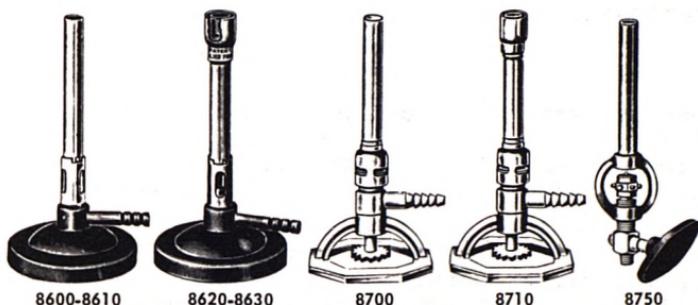


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Incorporating Malone-Stranger Review

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FIVE PHOTOGRAPHS OF FRIENDS I HAPPEN TO HAVE

i.

viewed as pictographs
these two young men seem as if
no one ever smiled back in the old days.

the grim albino the unhappy jew:
such odd subjects to last 75 years
if the color holds out if only

the same can be said of their
sense of humor which seems to have
gone the way of all things already.

ii.

the hometown werewolf
lets his wife take pictures of him.

here he is thrashing about
in the bushes with hallowe'en teeth
and small desperate eyes
that flash darkly in the foliage.

we have caught him here
just around lunchtime in the act
of casing the gradeschool shrubbery
for cuddly, if unwary, groceries.

iii.

the bearded Children's Librarian
obviously a summer replacement
here at his desk is practicing
his wild-eyed stories gesticulating
feverishly towards an empty wicker chair
which is due soon to hold an attentive
if unfortunate little person.

perhaps a bit out of focus
this is how we remember him
nonetheless.

iv.

waving from the motor-home's wide window
they are happily surprised
here in the Colorado campsite
at last night's wondrous summer snowstorm.

footsteps lead away betraying
the hidden photographer who stands
in the glassy morning light
while snow feathers bristlecone limbs:

and every bit of this predated
that magic land of divorce
and the subsequent binge that later read
in the local paper like the night
Tamburlaine lost his cherry.

v.

this is a photograph of God.
no kidding he's the one with
"Roscoe" written across his shirt.

aside from the fact that He
is in this shot and those few birds
and that one lousy tree you can see
that this picture is no big deal.

I have no idea who those clowns
are in the back there.

COMPROMISE

just above
the onion sprouts
Brisco sits
on the 4x4 post
a proper totem
to all things
brooding
and cat-like