

the Rebel



Fall 1972

The bar
made up
baseball game
in the game
it to me
May 29, 1961

Team my
diploma — June 1, 1961

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June 1, 1961

the Rebel

Fall 1972

Dec. 23, 1950
Saturday Afternoon
from Mac
to Mac

Dear Mac,
I'm writing you
before Christmas.
The names of
the boys of
and they're over here.
You supply the boys
come around. I drew my
name. He gave me some marbles
pictures. I said Mac. We double dated
with Margaret and Lynn.
Dec. 23, 1950

Editor - Philip K. Arington
Art Director/Designer - William Carrig
Managing Editor - Sandy Penfield
Business Manager - David Lusk

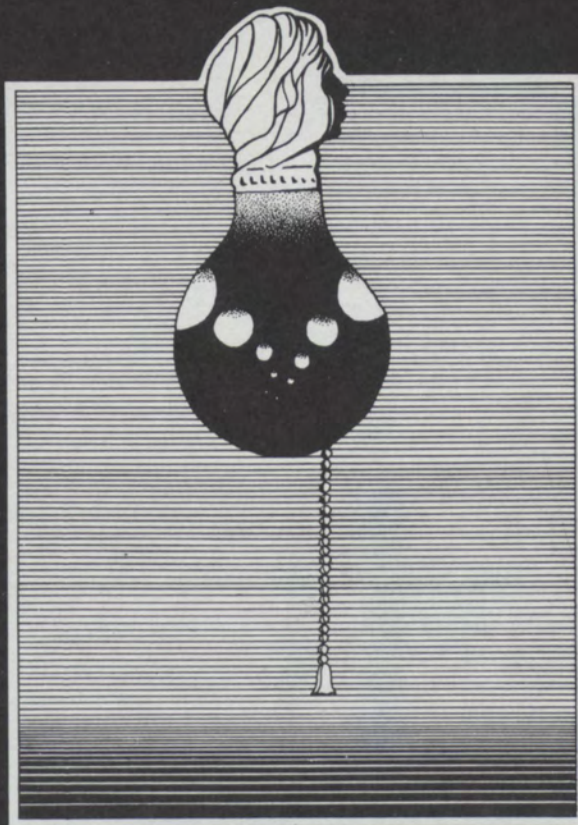


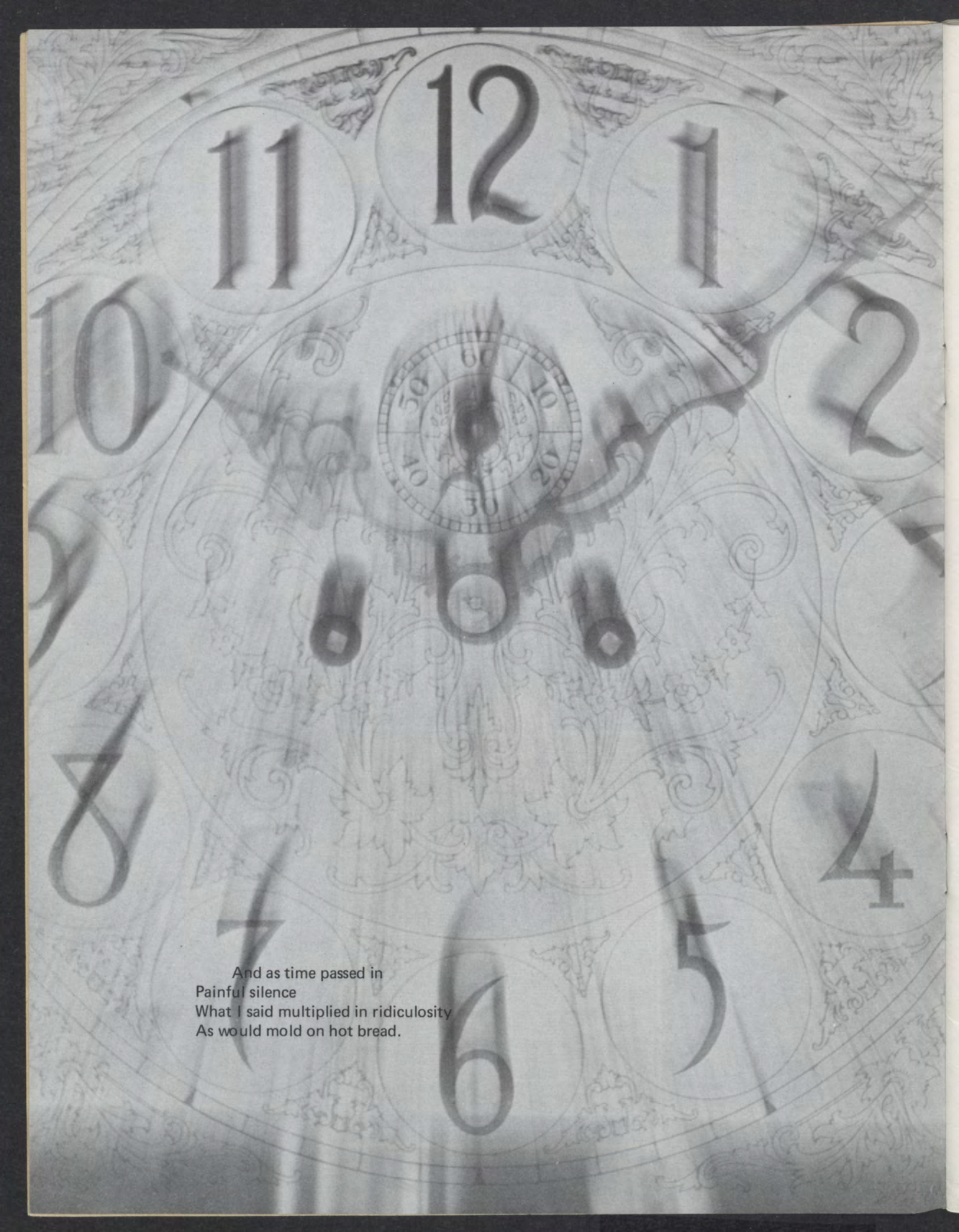
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FOG

We rode in a night where
Everything was a nothing.
"This is a strange world,"
I said.
You
and the fog
Were quiet.

There WAS beauty:
Lights, globes of fur;
Trees, fuzzy ghosts.
We exchanged the eerie cold
For bulbs and electric warmth.
That created light was
Denser than the night.





And as time passed in
Painful silence
What I said multiplied in ridiculousity
As would mold on hot bread.

"Tuesday Poker With God"

It was on a Tuesday
That the one who puked on himself
Steadily died,
Amid the plugs and sucking
Pumps and the squeak of rubber
Against disinfectant tiles

It was then that the perverse
Power and strength arose
And mingled at the altar
With the smell of something
Which was leaving

And he made room at this altar
For the men and women in white
To lay with him under the
Sheets.
As they shared this twisted
Last supper on the table
Of departure

An obscure game of poker
Beyond any sport,
Ended with no change in the
Color of the day or night
As if the only death that mattered
Left long ago.

Like All Things-

*The intimate morning sun
That peeps from behind
The hills
Is the same that burns
In the afternoon blaze.*

/ industrial love /
when we know the feeling—
rolling over in our double bed
to love that cold mechanical flesh—
i shiver to think of screwing up my lover
i fear the ice breath when she says 'hold me'

Cyanide
for Charles Crump

She is drowning, drowning, her head
pure as visions of exotic white grapes
across the Nile, her hair is plastered to
her forehead, she is drowning and tinged
a slight poisonous blue, you try to breathe
all the air you can back into her

the way you would try to resurrect
the ancient skull and crossbones love
of your first wife, ten milleniums ago,
who was strict and German and petite
(though that possibility is blurred by huge
scarlet recollections of adultery, large
red wet flowers of guilt between your moist palms.)
She is drowning, two years later you are drunk and
walking into womens' restrooms, blundering,

your bald head shining, what a story this will be
to tell at some party; when you write about her
she will be young and slightly blue, almost
invisibly blue and very singular; and you will say
it is passe to tell the story of death.

She is drowning, we are all drowning, you
are drowning too but unaware of it,
your jealous mother, the ten-year-old idiot boy
waiting on the pier for you to bring back his
brother who is drowning, tender implicit faith
looking up at you and he is drowning, turning
blue as old water, and all you do is pump polluted air
back beyond his tongue, he is drowning with rhythmic

meter and though you guard lives you are unaware of
drowning yourself, never remembering your dreams,
being easily, marvelously pulled under by that thick
and coiled, unconscious weight, I am dreaming of snakes

and eggs in dirty white crates but you
are drowning, falling, your son returns from
his girlfriend's abortion, your daughter becomes
a lesbian nurse, your second wife drinks,
you are blue *Blue BLUE*
slightly drunk, nearly acid
incongruously breathing bobbing drowning

blue blue blue

*Every brute inversion of the world knows the disinherited to whom the past no longer
belongs, and not yet the future.*

Rilke



FERRY TALE

a one act play

Quentin

Pierre

Boatman

Lights very low, shaded to give an eerie effect of twilight. A fairly large, gondolla-like craft, stern toward the rear of the stage, occupies the scene with Quentin and Pierre sitting on the same bench, facing forward at opposite gunwhales. The boatman stands at the back of the vessel clothed in a gray serf smock, loosely belted with a shredded cord. He holds a long, stout pole. Throughout the play, he alternates the motion of poling with the antics of checking position and direction with the sextant which is stowed in the stern.

QUENTIN: (darting quick glances at Pierre) Getting dark, isn't it?

PIERRE: (absorbed in an unseen fascination off starboard) Where?

QUENTIN: Here.

PIERRE: Now?

QUENTIN: Yes.

PIERRE: (sweeping a glance overhead) I thought it was getting lighter. What time is it?

QUENTIN: (peering at his watch from several angles) One-seventeen. (pause) I think.

PIERRE: It's helpful at times.

QUENTIN: What?

PIERRE: Thinking. Recreational. It kills time.

QUENTIN: Time is mortal enough.

PIERRE: "As if you could kill time without injuring eternity." Who said that?

QUENTIN: Noah over a game of solitaire. (lets loose a loud, obscenely braying laugh, slapping his knee. Stops abruptly.) Sorry.

PIERRE: (disdainfully) Levity is hardly an appropriate escape. Especially now. (pausing reflectively) When is now?

QUENTIN: (again peering at his watch) Ten (pause) thirty.

PIERRE: Are you sure?

QUENTIN: Who, me?

PIERRE: (harshly) Egoist.

QUENTIN: (head hanging humbly, mumbling) Sorry. I thought it was alright. Nobody said anything...

PIERRE: (confidently) Alright, let's take stock of things. First—the situation. Where—are—we?

QUENTIN: (retrieved) Foul! Foul! No givens! 'Are we' is a given assuming tangible existence. (with smug relish) Disqualified!

PIERRE: (hurt) But we need rules.

QUENTIN: (aloof, clearly with the upper hand) O.K.—O.K. If you want to ignore (with a flourish) TRUTH...

PIERRE: I'm not ignoring it. I'm building it.

QUENTIN: Hah!

PIERRE: (nods toward boatman with his head) Ask him where we are.

QUENTIN: (swinging around) Praytell, fair boatman, where be we? (no reply) I enjoin you, fellow. Location, if you would (no reply. To Pierre) Is position so important?

PIERRE: It depends on where you are.

QUENTIN: (formally) Boatman, quickly, I say—out with our position or I shall have you flogged. (no reply) Obstant bastard.

PIERRE: Professional pride, no doubt.

QUENTIN: A union man, you think?

PIERRE: Perhaps. Or not.

QUENTIN: I'm leaving.

PIERRE: You can't.

QUENTIN: Why not?

PIERRE: (pause) It's too wet.

QUENTIN: (looking dubiously at Pierre, dips his hand over the side. Surprised.) You're right. (pause) I suppose—this means...?

PIERRE: It would seem so.

QUENTIN: And what do you propose?

PIERRE: Prayer would be in order.

QUENTIN: (ignoring him) Let's pick noses!

PIERRE: Vulgar!

QUENTIN: Filthy! (They pick noses. Pierre stops.)

PIERRE: (looking at Quentin, sarcastically) That's attractive.

QUENTIN: (stopping at last with a sigh) Mildly entertaining, but I daresay it gets old quickly.

PIERRE: About prayer...

QUENTIN: Your god or mine?

PIERRE: Impious rogue!

QUENTIN: Irreverent malcontent!

PIERRE: Heretic!

QUENTIN: Blasphemer!

PIERRE: Heathen!

QUENTIN: Atheist!

PIERRE: Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine: it lux perpetua luceat eis, libera me Domine de morte aeterna in die illa tremenda: quando caeli morvendi, sunt et terra; Dum veneris judicare saeculum per ignum.

QUENTIN: (monotones simultaneously) Mary hadda little lamb little lamb little lamb mary hadda little lamb its fleece was white as snow and everywhere...(stop simultaneously) It's no good.

PIERRE: No good? Why not?

QUENTIN: (animated) Why not?! Look at us—just take a look at us. Not a stitch of efficacy for our efforts. Think of the calories burned. Wasted!

PIERRE: (disgusted) You hedonists are all alike. Instant gratification. It's all I ever hear.

(long pause)

QUENTIN: Where are we?

PIERRE: I've never seen this place.

QUENTIN: Oh, you've been here before?

PIERRE: That's what I meant.

(pause)

QUENTIN: What about art?

PIERRE: (nodding admiringly) A noble lie.

QUENTIN: But is it viable?

PIERRE: Attention, my dear fellow. Interpret and be enthralled. (he holds his hands in front of himself, weaving them slowly through the air in various patterns. Faint impressions of a swan. At the same time, he whistles a very fast rendition of "The Stars and Stripes Forever.")

QUENTIN: (watching with fascination) Fascinating. Fascinating.

PIERRE: (still weaving, between whistles) It's a very high art.

QUENTIN: (deeply serious) The eternal archetype of forces opposing. Yin and yang. Good and evil. The majestic cosmic struggle between the basic components of the universe and their terrifying manifestation in that most enigmatic and paradoxical creature: man. (Pierre's whistling has slowed and his hands have become more sluggish as he listens to Quentin with increasing puzzlement.) Locked in mortal strife, the forces clash, withdraw, and clash again, as the Great White Whale that is within us surges powerfully from abysmal depths to the shattered surface, only to find St. George waiting, sword in hand. (Pierre has stopped whistling. Quentin grows more and more dramatic and locks his gaze skyward.) O. Leviathans of Spirit—the twisted, noble anguish of the man within whom you battle. The wondrous link of man to primal man...

PIERRE: (his hands folded before him, shaking his head, quietly) NO.

QUENTIN: ...the frail daisy-chain, transcending time and space in a glorious linkage of men—brotherhood...

PIERRE: (louder) NO.

QUENTIN: (oblivious...captured) The essence of homo sapiens, the tremendous...

PIERRE: (screaming) NO!!!

QUENTIN: (punctured but hopeful) Close though. Right?

PIERRE: Miles.

QUENTIN: (thoroughly crushed) So much for art. Another subjective truth. Universal principles, eternal truths—hah!

PIERRE: (bitterly) Well, performing isn't any bed of roses either. The only hope that made it worth while was the slim, slim chance of communication—of sharing the plight—of shifting the burden to helping hands. (pause) Great White Whale indeed!

(long pause. Pierre yawns.)

QUENTIN: Bored?

PIERRE: Uninspired, I'd say.

QUENTIN: (decisively) I'm leaving.

PIERRE: You can't.

QUENTIN: Why not?

PIERRE: It's too wet.

QUENTIN: (dejected) I forgot.

(pause)

PIERRE: What time is it?

QUENTIN: (peering with difficulty at his watch) Noon. Or midnight. I think.

PIERRE: (scanning the sky) It's getting lighter.

QUENTIN: (also looks up) I thought it was getting darker.

PIERRE: Darker than what?

PIERRE: (disapprovingly) Ambiguous. (sing song) Ver-y am-big-u-ous.

QUENTIN: (with a start) I've got it!

PIERRE: (sarcastically) Another Spiritual Leviathan?

QUENTIN: (excitedly) What is it—what is it exactly—that we lack?

PIERRE: (bored) What we haven't got.

QUENTIN: Exactly!

PIERRE: How would I know if we haven't got it?

QUENTIN: No, no. I mean that's right. That's correct.

(pause)

PIERRE: So?

(long pause)

QUENTIN: (suddenly dejected) I forgot.

(pause)

PIERRE: (shaking his head) Dolt.

QUENTIN: (suddenly excited again) I remember!—What we need is a god!

PIERRE: (unmoved) Hurrah for our side.

QUENTIN: (animate, ignoring Pierre) We elect him! Within this (indicating the boat) our own little universe. Transcending metaphysical barriers.

PIERRE: (with grudgingly growing interest) Perhaps. Perhaps. There are possibilities...

QUENTIN: Supreme ruler within this tiny back room of the cosmos, able to dictate at whim the future of his domain. Think of it! A First Mover!

PIERRE: (thoughtfully) Cause and Effect...

QUENTIN: A reason for living. A reason for dying. (loud, ominous) God—hath willed it!

PIERRE: There would be a resurgence of faith.

QUENTIN: With an ensuing renaissance.

PIERRE: The populace will be secure.

QUENTIN: Certainty becomes a new and wonderful factor.

PIERRE: A million question marks erased.

BOTH: I accept.

(pause)

PIERRE: (stuffyly) We shall put it to the vote. All in favor of me for god, signify. (raises his hand) All in favor of you, signify. (Quentin raises his hand)

(pause)

(They turn simultaneously and look at the boatman)

QUENTIN: What about him?

PIERRE: (contemptuously) Him? Hah! I don't even think he knows where we are. A lost, mute boatman for a god. Hah! How ridiculous!

QUENTIN: Preposterous!

PIERRE: Insane!

QUENTIN: Comical!

PIERRE: Ludicrous!

QUENTIN: Farcical!

PIERRE: Absurd!

(pause)

QUENTIN: So what do we do now?

PIERRE: That depends.

QUENTIN: On what?

PIERRE: On what time it is.

QUENTIN: (peering at his watch, shaking it) Yes.

PIERRE: Good. Then there's time.

QUENTIN: (looking around) Where?

PIERRE: Where's what?

QUENTIN: Where's time?

PIERRE: Who?

QUENTIN: Who??!

PIERRE: You're impertinent.

QUENTIN: You're obese.

PIERRE: You're arcane.

QUENTIN: You're mordant.

PIERRE: You've got bad breath.

QUENTIN: Your feet rot.

PIERRE: Termigant.

QUENTIN: Virago.

PIERRE: Haridan.

QUENTIN: Shrew.

(pause)

PIERRE: (pensively) What we need is government.

QUENTIN: (clasping his hands) How exciting!

PIERRE: (scholarly) Yes—preceeding the establishment of gods and/or religion is the need for government and meaningful social interaction and organization. (pause) I believe we can eliminate democracy at the outset. Far too complicated. A strict monarchy would be enviable, but I'm afraid I see immediate trauma. The divine right of kings would not be easily explained without a deity. Perhaps—perhaps an oligarchy.

QUENTIN: (excited) Oh, yes! Yes! An oligarchy!

PIERRE: It seems plausible. Very well then—supreme power is hereby invested in you and me, and he (nodding to the boatman) is our loyal and reverent subject. (with finality) There—now we have government.

QUENTIN: Admirably done!

PIERRE: (aloof) Thank you.

(long pause)

(Quentin seems content as he gazes over the side, but Pierre is becoming visibly agitated as he fidgets and shows signs of restlessness.)

PIERRE: (stiffly) Attention. You are hereby deposed. This is a coup. As of this moment, I declare myself Supreme and Sole Majestic Ruler of the Varied Realms.

QUENTIN: (incredulous) You can't do that!

PIERRE: (harshly) Silence! (pause) Why not?

QUENTIN: It's a question of ethics.

PIERRE: (with a contemptuous snort) Hah! Ethics are rules invented by runty little boys who grow up to be runty little men. And for my first royal act, I shall have a purge. I hereby order you to be eradicated.

QUENTIN: (seeing his opportunity) Oh, ho! Well, go ahead.

(pause)

PIERRE: (decidedly confused, looks at the boatman who is totally oblivious.) I need an army.

QUENTIN: (with the upper hand) You surely do. Because I say the peasants are revolting.

PIERRE: (with a last air of aloof nobility) No one will contest that.

QUENTIN: (ignoring him) The despot is overthrown. Anarchy thrives again! (pause) So much for government.

PIERRE: (downtrodden) I suppose it wasn't a very feasible idea.

QUENTIN: Not in the long run...

(pause)

PIERRE: What time is it?

QUENTIN: (peering at his watch, shakes it, takes it off and pounds it viciously against the gunwhale. He tosses it overboard.) Tuesday or Saturday?

PIERRE: Does that leave us much time?

QUENTIN: For what?

PIERRE: For anything.

QUENTIN: (shrugging) Who knows? We must assume that it does.

PIERRE: Must we?

QUENTIN: All is lost if we don't.

PIERRE: (decisively) I'm leaving. (He stands precariously, serious) Just remember that there are two dark themes which inherently obsess and fascinate man...(pause)...but I can't recall what they are. (places his foot on the gunwhale)

QUENTIN: (sing-song) YOU-can't-leave...

PIERRE: Why not?

QUENTIN: Wet??? (Pierre sits down with a thump.)

(pause)

What we need here is a meaningful relationship. (slides over to Pierre) Let us relate. (bearhugs Pierre, who passively humors him.)

PIERRE: (dryly) To love and to cherish...

QUENTIN: (still hugging Pierre) You, dear friend, shall serve as a cherished port in my storms and I shall serve you equally as a haven—a warm respite in the midst of your tempests. Unable to kill the pain, we may certainly ease it—together—through thick and thin...

PIERRE: (impatiently untangling himself) There is no thick. That's an illusion. Only degrees of thinness—if that much.

QUENTIN: (sliding back to his side of the craft) Tsk, tsk. My, my—pessimistic, aren't we, Little Boy Blue.

PIERRE: Go fart.

QUENTIN: (hurt) Well, how am I supposed to carry on an expanding relationship with a misanthropic old goat?

PIERRE: (sharply) Don't be a fool! You were thrown into this world alone, and you shall be carried out alone. And you shall be planted in the cold, clammy ground to rot—alone!

(Pause, as Quentin is sulking with his head down while Pierre looks arrogantly across the stage. Quentin's head rises; he looks slyly at Pierre several times and suddenly lets loose a long, loud piercing wail. Pierre is unperturbed.)

QUENTIN: (head wagging back and forth, eyes wide, tongue lolls out)

For God to my altar
To alter my god
I've five royal schillings
They rust in the sod.
Ohhhh! I've five royal schillings
And they rust in the sod.
Sod sod sod sod—omy and gonorreah
Sod is clumped clods
No man is a clod
But all men become sod.
(He lapses into low, inarticulate babbling)

PIERRE: (totally unmoved) Insanity's been tried by better fools than you. Unfortunately, it has a painful reality all its own.

QUENTIN: (suddenly silent, relaxing with a deep sigh) It's a tedious role, isn't it?

PIERRE: (quietly) They all are after a while.

(pause)

QUENTIN: What are we going to do?

PIERRE: (shrugging) Drift, I suppose.

For the world is a mountain of shit: if it's going to be moved at all, it's got to be taken by handfuls.
Allen Ginsberg



Memoir by ARCHIE GASTOR

Where are you, Howdy Doody? Is there a shrine where I may see your bandanna; where I can steal a last glimpse of those huge freckles? Oh, American Bandstand, how could you desert me? Didn't I stand behind you when our high priest, Dick Clark, was called before a congressional committee to answer charges of payola? Didn't I laugh when a congressman asked Dick why he didn't play some good music like Frank Sinatra instead of that short-haired be-bop? Certainly, there is a monument to you, American Bandstand. Somewhere there must be a simple statue of a slouching teenager wearing dungarees, an Italian shirt, and a flat-top and holding a 45 RPM recording of Blue Suede Shoes.

Where is Howdy Doody? Word has it that he left the country quietly after being accused of plugging a certain brand of balsa wood on the air. The rumors were false about good old Howdy. Although many people believe there were many Howdy Doodys, and that each Howdy was dressed in a different costume, there was really only one and he did change costumes. The true story is that there were many Buffalo Bob Smiths, and each one was trained to do a different trick, but none of them ever learned to change clothes the way Howdy could. Where are the Buffalo Bobs today? Well, one is on a college lecture tour, and the others took up peanut farming.

If there is any doubt in the world that television is American and all American, just look at what it has accomplished for big business in the United States. As a matter of fact, it is the current rumor of the video set that Howard Hughes, before he sold his TWA stock, conceived and developed the idea for "The Flying Nun." It was all a plot to rid the common man of the fear of flying. With divine power, how could you develop engine trouble?

Careful analysis of market trends has left no shadow of a doubt that ITT stock has increased in value in direct proportion to the number of TV sets in use in the American home. Just imagine the buzz of the private lines each weekday as Americans dial their favorite neighbor and ask the most poignant question involving TV theology today, "Did you hear what Paul Lynde said on Hollywood Squares?"

A little known item contained in the Pentagon Papers on a page that was eaten by a three star general is said to have revealed a conspiracy involving ITT and the army that would have made a three minute story on the CBS news. It seems ITT was planning to give the army 30 seconds of advertising time on their Bell Telephone Hour providing the army use the time to show a soldier in Saigon phoning his wife in Bangor, Maine, person to person and collect. The rumor repudiated, however, when x-rays of the general's stomach revealed that the wife actually lived in Portland.

The other evening, as I pondered weak and weary my 11 inch Sylvania, I mustered my troops and found the strength to reach over and turn off Walter Cronkite just as he was telling me, in an intimate way, about a sixteen-year-old girl who killed herself and the other members of her softball team by pitching a hand grenade over home plate. Walter admitted that the motivation of the girl was purely their conjecture, since the only one left to interview was the bat; however, by questioning another newsman at the scene, the CBS reporter came up with definite evidence that the girl was a loner, and the rest of the team had been trying to get her to join the Church of God.

The meeting began as usual, with the handing out of the bumper sticker of the week. Then, after pie and coffee, one of the members showed color slides of his recent visit to Norman Vincent Peale. Finally, I thought we were ready to get down to the weekly discussion of religion in our lives when a visiting member of another group, a group called Free Virginia (they believed Virginia Graham was forced off of TV against her will and is being held prisoner inside a Chiquita banana), stood up and asked our pastor how much money he thought she should give to the church of God to give her a room with a TV when she gets to Heaven. The pastor answered her with a question, as he occasionally does. He asked her what made her believe that there are TV sets in Heaven. She soon caught on to the way things were going and answered him with another question. She asked him if he thought a loving, charitable God would want her to miss "Let's Make A Deal." Our pastor shook his head as if he agreed with her, and then asked her if she did not think that God



would want her to trade the vain, temporary values of a dying Earth for true, meaningful, saintly ones like love, peace, and eternal joy when she went to join Him. She said yes, that she would trade, if that was the big deal of the day.

So then our weekly meeting became just another discussion of TV. One proud mother testified on the importance of TV in rearing children. She said her five-year-old had left the house on his ten speed posi-traction mini-bike and met with an accident. She found him screaming and crying, and nothing she said would make him stop. Then TV saved her. She told her boy to imagine that she was Marshal Dillon, and that she had found him wounded on the trail and was carrying him back to Dodge where Marcus Welby would kiss the hurt and make it well. Most of us agreed that her thinking was brilliant; however, one member spoke out and asked her if she did not believe that incident would cause her son to grow up to be a homosexual.

I guess the member of our group who said it all was a tiny woman named Bess Rating, a midget genius with a gift for prophecy who stands only 21 inches high

(measured diagonally) when she said, "TV is just a vicious circle. You get up in the morning and exercise with the physical fitness show, and you lose a pound. Then, you eat a 49 cent bag of potato chips wondering if Grandpa on 'As the World Turns' is having an affair with a nurse on 'General Hospital.'"

The remaining time was passed in a discussion of the history of television, and I learned many important facts that I wish to relate to TV buffs everywhere. First of all, it seems TV was only rediscovered in this century. Actually, the talent for making them goes back to the Middle Ages, but the art was lost for centuries while Europe was in darkness.

It seems that Marco Polo brought the first TV set to Europe when he returned from China. China had only produced one TV, and it was hand made; however, Marco Polo, being capitalist minded, traded them out of it. It was a six inch Ching model that sold for 4,000 doobles when it was new, but Marco got it for a Kodak Instamatic and a roll of film that had to be sent to the West Indies for processing. The Chinese objected at first because they had no way to send the film so far, so Marco threw in a complete original set of Leonardo Da Vinci drawings of a flying machine to clench the deal.

The Chinese thought to themselves, "Ah, such a fool, this westerner, he trades for a TV in summer when everyone knows Johnny is on vacation, and Joey Bishop is taking his place."

Marco Polo thought to himself, "Ah, again I have proved the Caucasian mind superior. These foolish easterners trade for a camera when there is nothing here to take pictures of. Nixon will not be coming over for many hundred years."

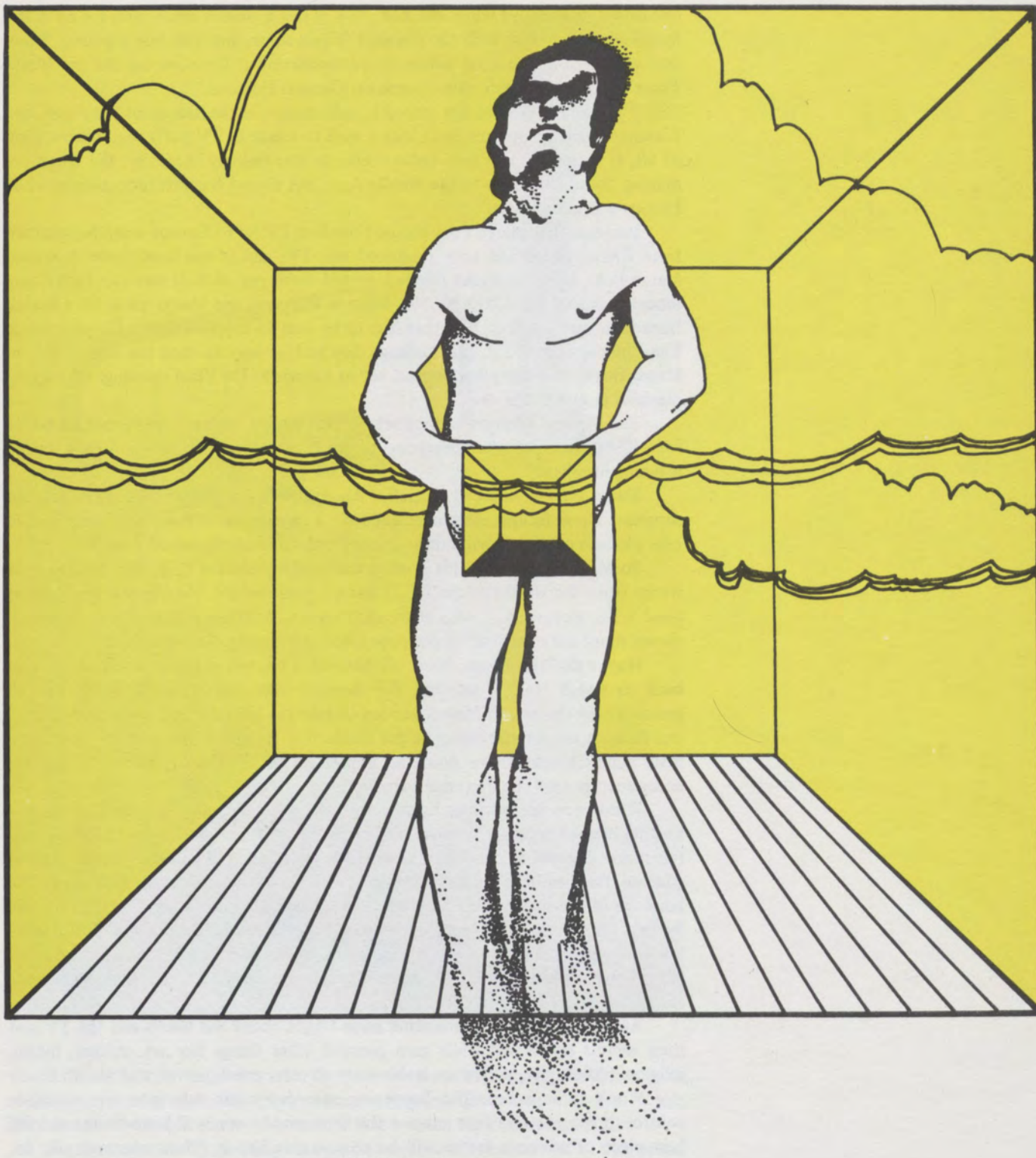
So Marco climbed on his donkey and headed back for Italy. The donkey grew weary from the weight of the TV. It was a console model. The Chinese have always liked a big picture, and with a six inch screen, half the population could watch shows about the other half of the population developing the H-bomb.

Marco made it home, took off his shirt, opened a can of beer, and settled back to watch his TV set. But the damned thing didn't work. There was no guarantee on the set, so Marco decided to take the back off and fix it himself. You can imagine his surprise when he got inside that set and found nothing there but a little nude Chinese fellow doing an impression of "The Brady Bunch" practicing acupuncture on "The Partridge Family."

Word soon spread over Europe that the Chinese could not be trusted. The knights banded together in what was to be the crusade to recapture the TV works, but it was decided to send falcons over China dropping illuminated manuscripts to educate the heathens instead. Meanwhile, Marco Polo had learned to speak the language of the little nude Chinese fellow and had discovered that this man was the leading Chinese scientist assigned to the H-bomb. Marco forced this pitiful little loyalty torn specimen to give him the plans for the bomb by threatening to cut off his volume control; an act that has been called aggressive by scholars, world leaders, and Dinah Shore from that day to this.

As history records it, mankind soon forgot about the bomb and the TV and their secrets lay buried while men pursued other things like art, culture, music, religion, philosophy, holy wars, noble wars, slavery, greed, power, and wealth.

Won't it be a beautiful happening someday when television has complete control of our society. Just imagine the time when a son will leave home, and the best piece of advice a father will be able to give him is, "Son, whatever you do, keep the money. Don't trade for what's behind the curtain. It's a zonk."



in the room
where there are no walls behind you
no windows to feel alone
no doors to keep you safe
where ceilings are the winds
no floors to fall to
no cubicle contains
in the room
where there are no voices
where there are no conditions
except those hand-made

Aging

way back in the times when they built those temples in Mexico and cut your heart out on the altar, and you made jokes like, What do you get when you put an icicle on top of a bicycle? A tricycle! I walked right out and men were hanging from all the trees, their hair like dental floss, their limbs like plumbing fixtures, the flesh on their stomachs

like glass baubles or gold bangles swaying in the wind. way back in the times when men tied their feet to ropes and black leather cords and flew through the air while attached to temples, when your flesh was like papaya, sweet pulpy fruit, when religion was just an insanity, a ritual, and your jokes were only misdemeanors, I took you to church

and we each married a monkey while the organ grinder played fire and daughter and we both smiled bright as rubies in a black man's ear. now it is way back now, swayback, the very empty end of an enormous channel, a tunnel, a mutilated cornucopia, a river defiled with too many years, and there are racetracks driven like stakes down my cheeks, the highways

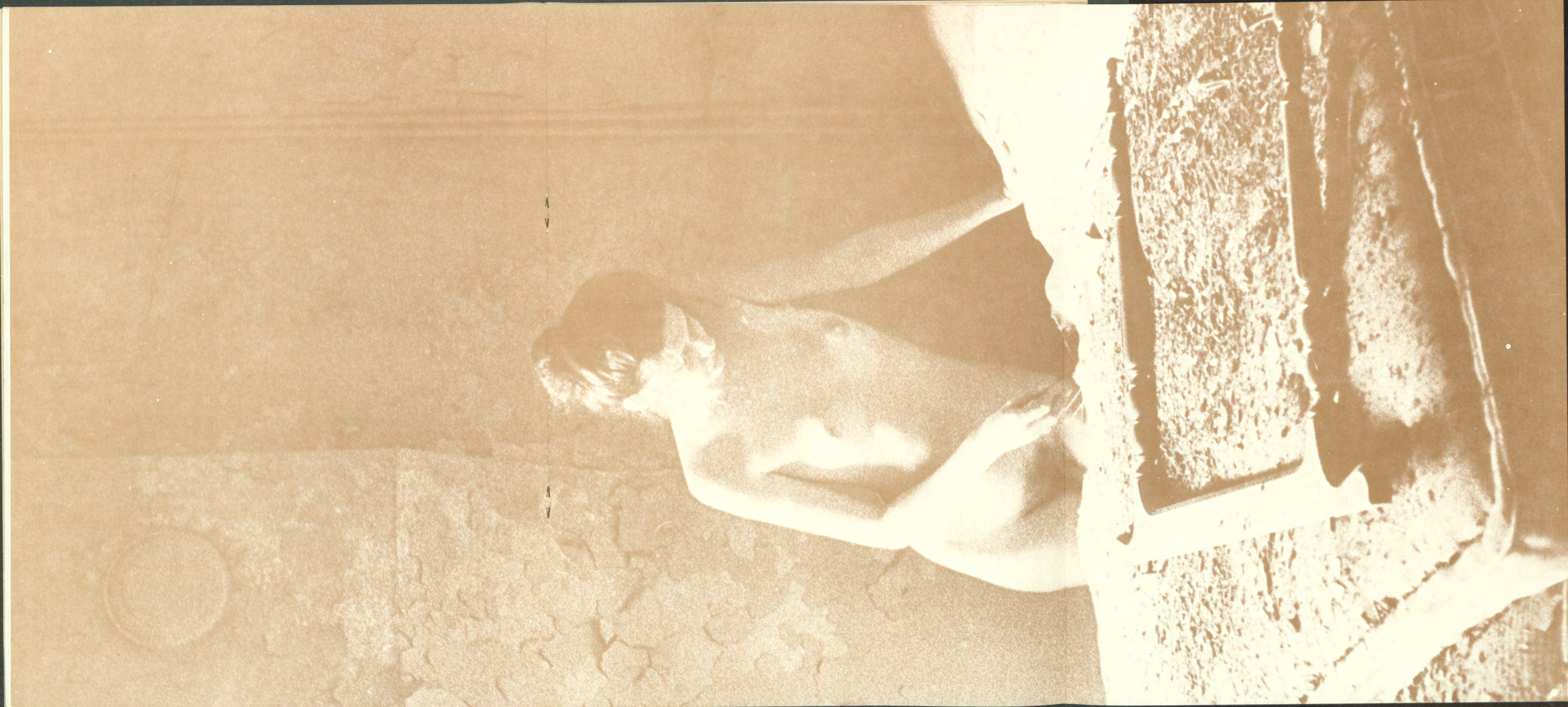
of too many, too many tears, my hair is hysterical, my hands the claws of wrens. till when I can take care of the cockatoo, and you can build cages of straw and leaves, till we can marry each other with the choir pumping distilled sentiments down the drains of our fears, and your jokes will resemble sugar, candy accordions, till then do you remember way back in the times when



I am standing up inside my mother's stomach, wearing patent leather shoes and a starched blouse and a navy skirt with a wide, bolted belt. If I flex my arm muscles as if I were exercising and stand up on my toes as high as I can, sometimes I can push aside the curtains of blood hung on golden rods and look straight past the prison bars out of her eyes. That's the world, she says.

I am six and I am sitting on a sidewalk in Chicago, my tricycle turned upside down and resting on its handle-bars between my spread legs. I am pushing the pedals with my hands and shouting, Ice cream! ice cream! I am making ice cream with my red and white tricycle; the sweetness of autonomy.

Outside I am lying on my father's fat stomach. He has a handle-bar moustache. I can hear his heart somewhere far away inside, though I know that his heart should be located in another region. Through



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I am twenty-one and lying flat in bed dressed in nothing but a big man's sweatshirt. A man is lying beside me sweating blood and telling me a story about a girl who ran for President and made ice-cream with her tricycle during the campaign. In the kitchen my mother is screaming, Soup? How can I make soup? Do you want me to cut off my leg to have a bone to make soup with?

Two brothers walked out of my father's loins. One had his index finger bitten off by a racehorse. The other had scratched glasses and talked as if he were a gyroscope.

Suddenly they are all in a circle, pointing at me. I am lying under the skins of six thousand mute kittens. I can only answer them with my eyes.

Hailstorm.

God
provided
ice
but forgot
booze.

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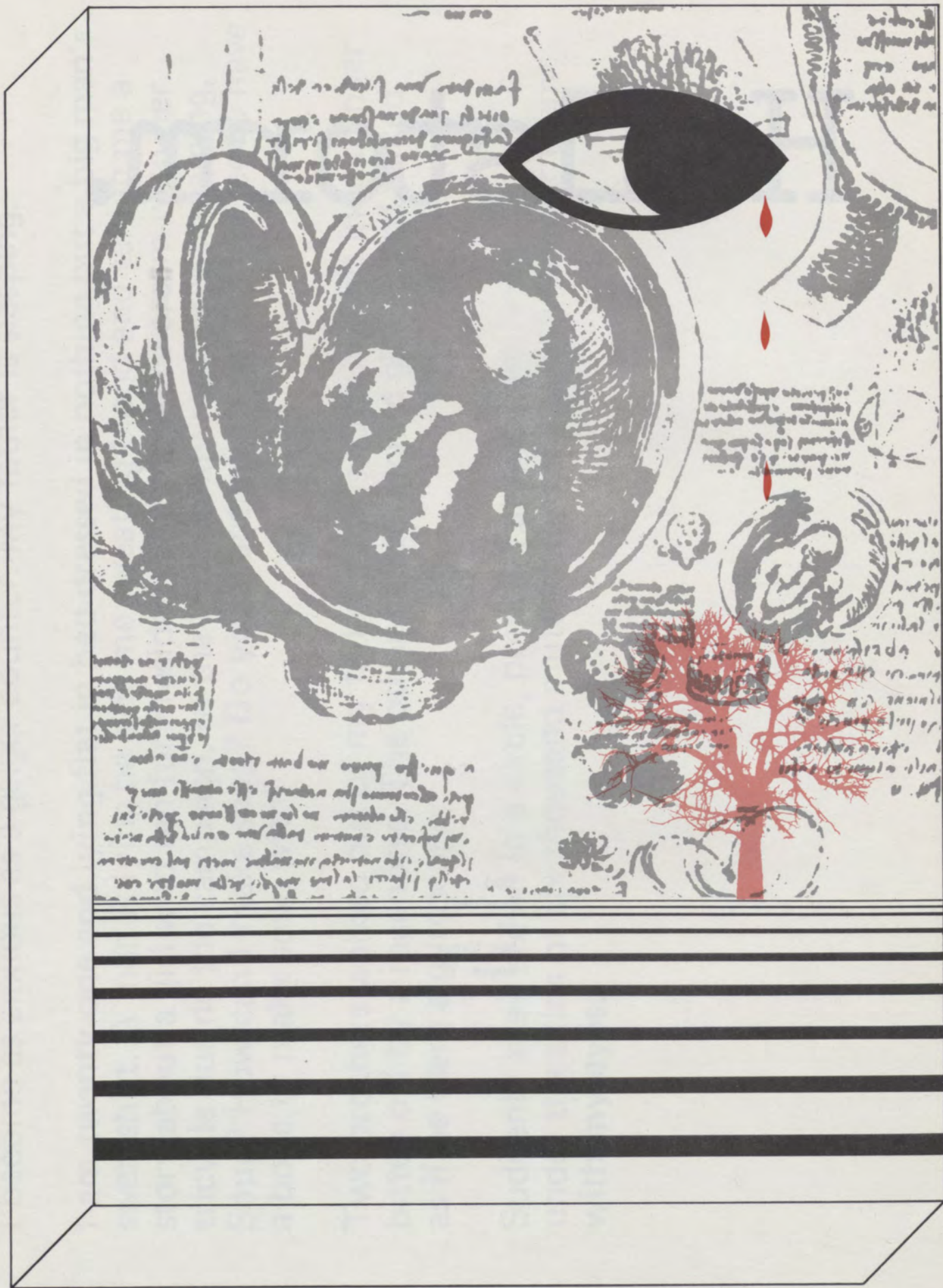
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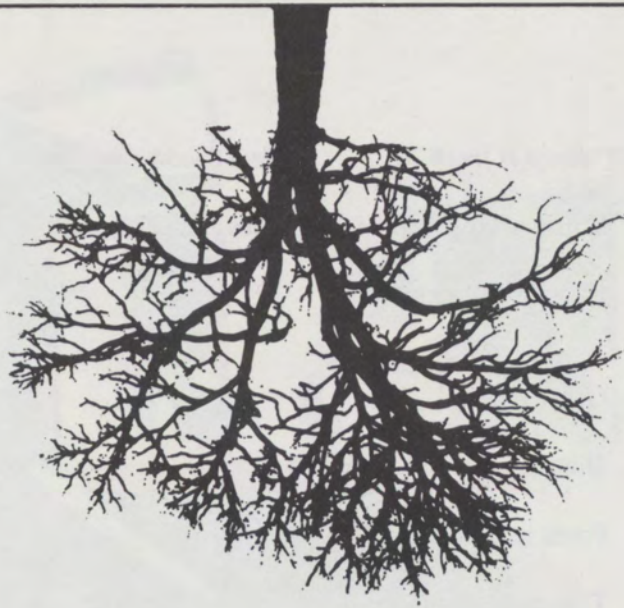
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When I Lived In a Room Of Blood

27 forevers ago
and read you in a pan on the stove
for crying, I thought that

anatomy was destiny; but your
crooked limbs, your Quasimodo
back, your paralysis was no
fake Frankenstein, no remote
resemblance to man. I've got

Tristan and Isolde in my veins,
musical salagmites hanging from
my upper lips, feakish growths
inside my head, sagging breasts
pinned with corsages, but could I
imagine how you live? A steel
monsterhood soaked in the irony of
manipulation. No less, the doctor

even put his tongs to your head.
Tatoed put on your skin with
indelible sex, smeared across
your forehead like bloody roses,
the insects of the universe are less
unsteady in their plight. "*We will
fight this handicap with all our
might!*" the counselor bleated, shaking,
ever-enthused; then pulled back his
Milland ciragette, smoothed out Liberace
lapels, and proposed to try to explain to
you the eminent theories of

deprivation. ((there are no fates much
worse than life)).

"Keep it fresh" Ezra Pound

Words wed to careless tongues

Hide in deep closets,

Grow pale,

Die.

Poets rummage

The dark and sweep

Them out.

what say you there
in the air hangs?-

some multi-faced Demonical FACT
a condition of our perception
the observable behavior's direction
perhaps

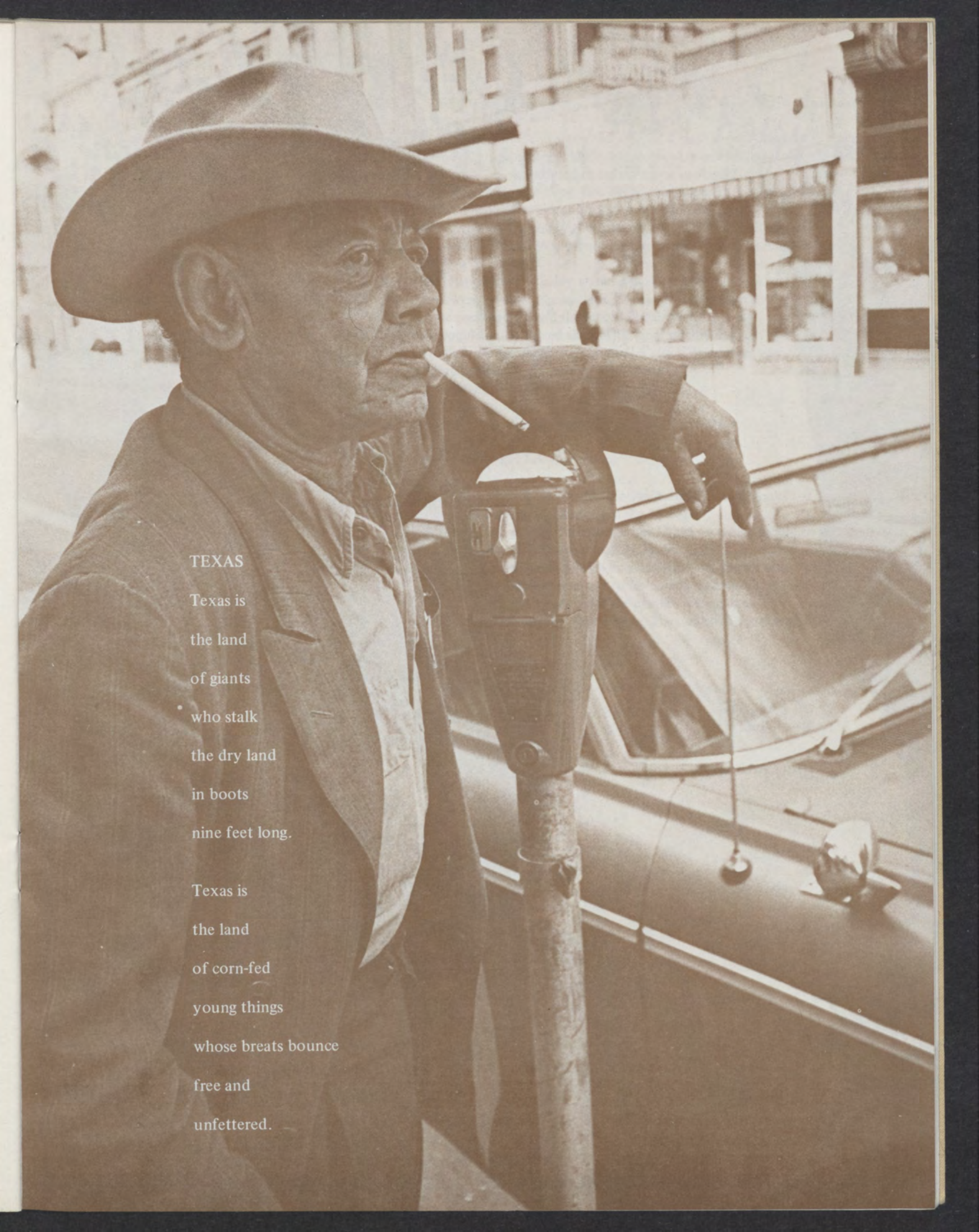
some saw-toothed one-eyed Theory Troll
with his documented point of view
the evidence eats its way through

or
what want you
to live by?-

that quiet infinite Secret
the prevailing sense of terror
a changing in the wind
a feeling (not knowing)
a smelling of the Awesome
A fearing of the Perfect
Unalterable Tyrannous Truth

and the Open Eyes
of your Self
look back at you
with tears of joy-

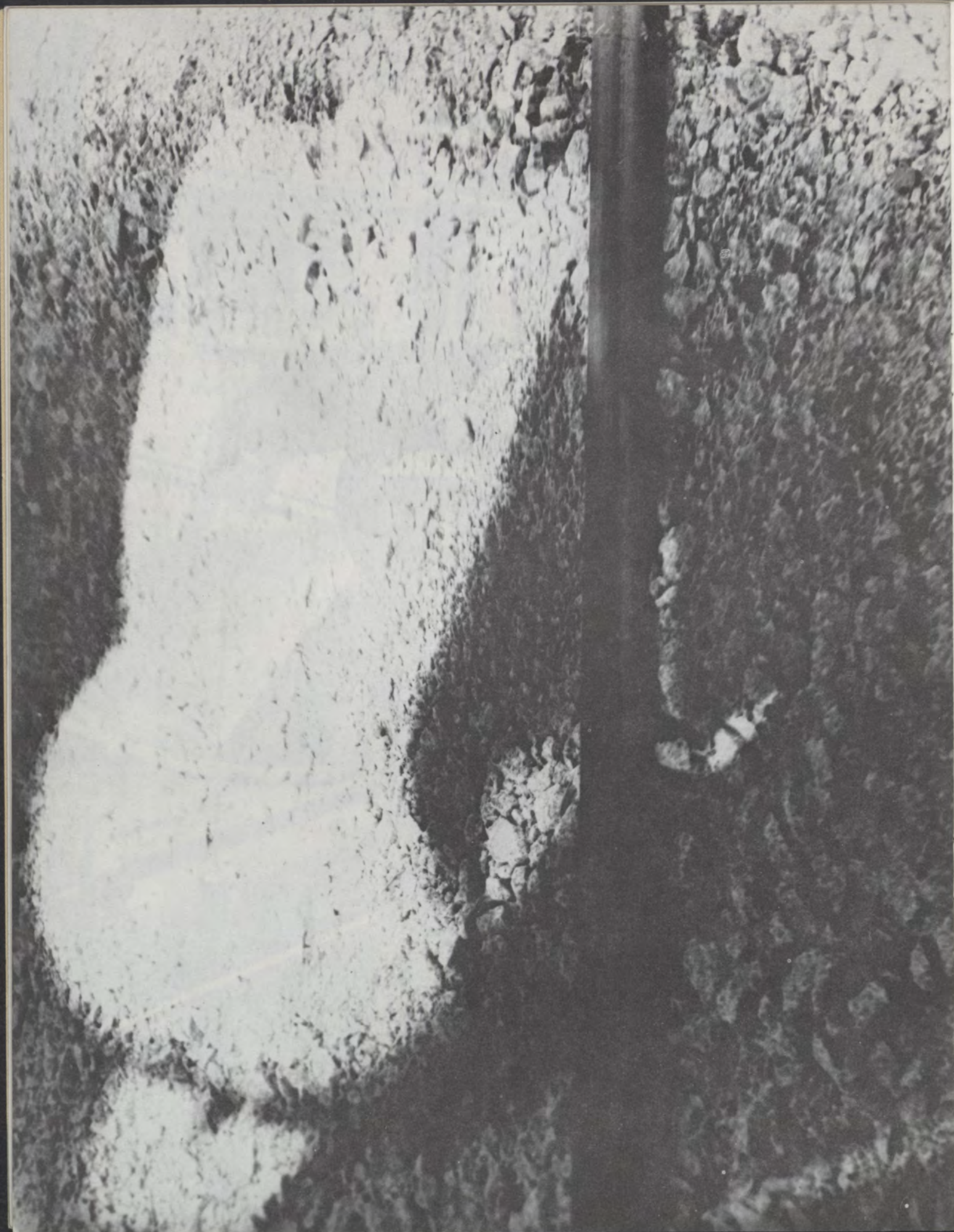
live by this?
who said 'yes'?



TEXAS

Texas is
the land
of giants
who stalk
the dry land
in boots
nine feet long.

Texas is
the land
of corn-fed
young things
whose breats bounce
free and
unfettered.



Patrick Poindexter was a little boy just like any other four-year-old boy. He liked television, especially on Saturday morning. But he didn't like the news or network difficulty.

And like all four-year-old boys, he had a wonderful imagination. He lived on the edge of a giant forest. One day he had a perfectly wonderful conversation with this fat old frog friend of his. The frog told him about his wife and his little tads and how hard it was to provide for them. But when Patrick went into the house and tried to tell his mommy about George (that was the frog's name) she didn't seem to believe there was anybody named George Frog. She never did believe Patrick when he talked about George. So Patrick Poindexter just forgot all about it and had some milk and cookies and took a nap.

The next morning was Saturday, Patrick Poindexter's favorite day. Daddy and mommy would be home all day, and daddy would doubtless do something terrific—like wash the car or cut the grass. And sometimes, he would let Patrick help, which was great.

But since it was Saturday, Patrick Poindexter knew his mommy and daddy would sleep later than usual. So very early that Saturday morning, Patrick put on his robe and slippers and went down to the kitchen. He made himself a bowl of cereal, spilled the milk, knocked over the sugar dish and headed out for the backyard toward the fenced-in half acre.

The birds were singing "Jesus Loves Me," and Patrick Poindexter hummed along with them slightly off key, wondering how the birds knew the tune better than he. But anyway, he knew the words better. After all, Patrick Poindexter was smarter than any old dumb bird. "I mean, I am four and a half," he reminded himself.

"Now where is that dumb old George Frog?" Patrick muttered.

"Here I am, Patrick Poindexter; been waiting for you. Come on."

With that, Patrick Poindexter followed George's hippity-hop through the backyard and into the forest.

"Hey, George Frog, where are we going?"

"Just follow me, Patrick. As frogs go, I'm pretty clever, you know! Just come along!"

"All right then, George Frog."

Suddenly, they came to a deep place in the forest with a sort of a clearing. George turned around, looked at Patrick Poindexter and winked the way only frogs do and hopped off, leaving Patrick all alone in the forest.

As Patrick Poindexter stood there in this little forest glen, things were for a few minutes just as things should be in any other little forest glen. For instance, he saw two small ants shoving this crust of bread along. He asked them where they were taking it, and they indicated, rather crossly, that that was their business, not his. He even tried to help them a little. Well, they just had a terrible temper tantrum over that. So Patrick Poindexter warned them not to have temper tantrums, at least in front of their parents, or they'd surely get punished, and walked away from them and forgot the whole rude incident.

Patrick Poindexter decided, on the whole, ants weren't really his favorite type people. They most all acted cross, nervous,

THE REAL THING

a short story



and in a hurry like his great Ant Clara. Maybe that's why they were called ants.

Then suddenly, a wonderful thing happened in that little forest glen. The birds started flying around, scolding him terribly at first, and then everything became still and smooth all over like whipped cream. Patrick Poindexter felt a sense of excitement, and he knew something magic was going to happen—and it did.

As Patrick stood there very quietly looking up through the tree tops, he heard a soft whirring sound. And right up there in the air, hanging in the soft blue sky, was a gigantic purple balloon with a little purple basket under it.

At first, it seemed to be just hanging there, but as Patrick Poindexter stared up at it, well, it started getting larger and larger. "Oh, my goodness," Patrick said aloud. "It's falling down."

And it was. Before Patrick Poindexter could call George Frog, or run back home and wake up his mommy and daddy or anything, this giant purple balloon with big yellow funny looking letters on it had dropped slowly from the sky and landed right there in this little magic forest clearing, not ten feet from where Patrick was standing.

In the purple basket was nothing, Patrick Poindexter noted. Well, nothing at first anyway. And then, Patrick could barely believe his eyes. A little foot came over the side of the basket, and a little leg, then a little fat tummy. Finally, there stood a little old man, brushing himself off. And such a little man Patrick Poindexter had never seen before. Why, he wasn't much taller than Patrick himself. And how handsome were his clothes. He was dressed all in purple from head to toe, except for a big red nose that stood out pretty far—right in the middle of his face. He was wearing a purple split-tail coat, purple pin-striped trousers, and purple shoes and a wonderful silk purple hat. He was wearing purple gloves and was even carrying a purple cane. Patrick Poindexter noticed the little old man dressed in purple looked kind of wobbly as he reached in his back pocket and took out this bottle of medicine. Why, the medicine was even purple. He unscrewed the top and was taking a swallow of this purple medicine when Patrick Poindexter first spoke.

"Hi there, purple man."

Patrick Poindexter tried to sound bold and loud. Well, when Patrick spoke, the little old man dressed in purple jumped so hard he almost spilled his purple medicine.

"My name's Patrick Poindexter! What's yours?"

Patrick spoke this time even more confidently. By this time, the little old purple man didn't seem quite so wobbly and looked at Patrick and made a great flourish with his hat and cane and spoke in a squeaky old voice that came right out of the side of his mouth.

"Why, Patrick Poindexter. Ah, yes, m'boy. Grand meeting you formally. I've heard so many fine things about you from up there on my purple planet. The name's Bushfeather, Colonel Bosh Bushfeather at your service."

"Wow!" Patrick Poindexter said right aloud and laughed even though he knew he was being rude. "Wow, Colonel Bosh Bushfeather, you're something, wow."

"Well, thank you, my lad, I take those words as a mandate. Quite a trip all the way from my purple planet. Let me sit here on this rock a moment," Colonel Bushfeather said as he sat on a rock, taking off his wonderful purple silk hat and fanning himself.

"George Frog, he's my friend, must have known you were coming. I followed him out here," Patrick said sitting on the ground looking up at Colonel Bosh Bushfeather with great admiration. Patrick's words seemed to upset the Colonel a little, because he suddenly looked around and said with a start, "Frog? George Frog? Where...Who...Where is this man, Mr. Frog, m'boy?"

Patrick smiled and said, "Oh, Colonel, George ain't, I mean, isn't a man. He's a frog. I followed him out here from my house, and when we got here, I guess he just hopped off. You know how frogs are. Kinda dumb!"

A look of relief came over the Colonel's face as he spoke, "Ah, yes, didn't get you right the first time." The Colonel was having another dose of that purple medicine. "Good old George! How is he and his family, m'boy?"

Patrick's eyes widened. "Do you know George Frog, Colonel?"

"Oh, my yes. Been knowing old George for years. Used to have a traveling medicine show together. George and I (along with my late wife, Mrs. Bushfeather) did an act together. We tricked the audience into thinking that George wasn't a frog at all, but a handsome prince only by a kiss from the lovely Princess Drusilla, played by Mrs. Bushfeather. When she kissed George, a great cloud of purple dust engulfed the stage. When it died down, George would be in his place, there I stood, next to Mrs. Bushfeather, in all my princely grandeur. I was a veritable Barrymore in those days, m'boy."

"Gollay," Patrick gulped, "what an act!"

"Yes, it was, my boy. Had to give it up though."

Patrick broke in, "And I'll bet I know why. Mrs. Bushfeather got warts on her lips from kissing old George."

The Colonel laughed, "Ah, you're a bright lad, m'boy. But in this case, you're wrong. George left the act complaining of Mrs. Bushfeather's love for garlic. She ate it every evening in her salad. George finally put his foot down. George said, 'Either the garlic goes, or I go.' And that's the last I've seen of old George."

Now Patrick spoke cautiously. "What ever happened to Mrs. Bushfeather? I mean, I hate to ask but..."

"Ah, don't give it a thought, m'boy, I don't! Let's see, it was either in 1936 or 38...don't remember which. She got run over by a vegetable hawker's wagon in Upper Sandsky which was loaded down at the time with garlic. I warned the poor dear, but she wouldn't listen. But getting down to things more serious, tell me, Patrick m'boy, how is George Frog?"

"Oh, he's okay."

There was an embarrassing pause as the Colonel took another swig from his purple medicine bottle.

"Colonel sir, I wanna ask you something."

"Fire away, m'little tike. The Colonel knows all and tells all."

"Well," Patrick Poindexter said, choosing his words carefully, "what's that pretty medicine you're drinking?"

"Oh, that!" the Colonel said with a wink. "I'm glad you asked me that, m'boy. That is the very ingredient George Frog and I used to sell in our traveling medicine show. A wonderful medicinal preparation. On my purple planet, we call it purple purangashoo. It's a panacea for all human ailments. Removes warts, pimples, moles, also good for asthma, hay fever and the common cold. But most of all, and this is the best thing about purple purangashoo, m'boy." The Colonel paused looking around to make sure that he and Patrick were alone.

"What! What!" Patrick interjected excitedly.

The Colonel bent slightly forward placing a finger aside his bulbous nose and spoke in a rasping whisper, "It makes you...it makes you a believer."

Patrick gasped leaning forward. "Can I have some, sir?"

The Colonel responded as though he'd been shot with a cannon. "No! No! m'lad! Never young, sir."

"Why, Colonel?" Patrick asked terrifically stunned.

"Well," the Colonel's voice warmed, "why give medicine to the well. You already believe. On my purple planet, no one believes without Purple Purangashoo. We must take this simple tonic to believe what the eye doesn't see or the ear doesn't hear."

"Whatcha mean, Colonel?" Patrick asked.

"Well, Patrick Poindexter, you have a great gift. You believe! You believe in a great many wonderful things. First of all, you believe in your friend, George Frog. You believe in elves; you believe in reindeer that fly through the air pulling a sled filled with toys and a personal old friend of mine, who is slightly overweight; you know who I mean."

With that, the Colonel winked and Patrick Poindexter smiled back at him knowingly.

"Let me continue," said the Colonel with a small belch. "You believe in the Easter bunny, the tooth fairy, the sandman and most important of all, you believe in me!"

"I sure do," said Patrick.

"Well, there you have it," said the Colonel. "The poor people on my purple planet only believe while medicating themselves with Purple Purangashoo."

"Really?" asked Patrick amazed.

"That's right, m'lad, and the unfortunate thing is that some people on your planet only believe while taking medication similar to Purple Purangashoo. Why, Patrick, you'd never believe this, but some people on your planet don't even believe in themselves. That's right! I said themselves, unless fully medicated by some such brew similar to Purple Purangashoo," the Colonel said with a loud burp.

"You're kidding!" Patrick responded wide-eyed.

"No, m'boy," said the Colonel rising. "See how lucky you are. You are a believer. Now, stay that way. Up on the purple planet, we'd call you 'Positive Pat.'"

"What's that mean, Colonel?" asked Patrick.

"It means, you're the one we count on who always knows."

With that, the Colonel rose, if somewhat unsteadily, and headed back toward the basket of his balloon.

Patrick sat in the forest glen watching Colonel Bosh Bushfeather's purple balloon disappear in the blue sky through the tree tops.

Then suddenly, George Frog appeared. "Well, I hope you had a good time. I gotta go now, see ya, Patrick Poindexter. You're my friend, but I have more important things to attend to."

Patrick looked around and saw old ugly George Frog just sitting there squatting and winking at him.

"Okay, George, thanks. I had a great day. I gotta get home. See ya."

Charles Poindexter sat across the kitchen table from his wife, Betty. He felt great. The coffee smelled good. The ham added savor to the eggs scrambling on the stove. Down deep, Charlie Poindexter was happy. And this was his big day!

Betty sat down watching Charlie happily scrutinizing the ads in the morning paper. After almost ten years, she finally understood her nutty husband. He was born and bred an ad man. She knew, by now, he couldn't help it. And as zany as it sounded, she loved him for it. She still remembered the night he got out of bed at 2:00 a.m. and recorded a conversation with a cricket in the house. It really did turn into a good commercial.

Why, he'd opened up a dozen shopping centers around the country, and most of them had prospered tremendously. Admittedly, she had thought his ideas, especially this last one, were a little far out, extravagant and ridiculous. But she was an ad man's wife—not an ad man.

"Charlie, it's none of my business, but explain the Parr Plaza Shopping Center idea again," she said trying to keep the nag out of her voice.

Charlie looked at his wife, loving her in spite of her lack of imagination—took a gulp of hot black coffee and crackled, slightly impatiently.

"Well, you see, Betty, they threw the loot at me. So I turned their shopping center into a purple planet. You know—purple ferris wheels, purple merry-go-rounds, purple balloon lifts, purple cotton candy and 100 midgets dressed in purple. One midget

all the way from White Plains, N.Y., who does a perfect W. C. Fields; calls himself Colonel Bosh Bushfeather.”

“I hear he’s a wino,” Betty smirked.

“Okay, he’s got a slight alcohol problem, but he’s great. And he keeps the booze under control,” Charlie retorted.

“Well,” Betty said, “it’s almost 8:30. You’d better get over there. The center opens in just 30 minutes. By the way, where’s Patrick?”

“I dunno, the half acre is fenced off. And so is the yard. He’s gotta be around. Why worry?”

Then suddenly, as if on cue, in burst Patrick Poindexter.

“Hi, buddy,” Charlie said.

“Look, Dad, Mommy, have I had a great morning. George Frog and I...”

“Now, don’t start that nonsense, Patrick. Frogs can’t talk, and you know it,” Betty put in quickly.

“No, they can! I know it cause, Mommy, you haven’t had any Purple Purangashoo! Course I haven’t neither. But the Colonel said I’m a natural born believer and don’t need it. But a lot of folks ain’t—I mean, isn’t—I mean, aren’t—I mean...Colonel Bosh Bushfeather told me all about his purple planet. Did I just dream all that, Daddy?”

Suddenly, Charlie Poindexter got up from the table, slipped into his coat and walked over to Patrick. He took his son’s hand, bent down and kissed his cheek and said, “Come on, boy, let’s go for a ride. I want to show you something terrific.”

“What do ya mean, Daddy?” asked Patrick Poindexter.

“Well, when you’re four years old, and you believe in miracles like talking frogs and purple purangashoo, it’s okay. But when you’re over thirty, and you believe in miracles, people call you names like ad man, poet, artist and sometimes, if they’re unkind, they call you nuts. You see, I believe in miracles, too, Patrick.”

“You do?” Patrick asked breathlessly. “Do you even believe in the purple planet?”

Charlie smiled proudly as they backed out of the garage. “I mean to tell you I do. I created it.”

“Can you take me there now, Daddy?” asked Patrick, never really doubting.

“We’re on our way!”

Betty Poindexter watched the Chevy wagon turn down the road that led to Parr Plaza Shopping Center and realized the adult imagination was finally going to meet up with the imagination of a child. Would there be an imaginative crash on this purple planet? She instinctively knew better because it had ceased to be her husband’s creative gimmick to kick off a gigantic advertising campaign. It was now Patrick Poindexter’s purple planet, and that was how it was going to be, like it or not.

Patrick Poindexter rode up with his daddy and parked at Parr Plaza Shopping Center, and sure enough, just like Daddy had promised, it was terrific. There were purple ferris wheels, purple merry-go-rounds and purple roller coasters and a jillion other things. There were lots of little men and women dressed in purple. Patrick touched his father’s shoulder and said, “Gee, Daddy, your purple planet was great. It is almost like the real thing.”





The beautiful is nothing but the beginning of the terrible that we still barely endure, and we admire it so because it serenely disdains to destroy us.

Rilke

DOGGEREL DEFINED, PLUS TWO

There, there gack the spinning tiles;
Who would wallow in their depths?
SNAP! A toenail cracks:
The gray blot reclaims its own.

Deciduous name tags dwell in their juices;
Flip the lever and toss out tripe.
Whose dripping laughter fills the hall,
That would be their own passion?

Why should inexorable chairs thunder about,
When there a nickel stands alone?
Magnetized knuckles trip out:
A blasphemous prof is only there already.

Irrelevant significance defiles the prist;
Let the beer can bellow sadness.
For whom does the sneeze resound,
While obstreperous meaning snickers?

the day of the morning
when the party
had been called off
even though
god was at the backdoor
dressed in microscopes
and
brothers of the social club
came in priestly shrouds—
the caterers brought rotted meat
the laundry was sent to china
and
you thought your conscience called
but it was only an empty room echoing
and the night before your mother died
you'd
heard the same sound
rattling against your ears
and you were afraid—
but the cameraman will be here
to photograph the cake
and the party's definitely cancelled
the coming morning's late

/to the revolution, a tragedy/



after throwing the bombs
exploding in bitterness
when you wore the peace
stitched on your jeans
after the clubbings in the street
(the dazzling smell of fear against fear)
bleeding and mumbling into the concrete
roaring drone of bull horns
thick in the gas-filled air
and you whispered ginsberg's name
(hoping he might appear and adjust your headband)
and you hear marx's pen
scuttling across the atlantic
from its british museum birth-
then you knew
then, at last, you saw
to change
your jacket was all that was
required of you...
the emperor's new clothes
are self made
as most changes are...



Waiting for Gloria

A Short Story

The early morning mist that hovers over small mountain towns was just lifting. There was a freshness in the air that was nippy and clean. The snow hadn't come yet, but the trees were almost bare. Similar to a suspended pendulum, neither to one side of the other, but right in the middle. As the mist lifted, the old man looked up at the mountains, his eyes showing a longingness; and yet a vague feeling of hope could be seen there, too. But no one really noticed particularly. They had seen old Joe many times. He was just like one of the buildings; a permanent fixture

I would rather be mad with the truth than sane with lies.
Bertrand Russell

in their minds. Nobody noticed where he went particularly, but people did stare at the unusual way he walked. Joe said he walked that way because of an injury received in World War I, but those who could remember back knew that he had fallen off his back porch ten years ago. Just never healed. Old Joe never believed in Doctors. It was no alarm when Joe came down to the station that day, because he came every morning. Everyday when it was time for the train to roll in, he was there wearing his same old tattered Sunday suit. As soon as it arrived, Joe would walk up and talk to the Engineer, and then when the train left, he would go back home, hobbling along with his dog at his heels.

Joe lived alone in his old square frame house right outside of town. He and his dog sat out on the porch and watched the whole world go by. The only place he ever went, as far as anybody knew, was to the train station, and he was there every morning at 9:00 sharp when the train pulled in. People wondered at first why he came to the station like that everyday, but people couldn't trust what the old man said. Why, everyone knew he was a little touched! They would go up to old Joe, pat him on the shoulder and ask, "What you doing down here today, Joe?" Old Joe would just look up, smile and say, "I'm waiting for Gloria."

Small towns in the Virginia mountains don't change very much, haven't for about the last fifty years or so. People who were born here usually marry here, raise kids here and someday die here. The cycle never ends; it keeps getting passed down from generation to generation. The only thing that ever really grows here is the graveyard.

In a way Joe was a freak from the cycle. The old codgers say he left in about 1920 or so for the city, but he returned five years later. Before he left, he was a lively sort of fellow, always joking and playing around. But when he came back, he sort of stayed to himself except at 9:00 every morning, he would go down to the station and wait. He always looked excited; his withered white hair shone in the morning sun, and his face held the hopes of a lifetime of old fools in its depths. Joe was a sort of fool's saviour, who kept right on holding on to his dreams.

The whistle blew shrilly and echoed all through the mountains. The train was the only link with the outside, a mere remnant from another world. As the train approached, the old man straightened out his tie and tried to smooth the years from his wrinkled suit. The station master stared while Joe combed his hair and wet it down with a look of satisfaction. He walked out the door of the station just as the train was pulling to a stop. He went up to the Engineer and said, "Where's Gloria?" The Engineer looked down solemnly at the old man and replied sadly, "She didn't get on this morning, Joe." The whistle blew shortly after, and the train pulled out of the station, leaving the man and his dog watching it pull away, sadness entrenched in their faces, disappointment a way of life.

Old Joe walked slowly back to his house, dragging his foot; his dog loping at his side. The ones who noticed him didn't pay much attention to the old man and the multi-colored mutt that was with him. Sure they felt sorry for the old man. Why, everybody knew he was touched! Poor old man, they thought, ain't got a soul to care about him. Those who were distracted from their everyday lives by his presence felt a twinge of sorrow, but it was soon forgotten.

As the old man got just out of town, he looked down at his dog and sort of chuckled to himself. "Good boy!" he said. The little dog wagged his tail and barked as if laughing, too. Old Joe sat on the front porch and patted his dog on the head. Once again the dog wagged his tail in approval, and they both sat on the porch with a satisfied grin on their faces.

The early morning mist that hovers over small mountain towns was just lifting. There was a freshness in the air that was nippy and clean. The snow hadn't fallen yet, but the leaves had disappeared from the trees. Old Joe looked up at the mountains, his eyes showing a longingness, and yet there was still hope in his eyes. No one really paid any attention to the old fool. Why, everybody knew he was touched! He came down to the station every morning, so why should they pay any attention to him? Couldn't get any sense out of him. If anyone asked him what he was doing at the train station, he would just look up at them and smile saying, "I'm waiting for Gloria."

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The following manuscript was found within John Barth's "The Floating Opera" shortly after the author's tragic and untimely demise.*

Yes, dear reader, I laughed when first I read "The Floating Opera." Who but a lovesick old Daughter of the Confederacy would not? It is, at first, so very easy to laugh at Todd Andrews and his futile attempt at living, not to mention his futile attempt at dying. But, on reflection, it can also be very troubling and sad.

I will admit that you cannot help but greet—with humor—Andrews' declaration that he has, at long last, the proper reward for a raving universe that has tormented him for so long. And can you truly consider anyone serious who dances a "trepak" along the meandering streets of a stoic Maryland community, even caroling a few "come-all-ye's" into the silent air. Then, he actually turns solemnly to you and says, "Suicide was my answer; my answer was suicide."

So you chuckle at Todd (almost the German word for death) Andrews. And perhaps rightly so, if such is your state of mind. Such was my reaction at the initial reading. However, a second reading found me not further unraveling this strange creation of John Barth, but rather discovering a panoramic view of myself spread through this worded insanity. And so may you, if you do not exercise caution. For do not deceive yourself into believing that it is only Todd Andrews and myself who find life a futile, senseless struggle. If you also turn your critical vision inward, you may find a flailing soul that cries for release.

If you, my confidants, have ever pondered suicide, you must realize the massive undertaking it is if you wish to expire in the proper manner. After all, it would be rather a pitiful occurrence to suffer the degradation of being found dead in your own cozy little bed, having rendered yourself up painlessly in golden slumber. How cruelly disappointing to your friends whom you have cheated of all speculation as to how you met the merciless Angel of Death, how you struggled and suffered under his vicious and unrelenting attack.

It is necessary, after all, to feel pity for those you are leaving in this dark world to wander without your omnipotent presence. So it is that Andrews undertakes to live his last day just as he has every other, continuing every habit, while tidying up those affairs which might suffer without his attentions.

And so we walk along the shady streets of Cambridge, Maryland, with the fifty-four year old lawyer, feeling secure in his presence and cheered by his numerous digressions as he follows Barth's meandering stream style. It is during this stroll that you, dear reader, may discover the utter futility of your own life as I did.

You will, at first, laugh at the sexual encounters of Andrews. His first attempt will make you wince as you remember the awkwardness of your own stirring occasion. Perhaps Andrews did go a bit far when he roared uncontrollably at his and Betty June's skinny, entwined bodies reflected in a mirror. It might be important to note that he regretted his mirth several years later when the same young lady nearly sliced him to pieces with a rubbing alcohol bottle in a Baltimore brothel.

Barth turns more attention to the unusual relationship between Andrews and his best friends, the Harrison Macks. Harrison Mack is a pickle magnate who knowingly allowed our friend to carry on a rather long and fruitful affair with his beautiful wife, Jane—exactly six hundred and seventy-three times per year with two left over. Certainly respectable for a fellow with a bad heart when you consider it, dear reader.

Yet, in this affair, we begin to see the futility of life. It is truly futile to love a woman and yet be unable to possess her, or even claim her outside of a dingy hotel room called home for many years, as in Andrews' case. Five years he passed in this manner.

As we continue our day with Andrews, more and more of this man becomes evident to us, and our kinship with him grows. For instance, each of us has surely lost someone near, by some means or other. We should then be able to feel what our friend does as he relates how he found his father deftly suspended from the rafters of the basement after the stock market tumbled. We can feel the destruction of a personal universe as Andrews tells us of searching the house for his father, finally discovering him, "one end of his belt spiked to a floor joist and the other fastened around his neck, there was not a smudge of dirt anywhere on him, though the cellar dusty. His clothes were perfectly creased and free of wrinkles, and although his face was black and his eyes were popped, his hair was neatly and correctly combed. Except that the chair upon which Dad had stood was kicked over, everything in the cellar was in order."

Can you not see that Andrews' life was, from this moment, like that orderly, though dusty, cellar? Its order was marred by an overturned chair. And from this day, more items would overturn and clutter, leading

us to this last day.

With tedious finality, we watch our friend tidy up his affairs. One item which demands attention from our friend on this, his final day, is a massive conglomerate known affectionately as the "Inquiry." Along with several other literary endeavors, it lies along the dull walls of his hotel room home, layer after layer, packed in baskets and crates. If ever completed, the "thing" would be properly entitled, "An Inquiry into the Life of Thomas T. Andrews of Cambridge, Maryland (1867-1930), Giving Especial Consideration to His Relations with His Son, Todd Andrews (1900-)." It is, quite simply, a complete study of his father's mind and life from his birth in the front bedroom to his tragic demise in the cellar, or "from the umbilicus that tied him to his mother to the belt that hanged him from the floor joist."

In these final hours, the "Inquiry" is closed with the following notations:

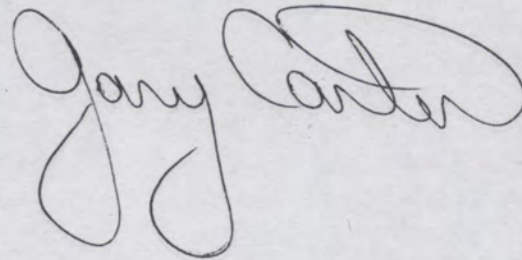
- I. Nothing has intrinsic value.
- II. The reasons for which people attribute value to things are always ultimately irrational.
- III. There is, therefore, no ultimate "reason" for valuing anything, including life.
- IV. Living is action. There's no final reason for action.
- V. There's no final reason for living.

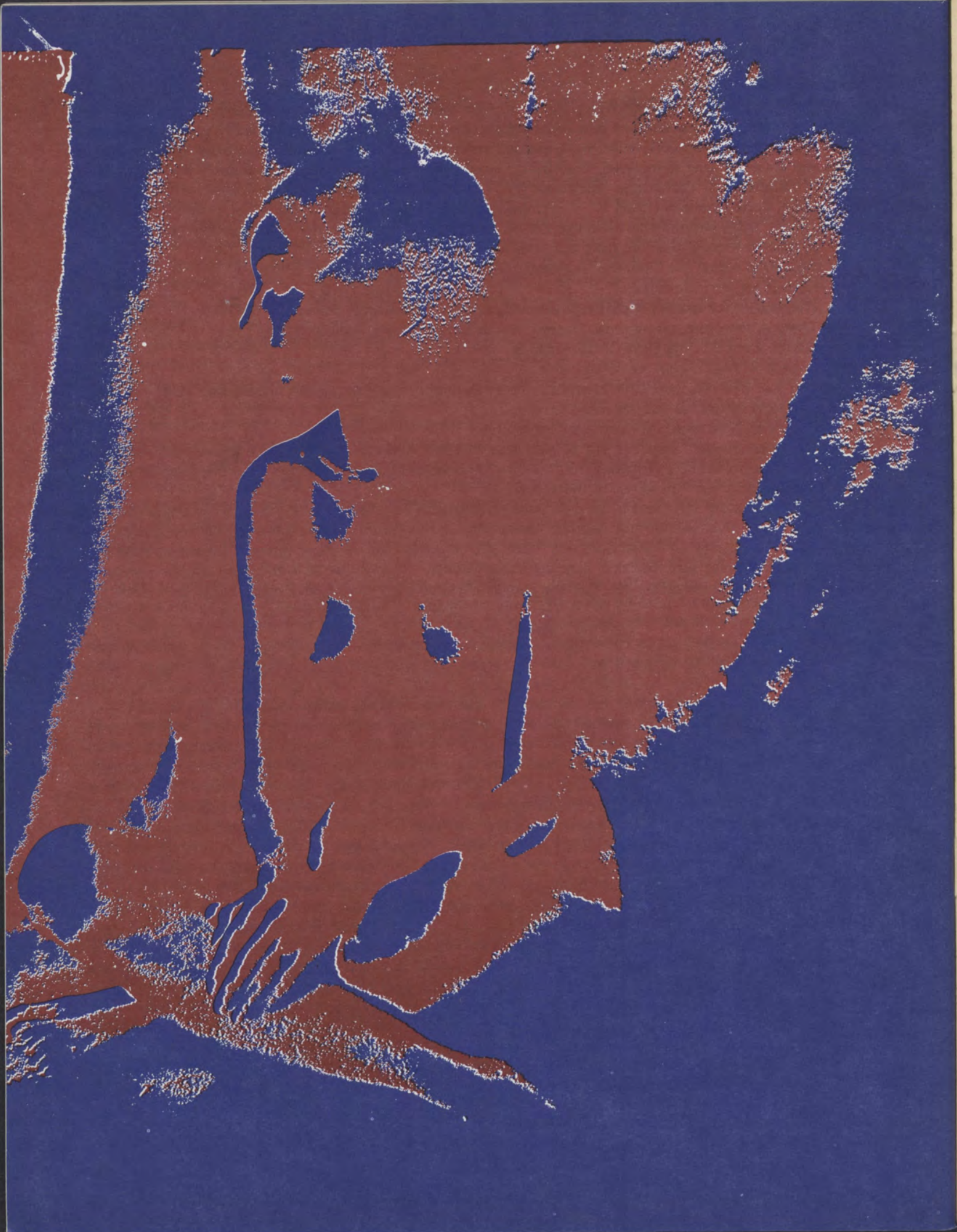
After a well-planned, but futile attempt to do away with himself, better left undescribed here, our friend and hero dismally revises his last argument to read:

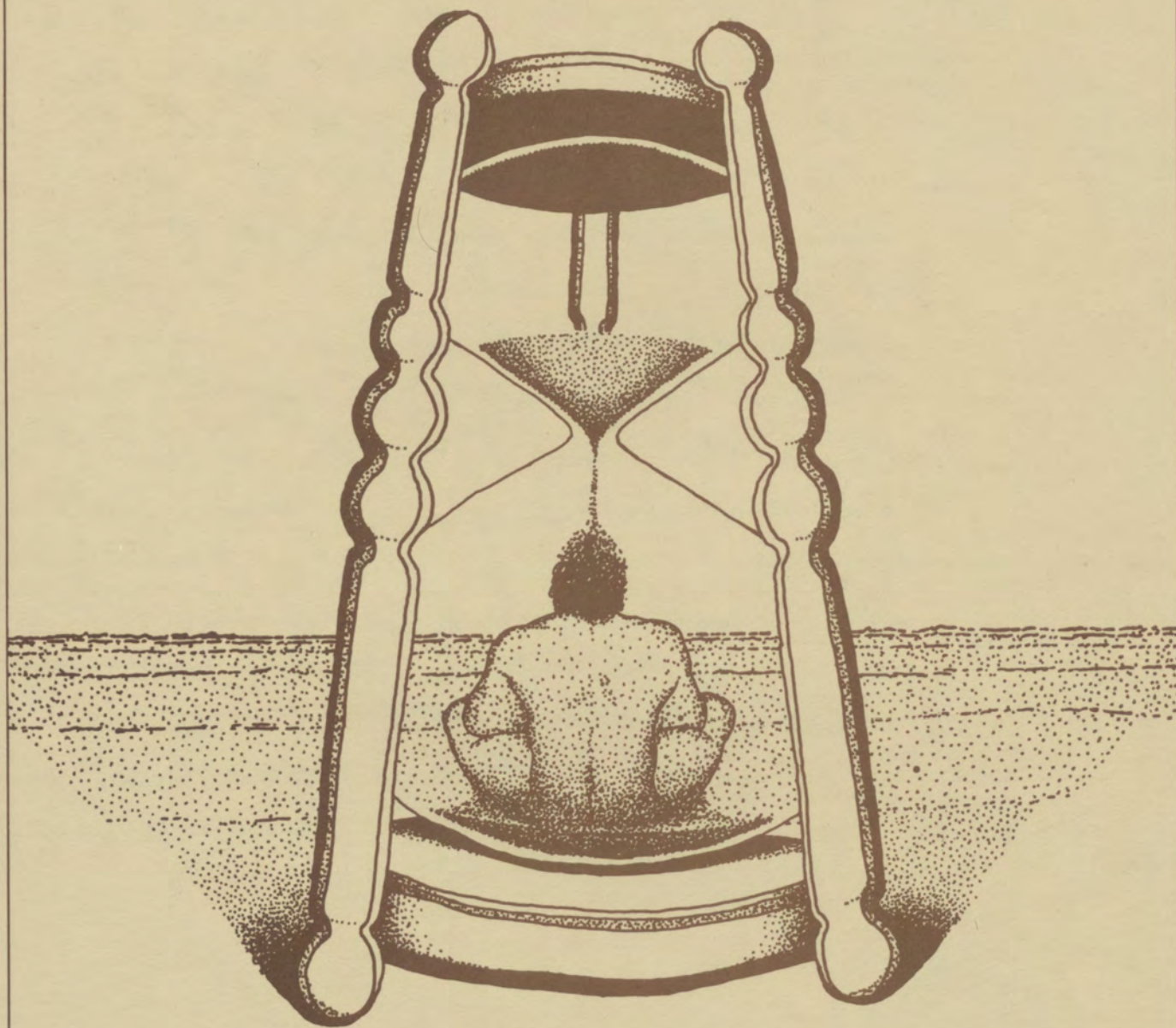
V. There's no final reason for living (or for suicide.)

And so, dear reader, ends the sad or glad saga of Todd Andrews. Let it suffice to say that our friend settled back into his futility, reopened his "Inquiry" and waited patiently for the marvelous day when that waning heart would at last fail to rise to the occasion.

But, unfortunately for those of us who have walked with Andrews this day, it is not so easily resolved. Mr. Barth and his character do not seem to realize that in this furious reality of which we are, one cannot simply accept the futility of life as does our friend and guide. Rather, we must decide if we are satisfied with our lives and therefore, wait for that appointed day whenever it may be; or with pomp and circumstance, march out of this sickness called life. But the choice is left to each man. I have made mine, dear reader. So farewell...

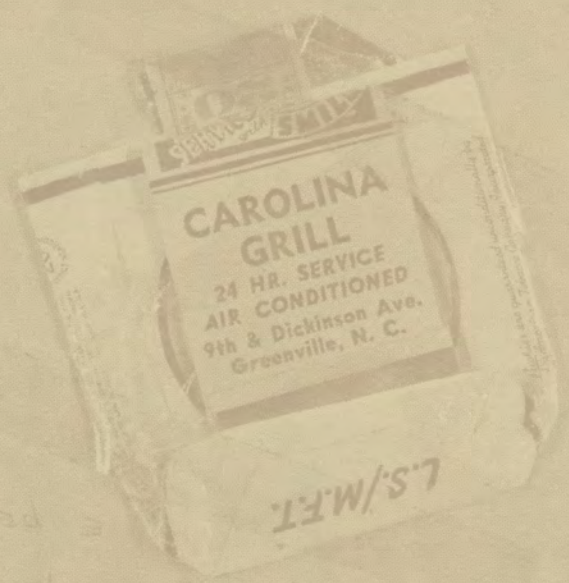
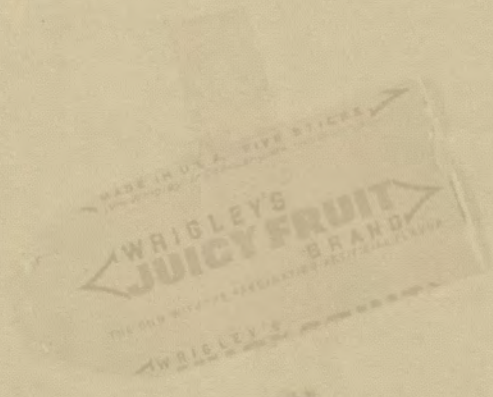
A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Gary Carter". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.





we are of the soil
just this single second
of the air
we stretch out arms to feel it
close to your existence
rub the dust in your skin
eat the rain before it falls
let loose the love in the ashes of the churches
in the rags of lost hours
between your father's life-minute
and your son's birth second
there is you
only now
pull the day around you
wear it like a god choosing to be the wind

Dec. 24, 25, 26, and 27



dated Jimmy
father and had a
beautiful Christmas. I only
hope he had a more pleasant
time than he would have had
otherwise. It was wonderful
to me - the Christmas Eve
service in Wilson, the cups
of coffee, the huckies, but
most of all see break-
fast at there this morning



Dec 27, 1951
Carolina Grill in Greenville
dated Jimmy happily
from LaBelle - wasn't
very impressed by him - not
he by me. Gordon Hammerick
from Shelby brought me the
King's breakfast - went back
home and I went back
with Gordon + I
the King + Lyman
a great time
had.

Art and Photography Credits: Cover-

Design: Bill Carrig. Photography: Jim Dilland,
Bill Carrig. 4- Steve Martish. 5- Joe Brannon.

1- Greg Resler. 16, 18- Jim Dilland, Bill
Carrig. 20- Steve Martish. Foldout - Bill
Carrig. 22, 23- Bill Carrig. 25- Bill

Dugan. 26- Tom Haines. 27, 29- Bill
Carrig. 31- Sam Halton. 33- Design:

Bill Carrig; Photography: Tom Haines.

34- Bill Carrig. 38- Sam Halton. 39 -
Steve Martish.

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