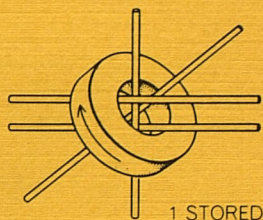
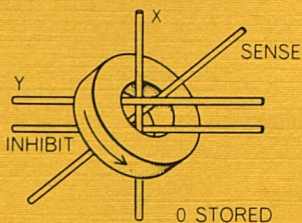
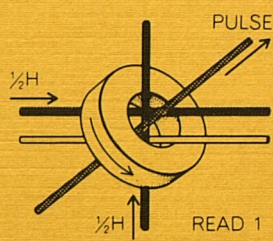
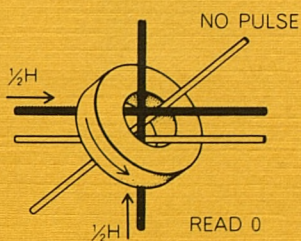


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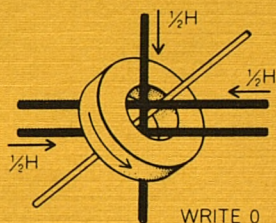
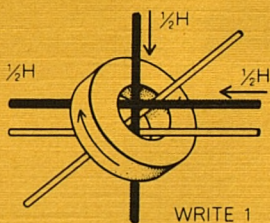


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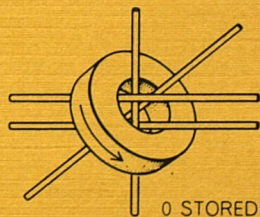
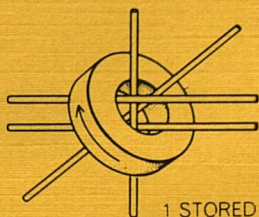


WORMWOOD: 69

3 WRITE



4 STORE



Incorporating Malone-Stranger Review

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THREE WOMEN RUNNING IN THE COUNTRY

i

The ground slopes westwards.
She is preceded by a man
who bends to the east,
his white galoshes
are firmly on the land.
She runs behind him,
her knees knock as she runs,
her left breast falls to the west
her right is concealed
by an anorak made in the east.
She holds her arms up scarecrow style,
her running resembles a kite
as it bobs on the grounds lightly,
before it comes to rest.
Out of the copse behind her
countless frightened birds emerge.
The otherwise empty sky
she's managed to fill with her running.

ii

She runs from the north.
Her small feet are hard
and can bear to run on

freshly cut corn stubs.
This one can run fast
with her hands in her pockets.
Her rain-coat is wide open,
it reveals an olympic body
which not just any man could love.
The meager breasts and shoulders
make her streamlined I suppose,
help her speed and her speed
can save her from being ignored.
She runs with a storm breaking,
she rains down the valley,
she thunders past the hedgerows.
Keep your eyes closed as she passes
and please please, don't stand near trees.

iii

This woman is dark
and fills my life with heartbeats.
She runs down a hill
in a southerly direction
wearing a striped dress
which is torn in several places.
The thrust of her body
travelling so urgently
is almost unbearable.
She leaves a breathless man behind her,
he is unable to catch her up,
his working boots are heavy
and unsteady in the heather.
I dearly hope she is running to me.
The sky is black and contains lightning,
if she reaches me in time
I will tell her lies about myself
and take her home forever.

FOR THE KEEPER OF THE LONG HOUSE

Each morning I am torn from the earth
to work for the man who makes skyscrapers.

This is the Moon of Wild Rice
and still I have nothing saved
for when the Cold Moons come.

Each night when returning to my home
as the sun begins to fall
I pray to the North for redemption.

Since they took away my drum
my songs resound in concrete.
I am only half-wrought and discontent.

How can my son outsing the swan
while I shoot arrows at a continent?

-- Tony Dash

Liverpool, Lancashire, England

THE YOUNG ARE A PAIR OF SCISSORS
AND CUT THEIR WAY OFF THE EARTH

A man who looks as old as China
drifts in his sampan through the final light.
At his knees are stacks of paper cut-outs.
Legend is he started from America
and lost his way centuries ago,
the last stretch of shoreline
finally dissolving.

This evening his boat seems to stop.
Resting the oar upon the roofing of mat,
he pulls out a paper figurine
of Marilyn Monroe,
her body a disaster,
some war her tribe was having
exploding on her knee.
And since the cutter specialized in groups,
a comic doll two inches tall
is holding Marilyn's wrist,
her two-way face a Tracy radio,
her mouth the space at the end
of someone's joke.

The old man imagines Marilyn is his wife.
He takes her hand
stands up in the shakey boat
begins to dance with her and the one-tooth child.
They form a circle, laughing and shouting,
turning faster and faster -- then slowing.
Now they have drifted into the distant waters,
the cobra night starting to swell its neck
around their paper sampan.

THE MOMENT OF DECISION

Leona stood in the supermarket near the tomatoes. Several people were staring at her. Someone from the coffee clutch seemed to be snickering. The clerk had put up many signs: Ponderosa. June Pink. Marglobe. German Johnson 1. German Johnson 2. If angels have sweethearts, mused Leona, I want mine to be a produce-man. A slight thought occurred to her. She could stab herself with a carrot right there in the aisle. Then St. Peter would produce her produce-man instantly. But now she must think about choosing a tomato.

It was easy to choose mayonnaise. You just opened the jar and stuck in your finger and tasted. But from childhood Leona had preferred horseradish. A big snort of horseradish made her feel like one huge nose. Leona could get off on horseradish while other people just stood around drooling and looking frigid. She had once talked her little friend Hortense into snorting horseradish with her on the back porch. Hortense reported it made her buns burn at potty time. Hortense's mother told her never to speak to her naughty friend again. Now Leona was feeling a surge of energy from the memory of this friendship. She lifted her right arm and ripped off a plastic bag from the roll, taking one extra for a bonnet, as the rain had begun outside. The moment of decision had come. Leona stepped toward the tomatoes.

It was late, and she knew she should be home. But horseradish alone on pumpernickel did not seem just right. Maybe if it were red, she thought. She pondered the tomatoes. German Johnson 1. Marglobe. German Johnson 2. Ponderosa. Big Boy. Better Boy. German Johnson 3. June Pink. It was impossible to choose -- even with produce-men looking over her shoulder, smiling like the sweethearts of angels. Then Leona's right eye began to rove toward the orange bin. Only one brand. Indian River. From Florida. That settles it, she thought. Picking up one Indian River orange, one bottle of slow flowing ketchup, one half-loaf of pumpernickel, one cafeteria sized container of horseradish, and one jar of mayonnaise -- just tasted, Leona pushed her cart out the door and down South Street, thinking of her orange tomato sandwich. No one could step up and accuse her of having failed in her moment of decision, not even Hortense, who long ago had gone from potty to pot and smiled at everyone all day long.

-- William Harrold

Milwaukee WI

ABSURD FLIES

"James, these flies are absurd."

"Very good, Madam."

"Why couldn't they have all been born butterflies? With colorful wings and graceful movements, brightening up the garden or fluttering across the veranda?"

"I'm sure I don't know, Madam."

"I don't believe I like the tone of your voice, James."

"Excuse me, Madam, I was merely attempting to deal with your question."

"It was a rhetorical question, James. I wasn't looking for an answer from you. Don't be absurd."

A REAL HOTDOG

"Hey!" Jeff yells upward to where Stan is manning the largest spotlight which is suspended from the ceiling rafters, "don't turn that one-eyed monster on until you're signalled. It's a waste of energy otherwise."

Stan switches the spotlight off and nods his head to show that he understands.

"I've gotta watch that happy-go-lucky sonuvabitch," Jeff confides to the Donut Man as he chomps into a chocolate glazed, "or he'll cost me a mint. My wife's side of the family -- a real hotdog."

HUMID PAPER

Lois Lane sits in her apartment kitchen, stark naked, waiting impatiently for Superman. "Even the sparrows fly home at dark," she says aloud to the coffee pot, to the curtainless and open window, to the piece of paper she is sitting on in this dead 90 degree plus heat.

A drop of sweat rolls down her pliant back and off the curve of her left buttock. It lands on the white paper as she lights up a Lucky Strike and blows a flower of smoke up toward the fly paper near the kitchen light.

She stands up to go into the bathroom, but the paper sticks to her well-rounded ass. She disengages it with both hands and places the paper back on the seat of the

chair. She walks to the bathroom, hesitates for a moment, and finally walks in, closing the door.

Superman's head pops up over the windowsill and he looks into the deserted kitchen. He crawls in the window, sees the paper on the chair, snatches it up and flies out the window.

CLIENTELE

-- for Len Durso

Wesley wakes up in his bed and looks around the room. The same as every morning. Nothing out of the usual for Wesley. His life has always gone that familiar, middle of the road line. Nothing to fear, nothing to hide. Good old. Dependable. Wesley the Responsible. Thorough. Always There Wesley. You can count on him. He ties his orange tie in the mirror and combs his hair. He walks into the kitchen and breaks two eggs, sunnyside up, into a frying pan. The same pan every morning. The same kitchen. The same Wesley. One of the eggs says, "Hello," to Wesley. The other says, "Goodbye." Wesley burps. Too much spaghetti last night. There is a knock at the door. Wesley stands still. The knock repeats. God, Wesley moans to himself, I hope it's not one of my clients, not this early in the morning. He stands by the hissing eggs.

DIRECTIONS FOR THE WEST COAST

I stole the directions
from a one armed,
unemployed Indian scout
for 24 joints and a Mars bar.
He had never seen chocolate
before.

-- Joel Dailey

Endicott NY

My daughter tells me she may be pregnant. "How's that?" I ask, and am instantly sorry, because she reels off figures, facts and dates that only a statistician could comprehend.

HISTORY OF ART, WITH
EXAMINATION QUESTIONS
AND ANSWERS, KEYED TO
YOUR TEXTBOOK

The purpose of Art
is to anger people and
make them say, "that's
a piece of shit."

WHICH KIND ARE YOU?

I liked them
both,
husband & wife.
So I said, "You
have a nice
wife."
Mashing his
can of Coors
he said,
"Honey, any
kind is better
than none."

My sister always got ate up by mosquitos. "Let's count,
nothing else to do." She'd win, a million bites on one
leg or something bad like that. Mom said cause she was
blonde, but I think she was a pest and kin favored kin.

NON-VIOLENT SPORT

My sister-in-law said, "My children
have always received enough affection
at home, they've never had to search
elsewhere."

I then turned my back to her, so she
could stab me once more.

You would not believe how brave my mother is. She married
again. Three times now. My dad loved his whiskey and
died, my step-dad overate. Steady and calm my mother will
begin her sixty-eighth year. You would recognize her
immediately. Say, for instance if half an army platoon
marched into your house, my mom would ask, "Are they
staying for dinner?" Once at a party a lot of unsocial
people declined three scotch and waters she graciously
mixed, so she drank them herself. She used to live in
Pasadena, but she doesn't drive or wear tennis shoes.

MINIMUM DAILY REQUIREMENTS FOR C.G. HOLLIS

It is beautiful,
 very attractive,
 good design, but
does it hold Corn Flakes?

SHEPHERDS IN HEAVEN

Most people wouldn't call that often, But I always know
what the dead animal pick-up man is going to say. "You
gonna be there, lady?"

"Sure mister, me and some of his best pals. We'll be in
the road with the dog priest."

The german shepherd won't be there long, feet pointed
straight to heaven, lift-off time, any minute.

ELLEN LUISE

In air-conditioned chill, I wait
looking for a sign, crying.

The yellow speck has gone
Hughes Air West Flight 983.

Yesterday her father married.
today my first-born flies
apart from home.

Probably the car won't start
or have a flat.

You shouldn't always be
depressed. Keep looking
for a sign.

A man showed me his thing in Georgia once. He peed on
the bushes. "Ain't you ever seen one?" I must have
looked, but don't remember or want to. "We better find
them cows, my Grandma wants 'em." That's what I think
I said.

-- Frances Boettcher

San Pedro CA

Eureka CA

FREE FORM

the lady
washes her hair
pours creekwater
from a bent saucepan
waterfall strands
run dark in the sun
the bay horse stops
watches suds
pile snow on the sand.

LAYOVER

the creek increased
by forty loaves
cut a new course plus
the old and took
the road. we waited
three days
in a line shack with two
holes in the roof,
one for rain
one for snow
before the storm moved on
leaving the creek
for dead.

FOOD ESSAY

today we shot four
king jays for the pups,
one apiece.
they ate body
beak and feathers. down,
blue as lakes from an airplane,
stuck to sam's paw.
the flying feathers were large
and dark, stiff enough for a quill pen
or a hat band.
we planned bear steak
or a raccoon roast for ourselves.
we ate beans and rice.

before first light there is an hour,
maybe less,
when the woods are silent.
even the owl. even the ringtailed cat.
i hear the city then
eating pumpkin ice cream
mandarin oranges and dark chocolate.

-- carolyn anderson

Jerome AZ

FOUR PANEL SCREEN: A CHINESE TALE PAINTED IN THE
ANCIENT MANNER

THE PANEL OF BURNING BOOKS

Black dog raises his leg
and pisses on my library.
Huwang Chow burns all my books,
every volume to the flames, eaten.
They did not distinguish between the two translations.
They burned Kung Fu Tzu and Lao Tzu alike.
The fire roared for hours
in the clear winter afternoon.
They roasted words and covers alike.
All illustrations were destroyed.
When the people who were not men came,
the carts were loaded with all the books,
and they were carried down to the river banks
to be burned in the ditches
filled with winter straw.
Oxen pulled the carts when the books were burned.
Their tails hung down in the ice slush
melted by the flames.
I was only ten, but my books were also burned.
The ones painted by Li Fu Tza were also burned.
The black ribbons of the burned leaves
flew through the air like a flock of silent crows.
The soldiers who did the burning
never read books, and their armor was well polished.
There is no blame. Their duty was to burn books.
The burning books also filled the night with embers
of poets and scientists until an hour before dawn.
Nearby marsh birds were killed by the smoke,
and the ground was black until spring.

INCANTATION FOR A WINTER JOURNEY

Smoke rises from the city which has been raped
and plundered by hordes of men with unusual thoughts.
The inhabitants are coughing up reptiles, broken teeth,
and images fit for unholy celebrations.
Careless hands throw everything into carts
with high wooden sides. Yesterday's clothing is in a heap
on the top, robes and fine blankets
cover delicate chairs and tables and the toys of
the children.

Before I am pulled from my house,
I scrape a quick message on the frost of the window.
Perhaps it will reappear again before spring.
We take a last look at the garden as we pass.
The plum trees which we enjoyed last summer
now rasp upon the ground, con sordino,
like mice running over straw mats.
The horse sleds are being loaded also.
Everything excess is thrown into a ditch.
The sun is gone for good, and one who seems to be a
leader
is pointing with a long fingernail.
A red-faced man with a beard blows a trumpet
for a joke as we depart.

About three miles out, at the summer cottage of Li Wu,
the runners get stuck on a tree branch.
Someone shouts for an ax, and it is as we fear.
A rope is dragging by the side of my sleigh,
and I watch it for hours like a baby
looking at a toy he doesn't understand.

Food is brought up for the drivers.
They wash it down with tea made from melted snow.
We get nothing, of course, and the fires are kicked out.
There is no conversation on the trail,
only the panting of the horses.
I have memories of birds; I recall names stupidly
and lines I have written in notebooks years ago
behind painted screens.

I feel a little cold coming on.
There was some chill when they pounded the snow into
my mouth,
but I am still able to breathe from my nostrils.

A FABLE OF REMOVING HANDS AND HEADS

The city people were easy to move or remove. The men
hung their heads and lowed like cattle as our perfect
blades drank up their bones. We are not barbarians.
We understood the cruel comments made by some of the
angry women. The trilling, refined tongues were known
to us from intercourse with women of the northern
provinces. We are not without refinement and culture.
No one was made to suffer a long time. In the sight
of the captains, death was winnowing swift and performed
with precision. We only cut off the hands of those
women who had done terrible things to our foot soldiers,
and then we bound the stumps with rice paper after a
moment in a healing fire. It is true that books were
burned, but is it not also true that it was the books

that made the city weak at the end? The thoughts they contained would have made even Kwang Lei blush with shame.

The women and children we saved and carried in comfort on sleds to our homeland. We bore them to us like treasures to be cherished and protected. Only the dangerous or foolish were dispatched beside the road. Our slaves for the most part come to love us in time. I have seen it happen before. Some of the women will be taken as wives into the tents of chiefs -- could their lives in the city with walls have been so very pleasing?

The Khan's all together have been much maligned by effete poets and scholars. My father and grandfather were from the line of Chow, and never were rituals or the gods profaned by their words or actions, neither in battle, nor before the hearth fires of Lwoun.

PONIES ONLY WALKING -- CHINESE SURVIVOR EPILOGUE

Shaggy Tartar ponies are still coming through the snow and a low morning mist to where I am hunched, sitting on the ground before my early fire. Everything remains white, glowing sheets, rolling, knife cutting, smothering, a quilt of dragon breath that hugs me to death like lover Li.

At first, I could only hear them in the cold dawn, far away across the steppe. Then, suddenly, the heads of the ponies broke through, and soon the first one was beside me, snorting and puffing rings of red smoke.

The owners of the ponies had obviously been killed in a battle on the previous day, for the saddles and bridles were those of warriors, and the manes and coats of the ponies were matted and stained with blood. One animal in particular was most pathetic in appearance since there was a barbed arrow through a front fetlock, and it was a wonder that he was able to keep up with the others at all.

I have been here for several days now, and still the ponies march slowly through my camp. I hardly notice them at all anymore. There is a blanket around my shoulders against a rising wind, and I am alone melting snow over my fire for another cup of tea. I am also beginning to fear the wonderfully accurate portrait of my face painted in the snow a few feet from where I am permanently crouched.

-- David A. Adams

Bird Island MN

Shovel Off To Buffalo



I-80 HEADED WEST

comin down out of the sierras
everything that bright new
growth after a rain green
my old lady sittin beside me
in the cab beer between
my legs a joint passin around
merle haggard singin white line fever
on the KRAK country corral
out the windshield everything
lookin so good
so god damned good

NOTE TO A PAINTER

i found it interesting
that you labeled my comments
about your woman pointless
i don't think i've ever heard that word
applied to anything
other than modern art & writing

& while perhaps you may be stuck
with your paintings & your woman
i am not
with my poems or my woman
even though i too have often found
most women & most things
pointless
dull
the knife never sharp enough
to pierce the skin & share a slice

but there are times when the cut
is so quick so deep
that a bold crimson swatch
splashes across the page
& the taste is incredibly sweet
but those times are hard to see
you must move quickly
to catch them
you have to listen
even when you know
there's no point
to filling in the canvas

which is what i suppose
john thomas was getting at
when he pointed out that
the difference between painters & poets
is that the latter
do not have to
keep their hands still

ATASCADERO

comfortable new tract
he doesn't plant dichondra
or gravel but grapes chilis
everything from artichokes to zucchini
thrive he makes his own
beer grows the largest
begonias i've ever seen
seems honestly happy
riding his bike to work
dispensing medication at
the state mental hospital

THE FATHER POEM

i didn't know him very well
he & my mother split up
when i was 8 or 9 or 10
and for the next few years
i only saw him
when he came to town
once a year at the capri motel
next to the LA airport
then i moved out
& even that stopped

i was 22 or 23
when i next heard from him
a letter hastily written
on half a sheet of paper
dear kirk it said
i guess i haven't been much
of a father
& perhaps i've developed
a jaundiced attitude toward things
but i've tried to do
what i thought
i had to do

i mentioned the letter
to my mother
he's just got jaundice
she said
from all his drinking

i meant to go see him
or at least write
but i was moving around a lot
running from the draft
& never did

it was about 4 years
after that letter
that they found him
in his old clunker
in santa ana
as dead as the battery

RUNNING LOW

-- for jack kerouac

realizing that i have lived
at least 15 different places
in 3 states
over the past 8 years
not counting the trips
to here & there
and now feeling tired running low
but still not feeling
i'm in the right place
the chosen one & once again feeling
like moving on i remember
jack moving west in a train
with everyone outside reading on the road
wondering just how and why and
where he'd missed the exit
not knowing how far it is
to the next one not knowing why
there never seemed to be a place
with enough space to stop
for a while
the shoulder of the road
barely wide enough to pull over
for a piss stop

INDIAN TRADER

is more white than indian
but plays his 1/16 for all
it's worth. he's a hustler.
the kind who'll come right out
& tell you he's one & that
he's good -- soo good --
that if he was an alky
he'd be able to con everyone
into stashing a bottle for him.
he's come back to the reservation
after selling life insurance
for 14 years & built a trading post.
he hires the local girls at \$1/hr.
and hocks just about anything
for the local drunks can switch
from new york life insuranceese
to broken indin in a flash
but like anyone else who thinks
his shit stinks except better
than anyone else's it all
comes out the same.

OF COURSE THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT VERSIONS
OF THIS STORY BUT

you know i can get
into my car & drive
across my reservation
in about 15 minutes
the paiute said.

well, if i get
into my car the first thing
in the morning & drive
all day that night
i'll be at the end
of my reservation,
the navajo said.

yeah, the paiute replied,
i had a car like that once.

DINNER IN SAUSALITO

she works in publishing
& would be only too happy to
get me a job.
it's such a challenge
working with artists & writers.
i was in all the peace marches,
she says, sausalito is such
a small town i didn't get my first
pimple till i was 40.
she's only too happy to
get me a drink,
can't keep her hands off me,
everyone gets caressed
as she passes.
she sits further away
when her husband returns
from the bathroom &
wonders why there's been several
lawsuits from people
who've fallen up or down her steps.

A REPLY

she says she keeps on
writing a postcard or letter
every two weeks or so
because i haven't
told her not to

i've spoken to the rain
& it didn't do any good

she writes that she's going
to school studying a lot
seeking psychics
seeking help with things
putting the past into the present

she says that if she knew
then what she knows
now she'd really like
to know what i think
of it all

sometimes i think all that people can do
doesn't make any difference
it all comes

from inside here
in the center
like the hubcap
on a wheel
that the sun's rays
shine from
when not obscured by clouds
or spattered with mud
so look
i can't see anything
i have nothing
to say or write
so don't

THE BUTCHER

he's a nice guy
quiet soft spoken
spends a lot of time alone
hiking in the mountains
his wife off here & there travelling
& studying mapping her heritage
he hardly ever speaks
says it all with fewer words
than most makes his own
beer smokes a little hash
shows me the slaughterhouse
this is where it all happens
he says some can take it
& some just can't
take all that dying across
the road from his house things
with horns & hooves hover
in the air he says sometimes
when i've been out & come back
the smell almost makes me sick
& looking up sure are a lotta
stars out tonight isn't that
taurus up there

WESTWOOD

she announces over burgers
that what she really
wants is to go back
to vegas & get some
silicone tits

GOING TO THE POST OFFICE WITH MY SON

we do it six times a week
he really likes it
yells flag flag flag
when we get there
runs right on in
while i open the box & dig it out
he climbs up the stairs
to all those unvisited offices
the ag extension board
the draft board
on the second floor
sits at the top & waits
for me to ascend & open
there's lots of books & mags in there
there's lots of submissions in there
there are two checks that total \$3.50 in there
there is one acceptance in there
there are five rejection slips in there
& while i read through them he says hi
to everyone underneath passing by
& then we come down
hand in hand
headed home
for the sunday layover

DEAD DOG

it was a bitch
putting her down
the ground frozen
hard & full of rocks
two weeks later it's christmas
& i get call of the wild
after shave
in a bottle
shaped like a dog
thank you i say
thinking about how many times we say that
about how many times we're given
what we don't really want
& about how many times
we say thank you for it
like when a cop gives you a ticket

GLADIOLI

i

i've seen red ones
yellow ones
& white ones
possibly pink but
i'm not sure.

ii

they always seem to be present
at weddings & funerals.

iii

they masquerade as pumpkins
& gourds on halloween.

iv

they turn into unmatched socks
when left behind
in laundromat dryers.

v

van gogh found them temperamental
difficult to work with &
turned to sunflowers as models.

vi

they are tall
or at least seem to be
pulled up quite high
on thick green ropes.

vii

when i was young
the thought that these giants
lingered in my grandmother's backyard
terrified me.

viii

there are at least 35 of them
right now outside this window
growing closer all the time.

ix

they grow from bulbs
& come back in the spring
like snakes uncoiling.

x

their name means small sword.

xi

rimbaud went to abyssinia
& smuggled them.

MORNINGLAND

finally after much effort we
succeed in tracking down her girlfriend
who now owns a health food store
& is a member of a religious commune
or something has friends with
names like karass and dharma
who all wear these airbrushed
t-shirts and order margaritas
without tequila when we go out
for dinner at the mexican place

SAN DIEGO

she works part time
fixing up & then selling
oriental rugs her latest
one & only true love
has left her gone to denver
she tells me how much he's
like the lady i'm with
shows pictures full of muscles
is into health foods yoga
astrology the usual she even
balls an up & coming rock star
on the side we smoke joints
she makes me gin & tonics
in the morning breakfast

A STRETCH TOO FAR

he asks me what he should do
about it

he really doesn't listen
to what i'm saying
having gotten his question
up and out to another
ear is enough
he drums his fingertips
on the table as if
it were a piano
fingers spread wide
straining to cover
as many of the keys
as possible

the guy i work with
is having problems
woman problems
his old lady has kicked him out
& he's moved in with another
who his old lady calls
& now he's out of there too
on the street
no car
no money
no woman
just this job
& his music maybe
even his piano will go
soon

yes yes i say
i don't know
i tell him that i've given up
trying to figure the woman thing
that even when i see it
i'll still believe it
can be done
try to make it work
like an easy shot on the 8-ball
not wanting to realize
that even with a four finger bridge
it's a stretch too far

POETRY 201

rushing trying to do
as much as possible
only have a week off
drive down 395 thru
bridgeport bishop mohave
sleep just outside the valley
in the car
drive on into long beach
stopping for breakfast
somewhere in westwood
meet gerry at school
go have a few drinks
before his one o'clock
we're all drunk and
decide to read for his class
one girl asks what i think
are good poets to read
she's never heard of anyone
that i name another girl
asks gerry if this
is what he wants them
to write like

SATURDAY MORNING, 3:07 AM

walk to 7-11 barefoot
hall's throat lozenges more smokes
unfinished poems left on the table
watch the local freaks
on the pinball machine
2 chicks in a mercedes
one tall with nice legs
one short and so-so
come on about this party
decide i've been drinking
too much & pass on it
walk home feeling cold alone
a little horny type it up
while rubbing my feet together
trying to warm them

REASON ENOUGH

she wants to know
why i don't use names
in my poems why
i just use she or her
why i don't use her name.

she tells me little of herself
simply that she's more interested
in the form & doesn't want
to have to deal with the content
of her life or any other.

she's like those people
who ask how you're doin,
& before you can reply
that you don't really see much hope at all
that the doctors are vague about what's wrong
that you can't seem to handle it
as well as you once could that it's hard
to remember what to do & say when
every year every day every hour
every cigarette woman beer joint poem horse
blackjack table
there's just so much more to remember
& just that many fewer brain cells
with which to do it,
they'll say why you certainly are
looking good.

i tell her it's for reasons
of diction & compression
in order to speak

but i'm not really sure

ANOTHER BLOW UP

they just seem to happen
at least once a week
like saturday matinees
when i was a kid

our relationship
appears to be one catastrophe
piled on another

burning it up so rapidly
that dresden seems just a fire
built on a rainy afternoon
by the 3 stooges

no longer as much fun
as it once was something
we looked forward to
now it's something we dread
coming & are helpless to stop
the bombs falling everywhere
while we try to find
one usable glass
under the rubble
of 3 weeks dirty dishes

AN APOLOGY OF SORTS

my dear
you have sulked off
pissed off
because i didn't like your granola
but i ate your strawberry pie
which was good
but i didn't tell you that
instead i just pointed out
how bad the granola was
then it was whimpers
the click-click of the light
the door slamming &
you were gone
it's very quiet now
like waiting for a cake
or rome to fall
therefore
since i care for you
much more than your granola
an oven full of which i now
sit beside
in the future
please don't listen
to me at those times
only
time
will take care
of the rest

AS IF FINGERS AROUND HER NECK

she tells me
her new lover's only 24
& he's got a pot belly
too.

he lives in a garage
snorts his whole paycheck
is not very creative
not exactly my type
she says.

what is your type
i ask.

you are,
she replies.

i suppose that's why
she's moved in with him.

earlier she had told me
that she believed she lived
a charmed life & would live
forever unless someone
murdered her.

after she left
i got into my truck
& drove around the desert
wiping the wetness
from my eyes
ashamed at the sadness
of four years of love
gone why had my luck
seemed to stop so suddenly
my fingers tightened
on the steering wheel
as if around her neck

and i realized that she
just might be right.

BAD ROADS & A BROKEN HEART

it snowed
the day she left
i stood at the window
and watched the snow
fill in her tire tracks
still out front there
in the mud

WHAT YOU WILL MISS MOST

when your old lady has taken off
for LA to become a movie star
when you've been uptown to the nugget
and not seen anything
you'd even remotely care to associate with
when you've come home
half drunk half stoned
successfully lit the oil stove
and are sitting on the bed
staring at your reflection
in a pane of glass
feeling a little lonely
a little down stranded
in the midst of the great basin
is simply this:

the absence of the sound
of your son's voice.

-- Kirk Robertson

Missoula MT
Fallon NV
Carpinteria CA

ELEVEN WAYS OF LOOKING AT A TEQUILA BIRD

i

in an air of melodrama,
his face beaded in sweat,
he pursed his thin, viper-like
lips to say
"i quit," mocking us in
nationwide living color.
i turned the set off and
it grew dark outside,
the sun hidden in the wingspan
of the tequila bird.

ii

my eyes turned on them,
as they left escorted
by a fat policeman.
the stainless steel bracelets
bit tightly into their wrists,
and as the doors of the
dept. store closed behind them,
and the fat policeman opened
the back door of the car
for them to get in,
he was startled as a
tequila bird flew out at him
and disappeared up into
the sky.

iii

hitch-hiking,
the two young girls
heard its cry,
and looking above,
they saw,
on top of the telephone pole,
the tequila bird
grinning at them.
they took a bus.

iv

everyone sat in silence,
and when i was done reading,
they tucked napkins
under their chins, and
pulled out their forks and knives.
oh, where is the tequila bird now?

v

in the backseat of a mustang,
she told me she was taking
self-defense at cerritos j.c.,
and that she could break my fingers,
my wrists, pull my ears off,
poke my eyes out, dislocate my shoulder,
and even pull the hair out of my armpits.
the tequila bird perched on my
shoulder went into hysterics,
and i decided to watch the movie.

vi

in the heat of the afternoon,
the tequila bird practiced
transcendental meditation in
the shadows of the tree outside my window.
(he can't fool me, he's really asleep.)

vii

the tequila bird likes to eat
taquitos, frijoles, and
guacamole sauce.
except when he has a date afterwards.

viii

as my dad yelled at me
for parking my car in the driveway
which resulted in a pool
of oil to stain the concrete,
i lost track of what he was saying
as i noticed a feather belonging to the
tequila bird, saturated in the middle
of the black gloss.

ix

on saturday nights
the tequila bird likes to go out
and get drunk with his friends.
beware the wrath of mrs. tequila bird!

x

see the tequila bird
praying?
he is very humble.
(come xmas and easter he's a dove.)

there is an old saying that says,
"if one gets lost, he should look to the sky
and search for the tequila bird,
for if he is seen, then one is not lost,
but rather, he is home."

3/6/77: THE "AFRICAN QUEEN' REVISITED

a favorite fantasy is me and whoever
i happen to be in love with at the moment
stuck in the everglades of an african swamp.
our small boat, the "african queen," is tangled
in the reeds and just won't budge.
finally, i strip down to the waist and jump
overboard into the 4 ft. deep water. she stays on
board, as i pull the boat through the reeds
with a rope, and she directs me, pointing
out the way.

when i climb on board for a much-needed rest,
we find that leeches have attached themselves
to my bare back, and she quickly rubs salt
on the bloodsuckers, and she gives me medicine
to soothe the rope burns on my hands.
she is also crying, because she knows the
only reason i endure is for her.
after i have rested, i kiss her, and she holds me,
letting me know that she will love me
always. then i jump back to the
awaiting leeches, the dark water.

but what do you expect from someone who
(when he was 5 yrs. old), was seated
on the couch by his mother and told by her
that there was no santa claus
and that daddy was broke
and not to expect much for xmas.
i've been pretending ever since.

1/7/77: FOR THE FATHER OF MY FATHERS

when you see the gods
coming up the steps of the temple
to be received by you,
do not be foolish.
look not at their shiny, metal armor,
the four-legged creatures that they seem

to be part of,
nor marvel at their white skins
and flourishing beards.
do not look down at their feet in respect,
but gaze long and hard into their eyes,
and you will know the truth.
and when you sense the desperate greed and lust
within the very fibre of their souls,
kill them.

their blood will be red,
just like yours.
and your children will whisper your name
in awe,
with respect for years
to come.

-- RVargas

Long Beach CA

VOWELS

-- after Rimbaud

A, the bile of morning, the coats of Hessians
dead at Trenton. E, the tomcat balanced
on the oak limb outside my window, right
front paw up, unable to put it down and catch
the robin singing a lightweight song.
I, the bear I ate my lunch by in Alaska,
neither of us knowing it until his nap was done.
Fear froze me, mild annoyance like an old lady
nothing to hide anyway surprised in her bath
made him paw the air a bit, as though he held
soap and sponge in hand. U, the label
on Bluebird Records, "Shake It Up and Go,"
1940's, my song ever since. O, the bloody
hole, the end of everything, to which we are sucked,
whirling, gasping, our words at last revealed as useless.

STATE MEET

Mashona Marsh's black
Legs scissored over
The last hurdle and through
The tape. "19.4 seconds,
A new state record,"
And, "Why don't you tell me

Where you're going?" my wife
Screamed in my ear. Other fans
Looked away; my little girl
Stared at us as always.
"I'll tell you where I'm going,"
I said and began to jog
With the grace of twenty years back.
"Don't leave me," she gasped, flopping
Beside me. We reached the exit
Tunnel. "I left you a long time
Ago," I said, accelerating
On the turn to the parking lot.
My daughter ran easily
Between us, breathing in through the nose,
Out through the mouth. "A little more
Arm action, baby," I said,
"There, that's it." "You're running
To her, aren't you?" my wife
Asked, panting. "She's a long
Way off," I said, getting
My second wind, but there
She was, her red hair
Exploding in the April air
Like the last-lap gun.
I sprinted the last hundred yards,
Chest filled with arc lights
And fell across the finish line.

-- Patrick Worth Gray

Bellevue NE

MICRO CHIPS

i

In the park, I sat next a girl who was reading Marcel Proust. She frowned a lot and turned the pages with a snap. Now and then, I tossed nuts to a squirrel. A guy came along. He looked Indian.

"Watch," he said.

The girl slammed her book shut. The guy started concentrating. He screwed up his face and clenched his fists. Slowly, he rose off the ground. He went up a foot, shaking, then managed another couple of inches before coming down with a big puff of breath. He was smiling.

"Hey," I said.

The girl moved to a new bench. She sat down, tucked her skirt under and opened Marcel Proust. The guy walked away. He went over to the lake and looked down at the water for a long time.

ii

I had an opportunity at a cocktail party. A lovely girl talked to me. I smirked. I disagreed. I criticized her. She kept trying. I yawned and scratched my crotch. She walked away.

Everyone got on me. I had missed an opportunity, they said. A big one. The girl was rich, very rich; smart, very smart. Her father owned half a city. I thought about it and felt bad.

That summer, at a wedding, I met another girl. She was richer than the first and better looking. She was awfully smart. I danced with her. I said witty things and told her how smart she was. We ran away and got married.

Since then, none of my friends talk to me.

iii

I was up at six-thirty. I ran for the train, and spent forty-five minutes reading the reports I would have to argue with Ed Sheen about.

Lunch was two-thirty. My client had two martinis and talked about golf. I hated golf.

I felt tense, so I went to my club, did forty laps and calisthenics. I liked the new receptionist. She said a late dinner would be fine. I walked home.

I jogged up the three flights to my apartment. I coughed. I rattled my keys. Finally, I heard Sinbad growl and jump off the couch. I opened the door.

He was all over me. I lost my balance and fell against the wall. Sinbad took up his position. I got hold of his collar and he led me to my chair. He was very patient with my tiny steps. I sat down heavily.

"Oh Sinbad, what would I do without you?" I croaked.

He looked up and wagged his tail.

iv

I told Ben about Emma. She loved me. For years, she gave me money, lots of it. I took it, met someone else and left her. I was a bastard, I said. Ben nodded.

Later, I told him the story again. He frowned and bit his pencil. I was a bastard. Yeah, Ben said.

Everytime I saw Ben, I stopped him and told him about Emma. He kept nodding, muttering something. Once or twice, he saw me coming and ducked away.

Friday night, I found him sipping a drink at Mort's. I sat down and told him my story. I was only half way when he jumped up, shoved me against the bar and grabbed my throat. It was bad. People tried, but they couldn't pull him off. When they got one hand away, the other came back.

"Let him alone!" I yelled, between grabs. "He understands! He understands!"

-- John Lowry

Brooklyn NY

GOOD

It was good, really good,
better than having your toes licked
by a quiet dog with red hair,
better than letting the air out of the tires
of a Jaguar parked across two spaces,
better than being broke
and laughing in the salesman's face,
better than folding cash
after winning three straight races,
better than endless credit
at the local liquor store
or the best whore house,
better than lighting fires
in a rich man's warehouse,
better than looking a cop in the eye
and calling him a liar,
better than getting calls you don't want
and hanging up the phone,
better than meat close to the bone,
or knowing the best is yet to come.
It was good, really good.

-- Michael Glover Leigh

Long Beach CA

I'VE GOT THESE OLD SHOES GOD

knows how
long it's been
since they've
had laces
(they originally
had laces) a
few months ago
they got
splits along
the sides in
several places
they're my
favorite
shoes now
to look at
them you'd
never guess
how shiny
and stiff
and damn
uncomfortable
they'd once
been all i
want is to
reach down
and find my
hands as full
and welcome
between your
legs as
holey shorts
let's be old
lovers to start
with we can
be new and
squeaky later

THIGH WOMEN

alone in the
night talking
about men and
drinking like
women don't
in front of
them high on
thighs and
touching thighs
all around it
to drive it
wild and men
always asking
before they
push our heads
down like they
were talking
us into some
thing and the
script of hair
on our mouths
getting thick
until the
wonder of it
hard and smooth
and wanting us
toward morning
we walk one
another home
both of us
slick between
our legs we
pass two stray
drunks asleep
outside a jesus
saves linda
whispers tit
men and we
laugh ourselves
half sick

-- M. Truman Cooper

Santa Barbara CA

IF

REFERENCE I:

to be prince
of bankers is something
let's seize this fact
together then I am nothing.

she's not all that
attractive really
but her body seems
to go with her.

BODY BURNT

FEAR

got to
get out
somehow
emptying your
urn onto ice
for wheel-grip

fear of
words once got
on page they are
sturdy.
Right.

-- Peter deRous

Kingsway, Derby, England

THE WORMWOOD AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT:.....

Since there have been requests for a complete list to date of the Wormwood Awards ("for the most overlooked book of worth for a calendar year"), it is appropriate to comply as we announce the 1976 and 1977 winners: 1961: Alexander Trocchi, The Outsiders (Signet); 1962: Kurt Vonnegut Jr., Mother Night (Gold Medal); 1963: James Drought, The Secret (Skylight); 1964: Russell Edson, The Very Thing That Happens (New Directions); 1965: Christopher Perret, Memoirs of a Parasite (Hors Commerce Press/Callahan); 1966: Stanley Crawford, Gascoyne (Putnam); 1967: Peter Wild, The Good Fox (The Goodly Co); 1968: Ian Hamilton Finlay, 3 Blue Lemons (Wild Hawthorne Press); 1969: Charles Bukowski, Notes of a Dirty Old Man (Essex); 1970: Lorine Neidecker, My Life by Water (Fulcrum); 1971: Jonathan Williams, Blue & Roots/Rue & Bluets (Grossman); 1972: Gerald Locklin, Poop, and Other Poems (MAG Press); 1973: Ronald Koertge, The Father Poems (Sumac); 1974: Steve Richmond, Earth Rose (Earth Press); 1975: Lyn Lifshin, Shaker House Poems (Tide-line); 1976: Phil Weidman, After the Dance (Orchard Press); 1977: Joseph Nicholson's The Dam Builder (The Fault); 1978: to be announced. Nominations from our readers are welcome.

NEW MAGAZINE EXCHANGES:.....

Bombay Duck (contemporary photography and modern poetry), edit. by Ev Thomas, \$2.50/copy fm. 2503 Myrtle St., Oakland CA 94607. ¶ Impact: An International Quarterly of Contemporary Literature and the Arts, edit. Gary Lagier, \$8/yr. fm. Commentators' Press, P.O. Box 61297, Sunnyvale CA 94088. ¶ MiniReview, edit. Leo Mailman, \$2.50 (individuals) \$3.50 (libraries)/4 nos. fm. P.O. Box 4261, Long Beach CA 90804. ¶ Rockbottom, edit. Judyl Mudfoot & Sasha Newborn, \$2/copy fm. Mudborn Press, 209 West de la Guerra, Santa Barbara CA 93101. ¶ Alley Cat Readings (covering readings at Hermosa Beach's Alley Cat Resturant), edit. Michael Andrews & Marcus J. Grapes, \$2.50 copy fm. Bombshelter Press, 1092 Loma Dr., Hermosa Beach CA 90254. ¶ en ancas, edit. Ramón Ordaz, fm. Apartado 4346, Carmelitas 101, Caracas, Venezuela. ¶ Whetstone: A Southwest Poetry Magazine, edit. Michael Bowden fm. San Pedro Press, P.O. Box 226, Bisbee AZ 85603. ¶ Tequila Press Poetry Review, edit. RVargas, \$1.25/copy bargain fm. P.O. Box 3296, Long Beach CA 90803. ¶ Vanessa Poetry Magazine, edit. John Welch, \$2.50/3 nos. fm. 40 Walford Rd., London N16 8ED, England. ¶ Seven Stars Poetry, edit. Richard A. Soos Jr., \$6/4 nos. fm. Realities Library, P.O. Box 33512 San Diego CA 92103.

CLASSIC:.....

Edward Field's Stars In My Eyes (\$7.95) and A Full Heart (\$7.95) fm. Sheep Meadow Press distrib. by Horizon Press, 146 Fifth Ave., New York NY 10010. ¶ James Magorian's Two Hundred Push-Ups at the YMCA (\$1/Specific Gravity Publications), Bosnia and Herzegovina (\$1/Third Eye Press) fm. author, 1225 N. 46th St., Lincoln NE 68503; also his Notes to the Milkman, 50¢ fm. Black Oak Press, Box 4663 Univ. Place Station, Lincoln NE 68504. ¶ Charles Webb's Zinjanthropus Disease, \$4 fm. Querencia Press, 1100 38th Ave., Seattle WA 98122. ¶ Barbara Drake's field poems, \$1 fm. Stone Press, P.O. Box 227, Okemos MI 48864; also fm. same address, her Who's Responsible? ¶ William L. Fox's Monody, \$1.50 fm. Laughing Bear Press, Box 14, Woodinville WA 98133. ¶ Maxine Chernoff's A Vegetable Emergency, \$1 fm. Beyond Baroque Foundation, 1639 West Washington Blvd., P.O. Box 806, Venice CA 90291.

VERY HIGHLY RECOMMENDED:.....

Gerald Locklin's Toad's Sabbatical, \$2.75 fm. Venice Poetry Company Press, c/o Maltese Books, P.O. Box 781, Redondo Beach CA 90277; also his Frisco Epic, \$1.50 fm. Maelstrom Press, P.O. Box 4261, Long Beach CA 90804. ¶ 19 + 1: Anthology of San Francisco Poetry, edit. A. D. Winans, \$5.95 fm. Second Coming Press, P.O. Box 31249, San Francisco CA 94131. ¶ David Barker's Ideal Tourist (75¢) and Cha-Cha in Laguna (\$1) fm. Rumba Train Press, 6023 Village Rd.,

Lakewood CA 90713; fm. same source: Elliot Fried's Poem City (\$1.50). ¶ Kirk Robertson's Sultry Afternoon With the Blinds Partly Pulled, 50¢ fm. Lion's Breath Press, 1252 Fifth Ave., San Francisco CA 94122, and his Walked on By 40 Camels, \$2 fm. Rocky Mt. Creative Arts Journal, P.O. Box 3185, Casper WY 82601. ¶ Judson Crews' Modern Onions and Never Will Dan Cause No One To, Xerox books fm. author, P.O. Box 40011, Albuquerque NM 87196. ¶ Robert M. Chute's Uncle George (\$3) and Voices Great and Small (\$2) fm. The Cider Press, RFD 1, Box 190, Mt. Vernon ME 04352. ¶ Opal L. Nations' The Strange Case of Inspector Loophole, \$1 fm. Véhicule Press, 1000 Clark St., Montreal Canada. ¶ Raymond Tong's A Matter of History, \$2 fm. The Sceptre Press, Knotting, Bedfordshire, England. ¶ James Broughton's Odes for Odd Occasions: Poems 1954-1976, \$4 fm. Manroot, Box 982, South San Francisco CA 94080. ¶ Imperial Messages: 100 Modern Parables, edit. by Howard Schwartz, \$2.50 fm. Bard/Avon Books, Div. Hearst Corp., 959 Eighth Ave., New York NY 10019. ¶ nila northSun's Diet Pepsi & Nacho Cheese, \$2 fm. Duck Down Press, P.O. Box 996, Carpinteria CA 93013. ¶ STOOGISM Anthology, edit. Paul F. Fericano, \$3.95 fm. Scarecrow Books, 1050 Magnolia (#2), Millbrae CA 94030; also fm. same is Paul F. Fericano's Cancer Quiz, \$1.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED:::.....

craig ellis' after the fact, unpriced fm. Abyss, P.O. Box C, Somerville MA 02143. ¶ Hugh Fox's Happy Death Day, \$1 fm. Vagabond, P.O. Box 879, Ellensburg WA 98926 and Yo-Yo Poems, \$1 fm. Allegra Press, 526 Forest, East Lansing MI 48823. ¶ Harley Elliott's The Secret Lover Poems, \$2.25 fm. Emerald City Press, P.O. Box 4569, Tempe AZ 85717. ¶ Kell Robertson's Regular Grinding, 50¢ fm. Lion's Breath Press, 1252 Fifth Ave., San Francisco CA 94122. ¶ Roger Dunsmore's On the Road to Sleeping Child Hot Springs (\$3) and C.W. Dolson's The Showplace of the Country (\$3.50) fm. Pulp Press, Box 48806 Station Bental, Vancouver V7X 1A6, Canada. ¶ A.D. Winans' North Beach Poems (\$2.50), Pancho Aguila's Dark Smoke (\$2.50), J. Whitebird's 24 (\$3), and Ben L. Hiatt's Data for a Windy Day (\$2.75) fm. Second Coming Press, P.O. Box 31249, San Francisco CA 94131.

RECOMMENDED:::.....

Finding the Grain: Pioneer Journals, Franconian Folktales, Ancestral Poems (Norbert Krapf) \$4 fm. Dubois County Historical Society, P.O. Box 31, Jasper IN 47546. ¶ Vôo das Cinco (Aquiles Branco) fm. Joaquim Branco Ribeiro Filho, Av. Astolfo Dutra 247, 36.770 Cataguases MG, Brazil. ¶ Illuminations (Richard Kostelanetz) \$2 fm. Laughing Bear, P.O. Box 14, Woodinville WA 98072. ¶ Here In The (Russell Atkins) \$2.50 fm. Cleveland State Univ. Poetry Center, 6005 Grand Ave., Cleveland OH 44104. ¶ Möbius Novel (Grant Pass) \$1 fm. Reductio Ad Asparagus Press, P.O. Box 15193, Columbus OH 43215. ¶ Codger Picnic (Eric Baizer) \$1 fm. author, 2105 O St. N.W., Washington DC 20037.

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"...Seeking an art based on fundamentals to cure the madness of the age, and a new order of things that would restore the balance between heaven and hell. We had a dim premonition that power-mad gangsters would one day use art itself as a way of deadening men's minds...."

-- Hans Arp in "Dadaland"

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