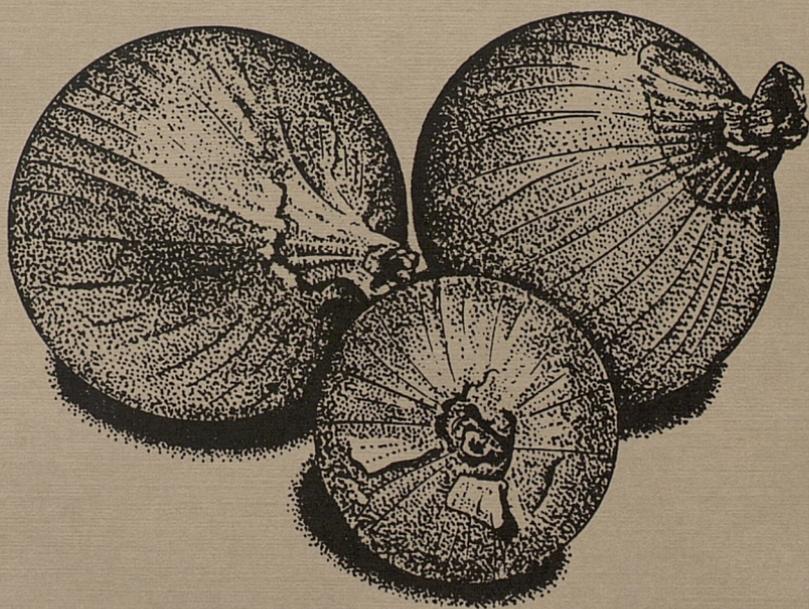


WR: 125



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ESKIMOS LOVE YOU

you are the grassblade
you are the dew
you are the sunrise
mulligan stew

you are bees ankles
you are the notch
eskimos love you
so do the scotch

rain on the summit
hail on the roof
weeds in the garden
beef on the hoof

you are bees ankles
you are the notch
eskimos love you
so do the scotch

elefants graveyard
birds born again
fish in the forests
elk in the glen

you are bees ankles
you are the notch
eskimos love you
so do the scotch

MOTO MAGIC

when i bought my seca 650 i
really wanted a vertical twin but
memories of an ariel square four
in the fifties its smooth sound
similar to that of an offenhauser

convinced me that i should try a
modern inline four but inline
fours sound nothing like square
fours in the fifties the sound of
an ariel square four would set me

to dreaming of a quarter midget
built around that engine it would
sound like an offie and go like
snot my virago 500 sometimes
sounds like a small harley i

wonder if a special 650 would
sound anything like a triumph in
my youth all indy cars except for
those from europe and one or two
specials had offenhauser engines

the engines were in front the
drivers all wore goggles some the
sexy split goggles that i'd wear
today except for my glasses i
won't wear my WWII flier's helmet

either or my leather butcher cap
i don't want to crush my skull
when i fall down again maurie
rose did he die in flames against
the wall at indy or was that 18

other guys you may be waiting for
the first woman to be president
of the united states i'm waiting
for the first woman to drink
champagne in the winners circle

at indy i get a thrill when i see
a woman fly down the front
straight on a harley at the san
jose mile wish i'd made it to
catalina on my mustang when they

were still road racing on the
city streets catalina was trying
to be this country's isle of man

my buddy tommy smith made it to
catalina on his gold star almost

lost it against a curb when he
looked back never look back he
went down on the salt flats at
130 MPH in a helmet swim trunks
and nothing else i wonder if

tommy's still alive if tommy still
dreams of speed still remembers
catalina i never raced after a
few dirt track races in high
school riding in the 125 class at

lincoln park after the real tt
races kids out for fun giving the
spectators something to do
between races besides drink beer
i never raced again got married

instead now i dream of triumphs
excelsiors with villiers two
stroke engines bsa's nortons my
old matchless my honda dream my
bonneville the old harley 45 that

mustang with no front brakes that
would hit 85 flat out on the san
bernardino freeway me on the tank
at 3am with larry pulling away
steadily his mustang having been

bored out it was 25 cubic inches
now i dream of old bikes and ride
around on my nostalgia design vee
twin with the japanese slant

— Jim Gove

Felton CA

ESSAY QUESTION

In England, during the first half of the nineteenth century, a particular male child was trained in the visual arts and ultimately achieved a proficiency approximately equivalent to that of young ladies who do water colors and sketches, or needlepoint, as part of their preparation for a suitable marriage. He was educated privately, and both pampered and ruled by a

protective mother. He traveled extensively, but still proclaimed that, for pure natural beauty, Friar's Crag in the Lake District was unsurpassed in Europe. After a proper engagement with a suitable partner, he married. But on his wedding night he discovered to his horror that his bride had hair in places his aesthetic sensitivity could never have imagined and his sensible vision could not bear to look upon. The marriage was annulled, and he seems to have concluded that his near-wife's peculiar secondary characteristics were probably endemic among females. Through the rest of his long life, the man continued to read widely, to publish extensively, to lecture to adoring audiences. He became the preeminent aesthetician and art critic of his age. He also became obsessed with female children as objects of beauty. No one seemed to notice any irony in this situation, perhaps because the details of his wedding night were not widely known. But even after the story became common knowledge, he was touted as one whose visual sensibilities and overall aesthetic judgment were superior. Explain why, or at least point out how this man's story is similar to a wildly absurd and sadly hilarious sketch by Lenny Bruce.

ACADEMIC SCENE

An avuncular full professor is in charge of this first (and what becomes the last) of a projected series of orientation sessions for the new instructors, all males. He makes a point of calling them gentlemen while he favorably compares the paucity of their educational background to the dearth of their experience in the real world. He explains that they simply do not know how to handle difficult situations and presents them with a hypothetical one: A disgruntled coed comes to your private office (although, of course, none of you are assigned to private offices at this time) and closes the door. She demands a higher grade, which you of course refuse. Then she rips her blouse and begins to shout Rape! No one would ever believe your version of what happened. You would lose your position and leave under a cloud. Your career would be ruined. Now just what would you do in a situation like that? A triumphant, intimidating silence. From the back row, a voice like Will Rogers', but younger: Sir, if everything is just like you say, I believe what I'd do is reach over, lock the door, and rape her.

DOXOLOGY

The unofficial leader of the youth group in the church is outlining what will happen at the fund-raising dinner this evening in the Family Life Center. The young people are to serve the meal and stand around the perimeter of the room throughout dinner and the ensuing prayers and speeches. The leader explains: Then just after Brother Jones gives his invitation for free-will offerings, Brother Smith is going to stand up and say he is moved to give a thousand dollars. Then I want all of us, all around the room, to spontaneously break out singing "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow." It'll be a great moment for the Lord.

EXPERIENCED TEACHER LONGS FOR HALCYON DAYS

One of his bouffant sophomores, a blonde and blank P.E. major from his old West Texas high school, interrupted his peripatetic remarks with "Please don't tell us about those six million Jews or the forty thousand men, women, and children who starved to death today or how many millions or trillions it costs us to fight a war." In a voice not really aggressive. Long suffering. Resigned. Slightly disgusted. Weeks later, when he asks for an example of religious intolerance, she volunteers: she and her high-school friends were forced to eat cafeteria fish on Fridays, and all because of the Catholics. He sighs. He longs for one of his old, easy jobs, as a hot-tar man on a roofing crew, or digging caliche with a shot-shovel. Maybe he could have been a straw-boss by now.

— Jim Linebarger

Denton TX

LOST & FOUND

I lost weight,
you found it
& stuffed it up your jumper.

EASILY PLEASED

I went to a party,
told a joke
& somebody laughed.

TYPEWRITER IN CONTROL

Whenever I feel I'm losing control
I strap myself behind
my Olympia Traveller de Luxe
& find my balance on the chair.
My typewriter gives answers
I would normally suppress.
The typewriter is in control.

It doesn't get drunk
when I spill wine thru its teeth;
doesn't cough when I blow
smoke into its mouth.
I keep it by my side
when my lover calls
to talk to me about incompatibility.
The typewriter is in control.

It consumes me
when there's no food in the kitchen;
keeps me rich
when I'm too broke to go out.
It helps me with the housework:
makes me make the bed
when I'm making problems
with a poem.
My typewriter holds all the keys.
The typewriter is in control.

THE PERIL OF TAKE-AWAY

She fell in love
with a hot dog vendor
& never recovered.

— Myron Lysenko

Taggerty Post Office,
Victoria, Australia

words move
more than wheels
and what's up's
m'lady's heels

— M. K. Book

Gladstone NE

l
h o
t i n
a h s
I s r g
s s o f a
a u i n n
s g n d
w h g t
a a t e h
n s h r i
e s n
w w
s e
i r
n e
i d
o
n w

— Tom Saya
Cincinnati OH

old churches ringing
their bells, old water ringing
my bathtub

 jammed into an unearthed
 skull fragment's eye socket,
 a flint arrowhead

in the desert soldiers
getting killed, at desks graysuits
hiking gasoline prices

 a remembrance of your legs:
 that stubbly itch
 that comes when I don't shave

apples ripe in green leaves
shading other apples
rotting on the ground

 through hills
 black against a red sunset
 a snaking of headlights

that moving queue
of concrete slabs?
just a side walking

 under crushing feet
 grapes turning whichever way
 they can

— William Woodruff

Pasadena CA

Note: The first poem on this page appeared in WR:124
marred by a printer's error. Here it is corrected.

WOMEN'S MAGAZINES

at the side of the bed always
there are these women's magazines
piled or scattered, and from them the faces
of women, beautiful models and actresses,
are forever staring up at me, whether it be early
morn when i'm getting out of bed to go to work,
or maybe when it is late at night and i am
crawling back into bed, perhaps slightly tipsy
from drinking with the day's last thoughts, or
maybe outright drunk from the bitter grief
and the hilarious joy of attempting once again to
get these thoughts down on paper in pleasing words.
but whatever time it is, even on an occasional
rare afternoon nap, there are always these
magazines with the stunning faces, which
after awhile all look alike, wide-eyed and
smiling, trying to get me to read the titles
of the articles held inside. and when i do
succumb to reading these titles i am quick
to notice how many have to do with dealing
with a man. articles of this sort, i am
forced to admit, i do have a tough time
refusing to read. it's always so damned
enticing to find out what negative
characteristics i share with other men.
and it's not all that surprising, i guess,
to discover that the number of failings
we men have is enormous and frightening.
but i suppose the real frightening aspect
of this whole scene is that i am in so many
of my worst failings so very similar
to the rest of my troubled sex.
i would have hoped for at least some
small measure of originality in this regard.
sure, i suppose too, that there is some
bit of comfort in knowing i'm not alone
in what i so clearly suffer from, but
it is a minor comfort at best,
believe me. then, sometimes at night,
when my girlfriend is reading
next to me in bed before sleep,
i cannot help peeking over to see
which article she is open to.
i cannot tell you what a relief
it is when i see she's only
wrapped up in another
miracle breakthrough for
slimmer thighs.
then i can fall asleep
in peace.

BETWEEN DREAMS

half-asleep in the early morning i see her
tiptoeing from the bathroom to the closet
with no clothes on, and then at the
closet door i see her slip into a blouse before
going over to the dresser for a pair of
panties. she does these things with the
utmost of quiet, thinking that i am still fast
asleep. every morning it is almost the same way,
since she has to be out earlier than i have to be.
i like it best when fresh from the shower she
glides into the bedroom without a stitch on,
and then stands on the scale in front of the window,
which is usually softly glowing at that hour with
a dawn bluish-gray. she stands there, hands
folded under chin, arms pressed securely
against breast. naturally, at this
moment i make a quick study of her body, and
often enough i come to the same exact conclusion:
it is like no other woman's body i have ever known;
it has its own particular rules and landscapes.
i wonder at the way it decides the flow
of passions in my life, how it influences
my energy like the wind influences waves
and leaves. when she finally goes down to
the kitchen i feel alone in the bed,
in the world. her scent lingers
briefly in the room. i am helplessly
between dreams so it seems, and i have only
my breathing.

MORE TOMATOES FROM MY FATHER'S GARDEN

we cannot keep up with the tomatoes
from my father's garden. lots of them
go bad before they can be picked.
next year, he says, the garden will be
smaller, claiming that there's too much work
and too much waste. when my mother makes a salad
tomatoes dominate. the plate is piled high
with them. there's almost no room in us
for anything else. when i leave their house
i'm given a huge bag of tomatoes to
take home. and believe me, i am grateful
for this; they are so meaty and substantial,
so hearty in spirit. and what
georgette and i don't use can always be
given away. i've never seen anyone
refuse a big beautiful tomato.
as i drive the dark country
roads the huge bag of tomatoes
is on the seat next to me.

i keep thinking that perhaps
i should put the seatbelt
around it.

CHINESE TAKE-OUT

i yelled to her to bring some chinese food back with her when she was going out the door, but i didn't know whether she heard me or not. it wasn't until around midnight that she came in, and when she did she had a large bag in her arms and from it i could smell the aroma escaping of our favorite dishes. so i got her a beer glass and on the coffee table i put sticks and napkins and paper plates. i cannot tell you how many times we have had these dishes; really, there's no sense in me even trying to venture a guess. in the basket on the mantelpiece are enough slips from fortune cookies to choke a cat. often when i am going out the door she'll yell to me to pick up chinese. that's all she has to say. and when i get to the restaurant smiles meet me there. they know exactly what i'm there for. i'm not even asked or handed a menu. the girl at the cash register will fill out the order without me having to say a word. it's to the point where to change dishes we'd have to change restaurants. at our usual place a change in our order would not be believed. it'd be tantamount to breaking an oath. and it is with this knowledge we live, and so we know it'd be a catastrophe to tire of the dishes we are associated with. true, there have been nights when we have looked at one another, at the sameness of the dishes in front of us, at the same faceless shrimp and the same cubes of tofu diced with such meticulousness, at the same bold forests of broccoli and the same strands of surrendered cabbage — we have looked at these and ourselves and we have honestly questioned how long we can persist in this madness. i know when we pass the new mexican restaurant, down by the old post office, we are tempted with what take-out might be like there. but, even though our oath is an unspoken one, still we chose to live by it, and in this way the years pass.

VOICES

i've been hearing voices calling me again.
actually just today i heard one, in the early
afternoon: i was upstairs changing the sheets on
the bed and a voice came from downstairs somewhere,
but i wasn't exactly sure where. i don't know what
to think of this. they never really scare me, these
voices; it's always a distant call, and when i go
to it there is nothing there. it's not from
the drinking that i hear these voices, no. i hear
them when i am sober too. and it's always a
female voice that i hear. i should mention
this, not because it means anything to me, but
it might mean something to you, although i
cannot imagine what. recently i talked to the
family who used to live in this old farmhouse.
i had run into them at the supermarket.
one of the children had something interesting
to say: she told me that she had heard voices
here. when she did her parents snickered
and told me not to take her seriously.
she told me this without me mentioning a word
about the voices i had heard. and
the voices always seem to use my whole
first name. this makes me even more curious,
since only my family uses my name this way.
friends and acquaintances without fail
will shorten it. and every so often i swear
i can identify one of the voices. i'm
convinced one of the voices belongs to
the woman whom i lived with not too long ago,
for over three years. but, i don't know
how this could be the case, since i thought
only the dead called out to you
in this manner. and she is not dead,
thank god. only yesterday i ran into her
at the health food store at the little
mall in town. she appeared as beautiful
as ever. we talked for a brief spell.
in all the time we've known each other
we have not had a bitter word between us.
anyway, it could not have been
her voice that i've been hearing, or
one of the voices. if she wanted
to call me all she'd have to do
is use the phone. the dead
cannot do that. they can't use
phones. not even
pushbutton.

— Ronald Baatz

Mt. Tremper NY

TODAY IS

december 30, 1988 and i spent
it in the public library,
rubbing elbows with the
rest of the transients

and all that the papers had
was how you shouldn't drink
and drive on new year's eve
and how you could cure
your hangovers if and
when you got them

i don't understand all
those people who need
some excuse to drink

IT'S NEW YEAR'S!

IT'S THE FOURTH OF JULY!

as if this made it ok to get sloppy
and pinch your secretary on the ass

and later they'll say

oh, i did that? i was SO drunk!

these are the people that disgust
me — i say give me a man who drinks
because he enjoys it and doesn't
give a damn what anyone else thinks.

JUST THE RIGHT SPEED

so here we are; sitting on our
bathroom floor, drunk on beer,
scraping paint off the walls

seems like six or seven layers
of paint; this house must have
seen a lot of living

we don't make much progress;
we are young and in love,
stopping every few minutes
to touch

this is okay, even right, we
have time, the walls will wait

we will be here for, i don't
know how long, but while we
are this old house will breathe;
it will understand our love

the wood and plaster will
sing with us as we make
love late into the night

so it is okay that our progress
(on the walls) seems slow; we
are really moving at just the
right speed.

WAITING ON THE GODDAMN BUS

sitting on the bench, waiting on
the bus when this old man sits
down next to me, turns his head
to the side, spits and before

i can lose myself in the paper
he starts

"they'll fuck you everytime"

i'm just sitting, hoping for
the bus, watching

"those cocksuckers — they'll fuck
you everytime"

i sigh and resign myself

later we've compared scars and
he has told me the portion of
his eighty-six years that he
considers important

when he gets off the
bus i miss him.

— tom caufield

Conway AR

MADONNA WHO PUTS HER MAN ON A PEDESTAL
gets a stiff neck

MY MOTHER AND THE STOCKS

— Mother, may I go out to swim?
Yes, my darling daughter.
Hang your clothes on a hickory limb
but don't go near the water.

Honey you should
you never want to
listen or learn
know about them
it was hard when
your father died
and I know you'd
rather read poetry
but Lyn there's
so much you ought
to know. What? you
have read about
mutual funds?
Oh, I don't like
the sounds of this,
I knew I shouldn't
trust you, should
get a trust fund.
What do you think
you are Bernard
Baruch? You mean
you know who he
is?

UNEASE

bay leaf
on the sill
to keep out
ants. when
I think of
my mother's
operation
shadows like
floaters or
little black
bugs fly up
I can't look
at what's
what straight
something
thickening
that doesn't
go away

IT DOES BOTHER ME, THE SLUT IMAGE

and you do nothing
to put it down,
bury it, your
smile it's your
eyes maybe I
know you didn't
say anything or do
but you come in
a room with a
certain air that's
suggestive it's
your fault baby you
give them ideas

KENT STATE, MAY 1970

smoke in the
apple blossoms
pale flowers
flames in
Saturday light
a woman at
the window
all night
waiting one
long black
haired woman
notices a flower
in the barrel of
one soldier's
gun flowers
are better than
bullets the
governor in
black polished
shoes bayonettes
against a burn
ing building

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE MADONNA

is sly
puts a strain
on your heart
instead of giving
you strokes,
could make
you have
one

MAIN SQUEEZE MADONNA

gets you in the
pleats of her
accordion and
plays you

MADONNA WHO'S HAD IT WITH HIM

wonders if
she can
have it again

MADONNA LOVES WHAT HE SAYS

but knows his
eyes are deceptive,
hypnotic as blue
water off Big
Sur that could
suck metal and
wheels in be
cause of its
beauty, that his
grandfather lived
1 mile from the
blarney stone

HURRICANE MADONNA: 1

you can track
her but she
rarely does
what you suppose

HURRICANE MADONNA: 2

she's fierce
sends furniture
flying into
the streets
messes your
sheets and
drawers breaks
your house up
into pieces
just lets you
catch your
breath then
does you in

READING MADONNA

would rather
open a book
than her legs

COFFEE MADONNA

steams your
glasses makes
you speedy you
can't face too
many Mondays
without her

REFRIGERATOR MADONNA

as long as she
hums and vibrates
you know what
you put in
her will get
hard fast

WAITRESS MADONNA

tries not to
blow her top
so she won't
blow her tip

— Lyn Lifshin

Niskayuna NY

POSTER CHILD FROM HELL

They always seem to show up in the middle of The Rush on a bad Saturday night, hair brushed back so precise not even a hurricane could disturb the coif. Their designer silk shirts are always freshly pressed, the moustache trimmed, nails pared and buffed to perfection. He orders four drinks and wonders why they aren't in front of him as the last syllable leaves his mouth, hands over an American Express card when he recognizes his order on the wood.

"What's that?" I say.

"It's a credit card."

"I know that. I was ringing up sales in a National Hotel chain for State Senators when you were in first grade."

"So what's the problem?"

"Your credit's no good here."

He looked as if he had been gut shot and someone had poured kerosene in the open wound and was about to light a match; the concept of bad credit was that appalling.

"Mr. Cash only." I said.

"What?"

"You know, money, the stuff your old man uses to pay for your plastic problems."

He looked as if he had heard of money but wasn't sure where it was kept.

I was going to remind him that it was in the bill-fold part of his wallet but reconsidered; even he was probably aware of the general location of the precious Mr. Cash.

"I'll bet you don't make a lot of tips."

"Tipping, isn't that a city in China?"

He didn't get it and he didn't leave me the time of day either. Not that I wanted it from him. Actually, we were working on a hundred and a quarter apiece for the night so why not have a little fun for a change?

CONTACTS

"There I was on line at the Paper Cutter getting the pages for the magazine copy ready and this strange guy comes up to me and hands me his card.

He was old, ancient in fact, decrepit even. The card was blue and it had all kinds of names on it, some with addresses on other planets. I wondered who took

the order for that one and where. He indicated that he was on some kind of mission that was of vital importance and top secret to boot. 'Take Sara, for instance. We've been in contact for years. Her home base is still Saturn but that could change on a moment's notice. What are you having run off?' 'Runes. I'm the head of a Secret Society that specializes in the significance of signs; have you ever heard of The Semiologists?' I thought I had a strong shot at becoming a statistic judging from the look in his eyes. It was only later, that I realized he hadn't gotten the joke and he had perceived me as a threat from a rival power."

SUB SHOP KAMA SUTRA

"I was still working my brother's string of sub shops in Syracuse when I heard this incredible story. Elaine, one of his managers, was trying to get through to her store on the horn but the phone was off the hook. It was snowing like crazy but she got her car out intent on driving a couple of miles to the joint, liberating the kids on the job. She got there around 11 and is about to walk in when she sees the kids lying down by the counter working each other over in a major way. Her first impulse is to break them up but thinks instead: Someone I know should see this. So she calls my brother. He's like racked out at the time but it's only a little snow and what's a couple of miles, anyway? This is Syracuse after all. He's there in about ten and can't believe two kids in their teens are trying out positions he thought you could only see in X-Rated movies. His impulse is to break up the party, they are on the clock after all,

and is about to put the key in
when Elaine says:

'I'm going out for a couple of beers,
you want one?' The shop was sheltered
from the snow, it wasn't really that cold,
zero wind chill, so he says:

'What the hell.'

After all it was shaping up to be
one hell of a show."

WORKING HARD ON 10 TO 15

He shot things from
observation decks in
National Parks.
Humans were things
to him and he had
this strange habit
of pulling down on
people with water
pistols just for fun,
threw coke bottles
full of gasoline from
speeding cars just
to see what happened
next. He was a
Washington Park
regular hanging out
with the tough punks

and their boys.
He liked to feel
the sun coming up
in his veins, the bucks
that came with illicit
sex and bombing runs
just before dawn.
He was eighteen and
invincible; getting
caught never occurred
to him which is one
of the reasons Maximum
John gave him 10-15
without a chance of
parole. A large
incendiary bomb went
off inside.

SHE LOOKED AS IF STARRING

in Return of the Attack of
the Bimbos was a mission
she was committed to complete.
You don't often see wenches
dressed almost that naked
who aren't on some kind of
assignment. I almost asked
her how much when I put her
Absolut and Tonic, with lime
in and out, instead of saying,
"That'll be three bucks."
I'm getting old but I'm not dead
yet and the sly ready for sex
look she gave me indicated
I was in for a long night
no matter what happened.

THE SPRING OF RICKEY HENDERSON'S DISCONTENT

It's tough to actually feel sorry
for Rickey Henderson only
making 3 million to play
baseball next year.
What a shame he can't make
ends meet at that pittance
with a valid, binding legal
contract dotted and signed.
His agent is probably considering
jumping into the San Andreas Fault
with an atomic bomb strapped
to his chest for screwing
his client like that.
Rickey says he can't concentrate
knowing he's not getting paid full
market value.
I'm old fashioned.
I remember when guys played
sports for the love of the game
and the money was incidental.

I WAS WATCHING GABBY

play awesome tennis
and it occurred to me
that I did something
wrong with my life
not meeting a beautiful
20-year-old athlete winning
4 million dollars a year
travelling around the
world first class,
not to mention endorsements
which are probably worth
5 times 4 million.
My wife probably feels
the same way about
Boris Becker.

— Alan Catlin

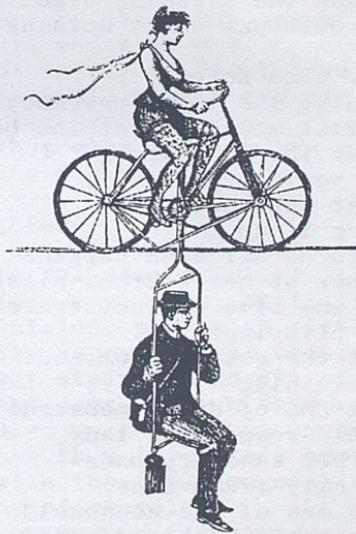
Schenectady NY

and a hard man is good to find

— Mae Eaton

Winsome ID

Super Woman and Others



Catherine Lynn

FULL-CYCLE

My great-aunts —
sturdy Missouri farm girls —
used rags.
They washed them out by hand
and hung them to dry
along with the rest of the
family laundry
on long rope clotheslines
behind the main house.
It was no more distasteful to them
than scrubbing the latest baby's
soiled diapers
or scooping out the chicken coops
or emptying the steaming night buckets
into the outhouse every morning.

My mother used Kotex,
purchased at the local pharmacy.
The druggist would secret the box
from under the counter
and they would avoid
looking at one another
as he rang it up.
Mother stored her used napkins
in the back of her bedroom closet
until it was time to incinerate
the yard clippings.
They gave the entire room and
all her clothing
a faint aroma of dried menstrual blood.
But no self-respecting lady
ever put her sanitary pads
into the city trash cans
where the men of the household
might see them and be offended,
or the garbage collectors
make lewd jokes.

When I was a girl
we had two brands to choose from —
and 200 horror stories to exchange —
about the girl whose pad fell off
in the middle of the sidewalk
right in front of the most popular
boys at school,
and how a boy could tell
if you were having your period
just by looking into your eyes,
and you couldn't take a bath
or ride a bicycle
or participate in P.E.,
because something terrible

might happen to you —
only nobody ever
told us what.

The Kotex Company
finally published a pamphlet
obscurely entitled
"Are You In The Know?"
It was illustrated with cute cartoons
of young women dancing, skating,
doing jumping jacks,
even taking a shower —
all while on their period.
Wanda, the biggest slut
in our seventh grade class,
always carried a pamphlet in her purse.
Whenever she saw a boy nearby,
she would sneak it out
and show it off to her friends,
and they would giggle and gag
and shriek hysterically
as if they were looking at
a Tijuana Bible.

My daughters
get to choose from an enormous
and colorful assortment of tampons,
mini-pads, maxi-pads, panty-liners,
panty-shields, pads with little
butterfly edges so your underpants
won't get stained, and all of the above
for light days, medium days, and
heavy days — scented or unscented.
They toss them into their grocery carts
along with the fresh vegetables
and cans of ravioli.
If the price won't register
on the glass computer plate,
the clerk yells through the intercom,
"Hey, Joe! I need a price-check on
super-absorbant, scented, Maxi-Pads —
Aisle Six!"
And nobody even bothers
to look up from their copies
of The National Enquirer.

SUPER WOMAN

My girlfriend, Mary Ellen,
didn't have to work.
The interest alone
from her Daddy's trust fund

could have easily supported her
in a lifestyle few of us
will ever know.

But Mary Ellen said she needed
to work to get out of the house —
and besides, she was seeing one attorney
during her lunch hours
and another on the afternoons
when she was supposed to be attending
her Junior Assistance League meetings.
Neither attorney knew about the other
and her husband didn't know
about the attorneys.
Mary Ellen never worried about anything
except getting caught.
Guilt was not one of her
strong points.

But she would go into a stomping,
door-slamming fit
if one of her artificial nails
broke off.
Mary Ellen was a perfectionist.
She had her hair permed and frosted
twice a month by Mario,
her favorite stylist.
Mario wanted very much to
jump her bones,
but tho she found his accent
and rippling brown muscles appealing,
she was afraid he
couldn't keep his mouth shut,
or maybe she would catch a disease —
like herpes or the clap or AIDS.

Mary Ellen owned a beautiful
split-level in Newport Beach.
She did all her own housework.
She said it was cathartic, and anyway,
she didn't want some clumsy cleaning woman
breaking her expensive bevelled-glass
coffee tables.
She had two nice kids
who were always clean and well-behaved,
and a big shaggy mutt named Chivas
after her favorite brand of scotch.

Mary Ellen loved to cook.
After an exhausting day of work
and fooling around,
she would hurry home
and whip up an entire gourmet meal
and serve it on her every-day Noritaki,

with long-stemmed Steubens
for the wine.

She was little and cute and sexy
and bought all her size 3s
at Bullocks and Buffums
and the shops along Rodeo Drive.
She seldom wore the same thing twice,
but if she did, you couldn't tell,
because of the clever things
she knew how to do with accessories.
She spent her weekends and vacations
at the beach in front of her mother's house
on Catalina Island,
showing off her all-over tan
and perfect bod.

One day I asked her
how the hell she did it:
the job, the house, the kids,
the husband, the lovers,
the gourmet meals,
the perfect selfness.
She said it was easy —
she made all her plans
for the following week
while she was having sex.

CREDIBILITY

Sally had always been disappointed in Tiffany,
one of her co-workers at the cosmetic distribution
company where they shared a small office, because
Tiffany believed every single word printed in
The National Enquirer. She kept a current copy
on her desk and read it cover to cover, sharing
out loud particularly shocking and nauseating
articles so everyone had to hear. She cut out
special articles (photos or drawings included)
and pinned them to the bulletin board above her desk.

Her favorite subjects dealt with weird sexual
experiences and encounters with other-world beings.
But any story interested her if it were outrageous
and unbelievable enough. Like the Civil War widow
who became pregnant from a bullet. Seems it was shot
through some poor soldier's testicle, picked up
living sperm along the way, then hit the widow smack
in her left ovary. Nine months later she gave birth
to a healthy baby boy. The only thing that seemed to
upset her was that the soldier had been a Yankee.
"Yup," said Tiffany, born and raised in Orlando, "That'd
upset me, too!"

Tiffany, a worshipper of Elvis, especially treasured every account of The King standing in line at Wal-Mart or window shopping along Rodeo Drive or peeking through his front door screen. It was proof to her that he was alive and well and looked as handsome and slender (at least in the fuzzy, touched-up, 300 times enlarged photos that accompanied each article) as when he first appeared on the Ed Sullivan show.

Humans with extra body parts were also among her favorite subjects — especially people with more than one head. Not real Siamese twins — that was a boring medical reality done to death on the Sally Jesse Raphael show — but individuals with only one body and two or more heads. Or better yet, one head and two or more bodies, although that was distinctly more rare. She even believed the story about the farmer's wife who gave birth to a litter of pigs.

Now it's the Kennedys — raping innocent young women and running around their Palm Beach compound drunken and disorderly, dressed in nothing but t-shirts and ankle socks. This was the last straw for Sally, a staunch Democrat and ardent Kennedy fan. Now she refuses to talk to Tiffany, for fear of giving her the slightest encouragement. Says Sally, grateful to be among the more enlightened reading public, "I never believe ANYthing unless I see it in People magazine."

TO REACH THE COMMON FOLK

If I live to be 100 (and I will),
my children have promised to mail my photograph
to Willard Scott, the jolly, people-person
weatherman on NBC.

When my picture appears on the screen
Willard will gleefully announce:
"Now, here is CATHERINE LYNN of Long Beach,
California — 100 years young
and isn't she a pretty lady!"

But no one will see a shriveled crone,
package birthday bow in her carefully permed hair,
dressed in something ill-fitting that her
grandchildren picked out for her,
stooped and confused and trying to smile
as her bleary, watery eyes
are blinded by the camera flash.

I will be sitting ramrod straight
in my favorite antique chair,

wearing my flowing lavender hippie dress
and dangling purple shell-shaped earrings.
My hair will be naturally gray,
shoulder-length and wild,
the way I like it.

I will be bright-eyed and alert,
smiling broadly in spite of my worn-down
coffee-stained teeth
and my Map of Europe face.
Greenpeace, Save the Whale, Ban the Bomb,
and Vote Democrat buttons
will be pinned to my lapel
and I will be holding aloft
a copy of my best-selling,
Pulitzer-Prize-winning collection
of straight-forward, easy-to-understand poetry
that every literary critic in the free world
has proclaimed to be the turning point
in making poetry reading
as popular among the masses
as afternoon soaps
and MTV.

NATURAL SELECTION

It happens every Spring —
adult birds build their nests
in the branches of the giant juniper trees
outside my bedroom window.
The trees are heavy-branched and hanging —
unmoored to the house in any way.
They sway and thrash about
with every gust of wind.

From April to June we find
tiny nestlings scattered across the yard
like a field of soft brown dandelions —
shivering, not yet ready to fly,
stunned from their fall,
as the parent birds circle frantically above,
unable to help.

We used to carry them into the warmth
of the kitchen, wrap them in towels,
and force-feed them warm milk
with medicine droppers.
But they always died,
and the children would weep
and make graves for them
with markers of crossed sticks
and mounds of garden wildflowers.

Now the children are grown and gone.
Whenever I find the nestlings,
I place them gently in the apartment trash cans
so the neighborhood cats cannot torture them.
If they were to survive, they would build
their own nests in inappropriate places
and the cycle would continue.

I think of this when I watch the news
and see thousands upon thousands
of children dying from earthquakes,
floods, famines, drought, and disease,
because their parents could not find
a suitable place
to build their homes.

SOMETIMES BEING MANIC IS AN ASSET

All Julie wanted were some aspirin tablets
for her morning headache.
She asked at the nurses' station
and was told she could not have them
without her doctor's written consent.
"My doctor won't be in until tomorrow," said Julie.
"I'm SORRY!" snapped the nurse, annoyed at
being argued with. "Those are the RULES!"

"Are you telling me I can't have
TWO LOUSY ASPIRIN TABLETS?" shouted Julie,
beginning to shake and turn blue
at the corners of her mouth.
The nurse quickly backed away, holding up
her clipboard like a talisman.
"Don't yell at ME, young lady," she said
from the safer distance. "I don't make
the rules around here — I just work here!"

Julie spotted a small bottle of Bayer's
on the nurses' desk just inside the open window.
She grabbed it, shook out four tablets,
and replaced the bottle.
The nurse made no move to stop her
or to summon an attendant.
She liked her potted African violet
and the large color photo of her husband
too much to risk one of Julie's attacks.

Julie downed two of the aspirins
with a large swig of coffee
and put the other two in her jeans' pocket
for the next morning.
"I survived 100 capsules of 300-mg lithium,"

she shouted, making sure the nurse could hear,
"and that god-damned bitch tries to tell me
I can't have TWO FUCKING ASPIRINS!"

The next day there was a standing order
in Julie's file
that she could have two aspirin tablets
whenever she wanted.

THE LIFE YOU SAVE

The intern on duty
that night at County General
had never seen so much blood before —
it covered the victim's body
like a scarlet shawl —
it gushed from his open mouth,
his nostrils, from the torn aorta
exposed by an enormous ragged hole in his chest
like crimson water from a
marble florentine fountain.
He looked as if he'd been hit
by a mortar shell.
"That one's a goner," somebody said.

Night after night
the intern had watched the same scenario:
dozens of them, carried in by family,
by friends, by paramedics —
white, black, hispanic, asian,
still flaunting their colors, their tattoos,
their shimmering jewelry,
and their garish, oversized crucifixes.
They almost always died, surrounded by
weeping mothers and sisters
clutching Bibles and Rosary beads,
pleading, "Why, why, WHY?"

But this one was different.
Nobody came to weep for him.
He was only a kid — 16 at most —
with long blond hair
and a face like Michelangelo's "David."
He wore no colors, no jewelry,
not even an earring.
A victim of cross-fire, thought the intern,
the familiar rage eating at his stomach.
They stitched the aorta back into place,
sewed up the hole in his chest,
and wheeled him off to CCU to die.

The intern followed, his other patients forgotten.
For three days and three nights
he sat with the boy.
Whenever the exhausted heart stopped beating
he was there to call "Code Blue."
He talked to the unconscious boy
about sports, music, movies,
about his own young wife and daughter,
and about his childhood summers
hunting quail and picking gooseberries
in the New Hampshire woods.
He even sang the wrong words to
long-forgotten lullabies — anything
to encourage the boy's tenuous
hold onto life.

On the third night of the third day
the intern suddenly looked up from dozing
into a pair of clear blue eyes.
The small peaks on the heart monitor
were slow but regular.
The boy would live.
The intern lay his head upon the bed
and wept — deep, painful sobs.

When the boy was strong enough
to take nourishment
the intern asked him the meaning
of the faint and amateurishly tattooed
tears he had noticed
whenever the light was on —
six under one eye
and four under the other.
Were they symbols of some religious sect,
or perhaps a commentary on the tragedy
of the entire lousy world?

"Shit, no!" said the boy, smiling
between sips of broth.
"They're like notches on a rifle.
Each one stands for some dumb fucker
I blew away."

THE NOVICE

The message on my answering machine
was garbled at first —
the caller was obviously new at this
and the sounds in the background
of young children and angry adults
shouting and throwing things
made it even harder for me

to understand the child's
unfamiliar vernacular.
But the longer he spoke
the more confident he became,
and I was able to comprehend
his basic point:

"Pussy, ass-hole, fuck-face,
god-damned fat ugly bitch —
you ugly ol' fat ugly bitch ho' —
fuck-face, pussy, ass-hole!
I hate yo' fat ugly guts!
You fat ol' ugly fuck-face bitch ho'!
You want me to suck yo' pussy?
You can SUCK MY COCK!"

O.K., O.K., kid — I get your message!
You could use some professional
speech therapy
and a more polished approach,
and a lot more variety and imagination,
but you're not doing badly
for a five-year-old.

And believe me, I do understand.
I'm having a shitty day, too.

A NICE PLACE TO VISIT, BUT YOU WOULDN'T
WANT TO LIVE THERE

The entire ward had recently
been completely re-decorated.
The doctors were happy.
The Board of Directors were happy.
The staff was happy.
The patients' families were happy.
Only the patients themselves
were not happy.
They didn't give a shit
if the walls were Tropical Tangerine
with Bachelor-Button-Blue trim.
The beds now had matching coverlets,
the carpet was so thick you sank into it,
and every chair, table, lamp, curtain,
even the tooth brush holders,
were color-coordinated.

Doctor visits did not increase
from the usual one hour a week.
Physical therapy continued to consist of
making beads out of Reader's Digest pages
and Elmer's glue.
The group therapist was still the same

"gut level feeling" pain in the ass.
Every jig-saw puzzle in the lounge
had at least a dozen missing pieces.
And everybody's medicine made them feel
crazier than they had
before they were admitted,
except for the real psychotics
who couldn't feel anything anyway
and who wandered up and down the halls
all day long,
dragging their arms
doing the Thorazine Shuffle.

One young woman with freckles
and bright red hair
began sticking her Thorazine inside her cheek
and spitting it into the nearest toilet.
Her only "illness" was a week of hysterics
after her new husband confessed to her
that he was gay.
Her family had no idea what to do with her
so put her in the psych ward.
Now, she took enormous pleasure
in dragging great globs of snot
out of her nose
and wiping it on the hems of
the new Bachelor-Button-Blue curtains.

This did not seem to anyone
to be the behavior of a psychotic.

THE SCIENTIFIC MIND

True genius began when,
without prior discovery
or books,
without laboratories
or equipment,
without formulas
or equations
or sophisticated language,
people who covered their nakedness
with animal skins
and cured their rotten teeth
by pulling them out
observed a shaft of dry brown wheat
and saw a loaf of bread.

— Catherine Lynn

Long Beach CA

CONVEYANCE

an interesting point to remember
about Ezra Pound
is not only his fondness
for Oriental poetry's brevity,
but how he learned from reading
the ancient Greek fragments
(such as Sappho) that
the missing segments
would leave the mind open
to imagine.

he considered poetry
a light
to introduce the soul
to itself.

many things come through
his poetry
not conveyed
by his words.

his treason
seems to have been the product
of a long festering disappointment
that recognition for his greatness
hadn't been dished up on a silver platter.

what hope is there
for poets in the 20th century
when the best of them
ends his life saying: "At seventy
I realized that instead of being a lunatic,
I was a moron."

LIKE A CHARACTER FROM BRUEGEL

he banged on the machine
banged and banged
shaking the glass panel
behind which were sacks of potato chips,
corn puffs, Snickers, pretzels, etc
slamming the lunchroom
full of racket

Old Carl yelled across our table
to him, "Did it steal your money?"

somewhat resigned, he turned, "No,
it gave me an extra dime. I'm trying
to see if I can get anymore
out of it."

OF CALLIOPE AND BANJOS

AND ping pong. and nut farms. old folk's homes.
fading cops in wheelchairs scribbling tickets
in senile delerium, slobbering,
"Don't try to pull anything, tell it
to the judge." a chorus of Sunshine Girls
singing, "Row row row your boat gently down the
stream," in the dayroom. an old gal with red
lipstick creeping up the crevices around her lips
whose children are scattered about the country.
flower vases full of chrysanthemums.
a life-long nitwit twanging on his banjo, and
downstairs, the balls
of ping pong
bounce
back and forth.

MY GIRLFRIEND

in the whole 2 1/2 years i've known Janet
i've never seen her drunk. i've never
seen her drink more than 2 or 3 drinks.
so i asked her, "Have you ever been drunk?"
not wanting to appear that she didn't know the score
she said, "Yes."
"No, I mean snot-slinging psychedelic drunk
hungover the next morning throwing up in the toilet?"
"Oh yes of course Mark." i don't believe her,
but i let it go at that — she's just not
the type — and i prefer her that way.
i can't imagine living with another drunk,
having 2 drunks set up housekeeping,
robbing the same piggy bank, eating twice
as many aspirin and living on a diet of
hot dogs and Campbell's Soup, besides,
we've only got one toilet.

BATTLE OF THE SCULLERY

the only person noiser
in the kitchen
than my mother-in-law-to-be
is her daughter
rehearsing World War 3
with pots & pans.

— Mark Weber

Albuquerque NM

I SHOULD HAVE TIED A STRING AROUND MY ELBOW

i was asked to write out some answers to some interview questions. i did. i was very displeased with my answers, which seemed dull and self-important.

i decided the problem was that i had attempted the project cold sober. i resolved to try another batch of questions with a bottle at my elbow.

but when the new questions arrived, i sat down and started writing. i think i did a little better on them, but it wasn't until i was done that i realized i had forgotten to get drunk.

forgetting to get drunk: now that is truly the sign of a failing memory.

TOADLOGIC

i read in the paper today that under the new immigration law everyone applying for a job will have to prove that he or she is a citizen of the united states.

that's an outrage. it is a violation of the constitutional rights of citizens of the united states to force them to prove that they are citizens of the united states.

only people who are not citizens of the united states should have to prove that they are citizens of the united states.

otherwise, where's the challenge?

A DIFFERENT DRUMMER

"did you hear," gunther says, "that my brother bought a blues club up in l.a.?"

"gunther," i say, "i was under the impression that your brother was a white supremacist."

"he is," gunther nods, "and now he owns the world's only nazi blues club."

A RED RIBBON WEEK

the memo from the elementary school comes home with a red ribbon stapled to it. next week is red ribbon week, which is the week when the children get their consciousness raised about the war on drugs. as part of the collective effort, it is suggested that each child wear a red ribbon and that it would be an even more encouraging step if red ribbons were attached to every family's threshold.

i almost bring up my italian dinner on the school's red ribbons.

of course, it's just a loyalty oath for kids. my third-grader and kindergartner are supposed to bear public testimony that they are not addicted to substances that they have barely heard of and to, in the manner of the old irish catholics, "take the pledge" that they never will be.

it's put out more flags.

it's naming names to the house unamerican activities committee, like the kids who have started turning in their parents for smoking pot.

it's what we have instead of god.

it's what we have instead of the inquisition.

and you still hear advocates of prayer in the public schools insisting there would be no undue stress on the children whose parents did not want them to participate.

just as, if i tell my kids they can't wear the red ribbons, i am not only subjecting them to the cruel modes of youthful ostracizing, but i am indicting myself as the drug user that i may look like, but which, in fact, i am not.

so how does one deal with such a dilemma?
i'll tell you how a real man does:
i have another drink and leave the whole thing up to my wife.

— Gerald Locklin
Long Beach CA

PROBLEMS IN THE CHECKOUT LINE

often in the supermarket checkout lines
the cashier will ask me,
"how are you doing?"
and often I'll answer something
like, "not so good, I've got
hemorrhoids, insomnia and vertigo, also
the battery in my watch has
stopped...."

there's never any response, it's as if
they haven't heard, they just go on
ringing up my purchases.

I am not attempting to project my
frustrations upon supermarket
employees
but when they ask me,
"how are you doing?"
I'm usually not doing very
well and there's nothing that
makes me feel worse
than to say,
"fine."

I've tried it the other way.
when they ask,
"how are you doing?"
I say, "god, it's never been so
good! it's unbelievable, the money's
just rolling in! I don't understand
it!"

but they seem to dislike this one
more than the
hemorrhoid, insomnia, vertigo
bit.

I've even tried another way.
when they ask that same question
I say,
"you really don't care."

again there's no response, they
just go on
ringing up my purchases
but I rather get their answer:
they really don't care.
I think that's nice.
we all ought to know this, it's
nothing to be ashamed of
and it makes the buying of
groceries

just about the same as
anything else:
all we need is what we want and
what we want
has very little to do
with anything
else.

I'M A FAILURE

I locked my car door
and looked up and this
guy walked up
he looked like my old
friend Peter
but he wasn't Peter
he was this gaunt gringo
in blue workshirt and jeans
and he said,
"hey, man, my wife and I
need something to eat, we
want to go to a Kentucky Fried
Chicken, o.k.?"
I looked over on the sidewalk
and here was his fat Mexican
woman
and she stared at me
her eyes near
tears.
I gave him a five.
"I love you, man!" he
hollered, "I'm not going to
spend it for drink."
"why not?" I answered,
"I would...."

I went into a building
took care of some business
came out
got into my car
as always
contemplating about
whether I had given
properly
or been taken
properly.

as I drove off
I remembered my years on the
bum
starved damn near beyond repair
I had never asked for a
dime.

that night after some drinks
I explained to the lady I lived with
how so often I gave money to panhandlers
but I myself
in the darkest hungriest time of
madness had
never asked for
anything.

"you just didn't know how to do
things," she answered.

— Charles Bukowski

San Pedro CA

PRESS NOTES:::

Important anthology of 60 young L.A. poets, truth and lies that press for life (edit. C. Hershey), \$12.95 fm. Artifact Press, 900 Tanglewood Dr., Concord MA 01742. ¶ Tod Moore's 21-volume Dillinger is now being published by Primal Publishing, 107 Brighton Ave., Allston MA 02134.

MODERN CLASSICS:::

Sherman Alexie's the Business of Fancydancing (\$10) fm. Hanging Loose, 231 Wyckoff St., Brooklyn NY 11217. ¶ Kurt Nimmo's Stories From The Single Life (\$4) and Notes On A Condition (\$2) fm. Persona Non Grata Books, 46000 Geddes Rd. (#86), Canton MI 48188; also his Catholic Girls (unpriced) fm. Translucent Tendency Press, 3226 Raspberry, Erie PA 16508. ¶ William Heyen's Pterodactyl Rose (\$10) fm. Time Being Books, 10411 Clayton Rd. (#208), St. Louis MO 63131. ¶ Cliff Dweller's Mapping The Asphalt Meadows (\$4) fm. Slipstream, Box 2071 New Market Station, Niagara Falls NY 14301.

VERY HIGHLY RECOMMENDED:::

Gerald Locklin's A Yank At Bangor: Poems From The Welsh Teaching Experience (\$5) fm. Vergin Press, 10708 Gay Brewer Dr., El Paso TX 79935. ¶ Norbert Blei's Chronicle's Of A Rural Journalist In America (\$11.95) fm. Samizdat Press, P.O. Box 198, Sister Bay WI 54234. ¶ Billy Jones' Cup Full Of River (unpriced) fm. Makar Press, P.O. Box 71, St. Lucia, Queensland 4067, Australia. ¶ Lynne Walker's Big Red Burns (\$7) fm. Bloody Twin Press, 253C Rte. 1, Bluecreek OH 45616. ¶ Mark Weber's Dig & Be Dug (\$3) fm. Iniquity Press, P.O. Box 1698, New Brunswick NJ 08901. and his Salt Lake (\$1.75) fm. Vergin Press, P.O. Box 370322, El Paso TX 79937. ¶ Sarkis Simonian's motel modern (\$3) fm. Look Quick, P.O. Box 222, Pueblo CO 81002. ¶ Sandy McIntosh's Endless Staircase (\$5.75) fm. Street Press, P.O. Box 772, Sound Beach NY 11789. ¶ Continued in WR:127.

The edition of this issue has been limited to 700 numbered copies, the first 70 being signed by Catherine Lynn. The copy now in your hand is: **528**

THE PATRONS OF WORMWOOD CURRENTLY ARE:

Allen Berlinski	In Memoriam: P.J.M.
Dr. Stuart W. Bloom	Craig G. Myers
James J. Camp III	Terry Persun
Anonymous: J.C.	Donald R. Peterson
Lloyd R. Gág	Stephen Ramirez
In Memoriam: 2-Ton Tony Galento	Anonymous: S.A.R.
David D. Ginsburg	David Rose
David A. Goldstein	In Memoriam: Ruffian
R.C. Gross	Dr. Marvin A. Sackner
Tim Jelinek	Samuel A. Smith
Anonymous: D.H.L.	David P. Widup
Anonymous: G.I.L.	Sean Williams
Anonymous: C.L.	Herb Wrede

NOTICE: One of the causes of the American Revolution was the Stamp Act passed by the British in 1765 in order to raise revenue. Duties were placed on pamphlets, newspapers, almanacs, circulated advertisements, paper used for legal documents, etc. The State of California Legislature, for similar reasons, has decided to tax all newspapers and magazines starting July 15, 1991. Amazingly there seems to be little if no public objection! Therefore, all California subscribers must add a 7.75% amount to all of the following rates. WORMWOOD subscriptions are \$8/4 nos./yr. to individuals and \$10/4 nos./yr. to all institutions. A patron's subscription (when available) is \$24/4 issues with poet-signed center-sections or chapbooks. Free inspection copies are not available because of our very limited press run; however, copies may be purchased at \$4/copy including postage. Back issues 4-15, 17-44, 46-52, 54-62, 64-65, 68-70, 72-91, 93-94, 96-102, 104-105, 108-109, 112-124 are \$4/issue postpaid while stocks last. Don't request multiple copies of an issue.

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