
EXEUNT . . . a short anthology of
Americans abroad . . .

with two drawing by C. Peret



Can you hear
Severin's pen
as he sketches
dying Keats?

-- Dan Georgakas

Rome, Italy

Mr. Four Letters

Mr. Four Letters asked a pretty girl to visit him. One evening she knocked on his door. Mr. Four Letters was in his dining room eating one of his meager dinners. He swore to himself when he heard the knocking. He lived alone, and he enjoyed eating his small nourishment without interruptions. But he did get up and go to the door to see who was there. He was very surprised to see the girl, and he was delighted that she had come to his house. He never really thought she would be in his section of town.

"Come in, come in," Mr. Four Letters chanted with much interest. The girl entered. She looked around until she found his bedroom and immediately took off all her clothes and sat on his bed.

This surprised Mr. Four Letters even more than seeing the girl at his door.

"Why do you take off all your clothes, my dear?" he asked her with considerable bewilderment.

"I've come to get your advice," she replied eagerly.

"But why do you take off all your clothes?" he asked her again.

"You are Mr. Four Letters, aren't you?"

"I'm an old old man," Mr. Four Letters complained.

"But you asked me to visit you," the girl reminded him.

Before Mr. Four Letters could stop her, she was lying down on the bed, and rubbing her bottom on his white bedspread.

"I'm the elderly Mr. Four Letters," the old gentleman explained.

"Then why did you ask me here?" The girl was frankly puzzled.

"Why to help you," he answered.

"Where's your son?" she asked Mr. Four Letters.

"Kiss?" he raged.

"I really wanted to see the other one," the girl replied sitting up.

"My grandson and I are not on speaking terms," Mr. Four Letters said with much dignity.

"Then what's your name?" the girl asked staring at him.

"Love," the old gentleman said.

The pretty thing fell back on Love Four Letters' white bedspread and laughed until she wept.

-- John Stevens Wade

Apeldoorn, The Netherlands

Liberty I Have Outpaced

Liberty, I have outpaced your carpet.

The smoke of Melville's strong cigar
Lingers on at Uskudar,

And Mr. Hawthorne's tall top-hat,
What could be lonelier than that?

Self-exiled men, like sage and thyme,
Grow a wilderness and call it home.

O Liberty, I have outpaced your carpet.

Voyages men take, and tell them
To the four corners of a room,

Towers men build, and climb them,
No better than a Wayside Inn.

Customs-house and consulship
Are hawsers the mighty cables slip.

O Liberty, I have outpaced your carpet.

Ding-a-ling, all anchors drowned
In the old depths of a wound,

Albany and Istanbul,
Ends of a peripatetic school,

The long, green summer lies afield,
Afflicted by transcendant gold.

O Liberty, I have outpaced our carpet.

A Flash-Poem On the Affinities of Frost

A strawberry, a strawberry,
A strawberry with bright success
Hangs in a niche of Caucasus,
It and I alike in this,
Our chins grow white with rime.

-- James Lovett

Istanbul, Turkey

Bright Rags

Ah, the great black cypress of Hannibal the Carthaginian,
Who drank a dab of death-fire from his ring-finger
On the Bursa road!

Today that tree is tied with prayers
By the votive-minded ladies of the neighborhood.
They climb from the village of Eskihisar, clutching
Their shawls of discretion, to tie those love-knots
On its boughs. They crouch in their vivid pantaloons
With their surcoats pinned like grief about them,
To whisper it cantative bits of the Koran, begging
A cure to the luck that fails. And what could be
Kinder than silence to the flame of their candles?

Ballad of Beddington

I heard the cry of a loon
It was the ghost of Stephan Rothermell
Who under my window-ledge would step
To throw a scare into my soul

I heard the cry of an ant
It was my old friend Leroy Zick
A razor-strop in his father's house
He came along to be nervous

I heard a whistle with fingers in it
It was that fair-haired ghost Jim Lang
When laughter made him weak
He'd stretch out on the street

But the moon no good in the sky
Pock-marked, whey-faced, puny
As we went out rolling
With our hands in our pockets
Down hills and holes and river-beds
Pretending to be destined logs
Abrupt to the bottom we bounced
There stood a Devil with a saw-mill
Shouting orders to his Swedes
They cut us up and stacked us up
To serve more human needs.

-- James Lovett

Four Poem Sequence

1. in a café beside the Loing drinking coffee
mother of my saints sweet
lizard on my window
thoughts of yesterday early in the
morning
 i will settle myself for things to come

five fishermen in three boats
 in the distance trees
shine green in the sun
i see shade under them and cows eating grass
 it is sunday and peaceful
over the water the roof of the chateau
shimmers dry rot in the heat

black hairs on the lip of the
waitress her face cruel and witless
 she approaches the becoming gentleman
with the blonde she smiles there is a
smell of money in the air

enter a family the father
gray moustached somewhat distinguished
the mother flesh mountained
fish face fish lips
 the son dull and bored
says nothing

a pretty bathing-suited girl
lying between her father's legs
passes in a flat-bottomed boat
 white skin reflecting the sun

2. we drive each other desperate
with our common hopeless causes
 will you have another rum
friend? as you lean against
the dirty wall

 everyone is doomed but doesn't die
by bombs which must explode but haven't
though centuries back some decades ago
we had it all resolved
 the celebration of the end of things
like souls hearts and futures all
sensitive with great parties where all
booze flowed licitly and illicitly
with the changing times

3. as a young girl she would have made a handsome
man

in the tired light under the dusky ceiling
the profile is still striking a lover of
plants and animals versed in their
daily rhythms dedicated
disciplined but it was not enough
parted from the blonde Christina she
showed her friends the verses and they
after the usual compliments seeing them
more clearly than she
indulged in a little private desperation
and hoped that the bottle she brought was
full and proofed

how will she feel tomorrow? she
will water the beloved
flowers at five am
or five minutes after
we depart

have a cigaret friends another
glass of rum there are people doomed who
do not die by a bomb which must explode
but hasn't now we'll ooze a bit of
sorrow and if we nudge each other
a little the bottle will soon be empty
tomorrow we'll take an aspirin

4. three times you stomped
on my liver
as it lay thudding on the floor
be afraid i tell you!

the cat is crazy turning in
circles too large
for the room
thrashing its tail
in the air!

take care! i'm going to
slap you right in the mouth
my hair is dancing on my head and
my eyes are caged lions!

i have never worked on
the thirty-third floor
of any building
nor like
winter-grimed pigeons
creaked my cold way
to blackened ledges

i saw a B-51 fly fly
around the light bulb
and asked myself: will
my sense of humor hold out?
the thing was big and black
and made a shocking noise in
the bones
the kind of fly that bites
a horse's ass
and spreads terror among
the anthrax-fearing!

Joe Kidgel killed cats with his foot
(while his buddies held them
well stretched out from head to tail)
Joe Kidgel was a football hero
of local importance
Joe Kidgel went to war --
was killed by a bomb
a merciful death as it
hit him right on the head
Joe Kidgel was a war hero
of local importance

Poem # 46

Ignore his situation
Keep the branding iron in your pocket
Who's good looks matter to the postman?
He delivers our mail
Do not ask for whom he tolls
... the piece of wood
on which the boy is working
was Abraham Lincoln

Poem # 49

Dead pigs hanging on the butcher-shop wall
small blue flowers in the butcher's nose
flutter gently only when he sneezes

Poem # 50

Tis a cold wind
that blows no toasty cornflakes
into our cardboard lives

-- Harry Bell

Here & There, Europe

It Shows

The tops of mountains that I tossed
down eight-o'clock mornings
Old rubber soles and heels
It shows in my way of bragging
The games I played bent each and feverish
over the wooden tables
It shows in my way of winking
The holes in my socks
My hands manipulating the leaden hockey-men
The serious talks oh yes the wine I drank
the curious caravans circling the painted
desert
It shows in my way of walking
The big town riffs
The pockets full of copper coin
I know I sifted sand and gold
The women shared their clothes and softness
I pared like pears
in pairs they entered, sat, and smiled
and blinked and held their cups of tea
It shows
they laughed
With each one thing in common each
they slept when I tiptoed
and sank it shows

-- Christopher Perret

Mallorca, Spain

Don't know whether you like
working-copies of poems like this:
I find them graphically
interesting something — so
if you agree, here's one
for your collection.

Poem For Kathy

Shade me with your kindness
Love in your forest make my bed

Let the greening grasses grow
in the Gilead of my head

When you touch me Love
how true Goodness breaks my heart

in two You're the image You're
the stillness You're my eye Love

You're the need Fluent brushstrokes
breed those songs which from bird

and silent pond make a Hokusai of me
Tartar queen and mountain prince

strutting with the sun are One in
me Love gladness rumbling for the kis-

ses of Cathay I have heard
in treeless halls sun-haired drumbeats

fall from reeds stark with thread-
like discipline You have taught me

what I know of the rockbound Barbary
Love and Love amalgamated

in a long march to the sea When I
taste you Love I know rolling laughing

tongue in cup that a god's son I must
be God I am of Joy and Free.

-- Christopher Ferret

Rome, Italy

A Few Lines For H. B. At Morning

(... harry's driving off into the sun in his tin-can citroën.
where's he going: duck-foot Charlie walking off maybe thirty
years ago with Paulette Goddard on his arm -- she was a dish --
bolts, tin-cans, monkey-wrenches, nuts and screws -- What's
left ...)

Don't let the sun go down
Pull your end of the string
Jerk it back into the sky
Grinning cardboard
Salt of your eyes
Green cacti
The lack of ebullition
The globe the rope
The circle
The rooms of self-destruction
 rectangular
 pinch the nose and bite the eyelids
Oh the wilful dead-end bottle
Anywhere

What rips through your cage
Shake the bars
It's only the red coyote laugh
 of those blind hand on shoulder
 walking knee-deep into yesterday
Deeply broken
Beyond the trappings
Weep too late for tomorrow's kisses
Light heart of the salty lake
Let there be bright!

-- Christopher Perret

NI PAR GOUT NI PAR DÉGOUT

(translation)

J'ais pris le papillon
par les deux ailes
et lentement j'ai tiré

I took the butterfly
by its two wings
and slowly pulled

j'ai regardé
les deux morceaux

I looked at
the two pieces

-- Harry Bell

-- Christopher Perret

La voiture de l'amour
La voiture de la mort
La voiture de la haine
La voiture de la vie
Que de circulation!

The car of love
The car of death
The car of hate
The car of life
What traffic!

Code de la route
Choisir son chemin
Moteur du destin
Brebis du vide
Tigres du néant
Que d'ailes à briser
Que de coeurs à ronger
Que de monuments aux morts
à avaler

Code of the road
To choose your way
And destiny's motor
The sheep of emptiness
The tigers of nothing
So many wings to rip
So many hearts to gnaw
So many monuments to the
dead to gulp

Prière de ne pas déranger
Les vivants dans les virages

Please do not disturb
The living at the turns

-- Harry Bell

-- Christopher Perret

Surrealist Ads

(translated from Maurice Nadeau's Histoire du Surrealisme:
to each ad was added the address of the Bureau of Surrealist
Research -- 15 rue de Grenelle, Paris 7^e -- followed
by the "business hours.")

The rectory has lost nothing of its charm
nor the garden its glory.

You who have lead in your head
Melt it into surrealist gold.

SURREALISM
is writing abjured.

"We cannot hope for too much
from the strength and the capacity of the mind."
Hegel

ENORMOUS PLEASURE LIKE
THE BALLS
OF HERCULES !

Ariadne my sister! of what love wounded
Did you die on the sands where you were left?

If you like LOVE
you will like
SURREALISM.

The chocolate's umberella is discolored,
Soak it in the door and braid.

SURREALISM

is within reach
of all sleepwalkers.

PARENTS!

Tell your dreams to your children!

YOU WHO CANNOT SEE
Think of those who can.

Is surrealism
the communism of genius?

-- Christopher Perret

Nostalgia

These are the reason-rocking days,
When all the turbulent Fish swim nigh
In their trillions of amorous blue,
And business men with hooks in their wallets
Fish off the bridge called Kopru,
While their mistresses, huddled in negligees,
Wait till the coals in their red-hot braziers
Also turn a little blue.

-- James Lovett

Now,
so late
we only hope
that others dare
those things
we thought
too bold.

-- Dan Georgakas

The Monastery: Aegina

Nektarios was a sweet old guy.
In those dusty shoes (in that glass case)
He tramped the island giving alms,
Advice, dowries to ugly girls --
But no saint. He could milk a goat
Or brew or gather wild honey
Or make good jam from roses.
And now, looking his ikon in the eye,
You see him wink and think it funny
That a limping monk could get so far
Among the pine trees and the palms,
Bequeath his fellow monks his coat
And leave them panting in the race
Like donkeys following a car.

The Idiot In The Bus: Aegina

With the back door agape and the horn drooling,
He clumbered the slow-motion road in the heat's wake,
Tossed his limbs inside the bus, shut his eyes, died.
But the jibes revived him. He clapped hands in glee,
Sat up, gained a seat, grinned at the classic crowd.
And the miles within his head quietly conspired
With the sun, with the rocks as he tried to speak.
He was bound and gagged in the cave of sense,
The robber's cave where the lights blow out,
Where the air grows wings and the tongue fur.
He beat his wings on the walls of our sight.

Athens By Night

The sad gluttons who once feared
Brambles on the baked rocks,
Hunger and the amorous wasp,
Now in fury and tight pants
Slap cards against the sidewalk,
Or pinch the mustached girls.
The sheep they kept also love secrets:
Their eyes blink from gourmet platters
As bazoukis sob for unlikely hills,

As the lottery stirs in its cage,
When the moon slides toward Piraeus,
The octopi flirt with the lobsters,
The blind waiters pocket tips,
The curley boys stack up chairs,
The chestnut sellers go home warm,
The avenues collapse with laughter.

-- Lawrence P. Spingarn

Athens, Greece

POUR SON ANNIVERSAIRE

Avril arbres enfants fleurs
Champs rouges jaunes bruns et verts
Collines monts et montagnes
Rivière froide et claire
Poissons oiseaux chats et chiens
Le soleil
Les maisons
Saluent ta nouvelle saison

-- Harry Bell

For Her Birthday

April trees children flowers
Red fields yellow brown and green
Hills and hillocks mountaintops
River cold and clear
Fish birds cats and dogs
And the sun
And the buildings
Greet the morning of your Spring

-- Christopher Perret (trans.)



"Young Amazon" by C. Peret

Lydden, Kent, England