The Warm World Round You, Number Thirty-Five -- the All-California Issue, Including Ronald B. Koertge's TIES THAT BIND. Editor: Marvin Malone.....Issue Price: $1.00
We All Lived in Hollywood

All the Johnnies
Came marching
Home
But even the mothers
With only photographs on
Little varnished tables
Even the mothers didn't
Believe it happened
The girls
Worried about stiff strapless
Dresses with huge skirts and
Where to put their corsages
Even in Iowa we lived in
Hollywood and spent our spare
Time improving our minds
Nobody believed
It had happened

Not even the mothers with

Only photographs

On lace doilies
As we drove away from the gas station
Where we asked for directions
I said "They must think we're crazy"
And Fred said, "No, he thinks we
Think he's crazy"
We almost lost our way
Getting there.
When we got there
Bukowski said
He'd lost $170 at the races
Neeli Cherry and Harold Norse
Signing autographs
Frances doing
All the folding
It was a strange atmosphere
Of speckled air
After awhile Fred lay back
On the floor and snored for a minute
The sound of it woke himself
Up
And a weird cat walked in
That's a wild cat Bukowski said
Lives off the land and
He went into the kitchen
Saying Neeli don't do anything
Don't scare that cat away
And came back with a dish
Of cat food
But that cat had gone
And later when it came back
It walked all around between us
Looking through all the rooms
"That cat is used to humans"
Somebody said.
Examined the cat food
Without touching it
"And that cat
Isn't even hungry"

Kafka Watches Me

I have no
Cockroaches in my
Kitchen
But Kafka stares at me
Over the sink his face
On the white wall
And to my left beside
The refrigerator I see sunshine
As a strange substance
And through glass

I have painted my refrigerator
Orange

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Raining Now

He always said
The rain always made him think of me
Because it was raining
That time
But I don't remember the rain
And never told him that and
Wondered
If he really did
Or if he was just being corny

I remember the thud
Of the Sunday Times on my doorstep
In the morning and his arms
But I didn't tell him
That because it sounded
too ordinary

-- Gerda Penfold

Echo Park, Calif. 90026

Meeting God out of Gare Lyon

One of those nights waiting
for trains:
Grenoble then on to Cannes
drunk on good wine
all the young girls gone
to bed
just bawds and drunks
soldiers and tramps

the hip
sleep it out on benches
waiting for morning.

I find my car first
class compartment
pull the shades,
alone lie down across the seat &
sleep to 4 a.m.

@ dawn there are roses,
lilacs, tulips, violets, incense
and a girl on hash
seated nude
on the red seat across from me
her flight bag filled with heather.
She sways singing karma
prayers with a Brooklyn accent
(I swear to God)
explains, defines, breasts bobbing
"sorry I waked you,"
black hair down her back
down her belly

and all the way
to Lyon
we are two parts of the one
Yin & Yang be
-coming God.

Afternoon at Abisko for 3 Americans

It was like jumping
off into unknown
lakes like Ujiji
w/ the whitewashed Lapp
store (no Americans had
been there before)
shelves of reindeer hides
bone spoons

those sisters
we'd slept together on the
train (on the floor)
I took them through the
rain to where the lakes lay
open
endless
only the Lapp paths & railroad tracks
between us and the end
of Europe.
&
They went on to the North
Cape.
I took the next train back to
Stockholm.

Marcuse and the Economic Virgins

Reading Marx
I see the bowed rivers
and sleeping fjords
of North Finland:
the Kalevala
and Professor Black Book
who took his daughters to America.
They were the dark rhetoric of Marcuse come to play on commodities of Spring before Mark Rudd or Guevara's end.
Swept wheat hair like the fields of Karelia.
We lead bullocks through the pastures of hair floating over the window boxes and all the faces of the people seemed to come undone.

For Sandra Hochman

Poetess: pitted against a nest of virgins (mostly hardwoods) she draws in fists of honey making bees: hides them in the wreaked grains.
A hive transported broken through Poughkeepsie to the dark stone country west of Troy and Saratoga becomes herself: the medieval carnival: Queen of diseased oak she sings like Sappho.

-- Ben Pleasants

Beverly Hills, Calif.

John XXIII

Pope John you fox you foxed them good. What they had in mind was someone dying, fat, and full of gratitude, a papal puppet for the interim.

And you were all these things, you sly old saint, so grateful to be simply under earth's rotunda, corpulent with years of pasta contentment,

and dying surely dying just to see what death is like. The perfect man for the job, a comfort to duennae and the cortege of cardinals. A gull.
What they failed to reckon was that you were full of grace, a holy fool, incapable of hating Turk or Jew, too cool to care if people popped an occasional contraceptive pill. You loved the goddamned world, I think, from proletariat to commissariate, you let the sinners tap the spiritual till (your sin was surely more than venial).

Pope John you poor old homely man you were the best damn pope since Peter. Perhaps we will fight fewer holy wars. May peace be your eternal portion.

Peter

This much is clear: he was no coward. Remember his spontaneous response the first time that the fuzz laid hands upon the man he loved. With one quick thrust he zipped that fascist mother's ear off. Later, however, at the station house the infiltrators caught him off his guard. He was hungover, hadn't slept, and knew he couldn't get his boss a bondsman if they busted his own ass. (Let's forget that miserable fiction of the crowing cock, a facile literary ornament first introduced by frustrated hacks.) And when the heat was really on he still went all around the world confessing for the man he had loved most of all.

Simon Peter was a big-balled man who died with them dangling in his face. Which is more, I think, than you or I are apt to ask for.

#29

the casanova of doheny's bar in seal beach california is a cat of forty years or so who loses once in a while at pool but not often. when he does it is quietly and with grace. he is as good-natured as his generation at their best, those who came back from the war in europe and could have been discouraged but went out instead
and got a decent job and bought a home.
he probably voted for eisenhower, but would
never vote for george wallace. his hair
is thinning but he hasn't gotten fat and slow.

his women are mostly in their thirties and early
forties, the ones who still look good in
blouses and capris, especially after you've
put down a few beers. sometimes a college
chick will search him out but he doesn't
usually invade the frat-boys territory -- he
had his share of nubile maidens when he was
that age himself. he doesn't look for trouble.

outside the hippies sit on the front steps of
the bookstore. he doesn't pay them much
attention. they have their thing and he
has his, and theirs isn't his, nor his theirs.

don't answer the phone for me the same
as for your ex-boyfriends, dig?
eschew that little cry of surprise
which suggests: someone else is here with me.

save it for pete, who writes such
execrable verses and who pretends
to be your friend, but who really wants
to get into your pants, we know it, don't you?

save it for the guy who calls from fresno,
who only met you half an hour in vegas:
i believed it when you told me that;
i believe everything you tell me.

and save it for your mommy and daddy
who only call when we're making love.
save it for your girlfriends, who are
always looking for a fourth for an orgy.

since, however, i call or come
to visit you every single day,
there is something supererogatory
and degrading about being greeted with surprise.

please, therefore, cut that shit out.

-- Gerald Locklin
Long Beach, Calif.

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I am upstairs deciding which of my two selves to be and not feeling like being anyone today and thinking about Gertrude Stein and her new way to write and how Alice didn't have enough money at the end and how its funny to live two lives that are not one life and maybe there can be a new way for that too. Once a while ago there was a young old fashioned married couple and she was very shy and he was very ardent and she was prim and proper and wore her dresses up to her neck and never let her husband see her undressed and he was always begging for a kiss and she was always blushing and saying stop your foolishness you're getting in my way while she was in the kitchen with flour on her arms up to her elbows and her apron over the dress which came up to her neck and in the sink was the pump handle pump and in the barn were two horses and six cows and the nearest neighbor was two miles down the road. Sometimes she would get really angry when she was working and he would try to play and her mouth grew into a thin straight line and her nose got sharp and she looked bony but when they went to bed she was plump and juicy and her mouth was soft and asking for kisses and her other mouth trembled with delight and her husband never knew what to think in the light he had one wife and in the night he had another and the one who cooked his meals frowned at him and the one in bed smiled in the dark and he was puzzled and wanted to see what she looked like in the dark without her thin mouth and sharp nose so one night when they were making love he reached over to the floor and lit a match and she was startled and he watched her face go from wet to dry and the frown came and he burned his fingers and she wouldn't make love any more that night and I don't know whether she ever felt so free in the dark again or whether she began bringing the frown to bed or whether she woke up later that night and laughed and got up in the morning and took her smile into the kitchen. He felt frightened like he had given her all the power and now maybe he had spoiled his great dark pleasure forever I don't know how it turned out and Alice is dead now after she finished out her unaccustomed poor style life I wonder if Gertrude was there to greet her and how it was with them.

Sometimes I am tired and decide I must give up something and the other voice says don't quit and the first one says it's not fun any more and the second says don't give up just because you can't hear the music don't you
know the brass band is only for sendoffs and sometimes for welcome home and after all you chose these two lives no one is forcing you but it would be comfy to let one go but if one dies the other one carries the corpse and it may look like life but it is really like Siamese twins when one dies the other must go too so I am a Siamese twins trying to stay alive and thinking about pioneers and how it was when men and women walked west from the Missouri River beside their carts to choose the land. And the women chose the men and the men chose the land. There was one woman who started to Seattle proud beside her husband in a new calico dress standing tall and feeling the fabric stretch over her breasts as they walked away from home and she saw him die half way there from an Indian arrow and she was a drain on the rest until she found another man and there were women who lived under the wind in the sod houses with greased paper for windows that let in too much cold and let out not enough smoke and with husbands too tired and strained to speak or care and there were women who cried and whose husbands wished they had left them home and others who could smile as they helped with the heavy work of plowing and digging out the stubborn roots and there were women in the Donner Pass who froze to death after they had eaten the flesh of those who died first and there was a woman who went crazy living alone with her man and listening to the surf off of Point Conception and there was a San Francisco woman named Alice who went to Paris to be with Gertrude who was a pioneer and maybe they can hear the music now.

-- Eleanor B. Zimmerman
Calabasas, Calif.

Williams' Wheelbarrow

So much depended
upon
his white physician's hands
purified with Paterson rain
even a red wheel barrow.

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Biography:
My mother, the packrat

saves nostalgia
  like green thumbs
  for her garden,
saves broken glass
  to paint pictures on,
saves memorabilia,
  obituaries & prunes,
saves 5,684 recipes
  she has never tried,
and has a scrapbook
  of prayers yet to offer,
  all unanswered.

St. Elizabeth's Ghost

The ghost of St. Elizabeth's asylum is not dead. I saw him on TV, traveloging through ancient ruins of a mind, calligraphing Chinese lyrics, dialoging Confucius among the Cantos of Pound politics, war, hate/love, peace.

I have met him through the ages, though generations outdistance us, we have scanned and walled together the words; I have gone through wards of pages to touch his fingertips, which have become porcelain.

Some say they saw his cape brisking the wind in Venetian streets supported by cane/ or thought, perhaps, in a special box at Spoleto.

The ghost of St. Elizabeth's is NOT dead; after his release, drained and postulate I heard his tempering voice declare: "All I have left is to contemplate."

-- Paul Mariah

Walnut Creek, Calif.
gagaku

he drives the freeway
trying to remember last night's dream
he can remember only that it was
just another nightmare

meanwhile
depth within his head
demons play jumprope within a black set,
they play kickball and dodgeball and 4 square
and tether ball and sockball, the things
he did as a child.

gagaku

one puts his finger through the curtain
it curls several times
beckoning me
to the stage
I remain seated it
moves toward me circling
my throat pulls me
through the hole
I dance with demons
I am male they female
our left hands together our fingers
interlocked
my right arm around their waist

I stick my head into their face
look all around inside
of their body

there is nothing
there

gagaku

the stems of flowers
pull themselves
to the ground
the petals of the flowers
pull inward
they beckon me
I go and put my head into the red
stamens with yellow heads
mine is the head of a giant worm
with blue eyes
The deer that peeks out, from between
my closet
and bath room doors, has great antlers
that reach for the light
bulb.

Heard, an expert
today on our culture
and advertising,
no way, he said there is
no way to escape the
heritage, cultural
heritage unless you
go mad, must go mad
and even then, then
even you are part of
the cultural heritage,
if you go mad.

-- Steve Richmond
Santa Monica, Calif.

After the Dance

Drove up logging rd
parked stretched out
head on lap
booze swirling me
in & out of her
overhanging gently
teasing breasts &
told her the short
sentimental story
of my life

Dolly

Gets to me way she
dolls up wig fake
lashes powder lipstick
& all that elastic
keeping me out.
I tell her even beg
but she dont listen
so rip it all off
& hump her till she cries.
First thing afterwards
she dolls back up.

-- Phil Weidman
North Highlands, Calif.
Dream Poem # 1

I was driving north
In Canada
in a bus full of different friends from my life
was going north to fish
and I stopped along a huge lake
when we saw pieces of debris
hitting the water ...
We watched ... it was a plane, about to crash ...
It wobbled and struck the water next to the shoreline ...
I took off a heavy wool coat, my arms getting stuck
in the sleeves ...
Lloyd Villet, a school friend,
followed me ...
We swam to where the plane should be
dove down, the water warm,
lifted the craft by the tips of the wings,
took it up to the road ...
It was suddenly diminished ... the size of a toy ...
I opened it and took out three tiny figures -- a man
and two little boys ... they were pink like plastic ...
I pushed their small stomachs, water came out their mouths
I breathed air down their throats, they became smaller ...
They woke, lay wriggling in my hand
like baby mice ...

Dream Poem # 6

We're going to church, my father said,
All of us before it's too late ...
And we dressed and waited
and he took a bottle of whisky from the closet
and drank from a shot-glass, one, two, three,
until it was empty ...
His face was red, he was sick ...
I said we can't go
we have to stay home ...
But he wouldn't listen
to anybody ...

Dream Poem # 8

We walked a long way, my brother and I,
to fish a mountain lake ...
When we got there the water was shallow
and lay in a huge flat atop a ridge ...
My grandmother was there, alive again ...
She built a fire and waited to fry our catch ...
One I caught was small but grew larger as it
came to the end of my pole ...  
When I grabbed it by the gill slits, it began to talk ...  
I took it to my grandmother ... We listened to the fish ...

Dream Poem # 12

Missoula, Montana ...
I could smell the fires in the mills --
It was on the air strong as spoiled meat ...
Winter was in my feet and hands and I kicked down through hills of snowbanks, snowbanks ...
I was lightly dressed, I was going to see Caroline ...
When she opened the door she was someone else -- a Negress who wore a clear green skirt, who stood on the mantle and undressed ...
who took a flashlight to bed who told me about her dead brother ...

I was in the bathroom, the lights off, tongues of snow coming through the window ... I was crosslegged on the floor, naked and wet ...
I could smell the fires in the mills ...

-- Craig Sterry
Irvine, Calif.

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Ronald B. Koertge's

TIES THAT BIND
My Old Lady

is sitting on the floor separating the trading cards she found in her old suitcase. Twelve years ago when she collected them seriously she was prancing around Peoria in her tight-assed levis thinking that French kissing was for fallen women and sophomores. When I think about her little butt and maiden's head it moves me and I go over and kiss her on the part in her hair. She looks up and smiles. "What?" she says. "Nothing," I tell her. "You're a nice girl, that's all."

Making Do

I have moved my belongings out to the race track. My faithless friends and former fiance think I am mad, but that is not the truth, far from it. It is true that I love the track, that much is true. But it is only because she does not cheat or lie or just tell me that she loves me. I have had enough of being told and then left in the lurch like some funky horse-player. So now I spend all my mornings out there where it's nice and cool. Then in the warming afternoons I mix with the crowd. Our conversation is patterned and inevitable: "I like the 3 horse." "Yes," I reply, "She's got a shot at it." I love dialogue like that, it holds no surprises for the honest lover. At night I wander around the stands, listening to her settle and moan. She excites me, so I cross the dirt racing strip and leave my clothes on the rail, my seed on the tall green grass.
The first time it happened he hid in the woods until the moon went down, scaring the hell out of the friendly forest folk who couldn't begin to understand. The next afternoon he went to the only doctor he could afford, a man without a phone whose office shifted mysteriously from one block to the next nearly every week. On the wall was his diploma from Transylvania City College. That night he held up a mirror and made his diagnosis: "Lycanthrophy," he said, "rarer than hen's teeth." Leo watched all night and in the morning he saw his splendid muzzle and shiny teeth dwindle to the lackluster chinlessness of himself. He paid the doctor and took to the woods, waiting for the transmogrification. Then he prowled, killing and feeding, pretending not to notice the hot smell of the bitch who trailed him. Finally gorged, he growled his demands. Cowed, she ate and then he mounted her.

By dawn he was holed up in his room, curtains drawn, cursing the light, hating his flabby body, waiting for the coming of night and life.
Our nameless, sexless cat is pretty casual about things, but ever since that operation she's been kind of strange. There she sits, listening to them scream and screw and as far as you can see she's like a eunuch at his first orgy, interested but not quite sure what all the fuss is about. She always wants to go outside on these warm, noisome nights so I let her, but she always comes right back in. She does not understand why she is suddenly persona non grata. The only male who pays any attention to her at all is a scarred old fighter who I suspect is a pederast anyway. One night she and I watched out the upstairs window while hulking toms with pool-cue tools arched and shrieked for the hot little number from up the block. She looked so sad I thought of fastening a little bag of cat-nip to her tail so she'd get some kind of action, but would I send my ugly daughter to school in falsies? Probably not, so all we can do is play games indoors: Get the Lump, Chase the Horse, and our favorite, Hideout, where we just lay low until the heat's off.
The Black Thumb

He lived alone. Had a kitten but it died. Got a puppy from the pound but it ran off yelping.

One day he made a little garden out in back of his rooming house and planted a few seeds. They never came up.

A little later he bought a potted plant and put it on top of the t.v. The next morning even the dirt was gone.

On Saturday he went out to the park, laid on his back and thought things over. When he got up all the grass was yellow where he'd been lying like a rock or something had been there for months.

And you know that big tree out in Calif. that's so famous and the cars can drive through and all?

Well, that whole area is roped off and troops are all over the place with orders to shoot to kill.

Late

It is the kind of night when I would welcome the things I am usually most afraid of:

"Over here, Slasher." You know where the jugular is, don't you? Good, then let's get down to business.

Up here, Maniac Shotgun Killer. I've got a big bull's-eye painted on my chest. Let's see some fancy shooting.

Oh, Strangler, I'm down here. And don't even bother with the stories about the leaky toilet or the bum furnace. Just get a good grip, okay?"

It is that kind of night. The windows are open, locks sprung, doors swinging wide in the wind.

Come and get me, whatever you are. But hurry up, please. Every second counts.
What did Tarzan know. He'd lived alone for thirty four years and then all of a sudden this female dropped out of the sky and made him build a treehouse. In the daytime she ordered him around and at night she mumbled to him in a language he couldn't understand.

"Darling," she said. "My noble savage. You've got so much to give. Call me Jane and get a haircut, won't you?"

He had to admit she was better in the sack than Cheetah, but that could have been because she was taller. Tarzan didn't really know.

"You're not much in the think department, are you, baby?" said Jane a few months after the nuptials. And not long after that she brought out some long pants.

"Put these on stupid," she said. "I don't want you walking around with your yo-yo hanging down when the baby comes. God, what a jerk."

Well, Tarzan understood that all right and he was good and mad: "I pissed," he said, picking up on his sweetheart's vocabulary. But he got it out of his system by diving into the river and opening up an alligator or two.

Somehow he kept a level head all through the pregnancy, but he didn't know what piles were, either. Jane, on the other hand, was treating him worse all the time:

"What about a moniker for junior here," she said one day, "or is that asking too much from a banana-brain?"

"Tantor?" said Tarzan. "Tantor good name. Or Simba. You like Simba?"
"Yea," she said. "Simba's great. 'Ladies and gentlemen, the new President of the United States, Simba.' Honest to Christ. I wonder what I ever saw in a ding-a-ling like you."

It was back to the alligators for Tarzan.

A little later the baby was born and Jane called it Otto. "I like that name," she said. "It's the same forwards or backwards."

"That's a stupid reason," her husband said. "Boy's good enough for me."
She gave him the finger and locked the bedroom door permanently. Tarzan liked sleeping in the guest room and they got along that way for years. But one day to his utter horror he found that he was impotent.

"Good," said his wife. "I dug it at first, but later on it made me kind of sick."

Tarzan didn't know what to do, none of the roots and herbs he ate worked worth a damn and he didn't trust Jane to suggest a good psychiatrist. Then one day while he was thinking about his problem and Jane was taking a swim his son stopped him in the hall. "I wish you'd gone to college, Tarz," said Otto. "What if Harvard finds out my old man's a goddamned gorilla?"

Tarzan broke the boy's neck with one deft movement and then he threw his body out the window where the lions ate it. Then he tore off his suit and dove into the river. He crawled along the bottom until he got underneath his wife, then he shot to the surface and opened her up with his trusty knife.

When he got out of the water he discovered he had a hard-on. "Goddamn it," he said. "That's great." Then he heard a rustling behind him and when he looked over his shoulder and saw Cheetah with a big banana in her mouth he knew everything was going to be all right.
Being happy with someone just makes me nervous. Even when things are best around here I start in on myself. Either the black pixies come and stomp around in my skull or the inside of the oven starts looking good. On this good day I think of my wife: her sweetness, her postures, her cheating heart. Oh, she does not philander now, there are no cigar stubs in the ash trays or jockey shorts in the glove compartment, but somewhere out there is a boy hitchhiking in from Topeka. He has more style, more grace, more hair than me. And though she will not condone the theft, he is going to stride into one of her classes in his seven league desert boots and steal her ghostly heart. I see him now leading her behind the bushes outside the library. Listen -- "Oh, daddy, give it to me daddy. I never had nothin' like this at home." Oh jesus. Scared to death I sprint downstairs and put my head in her lap. She looks down fondly as I say over and over, "I love you, I love you, I love you." She does not suspect that I am talking to myself.

Chuck, Gerry, Karl and I are doing fine in Long Beach's 49er Bar. During our comic pool games we talk about ontology, pussy, the state of the nation, pussy, rights of the individual vs. rights of the world-at-large and of course pussy.

But then, right in the middle of an important discussion centering around the length of time a lady could be dead before she was considered absolutely out of the question, the hairdresser from next door walks in.

She is an attractive girl, one of the sort who turns men's heads so often that the chiropractic business is up 22% in the beach cities. So we look at her legs and watch her walk and creak our own necks. Then she leaves with her ham and cheese.
And she takes something with her: Even if it is true that she wears thirteen pairs of cotton panties, even if it is true that between those expensive thighs lies the crotch of a mannequin, even if it is true that she is as unaccessible as a nun she nevertheless stops the day —

Beer goes flat, eight balls disappear, cues wilt in the act of shooting. Clearly, the game is over.

A Family of One

Yesterday I was informed that I had a cancer. Do you think that caught me off guard?

Think again. I knew it all the time and had, in fact, informed them. The medicine men pooh-poohed me, but I knew. I would have known that cancer anywhere. I raised it from birth. Like a child conceived in wine and haste it came unwanted but once here I nurtured it.

Nightly in my closet I bloodied myself, brought myself to bear against myself, fed it bruises and scabs.

Now they tell me I would have months more to live if I had been more careful. Piffle. That is all they know of motherhood.
At eight in the morning I put on my dark suit and sit in the front room right next to the low, screened window. It is not that I am old and bored and have nothing else to do, on the contrary, I have a great deal of responsibility.

At half-past the mailman stops by and tells me again how much he wants to be a writer. He imagined that by carrying loads of prose he would more or less absorb a feeling for style, but it doesn't seem to be working.

I suggest to him that Freddy Zip Code is his muse and a novel composed entirely of numbers might be just what the world is looking for.

From next door comes the wife of a men's-room-attendant-and-philosopher. She confesses that she longs for Tony Curtis, that she has a life-size picture of him that she sleeps with but lately she has started to feel cold and distant toward it. What should she do?

I advise her to purchase a life-size photo of Steve McQueen. Tony Curtis, as everyone knows, is a flit.

They come and go all afternoon, and by evening the street is full of them: the M.D. who believes in chiropractors, the shy gardener who cannot call a spade a spade, the butcher who beats his meat. They wait patiently in the glow of the street lights, enjoying
the smell of begonias in the cool night air
and eventually I hear them all.

Then I stand and sigh,
pull the shade
retire to my bedroom.

As I take off my goofy vestments, the real or imaginary problems I have
solved or complicated
sadden me for a moment, but no longer than that.
In fact, the entire period of grief consists of just the time it takes
to lay my head on the pillow and whisper
Boo Hoo.

Then I grin, turn out the light
and go to sleep.

Pour Vous, Agnes

You have stopped at the Smile Shop on your way Home, and now your purchase hangs precariously
In front of your teeth.

You are secure because you know I cannot leave
The house. You think I tinker away my time
On nonsense.

That is all you know. Right now in the basement
There is the slightest glow and the tiniest hum
From a machine of my own invention.

The gears and pulleys from my first wife's heart,
The screws that were loose for so long, the levers
And chains of my misfortunes: they are all
Cunningly assembled into a device which will,
I feel certain, take your breath away.
At the Los Angeles County Fair

there is a lion who waits through the races to perform at night in front of the grandstand. He has the only shade around and he lies in the shadows

while the bettors in the infield and the horses on the track circle around him.
I look forward to seeing the lion every September during the short racing season out there.
When I stand by his cage to read the Racing Form my luck seems to improve,

if only a little, and that is a comforting thought in the spring when betting is precarious and the fillies and mares are not thinking about running but of enormous, haunchy stallions.

Once in 1966, after a fine day, I successfully resisted the temptation to smuggle in some delicacy for the lion. I have always been glad that I did not do that.
From the beginning our relationship has been without sentimentiality or need for compensation. It has been as clean as his sharp, white teeth.

Yesterday when the fair opened for the new season I drove out and the lion was nowhere to be found. And though I asked anyone who would listen to me, no one in the circus nor any of the fair officials seemed to know anything about it.

Things They Don't Tell You in History Class

The name, for example, of the man who first used the phrase, "The only good indian is a dead indian."

He was called Oklahoma Charlie, a little-known scout for the Army who was -- besides being a necrophiliac -- was queer as a three dollar bill.

Live and learn.

-- Ronald Koertge
Pasadena, Calif.
myself restful

i am myself restful
water i am hot melting ice
& trying to spit a smile
out from behind my teeth
beach white with sand
i am cold freezing water
& sitting with
candle light on the left
& a defrosting refrigerator
on the right & the crystals in
my central globe tell me if
there is bad breath
don't unplug the air
matress in a tight room
i am myself restful
water

song for sue's dreams

red apples bite
the tart skin on the left
side of a two legged
snake, & the snake
turns tail & eats
the apples with cheese
& red wine for desert;
& the turning toward
the tail is left.

now, yellow apples
must be eaten with
light cheese & white
wine, & they don't
need snakes to
bite. yellow apples
don't hang up in the blue sky;
yellow apples ain't
chickens -- they just hang
around the tree till
they get ripe
& fall off.

-- Don Gray

San Francisco, Calif.
And You Would Follow

your poem began we
can just lay together
it can be just that you
simply say you want
it and i said i am old
and old and you said
you knew and you wanted
a young one warm and
it needn't be anything
but laying there just
us two and all girls
were pretty and yes i
was pretty too and all
i had to do was say
but i told you your wife
was there for christ's sake
in the next room and it
was alright all i had to
do was say yes and it began
with touching your hand
and going in and undressing
and you would follow
into my warm bed and
it would be more than just
laying there
and your wife got up
and i said my god she'll find
us but she just flushed
and we rose a thousand times
on some dark wave following
our curves and planes my god
you said before i sent you
back to pat her butt my
god it is not good to be
alone

-- Elizabeth Starr
Sacramento, Calif.

Poem

to break the silence
and repeat old phrases
on lofty occasions
is reserved for bad poets,
ancient generals,
and wealthy uncles --
or a combination of all three.

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It Is Nothing

when they come to my door
i will greet them with hand grenades
and point to children
playing across the street --
they will learn that the enemy
is in our own backyard --
and there will be all this blood
scattered in the street.
its like a painting by hieronymus bosch
or a symphony by wagner --
one must approach such things
on the clearest of terms.

I Thought of Whitman

i thought of whitman
dying
in camden

i thought of nail polish
on my mothers table
and windows
pointing to a dark morning
with silver clouds

and santa fe
without its roundhouse --

i thought of emerson,
a polished apple in the morgue,
and my empty pockets,
my funny notes,
my fotos,
my irresponsibility,
my thoughts of suicide.
my last bottle of beer,
my joint of mariwana,
my intolerance,
my hatred of armies and wars
and armored ships
sailing over the ocean --

i thought of tamborines
and my sisters dance recital
and
randolph hearst
who built a castle
to protect himself from death.
but there is no protection
for any of us —
and this is good to know
as governments create new fascism.

there is no escape/
no way
from blowing ones nose
or
belching
or
going insane
or
committing any number of suicides.

i was sitting in my bedroom
thinking of whitman --
and emerson,
like a south american banana,
lying in his coffin.

i thought of IBM
and saint dominigue --
he set fire to the town
and murdered himself
because nobody was clean,
including self --
this brought him sainthood.

i thought of hank
and
marina louise
and
elm trees
lining the lanes of massachusetts --

i thought of gracie allen,
funny lady --
she did not see the beard of whitman
and his large, soft eyes.

i thought of tinkerbelle,
i thought of huey and russell and samuel long,
i thought of bogart
and flynn
and tracy --
i thought of standard stations
and standards of literature --

i thought of stale men
and their weak decisions --
i thought of walnuts growing on the tree --
i thought of fifteen yr old boys
pumping till last ebb and flow
of their strength —
growing into old
and toothless men.

i thought of mud
flowing genuine on the bottoms
of american rivers -- the fine substance
of our ancestors --
the ebb and flow
of fifteen yr old boys --

i thought of these same young men
fascinated by the black curly hair
growing on their body -- shaving
for the first time.

i thought of smut hunters
and
guardians of traditional art
and
plato, making it with a young student
and
rabbis of hamburger heritage
and
policemen in heavy thighs, waiting for rebellion,
a moments release
in cracking of skulls.

i thought of labor day
and women in excessive labor
and
peasants laboring for worms
and
a dry crust of bread.

i thought of the con
one man slips on another --
i thought of easy money,
fast money,
and
hatred,
bubbling from coffee cups

and eyes of the law
staring
from your prune danish --

i thought of whitman,
i thought of emerson,
i thought of general washington,
i thought of chocolate pudding,
i thought of the apples of simon gold,
the iron in newmans junkyard,
i thought of all the boys
waiting in camp --
i thought of father and i and captain goodwin --

i thought of john kennedy --
i thought of oswald --
i thought of ruby --
i thought of dallas --
i thought of the elm trees
blowing over the grey beard of whitman --
i thought of emerson
asleep like apple blossoms --

a clean fascism --
a gentle anarchy --
anything with guts.

-- neeli cherry

Los Angeles, Calif.

"How I Was Almost Donna Reed"

The Night I met you at the
Greek dance concert I wore
that horrid shocking dress
because I was mad at my father
and you tried to pick me up.

And for once I didn't tell
you, the mass you, that I
was Dominique Vanderbilt and
I was home for the weekend
from a small college in
Poughkeepsie -- Vassar, you know.

No, I told you the truth
about me if a name is a truth
and you pursued me; I love
to be pursued; it's so dramatic

I said are you sure you're
not married? No, you said.
Are you sure you're not Catholic?
No, I said. And you said I have
to see you again and I gave
you my Sarah Bernhardt look.

And you called me that night
between autopsies and I was
fascinated and told you
about my grandmother's autopsy
and about Dylan Thomas.

That Saturday we went to
your apartment and I liked it
and your red Alfa-Romeo
and told you about my
speed and power complex
and you gave me a stethoscope.

And we went out to dinner
which I thought was terribly
bourgeois but then we went
to the underground flicks
which was better and then
you tried to screw me which
was best but I said it
was too risque and you
called me a prude.

So on the second date we
did the thing at Camille's
apartment after you
helped me study the amniote
egg and I said it was
the first meaningful, really
meaningful, experience I had.

And we went walking on the
beach and fell in love without
your knowing about my going
to the Princeton Jr. Prom or
about my rendezvous in St. Louis
with Glueckman who said only
Jewish men appreciated
Catholic girls.

And we went walking on the
beach and fell in love without
my knowing about your Lisa
or the girl you got pregnant
six years ago or
knowing your family.

And then you rented an
executive room at the Newporter
and I watched television
because I didn't want to
do it all the time in motels --
only sometimes -- and you said
I really was pure and I
looked like somebody's sister.

We were always honest. I
said that literature was my
only love and I was going
to get my doctorate and
live in a haunted house
with a parrot on my shoulder

And I said you were so
fantastic with women that
you should go into residency
in gynecology to show you
I wasn't the jealous type.
And you like me because I
was so blase even though
I told you I was rather intense.
And your lecture telling
me I talked in abstracts was
so true -- everything you say
is true.

So now this time I really
love you -- your beer belly and
lower extremities and everything
in between and your face
that looks like Norman
Mailer -- but most of all
your brilliant mind.

And all I want to do is be
pregnant. I practiced walking
with pillows all the time.
And how nice it would be
to breastfeed a baby. Isn't
that what life's all about anyway?

But that will never happen
because you'll leave me
for someone you'll meet
at a Mongolian singing
festival and I'll never
go out with anyone else.
I'll become a nun and say
Hail Mary's to my memories of you.

-- Patricia Hamilton O'Connor
Long Beach, Calif.

The Blahs

I am thirty-two years old
and like to get letters from poets
and excitable people. But there aren't
many people writing excitable poems
(horray for those who do) anymore.
People have this dull look about them, lately.
What is the matter with them?
The mail comes slowly and I've been
looking around for something better to do.
Repossessed

We are moving to this house out in the country with nothing on either side of it but dirt and weeds and whatever small things can hide. The poor people who originally lived there, went under. So the savings & loan said: sorry, no money, no house, no two acres. And they took it back.

We came along looking for something we could afford, and this had to be it. The place was filthy from ceiling to floor, as if the original owners had taken out their financial fury on the heart of the house. But they wrecked it just enough to lower the price to our level. God, I thought, is this the capitalist in me? But no one is in the house now. Only spiders are there who have spun a million webs where the mosquitos and moths are caught. And outside, some chickens running around wild and frightened.

So I said, let's get it. And we did. Tomorrow we're going out to mop the place and scrub the walls and put our own paint on it. We will get caught in our own webs, thankyou. Pray for us.

Harry

I met Harry when he was fifty-eight and I was thirty-one.
He talked and recited a lot.
He also smoked and wheezed.
And he fell in love, all the while continuing to talk and recite, smoking and wheezing, giving you his heart and mind. I think you would like him too.

Ernest Hemingway Is On My Mind

Ernest Hemingway is on my mind.
I think he was a big man and pretty good at writing.
I think he lived as big as he was because if he slowed down he might have run over himself.
I think he turned around only once.
The Second Flood and Then the Fire

This was the way
the flood came;
no one was being
overly good
or bad.

Clam chowder
was the soup of
the day.

The winos
were drinking anything.

But it rained anyway.
It rained
like hell.

It was too cold
for kids
to build small rafts.

Everyone disappeared
into the houses and buildings
until the rain
spilled them out again.

Lovers, in their fear,
forgot to embrace.
Death
touched their lips.
And called out
everyone's name.

Birds perched
on whatever was tall
above the water.

A bartender
waiting for the last
of the seige,
polished glasses
and poured himself
a drink.

It was a good enough
ending.

And it rained, they say,
Forever and ever.

Please Don't Tell Me I Am Prosaic Just Let Me Write

It took me just five minutes
to write my last two poems. I will
probably send them out and maybe one
of them will be accepted.
People (we know who reads us)
will read it and think they know
how I felt when I wrote it -- but let's
be honest together: I wrote
these poems after a good meal.
I was content (for then) and life
seemed full of the living.
So if you ever meet me,
do not expect the sad-eyed hungry
poet. Forgive me, it is not that
I am a fake, just that we are all
so many things.

Mate

Sometimes
even when I don't
want you,
I want you to keep
wanting me.
It is destroying us.
Guide Him Through These Mysteries

It is a lot of fun
to care about someone
who is younger than you, and to think
you know so many more answers
than he will discover
for himself, and to confide in him
the wisdom of your experience
and to guide him through
these mysteries of life
and to look at his face and see
he has been allowing it
and loves you anyway.

-- Ann Menebroker
Wilton, Calif.

Rock for Madam Dusty

Madam Dusty
hobbled over to her looking glass
sprayed herself with eau de cologne
painted a scarlet wound on her mouth
where breath went out and in
flabby Madam Dusty
Madam Dusty
danced with a fop
bony under his powdery skin
Madam Dusty
danced
her face got longer
her cheeks fell in
and he chased her into a corner
long-faced Madam Dusty
while the green things came up
the leaves little
the tall white flowers
the green things came up
as they always do
and the sun shone golden on the web
and the atoms danced the deathless dance of death
Bar-Room Colloquy

you're a dumb Indian
said the man in the bar

the Indian got to his feet slowly
and sauntered over
he folded the man up
and wrapped his legs around his neck
then he dangled him by his coat collar
dusted him off with care
and set him on a bar stool

thanks for not killing me
the man said

you're lucky I'm not a white man
said the Indian
breathing hard

--- Hester G. Storm
San Francisco, Calif.

Highly Recommended: ................................................

• Animae (W. S. Merwin), Journal of Return (Richard Shelton), In Defiance of the Rains (Kathleen Fraser), Selected Verse (Georges Zuk, trans. by Robin Skelton) each $1.50 fm. Kayak, 2808 Laguna St., San Francisco, Calif. 94123 plus Wondering Where You Are (Robert Peterson) just publ.
• The Five Hours (Don Gray) $1.50 fm. Twowindows Press, P.O. Box 16272, San Francisco, Calif. 94116. • The Dimensions of the Morning (D. r. Wagner) fm. Black Rabbit Press c/o T. L. Kryss, 41-A Sanchez, San Fran., Calif. 94114.
• Monster Cookies (Pete Winslow) $1 fm. author, 332 Chestnut St., San Fran., Calif. 94133, also brilliantly illust. by Ken Brandon.

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• John Oliver Simon's Dancing Bear, $1 fm. Noh Directions Press, 2209 California St., Berkeley, Calif. 94703. • Anthology 2 (Poems read at the Midwest COSMEP conference, Ann Arbor, June 1969) $2 fm. COSMEP, P.O. Box 703, San Fran., Calif. 94101

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Grande Ronde Press releases Blues from Thurston County (Charles Potts), Her Majesty's Ship (Gene Fowler) and Jo Slatton's Hooded Eye -- all from Box 2038, Sacramento, Calif. 95809.

Furies by Lili Bita, forward by Anais Nin, $1.95 from Hors Commerce Press, 22526 Shadycroft Ave., Torrance, Calif. 90505. 

Aphrodisia Press has released marcus j. grapes' Perchance, In All Your Travels Have You Ever Been to Pittsburgh, $3.95 from author, 725 North Sweetzer, Apt. 208, Los Angeles, Calif. 90069 -- a future collectors' item with brilliant counterpoint illustrations by Francisco McBride. Get the catalog of many little press offerings from A New Dimension, P.O. Box 2038, Sacramento, Calif. 95809.

new little mag: Meatball (edit. Joel Deutsch) 50 cts./copy from 206-A Frederick St., San Fran., Calif. 94117.

Noted As Received:

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Fred Rue Jacobs' Every Woman is a Virgin $1.50 from Zeitgeist, Box 150, E. Lansing, Mich. 48823.

Martha O'Nan's The Role of Mind in Hugo, Faulkner, Beckett and Grass $3.95 from Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10016.

Jesus Rosas Marcano's La Ciudad from Poesia de Venezuela, Apartado 1114, Caracas, Venezuela.

Knute Skinner's In Dinosaur Country $1 from G. B. Morgan, Pierian Press, 1614 9th St., Greeley, Colo. 80631.

Gena Ford's This Time, That Place $4 from Elizabeth Press, 103 Van Etten Blvd., New Rochelle, N.Y. 10804.

For those Who Waked Me by Robert Lewis Weeks) $2.50 and Discourses on Poetry (edit. by Kenneth Lawrence Beaudoin) $2 from South & West, 2601 South Phoenix, Ft. Smith, Ark. 72901.

Moment of the Now (Charles Shaw) $3.50 from Profile Press, 151 West 25th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10001.

Albion Wattled Eyes (David E. Middle-ton & Lin Stoll) from authors, P.O. Box 7041 Tech. Stat., Ruston, La. 71270.

Paul Grant's Soundtracks from Gallowglass Press, 1721 21st St., NW (#1), Washington, D.C. 20009.

d. a. levry's stone sacophagus 25 cts. from Radical America, 1237 Spaight St., Madison, Wisc. 53703.

Vito Acconci's Transference from 0 to 9 Books, 102 Christopher St., N.Y., N.Y. 10014.

Sotere Torregian's Song For Woman from Lace Review, Box 7181 Roseville Station, Newark, N.J. 07107.

Jerry Burns' Acetylene Flowers & The Way: A Trip in Tao-Tarot Time, each $1.25 from Goliards, P.O. Box 1282, Bellingham, Wash. 98225.


Tar River Poets (Lyn Colcord, Kathy Gossett, Regina Kear, Clair Pittman) $1 from East Carolina Univ. Poetry Forum Press, Univ. Stat. P.O. Box 2707, Greenville, N.C. 27834, also Tar River Poets (Fred Sorensen, Richard Capps, Chas. Griffin) $1.

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