

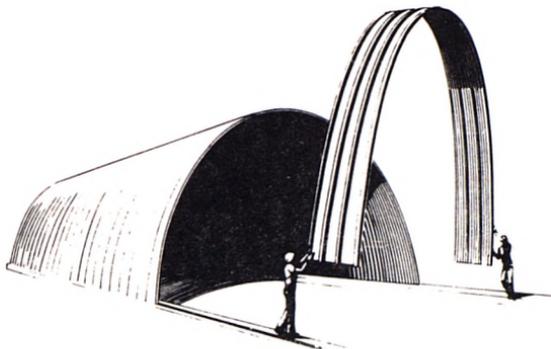
**wormwood**



**review: 77**



Editor: Marvin Malone; Art Editor: Ernest Stranger  
US-ISSN:0043-9401. Copyright © 1980, The Wormwood  
Review Press; P.O. Box 8840; Stockton CA 95204 USA



## SIDEKICKS

They were never handsome and often came with a hormone imbalance manifested by corpulence, a yodel of a voice or ears big as kidneys.

But each was brave. More than once a sidekick has thrown himself in front of our hero in order to receive the bullet or blow meant for that perfect face and body.

Thankfully, heroes never die in movies and leave the sidekick alone. We would not stand for it. Gabby or Pat, Pancho or Andy remind us of a part of ourselves,

the dependent part that can never grow up, the part that is painfully eager to please, always wants a hug and never gets enough.

Who could sit in a darkened theatre, listen to the organ music and watch the best of ourselves lowered into the ground while the rest stood up there, tears pouring off that enormous nose.

THE SEVEN DWARFS, EACH ON HIS DEATHBED, REMEMBER  
SNOW WHITE

- Sleepy: I wanted to get her into the feathers alright, but just to snooze. I tried to make her understand that, but oh no. Always the raised eyebrow and wagging finger.
- Dopey: When she turned up, I knew she wouldn't stay. When she fell asleep like that, I knew it wouldn't last. By acting dopey I got out of a lot of work but really I'm as sharp as the next guy.
- Grumpy: Snow White? I barely remember. Besides, what did she know about chronic pain. I believe she danced, but you couldn't prove it by me. Every night I was in bed early, doubled up.
- Doc: Snow White worried about her health and about getting old. She was tyrannical about physical examinations; once a week was nothing. Of course a woman her size and complexion was exciting, but I soon got used to it.
- Bashful: We didn't have a t.v. so the others used to turn off the lights and make me blush. She could make me beet red, just like that. Or at first she could. After a while she had to get downright bold. And she liked saying those things too. I could tell.
- Happy: She made very little difference to me. I was always happy. I was then, I still am. Even now. I imagine I'm ill. Mentally ill, I mean.
- Sneezy: I was the most handsome of us all, less gnarled, my limbs in more pleasing proportion. But my nose runs constantly and my eyes water. She preferred me until I sneezed on her fancy dress then let me tell you, handsome or not, that was that.

PRONOUNCING MY NAME

When someone leans in and says, "Koehurch? Curcheese? Curgoo?" I just nod. Believe me, it's easier.

When someone wipes his brow and asks, "What the hell kind of name is that, anyway?" I say that it's probably German. Like Goethe.

Whom I used to refer to casually as, in high school, I also let it be known that my great great grandparents, being modest immigrants, had simply dropped the titled Von. Actually I was an aristocrat. Sure, Ronald Von Koertge The Twerp.

"Coeur," said Robert one day. "Maybe it's French." Could it be Ronald Heart, like in sweetheart? How wonderful. What did the Germans invent, anyway, but anal retentiveness.

But the French, they drink wine all the time and think nudity is okay. Now I can stop worrying that I would have looked good in a long leather coat. I have a great new hometown, France. Where, by the way, my great great great grandfather invented the sweetest kiss of them all.

#### LAST MINUTE CHANGE OF PLANS

Cherry and I were going up the Club House elevator when she said, "Boy, I could find you anywhere in the world."

"How's that?" I ask idly, keeping my nose in a tough grass race for fillies and mares.

"I'd just go to the nearest track."

"What nearest track."

"Fairmount down the hill from your folks' house. Or the one in Tucson. Or Centennial, you liked Denver."

"Tracks are big places. You'd never catch me."

"Ha. You always go to the paddock. I'd just hang around there. You'd show up."

She studied Spanish while I messed around with deuces till there was a race I could bet. Now and then I would look over and smile, but I was thinking about sweet Julie in white shorts packing and, at this very moment, writing a note to her dumbfounded parents.

THE VIRGIN, THE DYNAMO & THE IBM 300

I had to tear myself away from my wife this morning to make the first race of opening day, and when I got to the track there they were: fancy new machines where a whole day's bets came out on a long receipt like at the Safeway or Von's.

Gone are the azure 10 dollar tickets and Sherwood Forest 50's, gone genius green and verdigris. Mutus mutandis we stand and the clerk types. Lord, not even the metre of 2's, rich as freight trains through bronze hills.

I swear if they can change the way it has been forever at the track, they can move the vagina, move and improve that wise and cordial part.

Dear Cherry Jean, when I come home will everything be right where I left it?

NIGHT GAMES

The announcer sets the stage  
as I do dishes:

a green lawn reflects into  
the upper deck. The clean-up  
man taps his spikes

and I reach for the big green  
bowl as he belts one over  
the scoreboard breaking a  
wineglass.

I turn off the faucet  
just in time, saving 32,000  
people from drowning.

-- Ronald Koertge

South Pasadena CA

## THE HISTORY OF HIS LAUGH

She liberated the laugh in him. Before he met her, he never laughed. She took one look at him and she saw where the laugh was stuck like a kite in a tree. She hit him hard once on the back and the laugh dislodged. Since then, he laughs a lot. He's gotten to where he really enjoys laughing.

## PSYCHOLOGY OF THE WASHER

-- for Les Pearlstein

When he first met the washer, when he was just falling in love with it, he thought, "the way it sits there with its mouth open, why won't it talk to me?" He tried feeding it: Danish ice cream, frozen yoghurt, expensive chocolate. But not a word.

After a few months, he got firm with the washer. He told it, "our relationship is totally lopsided. I'm putting in all the effort. You aren't even trying to communicate." Still not a word, no answer.

He tried to get the washer to go with him to see a counselor. The washer wouldn't budge. He called it a narrow-minded defensive coward.

One night when he was alone with the washer, when he reached out to caress it, he stopped. He said, "it hurts me to say this, but our sex life bores me. If you can't at least try to make things better, I'm moving out."

Which he did, though it broke his heart. And since he couldn't really understand why their relationship hadn't worked, he went to see a counselor. He was told, "you have to learn to approach a washer as a washer. It is fine to love a washer, but you must listen to the needs of your washer, not just expect it to do what you want."

-- Hank Lazer

Tuscaloosa AL

## A QUEEN

A kingdom has twenty women for every man.

The queen, no longer young, is quite distressed. She can't compete with the pretty young things at court, to say nothing of milkmaids and other wenches. And she is too proud to decree a lover.

A vendor brings a lovely pink dress. She tries it on -- looks ten years younger and radiant. Overjoyed, she orders all other women to wear gray.

Soon, she has scores of lovers. While the ladies in gray pine, suitors line up outside her chamber door.

After several years of this, the kingdom is going to seed. Since they have no men, the women are all unhappy. Since they all want the queen, but can't all have her, the men are unhappy. The queen is completely worn out. What's worse, the birth rate has dropped to zero.

Deciding strong measures are in order, the queen burns the pink dress, puts on a gray. Decrees all other women must wear pink. But by then, the men are hopelessly besotted by the queen, who besides being a queen is quite a woman.

Desperate, she removes the royal wig, under which her hair is as gray as her dress. Then opens her chamber door to the line of suitors.

"Go back to your women!" she commands. "Or anyway, seek others." The men snicker. "They're lovely and pink," she pleads, "I'm gray."

The men laugh softly, wrestle with each other to get to the head of the line.

## TWO WITCHES

There are two sisters who are witches. Though they look alike, the older sister, Morgana, is irritable and vicious (as is only befitting a witch). The younger, Cybele, is hopelessly sweet.

Morgana is feared and hated by all, and boasts about this constantly to Cybele, whose spells invariably backfire; who can't get her broomstick off the ground.

Cybele begins to suspect that her sister's powers come from a certain mirror: a family heirloom which, she decides, should have come to her. So she steals the mirror, hangs it on her wall.

"Today I'll do something outrageously wicked," she says to the mirror.

"Ha!" says the mirror, with a sneer.

She twists her dainty mouth into a snarl, narrows her eyes. "I'm going to be the nastiest witch in the land."

"Who are you kidding!" laughs the mirror.

Furious for the first time in her life, she kicks the mirror, splitting it down the center. Then she goes out and turns a prince into a hedgehog.

Morgana, finding her precious mirror cracked, weeps piteously, looking almost human.

Pretty soon, you can't tell which is witch.

-- Judith Berke

Miami Beach FL

TO JOHN GARFIELD, FOR WHOM THE POSTMAN ONLY RANG ONCE

No one knows why you killed yourself,  
but your movies offer clues.  
You snapped everything:  
cigarette cases, hat brims, gloves, women.

In comparison, Britain's Angry Young Men  
were honor roll students from Dale Carnegie.  
You were representative, but I'm not sure of what.  
A lost generation of one, in boxing gloves or  
pinstripe suits.  
As the honest crook in Force of Evil, you told  
Eleanor Parker:  
"My trouble is I feel like midnight."

Mostly though you spat out words  
except at types like Priscilla Lane.  
Robert Blake swears you saved the fragments of his  
childhood sanity  
fathering him while he played your younger self in  
Humoresque.

Like most tragic figures, you left heavy prints.  
Nick Adams patterned himself after you even in death.  
But Lilli Palmer summed you up most complexly  
when she cooed at the confused, scar-tissued  
welterweight:

"Tiger, tiger, burning bright,  
in the forest of the night."

"What's that mean?" you asked.  
Stroking your tired but still tight bicep,  
she murmured: "Well built."

You had to be sad and lonely,  
but we loved you, if not only,  
we loved you, body and soul.

#### SIGN OF THE TIMES

The western world knows that Johnny can't read  
nor can he spell -- TV or not TV.  
Likewise the bald spot on Punctuation's head  
was last seen going under for the third time  
in the La Brea tarpits.

Which leads me to my Ponderoso Question:  
do I want commas and colons to return  
out of the black lagoon?

A sign outside a bar in Lakewood  
makes me wonder. It reads:

Johnny's  
Dancing  
Cocktails

one solitary dash would have spelled  
failure for the entire composition.

-- Charles Stetler

Long Beach CA

BY THE PARALLEL BARS IN THE PARK

trying to wring death out  
of the bones  
get the blood pumping  
shirt off dripping away in  
the sun

& this old geeser comes up  
in a huge grey herringbone  
coat  
nearly screaming at me, "you  
kids are all alike," he says,  
"always trying to impress the  
ladies. me i've fucked them  
all. Lana Turner in the ass,  
nailed Marilyn & all she had  
on was a pair of red pumps,  
Rita Hayworth even Farrah  
Fawcett. you name em, i've  
fucked em. even that broad  
over there, screwed her about  
12 times." & he points to one  
of the mothers swinging her  
kid.

"as long as you've got a good  
hand, one good palm," he says,  
nearly sticking his claw in  
my face, "you can have anyone  
of them & never get your heart  
broken."

then he shuffles off stepping  
through one of the sand boxes  
taking a long look at one of  
the prettier women as he walks  
past.

MY 9 YR. OLD DAUGHTER ON A BAD DAY

first her body is falling apart  
at the seams  
an abrupt stomach attack in the  
middle of breakfast

her limp at full throttle & the  
near microscopic scratch on the  
side of her foot she shows me

later she tells me the sun is  
giving her a headache  
as though it didn't have enough to  
do pumping up watermelons &  
daisies

then it's the apocalyptic voice  
of doom & she just knows  
the store will be closed that  
has her favorite pastry  
her mom's gonna be pissed about  
her foot  
that puppies are eating cardboard  
on the streets of Manila

& i want to plug up all the holes  
whip out psychic band-aids  
potions, steaming herbs give her  
more than this hug  
& conversation

her eyes are big & blue & on the  
verge of puncture -- do you love me?  
they ask  
-- love you very much, i tell her

being a weekend father is very  
hard, i think as we head out of  
the park

being a weekend daughter must be  
equally as difficult.

#### 14 YEARS TOGETHER & OTHERWISE

"batten down the hatches," he says  
a huge swirling wave slapping  
through a porthole just inches  
from his head

"secure the anchor," she orders  
& they tie ropes to the children  
then with wild eyes she threatens  
to jump overboard  
but all she does is puke over the  
side instead  
then they both hug till the calm  
untie the children

i've known them a long time now  
& i love them but sometimes  
visiting them is a little too  
dramatic

even for a poet.

#### I'M GETTING TO KNOW HER

at first it was like fishing  
through a hole in a frozen  
lake  
running into her on the st.  
the cold shoulder

& now months later completely  
thawed out the conversation  
is warm  
parked in front of the  
laundromat like 2 canoes in a  
blue lagoon

as she gently tugs at my beard  
tells me she's allergic to  
hippies  
"here look," she says & lifts  
up her skirt shows me  
an invisible rash on the in-  
side of her thigh  
& laughs

& i reach for her blouse, ask  
for more evidence  
& she laughs even harder

she guesses i'm a leo  
but she's not even close.

#### BLIND MAN

he sits down next to me  
on the bus  
starts talking  
& it's very strange like

this huge ventriloquist's  
doll with the ventriloquist  
locked inside

only the head & the mouth  
moving the eyes glazed over  
but he's there  
his consciousness, his guts  
the nuts & bolts of his  
personality  
peeking out from some two way  
mirror in his dead eyes

makes me uneasy  
like i might say the wrong  
thing  
like when i was a kid trying  
to open walnuts  
by squeezing two together

always doing it too easy  
or so hard they split up into  
a million crumbs.

I LOVE YOU, BUT

"i love you," she says, "i'm just  
not ready to get into anything  
serious right now. i need more  
space, i'm still trying to get  
over Bill."

& i look around & she's right his  
presence is in the room  
his hands still in her soul  
shadows of his shoes by her bed  
his gloves draped over the t.v.

he still owns the franchise of  
her body  
the eyes, lips  
between her legs

& now 3 months later the gloves  
are gone  
& only one shoe by the window  
"i still need more time," she says  
"but god i love you so much."

& now she fits me in her eyes  
her lips  
between her legs  
plus warmer deeper places

outside i can hear Bill clacking  
off down the street with one  
shoe  
a slow walk around the block  
a few times at least.

-- Robert Scotellaro

San Francisco CA

PAPA

He sits in his chair,  
motionless.  
Weekly visits on Sunday,  
frustrating chit chat  
no response  
They leave him  
alone with his hatred.

REUNION

Old Irish uncles  
half crooked,  
sing old Irish tunes  
us kids laugh.

BUSING

By himself,  
sitting next to a boy  
who too is alone.  
A small spit wad in the ear  
opens communications.  
Friends at last.

-- Bob Amsden

Crete IL

## THE USUAL SYMPTOMS

When the train has remained stationary  
for more than a minute,  
my eyes stray up from my book  
and focus first on the raindrops  
speckling the nearest window  
and then on a beautiful girl  
with long blonde hair,  
standing on the other platform,  
across the track from me.

All this occurs  
with a satisfying, cinematic effect.

Recalling how, on Sunday night,  
Gina had chided me for staring  
open-mouthed at women  
-- alleging I am always smitten  
with this slack-jawed look  
when eyeing up pretty girls --  
I check myself & find my mouth  
is indeed open.

I close it firmly, even grit my teeth  
to keep it shut,  
but I continue gazing  
until the train moves off.  
All the while I keep the blonde  
under surveillance:  
even when another train stops  
between her & me  
& I can only see half of her  
through three sets of windows.

It's consoling to know  
I have some control  
over the symptoms,  
even if it is abundantly clear  
I shall always succumb  
to the disease.

## MISTAKEN IDENTITY

today i saw your face  
on another woman's head.  
the resemblance  
was uncanny.

but her chic suede coat  
& model-girl headscarf  
were not "you."

tricked into remembering you  
i conclude that i would not  
want you for a lover  
again.  
not now.  
yet i could desire this twin  
of yours opposite me  
on the train.

she looks like the picture  
i had of you  
before i knew you were  
nothing like  
the way i thought you looked.

Stockholm,  
2/13/74

-- Allan Burgis

London, England

WHEN HE TRIED TO KISS ME IT WAS LIKE SOMEONE PRESSING  
THEIR FINGER INSIDE YOUR NOSE

not that it  
didn't fit  
or that any  
skin was  
made bloody

it didn't  
knock any  
teeth out

seemed as un  
threatening  
as a finger  
in yr nose

and about  
that romantic

GEORGIA O'KEEFE

he would photograph  
me with a glass plate

you had to stay  
still not  
move 3 minutes

you'd itch here  
and here and

here down

there you don't know  
how many places  
you could itch in

TO THE PERSON WHO PICKED UP MY NEW ROLL OF STAMPS THE ONE  
MOMENT I WASN'T LOOKING

I hope you'll write a love letter  
to someone who lives in a house  
so quiet you only hear walnut  
branches on a night the full moon

makes it too loud and light to  
sleep or send dahlia bulbs to  
the man who loves dahlias but got  
a goose too late to guard them

from the squirrels. Send lace to  
the old woman who used to trim  
her sleeves with lace you can't  
touch now without tearing

If you left the roll unopened  
it could be a large table for ants  
a foot stool for a grasshopper  
stretch it out to trim a tree

It's all red for valentine's day,  
or a border to cover part of  
a wall. You could mail leaves  
from the south to where there

aren't any. Stamp milkweed or  
blow it toward Boston with a  
message saying "hurry, come."  
This poem cost me fifteen

dollars to write, a lot less  
than most others.

CONDOM TUESDAY

for two weeks  
each car seems to  
be drawn toward  
mine as if there  
was a huge magnet  
under the hood  
with a field  
larger than  
Alaska. I took  
the phone off  
the hook all day  
wind drifts snow  
over Monday's  
footprints. I  
don't leave the  
house. Voices  
bounce off the  
walls dissolve  
are like a tv  
program that  
bounces off the  
stars lands in  
Sussex 12  
years later

THINGS YOU CAN'T STAND ABOUT HIM

like roaches if  
you see one or  
two in the light  
imagine the nights

-- Lyn Lifshin

Niskayuna NY

# leo mailman's

## JUNGLE TALE

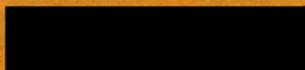
You point out the inch long scar on your left wrist and you tell people, "that's where the caiman bit me when I tried to wrestle him into a cage." Caiman are the miniature version of their kissin' cousin, the Florida alligator. The Queen's Jungle

Shop specialized in exotic animals. Before exotics became restricted, Queenie used to import every variety of snake (poisonous or otherwise), lizard, bird, mammal or fish imaginable. The iguana love a bunch of

morning glories on a sunny day. The margay loves a stroll with madame on a leash. Two beta in a bottle love each other. And the caiman love you. Actually, their love is indiscriminate. Well, actually, the two foot bugger was going for the handful of dead goldfish (as well as your hand) when you pulled back and gouged your wrist against the side of its tank. "see that scar," you

tell customers at The Queen's Jungle Shop, "that's where the caiman got me."

**JOB**



DIVE!DIVE!DIVE!

You're the only landlubber on board and Captain Bill is as mean a bastard as any cur to have ever walked a plank. You learn the ropes at your station but you spend the summer painting the hull, woodwork and masts on the Witch's Brew. In a trial run about Santa Catalina Island, Captain Bill orders you up the ratlines to the crow's nest, a 2x4 foot plank, thirty feet above deck, only, with the leeward to starboard sway of the masts. You spend two-thirds of your time looking down onto the frothy heads of 15 foot swells. Your arms wrapped about

the mast, you watch your friend Jack pull himself up a rope hand over hand from the deck. He stands there, casually holding the rope so you can admire his scene. Your arms wrap tighter so you hug yourself. He says, Great view! You don't remember how you get back down.

You fondly recall, however, the witch's net on the bowsprit, where you'd lie on your stomach and the boat would rise and fall, your face alternately inches and yards from the neatly sliced waves. One night after

a day's drill, you discover a journal in the back seat of your car. They are love poems to some guy from your wife. She has never written a poem to you. You realize that you have been absorbed in sailing and have neglected her once too often. She wants to leave for Oregon where her boyfriend awaits. You comply with her wish but ask her to wait until after the race. The event of the

summer begins: the Ensenada Sailboat Race. The 65 foot Witch's Brew is impressive with her white hull and simulated gunports painted black. The crew works like well-oiled machinery, each to his ropes again and again, Pull! Pull! Pull! like the submarine crew in Run Silent, Run Deep who submerge their boat in seconds when Dive! Dive! Dive! echoes below. Despite your large-boat class advantage, the Witch's Brew comes in dead last. A note

is pinned to the apartment door, the cat is half-starved. You sell your newer car and buy a '62 Ford Fairlane station wagon. You head for the deep, deep redwoods of Sequoia but barely make it through the Grapevine. On Rt. 99 the engine finally blows and your car is towed into Bakersfield.

Somehow, Bakersfield seems appropriate. You lie on the cool sheets of a Motel 6 room that night and listen to the waves beat upon the bow -- the bell clangs, the hydroplanes crank open, a voice echoes: Open ballast tanks. Dive! Dive! Dive!

## THE CANDY KITCHEN

You wrap the salt water taffy -- each piece with a swift twist of the wrists. Long rows of the sticky stuff stretch from the taffy twister machine.

It is summer and the nubile Canucks from Montreal and Quebec in their g-string suits saunter in and out of the candy shop -- their hands and mouths busy with deep toppings and milky chocolates.

Your boss, with eyeball to peephole, shuffles his feet in an Arthur Murray step and twists his apron into a knot.

The assistant cook, Rollie, toils at a fuse box in the alley behind the shop.

Michelle is from Biddeford and you love to kiss her more than anything. The Mass at her church is all in French and you love the French about her. She wants to fly for Air Canada.

Your boss shuffles his feet and grunts and you shift your eyes to the clock. Your wrists go methodical twist.

## WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE

You meet her in the bay of the Phillips 66 service station in Cape Elizabeth. You, the gasoline jockey from an upper lower class immigrant family who survive the inner city blight. She, the upper middle class beauty from the silver lined shores of the Cape.

You don't even remember the amenities. You service her sports car and breathlessly arrange to meet at her parents' home the following Saturday afternoon. Apropos of

nothing but awkward silences over tea and cookies amid splendor and light, you say: When Worlds Collide. She puzzles over this, prefers Thoreau's Walden to anything by Jane Austen. You haven't read Austen but have seen the Laurence Olivier movie. You wonder if she has a wealthy aunt as you sit on an early Victorian couch, she on a Colonial rocker. Out the bay window the waves explode and spread in a lacy fanwork over the rocky ledges. You wonder if Walden has ever been made into a movie.

#### MANPOWER

You and this black guy are assigned a day long job. You end up unloading a boxcar full of pipe for the Portland Plumbing & Oil Co. He sits on a stack of pipe in the cool of the shade as you walk by with a 25 lb. elbow and says: Hey, man, wha' chew doin' bustin' you' ass fuh? In high school, the star

basketball, football, baseball & swimming star was black, and although you shared classes together, you never actually were introduced. He was school mascot -- pampered by teachers, coaches, and students (the talented and the rich). He was different and he was good. In a bar in Long Beach,

long after you've often reminisced of lost innocence in Maine, you lift a few with a gaggle of sailors who would lack a coherent vocabulary if the word nigger were removed from their mouths. At this point in your

life you decide to say something about bigotry, equality of opportunity, and national security.

## THE INCINERATOR

Wendy was the dog groomer and hospital manager. He was king of the roost since the Doc only hung around for surgery and clinic hours. Despite one polio shrunken arm, Wendy'd lift the biggest clients up onto the grooming table then over to the bath tub, except on those rare occasions when he could coax the dog to jump up for its clip and bath. You slung shit in the runs

out back and not invariably made it through the day unbiten. As with Pavlov's theory, you eventually became gun shy around dogs -- jumpy as a cat in a dog house, which is exactly where you worked -- and although no one ever suspected your false bravado in the wild grabs you made for the meanest mutts (the Doc always called on you when a particularly ferocious 4-legged fiend was brought in), you quaked inside and the damned dogs knew it and looked you in the eye. So eyes

averted, you spoke in a firm and overly loud voice: "Nice fella, o.k. boy, let's get those porcupine quills out." And all the time trying to subdue your urge to shriek like a madman and run away. You learned

fast by observing Wendy's method of dog training: this unassuming dog named Ashley surprised Wendy one day and came away with a chunk of hand. Wendy managed to get Ashley back into his cage. He then returned to the grooming room where he stopped up the bleeding. Next he selected a hefty-sized grooming brush and returned to Ashley's cage where, despite having only one good arm, he convinced Ashley that a clip and bath were preferable to being dog food for the other clients, who, meanwhile, were howling pitifully, like a bad scene from Disney's Lady & the Tramp. You,

however, were mostly restricted to handling the terminal patients and the dump-offs (who held one-way tickets), and although you considered beating the worst offenders, it seemed akin, somehow, to beating a dead horse. Before

bumping them off with an o.d. of pentobarbital, you'd fabricate tearful tales of a better afterlife for the loved one and received a generous tip for a sympathetic ear. Once, out back, after a busy holiday, a brush

fire sparked when ashes blew out of the overstuffed incinerator. It took 50 volunteer firefighters 1/2 day to control it. After that, Wendy instituted several Death Row runs to accommodate the holiday orphans.

MRS. GRETA FREEPORT BAXTER

You imagine that if you were years older or she years younger, you'd be her latin lover and she your Greta Garbo. Realistically, you'd be the grandson she'd have if she had ever married. Instead, she lives alone in the 20-odd room mansion on her acres of property on the rock-bound coast of Maine. Like a scene

from Dickens or possibly Thomas Hardy, you sit in the cavernous kitchen and the cook serves you chocolate cake and milk. All the people in her life, including you, are hired to be there. You were hired through Manpower to tend the gardens as a summer replacement. You feel at home and feel empathy for the monied old lady -- you tend her lawns and hedges and flower beds as if they were your own. She asks

what they pay you and doubles the amount. You row out to her sailing yacht and bask in the long afternoon sun. You decide that wealth is a made-to-order garmet and fits you well.

The summer's end approaches and her regular gardener returns from his trip abroad. The old lady brings you into her home to polish silver. She wants to retain you forever but realizes that you will soon marry and move away to California. She gives you a hug and a kiss and a wedding gift in a small white envelope. You

imagine yachting with her to the Caribbean. And tea and cakes served on silver and strolls in a manicured garden by the sea. You imagine a youthful Greta who takes your arm in hers. She guides you to the boathouse on a humid afternoon where you make torrid love on a pile of canvas sail. Once you get outside, you tear

open the envelope. Love is a made-to-order garmet and fits you well.

## THE CLASSIC VACUUM CLEANER PLOY

No matter what the cost, your boss says, get it out to the truck. Promise them, swear to them -- that you won't do a thing. Offer them a free service check or a gratis minor adjustment. Just get it out to the truck! So the fleet moves out like on

D-Day, and you invade the upper-middle class neighborhoods, unsuspecting housewives kicking back for that 2nd amphetamine A.M. with cup o' coffee. Or maybe sublimating that lonely drive by tuning in the vibrator to Family Feud. You swoop in like the Green Berets -- fanning out with military precision and you take them. Once you get the vacuum

cleaner out to the van, you have them. Even if it's brand new, you strip it down and maybe, just maybe, some slight flaw will allow you to bring her the parts in hand. Wide eyed, incredulous, you hold them out -- an offering -- Look, lady, this is bad, you say. This belt is gonna go any day -- lucky it got this far.

She examines all the parts, lacking the courage to say, put it all together and forget the belt. So you've got her. Your team covers several blocks with the same result. You eat lunch in the van, on the run. You sell a couple parts, can't reconcile yourself to a life of vacuous vacuums, so you fantasize trying the swimming pool cleaning business. Lolling

ladies in topless bikinis in backyards, Seagram's Seven in hand, shimmer in tin foil heat. You

collect \$15.50 for a day's work, go home to the Ocean View apt. on PCH, to your wife of two months. You scan the want ads -- Kirby Vacuum is hiring: Sales manager trainees, guaranteed monthly salary, no canvassing

## THE MOUTHPIECE

The job roll reads like a rogue's gallery so you were thoroughly prepared to strike out on any one of the following:

- 1) you were a WASP in a hive full of black-eyed peas and enchiladas
- 2) you were younger than any of them
- 3) you were their foreman (technically designated as Small Animal Section Head, and you'd never shake that title no matter how often you'd tell people: "I'm foreman here and a Certified Laboratory Animal Technician with the American Association of Laboratory Animal Science.")

First day on the job you magnanimously go to the men, who are having lunch in their cars in a shaded parking area adjacent to the covered boardwalks which are a typical component of old WWII hospital barracks. You introduce yourself, trying to control your voice, praying that the adolescent squeak which often erupts from your 22 year old throat won't finish you off on the spot.

You needn't have worried. Abraham, who, you've been informed, has a penchant for burglarizing office equipment, has you by the throat and is brandishing an 8" hunting knife whipped out from the sheath on his hip. "What's that, honky, you say 'bout my schedule?"

Somehow, despite the problematic wet spot in your crotch area, your voice actually saves you for once: "Cool it, man! You don't got-ta do nothing -- but I've gotta way, where workin' together, we can beat the system." If brotherhood is founded on nothing else, then beating the system is its Golden Rule. The others crowd in -- instinctively they know when they've found a mouthpiece. So for

423.00 a month to start, first day on the job: you are not handed your balls on a dog's shit pan.

## GOOD HUMOR

You humor Jim, the mechanic, because he's bigger than you and that's the only way you can survive his dumbness.

You pump the gas and make the change and change the tires and he works on the engines. You never actually feel superior.

One night, on the graveyard shift, he whines about his girlfriend and punches you in the stomach despite your good humor.

Once you pumped gas for two weeks with a broken pinky and never realized it was broken. It continued to swell, so you finally went to the bone specialist and in mid-sentence, he rebroke it.

You'll always hate that bone specialist.

## UP THE TOMATOES

You are in charge of the toy department, the small appliances, carpeting and housewares -- virtually one third of the basement space at the J.C. Penney store. You run the whole works on a part-time hourly wage, and you also keep the wolves at bay: the roving pack of lean and hungry assistant managers whose job it is to get underfoot, like snails, and bring misery and chaos where formerly existed sweetness and light.

This one particularly overbright assistant manager yells at you from next to your cash register one night. You are 50 yards across the floor helping a customer to decide between harvest gold and avocado green highlights for a toaster-broiler oven (it is pre-microwave 1971). You can't believe this nurd-brain

is actually yelling -- a dozen customers stand in the aisles separating you, and he is obviously pissed that you have left your cash register unguarded when he also knows

for a fact that no one could open it with less than a sledge hammer since you have the key in your pocket. So you wave, not inclined

to yell back, only this infuriates him more and he yells: Get your ass over here now, or you're through! You excuse yourself rather abruptly. You yell, UP THE TOMATOES!! and head for him -- no matter how useless and messy

the effort may be, not every snail on the path is stepped upon accidentally.

### TYPEWRITER CITY

A new shipment of Royals comes in just as Ron, the chubby little owner of TC, gets on the phone in another one of his real estate deals. So you go out back and try to think of new ways to stack the bastards cause your boss is a pennypincher on a genetic scale and orders wholesale

volumes of typewriters, 100 at a time, in order to save a few bucks, and he wants you to cram them into a 50 typewriter space in the storeroom. You get the ladder and begin piling them 10 high when Jack the salesman returns with coffee and donuts.

Naturally he doesn't offer to help, but as you lug the 10th case by his steaming coffee and glazy donuts, Ron's voice overtakes you both: "Jesus Christ, not a cent over \$250,000," he yells into the phone. "It's only 4 units and I've got to build garages..." Then he spots Jack and lets

fly in our direction: "Where's my 30¢ change, Jack?" You can't believe your eyes as Jack forks over the 30¢ a little sheepishly. When you finish -- ten stacks, ten high -- you experience a workingman's pride. Too bad it doesn't compound interest. However, it does keep you alive. You only wish that

just for once it could be, instead of Pride, one of the other Deadly Sins -- say, the keen cutting edge of 30¢ in change.

## WAX AND BUFF

One of your jobs at the Beverly Hills Safeway is running the wax and buff machine. Unobtrusively you course the aisles, pulling the trigger on the handle to squirt little white pools of wax onto the floor, deviating occasionally from the back and forth buffing motion to follow a fine pair of legs up one aisle, down the next, squirting at her heels. While spot checking for spills

one day, you spot Doris Day by the produce department. You hand pick some peaches for her and tell her you are from Maine and that your mother is her favorite fan and how did you like Maine when you filmed the one about lobsters with Ernie Kovacs? She is 5'2' and has huge knockers. You ask yourself, Is Rock Hudson really 6'4"? Is Alan Ladd really 5'6"? Next day.

Charles Bronson comes in with his 2 kids, only it's 1965 and no one knows who Charles Bronson is -- no one but you. Squirt and buff.

Squirt and buff. The store plays Xmas carols and it's 90 degrees outside. You feel like you're trapped in a time warp. You hear Kathy, your old girlfriend from Maine, laugh in the next aisle. You zip around the corner and nearly collide with Tallulah Bankhead, who is perusing the cottage cheese at the dairy cooler.

Oh, Kathy, you groan, we should have done it that night after the Senior Prom, on the front seat of my '61 Olds Dynamic 88 white convertible with the black top. One of the lady clerks grabs your arm, Hey, that's Tallulah Bankhead.

## DEATH'S HEAD

### i.

Mr. Gillium wears bandages over the lower half of his face. You wear a mask to cover your mouth and nose to keep out the odor of the big C, as John "The Duke" Wayne used to put it before it got him. Mr. Gillium had cancer of the jaw, and only once you

saw him without his face covering -- his is a death's head grin that sends cold shivers of irony down your spine. He would never smile or talk again -- from the nose down, all that remains of his face are bones.

You wheel him down to cobalt therapy every day and the crowded hospital corridor opens before you like the Red Sea.

### ii.

Sometimes Sue accompanies you to bring some false cheer to Mr. Gillium. But, in actuality, she grabs for your cock at opportune moments behind Mr. Gillium's back. Raised at a boy's

military school, Sue is a practical hedonist -- she leaves you an open invitation to come over and fuck sometime, and you try to tease her back, only, she isn't teasing. Not to be

outdone, you finally do show up one day. But, incredibly, she comes out on top again: she takes you on the floor in the hallway before you can even tell her that Forbidden Planet with Robbie the Robot is playing at the Capitol.

-- Leo Mailman

Long Beach CA

THERAPY

Sue was on a house-cleaning  
binge. So I knew  
she was pissed off  
about something  
or somebody  
usually me

She dropped some papers  
from a dusty file  
that looked like  
in my handwriting

But they weren't mine  
they'd been written  
by a young man  
with bright eyes  
a pure smile  
and children  
in his sacs

QUANDRY

Seymour my crazy brother  
phoned me said  
Hymie, I'm dying.  
That week I was dying too.  
Thelma had left me again  
which scared me shitless  
that she'd come back again.  
I'd move out tonight  
move to Wichita  
but the rent's been paid  
to the end of the month  
and that's not till  
a week from Thursday.

HEYWOOD BROWN

always carried  
a gallon of gin  
in his veins.  
He wrote about  
the frailties  
of the heart  
stupidity of the head  
failure of the guts  
but not of the liver.

BROTHERS

I should phone  
my brother  
who hasn't phoned me  
since he made  
all that dough.  
He used to call me  
to borrow ten  
or his rent was due  
his bookie edgy.  
Now he's become rich  
fat and vulgar  
without a reason  
to phone his brother.  
I'd call him  
if I knew  
what the hell for.

EVERY MORNING

At breakfast he dug  
his spoon into the grapefruit  
as into a relative.

I've had it up to  
he pointed his index finger  
to the top of his head  
here.

You want your pancakes  
with or without?  
With.  
She served his pancakes  
with.

I've had it up to here.  
This time he pointed  
to his throat. Coffee's  
cold he said.

How do you know? You  
haven't had any.  
He sipped at the coffee  
behind The Herald threw  
the paper on the floor  
banged the coffeecup  
on the table.

Up to here she heard  
as he  
pointed his beard  
out the door.

-- Herman Gold

Bay Harbor Island FL

#### TO COMPLETE THE CIRCLE

we need people who have the power  
to give it  
to those unable to start themselves  
mobility is an evasion  
it's impossible to be receptive  
while listening to the news  
we need people with the power to be generous  
who do not think in 4 year terms  
the president is at least 150 years  
behind his time  
we don't need a House  
we need people

without blow dryers & an eye  
for the superfluous  
it's much too late  
we need the truly capable  
to overcome their personal disgust  
& remove the obstructions

#### THE HEAT IN HARVARD YARD

i can see he wants something  
i don't want to give  
courteous information  
i refuse  
as he begins  
"do you know where ... ?"  
that's as far as it goes  
before i've got his throat in my left hand  
my right has already thrown 6 or 7 short punches  
i can hear the crunch of bone in his nose  
those complacent teeth  
are ridged with his own blood  
one eye is swollen & beginning to close  
i'm pounding his stomach & kidneys  
all wishful thinking  
he ignores my verbal rudeness  
& begins his own form of insolence  
"relax, relax" he smirks  
fat fuckin chance

-- J Levin

Cambridge MA

#### HOUSE IMAGE

In P-town, Massachusetts,  
87 Roses, 54 Silvers and  
102 Snows intermarry freely  
so that after a while  
everyone is his own cousin.  
Phonebooks are useless  
if you want to get the plumber.  
And the poets are  
sounding more like pipes each day  
silent  
except when they chink  
against each other.

## ADVENTURES IN INVENTORY

There is the wood stove,  
a stainless steel point in the well,  
books on art and mushrooms,  
a flute and a guitar,  
two thick quilts, a toaster that works,  
and lots of paper bags under the sink.

There are blueberries in the freezer,  
a flashlight in the car,  
ivy in the study, a chainsaw in the shed,  
dogfood in the pantry, a screwdriver in the kitchen,  
a fine pillow to watch TV  
and toothpaste in the bathroom.

Unfortunately, the door creaks.  
Sometimes it says:

I am the surprise in afternoon tea.  
I am the hunger in Presidents.  
I am the flame in Gounod.  
I am the darkness in etching.  
I am the draft in granite.  
I am the ripple in balm.  
I am the xerox in breakthroughs.  
I am the tartar in rue.

I can't put up with that.

We start rearranging the house,  
change the bathroom wallpaper,  
polish the stainless steel,  
take the ashes out of the hearth,  
eat the blueberries,  
rub lemon pledge on the loveseat,  
tie up old newspapers, blow bugs  
out of the light fixtures, rehang the door.  
So the faucet starts to drip.

I am the flute in crates.  
I am the detail in housing.

-- William Aiken

Truro MA

## RETRACTED TRACTION

The other night I was proofreading a book of mine which was about to see print after many years, and although it was generally intended as comic, there were things in it that turned me sad.

So I started to write an introductory note which would have said that, although I cannot imagine myself ever retracting, short of torture or a bribe of unlikely magnitude, anything that I had written,

still I was struck in re-reading these pages by the suffering that a writer so often causes to those whom he loves best,

and that I was happy that those whom I had hurt had showed, in spite of me, such strength of life.

But I decided not to add the note, partly because it might not have been fair to the book itself, but partly also because it occurred to me that the wrong people, ones to whom I have no intention of apologizing, would probably assume they were the loved ones I had hurt.

## JOHN WAYNE

i may have been the only liberal in america who thought john wayne deserved his academy award for true grit, dustin rico rizzo notwithstanding. he started that movie as john wayne and ended it as rooster cogburn.

incidentally, i regret that charles portis, who wrote the book, received so little credit for the movie, just as charles webb received so little credit for the graduate.

i also regret

(1) that joe namath didn't get a better shot with the rams, and

- (2) that joe namath was chosen to star in  
the second movie made from a charles portis book.

so what is the point of this poem,  
or, better, what are the points of this poem?

simply that

- (1) john wayne was not a great actor.
- (2) john wayne was sometimes the perfect actor for a part.
- (3) acting is an overrated art anyway.
- (4) john wayne was not a great american.
- (5) i surely hope that it isn't necessary for a person to  
be like john wayne in order to be an exemplary  
american.
- (6) that there have been many worse americans than john  
wayne.
- (7) that there have been many worse actors than john  
wayne.
- (8) that frederick exley has written how much easier  
it was to get in touch with john wayne  
than with gloria steinem.
- (9) that i have no doubt john wayne (and probably  
frederick exley too) would have been a helluva guy  
to have a drink with.

AFTER THE FINAL

-- with an assist to M.

It was a bit disconcerting  
when I caught a couple of the students  
using torn-out pages  
of the Norton Anthology of English Literature  
as Zig-Zag papers.

MARIE

a large, plain, sagging woman --  
jolly, nonetheless, and no doubt  
much more complicated than we would have guessed --  
she lived-in with my father's parents  
the many years of their retirement.

what i remember best of her,  
besides her blousy, quilted attire,  
is that she kept a diary.  
how many years she had been keeping it,  
i cannot say, because marie was also ageless,  
but i think she must have started it  
before our family knew her.

she never missed a day.  
i doubt that she was any more interested in prose style  
than in the fashion of her attire.  
i imagine her diary was a factual record  
in the great tradition of sergeant joe friday:  
a log of births, deaths, weddings, baptisms,  
picnics, holidays, roast beeves,  
and the first fresh corn of the season.  
i'd guess her diary contained more dates  
than an arab sheikdom,  
all those external, public goings-on  
that virginia woolf would have dismissed  
as quite materially immaterial.  
she did, however, have a small room of her own,  
and, at just the right time,  
she came into an independent income,  
although it involved her in a lengthy probate battle,  
from which she did not flinch.  
yeah, the more i think of marie, i can definitely  
see her as a character in an arnold bennett novel.  
then again, i've always felt that bennett joined to woolf  
might make the complete novelist -- james joyce, perhaps.

but i digress --  
for over twenty years marie's been traveling.  
i still hear from my mother that a card's arrived from  
marie, from some country that's recently changed its name.  
i think she's circumnavigated the globe  
in more directions than magellan.

i'm sure she's still keeping her diary.  
to anyone outside our family  
i suppose it might be dull as hell.  
that doesn't matter, though:  
her diary is remembrance,  
which my colleague, gene dinielli, assures me  
is the great theme of our literature.

thus, marie remembers everything;  
and i remember marie.

YOU CAN EVEN MOVE IT TO A SITZ-BATH

i am suffering from a massive attack  
of bleeding, throbbing hemorrhoids,  
the sort which are of such a magnitude  
that were you asked whether you would rather  
face death or a bowel movement  
you would opt without hesitation  
for the firing squad,  
especially if they would let you  
lie on your side as they fired,

and i have literally dragged my ass to school  
and then to the tax man  
from whom i have learned that i now owe  
five hundred dollars in addition to  
the eighteen hundred that i paid the irs a month ago,  
and that i can expect a bill for interest and penalties  
in thirty days, after which it is not unreasonable  
to anticipate a complete audit of all returns  
back to those golden years  
when to take a shit was still sometimes a pleasure,

and my wife is not speaking to me,  
for some reason i don't even remember --  
finding a reason for not speaking to me  
never having been a major problem for her --

and my baby daughter, who always gives me big smiles,  
has suddenly quit smiling -- i wonder if she understands  
what my wife has probably been muttering about me  
in my absence,

and the last thing i can contemplate at the moment  
is going out in search of a new woman,

and i am behind on not only a deskful  
of responsibilities and chores,  
but also on things i really want to do,  
like letters to my other children  
and a couple of pretty good ideas for poems,

and of course i can't even consider sitting at the  
long enough to re-type the story which has just been  
but which the editor has requested a cleaner copy of  
before the fast-approaching deadline,

and i hate hot baths -- they leave me  
weak and sweating and unable to sleep --

but i run the scalding water anyway  
and lower my ignominy into it

and stare at a copy of a moveable feast,  
first one of the fitzgerald chapters  
and then the one about ezra pound's bel esprit movement  
to free major eliot from lloyd's bank,

and it is the paris to which i have been  
and about which i have written  
and to which, before the recent financial hiroshimas,  
i had hoped to introduce my children,

and suddenly, in spite of everything,  
i'm happy.

#### LETTERS AND SCIENCE

The brochure for the new course advertised it  
as a "Metrics Workshop."

Thank God, I sighed, at last I'll be getting  
a few students who can tell an iamb  
from something you use to hold a door open.

Naturally it turned out to be  
a matter of inches and centimeters.

#### THINK TINY AND CARRY A BIG STICK

tiny tim was on the johnny carson show the other night.  
it was obvious he had come down in the world,  
but the discernible aspects of his decline  
were not sufficient to account for  
the vehemence of the audience's reaction to him:  
they hooted and giggled and pointed and stomped  
like a bunch of midwest grammarschoolers  
at a carny sideshow.  
had there been any chance of their being  
allowed on stage,  
i really think they would have done  
serious physical harm to him.  
at the very least, they would have tweaked his nose,  
or pulled his hair

or pantsed him  
or given him the adolescently feared pinkbelly.

always the gentleman,  
johnny tried by example to convey to them  
how anyone of the least sophistication  
or compassion or good humor or good will  
might be expected to comport himself  
in the presence of a tiny tim,  
but he only succeeded in confusing them.  
they couldn't imagine why in the world  
he wasn't joining in the fun.

just ten years ago, responding to tiny tim  
was to a whole generation  
the touchstone of open-mindedness,  
of a liberation from puritanism,  
of live-and-let-live.

how far we've slipped back towards the slime.

-- Gerald Locklin

Long Beach CA

#### DEAD AGAIN

Ben phoned and said, "there's a rumor going around that  
you're dead. HUSTLER magazine has gotten 3 or 4 calls  
about that.

"Well," I said, "maybe the dead can't tell, maybe I'm  
dead...."

5 years ago somebody started it:  
"Bukowski's dead."

Now it's beginning again.  
They want me dead very much.  
I seem to be very much on the minds of the  
death-wishers.  
It's irritating to some  
that a man nearing sixty  
continues to write.  
It should give them hope instead of  
rancor.

I'll die, my friends, I have no doubt of  
that

but I think that the history of our streets  
would have less ugly names  
if we could celebrate men's lives  
also.

1984

at the racetracks in 1974  
a corned beef sandwich was 90 cents  
in 1975  
a corned beef sandwich was \$1.10  
in 1976 they were \$1.25  
in 1977, \$1.45  
in 1978, \$1.65  
in 1979 they will cost \$1.85  
in 1980, \$2.10  
in 1981, \$2.40  
in 1982, \$2.80  
in 1983, \$3.35  
in 1984, \$4.00  
and horses will have 5 legs, 3 eyes, 2  
jockeys and it will cost 25 cents to drink  
out of a coin-operated water fountain that will  
operate for 7 seconds.  
Arabia, West Germany, Japan and China will  
meet at the bargaining table  
and I will stop eating  
many people will stop eating  
corned beef sandwiches.

#### A NOTE UPON WASTE

I have green and white pajamas which  
I have only worn once.  
and once while drunk I  
twisted my ankle  
and I purchased a thick wooden cane  
for \$2 and I only used it once (at  
a racetrack).

there are other things I have only used  
once: one  
Joan one Diana one nameless Philadelphia  
whore one German girl whose name I have  
forgotten one girl in a bicycle warehouse  
one girlfriend of a girlfriend and one lady  
with very large nostrils.

once-used things,  
as they used me once.

I should at least wear my green and white  
pajamas tonight when I go to bed  
alone. my thick wooden cane I suppose was  
once needed.

#### A FACT

Antony's wife cut out Cicero's tongue.  
Charles Starkweather went to the electric chair  
on June 25, 1959. it took him 4 minutes to die.  
Charlotte Corday was 25 on June 13, 1793 when she  
pulled the plug on Jean-Paul Marat.

remember: declaration of personal bankruptcy remains  
on your credit record for 14 years.  
male silkworm moths can detect a female moth  
6 and 1/2 miles away.  
flying fish can stay airborne for 1,000 feet.  
the land crabs of Cuba can run faster than a horse.  
whales weighing 195 tons and mice weighing 3 ounces  
develop from the same size egg.  
Cleopatra never washed the dishes.

this is what happens when you sit down to  
write a poem and you can't write one.

#### OVERT POPULATION

I'll say one thing: her older sister wrote  
more novels than anybody I ever knew but  
the novels kept coming back. I read some  
of them, or rather -- parts of them. maybe  
they were good, I didn't know, I wasn't a  
critic: I didn't like Tolstoy or Thomas  
Mann or Henry James.  
anyhow, her novels kept coming back and  
her men kept leaving, and she just ate more,  
had more babies; she didn't bathe and seldom  
combed her hair and she let the diapers lay  
about stinking. and she talked continually  
and laughed continually -- a highly nervous and  
slicing laugh -- she talked about men and sex

continually and I never criticized her because I sensed she had enough trouble and I was living with her younger sister, besides.

but one afternoon when we were visiting, the older sister said to me: "all right, I know you've had some novels published but I have these babies, these children, that's an art, that's my art!"

"many people have babies," I said, "that's really not exceptional, it's rather standard. but to write a good novel is a rare and an exceptional thing."

she leaped up and waved her arms: "oh yeah. oh yeah? what about your daughter? where is your daughter now?"

"Santa Monica, California."

"SANTA MONICA? WHAT THE HELL KIND OF FATHER ARE YOU?"

I no longer see either sister, although about 2 months ago the younger one phoned long distance and among other things she told me that her sister had just mailed her latest novel off to New York and that her sister thought it was very good, that it was the one, that is was the one that would do it.

I didn't tell her younger sister that all of us novelists think that and that is why there are so many of us.

#### THE BEACH BOYS

only the young are at the beach.  
I have a good body for my age  
little bull neck and chest  
and powerful legs.  
but my back is badly scarred  
from a former malady.  
I feel some shame for my deformities  
and I would not be there  
only my woman insists

and if she has the courage to be there  
with me  
then I must have the courage to go  
with that.

but I wonder where the old and the crippled  
and the ugly are?  
shouldn't the beaches be theirs too?  
where are the one-legged people?  
the armless?

I watch the young boys on their surfboards  
slim bodies gliding.

some of them will end in madhouses  
some of them will gain 40 pounds  
some of them will suicide.

most of them will stop coming to the  
beach.

and there is the sun and there is the sand  
and the young boys zoom down palisades of water  
and the young girls watch them.

they are thoughtless and pleased.

I stretch out  
turn on my stomach  
and they are  
gone.

-- Charles Bukowski

San Pedro CA

LIT NOTES//

Now released: Index of American Periodical Verse: 1978  
(edit. Sander W. Zulauf & Edward M. Cifelli) 432 pp., \$20  
fm. Scarecrow Press Inc., 52 Liberty St., P.O. Box 656,  
Metuchen NJ 08840 (as always, well done and fascinating  
to scan). ¶ West Coast Poetry Review has published a  
performance piece by Mary Ellen Solt regarding the events  
of 1968, The Peplemover: A Demonstration Poem, \$5 fm.  
1335 Dartmouth Dr., Reno NV 89509. ¶ For those interested  
in rare/beautiful books, the Winter 1980 issue of the  
Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress is devoted to  
the Rosenwald Collection, \$2.25 fm. Superintendent of Doc-  
uments, Government Printing Office, Washington DC 20402.

PRESS NOTES//

Latest received fm. Black Sparrow Press: Chas. Reznikoff's Testimony, Volume II: The United States (1885-1915) \$5 fm. P.O. Box 3993, Santa Barbara CA 93105. ¶ Vagabond ceased publication in 1979 after 30 issues. A classic little mag and important to readers, poets and other editors. Two items are still available than convey to the uninitiated what the mag was all about: Vagabond Anthology (1966-1977), a 278-page bargain at \$4.95 and Six Poets: John Thomas, Ann Menefroker, Ronald Koertge, Lyn Lifshin, Al Masarik, Gerda Penfold, a top quality anthology illustrated by Charles Bukowski at \$3 (second edition). Write John Bennett, 1610 North Water, Ellensburg WA 98926. ¶ Beyond Rice, a portfolio of 14 imaginatively presented broadsides, is obtainable for \$6 fm. Noro Press, P.O. Box 1447, San Francisco CA 94101. ¶ Amphichroia, a collection of 36 colorful and effective broadsides, \$10.75 fm. The Fault, 33513 Sixth St. Union City CA 94587.

NEW EXCHANGE MAGS//

Stance (edit. Steve Richmond) \$7/4 nos. fm. 137 Hollister Ave., Santa Monica CA 90405. ¶ Zone (edit. Peter Cherches, Dennis DeForge, Jay Heller & Steve Lackow) \$10/4 nos. fm. P.O. Box 733, New York NY 10009. ¶ The Smudge (edit. by Douglass Mumm) \$8/yr. fm. P.O. Box 19276, Detroit MI 48219. ¶ Gargoyle (edit. Richard Peabody Jr.) \$5/yr. fm. The Paycock Press, P.O. Box 57206, Washington DC 20037. ¶ Other Islands (edit. Joe Gonnella) \$6/3 nos. fm. 28 S. First Ave. Highland Park NJ 08904.

A RARE NOTE FROM THE EDITOR//

News of other presses and mags has always been an important feature of Wormwood, and the news has been sorted roughly into the above categories of LIT NOTES, PRESS NOTES, and NEW EXCHANGE MAGS. Another continuing (but separate) feature has been the terse book reviews where all publications are sorted into five classifications based on the editor's perception: MODERN CLASSICS, VERY HIGHLY RECOMMENDED, HIGHLY RECOMMENDED, RECOMMENDED, and RECEIVED. Books without any redeeming merit (literary or historical) are simply ignored. Frequently items in the RECEIVED class are not printed in Wormwood if page space is limited. Please note that readers should not presume that the news sections (LIT NOTES, PRESS NOTES, and NEW EXCHANGE MAGS) constitute review categories lower than RECEIVED. This misinterpretation has occurred at least once. News is news and the reviews are reviews. The news that is printed is considered by the editor to be important and/or of interest to the readers of Wormwood. This time, for reviews see Wormwood: 78.

The edition of this issue has been limited to 700 numbered copies, the first 50 copies being signed by Leo Mailman. The copy now in your hand is number: 406

PATRONS OF	Dr. Franklin T. Evans	Anonymous: G.C.O.
WORMWOOD:	Lloyd R. Gág	Donald R. Peterson
	David D. Ginsburg	Anonymous: S.R.
	John Hawley	Ruth & Marvin Sackner
	Anonymous: G.I.L.	Cherry Vasconcellos
	Anonymous: J.R.L.	Herb Wrede
	Anonymous: A.R.M.	

Wormwood subscriptions are \$4.50/4 issues/year to individuals and \$6.00/4 issues/year to institutions. Patron subscriptions are \$12.00 for four consecutive issues with poet-signed center-sections. Free inspection copies are not available because of our very limited press run. For collectors, copies of issues 16-23 and 25-76 are still available at \$2/issue postpaid. Issues 1-15 and 24 are now out-of-print, but reasonable prices can be quoted on an individual basis when and if clean copies can be located. Clean copies are now on hand for all except issues 1-3, which are virtually impossible to find. Microfilm volumes of Wormwood are available from University Microfilms, 3101 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106. The contents of this magazine are indexed in Index of American Periodical Verse, available fm. Scarecrow Press, P.O. Box 656, Metuchen NJ 08840.

The Wormwood Review Press publically acknowledges with thanks a \$1,000 matching grant awarded by the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines on April 11, 1980 to support the "continued publication" of The Wormwood Review.

Because of prohibitive postal/ mailing costs, all subscribers are reminded that Wormwood is mailed out 2-4 issues per mailing. The press cannot respond to library claims when the issues in question have not yet been released for mailing to all subscribers. The reason is again the excessive postal cost involved. Wormwood operates on a very tight and very modest budget. As a matter of policy we try to avoid applying for grants (our last was in 1972) and we try to avoid raising the subscription cost for individuals. All manuscript submissions must be accompanied by the very necessary stamped, self-addressed envelope or International Reply Coupons.

All subscriptions are guaranteed through and including Wormwood: 84.



US-ISSN:0043-9401

THE WORMWOOD REVIEW : 77

INDEX	PAGES
William Aiken.*.....	31 - 32
Bob Amsden.*.....	13
Judith Berke.*.....	6 - 7
Charles Bukowski.....	38 - 42
Allan Burgis.*.....	14 - 15
Herman Gold.*.....	29 - 30
Ronald Koertge.....	1 - 4
Hank Lazer.*.....	5
J Levin.*.....	30 - 31
Lyn Lifshin.....	15 - 16
Gerald Locklin.....	33 - 38
Leo Mailman's Special Section: JOB CITY.....	17 - 28
Robert Scotellaro.*.....	9 - 13
Charles Stetler.....	7 - 8

\* First appearance in Wormwood

PRICE : \$ 2 . 0 0

EDITOR : MARVIN MALONE