



Vivian  
Finlay



T H E   W O R M W O O D   R E V I E W

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Nestorlah

He assumed the air of an actor. Raising a finger in a certain way, he told us vaguely about everything. People applauded in the many pauses. Yes! There was proof! All our worries are due to incorrect thinking. "Don't think that way! And furthermore, stand up straight! You owe yourselves at least that much!"

His bright orange pants fit him well. Occasionally, he'd throw in a flip or cartwheel. Gaining his audience, he began to explain the connection between and cure for nail-biting and fear of death. "I once bit my nails myself," he started. The story caught more and more ears, his speech going on and on.

After everything imaginable had been uttered, the actor said, "One more thing. I wonder if you want to know my name?" "My name is Nestorlah," he said. And all the people shouted, "Nestorlah, Nestorlah!" knowing that the world had been born between Nestorlah's lips.

The child could count to four or five and before it was very long he had reached the number ten. His mother taught him well, she taught him to dislike it. The boy wrote his numbers down, then he erased them, and placed the rewhitened sheet of paper on his pillow. He was destined to become a minor poet. All he needed was the ability to rest his head upon those crackling blank pages, and sleep-dream.

#### Uncle Williams

Uncle Williams pointed in the direction of the llamas' cage said he'd seen 'em in the war. I pointed to the lambs 'n asked him if he seen any of those. "Nope. They're common. But I been everywhere in my life. I traveled the Mongolian Sea and Oh the sights! The water there's extra wet so you don't need to take baths so often. Went for a week workin' on them greasy engines 'n my hands just a little smudgy. They got princes over there that go huntin' for elephants. That's all I know about llamas."

-- Stephen Hall

Attleboro, MA

#### Around Her Leg She Wore

She said the Prince had sent her  
all the way from the castle  
she'd come running  
all that way

She said there was a war on  
and asked me if I would  
wear one of their roses

I said I would be pleased to  
we both smiled as she pinned it on me

It was about a week later  
when the gentlemen came from the firingsquad  
of course I came away quietly  
to here

Now I fully agree with them  
a man must learn to die with dignity  
and though they've a cruel job I see them  
as essentially honorable men

And they've given me the time in this place  
to work it all out in my head  
and make peace with my past

### Babysitter

man he says I always did  
want to meet one of you college dudes  
then horse lids his eyes and he puts his head  
back on the top of the chair  
the cigaret lolls in his mouth

he is 18 but looks 25  
he has been in and out  
of various joints since age 13  
first time he eyeballed my books  
as if they represented the ultimate heist  
he is one of Blithering Jack's boys  
quite paranoid and a potential danger  
sometimes Jack drops him by  
when the heat's after him  
or he thinks they are

asleep he turns his head  
and the cigaret begins to burn  
the left shoulder of his shirt  
the smoldering fire moves  
like a slow eruption of acid  
in a vial of very pure water  
he has a tattoo that is  
being progressively revealed  
as the shirtsleeve crumbles away  
and I watch wondering what it is

he wakes with a rising slapping  
motion and gets things under control  
then he looks at me and I  
walk over pretending  
I had fallen asleep too  
there is a terrible angry black skull  
perched on angry crab-colored flesh  
with a turquoise inscription below  
which reads DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR

and I have to admit to  
feeling a certain envy of him  
having no such succinct code to live by  
I bring him a damp cloth for his arm  
and he lights another cigaret  
after awhile Blithering Jack comes back  
as usual he gives me some things for  
babysitting his boy then they leave

La Cienega, 1957

## L'ENFANCE D'UN CHEF

Sandoz worked the west 40 too  
he was made to carry the bull food in a quiver  
he found it cumbersome but continued  
he liked to watch the sun's progress during the course of  
a day  
& to rehearse the songs he had learned as a boy

The massa had his own skeetshooting trap  
on a handsome rocky point overlooking a bend of the river  
it was up behind the large and spacious ranch house  
his foreman was 84 years old and nearly blind  
he got young girls from the town and screwed them  
in the pinons all over the ranch  
Sandoz heard Slim had to go to the doctor a lot

Sandoz worried an awful lot about the twin villages  
down in the valley west of the ranch  
there was one wagon track that went in there  
one year it got washed out it was never replaced  
Sandoz worried about those people as he rode along  
he wondered could they grow enuff food  
& what would they do if their crops failed  
times like that he did not feel like singing

The ruins of an ancient pueblo  
stood in an almost hidden corner of the ranch  
when he felt blue Sandoz would go sit in the kiva  
or that dark room that had been their kiva  
it was a gloomy place that smelled bad  
but Sandoz didn't mind the odors  
nor the condoms left there by the boys from the town  
it was a good place to shelter from the rain  
he could hear the scream in nearby arroyos  
always here rain meant flash floods  
and maybe stock would be drowned

He sat and listened  
he sat & looked at the crumbling walls  
in the dim light till his eye sockets hurt

he thought of his toenails growing inexorably  
down there in his boots  
he also thought of his mother  
& of his father too  
they had taught him many songs

One day Sandoz had had to kill many snakes  
he did not like to do this but they threatened the stock  
also they could injure his own horse  
he was thinking of these things as he stopped  
at the river to gather a drink  
as his eyes followed his cupped hands he saw  
a snake in the water it was looking at him  
he mounted and road off  
still thirsty

Sandoz could not tell the authorities  
how large the ranch was when they came and asked  
his first job there had been to ride fence  
all he knew was that it had taken seven weeks  
to ride the perimeter of the place  
he got a little paranoid at first  
though of course he didn't know that word  
he thought maybe Slim had meant to just leave him out  
there  
but then Sandoz had faith and enuff food  
plus the songs he had learned as a boy

### The Collector

he starts out each day with gin and speed  
then drives to "the other house" where he  
walks in the gardens for one half-hour  
seeing no people speaking to no thing  
save the one bluebird he trusts  
he spends \$30 a month for sunflowerseed  
and more than that for plants and flowers  
often he performs the transplants himself  
his houses and grounds are constantly  
undergoing major alterations or paint  
or architecturally bizarre enlargements  
he has bridges built over tiny streams  
also a gazebo in the midst of an orange grove  
he concludes his morning excursion  
by pissing on the hollyhock behind his office  
it is almost twenty feet tall now  
with a lovely strawberry bloom  
then he goes into the mansion (TITANIA LIBRARY  
his cards read: An Empire of Important Books)  
where he sits at the world's most disorganized desk  
as long as he can remain motionless  
he uses the phone and opens the mail there  
but its principle function is as shelter

he eats no lunch but drinks coffee  
chainsmokes and drops speed instead  
he is sixty years old but does not look it  
his neck is permanently kinked so he  
carries his head at the port quarter  
and walks like a windup toy  
he is proud of his physical strength  
more proud of his ability to lie and forget nothing  
his wife gives him a monthly allowance  
of \$10,000 and he drives much too fast  
sometimes he burns a sore on the back  
of his left hand "to cauterize it" he says  
looking sheepish looking like a dirty grisaille  
he owns in excess of 100,000 books  
housed in various mansions estates and warehouses  
in two or three parts of the world  
he loses track of them as fast as he buys them  
then reports them as stolen to the authorities  
even though he has a system for cataloging them  
and a crew of typists and shelvees to do the work  
they start in the ballroom then fan out  
to the upstairs bedrooms studies closets and so on  
he hires kids whom he has never heard of or seen before  
hitchhikers who have heard of him up and down the coast  
come seeking work one day he gave a kid ten dollars  
to dig a hole and after lunch another ten  
to fill it in:

when asked he replied only  
I always hated the old army game  
from time to time shady looking college boys come  
to see him this is because he likes speed better  
buying from them rather than on prescription  
twice a year one of his gardeners gathers the gin bottles  
scattered in various arbors about the grounds  
they fill the bed of a pickup truck  
twice a year also he takes 30-day around-the-world  
bookbuying trips and sometimes his wife goes too  
she is in her late 80s now a really grande dame  
formerly a distinguished writer on psychopathology  
she married extremely well and did better with what was

left

when queried her present husband the collector  
looks greyly harried and responds  
yes I'm a piss-ease as if there had to be something  
intrinsically flawed about all born under that sign  
dealers and scouts the world over  
save for him their most soiled and defaced wares  
some keep them in barrels in basement corners  
buying makes him feel a way he likes so he goes  
sometimes he goes to smalltown Sally rummage sales  
where he tells the people there he's from  
some neighboring town's public library  
at the mansion he lives for the mail  
when it comes he opens packages ruthlessly

he opens each book and scribbles in large letters  
all over the front free endpaper expressions like  
GRABHORN PRESS LIMITED EDITION! FIRST BRITISH EDITION  
FIRST ISSUE WITH CONTENTS LATER SUPPRESSED  
and lies about the condition they are all FINE FINE FINE  
SUPERB IN THE ORIGINAL GLASSINE and so on  
then he slams the book to the floor  
or the top of the pile he's working on  
in such a way as to leave no doubt about the size  
of his scorn for the whole world of the intellect  
he loves to dole out usually derogatory stories  
about the authors of the books he holds to his boys  
or those few people that come to see him  
he spends hundreds a month calling libraries  
who say they will send people out but do not  
and next day more packages arrive from his scouts  
all over the U.S. as well as Europe South Africa Australia  
also Japan which he says he enjoys visiting  
always he complains about prices but always signs the checks  
then time for more cigarets and/or coffee  
more telephone calls and sometimes  
he walks in the gardens afternoons too  
fishing out one of his stashed gin bottles  
consulting workmen who are remodelling or tradesmen  
who bring things for which there is no black market  
then back to the phone and more pacing about  
he believes his caretaker steals books from him too  
also food though the man is steadfast  
he loves flowers and plants but seems to  
despise trees and has many of his own cut down  
he is sixty years old and sometimes looks it  
he is tough though and has a grip of iron  
he works harder than most men ever dream of  
reading catalogs writing letters cajoling by phone  
driving himself through twenty-hour days or more  
he lusts for the young men that work for him  
but complains about the pittance he pays them  
and tells stupid dirty jokes for cover

-- Sandy Dorbin

Flagstaff, AZ

Body naked  
Curled over the  
Camp fire for  
Warmth. Trees  
Shadows there a  
Round midnight  
Dark moon  
Legs tucked curled  
Neck back  
Please turn around  
I want to see the  
Fire on your tits

50 ø poem

Inferred metaphysical  
Importance.  
You don't say it right out.  
Just hint. An  
Old Magnavox becomes  
Man's search for self.  
A 49 Ford pickup  
Man's will toward e  
Ternity.  
Don't give away too much:  
Man's very soul a worn jock  
Strap:

Walnuts and whipped  
Cream on mine please.

I know it's fifty cents extra.

I just got paid.

Wind over the hill rounding  
It. Wind. Leaning trees  
Steady wind from the ground.  
The earth makes it. Like  
The grass it makes rocks it  
Makes like it does flowers.  
From some deep lung from  
Some water's sail makes  
It makes times to sleep in.  
Makes your legs.

-- Bernard Bever

Cliff, KY

### First Meeting

Now I knew why the trip had been so slow --  
it was the kind of place no one hurried to get to.  
Even the road had given up before it got there,  
yet the house leaned as if once  
the wind had tried to get in.  
I discovered if you looked at it through tears  
the green tar-paper would disappear  
into grass and trees. But the porch was real  
and its washing machine. The screen door  
hadn't any screen, but inside  
the gray linoleum and the daisied plastic curtains  
gleamed. The father was wearing my husband's  
nose. "Where's the baby?" the mother asked.  
But we hadn't made any.

Uncle Bill

He was nobody's uncle, just  
honorably old and humped  
like a snail over  
a rake or a mower,  
always in a starched white  
shell and bowtie, like a clerk  
who'd lost his counter.  
He must have been unbowed,  
before his eyes recessed,  
and looked at something else  
than grass  
but like an impossible child  
he only spoke when spoken to  
and we forgot to ask.  
We paid him board  
and nightly let him fade back  
to the Y.

-- Jeannine Dobbs

Derry, NH

Green Tomato

forced in some flat  
or with neon sunlight

not enough vitamins  
to nourish the blight

wormless, of course  
they appreciate taste

why do I think of lust  
in connection with

packed in plastic, green  
tomatoes/ why am I faced

it is solid pulp and green  
someone I could trust

vegetable connections  
dream/ soft rain

The Antennae

of people  
visible, though buried  
deep in the cranial whatever

show in the sudden lifting  
of an eyebrow, cocking  
the eye sideways

to let in vision  
or out thoughts

easily  
as if you were pouring something  
in or out of a tilted bowl ...

the antennae of people  
interest me.

Yours  
are nowhere near  
your eyes.

-- Ruth Moon Kempher

St. Augustine, FL

Red Cross

They take the body out.  
The white attendants  
in their sneakers  
stir the dust motes  
on the second floor.  
The Puerto Ricans  
in Apartment 8  
Look quick, duck back.  
A chattering.  
No trouble here.  
The stairwell stinks.  
He had a name.  
Goodby.  
He'd talked once  
in the hall.  
He'd grown a beard,  
once saw a Movie Star  
outside of Schrafft's.  
He'd lived for  
seven thousand days,  
an equal toll of nights.

With nothing to drop out of,  
he was young, addicted,  
disillusioned.  
I have been unworshipped too,  
but he was never liked,  
or tried to be.  
To not know how  
may be enough.  
He was not loved,  
and only once  
had overdosed.  
It was a good, full life  
for the unhappy god  
across the hall,  
Apartment 4.

### Third Rail

Look out. Don't touch.  
This rail is hot.  
Our end is what  
Your world is not.

Give me the things  
That you have found.  
I will not live  
In underground.

I am to touch.  
I am a man.  
We can forgive.  
We can. We can.

But touch me not.  
Your hands are red.  
My blood is cold.  
Your blood is dead.

Look out. Don't touch.  
This world is hot.  
Our world is what  
Your end is not.

-- Carl Larsen

Rosedale, NY

## Lenin's Letters From Siberia

-- for Louisa

1. In Shushenkoye now,  
just time for a card.  
The railroad stops here  
so we have to wait for Spring  
to go downriver. Siberia  
doesn't look so bad, after all.
2. Got myself a room  
in a peasant's house  
& I made good friends  
with his grandmother.  
The family thinks she's crazy  
but she has one good tooth  
& plays around with the I Ching.  
When I asked her about the Revolution  
she said Yes  
it was a good idea.
3. What bullshit  
to think a Marxist has to suffer!  
I've got my books here  
& my chessboard  
& the peasant's daughter  
slaughters sheep for me.  
I am getting fat & I wonder  
how you are.
4. I don't know  
how anything gets done out here,  
I'm so lonely. I have a name  
as long as a Mexican matron's  
& if you'd catch the first express  
from St. Petersburg  
I would gladly give some of it  
to you.

July 1971, Cambridge

## Marty Robbins And A Matte Print Memory Of You

At the end of a short spring  
we walked down the tracks by my place  
with a camera.  
You sang "El Paso" to yourself  
and we came across a rubber doll  
cut in half by the train  
and the sun was going down  
behind a factory

when you sat on the back of a boxcar  
and smiled for me.  
In the photograph you can see  
a young girl sitting on a boxcar.  
She is pretty and she is smiling  
as if the years could not be lost  
like Zippo lighters.  
Now you're in California  
and I wonder  
if you still sing "El Paso" to yourself  
I wonder if you're out of cigarettes  
and I put these things  
in a brown envelope addressed to you:  
A picture of you where the scars don't show,  
part of someone from Cambridge  
and a long, cold drink  
in a Texas saloon.

7/5/71, Cambridge

-- Joel Deutsch

Berkeley, CA

Red Wing

The wing of a bird  
may be translated  
from the Chinese  
in either red or gold

And I care nothing  
for your mysteries  
and your fads and diets

For I have seen Freedom  
throw a fake fur coat  
in the Rio Grande  
in a night of Mime  
when you were a dream  
in your father's eyes

Now I can tell faucets on the sink  
not to stare back at me  
while the world is wrapped in machinery  
with more cables than one's mind can conceive  
more layers of metal than nation's proudest peaks  
more tons of plastic than marble in the ground

I will give you diaries of invisible beings  
who have mined memories  
like the metal they chip from mountains  
to weigh and make rings of.

At A Gas Station In Kansas

The branch of stream and law entwine  
lost rail to the stars and back again  
while the dandelion sits on a weed  
joyous supernal it sits on a weed

A long ride over forgotten roads  
crisp kilowatts of radio alone in the night  
tracks on Vortex plains erased by gentle snow  
like upon the magic board I drew in school

Before the radar screen longed for blind events  
like towns alone in night of frost  
while snow and wind streak across the pavement  
showing sudden ghosts of fabled lizards

O Gypsy Moth around my lampshade  
why so dim the light beyond the door  
and the twisted trees reaching to the sky  
and down again into their own ring of years

In a month the moon repeats its fundamental note  
involuntary stomachs drift to Venus  
she repeats hers and within the newborn  
yet another aspect opens

Hungry wolves know the beginnings of snow  
home to unwind the mummy roll by roll  
a part of me, an edge I cannot peer beyond,  
a hidden angle, a side I cannot see

In the corner the spider weaves haphazardly  
forgetting the first part of the spiral  
tired perhaps, of the trembling fly  
in a forgotten filling station in Kansas

-- Charles Plymell

Cherry Valley, NY

LOOKING AT THE UNICORN TAPETRIES  
this one's for Anne's  
marriage to Louis  
full of trivia and  
colours stark  
thens rapidly  
unicorn's horn in  
a stream to  
up poison, nothing  
an simple as

FINGER

PRINT



here some places of  
cloth are missing  
but we know name by  
her rings (was  
was eaten by an  
spread over  
keep it from  
does Anne come  
rings her size  
32 and buying  
velvet to wear  
charles dies  
already thinking of  
Louis lights on the  
skin where the dice  
and gold cloth stops  
Lynch

LYN

LIFSHIN

the notes say how we  
know his long  
but no one is sure what  
the square means  
in the fourth  
the flags are a new color  
Anne looks older suddenly  
as if she'd prefer Lewis  
people but couldn't change  
that. Louis cold and yellow  
in the background  
people seem too large  
for the castle  
you now come and

## LOOKING AT THE UNICORN TAPESTRIES

1

this one's for anne's  
marriage to louis  
full of fruits and  
collars stags a  
hyena rabbits a  
unicorn's horn in  
a stream to suck  
up poison, nothing  
as simple as it seems

2

here some pieces of  
cloth are missing  
but we know anne by  
her rings. (was the  
rug eaten by animals  
spread over corn to  
keep it from freezing)  
does anne compare her  
rings her sleeves,  
22 and buying black  
velvet to wear when  
charles dies. is she  
already thinking of  
louis fingers on the  
skin where the blue  
and gold cloth stops

3

the notes say how we  
know his long fingers.  
but no one is sure what  
the squirrel means

4

in the fourth  
the flags are a new color.  
anne looks older suddenly  
as if she'd prefer fewer  
people but couldn't change  
that. louis gold and yellow  
in the background. the  
people seem too huge  
for the castle

5

the marriage contract  
sealed the unicorn  
caught in chains. (does  
anne dream the years  
in front of these threads,  
the beast tied to the  
pomegranate tree, the  
end and the beginning,  
the ripening fruit in  
the tree of her body

#### PULLING THE TOWER OF BABEL OUT OF DUST

out of the plains of  
old mesopotamia  
in the ruins of babylon

deep under a field of  
water men are  
reading wedge  
shaped writing

the euphrates in the  
distance sheep and  
goats grazing in the  
ruins of the palace  
ringing of sheep bells

hammurabi and nebuchadnezzar  
made love and died here  
alexander the great  
caught malaria  
and couldn't leave

the bricks were lugged away  
salt ate the stones  
the hanging gardens

deep under the earth  
now these rows of bulls  
mythical beasts scaly  
forked unicorns  
with eagle claws

standing out in relief  
from the flaking brickwork  
their glazed colors  
long since worn away

CHURCHWARDEN's ACCOUNT 1631 and 34 CHELUSFORD

to howlate for cobwebbing  
the church's corners

for carrying roger price  
out of the church  
being excommunicated

and to mrs fry for making  
the new curtains for  
altering the old ones  
with washing them

to howlate for his  
year's wages for  
looking to the boys

for 2 women for  
making the church  
clean by strewing  
rushes

to antony burgess of  
white chapel  
for catching birds

to howlate also for  
driving hogs out  
of the church  
yard to the pond

and to the mason for  
gilding the rose  
and thistle

and the ragged places in  
the claws of the lion  
and unicorn

WHO IS IT COMING BACK

the other night  
one man pulled  
me from some  
one like meat  
on sale

someone else  
said lyn youve got  
to make each  
poem each  
man matter more

as if it was  
the last one,  
dont spread  
yourself so

thin. it seemed  
strange i hadnt  
thought i was  
am i the same  
girl here 10  
years before

scared, hungry  
who is it lying  
in the grass alone  
still wanting

wondering if  
either man will  
want her tonight

and why that  
should matter so

PROGRAM

the doctor, suddenly  
he seems so  
old, hearing  
me into this  
dirty room, the  
lowells; I'm  
wondering is the  
red blood or  
orange  
And why this  
pink glass  
full of Scotch,  
his lips  
on my nipples

AFTER THE READING

the three  
at this  
workshop  
the dog  
way those  
treat seat  
rain the  
garage  
and ear of  
applies the  
road  
tell of  
radio

beer and  
rye, the  
what people  
say to get  
close or  
just to  
bed

that  
to  
the other's living  
to

i leaned  
toward

years you  
know  
out of  
business so  
I raised be

how far away  
are the  
mountains  
he kept  
saying

the woman hardly  
moves jeans into  
a hill of  
lowells

could we  
touch them

we used to shut Saturdays  
listen he says  
a bargain  
downstairs the  
walls sweat  
50 years

FAMILY

the doctor, suddenly  
he seems so  
old, hearing  
me into this  
dirty room, the  
lowells; I'm  
wondering is the  
red blood or  
orange  
And why this  
pink glass  
full of Scotch,  
his lips  
on my nipples  
FAMILY  
the doctor, suddenly  
he seems so  
old, hearing  
me into this  
dirty room, the  
lowells; I'm  
wondering is the  
red blood or  
orange  
And why this  
pink glass  
full of Scotch,  
his lips  
on my nipples

UP TO THIS POINT IT'S BEEN OK ONLY WELL NOW IT'S CONFUSING

the doctor, suddenly  
he seems so  
old, herding  
me into this  
dirty room, the  
towels: I'm  
wondering is the  
red blood or  
rouge  
And why this  
pink glass  
full of scotch,  
his lips  
on my nipples

FAMILY

at night the  
slashed cherry  
stretches roots  
deep under  
the garage

revenge on my  
grandfather  
pits will  
star his  
night

and for  
sinning with  
the egg girl  
50 years  
back

the chickenhouse  
grows wings  
claws settle  
on his  
lips and  
nothing  
sleeps right

DRY GOODS

the sign still  
says and  
sons  
but the  
oldest fell or  
jumped  
summer 1920

after that i  
didn't go so much  
to shul  
the other's living  
in california

these undershirts i got  
for 40 years you  
didn't know  
gutman's out of  
business so  
long raise he

says the woman hardly  
moves leans into  
a hill of  
levis

we used to shut saturdays  
listen he says  
a bargain

downstairs the  
walls sweat  
50 years

PHOTOGRAPH

the three  
kids in  
knickers  
the dog the  
way those  
trees still  
ruin the  
garage the  
same ferns  
apples the  
road only  
wider

the thin  
belly fat  
now the  
one kid  
dead at  
forty

FAMILY

by summer  
weeds covered the  
charred hole where  
the store burned  
to nothing, march  
just after the  
old man died  
my grandmother  
more undone by well  
i know which loss  
and she had reasons,  
all those years of  
watching car lights  
till morning  
In the fall she  
had them paint the  
rooms white sighing  
about how wood goes  
quickly too as the  
garage sank around  
his blue 53 plymouth  
It was so much  
like ritual

## PETS

yes he  
liked my  
fur my  
dresses

wanted me to  
live on his  
nest and  
write poems  
about him

what he  
said to me  
making me  
come was

like what  
i say to  
the cat

## MARRIED

not the one she  
wanted later he'd  
call her kike but  
the one who seemed  
gentle and read  
They had girls  
and moved in with  
her father then  
she stopped  
dancing He  
hardly said  
a thing  
On the way to  
the divorce he  
died and then  
she was sorry

## SARATOGA

dark counter on  
broadway early the  
morning smell of  
old wood a  
woman her tight  
lips scent of dark  
cloth nobody comes  
for the baths now  
only these  
gipsies monty  
wooly would  
sit out her  
face looks  
like it could  
crack a charred  
hole she says the  
fires losses  
there's nothing horses  
now the beauty  
gone smoke  
her mouth  
breaking  
you know  
but they  
lived then

## THESE DAYS

just fog  
cabbages  
getting blue  
things like  
yr shoes yr  
hands swirl  
by, dissolve  
I'll be so hard  
by winter if I  
don't break

carrying bags full  
of letters to no  
one saying oslo  
is beautiful

nobody in the room  
30 years the  
letters in the  
3rd person

it was the first  
time she'd talked to  
anyone they  
said when they  
came to feed her  
she laughed when  
they asked about  
her white teeth

sunday she  
couldn't get up  
from the floor

needles in her,  
the purple bruise  
spreading

later in the room,  
just an address book  
with no names

white gloves in  
tissue a rolled  
up painting called  
china dream

they said there  
comes a time when  
death is better

the 5 photographs  
had nothing on  
them but 1899

the ten year old  
girl in one  
looking somebody  
said a lot like  
the old woman

DURER

with your apples  
of sin and chaos

drawn to circassian  
slave girls, whores

but you stayed cutting  
the blocks of hard  
wood in a cold  
room in nurembourg

was it for that  
chill that adam has  
such huge leaves  
on his penis

Colorless days when  
it got dark early  
painting yourself  
as jesus

sun lute bells  
and ladies  
blurring in venice

Such long afternoons  
growing crabs loons  
knights and rabbits

wondering about  
the flood that  
would eat all men

Even your walrus  
seems uneasy

eels half a  
skinned rabbit

on an iron hook.  
the grapes in

water blood  
drying in sun

doors close.  
rose stucco

2:40 we don't  
say anything

to the one  
other face

nothing just  
the sea

moving shadows  
of 3 girls

down the de  
chirico streets,

lerchi

ONE OF 7 DEPRESSING THINGS

thinking about how just  
writing the poem some  
times is like putting  
one that came back back  
in an envelope again,  
hoping it doesn't seem  
like a thing gone over  
too much and not wanted

nothing can stay inside  
nights like this

women, their  
hips leaning  
into metal.  
heavy air, a  
storm maybe.

steps smell of  
wet earth, beer  
Summer in the  
city the black  
girls, their  
tight asses  
geraniums, stone  
Shades slam  
down you don't  
want me because  
i remind you  
from the top  
floor, glass  
Nights like  
this whatever  
comes, comes

PULLING WHAT THERE WAS BACK:

one  
photograph  
in Maine a  
letter. I  
never could  
call you  
father or  
pa, in  
spite of  
what they  
said. Ben, who  
knows what he  
knows and  
then it's late  
(you with your little  
book of  
words too) I  
wish one of us  
hadn't been  
so quiet

Other books in press or scheduled: Moving By Touch (Coty-  
ledon Press), Museum (November Press), Mercuriochrome Sun  
Poems (Charta Press), I'd - Jeanne Moreau (Morgan Press).

The Beginning of a Bibliographic Checklist for Lyn Lifshin

1. Why Is The House Dissolving? (September, 1968) Open Skull Press, 1379 Masonic Ave., San Francisco, CA 94117; 17.5 x 21.5 cm., stapled wrappers (white glossy stock with black offset lettering); 36 pp. mimeographed text; edition 500 copies. \$1.  
‡ Photo of the poet on back cover. Book printed and edited by Brown Miller; contains 35 poems.
2. Leaves and Night Things (1970) Baby John Press, P. O. Box 2293, West Lafayette, IN 47906; 13.3 x 21.0 cm., stapled wrappers (ocher matte stock with black offset lettering); 24 pp. offset text; edition 500 numbered copies. \$1.  
‡ Photo of the poet on last page of text. Book printed and edited by James Evans and John P. Miller; contains 21 poems. Inside and outside cover design by Iola J. Mills.
3. Black Apples (1971) The Crossing Press, New/Books, R.D. 3, Trumansburg, NY 14886; 15.0 x 23.0 cm., stapled wrappers (cream matte stock with black offset printing); 44 pp. offset text; edition unspecified. \$2 (rubber stamp, back cover).  
‡ Photo of the poet on last page of text. Book edited by John Gill; contains 34 poems. Cover by Larry Paciello. Text drawing by Patrick Lane. SBN 0-912278-00-5
4. lady lyn (1971) Hey Lady supplement no. 15, Morgan Press, 1819 North Oakland Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53202; 14.9 x 23.8 cm., stapled text, resin-glue-attached to wrappers (80 lb Avon white Kimberly cover stock with black printing on a circular white overlay, gold banding); 24 pp. letterpress text (Melior type, hand-fed Golding no. 7 press, Handschy and VanSon Ink; edition 300 numbered copies. Unpriced.  
‡ Photo of the poet inside front cover. Text contains 15 poems.
5. Tentacles, Leaves (1972) Pyramid pamphlet no. 1, Hellric Publications, 32 Waverley Street, Belmont, MA 02178; 13.7 x 21.0 cm., stapled wrappers (olive green matte stock with black offset printing); 16 pp. offset text; edition unspecified. \$1.25.  
‡ Text edited by Ottone M. Riccio. One eleven-part poem sequence (26 stanzas). SBN 0-912086-10-6

Other books in press or scheduled: Moving By Touch (Cotyledon Press), Museum (November Press), Mercurochrome Sun Poems (Charis Press), I'd Be Jeanne Moreau (Morgan Press).

## WHAT THE BUCK AND DOE DREAMED

The grass loves all who do not eat.

## SUNFLOWERS

Pride humbles their faces earthward.

## ASSASSIN

All that we love, we love alone.

## ARNTSON AT TWENTY-THREE

He talks to us out of a dream,  
lying on the slab of someone's patio,  
his face slick from drunkenness. He wants  
someone to "bring the equipment." We don't know  
what tools he needs, unless it be  
devices for survival -- an iron lung, a new heart.  
We find only a swim-fin, and a mask  
for looking into the stomach of the pool.  
The eyes within his eyes  
are open, are closed, are seeing  
things he never knew.

We peel off his clothes  
and wrap him in a blanket, carry him like a rug  
slung over our shoulders, out of the house and into a truck.  
He sprawls over the laps of the driver and my wife,  
losing hold of the blanket, his long legs  
exposed to the hip, the bare wings of his shoulders  
gone slack  
on all he knows.

And he wants to sleep  
in the bed of the truck because he can't walk  
the flight of steep stairs to bed, because he has to fly  
to Los Angeles tomorrow, because he is dead  
weight and can't be carried. But we lift him  
to the stairs, and he walks half-way,  
trailing the crazy quilt  
like a prince floating toward coronation.  
But we keep stepping on his train;  
and that pulls him over backwards again and again  
until he turns to ask, "Did Prince Hal really  
have this kind of trouble?" That is the last  
he says.

Half-way in the livingroom,  
he dives at the couch as into immortality,  
shedding the blanket like forgotten flesh, already asleep

before he strikes the cushions, before we  
tuck the quilt around him, laughing, drunk  
with his drunkenness. Tired of trying  
to understand ourselves in him, those of us  
who have a home, go home.

In the morning, while we are still  
crossing each other with arms and legs in bed,  
he will fly over us, for an instant,  
in a jet, in a fog, in a dream that is moving away  
toward a city of drunken angels.

#### ONE NIGHT STAND

Arntson worships the holy cross  
of his body, and gives off  
a strange light on his way to the barn.  
Only the vacant space  
where his body has been  
follows him.  
He knocks three times on the barn door.  
No one lets him in. No  
body is home. He bangs.  
He kicks, claws at the wood with his nails.  
And then he slides the latch himself.

Pigs and chickens, goats and cows  
amble out, looking up  
at his moon-blانched placid face  
as though expecting  
gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Arntson grows starry-eyed when he thinks  
they might remember him  
to their peaceable kingdoms.  
He hurries to find the axe.

#### THE TURKISH HOTEL, THE BEDROOM IN DENVER

I know you are asleep, but  
from the way you've lain your legs,  
you might be dancing:  
one foot raised  
higher than its partner -- as if  
you were about to leap somewhere  
while a band of nomads clapped  
their hands to keep the beat.

You seem about to snap  
the red and yellow tassles of the blanket  
from your back, to lead me

wheeling through the circle  
and the steps that do not matter,  
your bare legs  
itching to escape  
the weight of your body.

But, like a tourist's snapshot, you don't move.  
If you're even dreaming,  
you dream of static pyramids  
or locks by the Red Sea. I dream  
enough for two: both of us  
will wake tomorrow dancing.

-- Jack W. Thomas

San Diego, CA

roger corbin

is co-owner of the 49ers tavern,  
ex-marine, swing-shift probation  
officer. he sports a trademark gut  
now, but he'll still put out a quite

respectable half-game of half-court  
basketball. all the eligible divorcees  
would like to wed him, but he only beds  
them and continues waiting for miss right.

meanwhile miss right is casually being  
deflowered in the next room on the waterbed  
by roger's roommate rick. but rick's another pome  
entirely, one that he ought to write himself.

roger is the premier pool-shot of  
the bar, and lately he's extended his  
domination to pin-ball. he will, however,  
generously share his strategies with anyone,

and i am sure his systems work,  
it's just you also need his eye,  
and steady hand, and confidence.  
ah, confidence! yes, i should think it takes

a lot of confidence to sign a partnership with karl,  
who is as lovable as snoopy, and just as  
reliable. karl is another poem also,  
something of a combination huck finn,

mr. chips, and william burroughs.  
confidence is what keeps roger going.  
the stuff that lets you take tarawa beach-head,  
i think that he still dreams america

because for all his beautiful quick-witted  
dadaism, roger trusts in god, home,  
country, apple-pie, and fatherhood.  
of course he'll smoke a little dope,

but he will also sing the anthem loudly  
at the lakers' games. i'm sure he'd go  
to vietnam if he were asked, he might  
even win a military victory.

and someday soon i'm sure he'll make  
some nice young girl an ideal husband,  
good provider, strong and silent, sexually-  
knowledgeable, prudently unfaithful.

he will be generous to her, as he is always  
generous to all of us: free pitchers,  
quarters in the jukebox, takes the coin  
slot from the table on slow afternoons.

he loans us money, doesn't hassle if a glass  
or cue stick's broken, doesn't hassle  
if you stay a little after hours or  
get drunk and clear the place out with your singing.

still the bar makes money.  
which is a credit to the clientele. which might  
even make roger right, that americans aren't all  
assholes, just folks. i'll drink to that.

scratch one

hangover, out of sorts, due for an  
appointment with the income tax  
consultant, i stopped by the office  
to pick up the mail. it was

a bland day, no rejection slips, nothing  
accepted, but someone had posted  
a sign in the mailroom: funeral  
services for weldon niva 1:00 o'clock

at sunnyside memorial chapel.  
that's strange, i thought, to give  
a funeral for weldon niva when  
he isn't even dead yet. it seemed

in questionable taste to say the least.  
granted, he was hardly the most  
protean, galvanic, or mercurial  
instructor in our midst, but certainly

the undergraduates do  
carry their lampoons a bit too far,  
especially around exam time, when their  
self-made pressures tend to cook their geoses.

so i asked the long-haired dude  
stuffing junk mail, and he said,  
"yeah, slit his wrists and ankles;  
didn't have the decency to shoot himself."

so then i asked the secretary, and she said,  
"yes, he apparently was paranoid, he thought  
someone was following him. wouldn't you think  
his wife would have gotten him in to a doctor."

she also said, "it goes to show, it's always  
the ones you least expect, the quiet ones."  
well not always, but old weldon  
was a quiet one alright, a woodrow

wilson sort, although i'd heard  
that he displayed a dry britannic wit in class.  
he was a thorough lecturer, replete with  
the hugest briefcase in captivity.

he visited my class last fall  
to advertise the honors program, and i  
showed unusual (for me) restraint in not alluding  
to that stuffed portfolio. now i'm glad.

i'm also glad he tripped out so in character,  
his final grades signed, sealed, delivered,  
the semester tied up neatly in an academic tassel.  
we're rare birds, us eggheads.

poop

my daughter, blake, is in kindergarten. they are teaching  
her to be a docile citizen and, incidentally, to read.  
concurrently, like many of us, she has become a trifle  
anal compulsive. complications ensue.

i ask her what she has learned today. she says, "i learned  
the pledge of allegiance." "how does it go?" i ask.  
"it goes," she says, "i poop allegiance to the poop of  
the united poops of ameripoop."

"that's good," i say, "that's very good. what else?" "o  
say can you poop, by the dawn's early poop, what so  
proudly we poop . . . ."

for christmas, she improvises, "away in a pooper, all cover-  
ed with poop, the little lord poopus lay pooping his  
poop."

she has personalized other traditional favorites as well. someone, perhaps her grandmother, tried to teach her the "our father." her version goes, "our pooper, who art in poopland, hallowed by thy poop. they poopdom poop, they poop be pooped, on earth as it is in poopland."

surely hemingway would feel one-upped. surely the second pooping is at hand.

a fortune teller told us blake would be our greatest sorrow and our greatest joy. already, it is true.

-- Gerald Locklin

Long Beach, CA

### Image

She becomes the Blonde Beast,  
she puts the Blonde Beast  
ON,  
she's under the image of the  
Blonde Beast,  
men and women grrr at  
the Blonde Beast,  
but she's hiding inside,  
takes the Blonde Beast  
off every night and puts it  
in a drawer,  
when she sleeps identities  
float through her like  
alligators in sewers,  
when she wakes up she re-  
creates the Blonde Beast,  
watches people react to it,  
but stays way, way inside,  
like a single cookie in a  
big cookie jar.

### Utopia

I live in a race-tensionless  
town  
with pure air,  
low crime-rate,  
although there was a robbery  
last month and the robber  
kidnapped a sixteen year  
old blonde clerk and  
killed her ... found her body

in a swamp just outside of town  
five days after she'd been kidnapped --  
body decomposed ...  
come to think of it,  
wasn't more than fifty miles  
away where there were five  
murders last year, all coeds, raped,  
murdered, mutilated,  
and there's lots of  
cases of exhibitionism,  
guy'll stop his car,  
open the door and  
show his weaponry to a  
little girl or a coed.  
No coeds have been  
killed here, though ...  
but yesterday there was  
this girl who'd  
hitched a ride downtown,  
right in the middle of  
town, and the driver  
had pulled a gun on  
her and hit her,  
she pulled the  
steering wheel, ran him  
of the road.  
Predictions are varied  
about student activity  
this spring,  
from zero  
to levelling the  
whole damned  
town.

-- Hugh Fox

East Lansing, MI

### Barking At Thunder

Everything that is beautiful becomes  
Apparent,  
at that point where the boomerang  
stops before it turns back.

Everything stops, expectant, like dogs  
Barking  
at the sound of thunder, before  
lightning rips silently in the darkness.

Everyone notices those times during the  
Day,  
when all thought stops, before the  
faucet of the past pours down solitude.

Everything is brighter in the final  
Flicker of the candle;  
at that instant, before lips purse  
and light curls up in oblivion.

Everyone is waiting for the boomerang  
to sail away.  
Everything is waiting for the lightning  
to stick.  
Everyone is waiting for the faucet  
to run dry.  
Everyone is waiting for their candle  
to go out.

john berryman's unnumbered dream song

don't whoa' back berryman,  
john  
brother,  
for your unnumbered  
dream song is on my lips;  
your lovers  
will care for henry --

driven wishbone  
snapping on the ice plate,  
your unfinishin'  
your work  
raced up the team,  
(my fences was tore at  
the joints)  
when i heard  
that you had reached  
the bridge:  
junction of unsung  
and allsung  
childhood nightmares,  
thrashing.  
you filled  
the ice-cracks with the blood  
of your  
imagination,  
and lastingly you and father  
could speak  
the same tongues!

we've been waved away  
and i prayed for you john,  
berryman  
don't whoa' back now,  
for i'm  
driven on bleary  
to  
mr. bones ...

Postmarked In Long Beach

there in the toy department,  
not in the 49er tavern or  
at the Olympic Auditorium flipping  
bottle tops  
at the wrestlers (in a little  
less than cosmic situation,  
I assure you)

I saw

Gerry Locklin with apollonian  
black curls dangling down over  
his toad-rim specs,  
sparring with Charles Bukowski,  
who was really more  
concerned with selling Gerry  
a sweat shirt with a  
4 in. by 6 in. postage stamp  
stenciled on the back,  
commemorating Mount Olympia,  
at Pennys in Lakewood  
on the second floor.

Every Tuesday, they can  
be seen singing odes and anti-odes  
while throwing furtive punches  
into the sides of bean-bag-kangaroos  
when Miss Klippertongue,  
the floor manager isn't looking.  
Gerry wasn't about

to part with his Coors T-shirt,  
so to prevent an outright brawl  
I bought one,  
and to my chagrin,

I was

picked up by a drunk postman  
the next morning while waiting  
for the light to change,  
winding up in northern Utah  
where the shirt was printed.

-- John Kay

Long Beach, CA

I met this woman

I met this woman  
and she said,  
you're a real crud,  
and she started picking my  
blackheads.  
she picked those blackheads

everywhere:  
in the car, in the market, in  
bed, in the park ...  
in between we made  
love.  
I ran out of blackheads before I  
ran out of  
love.  
what are we going to do  
now? she asked.  
fuck, I said.

then she began pulling hairs out  
of my ears and nose and along the eyes  
and eyebrows, the back,  
with a tweezer. we ran out of  
hair.  
what are we going to do  
now? she asked.  
fuck, I said.

I ran out of blackheads and hair  
before I ran out of  
love. she's packed her clothes and  
is moving out  
tonight after she sucks the wax  
out of my  
ears.

a most highly unusual  
woman.

the painter

he came up on the porch  
with a grinning subnormal type  
and they stood there  
drunk on wine.  
the painter had his coat wrapped around something,  
then pulled the coat away --  
it was a policeman's helmet  
complete with badge.  
"gimme 20 bucks for this," he said.  
"fuck off, man," I said, "what do I want with a  
cop's derby?"  
"ten bucks," he said.  
"did you kill him?"  
"5 bucks ...."  
"what happened to that 6 grand you made  
at your art show last month?"  
"I drank it. all in the same bar."  
"and I never got a beer," I said.  
"2 bucks ...."

"did you kill him?"  
"we ganged him, punched him around a bit ...."  
"that's chickenshit. I don't want the headpiece."  
"we're 18 cents short of a bottle, man ...."

I gave the painter 35 cents  
keeping the chain on the door, slipping it to him  
with my fingers. he lived with his mother,  
beat his girlfriend regularly  
and really didn't paint that  
well. but I suppose a lot of obnoxious characters  
work their way into  
immortality.

I'm working on it myself.

-- Charles Bukowski

Los Angeles, CA

REVIEW:::

Jackson Pollock -- Energy Made Visible (biography by B. H. Friedman) McGraw-Hill Book Co., N.Y., 1972 (\$10) SBN 0-07-022421-8. xx + 293 pp. with 32 pp. b/w illustr. 15.6 x 23.5 cm. -- An effective biography, highly recommended. Details important influences of Graham, Hayter, and Guggenheim on the early career -- presentation is seriously marred by non-perceptive carping comments re Benton's influences. ¶ Pollock was a poet and his art. This definition separates him from DeKooning -- an artist. ¶ If ever a book should have been issued with many colored illustrations of paintings, it is this one. If you do not know Pollock's work well, read this book in combination with Frank O'Hara's Jackson Pollock (Braziller, 1959). Most art books have expensive plates and texts that range from banal to didactic. Here is an excellent text crying for plates. Perhaps there will be a second edition with such? ¶ The personal photos in this edition are very good and should be carried into the second edition. The introduction to the present edition is non-essential and an indulgence of the author. (Sypher)

Dictionary Of Literary Terms (Harry Shaw) McGraw-Hill Book Co., N.Y., 1972 (\$12.50) SBN 0-07-056490-6. x + 405 pp. 15.6 x 23.5 cm. -- Good definitions from "abecedarian" thru "zeugma" but not totally comprehensive definitions (i.e., ignoring "abecedarian sentence" which is one containing all 26 letters of the alphabet and with no repeats). Good for words such as "heptastich" and "sestina" as well as for "boner" and "jet set." Our readers will appreciate the definition of "little magazine" that includes the ff. sentence: "Little magazines flourished in the United

States, England, and France in the 1920s, but most of them ceased publication before the outbreak of World War II." That phrase is what the same dictionary might define as a "boner" although "dated" may be more correct. (Editor)

NEW LITTLE MAGAZINES:.....

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