just in time he climbed a chair to undo the chain and let them in. The left tenant, because that's who came in first, nodded to Matthew. The others followed two and two, and the left tenant closed the door quickly to shut out the snow. The left tenant had a gold bar in his sleeve. It made his arm stick straight down. He was tall, not the very tallest, but they passed the parsley to him first because he was the left tenant.

"Is the orange juice all right?" Matthew asked.

"I want mine squeezed."

"Me too, please, no ulpy pulp."

"Bottled stuff, neat. Don't shake it."

"Frozen kind with pepper. I can stir it myself with my pretzel."

The left tenant didn't speak, he was staring across the kitchen with a churning look on his face. Matthew saw what he saw, and his cold toes stumbled as he hurried to rescue his oil truck, parked last night by the toaster. He hid it quickly in back of boxes by the hot air register.

"Sorry about that," he said sincerely, because he knew from last time they couldn't stand to look at anything with wheels. Wheels made their stomachs turn, they said.

The last crunchies of peanut butter stuck on the plastic spoons. They peppered them black, messed them in pretzel crumbs and put them in their pockets for a snack lunch. The parsley pots were passed around for one last

sprig. The left tenant opened the door. They all saluted Matthew and went out, singing very softly.

"Peanut butter in plastic spoons,
pepper on the pretzels.
Orange juice for everyone and
parsley parsley parsley."

Matthew fastened the door chain. He towed his oil truck from behind the boxes; it was warm from the hot air register. In bed he snuggled his cold toes around his warm oil truck and listened to the quiet snowstorm.

Nietzschean

JANE TILFORD

Let the ghostly exorcise the spooks,
priests absolve priests.
Let thin sower reap sparse crop,
fats relish feasts.
Let the poor give alms, the educated
underwrite the schools.
Let the sick care for the sick,
dogmaticians for the fools.

Death of a Stranger

MARGARET CLARK

Donna noticed the bungalow on Hanna Avenue. The "For Sale" sign had come down weeks ago. No "Sold" sign had replaced it. "A possible "Re-List," she thought, slowing the car. The little white frame sat forward from the modern, more expensive, homes on either side. Donna pulled into the drive and climbed out. The yard was a tangle of untrimmed bushes. Tall tufts of dried grass pushed against the foundation of the house. Stalks of flowers, their dried blooms shattered around them, stood in borders along the walk. Persimmons were everywhere and as she looked up at the overlaid branches of the tree, one fell on her shoe.

On the porch, Donna cleaned her feet and glanced at the window. The curtains were drawn. "It must be vacant," she thought. She knocked and felt self-conscious summoning no one. She started to walk away, but the curtain moved and an eye appeared through the small parting. Donna smiled at the eye. The knob turned slowly and the door opened. An old gentleman greeted her, "What can I do for you, little lady?"

"I'm Donna Tilson, with Castle Realty," she answered. "I noticed the "For Sale" sign was gone. Have you sold your property?"

"No." He hesitated, "We just took it off the market for awhile."

"I would like to tell you about our company—if I'm not interrupting you. Do you have some time?"

"Well—," he paused again. "Come on in and I'll talk to you." He pulled the door open wider and Donna stepped into a spotless living room, cheery in spite of the closed curtains. Dresden figurines glanced at her from a corner shelf. "Won't you sit down?" The man's deep blue eyes glowed from a gently lined face. "I'm Frank Sommers. Yes, we had the house for sale. Planned to retire to Florida. But the realty company didn't seem to be able to sell it. Their time ran out a week or two ago."

"Do you want to put it back on the market?" Donna asked.

The old man turned his eyes to the floor showing a mass of snow-white hair. He looked up sharply. "We had to come back, though half of our belongings are down there. My wife took sick and I had to bring her home. She's dy—she has cancer."

"Oh, I'm sorry!"

The old man gave a wave of his hand. "It's all right, Miss—she may make it. Been through an awful time, but she's a great girl. I don't know what to tell you about the house. I wouldn't consider moving now. Not until we know how Nellie is." His eyes moistened.

"Mr. Sommers, I wouldn't think of bothering you. Your plans must be uncertain. But is there anything I could do to help you?" Donna knew the futility of her question.

"No." He gave a helpless chuckle. "Everything's been done."

She walked over to the man. A tear surprised her and ran down her cheek. She held out her hand and he clasped it tightly. "I'll pray for you—for both of you," she said, and hurried to the door.

At supper, as the Tilson family found their way around the table, Donna looked at the neatly laid places. Pink and white checkered napkins peeked up between the forks lying beside the white plates. The glasses sent sparks glittering along the top of the table.

"Flowers tonight!" said Ed, seating himself at the head of the table.

"Aren't they beautiful!" Donna exclaimed. "I'm so proud of them." She smiled at Karen, who had planted the asters for her last Mother's Day. "Now, have I forgotten anything?" she said, half to herself and mostly out of habit.

"The candles," answered Jenny. "Can't we eat by candlelight?"

"Oh, let's!" cried Karen, still excited by her compliment.

"I get to light them!" Ken interjected, before the others put in their bid.

Donna reached for the candlesticks sitting on the cabinet, and handed the matches to her son, "Be careful."

As the wicks nibbled at the fire and began to glow, Ed turned off the lights.

"There."

The family sat a second in silence. "Shall we pray?" asked Ed, in his usual tone.

Donna looked around the table at her family praying. Ken's hair, roughed from play, fell over his eyes as he bowed his head. Jenny prayed fervently to the candle sitting in front of her, and Karen peeped shyly at the bouquet of asters sitting in great-grandmother's rose bowl. Donna's eyes followed hers. The petals of the flowers stood out against the bright candlelight—soft pink, lavender, deep and still deeper, purple.

"Amen." Prayers finished, the heads around the table bobbed up.

"Pass the chops," Ed demanded to no one in particular.

After supper, as Donna wiped the table, she stared at the bouquet. "Ed!" she called to her husband, in the living room reading the paper. "I'm going out for awhile." Then, without hesitation, she lifted the asters, still in her most cherished bowl, and headed for the door.

A five-minute drive brought her to the Sommers' house. She knocked surely. The door opened, as before, and the elderly man smiled. "Well, it's the real estate lady again!"

"I just wanted to drop off these flowers. Maybe you'd like to take them to your wife."

"Why don't you give them to her yourself. Come in, I want you to meet her."

"You mean she's here?" Donna asked.

"Right down the hall," he said. "Just follow me."

"But Mr. Sommers, I don't want to bother you."

"Nonsense, she'd love it. Her friends can't face her now."

"In that case, I'd like to." She smiled rather weakly. What was she encountering? What would she say to this stranger—to one dying? She followed the tall erect gentleman into the room. Here, leaning back on a large pillow, lay a small plump woman. Her grey hair was neatly combed; little puffs of ringlets gave her a soft hale.

"Nellie, this is the young lady that came today to see us about the house." He looked searchingly

"Donna Tilson. I hope I'm not intruding."

"Glad to meet you, Donna, but I don't think we want to sell just yet."

"Mrs. Sommers, I'm sure you don't. I just came back to say hello."

"She brought you some flowers," Frank said, holding them out to her in the rose bowl.

"Asters! They are my favorite, if I have a favorite. I just love flowers." The old woman's face lit up. "It's like a miracle. All the flowers are gone from our yard." She wiped her eyes with the edge of the coverlet.

Frank left the room and for a moment there was an awkward silence. "I wish there was something I could do for you," Donna blurted.

"I really don't know what it would be. Frank has spoiled me. He does all the cooking and cleaning, besides waiting on me. He's quite a man."

"He thinks very much of you, too."

"Yes, I don't know what he will do when I'm gone. We've had a good life together. I only hope it happens soon. It's hard on both of us—waiting." The woman seemed cheerful.

Mr. Sommers appeared at the door carrying a plate with a slice of cake on it. "I want you to taste my persimmon pudding. Do you like it?"

"What a treat!" Donna answered, reaching for the dessert. "You'll have to give me your recipe."

"I see you've found someone else to spoil." Nell laughed.

"I'm not going to bother you ladies; I've got dishes to wash. I'm good at cooking but I sure make a mess." His eyes sparkled as he looked down at his wife and then left the room.

"Has he told you? Everything?" asked Nell.

"Not in so many words, but I guessed."

"It seems so odd. Here I am, and I don't feel any different. But they tell me I'm sick. Oh, I'm weak when I get up and all that. It's just that I thought I'd feel different, inside. The worst part is the children can't face me. Everytime they come, they dart in and out of the room. They say they have things to do, but I know. It would be so nice to talk to them. Really visit. My friends are the same. They don't understand how I feel."

"It must be terribly hard on them. It's always difficult for those left behind."

"But I haven't gone yet," she smiled, "I guess that's what I'm trying to say. They treat me as if I'm already dead. And here I am! I wish I would go soon, so they could get on with their weeping. It would be a relief." She stuck a foot out of the sheet. "They give me shots and I have no pain. I'm glad of that, but it makes it hard to believe. I don't mind dying; I've lived a full life."

"Maybe they are afraid of death. People who are, don't like to be reminded. You aren't, are you, Nell?"

"Aren't you?"

"No, I've gotten over that. We've had so many die in our family in the last few years. I suppose we all wonder how we will die, or what of. In that way you are luckier than most of us."

"I suppose you're right. But it is odd knowing and yet being here to talk about it. You might think I'm morbid, but I wonder how it will feel. Like slipping out of your body, I think."

Donna laughed; the conversation was strange. "You know I've always imagined it being like going to sleep on a train. You start from one place and simply wake up in another. I'm sure others will miss me, but I won't miss them."

"That's a nice thought. I like that. Emily Dickinson thought about death as a gentleman who would take her on a journey in a carriage. Do you read poetry?"

"Yes, and I especially like Emily. Years ago, I memorized many of her poems. I still recite them sometimes to myself while I'm driving. I spend a great deal of my time in a car. Let's see, I think I like this one best. Do you know it?"

I never saw a moor,
I never saw the sea;
Yet know I how the heather looks,
And what a wave must be.

I never spoke with God.
Nor—"

Nell finished,

"—visited in Heaven;
Yet certain am I of the spot
As if the chart were given.

Isn't that beautiful, and comforting." She smiled dreamily toward the asters. "They're beautiful, too."

"I must go now, Nell," Donna said rising from her chair. "May I bring you more flowers? I'll leave the bowl for them."

"Would you do that?" She was almost asleep.

The asters bloomed all September and October, until frost. Donna took them to Nell. Sometimes she stayed to visit; sometimes she handed them to Frank. He repaid her with persimmons to put in the freezer, or cookies for her to take to the children. "I like to keep busy," he'd say.

One evening, as Donna was talking to Ed, the phone rang. It sounded shrill coming from the empty kitchen. She hurried to answer it, and somehow she knew who it would be.

"Donna, this is Frank—She—She—"

"Frank, you don't have to tell me."

"They just took her away. You're the first one I've called."

Donna couldn't answer. From the other end of the line she could hear the old man quietly sobbing. Tears ran down her cheeks. "Do you want me to come over?"

"No, I'd like to be alone. I thought you'd want to know." The phone clicked.

As Donna replaced the receiver, she glanced through the window to the bed where the asters had grown. In the dusky light she could just make out the bare leaves not yet raked away. One tiny lavender bloom waved.

Reflection on the Unhappy Consciousness of the Bare Abstraction of Ego

JANE TILFORD

Herr Hegel German Obfuscator, you with subject
duplicator
you obstruct my concentrating, comprehending &
sublating.

Ego, ultimate contraction,
Shroud your simple bare
abstraction.

TITLE: from florida with love—
 DEDICATION: to marsha who couldn't care less—
 WRITTEN: in the st. petersburg central
 public library clandestinely—
 VALUE: gratuitous—

JAMES A. STAPLES

I am not a much maligned person. I am a writer—not a Writer, just a writer. This is a time of TA, of Scripts falling out of the sky, of being lost in the language of Winners and Losers. I recently read that our Oracle, Berne, proclaimed in print: the life of every human being is already charted in Bullfinch or Graves.

In an English seminar once the professor wrote on my Emerson paper: Your work in this course has been exemplary. A-. How the hell can you be exemplary and get an A-?, I fired back. No reply.

Last fall I was looking for something new, something really new. Teaching Contemporary Literature is O.K. but I needed something fresh. So I picked up a registration form and, like a dutiful freshman, went through the byzantine lines (at the end of several to be told I wasn't even in the right one) and accepted my free faculty reward in the form of courses in SPEA. School of Public and Environmental Affairs, the wave of the future. SPEA is an avenue for people who desire to assist government in performing its function more effectively and for students who want to enter the sphere of public activity more soundly equipped to understand and help solve public problems, the Catalogue says. So I signed. And the months passed.

At the end of the Fall semester and deep into the Indiana Winter I am pondering the writing of a story for a former friend. The story—which is to be about love—is for a former female student who fulfilled the time-honored tradition of allowing oneself to be seduced by a literature professor—without actually doing so. The lovely lady in question skillfully negotiated a non-carnal voyage within the parameters of a semester. You never realize what really happened until it's all over. It's like Fran Tarkenton of the Vikings passing so much on first down: you don't realize it until you sit down and examine the cold, lifeless statistics.

For me the sixteen-week odyssey has been magical—for the student it has been the reaching of another port before the next storm strikes.

During our intellectual liaison I had promised to pen a story—a love story.

With the ideas fermenting in my mind I went to St. Petersburg—Florida not Russia—for the holiday with my parents.



I won back my father and alienated my mother—all on Christmas day. You plan and anticipate for six months to go out and eat and then you start an argument about how long we'll have to stand in line, she says. It is true; I am a horse's ass. So I spend the joyous holiday with my parents' one-eyed mongrel and pedigreed poodle. They are very good company. The family is away, eating and ritualizing and renewing. And in her resignation Mom tells the world it is winning.



St. Petersburg is a strange city. The people are satisfied with one-story homes. Nothing pretentious—nothing striving for the sky. I guess they do not aspire to transcendental heights in this humid paradise.



It is there—½ block from Route 93 and ½ block from the public park filled with ducks that I conceived the story. It is here—in the St. Petersburg Public Library, where I now sit, that I will write the love story for the woman who wantonly abandoned me.

AN AMERICAN LOVE STORY

Matt and Hillary were very much in love. So much that words could not describe their feelings for each other.

Hillary had big boobs. Matt thought about them a lot. He was a true child of the Fifties. Only mammaries matter. The boob's the thing. Show me a pair of big, bulbous boobs and I'll show you America.

Matt's part of the bargain was his enormous biceps. Hillary's fathers had had small, straight, smooth biceps before her fifth birthday. From that day on she determined that she would have a man with big, barbaric biceps.

Hillary and Matt read *Time* and *Newsweek* together. They bought a King-Size Water Bed for \$125.00 from Household Goods. And—they believed in the American Dream. America has character.

Hillary's script was compliance; Matt's was supercompliance. Hillary's was simple: it is better to do what people want of you than to create conflict. Matt's was very complex: as the reposer of humane values he didn't want to push Hillary into anything or to hurt anyone. Matt's script came from his reading, not his experiencing and had all the trappings of a fine culinary dish with compliments from the chef, Immanuel Kant. As-if; ah yes; as-if the World were this or that. So-everything drifted and nothing happened.

When Matt had a problem he ran. Some nights, many miles. Why can't Hillary and I get it on? A nice easy pace. Two miles. Second wind. Nothin's coming through. Running. Sweating. Fucking up my favorite pants. On he runs: 25, 50, 100 miles...As he runs he notices his friends running, the number of miles registered on their backs: grammatically correct. Matt stops to take a piss in the public park. He thinks. Since marriages are made in the unconscious and not in heaven our love never quite was-or will be.



My toes are tingling. That's enough for moral commitment. This story is consummated.

Four days after Christmas I am writing a letter to one of my former SPEA professors in Bloomington, Indiana. The letter is written in sunshine and short sleeves—it is being received in snow and sweaters a thousand miles away:

December 29, 1973

Dear Professor X:

This past semester, as you may remember, I received a "C +" from you as my grade for the two-hour module, "Public Affairs in the United States." Now, as we both know, the people in the department say that a "C" in the Affairs of the Public is an O.K. grade. But we both know, being veterans of graduate school, that a "C" is a failing grade. I find it awfully hard to believe I deserved to fail your course. To paraphrase your words, when you handed out the test, I hope you take this in the spirit it is written.

With best wishes,

The writer


For a few days I felt better. But now, two weeks later, as I slide the Unofficial Transcript out of its container, I see the "C +" on top.

instead of me.
they want a swimming pool
for I'm a barrier to luxury
and yet my life shall no longer be
upon my branches songbirds have often sung
I still can shade them from the sun,
though limbs I've lost, I'm still quite young
but now, now they want to chop me down.
through rain and snow I've held my ground
I reached for clouds that were passing by,
up so high

up,

up,

where years on end I've stood and grown
from this soil I made my home



The Forlorn Tree

RANDALL LANE

Poem

PEGGY LOUDEN

Simply
to satisfy
a fantasy of yours
I will not
share
the me of me
just so you can say,
"I really know her".

I can only tell you
since
you so yearn to know:
some of me
wants
to know you
and
some of me
does
not!

I cannot
ever say goodbye
for when I leave
I leave a part of me
with you
and
I must return
if only
to see
how I am.

Under the clock
in front of the tomorrow-dressed mannequins
I waited for you
not knowing your eyes
or your name
but waiting all the same.

Others
who were waiting, too
didn't seem to mind my unsure intrusion
into their game
but
not one of them was waiting for me
so I stood
waiting all the same.

Eyes of passers-by met and left
my warm searching face
but
one saw no more than another of my cold nose
growing colder.
Then you came, but still I stayed.
Waiting is my game.

once upon a time
I thought
You could love me
for the simple blade of grass I am
but
I see now
it is the flower
You are trying to make me
that
You love
and
I am sad.

The Exorcist

NANCY SAPP

Certainly the most controversial motion picture of this year (and possibly this decade) is **The Exorcist**. To date, the film, in its first run at 30 theatres in 17 major American cities, has grossed approximately \$11,859,837. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has nominated the flick for 10 awards, including best picture, best director and 3 of the 4 major acting awards. The popularity of **The Exorcist** obviously cannot be questioned. However, inquiries concerning the reason behind this popularity cannot be as easily overlooked.

It is the general consensus of film theorists that the appeal of a motion picture lies in its artistry—its ability to create a believable illusion. **The Exorcist** is no exception to the rule. Its success does not stem from a believable illusion. Possibly the most lucrative con job of all time has been disguised as a "masterpiece of the film art."

The expertise with which the film was put together lies solely in the producer's knowledge of human foibles. For instance, the commercial spot promoting the motion picture reads as follows: "Something, almost beyond comprehension, is happening to a girl on this street in this house and a man has been sent for as a last resort. This man is the exorcist." No mention is made of the film's stars or director—any of the usual things that attract the community to a motion picture. No clips from the film are shown during the commercial or in the preview (in the theatres the same piece of film is used for the preview as is used for the television commercial). There is absolutely nothing to attract public attention, other than the desire to discover what can be photographed that is "beyond comprehension."

Thus the set-up for a perfect snow job has been perpetrated upon the movie-goer. Taking advantage of a human weakness, the producers of **The Exorcist** have filled theatres across the country with audiences whose imaginations have been sparked by their own curiosity.

Hustlers of "the newest thing in horror" have also put to use a common misconception of today's film connoisseurs—a strong display of emotion connotes good acting. Given two scenes, one—ordinary conversation, the other—an emphasized display of emotion (anger, sorrow, joy, etc.), John Q. Public would choose the latter as the better performance. The logic behind this is simple. Out of the ordinary behavior is more readily noticed than normal behavior. All of the actresses nominated for awards in **The Exorcist** have based their performance upon such logic. It is absurd to even consider as Oscar material Ellen Burstyn's characterization of Chris MacNeill. The climax of her portrayal is a string of oaths that is spoken with all of the sincerity of a cow expressing a desire to be led to the slaughter. The viewer, having absorbed the above delusion, is now prepared for part two of this cinematic swindle. One is tempted to believe

("We are happy to introduce this new section of GENESIS. We hope it will encourage greater numbers of students to express their own opinions about matters that concern them. We invite all students to participate in this continuing expression of opinion.")

that a 75-minute special effect is the brilliant acting debut of Linda Blair. This writer has no desire to question the craftsmanship of this 15-year-old who portrays Regan MacNeill. However, let's give credit where credit is due. The possessed Regan is a combination of "talents"—a voice dubbed by veteran actress Mercedes McCambridge, a body supplied by stand-in Eileen Deity Elber in the more physical scenes, and facial expression manufactured by the studio make-up department. There is no need to go into gruesome detail concerning the methods by which Miss McCambridge produced the gagging sounds used throughout the film. However, one must note that acting is an effect—an imitation of life. If the script of **Love Story** had called for an actress to actually die in order to produce an accurate effect, the part would never have been cast.

Finally, the real clincher is thrust upon the audience. The "sting" is made complete with a bit of celluloid gerrymandering. Subliminal cuts of a semi-eroded skull have been edited into the film in order to frighten the patron. The cuts are presented so quickly that the viewer doesn't realize what he has seen. His memory bank, however, registers the picture and the mental faculties emote a feeling of terror. In this case, the viewer has been frightened, but does not recognize the source of his fear.

It seems the producers of **The Exorcist** feel that if they cannot influence the audience with the text of the film, the technical trickery will get the job done.

The cinematic art is an extremely powerful communicative instrument. It may be a benefit or a detriment to the public. The film industry must be aware of its responsibility to promote the well-being of the trusting consumer. If the community continues to be duped by such hoaxes, there will be little hope for even the most worthy examples of the motion picture art to succeed. Theatres will then have nothing to exhibit except movies which are "full of sound and fury signifying nothing"—e.g., **The Exorcist**.

The Groves of Academe Are Withering

MICHAEL POSTON

In this season of widespread shortage it seems that Indiana University—Purdue University at Indianapolis has a shortage of its own: a dearth, if not a complete lack, of academic standards. The belief that a university is a place for gaining knowledge has surprisingly few adherents at this institution; instead, a belief that universities are merely more prestigious vocational schools appears to be firmly entrenched among professors and administrators. The once respected goal of equal opportunity of education for all persons has been debauched and transformed into a kind of mass-produced equality of education in which "equal" is synonymous with "mediocre."

What are the reasons for the languid condition of instruction at IUPUI? No one can be absolutely sure, but it is possible to speculate a bit. Perhaps the condition is a result of a general reduction of academic standards throughout the country; or perhaps it may be due to a lack of qualified instructors (either here at this particular institution or at universities generally). Could it be the consequence of a preoccupation on the part of instructors with the slip of paper called a "degree," thus overlooking what a degree really represents? For whatever reason, it is clear that a change in academic attitudes has taken place at IUPUI and can be observed in such standard requirements of instruction as course readings, examinations, and research papers, and in the widespread use of the "curve" in grading.

If one browses in the campus bookstore at registration time, he is struck by the number of courses where only one or two books are listed as required reading. Granted that there are some courses in which two texts are sufficient (these are primarily courses in the sciences), there remain many courses in such areas as business or the humanities which promise little reading for the student. This tendency toward fewer required texts is of concern for two reasons: first, and most importantly, the danger of one-sided presentations exists. How many courses in business practice include readings in business ethics? How many courses in political science include readings from both ends of the topic spectrum? Intellectual stimulation is not possible if there are no questions raised as to the validity of the subject matter. Secondly, fewer texts accustom the student to a lower level of intellectual exertion, and thus a lower level of academic achievement. It seems too obvious that this reduction in activity is contrary to the University's espoused purpose, that of intellectual provocation.

The system of examinations has also evidenced deterioration, to the point that many courses have no examinations at all. Others have exclusively multiple-choice or true-false exams. Even though there may be one or two special conditions in a class which legitimize these practices, the student gradually comes to wonder about the reasons for a multiple-choice type of exam. Does the instructor give these exams because he is convinced of their value, or rather because he wishes to spend as little time in grading them as possible? A second objection to multiple-choice examinations is that they are appropriate more to computers than to students; they require pure memorization, often without any real understanding on the part of the student. Thirdly, if a course lacks any

examinations, the instructor deprives himself of a meaningful tool for evaluating the progress of his students. He also deprives his students of a needed motivation for performing the tasks necessary for learning (and it is unfortunately true that students need to be motivated). Finally, essay examinations provide an opportunity for the student to sharpen his communication skills, something no true-false type exam can provide.

There may be some who would object, contending that research papers serve to heighten the student's ability to communicate ideas and therefore multiple-choice exams are often valid. A close examination of that objection would make an impartial observer tend to think otherwise. Many freshman-level courses and **too** many upper-level courses require no research papers whatsoever. In these classes essay exams provide the only opportunity for student expression. Other instructors require papers which are so short (often less than three pages) that they seem to serve more as sops to guilty consciences than as meaningful intellectual exercises. Some professors move to the other extreme and base their grades solely upon research papers; this kind of grading becomes susceptible to the submission of papers borrowed from students who have taken similar classes in the past or of papers prepared by professionals (who advertise their services in nationally prominent magazines).

Many instructors complain about the inferior quality of student papers, arguing they are forced to pay more attention to grammatical errors than to evidences of insight or analytical depth. This fact has caused a reduction to an alarming degree of expectations. It is now possible to submit a grammatically correct paper which has almost no content, under the expectation of receiving the grade of A or B as a result. This situation is detrimental not only to the students, but in the long run to the University as well.

The area in which the decline in academic standards is most notable is the system of grading. With the establishment of the Sacred Curve of grading, a student's achievement is no longer measured against an absolute academic standard but against the performance of his classmates. In the final analysis, the Curve is used to distinguish degrees of mediocrity in intellectual performance. It is thus widely understood among the student body that grades rarely reflect the degree of knowledge one has, but merely his standing relative to the rest of his class. This system puts IUPUI in the ridiculous position of having to declare someone the winner of a fifty-mile race who only completed ten miles, merely because he lasted longer than anyone else. Perhaps one way to remedy the situation would be to change the grading system by raising the point of failure. In place of the current A-B-C-D-F system of grades, perhaps one based on A-P-F (superior work; average or passing work; failing work) would work better.

However, the instructors at IUPUI are not completely at fault for the administrators must also share a part of the burden. The low number of general education requirements for Liberal Arts students, for example, contributes to the practice of enrolling in less than challenging courses during the junior and senior years in order to maintain a high grade point average. Do two courses in the physical sciences area really provide the student with the kind of adequate background expected of university graduates? Does only one year of study of a foreign language adequately acquaint the student with cultures and traditions other than his own?

A much more serious charge can be leveled against the degree planners' seeming unconcern for the needs of the students. Why are there no courses for the student who desires to delve into a subject in depth, while there are numerous ones which offer "the broad view" or "an introduction"? Why cannot the skeleton of honors courses be expanded both in terms of scope and eligibility; since present grades mean little, should opportunities for advanced work be denied to any student who desires to avail himself of them? For those students who intend

to continue their studies in a graduate course of study, is IUPUI giving them the same degree of preparation as other universities give their graduates? These are the kinds of questions department chairmen and school deans should be asking themselves.

Perhaps the basic problem of this University is that too few professors demand that their students engage in some kind of independent work or thought, although the myth of "higher learning" requires it. It is as if most instructors have no respect for the intellectual abilities of their students. They take for granted that the desired level of achievement is beyond the grasp of the IUPUI student, an assumption quickly assimilated by the majority of students. There are students here who wish to learn and are not dismayed by prospects of hard work. To give these students the most benefit from their effort, each professor should conduct his class as if each student in it was preparing for a select graduate school.

Indiana University—Purdue University at Indianapolis takes pride in its "mission" as an urban university, dedicating itself to service to the community. What kind of service to the community can any university provide if it cranks out diplomas rather than people who possess some kind of sensitivity to human problems and the insights necessary for solutions? The degeneration of academic standards at the university level is only the beginning of a vicious circle. Today's students, conditioned to just "get by," will become the grade school, high school, and college teachers of tomorrow. Will they impart their "get by" attitude to their students, causing a further debasement of the expected level of academic achievement?

One respected professor recently expressed the opinion that IUPUI is in a position to establish a reputation for itself (even more so should IUPUI become an autonomous institution). What kind of reputation will it gain? That is up to the students, faculty, and administrators as they answer several important questions: Which is most important—emphasis on high grade point averages or emphasis on learning? How would an admissions officer from a selective graduate school compare an A made in a course at Harvard or Yale with an A earned in a course at IUPUI? Aren't IUPUI students deserving of the same educational opportunities as UCLA students have? Will diplomas from Indiana University—Purdue University at Indianapolis be worth the paper they are written on? These questions must be answered; the future of IUPUI's position in the academic community may hang in the balance.

Bargains That Aren't

ROBERT G. DREESON

The stitch in time
That saves nine,
If used often
Is indicative
Of a poor choice
In clothing.

