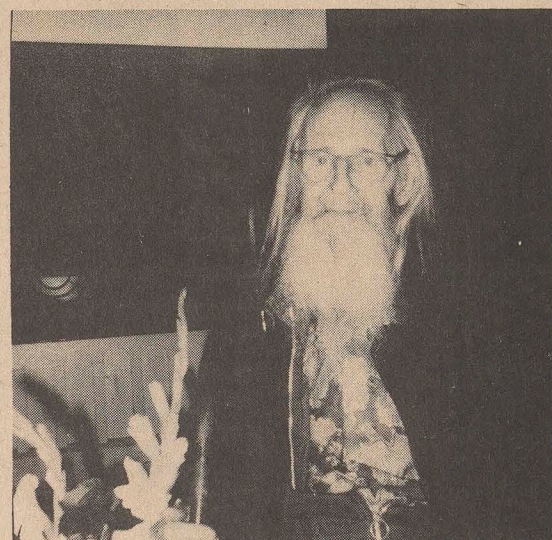


in memoriam



Prescott Townsend at the testimonial given in his honor Saturday, April 7, 1973, at the Charles Street Meeting House, a month before his death.

PRESCOTT TOWNSEND

1894--1973

On the evening of Saturday, April 7, 1973, members of the activist gay community sponsored a program at the Charles Street Meeting House to honor Prescott Townsend, Boston's venerable citizen extraordinaire and most senior gay liberationist.

Organized on short notice, between 30 and 40 people attended the affair. Prescott was presented as "The World's Oldest Practising Homosexual," an introduction which made Townsend smile. Truth be told, Prescott was seen in the company of a youth only days before, in which, let us hopefully assume, there was intimacy.

The tribute was comprised of a short biography of P. T., anecdotes related by friends, and the presentation of flowers and fresh fruit. Following this, An Early Clue to the New Direction was shown. It is a mid-1960's film done by Andy Meyer in which Prescott is featured. Part of his performance is given over to detailing his much celebrated Snowflake Theory of Sexuality.

After the tribute, Prescott attended a party.

As it happened, this was P. T.'s last public appearance.

Prescott Townsend died May 18, 1973, in his Garden Street apartment on Beacon Hill. He was 78. It appears to have been a case of his having chosen to die, since one source reports that P. T. had refused food and medication for his last few days.

His body was cremated.

An elaborate service was held in his memory at the Arlington Street Church of which Townsend had long been a member. Lacking publicity, few turned out for the service. Several relatives and a few friends of long acquaintance were there. Prescott, who had literally known thousands of people in his many years, was commemorated by just a handful.

But he is remembered. His death leaves a vacuum not only within the gay community but within Boston at large. Beside being an early gay advocate and proselytizer, Prescott was of that Boston breed of hearty Yankee Individualists for whom fighting injustice was almost second nature.

It was Prescott's wish to have his ashes interred in the Old Granary cemetery behind Park Street Church where his ancestors, up until 1812, were buried.

Boston, Mass.

Summer, 1973

FAG RAG FIVE

50¢

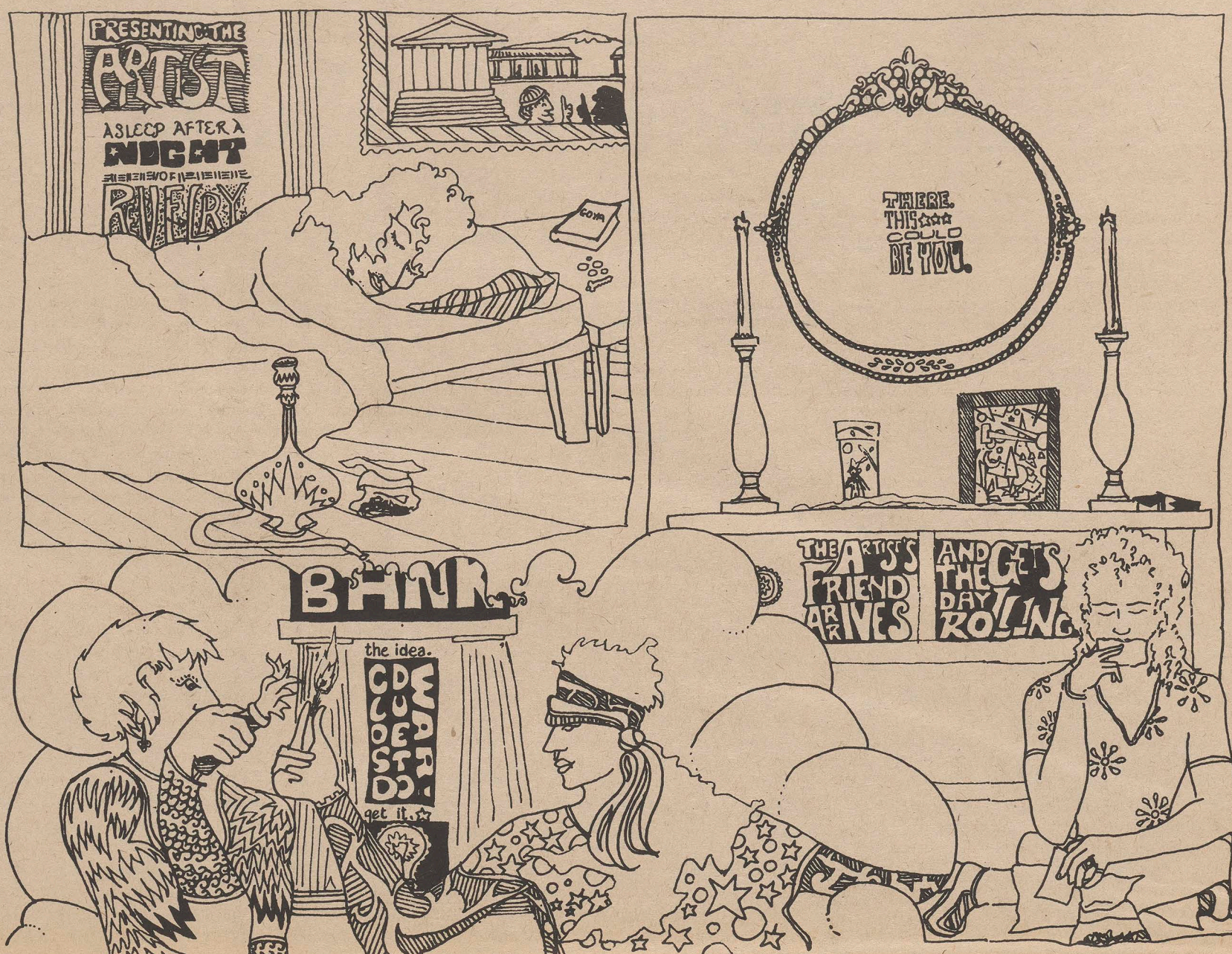
Christopher Isherwood:
An Interview

Allen Young:
On the Death of Marshall Bloom

Group Sex

John Wieners





WHO WE ARE

Who are "we" who bring you FAG RAG? Every issue has been the work of a different group who got together through Gay Male Liberation meetings and then met to write, lay out and publish the paper. Since FAG RAG THREE there has been no GML but some of us have continued the paper. Believing our liberation to be more than getting what straight people already have (churches, sympathetic psychiatrists, senators, protective laws, etc.), we want to find a love and happiness that has been denied us in the bars, bushes, tea rooms and baths.

FAG RAG is not a capitalist, money-making enterprise. So far, sales with a few donations have just about paid expenses. From the start, businessmen distrust us because the paper is non-profit. We refuse advertisements because they are bribery and ugly. We have never been able to find a distributor; our printer for the last three issues has just dropped us; and few bookstores will handle the paper. We have raised our price to 50¢ and provided for subscriptions so we may remain a reader-financed newspaper. We don't refuse the paper to anyone without money and it is sent free to prisoners, "mental patients," or members of the armed forces.

FAG RAG has not tended to concentrate on "news." The "news" is by its nature linear, dated, clocked and measured. "News" is straight; reading the *N. Y. Times* takes one further and further away from liberation. Such papers train you to think their "news" is all that is important. Worse, we are conditioned to think in terms of crises. People in the "news" are strange figments of im-

agination; they are hard to visualize as "real" or "human." That's why the "news" is more insidious than it appears on the surface: it denies us our own reality and humanness.

Teddy (on the cover of FAG RAG 3) once said gay "news" never changes; our oppression is everywhere the same. Any issue of the *L. A. Advocate*, for instance, tends to be like any other. A slick, sexy cover boy resembling no one we actually know; an inside of "news" about police-government-social harassment: someone has been fired, beaten, killed or raped; and activist counter-measures: marches, testimonies, court cases and petitions. This "news" is important, but there is other material, more important, that never gets reported.

Hopefully FAG RAG can become a part of the emerging gay consciousness and culture that has been so long suppressed. We want to provide a medium for faggot poetry, short stories, history, plays, reviews and art no less than abstract discussions of our oppression or confessions of our misery. We would have no consciousness without the raw suffering of our lives, but our consciousness is more than that suffering. It is a glimmering of how we can change; how we can overthrow the straight mentality surrounding us; how we can become whole people. In a review of Anais Nin, Meredith Tax wrote, "We can change the ways people's lives are structured enough to effect cultural changes, but these changes will not necessarily be the ones that will help people to be most human, unless we can understand enough about the way we are fragmented to imagine what it would be like to be whole."

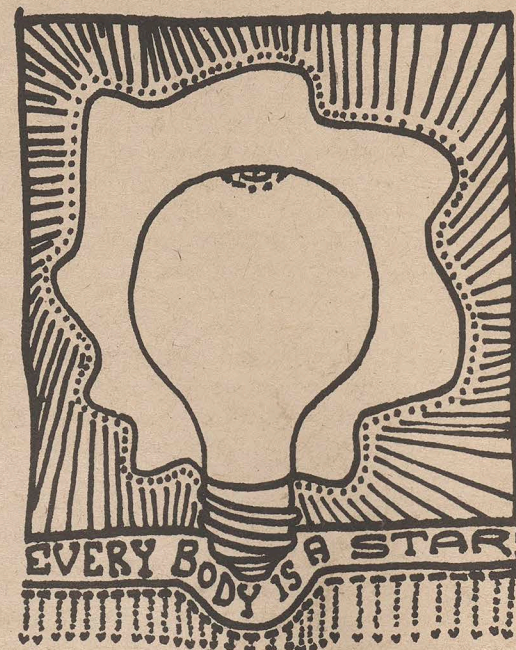
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FAG RAG FIVE, A Quarterly of Gay Male Liberation. c/o Red Book, 91 River St., Cambridge, MA 02139.

FAG RAG STAFF

Steven Abbott, Michael Bronski, Bob Clinton (cover & graphics), Charles Draper, Bob Hoffman, Dan Kiefer, John Kypker, Andy Kopkind, Louis Landerson, Littlejohn, Dennis Miller, John Mitzel, Charley Shively, Craig Thiersch, John Wieners, Allen Young, and others.

We welcome your help and contributions. Send songs, poems, plays, graphics, articles and other contributions. (Be sure & keep a copy yourself.)



Something in James Agee's recent approach to the Negro pseudo-folk (*Partisan Review*, Spring 1944) is the background of the notes which I propose in discussing yet another group whose only salvation is in the struggle of all humanity for freedom and individual integrity; who have suffered in modern society persecution, excommunication; and whose "intellectuals," whose most articulate members, have been willing to desert that primary struggle, to beg, to gain at the price if need be of any sort of prostitution, privilege for themselves, however ephemeral; who have been willing rather than to struggle toward self-recognition, to sell their product, to convert their deepest feelings into marketable oddities and sentimentalities.

Although in private conversation, at every table, at every editorial board, one knows that a great body of modern art is cheated by what almost amounts to a homosexual cult; although hostile critics have opened fire in a constant attack as rabid as the attack of Southern senators upon "niggers"; critics who might possibly view the homosexual with a more humane eye seem agreed that it is better that nothing be said. Pressed to the point, they may either, as in the case of such an undeniable homosexual as Hart Crane, contend that they are great despite their "perversion"--much as my mother used to say how much better a poet Poe would have been had he not taken dope; or where it is possible they have attempted to deny the role of the homosexual in modern art, the usual reply to unprincipled critics like Craven and Benton in painting being to assert that modern artists have not been homosexual.

But one cannot, in face of the approach taken to their own problem by homosexuals, place any weight of criticism upon the liberal

the pagan world.

Outside the ghetto the word "goy" disappears, wavers and dwindles in the Jew's vocabulary. But in what one would believe the most radical, the most enlightened "queer" circles the word "jam" remains, designating all who are not homosexual, filled with an unwavering hostility and fear, gathering an incredible force of exclusion and blindness. It is hard (for all the sympathy which I can bring to bear) to say that this cult plays any other than an evil role in society.

But names cannot be named. I cannot, like Agee, name the nasty little midgets, the entrepreneurs of this vicious market, the pimps of this special product. There are critics whose cynical, back-biting joke upon their audience is no other than this secret special superiority; there are poets whose nostalgic picture of special worth in suffering, sensitivity and magical quality is no other than this intermediate "sixth sense"; there are new cult leaders whose special divinity, whose supernatural and visionary claim is no other than this mystery of sex. The law has declared homosexuality secret, non-human, unnatural (and why not then supernatural?). The law itself sees in it a crime, not in the sense that murder, thievery, seduction of children or rape is seen as a crime--but in an occult sense. In the recent Lonergan case it was clear that murder was a human crime, but homosexuality was non-human. It was not a crime against man but a crime against "the way of nature," as defined in the Christian religion, a "crime against God." It was lit up and given an awful and lurid attraction such as witchcraft (I can think of no other immediate example) was given in its time. Like early witches, the homosexual propagandists have rejected any struggle toward recognition in social equality and, far from seeking to undermine the popular superstition, have accepted the charge of Demonism. Sensing

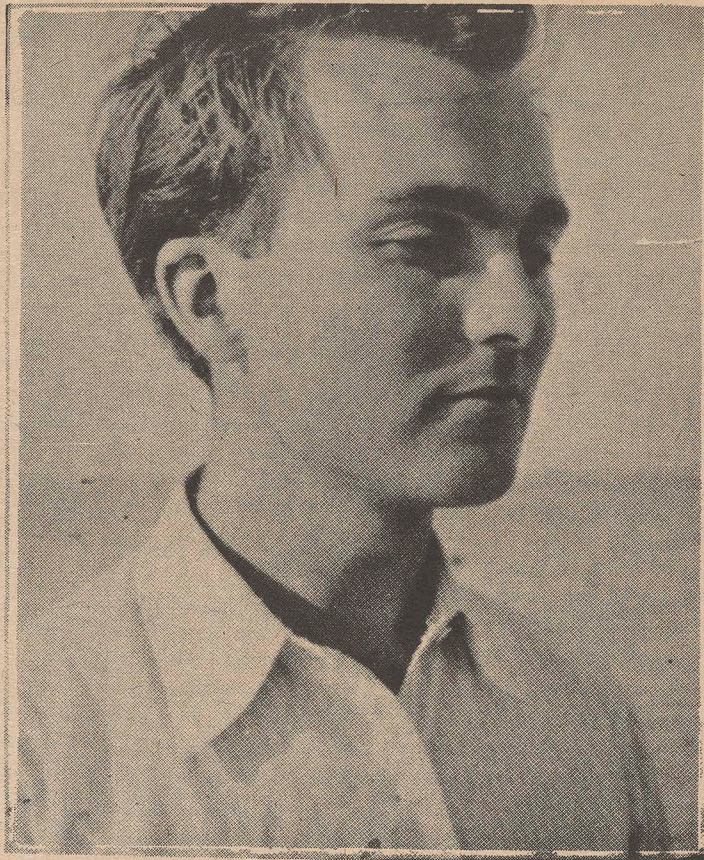
Remembrance of Things Past Charlus is not seen as the special disintegration of a homosexual but as a human being in disintegration, and the forces that lead to that disintegration, the forces of pride, self-humiliation in love, jealousy, are not special forces but common to all men and women. Thus in Melville, though in Billy Budd it is clear that the conflict is homosexual, the forces that make for the conflict, the guilt in passion, the hostility rising from subconscious sources, and the sudden recognition of these forces as it comes to Vere in that story, these are forces which are universal, which rise in other contexts, which in Melville's work have risen in other contexts.

It is, however, the body of Crane that has been most ravaged by these modern ghouls and, once ravaged, stuck up cult-wise in the mystic light of their special cemetery literature. The live body of Crane is there, inviolate; but in the window display of modern poetry, of so many special critics and devotees, is a painted dummy, deep sea green. One may tiptoe by, as the visitors to Lenin's tomb tiptoe by and, once outside, find themselves in a world in his name that has celebrated the defeat of all that he was devoted to. One need only point out in all the homosexual imagery of Crane, in the longing and vision of love, the absence, for instance, of the "English" specialty, the private world of boys' schools and isolate sufferings that has been converted into the poet's intangible "nobility," into the private sensibility that colors so much of modern writing. Where the Zionists of homosexuality have laid claim to a Palestine of their own, asserting in their miseries their nationality; Crane's suffering, his rebellion, and his love are sources of poetry for him not because they are what make him different from, superior to, mankind, but because he saw in them his link with mankind; he saw in them his sharing in universal human experience.

THE HOMOSEXUAL IN SOCIETY

by Robert Duncan

Robert Duncan published this article almost thirty years ago in Dwight MacDonald's movement magazine, Politics. Duncan is one of America's gayest and greatest poets; he now has over a dozen books published. We are reprinting this article not only because it is a neglected part of our historical heritage and because it is so prophetic but also because it raises issues still unresolved today.



body of critics. For there are Negroes who have joined openly in the struggle for human freedom, made articulate that their struggle against racial prejudice is part of the struggle for all; while there are Jews who have sought no special privilege of recognition for themselves as Jews but have fought for human recognition and rights. But there is in the modern scene no homosexual who has been willing to take in his own persecution a battlefield toward human freedom. Almost co-incident with the first declarations for homosexual rights was the growth of a cult of homosexual superiority to the human race; the cultivation of a secret language, the camp, a tone and a vocabulary that is loaded with contempt for the human. They have gone beyond, let us say, Christianity in excluding

the fear in society that is generated in ignorance of their nature, they have sought not to bring about an understanding, to assert their equality and their common aims with mankind, but they have sought to profit by that fear and ignorance, to become witchdoctors in the modern chaos.

To go about this they have had to cover with mystery, to obscure the work of all these who have viewed homosexuality as but one of the many facets, one of the many eyes through which the human being may see and who, admitting through which eye they saw, have had primarily in mind as they wrote (as Melville, Proust or Crane had) mankind and its liberation. For these great early artists their humanity was the source, the sole source, of their work. Thus in

What can one do in the face of this, both those critics and artists, not homosexuals, who, however, are primarily concerned with all inhumanities, all forces of convention and law that impose a tyranny upon man, and those critics and artists who, as homosexuals, must face in their own lives both the hostility of society in that they are "queer" and the hostility of the homosexual cult of superiority in that they are human?

For the first group the starting point is clear, that they must recognize homosexuals as equals and as equals allow them neither more nor less than can be allowed any human being. For the second group the

(Continued on p. 20, col. 3)

ISHERWOOD:

It's more or less like this. When I was about eight, my mother moved me from a school which was predominantly a girls' school into another school where there were more boys. The reason she did this was because she felt I needed some sort of masculinity in my character. I remarked jokingly that maybe she was quite wrong, and that my interest in girls was not because I was girlish but because there was some mild heterosexual tendencies beginning to show themselves. If indeed this is the case, thank goodness for St. Edmund's school and Webton which are the two places I actually went to. They were of course all boys' schools. Thank goodness for these two schools if they did something to tip the balance in the opposite direction. Then I say, despite the humiliation of living under the heterosexual dictatorship and the fury which he has often felt against it, Christopher has never regretted being as he is.

BELL:

You told me earlier today that you have been talking about your homosexuality quite openly on a number of panel shows and in newspaper articles the past few weeks. Is this the first time you have been open about it? I'm just curious to know if the current trend of things--the gay liberation movement as it is--if that is the reason for your coming out as openly as you have.

ISHERWOOD:

Well, no. I think I would have been absolutely forced to be open about it in this book, because this is really the first time that I have written a genuinely autobiographical book. The fact that I have written some books before where a character was called "Christopher Isherwood" is very misleading. All I meant by calling him Christopher Isherwood was that I found it convenient to tell the story in the first person. But this time I'm compelled to say everything about myself, and it would be impossible to speak about relations with my mother without explaining that I was gay.

BELL:

Do you think it would have been possible for you to have come out, would it have been possible to have this book published three years ago?

ISHERWOOD:

Oh, yes, yes. I think so. There is nothing in it at all lurid in the way of self-revelation, no great indiscretions. It's simply a repeated statement about my nature. You see, I have never in my private life made the smallest concealment. I can't remember a time, hardly, when people didn't all know about me. Somehow I never had to. I haven't lived that kind of life where I was in what they call sensitive jobs where I would have to be careful and cagey. I remember once on some college campus I said to one of my colleagues, among the ones who know me, "How many know I'm a homosexual?" And he said, "All, of course." I'm so used to this, and it's been my lot for so many years. I welcomed it.

BELL:

But on the other hand you said that you used your name only as a character in some of these stories. In the Berlin Papers /sic/ the "Christopher Isherwood" character is rather a non-sexual character. Is that person a fictitious one?

The following is part of an interview with Christopher Isherwood conducted by Arthur Bell. Their conversation took place in New York City in January, 1972, when Mr. Isherwood was publicizing his current book, Kathleen and Frank. Christopher Isherwood was born in 1904 in England. He published his first novel, All The Conspirators, in 1928, beginning a lifelong career as a writer and novelist. His subsequent books, The Last of Mr. Norris and Goodbye to Berlin, published in the 1930's were regarded by some as sensational. Isherwood moved to the U.S. in the late '30's where he took citizenship. Others of his books include: Lions and Shadows, Prater Violet, A Single Man, and A Meeting by the River. He is also credited with numerous screenplays. Gore Vidal dedicated Myra Breckinridge to him. Mr. Isherwood resides in Southern California. This interview, in its entirety, is located in the videotape library of the Gay Activist Alliance in New York City.

an interview with

CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD

ISHERWOOD:

Yes. Rather let me say that "fictitious" is not quite the word. He's less than a whole person. He's an observer primarily. Therefore he's inhibited. The great problem as I discovered was that using this --I wanted to write in the first person as I said, I wanted to have the quality that everything was observation. But on the other hand I didn't want to get mixed up in the story, because that would have dragged the story and made me much too interesting, which was not my intention. If I wanted to write about Sally Bowles or about Mr. Norris and all these people, I wanted the reader to be interested in them.

BELL:

The Berlin Papers /sic/ were made into a play called I Am A Camera, then later a movie with Julie Harris, and now another musical and movie called Cabaret.

ISHERWOOD:

If I may interrupt you, it isn't called the Berlin Papers. What there was originally was two novels. One was called The Last of Mr. Norris and the other was called Good-Bye to Berlin, and New Directions published them together in an omnibus volume which was called the Berlin Stories. I always regretted this very much because this title became known. I don't like the title because it sounds very presumptuous. It sounds like I was the only person who wrote Berlin stories. I said, at least call it The Berlin Stories of Christopher Isherwood; but they didn't. Then it got all mixed up with Berlin Diary of Shirer and various other people. So now nobody quite knows what the title is.

BELL:

I have always loved the character of Sally Bowles. She seems to be a free swinging woman who was perhaps not in control of herself, but as liberated as a person could possibly be under those circumstances. I don't know how that character relates to the women's liberation movement. Have you any comments on that?

ISHERWOOD:

That's really a terrible question to answer. I imagine that a strict women's liberation exponent would say that her life was too irresponsible to be quite what they want. They want people who can be taken seriously by society. I imagine the feminists would say: "Oh, she's been made into a fluttery irresponsible female, and Isherwood is putting her down."

BELL:

When you're writing your stories and screenplays, are you aware of the new consciousness that has developed via the movements over the past few years? Are you aware of making your men and women characters current 1973 consciousness people as opposed to what you just described as a "Sally Bowles character"?

ISHERWOOD:

I am and I'm not. After all, my business is saying what people are like or were like. I certainly don't propose to bring people out of the 1930's up to date by giving them the consciousness of 1970, because that's unhistorical. What I'm primarily interested in is recording circumstances as they were. If I want to write some kind of polemics or take a political attitude, then I believe I should do that in a pamphlet rather than put a whole lot of that into a novel as such, unless I'm going to write about these things.

BELL:

The Berlin Stories are two political stories.

ISHERWOOD:

Yes. They certainly have strong political overtones; that's true. But not of that kind because that wasn't the current concern.

BELL:

Have you been involved in any gay liberation activities in California?

ISHERWOOD:

Not what I would call activities in the sense of parading, and not taking part in the organized activities. I have co-operated with groups where there was a question of just getting together on the basis of being gay. I've spoken to people at institutes. I went a couple of times to the Society of David and gave readings there. Of course I see an awful lot of people and we talk about it.

BELL:

How do you relate to all this political activity that is so prominent in New York, like the embarrassment of John Lindsay, parades and marches that have been the focal point of the gay liberation movement? What you are saying is: "it isn't for me."

ISHERWOOD:

It is for me. I see it like this: What we're engaged in is an enormous campaign on all sorts of different fronts. It's a campaign I'm sorry to say with no central point of



DRAWING OF CHRISTOPHER ISHERWOOD
BY DON BACHARDY, SEPTEMBER 1965

command which is planning different sorts of action. It is fragmented, perhaps for the better, but it is fragmented. I can't help wishing everybody will join if they are working towards our objectives. All you can say about some of the things people do is perhaps they are mistaken. But in a great big campaign, you are going to make tactical mistakes. I could never dream of disassociating myself from anybody because of these mistakes. My line is simply I use my senior citizen respectability to hammer my little nail in, in a much sort of quieter and more individual and unspectacular way. If people come along and tell me I ought to join parades and this kind of thing, I say no. That would actually injure the little good I can do from my point of view.

BELL:
What do you see as our objective?

ISHERWOOD:
The immediate objective would of course be the complete revision of the laws regarding personal lives, which have a very much wider scope than just our particular thing, but nevertheless must include that. But then on top of that I do think we should all, and this is up to us much more than outside people, we should all endeavor to live as frankly as we can. I personally don't believe in going after the others and absolutely ramming it down their throats. Making it evident is one thing, but you needn't pursue people with it. In other words, I respect prejudice. I can understand such a thing as people who just don't like French people. Or don't like certain groups. As long as everybody behaves in a civilized manner, they don't have to keep meeting and spending their whole time with each other. I can understand people who, perhaps because of some weakness or mix-up in themselves, find themselves deeply disturbed by being with homosexuals.

BELL:
How can you see artists helping gay liberation?

ISHERWOOD:
You certainly should come out and say you are gay. That seems quite obvious. No one is going to be helped by total secrecy or denials of it.

BELL:
Does it help your work once you do that?

ISHERWOOD:
I think art is absolutely inseparable from truth. Any sort of concealments that you're putting up about your life injure you as an artist just as they injure you as a person.

BELL:
We are going on all sorts of side tracks, but I'm interested in your comments on how this would have affected Tennessee Williams and his Blanche DuBois character had Blanche been a man. Or Edward Albee, had his George and Martha been Jack and George. Do you think they would have created different plays?

ISHERWOOD:
Quite clearly they would have been different. But I can't really discuss these people because they are my friends--especially Tennessee who is quite close--because it would imply some sort of criticism and I feel they did what they thought was best. I guess it's up to gay liberation to persuade them to speak more.

BELL:
Persuade and not force.

ISHERWOOD:
Force never does anything. Force simply creates a backlash of one kind or another. It is completely disastrous.

BELL:
How do you think you can contribute to gay liberation?

ISHERWOOD:
In my tiny way, something that I can contribute is to persuade a few of those timid souls not to be so timid. Because by degrees they begin to think: Well, he hasn't been struck by lightning; why should I be? I find it really heartbreaking in this day and age when I see the pretenses that some people still put up. The absurd attempts to pass with lady escorts, the false relationships that they indulge in to try and cover up their real nature. And everybody knows about it anyway. That's the tragedy; everybody knows about it.

BELL:
Wouldn't you say that that was more a societal thing than a personal thing? Many people who are middle-class aspiring for the upper-middle-class are afraid that their homosexuality might be a giveaway and might not help them in their goals to reach the next step.

ISHERWOOD:
Oh, I know. I don't want to be facile about this. It's all very well for me having the kind of profession I have and living the kind of life I do; it's all very fine for me to be independent. I do know that there are people in various kinds of jobs who are still in great danger of losing them if something like this gets out. That can't be denied. Again I have to keep stressing the fact that I have been awfully lucky in being the sort of person I am and leading the kind of life I have. I can hardly remember the time when I felt any kind of distress in the idea of being homosexual. It always seemed to me to be the most natural thing on earth. So absolutely part of myself that there was nothing more to be said about it. When people do come out--I'm speaking of other people I know--it always seems so wonderfully simple that you can't imagine what all the fuss was about. I don't know why people have doubts about doing it. I do regret that I didn't come out earlier in one way or another, and I think perhaps I should have. But I never felt I was concealing it as far as my own life and relationships with other people were concerned. In the first place, over a great period of my life I have lived in a domestic relation with some other guy and we have always gone around everywhere together and there's never been any question about that. There has never been any question of covering up in any sort of way. That makes a difference. But perhaps, I wonder what would have happened if I had brought it into the Berlin Stories. I suppose it could have been done, and I could have just said it and made very little out of it. But my great idea was to keep myself in the background and let these characters play upon the stage. That was really the instinct that produced this caginess. But I must blame myself to some extent. I do wish I'd been even that less cagey, just dropped it as it were. It is true that I would hate not to belong to a minority group nowadays, and perhaps I do rather enjoy it a bit. I just feel at least my hands are clean.

It's more or less an unwritten rule among gay people, "liberationist" or not, that you don't talk about someone's being gay in a public way unless we know for sure that the person wouldn't mind.

Marshall Bloom was still in his closet when he committed suicide on November 1, 1969, yet I am confident that his spirit is with me as I write this.

Marshall Bloom was a faggot, and his faggotry was part of his life, as it was part of his death. This wouldn't be an article in *Fag Rag*--many faggots live and die as Marshall did--except for one fact: Marshall has become a minor folk hero and symbol of "the movement," and yet everyone who writes about him ignores the fact that he was a faggot. It is a farce that pains me each time I become aware of it.

Very recently, Marshall was the subject of a series of articles on the Op-Ed page of *The New York Times*. David Eisenhower, who met Marshall briefly at Amherst College, wrote an essay, published in *The Times* April 30, pointing to Marshall's death as a symbol of the emptiness and evil of the movement. Two of Marshall's friends wrote responses to the Eisenhower piece disagreeing eloquently and putting down Nixon's son-in-law.

At Amherst College--Bloom's alma mater, Class of '66--he is something of a legend. At the college library there is a fine collection of underground newspapers officially known as the Marshall Bloom Memorial Collection.

Who, in God's name, you may be asking, was Marshall Bloom?

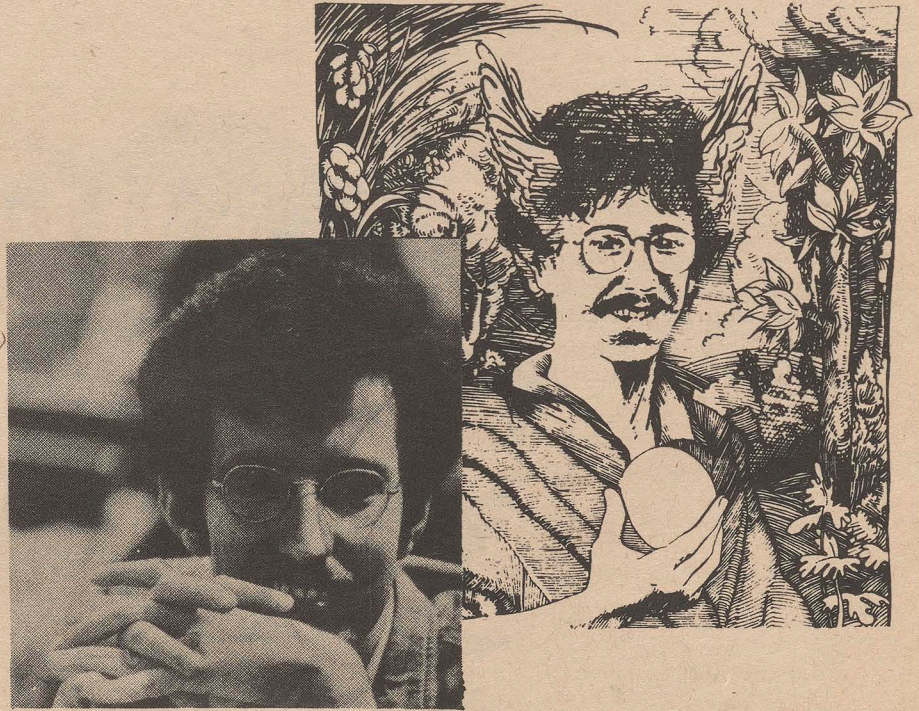
I suppose Marshall is best known as the founder and, for a time, prime mover of Liberation News Service (LNS). Some may remember him as one of the leaders of a student uprising at the London School of Economics. At Amherst College, he had been editor of *The Student*, bringing a radical viewpoint to its pages well before student rebellion was a national phenomenon. Marshall was a featured character in Ray Mungo's popular autobiographical book, *Famous Long Ago: My Life and Hard Times With Liberation News Service*. He is mentioned prominently in other books by Mungo, as well as in *What The Trees Said*, by Steve Diamond.

In mid-1968, LNS, then still in its first year of publishing, broke into two feuding camps. The Bloom-Mungo-Diamond camp bought a farm in Montague, Mass., with money secretly funneled off from a benefit film showing. They shocked the opposing faction by literally heisting everything from the New York office to their farm. For awhile, there were two competing LNSes: one on the farm, the other in New York City. The New York LNS carries on to this day, but by February of 1969, the farm LNS folded and became just a farm (which it still is).

The following fall, sometime after All Hallows' Eve (the traditional gay holiday), on All Soul's Day, Marshall Bloom ran a vacuum cleaner hose from the exhaust pipe through a window of his little green Triumph. When his friends found him, he was dead.

I heard about his death in Chicago. I was covering the Conspiracy Trial for LNS, and it was in Judge Hoffman's neon oven courtroom that Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, wearing black armbands in Marshall's honor, told me about it.

Although Marshall was indeed a Yippie, I find it rather incredible, if not stupid, that some of Marshall's friends, particularly Ray Mungo, treat his suicide as though it were some kind of ultimate yippie stunt. They make Marshall a mysterious magical figure, a shaman, which is not all that surprising as this is a traditional role for homosexuals in many cultures.



MARSHALL BLOOM

gay brother

by Allen Young

I knew Marshall Bloom not as a shaman but as a human being. I worked with him at LNS for nearly a year. But we were not friends. For a good part of that time, in fact, we disliked each other, though I'm not quite sure why. Partly it was because at the time he was more into being an anarchist, and I was more into being a communist. We had very different ideas about society, collectivism, and the individual, though I'm sure we would agree about much more today. We were on opposing sides of that awful split in 1968, and we never spoke to each other after that.

Did I recognize that Marshall was gay? Not on any conscious level. I was a desperately frightened and lonely closet case myself in those days. I couldn't deal with mixing my gay life and my straight life; they were never allowed to mix (a situation enforced by the straight environment of "the movement"). Consequently, I just assumed that Marshall was straight.

The truth is that Marshall had GAY written all over him, especially when he talked and moved. Once I heard someone make a nasty comment about Marshall being a faggot, and I voiced my objection by replying something like, "Just because someone is effeminate doesn't mean he's homosexual." I helped to kill Marshall Bloom by hiding in my closet, and by saying things like that. I'm not going to hate myself for it--I was a victim of my own justifiable fears--but I think it's high time for Marshall's straight friends and bi-sexual friends (like Ray Mungo) to admit that they, too, in their straightness and in their closetry, helped take Marshall to his death.

It is not enough to say that Marshall was a lonely, unfulfilled person. Marshall was a lonely, unfulfilled faggot. In fact, he killed himself shortly after a last-ditch unsuccessful attempt to make a go of it romantically and sexually with a woman friend. For years, he had carefully surrounded himself with attractive young men, yet he could not (as far as I know) bring himself to tell them how much he loved them and how much he wanted to kiss them and lie with them.

When Steve, one of these young men, was killed in an automobile crash, Marshall expressed his sadness and love in an LNS article. Maybe you can perceive the gay love as I do hidden inside this paragraph from that "obituary":

Photos:

Far left photo of Marshall Bloom from Famous Long Ago, by Ray Mungo, Beacon Press. Left above: reprinted from Home Comfort, by the people of Total Loss Farm, Saturday Review Press.

"For his seventeenth birthday, we got him a light meter; and a week later his camera was stolen from where he had (too casually?) left it in the office. By now he needed, beyond a family, a lover, or two, and he changed our house into his lair with other rooms appendaged. He touched secret truths with a bewitching poetess, and she opened her most delicate self to their shared trust. And then he violated everything temporarily for another. Never would she forgive him--how could she?--but her parting goodbye to Washington was to tear the only photo of him from my wall and put it in her purse."

Suicide is a complex thing, and I am not saying that Marshall took his life "just" because he was gay. But I am convinced it is an important part of the story. I believe this because I shared Marshall's life for nearly a year and because I have talked about this very topic with several of his closest friends.

Is it in "poor taste" to bring this all up? I suppose some people will think so. It interferes with some people's notions of myth and magic. But remember, it's in "poor taste" to commit suicide; like homosexuality it's an act condemned by church and State. The poor taste in this matter, as far as I am concerned, is that of the "movement people" and the "friends" of Marshall Bloom who wish to romanticize his life and death while they hide the very unromantic but crucial fact of his faggotry.

This same faggotry was crucial, I want to add for the record, to the very beginnings of Liberation News Service. Marshall founded LNS in the summer of 1967 after he was kicked out of his position as Director of the College Press Service. In writing about Marshall's ouster from that position with the establishment collegiate press agency, Mungo and others point to Marshall's radical politics and his pot-head acid-freak lifestyle. Yet I know from talking with people intimately connected with the incident that Marshall's faggoty manner was a major factor in some people's negative attitudes towards him and in the eventual decision to fire him.

To tell the history of LNS while deleting this fact is akin to telling the history of America while deleting the struggles of women, blacks, and workers.

Marshall Bloom died only four months after the Stonewall uprising, and two months before I got up the nerve to attend my first Gay Liberation Front meeting. Perhaps Marshall and I would never have become friends, but I like to think that the reality of gay brotherhood (with all its shortcomings), which I feel has saved my life, would have saved Marshall's life too.

(Editors' note: After the above essay was written, The New York Times published a letter to the editors from another of Marshall's old friends, Judith Coburn. In the letter she referred to Marshall's repressed homosexuality and suggested that this was a factor in his suicide.)

ODE TO A SUICIDE

PHOENIX, FIRE-RED, BURNING IN IMMUTABLE FLAME
DIFFUSING INTO INFINITY
MELDING INTO ELEMENTS OF TOTALITY
DIMENSIONAL-INEXORABLE-EPHEMERAL-IRREVOCABLE-ETERNAL

no more rain falling on my cheeks
no more warm sun
no more wind blowing in my face
no more crisp snow crunching under my steps
no more music
no more flowers

CRYSTAL FLAME, FIRE-RED, BLUE YELLOW GREEN ORANGE
STARK BLACK
ATOM, ELECTRON, MOLECULE, ELEMENT HURLED INTO DIMENSIONS
BURNING INTO THE COLOR SPECTRUM, THE FLAMING SUN OF INFINITY.

no more pain
no more bitterness
no more joy
no more laughter
no more sadness

MAN, HOW FRAIL A CREATURE THOU ART, IN THE WORLD OF INFINITY
MAN, HOW MAGNIFICENT YOU BE, IN YOUR DEFIANCE OF INFINITY
TRANSFERENCE, WHERE IS THY BURN?
...IN THE FLAMING SUN OF INFINITY...

in the caverns of the past:
in the pale of promises not kept?
in the laughs not laughed from the deep throat of life?
in the pearls not sought after?
in the prison of fear?
in the smiles not returned?
the songs not sung: GLORY GLORY HALLELUJAH...
in the lost isolation of communication:
in shunning warm and cold hands, not reaching out:
in friendship
in despair
in need
in asking
in giving
in getting
in meeting
in love
in hatred
in committing
in expression

VINCENT SACARDI

Vincent Sacardi was an active gay liberationist here in Boston. He had been a member of The Student Homophile League, the Gay Study Group, and Gay Male Liberation. He was also on the FAG RAG staff, and as a salesperson sold more FAG RAGS on the street and in bars than any other individual. He was also a writer who wrote constantly. Vin made many close friends with people he met through his gay liberation activities. But, unlike Marshall Bloom, even having come out didn't prevent him from taking his own life; he died October 11, 1972. The poem printed above was found, undated, among his effects.

Say "love" and "two" comes to mind, whether it's birds, the bee and the flower, or Love Story. Everywhere, we are taught to think love/sex/ pair without a break. The model of man and wife pervades everything and shapes our thoughts about how we should make love. Between heterosexual pairs this might seem "natural" (or at least fitting), but why should faggots ape straight ways? Why should we follow the British Parliament which legalizes sodomy between two but not three consenting adults? Each faggot has a mouth, anus, and penis which can all be used at once. Why shouldn't we learn to love more?

Among my friends, Aristogeiton best illustrates the tendency toward one-to-one relations. I'm uncertain whether to call him lover, ex-lover, acquaintance, friend, comrade, trick, or brother; these words are as unreal as the pseudonym "Aristogeiton." At any rate, we have become more than just passing strangers. When we are alone, he talks soft and intimate about his feelings and fears, but when there are more people (no matter how few or how well he knows them) his tone changes. He becomes more generalized, more impersonal, less self-revealing. Only the one-to-one relationship seems to be "real" or "authentic," while relationships with more people become "impersonal" or "public" and he becomes "reserved."

This attitude is at the very heart of the capitalistic, aggressive society in which we live. Pair-bonding trains us to be good little consumers. What we see in our "partner," "lover," "wife," "husband" or whatever you call the other one is a possession, something owned, something had. We have become each others' properties, investments, securities, ransoms against the changes in life and time. Sensuality, pleasure and feeling are squeezed out, and love is everywhere in chains. We need free love now.

In the search for such free love, I believe group sex is an imperfect but essential stepping stone. We need to get away from the linear one-to-one relationships and more into circular, multiple loving sensual conjugal systems. At this moment in liberation circles, we tend not to talk about sex at all; and about group sex, we are either silent or censorious.

I'd like to break through this by recollecting my own group experiences and scanning them to see what they can tell me about changing.

The first group sex experience I recall was sometime around my eleventh or twelfth birthday. Several boys and I had put together a shack in the backyard where we slept overnight. There were four or five of us and we stayed up most of the night having sex with each other. The nice thing about it was the comfortable way we felt; I don't remember any sexual objectification, one person being bigger, more beautiful, or stronger than the rest. We were all young and intent on exploring our cocks, mouths, asses, and all their possible uses. I'd had lots of oral sex and mutual masturbation before but this was my first anal experience. I found it very exciting. I later had friendships and sexual relationships with all the boys there that night, but we never got together again in a group. I'm not sure why; we certainly never talked much about it one way or another. One of the boys has remained gay like me throughout his life to date; the others drifted into becoming fathers of very large families. (Ours was a hillbilly neighborhood in Southwestern Ohio, made up of poor people with big families. The woman on one side of us had twenty-one children, the one on the other side had seventeen.)

My next memory of a pre-gay-revolutionary group sex experience was in Wisconsin. One day someone picked me up at a tearoom in the university library and told me to wait a minute. He had a friend with a car who could take us to a place with a bed. He told several other people the same thing--five in all if I remember

COCKSUCKING AS AN ACT OF REVOLUTION PART IV

GROUP SEX

by Charley Shively

correctly--and we all got into the car and went off to an apartment where we were a surprise to the owner who let the group in. He spread out some mattresses, but he was a bit taken back by the fact that we were all strangers. Our host read the evening newspaper in another room for awhile until we all got going, then he too joined in. The action was generally a round of indiscriminate fucking and sucking without any very clear demarcation of whose body belonged to whom. When we were finished, we all buckled up, went on our way, and never met again. Later I ran into and perhaps even slept with a couple of the orgy partners. Both said that they had felt uneasy and unclear in the get-together. I'm not sure that's how they actually felt or rather how they believed they should feel; at the time they seemed to enjoy themselves thoroughly.

Threesomes occupy an ambiguous position in group sex. How, for instance, should you classify two lovers who bring in a third person to pep up their relationship? My first experience with this was with my lover Agamemnon. Much to my dismay and shock he insisted on picking up "tricks" and bringing them home for a threesome. Initially I found this hard to understand. Was it an act of betrayal? Or just constant lust? Did it mean he didn't love me? Weren't we enough for each other?

But after a few times, I found it quite pleasant. Subsequently, I have found that such behavior is not at all uncommon. I've heard of one couple who would regularly call on a friend of mine to come over for some fun. And I have on occasion gone home with someone to find a lover waiting for a threesome.

Physically I think three people is much better than two in bed, just as two in bed is better than one. This is not meant to belittle masturbation, only to say that two together may be as physically limiting as one person alone.

For instance, I know of no sensation so pleasant personally as having someone fuck me while I'm sixty-nineing with another person.

Unfortunately, group sexual experiences are even less recognized than homosexual couples. Groups may exist physically once in awhile, but they have not become part of our consciousness. The rule in almost all group encounters is ONCE ONLY! Encounters in the baths and bushes are a matter of spontaneity. In those situations, a group just sort of spontaneously starts groping, doing, and loving each other. Just as quickly, they fall apart, dissipate, and never see each other again. For any more than a couple to maintain a lasting relationship is very rare. Sexual groups seem to have almost no institutional form or existence.

I've heard of a man who sort of manages orgies on a regular weekly basis here in the Boston area in which people do return and in which they do socialize before and after their sexual activity. But this seems to be rare, and I speak of it only from hearsay.

I have hoped that gay liberation might address itself to some of the problems (or possibilities) in love relationships and group sex. It is the most real need that every faggot in or out of gay liberation feels. I know of no exceptions. Everywhere, everyone is unhappy in love. Either they have a lover and are dissatisfied, or they are looking for a lover, or they have lost a lover, or they are looking for love in general. Every meeting it is the same: Z's after M who's in love with R who is very uptight but wants to talk to X who has never made love to a man before. Why not just do it?

Then we could get on with building the kind of world where our love would be free.

Needless to say, it hasn't been easy. My first effort in this direction was with Aristogeiton and his roommate Harmodius. They were playing various games in which Aristogeiton would sleep with me and Harmodius would be jealous. Then Harmodius would sleep with Aristogeiton and I would be jealous. There were all these tensions and ill feelings. We were supposed to be revolutionary communists!

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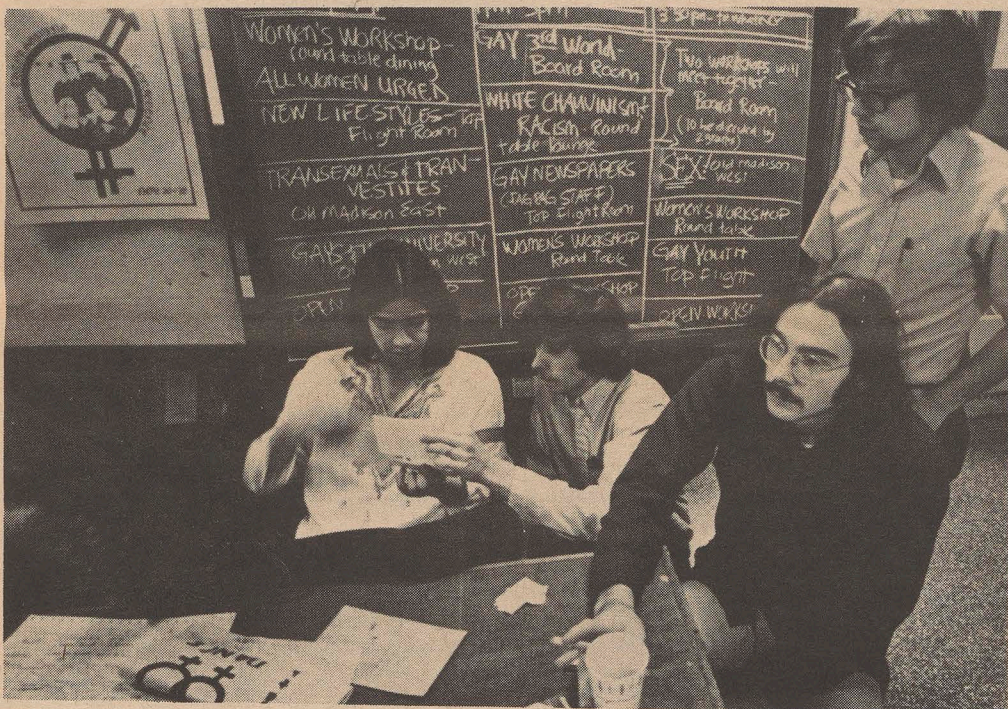
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So I asked: Why can't we share our bodies? And one evening we all got in bed together. After some discomfort about not knowing just what to do, we soon discovered we could do it together. Instead of building on this experience, however, we never did it again. Indeed, it proved too much for Harmodius (as complications of other people were added and subtracted); he packed his knapsack and headed West. Since then, he has never been heard from by anyone.

The next sexual group in gay liberation didn't actually include me personally, but I still want to talk about it. At the Madison, Wisconsin Thanksgiving Conference (1971), Paul and I called for a workshop on Sex for the faggots there. Our hope was to explore many of the questions never talked about, including group sex. When a lot of faggots showed up for the discussion, we divided into four parts on a supposedly random basis. In my segment, I brought up the suggestion of actually experimenting instead of just talking but was greeted as a "sex-crazed dirty old man" (which I am not). Paul, younger than me and more androgynous, brought up the same suggestion in his group and met with a better response. They decided to meet further and work on it. When two members of the Third World Caucus and I petitioned to join the workshop, we were turned away. (The Third World Caucus meeting had overlapped with the Sex Workshop.)



The group met together that night in a private house. They talked long and earnestly about their lives and desires. Then they undressed each other and took great care to kiss, caress, and attend to everyone with about the same amount of affection. There was no anal sex, but there was much oral contact. Several people had orgasms; some did not. The emphasis was on loving and attending to each other without any focus on climaxes. The next day, they met together and assessed their feelings and thoughts about the encounter. Everyone seemed to feel positive, although there were many repercussions with lovers, friends, and others not included. Later there was some correspondence, but on the whole this group was like any other with the people not meeting again as a group for sex.

Sativa and I (who were excluded but impressed with the possibilities of such a group) along with Paul tried getting similar groups going. We talked at great length about the Madison experience, and we brought the idea to our consciousness-raising group in Boston. Since we were all in the same group, we were able to convince three others to go along with us in an encounter--although one person was not well and had to leave early. It was the middle of winter, and we huddled up together under a sleeping bag. Generally, we enjoyed ourselves, but like so many group situations, we never tried it again.

We later talked about what had happened, but that seemed to make us even less eager to try it again.

Group sex could theoretically alleviate the problems within a group which arise from different degrees of love among the members. Internal jealousies could be overcome by everyone's possessing everyone else, having everyone physically loving everyone. Two people having sex is usually very exclusionary. It may be very ecstatic, free and pleasurable for the two people, but the very ecstasy of the two only heightens the being-left-out feeling of those not included. Within a group exclusiveness is more easily overcome because more people are included and fewer are left out. The group itself does not, of course, immediately make everyone equal. One member may be more loveable, another better looking, another a better cook, another verbally more astute, another mechanically gifted, another more musical, another more contemplative, another more sensuous. Such human diversity should only increase the possibilities for pleasure and harmonious life. Everyone could share and learn from everyone else.

Diversities don't seem to pose so much a difficulty for group marriages as a possessiveness similar to that between couples. Members of a group come to consider each other their property in much the way couples do and with many of the same difficulties. You are not now only owned by (or responsible to) one lover, you are tied to a whole series or people, all of whom have a stake in your life, and you in theirs. And as with an individual couple, inclusiveness within breeds exclusiveness without. Those outside your group are by definition in some way excluded. They cannot share your life to the same degree. So you might have a happy circle of friends and lovers, but if you are not in that circle, your life is so much the worse. Nonetheless, I would hope that the broadening of experience in group living would enlarge us all, would allow fluidity between groups and could provide ways to transcend the existing limits of existing faggot relationships.

One prime area in which group sex could be beneficial is in breaking down the barrier between love fantasies and the "real" world. Most faggots suffer this dichotomy between those they respect, know, work with, and meet socially on one side and those they get sexually excited by, idolize, use for masturbatory fantasies on the other side. Part of this comes from the fact that all too often familiarity breeds contempt; part from the desire for novelty. More deeply it comes from the way advertising and capitalist consumer society methods bait us with impossible visions of beauty, fulfillment and reality. Nobody can ever be the Marlboro man (God forbid!); None of us can equal Mick Jagger. Yet we are lured to look for such an ideal.

Not being able to satisfy our fantasies, we have to settle for Wheaties, Crackerjacks, Pontiacs, tar with nicotine, dangerous detergents, cat food, beer and lots of other consumer items. (Faggots can be notorious for keeping up with consumer trends, constantly buying things.)

The only escape we can find from this treadmill is through encircling ourselves with real people. One person can never break out of the false values of consumer sexuality and consumption; only a group of people who can relate to each other as real sexual comrades. What group sex might be able to do is create a whole new way of loving in which the real people we know we can become will be the objects of our fantasies! Feeling and loving those we know intimately well might become the touchstone to real sexual ecstasy and freedom. We might find new ways of being sensual. We might find "satisfaction." At the moment our libidinal lives are totally individualized and isolated: one faggot sees another who looks like a cracker jack or other toy hero and the lingam goes stiff. What would it be like if our lingams would only arise when we all linked arms?



"COMING OUT"

a review

If Tennessee Williams has not found homosexuality to be a suitable topic for a full length play, his heterosexual contemporaries have been much less particular about just what makes for good theater. For them, homosexuality has become a legitimate area of exploration so that Broadway theater audiences may now laugh away at the eccentricities of faggots or bathe in the cynicism and illusion that surround queers created by the pens of heterosexuals. For those of us who have seen or read about "Boys in the Band," "Butley," "And Puppy Dog Tails," and "Is That You, Norman?" there is a great sense of relief in experiencing "Coming Out!" -- a play about homosexuality written, produced, directed and performed by lesbians and faggots.

"Coming Out!", written by Jonathan Katz, was first produced in New York at the Gay Activists Alliance Firehouse on June 16, 1972. Nick Deutsch produced and directed it in Boston at Harvard, the Charles St. Meetinghouse, and Emerson College, for a total of 10 performances.

The play consisted of a number of independent sketches: journalistic accounts of events some of us have lived through, live readings of articles that by now have become classics, and accounts of people and historical incidents researched, I assume, by Katz.

As its title suggests, the play deals with the two pillars of homosexual existence: the pain and suffering of closet life and the liberation of coming out. Moving from incidents that occurred as early as 1629, up through Feb. 1973, the play documents ill-fated love affairs, trials for sodomy, public scandals and the underworld that homosexuals have been forced to inhabit in this country for so long. Balanced against this pain are accounts of fulfilling love relationships, courageous and spontaneous acts of affirmation, and irony that takes sexism as its target.

One of the most appealing aspects of the play, as Stuart Byron has pointed out, is a sense of history that has been seriously lacking for homosexuals in this country. Those same scholars, film-makers and other media freaks who would have us believe that American Indians did little but run around with feathers in their hair before the White Man came, and then did nothing but get drunk and shoot one another after he came; who would leave us with the impression that the only contribution blacks made to this country was pea-

nut oil; these people have chosen to ignore a very important part of our history.

Katz's play exposes a whole new world, one whose vastness has yet to be discovered. We have still to learn the real truth about Willa Cather, Emily Dickinson and other well known figures whose homosexuality was as much a part of their life and work as ours is for us.

In one scene, Katz presents a trial in the Massachusetts Bay Colony involving several men accused of sodomy shortly after arriving on the Mayflower. As the sketch shows, faggotry in this country was born in suffering. Coming out, or even living alone, was a luxury that early settlers were not afforded; in fact, some colonies imposed penalties on those who were not married by a certain age.

Women were first introduced into the continent for the purpose of producing populations for newly founded settlements, a situation hardly conducive to lesbian relationships. It wasn't until the early 19th century that certain privileged people were afforded the freedom of movement which enabled them to live alone, working where, and as, they pleased.

"Coming Out!" displays some fascinating accounts of lesbians who managed to break out of their confining situations, disguising themselves as men in order to work in steel mills, on the railroad, etc. Later, when the country's economy was capable of supporting sub-cultures, underworlds, and marginal populations, homosexuals were able to express themselves more freely, if only under the most clandestine circumstances.

The play includes a brief visit to a transvestite bar and sets the stage for an act of courage prededing STAR's (Street Transvestites Action Revolutionaries) Stonewall action by nearly one hundred years.

The overwhelming impression this history of homosexuals creates, onstage and off, is one of incredible resourcefulness, courage, and creativity. And for that we are proud. One of the proudest moments of the play is the enactment of the first Gay Pride March and Gay-In in New York City, June 1971. It is as though the play -- presenting the years of torment of so many individuals, yet ending on such a positive, affirmative tone -- projects in just two hours the catharsis of the past 3 years that we have all lived through together.

(continued on page 17)

NATURAL IDIOT

You are no Lothario
Despite the dramaturgy
penned between the thighs
The delicious fence,
The penal ties.
The exscaping sighs
there to keep the beat,
For left alone you are a menace.
Against the amatory light
cast by
Someone's bathroom-place-to-run-to
You may have thought your bodies
Fit well together
(the image may have helped you)
But I have heard the other side
And their hearts
Were obsolete
Before you tethered your crotch there.

--K. Wainwright

SHORT LETTER: FOR M.

what can i say to you? nothing.
i nurture a sticky silence,
and turn to a simpler language.
i water my plants.

my life grows more solid without you.
i am concentric, a shell.
i wrap one word around another
until opaque, i rebuild a memory.

i watch my plants grow, adding cells.
how do they thrive on so little?
water and light. some days
i remember with pain.

i miss you. i can say that.

--David Eberly

Everyone is ready for a poet of opium and drugs. (After all, Confessions of an Opium Eater is a perennial favorite.) Insanity is also quite in style; some peoples have even made their visionaries shamans. Robert Lowell is always teetering at the brink. John Berryman jumped over to the other side. Suicide, insanity, despair, drugs--La sottise, l'erreur, le peche, la lesine--these are the lifeblood of "modern" poesy.

But cocksucking? People (especially menpeople) are not so comfortable about The Poet As Pervert. Rimbaud, Verlaine, Whitman, Lorca, Shakespeare, etc., notwithstanding, there are several ways of trivializing the faggot-poet's soul when his existence is too strong to be denied.

You can say: Oh, how cute! Our favorite perversion--John Wieners. As though cocksucking were a phenomenon so far removed from YOU that you are only an observer, an historian, like reading in college about the Trojan War (as opposed to Homer, not to mention Sappho).

Or you can say: How noble! He creates beauty out of such a dung heap of hideous sorrow and malignancy. Who'd ever think anyone could find beauty and love in such sordid material? But, thank god, he's lifted himself out of that sickening world with his poetry. Now we can teach him at Harvard!

Or you can say: His sexual life is insignificant. It's his poetry that counts! What he does in bed is not important. He's a MAN, a great POET; forget all that faggot queer stuff. He's respectable enough. Don't mention that awful private life he leads--it's in bad taste to talk about such things.

All this is high comedy to me as a fellow faggot/poet. If you say I'm a faggot in a poem, out comes pontifical Norman Podhoretz in his black leather boots, jacket and chains to say (as he did about Ginsberg) that you're an exhibitionist, you can't be a poet. Or you can hide in your closet like W. H. Auden, write "porno" poems and save your eternal thoughts for the church, collected works and prize committees.

John Wieners bypasses all this and brings gayness out so that no one can dismiss it. He's simply followed the advice of such great poets as Williams/Pound/Olson & Co. First of all, report exactly what you find at hand, what you actually see, your world. ("I would be an historian as Herodotus was, looking for oneself for the evidence of what is said..." Letter 23). Secondly, report it in your own voice, your own language, your own song.

John travels right off from his world of cocksucking, gay bars, Greta Garbo, Johns, bushes, lovers, Judy Garland records, Mae West, Billie Holiday, Marilyn Monroe, and from himself into his poetry. ("A poem is energy transferred from where the poet got it. He will have several cautions, by the way of the poem itself to, all the way over to, the reader," sd. Olson.)

One can no more dismiss the gay part of John's poetry by saying it's insignificant than dismiss Gloucester by saying it's only a minor artifact in the Maximus Poems. As an exercise, one could scan all the Olson commentary (now becoming nearly as monumental as the man himself) and substitute "cocksucking" for "Gloucester." Or go to the beginning of this article and substitute "Gloucester/Olson" for "cocksucking/Wieners."

You get the idea. The quality is different. People can accept Gloucester without BLOCKADES to understanding, except for its being there. (The only danger in Gloucester is that "students" will become archaeologists of Cape Ann trivia instead of morning.)

I would sing C. Olson's "The Lordly and Isolate Satyrs" to John Wieners and the gay Carnival crowd as Olson sang it to his motorcycle club:



THE WILD TULIP SHALL OUTLAST THE PRISON WALL

by Charley Shively

Hail them and watch out. The rest of us, on the beach as we had previously known it, did not know there was this left side. As they came riding in from the sea --we did not notice them until they were already creating the beach we had known was there--but we assume they came in from the sea. We assume that. We don't know.

In any case the whole sea was now a hemisphere, and our eyes like half a fly's, we saw twice as much. Everything opened, even if the newcomers just sat, didn't for an instant, pay us any attention. We were as we had been, in that respect. We were as usual, the children were being fed pop on a beach. Something had happened but the change wasn't at all evident. A few drops of rain would have made more of a disturbance.

We look at them and begin to know. We begin to see who they are. We see why they are satyrs, and why one half of the beach was unknown to us. And now that it is known, now that the beach goes all the way to the headland we thought we were huddling ourselves up against, it turns out it is the same. It is beach. The Visitors--Resters--who, by being there, made manifest what we had not known--that the beach fronted wholly to the sea--have only done that, completed the beach.

The difference is

we are more on it.

The Loneliness

It is so sad
It is so lonely
I felt younger after doing him,
and when I looked in the mirror
my hair was rumpled.

I smoothed it
and rooted for someone else
or wanted to satisfy myself,
Almost seven,
No hope left.

How can a man have pride
without a wife.

I spit him out on the floor.
Immensely relieved
After ejaculating
Imagining myself up my lover's ass
he coming by himself.

Looking out the window, for no reason
except to soothe myself
I shall go to the bookstore
And pretend nothing happened.
Enormously gratified.

Feeling like a girl
stinking beneath my clothes.

--John Wieners

(continued on page 14)

continental drift

I. Outside

a poodle
eats vanilla ice cream
on West 74th Street
 you've got money
 counting corners
 downtown buses
a wedding
poka dotted
 and he asks
 can I be your friend
 novacaine's wearing off
I lied to you
I don't live in Brooklyn
Hotel Manhattan
 I belted a man
 two teeth stuck
 in my hand
I've been to two hospitals
 wet plaster
 St. Vincent's
 wanta buy two steaks
 No, I'm vegetarian
 that's not what I meant
nobody knows why
MGs have horns
or hotels locks
 Everyone explains
 their dog's behaviour
 by walking
 please clean up after
 every appeal exhausted
 still they live on
still they struggle
still they remember
still they love
they still try
 not to say
 or float

II. Inside

lap into lap
lips every
swaying towel
surfacing skin
hallway to mirror
lamp to moth
halfway toes teeth
grisel folded
in mathematical
mouths of rivers
liberation runs
libidiously melds
mellow grass
in halfhallways
skin covering
pupice diction
kissed away in
soft sucks of
undertow swimming
waters, talons
teeth spaced
two by four
oral fitted
stones in fixtures
snores in silence.

--Charley Shively

SEMINARY SEX

by Dan Kiefer

One night he just up and got in bed with me.

Imagine being awakened half through your sleep by the sound and sight of his sleek brown chest against your sheets. Perhaps it seems as natural as sand to you now. But then, and in that school, at our age!

Sure we had a game to cover with. I had boasted and braved (too loudly) about my sleeping naked. He said he had only come in to see. But, Jesus, come right in to see!

I didn't really worry then, "What if we get caught." Later, yes, when my Father Confessor, all comfy in the red-leather-chaired parlor, brushing pipe ash from the skirt of his habit, asked in careful alarm, "What if Father Disciplinarian had come through on a routine check?" At 3 AM? But then I flashed: the sweeping, biting-bright beam of his long, long flashlight combing the room like a beacon; weeding, panning 'til he caught the glint of our two bodies against each other. Then the real horrors start, whether screams or beatings or forced marches before everyone called from dreams to jeer. And the next morning, secret faculty conferences behind cloister doors, gossiping in the terrazzo halls, calls to our parents, lockers emptied in disgrace.

No one would ask me had I been asleep or eager, had I turned burrowing away from him or clasped him to me.

For I did turn from him, chaste as I was in my white underwear. Turned from him in scalding fear. I was afraid to touch his warm skin and his hard dark nipples. Perhaps I liked them better in fantasy. (In fantasy there are no repercussions, I thought then.) But here in this top bunk bed next to the cold window, if I touch him he might touch me back, and then where would we be? Then how would we feel?

Certainly we had no notion what our cocks were for besides pissing. But Christ Jesus, every stupid little kid knew this was sex: he in my bed, our wanting to touch. And, if not really Sex in all its conjugal glory, at least Wrong. Wrong, God knows. Sinful. I was scared to death to touch him.

So I tried to get him to touch me.

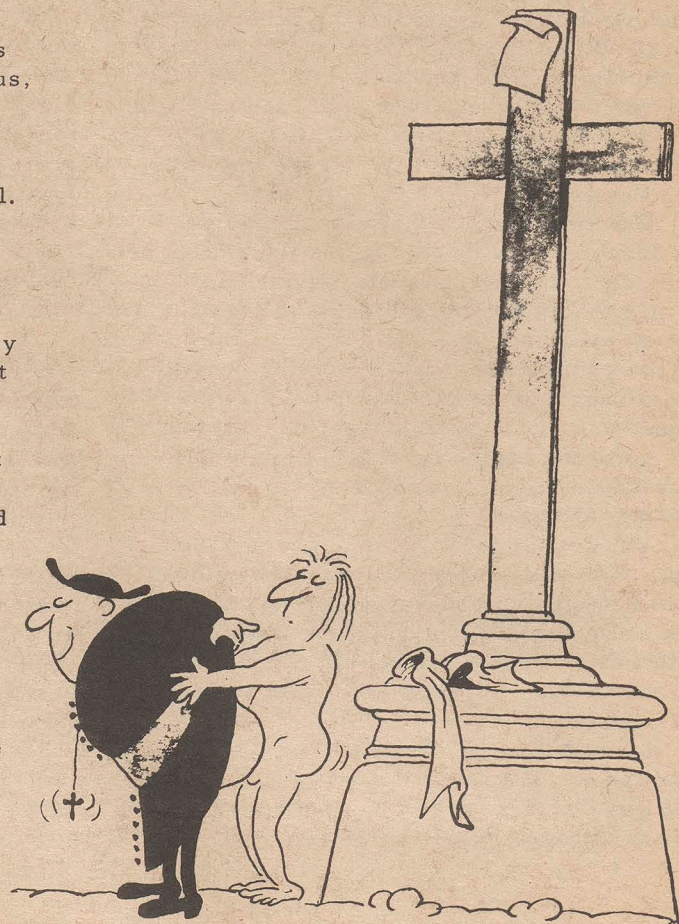
I scooted to the edge of the bed, turned my back on him and told him of course I don't have any clothes on. (Take yours off too, and stand up high in the red exit-sign light so I can stare and stare and stare at your body. At the roundings of your breast and the planes of your stomach and the lie and lift of your cock and the lanky muscles of your thighs and the nestling of the small of your back. Do not blush. Wrestle me out then. Reach for my genitals and play them like strings. Hold my chest smack against yours. Crush my bones. Take me by storm.) "I told you I don't have any clothes on. Now you better get out of here." (Don't go. Never think of going. Stay here in my bed. Please. Make me. I'm scared.)



But he knew my tricks. Or tired of them. He didn't want the blame any more than I. He didn't want to sit sweating on that red leather hot seat and admit playing with another kid in bed. At night, 'Til we came, first one by mistake and then the other rapidly after. He didn't want to sit under the flourescent light at breakfast and put canned fruit cocktail in his masonite bowl and reach for a napkin thinking, "I did a dirty thing last night."

Who could blame him.

Oh, years later there was a different boy who came into my room (we had rooms by then) and locked my door and seduced me. But I'm talking now of the high school seminary, with 48 bunk beds in one huge room. Full of tender boys, fearful and friendly, with still-smooth crotches and tight waists. We sure missed our chance then. We used to complain about the skimpy food and the stupid rules. But we didn't even know 'til much later, until now, how clubbed we were.





mentalia cognition

& mercedes ignition

blood sisters in silver
-trimmed velvet

red hung with families
of toothy bottom-up bats
tiny skilled claws
leave red retching--
mercedes hissing
soft mercy cries

mentalia in saturnine plated threads

advances to amaranth
retreats in blue
smoulders at length
behind smoky green haze

black pupils black depths
calculating the time to arise
to an early toilette
to bare his legs
but not his dark face
shoulders drifting in silky black waves
lost in lathered coral

strength learning mystery
knows rouge proves true

sweet lips compress soft
passion almost sneers
and moans pretty to warm

mercedes of metal-flake
lashes and heels

encircling the street
in chic tones and sparks

cat bodies delight in veils
not sight

velvet come to me mercy
your pretty boy blonde

ruby sharp kiss me now slivers

--Diedre Phelps

1972-73, now that drugs and their addicts' debris have left the scene, a new purity has hit life after dark. No more all-night rooting in the garbage. The parks are clear and the music cabarets are clean. Strangely enough this decade, it seems that the avant-garde homophiles; before in the 50's and 60's there was never such a thing, except in isolated cases, have adopted exemplar mores.

Gays sprout beards, around the vulva of a mouth, this can be quite exciting, and it also makes appear that effeminists are more manly. Their garb is rough. You can't tell a straight from a lady, and cruising promenades teem to capacity with the style and accoutrement of the far-out renegade and cool beat. These attitudes were to the exception and in the minority after sundown in the late 50's.

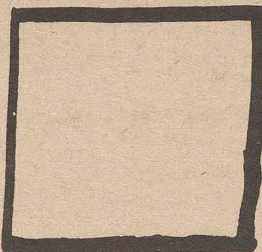
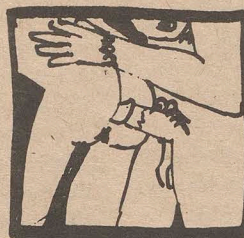
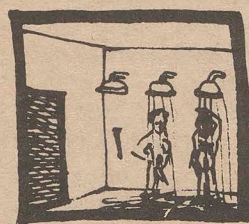
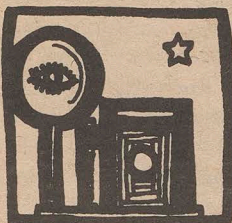
It seems a period of new experimentation and confidence and excitement has broken on the shore of our sexual "minority." Guitars get the attention of the male torso, and with the unleashing of an unconscious that the so-called "sexual deviate" inherits, and which by nature has been subjugated for three thousand years, who knows the telling where it may lead to.

Boys now dress in the clothes of their male idols, making them stand up to any butch competition. Homophile movements grow strong and proliferate weekly, without any advertisement, some out of a common need.

Drugs were dangerous. They leveled the ranks of the post-beat generation, some it was pointed out dispensed by fascist doctors to decimate the young. Terrorizing and terrified bands of youth swept over the boulevard and through the ghetto areas of New York, San Francisco and Boston.

Now that seems mainly over. We have survived, Simon and Garfunkel, and Allen Ginsberg and Fidel Castro. That seems good and we welcome the chance to come into our own, to take our place, as adults, politically potential, and emotionally capable, if not this decade perhaps after Orwellian 1984 ends, and the American Revolution leaves us unvanquished, able to take our place as victor and heroes, beside our competent, newly-trained lovers.

--John Wieners



After the Orgasm

Aw, what is fame, is it
worth it, that people should know your name
when you have a loveless shame

the taxi-driver last night, "Do we have a celebrity
with us?" and the only thing that helps
is to think of the others who haven't made it.

At least at this time. We sit around behind
grey window frames, and when it comes,
we'll know we worked hard for it

every priceless moment. Now listening to torch songs,
we dream of those revered days,
as if we haven't enough of it now

when our flesh shall be old,
and the young bodies shall mean the universe for us,
only to find it's some worthless punk who ends up in your arms.

--John Wieners



(continued from page 11)

John's position here vis-a-vis the Olsonians emerges clearly in a short piece called WOMAN, which he did in the series "A CURRICULUM OF THE SOUL." This curriculum-pamphlet series comes from an outline of Olson's for a curriculum of the soul. Various poets have each taken a word from the outline (talk about nominatives!) and written a pamphlet. In the list of available and projected word/works, there is not a single woman author; the whole curriculum is to be run by men. But the word/world "woman" was in Olson's outline, so they gave it to the most obvious faggot, the one who wrote "a poem for cock-suckers."

Let the fag do the dishes when there's no woman in the house.

So, John "Working without guidelines here, I abjectly suspicion retrograde aspersions as to why I do not accept this Assignment as an insult..." but he doesn't; the anima of Frank O'Hara hovers over the work. "Frank O'Hara could not attend. Even I had to borrow a \$1000, still unpaid, to reach the Festival." It's Camp-town time in the valley & John lays it on for the dullards sucking their pop bottles on the other side of the beach; and more seriously conspires "alone to return glamor and excitement out of the tedium, apparent in some monotonous tasks, they /women, we/ must undertake."

And the illuminated satyr lordly and isolate in his assignment takes it into the streets: "in closing I announce Rose Kennedy and Jacqueline Onassis as tantamount heroines to survive the dinginess of ugly politicians who drink and brawl at others' expenses." John did not just write, render trivial his world. On April Fool's Day, 1971, shortly after finishing WOMAN, he became Rose Kennedy/ was Rose Kennedy: a play on words few Olsonian lines can become. He was swiftly arrested at Boston's Logan Airport by "the dinginess of politicians" and imprisoned for several months until he could convince the "national leadership, stretching out of D. C. to B. C." that he was a man, that he was only joking, that he could be trusted to "pass" into the men's world. His Selected Poems came off the press while he was still incarcerated in the Taunton State Hospital.

What the airport, the police, the doctors and so much of the world abjures and cannot stand is any form of feminine identification in men (or in women really; there are few places for a "woman identified woman," even fewer for a "woman identified man"). That is why many men find John's poetry "difficult"; they can't comprehend this feminine sensibility.

The woman identification has many parts. For instance in music, John's imagination has always been fueled by women blues singers: Judy Garland and Billie Holiday of course, but also less well knowns like Ruth Etting, Helen Morgan, Mildred Bailey, Carmen McRae, Dakota Station and a host of others. His sensibility follows their perceptions with echoes and bits of their songs throughout his poetry.

And among schoolday poets, Edna Millay came first followed by Emily Dickinson and H. D. He was weaned as a poet on women's verses, not Vachel Lindsay, T. S. Eliot, or Ezra Pound or any other among the tromping troubadours.

Finally, we have the movie stars: Greta Garbo, Marilyn Monroe, Marlene Dietrich, Lana Turner and Elizabeth Taylor to name a few.

John must have read every movie magazine (and there are millions) ever published, lingering on the curious gossip and lingerie of Hollywood like a buggy eyed teenage lover. Yet he sees more, in the movies than might be immediately transparent. He has off and on through the years written his unique movie reviews and commentaries. For instance, April 1, 1962 in FLOATING BEAR: in a "Dear Billy," letter John writes, "Elizabeth Taylor farted incessantly during the Paris premiere of LAWRENCE OF ARABIA, creating such a stench that Richard Burton, her escort, often was obliged to hold his nose. This gave some members of the audience (seated beyond Miss Taylor's immediate vicinity) the impression that Burton disliked the picture. His actual opinion isn't known, but when they asked Liz how she had enjoyed herself, she replied, 'There was a lovely sunset at the end, and I think there was one at the beginning, too.'" This is more than burlesque Louella Parsons; it reveals John at the heart of his material, while all the time hovering over it, distanced, floating beyond the turnips in their loamy soil.

From Susan Sontag we should all know about "Camp," and through Andy Warhol be familiar with its vagaries. John was close to this experience. Gerry Malanga, sometime Warhol ex-superstar, for instance, did the cover and illustration for his book Nerves. And there are similarities in Wieners' and Warhol's utilizations of movie stars, singers and fan magazines. But the differences between the two are more than the differences between a plastic artist and a poet.

Besides being slightly pasty and solemn, Warhol has been caught up in the mass

media network he had evidently sought to exploit (ah, the hunter & hunted joined?). In a new underground magazine called MANIFEST DESTINY, John recently wrote about Warhol. "You've got to hand it to the master charlatan of a decade ago. He's got yearning Beverly Hillbillies' avant-garde eating out of his yard... What is sold's a cheap capitalization of mass-media and inherited truth without even stereotyped attention from genius." This "attention" makes all the necessary difference between being "cute," chic or fashionable and being a poet. ATTENTION is key here, a basic-- it doesn't mean solemnity but it does mean CARE, care as caritas and care as caution and care as watching. Attencion!

John brings a light purity, passion and love out of "Camp" sensibility. He loves his material even as he reweaves it, and without that love you have no soul. "Morgana La Fay" from Nerves is a fine example:

The return of
again is it
love we look, not
nearly so, only

the absolute inde-
prudence of youth, in
expectation, despite
Charles Dickens.

The first time going to the museum
alone, on to the library
walking Newbury Street after
the rain, and dining out,

visiting New York City on the late evening
trains. These things she thought
as the rain pelted the
trees on Long Island during the day,

and bumped into F. Scott
Fitzgerald, how he lives still
and his Long Island, always the place
to return, trembling alone

his and Zelda's Babylon
at Christmas, now living in a motel, this
evocation
contained in the embrace of phantom love,
and
to slip a peg, Lester Young by Times
Square

Finally and obviously the immense quality of love (care) in John's commitment to people, life, the world, everything around him is everywhere evident, as in "Morgana La Fay." Although I see nothing wrong in despair, I don't see John as a poet of despair. In a FUCK YOU anthology on despair, Harry Fainlight wrote, "The despair market is already cornered/ Wieners has got it sewn up tight as.../"

But the subjects John treats that might seem desperate to the straight audience, mass media, university don or suburban family poet are not maudlin when rendered into poetry by John Wieners. His objects are not objects of pity or onus to either himself or his audience. They are not subjective objects, personal misfortunes (as say in Denise Levertov's anti-war poems); they are objects of poetry/eternity.

No, the wild tulip shall outlast the
prison wall
no matter what grows within.

The Boy Who Spoke In Pornography

a fantasy by J. C. Mitzel



"Bring in the defendant!"

Tom was led into the courtroom, his black leather jacket open, swaying with his step. His T-shirt was soiled, his well-worn denim pants tucked into the tops of his glossy motorcycle boots. He was escorted on one side by his attorney, on the other side by a burly security guard.

The District Attorney chuckled, evidently pleased with the prospect of such an easy score.

"There he is, Your Honor, the man charged with and, as we shall prove, guilty of these heinous offenses."

The Assistant District Attorney, a small man wearing two-tone rims on his glasses, unrolled a motion picture screen to the side of the courtroom. Court attendants drew the shades. The D. A. was operating the projector.

"In this film clip, we shall see the defendant first indulging his vice, a step which led him into a life of crime and perversion."

The lights dimmed. An image flickered on screen: Tom entering a leather S&M bar. The sound crackled with muted laughter, the clinking of beer bottles, the shuffling of boots. Tom purchased a beer.

"This is one of the more notorious places in town," the D. A. noted for the benefit of the Court. "Mob-run and patronized by degenerates. You can see how easily the defendant makes his desperate contacts."

A blond man appears on screen.

"I'd like to chain you to the floor and make you lick my boots," he snorted at Tom. "I want to make you crawl and beg."

Tom nodded.

"Don't just nod. Say: YES SIR! BIND ME AND MAKE ME SERVE YOUR PLEASURE!"

"SIR! HANDCUFF ME AND MAKE ME YOUR SEX SLAVE!"

"Right."

"Lights, please! There. You have seen how easily the accused assumed his anti-social ways. With no resistance on his part, he was initiated into this illicit fraternity of sin. He showed no moral fiber whatsoever."

Tom leaped from his chair. "You cocksucker! Give me a chance to shove my swollen prick up your submissive ass, grind my balls into your thick, hairy thighs..."

Guards rushed him and slammed him back into his seat.

"Get on your knees, you whimpering trade, and let a real stud strap you to a bed!" he railed against them. "Pull the come from my loins and lick each pearly drop across your passive, masochistic lips."

They gagged him.

Lorraine was a nervous witness. She twitched and turned on the stand even before saying a word.

"Not content to vent his criminal passions with his own kind, the defendant assaulted innocent women. Lorraine here was one of his unfortunate victims. Would you tell us about it, Lorraine? Don't be frightened. The defendant has been restrained and can no longer hurt you."

Lorraine tried not to look at Tom, but as she spoke she kept glancing his way until her eyes were fixed on him.

"I was shamed! I was on a date with Seymour that night. We were on the subway. He came right up to us. Don't ask me why. Neither of us knew what to do."

"By he you mean the defendant?"

"Yes, him!" she exploded, pointing.

"Continue."

"He said some of the filthiest things I've ever heard anyone say."

"Do you remember what they were?"

"Of course! How could I forget such insults?"

"Would you repeat them for the Court, please?"

Lorraine blushed. "Must I?"

"It's necessary, I'm afraid, if you want to help prevent other young women from falling victim to your horrible fate."

"Very well," she sighed, swallowing air. "He went up to Seymour, put his hand on his fly and asked: 'Do you like to fuck?' Then he turned on me." Lorraine closed her eyes tightly. "'Nice tits on you girl. Ever let anyone rub his tongue across your nipples until they get hard? Ever tie guys up and make them pluck pubic hairs from your pussy with their teeth?'" Lorraine paused.

"Anything else?"

"Yes. He said he wanted me to push a breast up his anus. He said he wanted me to be nursing so it would be like I could orgasm in his cavity. But he didn't use those words. He was much cruder."

Lorraine burst into tears.

"That's enough, Lorraine. Thank you very much. You may step down."

Every head in the courtroom stared at Tom in horrified silence.

"My client would like to speak," said the defense attorney.

His Honor responded: "It would seem that your client has already done more than his share of speaking. If you haven't been following the drift of the trial, that appears to be the central issue; the defendant talks too much. Your request is denied."

If there remained any who refused to believe the case was sewn up for the prosecution, the clincher came when an ex-degenerate, newly converted to normalcy, took the stand to give testimony against his former acquaintance. He wore a dark nylon stocking over his head to mask his identity, a rather usual procedure to which the judge had acquiesced, saying, with ministerial authority: "Inasmuch as this young man is trying to overcome his perverted past, I feel obliged to assist him as far as possible on the road to recovery. He has volunteered to testify, after all, not pose for pictures."

The D. A. set the tone.

We ask the indulgence of the Court. What you are about to hear is truly shocking, beyond the ken of normal citizens. Our witness is going to take us with him on a voyage into that nether world of miscreants, a world of verbal abuse and perversions, a twi-light

world even God in all his mercy disavows.

"Do you know the defendant?"

"Yes sir. I have known him."

"Would you tell the Court how you met?"

"Certainly. I was still caught up in the tentacles of my criminal passion then. In my uncontrollable animal madness, I was driven to seek out a specific hangout where others who shared my handicaps met. Even recalling it now makes my stomach quiver. How could anyone fall so low?"

"We understand. Please continue."

"The defendant was there. Through the dim light of the jukebox, our eyes met and locked. He approached me. I repeat: it was he who approached me. He rubbed his hand on my rear end. 'You should spread those waiting cheeks and let me violate your pink little asshole with my manly dick.' I was stunned, though I must admit that something within me tingled."

"If I may, I would like to offer into evidence this photo taken at that very moment in the bar. It shows the defendant with his hand in the witness's leather pants. You will take special notice that the defendant's mouth is open. He was photographed in the process of talking pornography! Did you leave the bar with the accused?"

"Yes, I did."

"And where did you go?"

"We returned to my place where we completed our illegal acts."

"What is this recorded tape I am holding up before the Court?"

"That is a tape I made of my encounter with the defendant. It's a tape of how he humiliated me."

"May I play it for the Court?"

"Be my guest."

The prosecutor slipped the tape cartridge in a player and turned up the volume. There were unidentifiable sounds at first.

"This is where I am undressing," explained the witness.

"Down on your knees, shithead!" Tom shouted off the tape, followed by the sound of leather cracking against flesh.

"Lick my prick. Rub your hot tongue along the sides until I get hard... there... that's a good slave... DID I TELL YOU TO SUCK IT YET?... just LICK it, WORM!... that's right... now you can go down on it... take my sweetening prick into that wet mouth of yours and earn your submissiveness... glide up and down on it... press your soft tongue and lips against the fire in the head... lubricate your lips with the clear, sticky gism that leaks out... there... put your hands under my boots... palms up!... let me stand on them... feel the pain... keep sucking!... don't you love it... feel that pain run through your hands as my prick beats against the back of your throat... suck faster, slave... faster... FASTER!!!!... AAAHHH!!!!... aaahhh... ah."

The D. A. switched off the machine.

"I think we've heard enough."

The spectators in the courtroom, those who hadn't held their hands over their ears and closed their eyes, were nodding in agreement with the D. A. Everyone had had enough.

"And would you testify that the voice on the tape was that of the defendant?"

(continued on page 16)

(continued from page 15)

"It was. But that was just the prelude. It gets much worse."

The prosecutor turned his back on the witness, smiled, and walked back to his table.

There wasn't much of a defense. How could there be? Tom had been appalled, from the moment of his arrest, that any group of people should even consider it their domain to judge him publicly.

The defense attorney addressed the bench.

"Your Honor, there is not much for me to say, really. My client would prefer to speak for himself, but there he sits, bound and gagged..."

"And in a state of physical arousal, I might add," noted the eager Assistant D. A., directing the Court's attention to the readily visible outline of the defendant's erection.

"Touch it, scumface! Pull my prick!" the Court heard Tom cry through his gag, writhing his hips in an agonized plea.

"Silence!" gavelled His Honor. "This Court notices with severe disapproval that the accused seems to find physical excitement in his condition during these proceedings. This attitude borders on contempt."

"I ask the Court for compassion. My client was always regarded as a nice, middle class Jewish boy. At most, he has a few personal idiosyncracies, but each of us does. He mixed with the best company. But with the purchase of his leather jacket and his other accessories, his life somehow changed. It was almost as though he had gained entrance into a sub-culture where pornography was the patois. He has instructed me to read this brief statement for him: 'Until recently I never spoke pornography in my life. I never dreamed I could. But once I tried, it was the easiest thing to do in the world. Now I can't control it. Nor do I desire to. It's what I feel like saying. It's what most people I meet in this life need to have said to them.'" The attorney refolded the statement, leaving the final remarks unread in order not to antagonize the Court further. Avoiding the verdict in everybody's eyes, he returned to his seat.

No one assumed there could be any plea bargaining. This was nor ordinary crime of physical violence, passion murder, drug trafficking. No, this was a direct assault on the morals of the community, an attack on the sacred spirit of society. There could be no compromise with immorality.

When Tom was brought into the courtroom on the final day of the trial to be judged and sentenced, his lawyer was by his side whispering at him intensely. When His Honor entered, Tom was unstrapped from his chair and made to stand.

"I must preface the verdict in this case with some of my own observations about the proceedings. In over thirty-eight years in public service on this bench, no case has so thoroughly disgusted me as has this one. We have heard and seen testimony in this courtroom which described behavior no part of the Constitution can sanction or condone. We have before us a defendant who is not only very probably carrying some sort of communicable social disease, but a man who suffers a disease of the mind as well. To plead illness is not, however, an excuse for his crimes. I wish I could honestly believe that such things did not exist. But they do. And we must deal with them. We must make a strong and united fight to guarantee that no threat such as this one will ever have the chance to poison our social organism."

Under continual prodding all through this speech, Tom finally consented to the recommendations of his lawyer. He nodded, went limp, and appeared to give up. He had buckled under. But the niggling had reached His Honor's ears.

"Counsel for the defense! What is the matter?" boomed the judge.

"Your Honor, if I may..." The defense attorney walked up to the bench and spoke to the judge in soft tones.

Candle

My room
rug red on the floor
black night thru the windows
the air a sifting net
floats down down down
in quiet
finality
And on the bed we bristle and burst into flame.

What makes you think it's over?

As we weave in and out
nearer and farther
you stretch out your hand
I stretch out mine.
The smile on your face is taut.
I think, what is he afraid of?
I think, what is there to fear?
But I know the fear,
and I think I know the reason.

As we weave in and out
nearer and farther
you hold my hand
I hold yours.
The smiles on our faces are shy.
But so sweet.
I think nothing.

Song of Singing

I remember when I saw you
and it was all I could do not to run up to you and kiss you
You wore a white shirt
and I watched it unbutton as you moved.
Then there was music and we moved very fast
Around, away, back and towards
we circled each other like wistful snakes,
like sweet spiders we wove soft glistening strands
and stood in the middle together.
Completely together we were.
And at that moment I felt there was no presence beyond us
and no difference between us.

"This is all very unusual, but if you think it'll work. The defense has just asked for a recess and I shall grant it. I shall expect to meet with both the prosecution and the defense in my chambers immediately."

The courtroom was abuzz. Journalists ripped themselves from the throng to bolt to phones. Everyone suddenly had to make room for the unexpected.

Court resumed an hour later. All the principles entered the courtroom wearing smiles. His Honor explained:

"Due to a remarkable change in the defendant's behavior, the defense counsel has asked that the accused be permitted a few minutes to attempt to undo some of the harm and inhumanity he has spread. And as this is not a vengeful Court, we agreed to provide the defendant with an opportunity to redeem himself. Tom?"

Tom entered the courtroom through the judge's entrance.

"Thank you, thank you, Your Honor. In these few seconds I have to wipe my record clean, I'd first like to thank Kerney and Devonshire, clothiers to gentlemen for over seventy-five years, for this handsome ensemble I'm wearing. A contemporary tailored coat bearing homage to manly traditions with subtle stripes on a midnight background. Made with 100% American wool. Co-ordinated slacks in double-weave, wear any-where fashion knit. Slipping out of the jacket, you'll see that during tense courtroom drama I need never fear embarrassment by perspiration stain. My new sanforized, blended cotton with nylon polyester shirt by Phillip Glass has a double-stitch underarm protection against wetness for a man sized perspiration problem. Twin flap button pockets mean luxury and convenience. Sensibly priced for a young man's budget. Shoes by Walenko... unspoken elegance... the soft feel of forever... the luster of Corfam riding atop the durability of sturdy nylon soles. Designed and crafted by American labor. I buy American to save American jobs."

The defense attorney winked at the D. A. who was himself noticeably pleased

FOUR POEMS

to

FOUR MEN --

Arthur Kaplan

Minuet

So it's settled.
We silently solemnly nod to each other
A graceful slow stately dance --
Your step thru here, my circle around there.
I feel the structure like a buoy
lifting me
The pact the agreement the knowledge
gives me strength
gives me joy
O I am so happy in harmony with you

with the turn of events.

"His Honor has asked me to tell the Court my ideas about freedom. Well, Your Honor, freedom means something very special to me. It speaks of all the greatness in our country and in its unique heritage. Freedom is something it is our gift to use, but we must use it wisely. To me, freedom means a cross-country tour of this broad land, across our public Inter-State Highway system in a Pontiac Gran Prix with as much quality in the styling as there is power under the hood. Freedom means spinning off at any exit, in any state, unfettered by borders, guards, and delays, and having a selection of luxurious places to stay: Holiday Inn, Travel Lodge, Quality Courts. Freedom means the good life. Freedom means watching a televised football game on a lazy Sunday afternoon with a six pack of Bud in the refrigerator and a carton of Luckies by your side. Freedom, ultimately, means being a man and being free to do manly things: bowling or playing poker with your pals, taking the kids out to the ball park on a hot summer's day, feeling your heart beat just a little faster when you see the flag pass by."

The crowded courtroom was ignited by this tack. Spontaneous bursts of applause rippled through the galleries. Some whistled, others stamped their feet.

"... a land where freedom is manifest in every shopping center, in every dealer's showroom..."

Tom had come through on his pledge to change. The D. A., rising to speak before the din was impenetrable, said: "Your Honor, the State wishes to drop all charges against the defendant."

The crowd was fired to even greater displays of enthusiasm. Justice had triumphed, the sweetest kind of Justice--that tempered with Wisdom and Mercy. The jubilation was so intense that no one heard Tom finish out his testimony to freedom.

"This offer," he said, "is void where prohibited by law."



(continued from page 10)

COMING OUT!

The message of "Coming Out!" is simple, loud and clear, and it is as appropriate to straight audiences as it is to gay ones. But its simplicity is at once its strength and weakness. For in its limited discussion, much is not really dealt with. For example, the presence of lesbians and faggots on the same stage and in the same sketches seems to indicate they have a good deal in common -- which is the case if you think that coming out is the only, or even the biggest problem that homosexuals have. But much of the material used by lesbians talked about their problems as women, and even quoted Lorraine Hansberry as saying that perhaps the scorn for women in this country is responsible for its homophobia. The question of how male homosexuals relate to this problem -- which, as the women indicated, is a major one for them -- is nowhere dealt with. Somehow, this contradiction mars the impact of moments such as Sue Katz's essay; dulls the tremendous effect of the women reciting in unison from "The Woman-Identified Woman," one of the most powerful moments of the evening.

Another closely related male-dominated characteristic which mars the play is its almost painfully self-conscious effort to portray male homosexuals as normal, ordinary guys. In "Coming Out!" there is little camp -- that art of theatre which is our very own -- and most of the male actors appeared very uncomfortable with the little there was. Perhaps they were no less afraid of femininity than the straight men Sue Katz and Hansberry were talking about.

Criticism, as my friend once said, being the highest form of love, I can only say that I admire the efforts of Jonathan Katz, Nick Deutsch, and the play's cast, and hope that "Coming Out!" is just the beginning of a new voice in a medium that is so old and that secretly has been ours for so very long.

Your skin is warm
like the pink blush of flowers
bowed in deference to their own passing
your cheek is soft and warm
like the sunlight
tracking thru the pines
your chest is taut and supple and soft
your body anointed with warmth
as with flush
as with tender color glowing
beneath the surface a sigh
bubble slowly rises and slowly bursts
slowly
in warmth

it takes me back years
to another country under the same sun
and a woman
I thought I loved her for her body
then I found I didn't want her body
the sun beat on me as I sat reading
Crime and Punishment
I shrank into a whitewashed corner
I fled to rocks and castles
but the sun followed me
imprisoned me in a redhot shell
the smell of sweat of sex of heated flesh
booming around my head
dizzied me
and I ran inside
deeper and deeper inside
into the cool caves
the silent damp recesses

now I have come out
here in the woods with you
the smell is the same
but your tanning body
cat-cradled against my own
feels like an answer
the hollows of your body are pools to drink from
to bathe in
your glistening flesh gives me an image of myself
your eyes reflect green leaves the sky and the white sun
we made love on the ground
and melted in the warmth

Arthur Kaplan

a romance

men live dry on dry land.
we scrape our papered feet across sand
and rasp our scratchy voices out command-
ing empty, whitened life-guard chairs and
row on row of rocks; mar-
shalling armies of salt-white spars.

women live slimy like gleaming fish,
screaming, gliding, lolling, and squish-
ing into black black mud banks,
careening and streaming along each others' flanks
in the flip-slippery, filtered, golden-green, plank-
ton filled light; dark fragrant, dank.

dowse, flush, drown each man a man. clean
and blur, wash and wear out manly deeds.
cover each other over with womanly sea
water, singing, rinsing, wringing, flinging. seal
our dusty mouths, sprout gills. feel
free to live weak, wet, green.

--Dan Kiefer

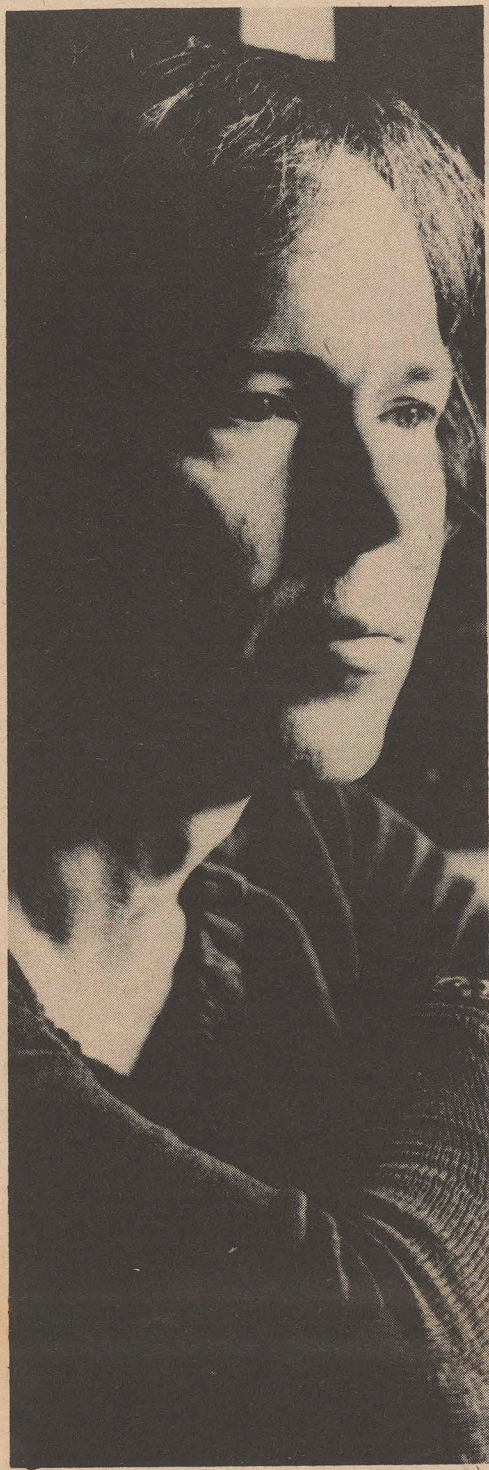


Photo: Eva Rubinstein

Having never been to Majorca

a review of Kenneth Pitchford's

Color Photos of the Atrocities

by Charley Shively

Kenneth Pitchford's poetry surges with passion as gay love sparkles through some hard happy lines. When I first read the "Homosexual Sonnets," I wept in their beauty and tenderness. Sonnet One describes a short moment siezed during a weekend pass; Ken and Bob get soaked in the Seattle Aboretum: "...I kissed your wet lips, our clothes drenched, discarded, / before we escaped home to our attic, leaning against the warm chimney/ for a dozen naked hours of coming and coming." (p. 39) I love these whispers of the soft secret so totally lost and hidden by faggots in and out of gay liberation: "that male bodies together can learn/ to lay aside their weapons and sleep in each other's arms." (p. 40)

But life is more than a few moments of sweet bliss. Color Photos of the Atrocities undertakes to chronicle the pain and progress in the changes of one man. Not too many years ago, Kenneth Pitchford was to the world a "straight," married man, enjoying the privileges of being pampered and comforted by the continual service of a woman slave. Gay liberation has been filled with similar stories of married men suddenly discovering and revealing that they can no longer go along with the fraud of the heterosexual nuclear family. On our local gay hotline the bulk of calls comes from married men (and teenagers) wanting help in coming out. We cannot say: "Oh, it's easy and fun, come on out!" We know better and they know better. We can say and show in our lives, however, (as Pitchford does in his poetry) that some of us are trying to change.

A measure of Kenneth Pitchford's change appears in the form of his poetry. In his closet queen days, Pitchford says, "all my poems were trying to curry favor/ with the Kenyon Review and other extinct areas of human sensibility..." (p. 53) That school of poets (John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Robert Penn Warren, Robert Lowell, etc.) were virulently anti-gay; for instance, after they found out Robert Duncan was gay, they rejected a poem of his scheduled for publication. Pitchford has been promoted by and has made his way among this group of poets. His first book was published in Scribners' academically celebrated series. His second book, dedicated to Allen Tate, was printed by the University of North Carolina Press.

Pitchford has now broken from the cranky crabbed lines and metaphysical thatchery of academic poetry. He breaks out into a free space of his own life and feeling. His innovations in form are hardly so dramatic as his cover jacket suggests: "Like Whitman, Kenneth Pitchford has been forced to break the mold of conventional poetry and invent a new one." Allen Ginsberg, John Wieners, Jonathan Williams and Robert Duncan among others have been doing just this for a generation. They haven't hidden their being faggots, and they have been ignored if not suppressed by the academy. Although open to known homosexuals, outside poetry has had its part in male supremacy. Still it has taken less away from life than the academy. The idea that we should only move from our

immediate experience in writing has been liberating beside the notion that we must discipline ourselves into straight masculine lines. We have learned to see, feel, taste, touch, smell and experience in our own ways. Pitchford has now moved outside the academy into this living steam of American poetry.

Unfortunately, he retains some old poetic values. In "The Destruction of Poetry," Pitchford deplores poetry that becomes common, and he implies that writing poems can't be among the "normal motions" of his living. "Poetry" becomes confused with what the Kenyon Review pretends it is--a realm where a child playing with manuscripts is either not poetic or an occasion for poetic conceit. Pitchford often conceives of his poetry as a thing separate from himself, as an object, a commodity to be played with and even exploited, something to support his will, his fame and power. He confesses using poems to manipulate Robin Morgan, whom he married in 1962. And he delights in making his poems an occasion for getting even with his enemies. While this may seem revolutionary, it comes out of the tradition of Dante's Divine Comedy or Pope's Dunciad where the poem becomes a weapon ("writing someone on the bullet of a poem," p. 70). The poet settles scores by mixing his petty vengeance with greater evils and immortalizing it all in a well polished form. (Dante burnt his homosexual teacher in Hell.)

Many habits from his formative years linger in his use of language. Most of the classical and literary references have gone; Zeus or Leda, Frederic Chopin and George Sand survive but they are peripheral. Still, the habit of mind survives in which formulae are used to replace life--in which the literary image supercedes one's self. Movement rhetoric can become a shadow to reality no less than quotations from Chapman. Rhetoric becomes a neat formula in place of real feelings: "Struggle to rid myself of blaming/ the oppressed for their oppression. / Dare to win." (p. 8) Such lines abound in this book. They have been life cries of struggle, but through the various media they have become cheapened into radical chic.

In some ways the cliches of television, Time and other consumer media have become a substitute in Pitchford's poetry for the lost classicism of his past. ("We say that we are 'in struggle' and that we don't/ want to play Avis to some straight man's Hertz." p. 41) Coleridge or Ariadne are gone but the habit persists of distrusting one's own life and substituting something more spectacular or meaningful. The "media" takes over the imagination. Writing a poem on the photos of MyLai or on the butchery at Attica is analogous to writing a poem on first reading Chapman's Homer. I know we have a mass of atrocity poetry. Mostly honky literature, the bulk of this writing is moral posturing--well-intended perhaps but false in feeling and purpose. How can anyone dare claim by a few verses that they thereby partake of the massacre?

But worse, many writers, politicians and rhetoricians have used these events to

For James

--Christifa Sandborn



manipulate others. Saying "shame, shame; you are guilty of these atrocities," the big leaders offer themselves as priests (and sometimes priestesses) of liberation. They play the politics of guilt in which everyone is blamed and then offered atonement by (a) donating money, (b) voting for someone, (c) marching in a demonstration, (d) buying or reading a book, or (e) attending a meeting. Guilt is stirred up only to manipulate more victims. Experiencing such guilt becomes a cheap and indulgent emotion, a way of actually not having to seize control of one's own life and instead letting someone lead you along. Guilt is lazy and self-indulgent, crippling, maiming, disabling, and enslaving. Guilt is the stuff out of which states, churches, and armies are built. The Crusades were fought on the fodder of guilt--crusades against non-Christians, against the Knights Templar, heretics and witches. Innocent III was a master crusader who crushed infidels, faggots, and Jews. People still follow him. And in his tradition many prophets still preach--including Kenneth Pitchford. I reject them all. Even if they come with their dynamite, knives and guns, I will still say: "I AM NOT GUILTY."

Beyond the politics of guilt and mortal sin, using MyLai, Attica and other atrocities in poetry does unexpected things. The poet Robert Kelly explained in 1967 why he was not writing any more anti-war poems. Because, he said, when you bring something into a poem you celebrate it, elevate it, help create it; it doesn't matter whether you say "bad" or add "not" or "not good," it's still there. In fact, the "not" only reinforces, adds to the image. As in the color photos of the atrocities. These pictures of bombed babies, gaping guts, napalmed bellies and other losses end up evoking and celebrating their own image. Yet worse, we come to celebrate "their" suffering by inevitably noticing how safely removed we are. Death and danger thrill and titillate audiences while reassuring them that they are alive and safe. The secret message of the photos is grimmer even than the surface: they reaffirm the power that created them.

Hidden within Pitchford's work are some starkly sadistic images and attitudes. In his earlier poem "The Bull-Killer" from *A Suite of Angels* (1967), Pitchford has "shoulders wet to the skin--/ initiate of life and death/ as though I lay in the trench/ bared to the bull's hot gore..." (p. 65) In *Color Photos of the Atrocities*, he takes a special delight in images of blood and torn bodies of women or children. And in both works he identifies himself with the actor not the victim. In an anecdote about the guard and the scholar at Auschwitz, Pitchford compares himself with the guard not the victim. (p. 11) As a male, he recounts the sufferings of Robin Morgan in the birth of young Blake (whom he sometimes identifies as "my child" or "my four-month baby" or "our child" as though Blake didn't own himself). Margaret Mead has deplored the way men are

always writing about childbirth, defining it, even explaining how painful it is or how natural it can be. Mead recalls men in some societies who writhed "on the floor, acting out their conception of what birth pangs were like." (*Blackberry Winter*, p. 299)

In the tradition of these men, Pitchford imposes his images, his self upon those for whom he weeps. His celebration of Sam Melville at Attica resembles those men trying to usurp for themselves the feelings and experience of childbirth. With psilocybin at the beach, Pitchford plays Melville: "...I lay outstretched/ on the sand, Robin leaning above the human sacrifice/ I had become. I lifted blood-pleated arms to a sunset/ striated with the colors of your life, pulsing, twittering, / gull, tern, pelican, egret, crane." (p. 77)

In this charade there is an arrogance in which the poet tried to take control of the lives of women, children and other victims whose gory deaths are celebrated. For instance, Sylvia Plath, whose name Pitchford drops only to belabor himself for not "helping:" "...I knew Sylvia Plath/ when she was still alive, still unmarried to a male fascist who helped her/ succeed at her third suicide attempt, our looking at each other longingly. / I might have made some greater difference than I did...." (p. 52)

As a man, Pitchford takes his final word in defining what the women's revolution will be. His concluding poem, "Four Ways," recounts the saint, martyr, prophet and hero:

exuberant
as the saint, doomed as the
martyr, dedicated as the prophet,
it is she who has to pick up
a rifle one day, look along its sights
and, without hatred, kill me.

I don't know what the coming heroes against sexism will be doing, but I doubt that they will be wasting ammunition on Kenneth Pitchford. In "Four Ways" he has made the usual male assumption that all will center around him--better to be shot than forgotten or ignored. Likewise, he continues to frame women in such traditional roles as saint, martyr, prophet and hero. And revolution itself is defined in the usual male manner of replacing those on the bottom (women) in the roles and positions they now hold with those on top (men). Some men can't imagine a society without kings and commissars, without tops and bottoms, without a ruling sex, class, or race.

Others can.

Because you came to me from behind,
I forgot I was afraid;
Because you said you loved me,
I touched my soul;
Because you came to me so many winters' nights,
I forgot the cold;
Because you smiled, I forgot to frown;
Because you held me, I became a part of you;
Because you were afraid, we said good-bye;
Because you loved me, I was born again;
Because you have left me, that life has died;
Because I still love you, I am angry;
Because the meadow still grows,
I will touch the sun;
Because the wind is cold,
I will close the door;
Because I knew you, I will not forget you;
Because you are afraid of love, I am alone...



animal fantasy

I gawked.
I hung out my tongue like a sick dog
to lap up your rain-grey eyes.
To scruff your furry beard
and make your purr rumble.
To skim my hands over the soft skin
of your back arched like deers frightened.
Bring your shaggy blond friend.
I'll take off both your clothes,
flay you down to hide and down.
We'll each take turns playing the salt lick.
The sour taste of your cocks
will settle my stomach,
upset by one sip of your eyes.

--Dan Kiefer

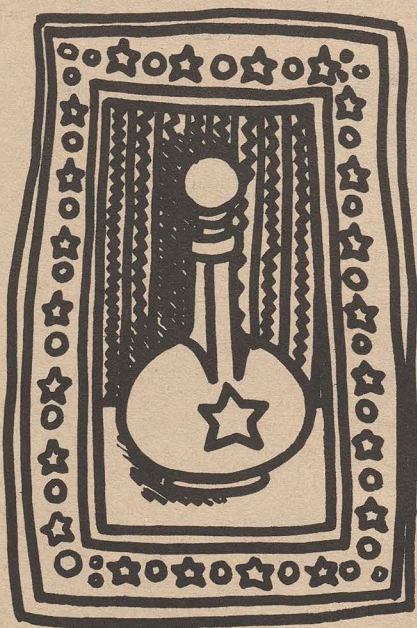


Some Sort Of Delivery

Lying in bed I heard voices out the window
in the deep morning I heard rough tough
men's voices
calling laughing throaty low
and I smiled to myself --
them on one side of me
you on the other.

In the still lake of morning
words like heavy pebbles rippled
smooth and soothing, distant and clear,
they carried me back, far back
to other mornings, other beds, other voices.
And again I smiled because you were there.

Arthur Kaplan



WHO WE ARE

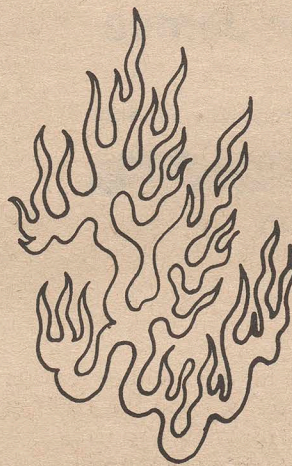
(continued from page 2)

We are not now whole. For one thing using the word "we" is more an act of faith than a description of reality. (Mark Twain said only pregnant women or people with tapeworms should use the word "we.") Within the group putting out FAG RAG there have always been bitter differences of opinion about what we should print and how we should lay it out. Working together has not forged a collective over time; after each issue has been finished, most of the people working on it have headed for the West Coast.

Our relation to the "gay community" has always been a deep question. We have wanted to explore and express the deepest desires and dreams of our community. And whenever anyone has criticized us they say, "You are betraying the gay community." As we have worked, we have discovered that there is no gay community. We have yet to create a community. For one thing, we are hidden from each other. I picked up a hitchhiker the other day who lived a block from my house who was gay; he had never seen or heard of the FAG RAG. Even when we recognize each other we tend to despise and denigrate ourselves. It is always a miracle when two or more faggots can get together to do something. Every force conspires to pull us apart; we do not come together easily.

We have to create our own existences; we have to create our own media; we have to create our own community. As Jill Johnston says about the existing media, it's "more an obstruction than a channel.... somehow the incoming information is blocked or distorted instead of passed through intact or at all. the media is its own agency. or else it's a strict customs agency and very little cargo is permitted to pass." What they won't let pass is any notion that the world can exist (and does exist) outside the will of straight white men. Most of us have experienced "editing" by outside media (even underground channels like the Real Paper or WBCN). What they cannot allow are any messages directed from faggots to other faggots.

Creating a community then means learning to think and love outside straight society. It means not only recognizing our gayness but loving it and loving that gayness in others. We appeal to our readers to respond to us. With ideas, criticisms, photos, poems, stories, plays, articles, drawings, etc. If our ideas are anyway near yours, come join us; we desperately need help. But don't expect too much; we are fallible, we have made mistakes; we are sometimes sloppy, slow and disorganized. With your help and love maybe we'll improve.



LAVENDER HOUR

Gay inroads in the straight commercial media have been rare. Except for "specials"--a feature article in a Sunday supplement, a "problem" report on the TV news, or a cliché-ridden movie melodrama--there is no regular gay presence in the mass media.

That makes "Lavender Hour," a monthly program of gay music, poetry and raps on Boston's leading radio station, a significant media event. "Lavender Hour" is taped and broadcast at 10 p.m. on the first Sunday of each month on WBCN. 'BCN has some women's and Third World programming, but most of the fare has been straight youth-cult rock.

"Lavender Hour" presents a mixed bag of music that can be identified as "gay" either in terms of an explicit statement of sexual liberation, or in its appeal to gay women and men. Madeline Davis' "Stonewall Nation" and Maxine Feldman's "Angry Atthis" fit the definition--and so does Marty Becker's version of "My Man," Aretha's "Reach Out and Touch." Roughly half of the music played on "Lavender Hour" is unrecorded commercially, or put out on small private labels. The other half is music from big-label companies and recording stars of various magnitudes, who may be somewhere in the continuum from gay to closeted to ambiguous to . . .

The poetry is almost all "new" and up-front gay. The first four Hours have presented poems by Judy Grahn, Rita Mae Brown, Michael Lally and John Wieners--as well as Allen Ginsberg and T. S. Eliot. All the poetry is read by the authors. There have also been interviews with Christopher Isherwood (an expanded version of which is published elsewhere in this issue of Fag Rag), David Bowie, Marty Becker and Lou Reed.

Some of the other new musicians represented in the first shows are: Christy Barsky, Catherine Andrews, the New Haven and Chicago Women's Liberation bands, David Wagner, Alix Dopkin, Peter Fisher, Patrick Hagerty and Lavender Country (a Seattle gay country rock group), Chris Robison, and Family of Woman.

The scarcity of gay music--or at least the difficulty of finding and collecting it--has been the major obstacle the producers of "Lavender Hour" have encountered. But in recent months there seems to have been a small explosion--at least a boomlet--in the production of gay music, and the word is spreading. New gay radio programs are projected in several cities; already, several non-commercial (educational and listener-supported) FM stations around the country--including, of course, the pioneering WBUR in Boston, with Gay Way--have scheduled gay shows.

Anyone who has--or knows of--material that might be used on "Lavender Hour" is asked to contact the producers, Littlejohn and Andrew Kopkind, at WBCN, in the Prudential Center, Boston Mass., 02199.

DUNCAN

(Continued from p. 3)

starting point is more difficult; the problem is more treacherous.

In the face of the hostility of society which I risk in making even the acknowledgment explicit in this statement, in the face of the "crime" of my own feelings, in the past I publicized those feelings as private and made no stand for their recognition but tried to sell them disguised, for instance, as conflicts rising from mystical sources. I colored and perverted simple and direct emotions and realizations into a mysterious realm, a mysterious relation to society. Faced by the inhumanities of society I did not seek a solution in humanity but turned to a second out-cast society as inhumane as the first. I joined those who, while they allowed for my sexual nature, allowed for so little of the moral, the sensible and creative direction which all of living should reflect. They offered a family, outrageous as it was, a community in which one was not condemned for one's homosexuality, but it was necessary there for one to desert one's humanity for which one would be suspect, "out of key." In drawing rooms and in little magazines I celebrated the cult with a sense of sanctuary such as a Medieval Jew must have found in the ghetto; my voice taking on the modulations which tell of the capitulation to snobbery and the removal from the "common sort"; my poetry exhibiting the objects made divine and tyrannical as the Catholic church has made bones of saints, and bread and wine, tyrannical.

After an evening at one of those salons where the whole atmosphere was one of suggestion and celebration, I returned recently experiencing again the after-shock, the desolate feeling of wrongness, remembering in my own voice and gestures the rehearsal of unfeeling. Alone, not only I, but, I felt, the others who had appeared as I did so mocking, so superior to feeling, had known, knew still, those troubled emotions, the deep and integral longings that we as human beings feel, holding us from violate action by the powerful sense of humanity that is their source, longings that lead us to love, to envision a creative life. "Towards something far," as Hart Crane wrote, "now farther away than ever."

Among those who should understand those emotions which society condemned, one found that the group language did not allow for any feeling at all other than this self-ridicule, this gaiety (it is significant that the homosexual's word for his own kind is "gay"), a wave surging forward, breaking into language and then receding, leaving a wake of disillusionment, a disbelief that extended to oneself, to life itself. What then, disowning this career, can one turn to?

What I think can be asserted as a starting point is that only one devotion can be held by a human being a creative life and expression, and that is a devotion to human freedom, toward the liberation of human love, human conflicts, human aspirations. To do this one must disown all the special groups (nations, religions, sexes, races) that would claim allegiance. To hold this devotion every written word, every spoken word, every action, every purpose must be examined and considered. The old fears, the old specialties will be there, mocking and tempting; the old protective associations will be there, offering for a surrender of one's humanity congratulations upon one's special nature and value. It must be always recognized that the others, those who have surrendered their humanity, are not less than oneself. It must be always remembered that one's own honesty, one's battle against the inhumanity of his own group is a battle that cannot be won in the immediate scene. The forces of inhumanity are overwhelming, but only one's continued opposition can make any other order possible, will give an added strength for all those who desire freedom and equality to break at last those fetters that seem now so unbreakable.

"DEAR MS FINN..."

A CASE OF JOB DISCRIMINATION

December 8, 1972

Miss Mary Finn, Nursing Supervisor
Mass Mental Health Center

Dear Miss Finn:

In mid-July you interviewed me for a position as a psychiatric aide. It was my understanding that there were no openings at that time, and I was to call back around the first of September. Nothing had materialized by then, and I was advised to check with you from time to time.

On the sixth of November I called, and you informed me that you could not hire me because of my homosexuality. Several days later Dr. Richard Pillard, a psychiatrist at University Hospital, called you at my request and received the same answer.

It has been a month since our conversation. This letter is an attempt to convey my feelings about the matter:

At first I was startled that you would admit--to myself and to a witness--the real reason for your refusal to hire me. Of course I could not be surprised that it happened, and I have no regrets for my own outspokenness. I knew the risk I was taking when I joined the movement.

Yet I find I am still very angry. Neither in my interview nor upon the employment application did I perceive homosexuality as a disqualification. If it were this important, why didn't you inform me beforehand? I would have disagreed with your policy, but I could have respected your integrity. I feel as if I have been tried and found guilty without the elementary decency of being allowed to defend myself.

Whatever my other qualifications (or lack of them), the fact of my homosexuality evidently was your foremost consideration in refusing to hire me. How it would affect my performance was left unanswered. I was insulted by your remark that I was "not suitable to work with young people." Your implication, that I am a potential child molester, is as absurd and obscene as the superstition that black men are naturally rapists. (By this logic heterosexual aides are equally a menace--to female patients.) My sexual orientation implies nothing about my character, my dependability or my competence.

In spite of your attempts, I am sure that there are dozens of homosexuals--male and female--who are employed at Mass Mental. Thank God you cannot tell who they are! Were you to purge them all, your hospital would be so badly understaffed it would probably have to close. No doubt most of them are capable employees and have been little cause for complaint. Like several tenured teachers I know who are rated "excellent" by the Boston School Department. Or the aides I knew when I worked at the Vermont State Hospital, who showed me that homosexuality was more than an abstraction or a stereotype. Not suitable to work with young people, indeed. What hypocrisy these principles embody!

I feel I have no reason for regret because my openness has cost me a job at your hospital. Hatred of homosexuals is as evil a bigotry as the racism that infects American life. I pity you for the attitude you have demonstrated toward me. Like the vast majority of homosexuals, I too had the option of remaining invisible; but my sense of integrity demanded that I speak out.

John Kyper
John Kyper



Photos by Rodriguez

OHIO CELEBRATION

Ohio's gay pride celebration May 4th to 6th centered in Columbus, the state capitol. The weekend began with a dinner followed by speakers; workshops followed the next day on the Ohio State campus. "We celebrated the coming of the Gay-Lib protest demonstration," Michaelangelo Rodriguez wrote, "by attending a rock dance in the famous OSU stadium. . . . Against the seventy years of OSU's excellent football reputation two hundred gay persons sacrilegiously danced on the green altar of the stadium." On Sunday everyone marched four miles to the state capitol singing, carrying banners and generally blowing the minds of bystanders.

The biggest news of the conference was the efforts of lesbians to reach the faggots there. In a workshop conducted by lesbians for faggots and in a self-criticism session for the conference, lesbians (led by Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon) attempted to communicate the depth of their anger and frustration in "working with" faggots. They again made the point that men (straight or gay) don't listen--don't listen to lesbians, don't listen to other women, don't listen to each other. One woman said, "we all have to learn to listen for the silent screams."



BOSTON GAY YOUTH. A group run by and for gay men and women of high school age. Meets Sunday afternoon at the Charles Street Meeting House. Mailing address: Room 509, 419 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02116. Phone: 536-6197.

COFFEE HOUSE open daily 12 noon to 12 midnight. Cheap, gay, fun food and entertainment. Poetry reading every Saturday at 8 pm. Volunteers needed. Call 742-0450, 491-5669, 288-8765.

DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS is a chapter of the national Lesbian organization. It provides a place for Lesbians to talk, socialize and work for change in society. Tuesday night rap sessions on being gay, open to all women. (Meet 7:30 at D. O. B. office.) Publishes FOCUS: a journal for gay women. 419 Boylston St., Room 323, Boston, MA 02116. Phone: 262-1592.

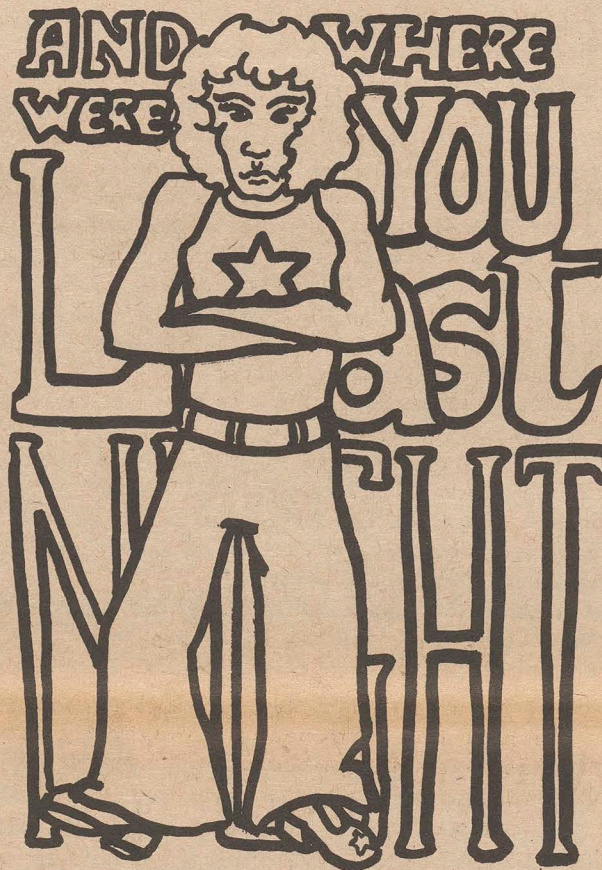
DIGNITY/BOSTON. A national Catholic group open to all people. We are organized to provide a place for gay and bi-sexual men and women to bring together their sexual preference and their religious beliefs. Meetings on the first Sunday of every month include a liturgy, a discussion and a social. For more information write, Dignity/Boston, 1105 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02115.

EMERSON HOMOPHILE ARTS SOCIETY. A group of Emerson students pooling their creative abilities in the communication arts towards the understanding and acceptance of gay life. 96 Beacon St., Boston MA 02116. Phone: 568-5068.

FAG RAG, A gay male liberation quarterly paper published twice a year. Write c/o Red Book Store, 91 River St., Cambridge, MA 02139. Phone: 536-9826.

FOUNDATION FOR PERSONALITY EXPRESSION. Local (Framingham) chapter of the international FPE. Also affiliated with Gender Identity Service of Boston. For information on Transvestism and Transsexualism, contact Helen Hyde, 879-6831.

GROUPS



GAY COMMUNITY CENTER. An ad hoc committee to promote a gay community center for Boston. Meets regularly. Holds Friday night dances and coffee house at the Charles St. Meeting House. Call 742-0450, 288-8765, 491-5669.

GAY PHONE. General raps and informal counseling on phone, information on gay community events and groups. Legal, medical, psychiatric referral. 354-1555, 354-1556.

GAY SPEAKERS BUREAU. Sets up speaking engagements, has a speaker training program, develops resource material, coordinates with speakers bureaus of other groups in representing gay people and gay issues to the outside world. Phone: 547-1451.

GAY WAY RADIO PROGRAM. A radio program for gay people. Broadcast Thursdays 9 to 10 pm on WBUR-FM (Boston University), 90.9 on your dial.

LESBIAN MEETINGS AND GAY CONFUSION. Occasional parties and meetings. c/o Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St., Cambridge MA 02139. Phone: 354-8807.

MEDIA WATCH. Concerned with fair and accurate representation of gay people and life styles in mass media. Meets every Sunday, 7pm, Gay Coffee House, 868-5729, 277-0687.

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH. A church for all people with a special ministry to the gay community. Services 7 pm Sunday, Old West Church, 131 Cambridge St., Boston. Phone: 266-7491.

RED RIVER DYKE COLLECTIVE. Newly formed radical lesbian group. Inquiries and new members welcome. 43 Willow St., Somerville 02143.

STUDENT HOMOPHILE LEAGUE OF MIT. Open to anyone in the MIT community. Hot line counseling for MIT people. Group meets at irregular intervals. For information call 492-7871.

HOMOPHILE UNION OF BOSTON. A civil rights and service organization for all gay people and friends of gay people. Legal and medical referrals. Publishes GAY-LINE. Room 509, 419 Boylston St., Boston 02116. Office hours; 6:30 to 9:30 pm, Monday through Friday, 1 to 4pm on Saturday. HUB 24-hour phone: 536-6197.

PERIODICALS

(Unless otherwise noted, a sample copy can be obtained for 50¢.)

- BODY POLITIC, 4 Kensington Av., Toronto 2B, Ontario, Canada.
- FOCUS: A JOURNAL FOR GAY WOMEN, c/o Daughters of Bilitis, 419 Boylston St., Boston, Mass. 02116.
- THE FURIES (a lesbian paper), 219 11th St. SE, Washington, D.C. 20003.
- GAILY PLANET, c/o Mansfield, 826 Diamond, San Francisco, Cal. 94114 (Send donation for sample copy.)
- GAY LIBERATOR, Box 631-A, Detroit, Mich. 48232 (Send 25¢ for sample copy.)
- GAY SUNSHINE, Box 40397, San Francisco, Calif. 94140.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

If you send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to each of the following, they will send you their free price lists of literature on gay liberation and other topics:

- GAY LIBERATION BOOK SERVICE, Box 40397, San Francisco, Cal. 94140.
- NEW ENGLAND FREE PRESS, 60 Union Square, Somerville, Mass. 02143
- OSCAR WILDE MEMORIAL BOOK SHOP, 291 Mercer St., New York, N.Y. 10003.
- TEMPLAR PRESS, Box 98, F.D.R. Station, New York, N.Y. 10022.
- TIMES CHANGE PRESS, Penwell Rd., Washington, N.J. 07882.



FAG RAG FIVE is coming out despite unusual difficulties. Our printer since the fall of 1971 (Forum Press of Marblehead, Massachusetts) suddenly refused to print the paper because of its homosexual content. Mr. Triplett, head of the company, said that they preferred not to print this type of material and that anything gay was always controversial. He said that the Forum Press was not cancelling the FAG RAG because of either governmental or community pressure but that they found our content offensive. This is particularly alarming because exactly the same thing is happening in Toronto with the BODY POLITIC, another gay liberation paper. We fortunately now have another printer.

GAY LEGISLATION

The two biggest activities of Boston Gay Liberation has been the drive to support the two bills before the General Court and the All New England Gay Conference. The major thrust behind these efforts has come from the combined work of the Homophile Union of Boston and the Daughters of Bilitis.

Particularly Laura MacMurray, Jeri Bidwell and Elaine Noble have been responsible for the successful thrust in both these efforts. They have been working for years on law reform and their efforts are not always fully recognized. The bills repealing sodomy laws and an anti-discrimination bill (H. B. 3218, 3220) have not passed but we have been astonished at how well they have done, how much attention they have received, and how many people have had to reassess our importance.

LAVENDER COUNTRY, An Album of Gay Music. Patrick Haggerty (author of "Out, Out Damn Faggot," in FAG RAG THREE) gives us some fresh new gay songs. Well produced and recorded but not well distributed. You can only get a copy by writing Gay Community Social Services, P. O. Box 22228, East Union Station, Seattle, Wash. 98122. (Enclose \$4.50)

DARE TO WIN!

Backlash against openly gay people in Boston continues. Wealthy business interests are trying to close three important meeting places for us in the downtown area: Jacques/The Other Side; the Old West Church and the Charles Street Meeting House.

The Bay Village Association (a front group for the Boston Redevelopment Authority), Howard Johnson's and Ben Sack are trying to close down the only large lesbian bar in Boston and the most famous faggot bar. So far they have failed in their effort to have the licenses revoked for Jacques or the Other Side, but they are trying. Howard Johnson's has a twelve-man goon squad which has beaten up several people and may even be responsible for some of the mysterious murders in the Bay Village Area. Certainly any violence or threat to public safety is coming from straight people, not from us.

Near the government center the Old West Church has been open to gay meetings as well as other movement activities. When the minister performed a gay wedding, the Methodist bishop removed him on grounds of insanity. The idea is to close Old West to anyone who might oppose existing society.

The third move has been against the Charles Street Meeting House. A group of wealthy men on the Hill have offered \$100,000 a year first to the congregation and then to the Unitarian Universalist Association for control of the church on every day but Sunday; their hope is to drive out all the gay activities around the church.

The attack here is on poor and militant gays. The Napoleon Club and the Church of the Advent are not under attack because they tend to be wealthy and closety. We are under attack because we are poor and openly gay.

NEW ENGLAND GAY CONFERENCE

The New England Gay Conference March 9-11 was generally a success; most of the time was spent discussing regional cooperation, the gay laws, and the forthcoming gay pride week. There was a very well-received entertainment arranged by the Emerson College group as well as workshops on the arts and communications.

The conference was attended by a couple hundred people and nearly half were women; the large number of women present helped offset the usual pushiness and noisiness of the gay men.

RURAL GAY COMMUNE

The Hop Brook Commune has opened on a 31 acre farm near the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. They write that, "we only live with people who we get off on (provided the feeling is mutual). If one of us objects to a newcomer intending to live with us he usually says so and the newcomer remains only a visitor." FAG RAG SIX hopes to have a fuller account of the commune's progress; in the meantime you can write Box 723, Amherst, MA.

JUNE

16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
GAY PRIDE PARADE 1:00 PM STARTS AT: COPLEY SQ. GATHER 12 PM. ENDS AT: PARADE GROUND BOSTON COMMON <i>The Witches</i> PERFORM AT 9:00 PM. WELCOME DANCE AT C.S.M.H.* GALLERY COFFEE HOUSE NOON - MIDNT. C.S.M.H.*	RELIGIOUS SERVICES OUT DOORS (WHERE AND WHEN TO BE ANNOUNCED) GALLERY COFFEE HOUSE NOON - MIDNT. AT: C.S.M.H.* 4:30pm RELIGION Service AT: C.S.M.H.* 7:00 PM. GAY CRUISE OF BOSTON HARBOR 20 LONG WHARF BOSTON \$5.	HOLD HANDS MEN, WOMEN, GAYS, BIS, STRAIGHTS, YOUNG, AND YOUNGER; ALL WELCOME !!! AWARENESS WORKSHOP 8 PM. AT: C.S.M.H.* GALLERY COFFEE HOUSE NOON - MIDNT. AT: C.S.M.H.*	GAY WOMEN'S WORKSHOP 8 PM. AT: C.S.M.H.* GAY MEN'S WORKSHOP 8 PM. AT: C.S.M.H.* (SEPARATE ROOMS!) GALLERY COFFEE HOUSE NOON - MIDNT. AT: C.S.M.H.*	GAY YOUTH'S WORKSHOP (19 YRS. AND YOUNGER) 7 PM. AT: C.S.M.H.* RELATIONSHIPS WORKSHOP 7 PM. AT: C.S.M.H.* PLAY: Coming Out !!! RETURNS TO BOSTON 8:30 PM. AT: C.S.M.H.*	LAW AND POLITICS WORKSHOP 8 PM. AT: C.S.M.H.* EVENING ENTERTAINMENT AT: GALLERY COFFEE HOUSE C.S.M.H.*	A NIGHT OF ART AND ENTERTAINMENT 6-10 PM. AT: THE GALLERY COFFEE HOUSE AND ART GALLERY C.S.M.H.* DANCE 9 PM.-1 AM. ALL WELCOME MAIN HALL: C.S.M.H.*	TEA ON THE LAWN ART FESTIVAL ENTERTAINMENT REFRESHMENTS (INQUIRE FOR LOCATION) BAD WEATHER WILL ALLOW US TO MOVE INSIDE TO THE: GALLERY COFFEE HOUSE ANOTHER DANCE 9 PM.-1 AM. C.S.M.H.*	N.Y. CHRISTOPHER STREET PARADE (INQUIRE AS TO WHERE & WHEN) * C.S.M.H. (CHARLES ST. MEETING HOUSE 70 CHARLES STREET BOSTON.) INFORMATION: CALL H.U.B. 536-6197 6:30-9:30 PM

A TRIBUTE TO FAGGOTS

Let us be brutally honest with each other. After all, we're among friends.

Faggots are, on the whole, an extraordinary group of people. We should take a pause from the hard work of Gay Liberation and do what few have done before:

Sing praises to faggots!

Sure, being a faggot doesn't grant one the most comfortable status in our society. If one were looking to pass through life unnoticed, without improving the quality of human existence on this planet, then the best way to do so is go "normal," be strictly conventional at all costs to Self.

But this is not the lot of faggots. It is up to us to make an asset of this condition. Faggots are stigmatized for not fitting into the molds society offers for acceptance. We faggots break molds; we are constantly creating ourselves.

One of the remarkable characteristics of faggots is that we, unlike our non-faggot brothers, are less tainted with machismo and homophobia; more likely, faggots deliberately avoid acting as carriers for these social illnesses. In fact, being a faggot acts as a wonderful anti-toxin to the poison of Macho.

Society... Heal Thyself! Look to faggots!

Faggots have always been prominent among the diagnosticians who have warned our culture about the effects of machismo and homophobia. The more intelligent among non-faggot males are finally coming around to see how right the faggot perspective is. We faggots are insistent that the personality distortions imposed by this combination of machismo and homophobia must be eliminated before we can begin to approach a decent society.

Though nipped by frosts, the first buds of this decent society are determined to survive and prosper: this is the gay community. Unfortunately not every faggot yet identifies with this developing gay community--"making it on one's own" is all too characteristic of faggots, an isolation maintained by the status quo. Still, we could pick any faggot at random and he'd probably be nearer an ideal condition of Citizen-in-Society than any non-faggot male similarly selected.

This is not to say that all faggots are exempla of self-respect and personal integrity. But put in relief against non-faggots, it's the pluses about faggots which are outstanding. There are faggots who love failure and destruction--and don't we all know some. There are vast numbers of closet faggots who compensate for their guilt by embracing non-faggot behavior with a vengeance. All too many men, when they discover their potential for becoming a faggot, flee this impulse and head for extreme limits of self-denial.

There are faggots who have suffered terribly under the burden of the stigma. But any faggot as a faggot understands only too well the pernicious behavior demanded by our society as "normal" male behavior. If any faggot has not fully evolved from the destructive imperatives of his society, at least it can be said that he has begun. Even within the emerging gay community, contradictions abound. But faggots in the gay community are constantly struggling to resolve these contradictions. Macho non-faggots, on the other hand, are proud of the contradictions in their lives, boastful that they'll never know integrity. Such men are uninterested in maximizing civilized behavior. Eat that, Tiger and Fox!

Allen Ginsberg made a most profound comment about the recent change in faggots: "Fags have lost that Wounded Look they had ten years ago."

And isn't it about time!

The tyranny of homophobes and the reign of their hypocrisy has had far too long a run.

Despite their bluster, deviousness, and power-orientation (and their inevitable resort to subterfuge and violence--their specialty), homophobes ultimately collapse when challenged by the moral authority of faggots. Macho homophobes almost always run in packs, often have little identity outside their association with the pack. Isn't it amazing how, when isolated, one or two of these MachoHe-Men, These Tough Guy Sportsmen, These Rugged Womanizing Patriarchs are reduced to slurs, threats, sweaty palms, violence, and "temporary insanity" when confronted with real faggots. The presence of one faggot can shake up a household. A whiff of faggotry can send a bureaucracy spinning. Such is the stuff of He-Man-ism just beneath the surface.

Who says faggots don't have power?

Faggots are in the forefront of bringing men back to their senses. Faggots are building a gay community. They are developing a new identity for men, accenting individuality (in its best, creative aspects), and yet giving individuality the background it requires for full realization, i. e., a sense of belonging to a community.

Gay community opens the paths for faggots' brotherhood. It promotes affection. It keeps in check the crueler tendencies imbued in us by the Macho non-faggot society. It stimulates friendship and sympathy among faggots, an end in itself. Non-faggots retreat in fear from this openness; they define themselves solely in terms of the economic system and the power they can wield in it. Non-faggots see each other as instruments to be manipulated and exploited for power and material gain. Their contradiction.

Faggots, also, are in the avant-garde among males who are working for the "normalization" of relations between the sexes. For too long, all men, faggots included, continued the oppression of women. Faggots as well as non-faggots learned to be misogynous. But faggots and feminists have seen the similarity in their goals; there exists a natural alliance in their interests for change.

Some say that faggots are light years ahead of the rest of society. They say that the changes that faggots foresee in human behavior will come to pass--someday!

But to relegate faggots to the status of harbingers of the future is just one more way of dismissing us.

Individually and collectively, faggots have always had to negotiate a special interpretation of reality (which hostile critics and the popular media have invariably distorted and exploited). But the reality faggots create also provides a warm home for The Imagination, that tender refugee from the cold non-faggot world. And the reality of faggots--in the various manners we choose to depict it--offers visions into important truths.

In our reality we live in the present tense. We are already creating the kind of society we want, one based on values often considerably different from those in the reality of non-faggots. We know it's their responsibility to catch up with us.

We might regard non-faggot males as our younger brothers and have compassion for them, but we must be stern when necessary. How else are they to learn? Even within a pluralistic society such as our own, there is no room for those who possess malicious intents. We mustn't let non-faggots intimidate us, despite their thuggish adolescent behavior. With proper instruction, perhaps they too will become faggots. We have a great history as instructors: Socrates, da Vinci, W. Whitman, E. Carpenter, Paul Goodman, Allen Ginsberg, etc. We can teach them to change!

Gentlemen... A toast to faggots!
