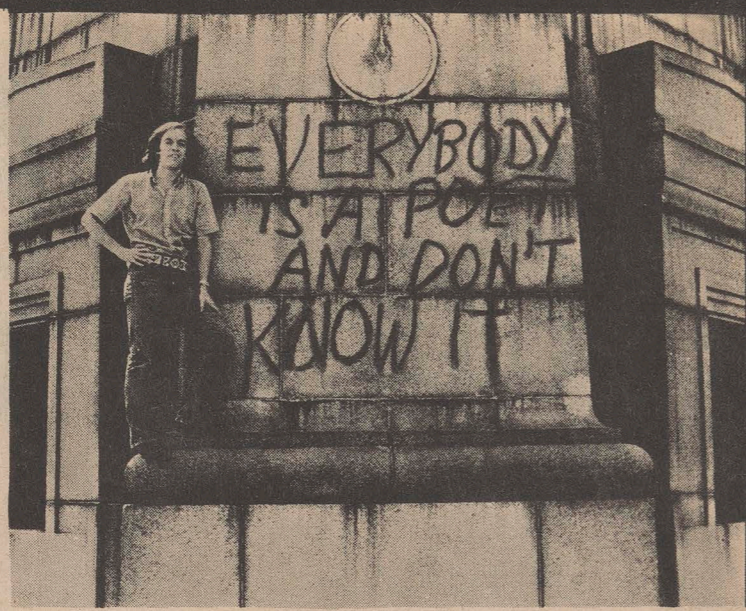


[FALL 1974]

POETRY



steven abbott*-phillip allen*-don apple*-w.h. auden*-william barber*-anthony bruno*-stuart byron*-j. d. butkie*-ed cates*-keith craighead*-louie crew*-glenn davis*-*-david eberly*-eggeling*-r. daniel evans*-jim everhard*-salvatore farinella*-*-*-jonathan p. feldman*-allen ginsberg*-christopher j. guerin*-jerry heft*-daniel herzog-gary jane hoisington*-stephen jonas*-jim jones*-maurice kenny*-d. b. kreitzberg*-*-john kyper*-norman lubowsky*-michael lynch*-gerard malanga*-donald stanley meuse*-*-gene mcLaughlin*-bill mitchell*-caleb murdock*-thomas nashe*-harold e. pickett*-*-alphonso price*-eusi profile*-craig reynolds*-charles river*-reus salvator*-sativa*-satya*-ron schreiber*-alan schirmer*-michael shernoff*-charley shively*-larry seth stewart*-koke vacha*-john wieners*-george whitmore*-terence winch*-owen wilson*-*-kenneth tyrone dudley wise

Flag Rag

10



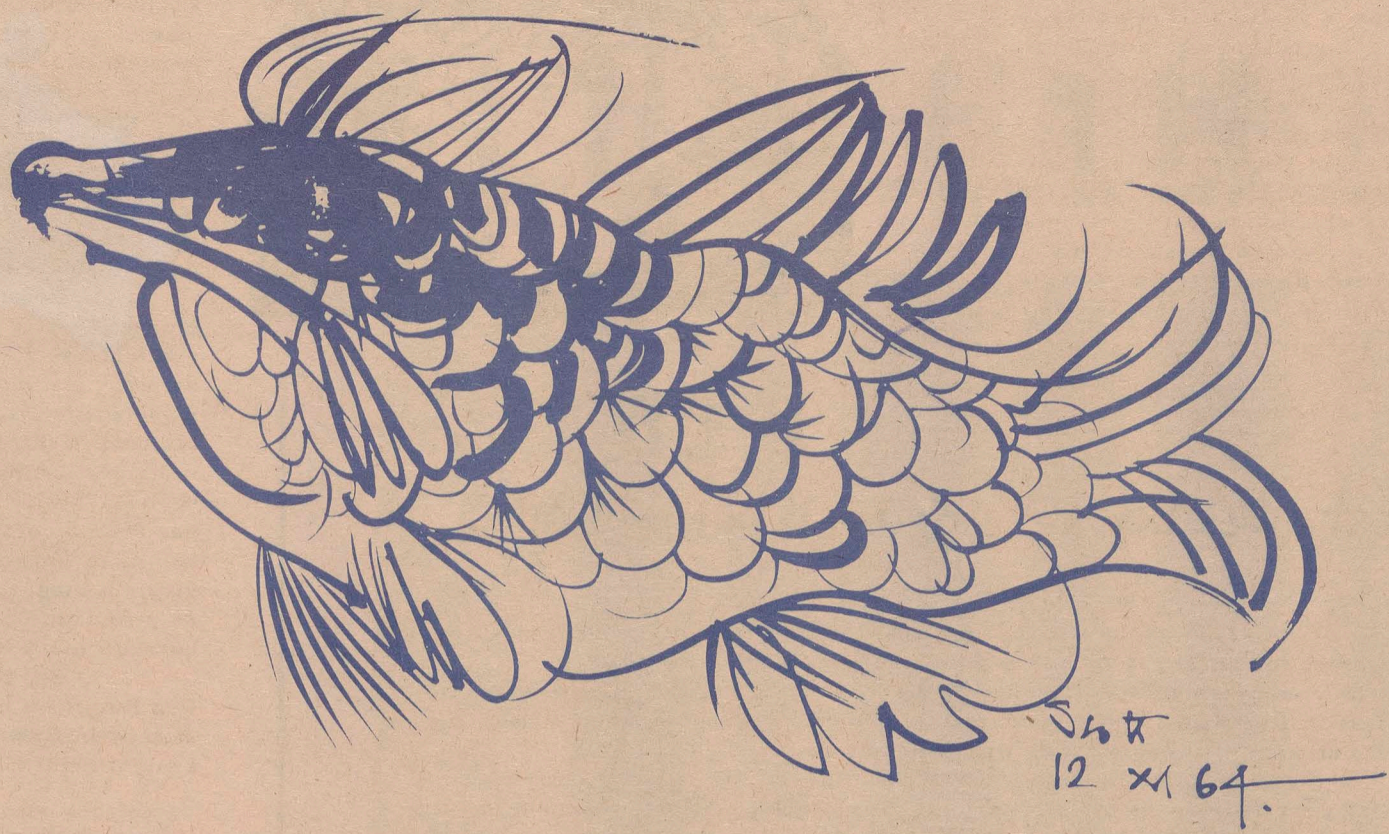
art & photos

allyn amundson*-jim arnold*-douglas besette gerard malanga*-charles river*-ken sanchez* lawrence scott*-norman walker*-*-*-*-*-*

views
reviews
interviews

Auden
Jonas
Shively
Wieners

50¢



Don't know who I am
Whether President of Atlantis
With Ruby dancing boys
Long haired smiling at my baldness
And teenaged nymphs
Placing small soft hands on my belly fur
Or irresponsible rich prince-garbage man
Of wavy quiet boulevards
Of Pacific water
So this minute I accept my
Self
A big hairy fish

Allen Ginsberg

Morning Cambridge Nov 12, 1964

Dear Fag Rag:

I am enclosing a letter from R.F.D., a new gay publication of interest to us country gays. I feel it is very important for us country gays to have a way to communicate with each other, and this new publication is really good news for us.

The people who work on R.F.D. have asked me to ask you to please, please print the enclosed letter in the next issue of Fag Rag. I hope you realize that there are readers of Fag Rag who now live in the country, and there are readers of Fag Rag in the city who have rural lives behind them. So please try to find the space in your next issue for this letter.

I hope you are having a nice summer's day today.

Love,
Allen Young.



R.F.D.

post office box 161, Grinnell, Iowa 50112

Howdy,

A group of gay men in Iowa and Oregon will begin publishing a magazine for rural gay men in September. We feel that there is a need for our own publication as MOTHER EARTH NEWS, the counter culture's answer to ORGANIC GARDENING, is adamantly heterosexual and as the existing gay publications are predominantly urban-oriented.

R.F.D. hopes to help break down the feeling of isolation from "things gay" that many of us experience in a rural situation, to provide a means of sharing with each other...R.F.D. hopes to be serious and gay, cosmic and funky--something pleasant to find in your mailbox every once in a while. (A plain envelope for your mail carrier's benefit.)

R.F.D. is a reader-participatory venture. You write, sing, dance and are R.F.D. We solicit your contributions of whatever you would like to share with your country brothers. We need your contributions in order that R.F.D. succeed. We are also looking for stories, experiences, and reflections from former farm boys now living in the City. Contributions from Lesbians and dykes are welcome, but because there are no women presently involved on the staff, our orientation is mainly toward gay men.

The first issue will cost 50¢. One year's subscription is \$2.00 and will be four or six issues depending on the response from you and depending on how quickly we make our mistakes and learn from them.

So after the supper dishes are washed and you have watched the sunset, please take time to write us about you or the land you live with or how the tomatoes are doing or how the sunset was or whatever you feel like writing. And, of course, if you would just like to receive a copy, let us know.

Love and cucumbers,
The R.F.D. Staff

Dear Fellow Fags:

A friend of mine (gay of course) picked up a copy of "A Gay Manifesto" in New York and handed me the issue with a sly look on his face. Upon glancing at the inside cover--Lo and behold--there is me and my lover in the '71 parade. It was a less perfect reproduction of the same picture that appeared on the back page of an earlier issue of Fag Rag.

The picture has a note of sadness for me because my lover died in April 1973, but it is wonderful to have this beautiful memory of us together.

However, the reason for my dark glasses is not "disguise" but because bright sunlight has a kind of paralyzing effect on my eyes and so I am enclosing a photo of myself with clear glasses to show that I am "not in the closet."

I am 72 years of age and have been Gay since 16. My lover Bob Liechti has been a contributor of articles on female and male impersonation to various gay and straight magazines and we have been together 26 years not without occasional differences! but with many happy times.

So, in conclusion I want to thank Fag Rag for a happy memory and hope to stop by in Boston to say hello to any of you I might meet some time shortly.

Yours with lots of love
from
Harry Isele



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Ken Dudley

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Fall '74

Dear Fag Rag,

Because there are a few too many Kenneth Pitchfords in this world, not because Fag Rag is a gay male publication, is the reason why we can't work together (or one of them). I'm just writing this because after reading the entire Fag Rag/Gay Sunshine issue, and especially a letter from Joel Starkey of Boca Raton whom I guess doesn't know the background of Fag Rag and about the split (male/female).

I like to read Fag Rag, I like to read about cock-sucking, rimming and indiscriminate promiscuity as acts of revolution, not because I believe or buy the idea (which I sometimes do or do not) but because the defining and categorizing is at a minimum and doesn't extend itself to women. I also like to read about Charley Shively getting mugged and beaten up in the Fenway. I don't like the fact that it happens just that Charley can write about it. No, that's a lie. I get off when I hear about any man, even a faggot, being victimized by some other man. Sorry, Charley.

Now I'm reminded of Mitzel's "Proselytizing" thing a few issues back which I still think is the best thing I've read in any gay paper altho what in it was satirical, honest and fantasy was unclear. John Kyper I love, but after rereading a piece he recently wrote for Boston's Gay Community News about the N.Y. Gay Pride Parade: John, now please don't become another K. Pitchford! (He's my latest & greatest object of vilification.)

I guess my unrefined and uncultured female mind is showing itself but who the hell is/was Ned Rorem, besides being a pompous, conceited sexist moron? Why

was that article so long? Anyone who makes statements like "Passivity is stronger than activity, for it arranges to be reacted to" is someone to admire, tho I wish we could all believe it. The Fag Rag stuff was infinitely superior, to my mind, than the Gay Sunshine trips. Some of the poetry was unbelievably sexist but this is not a complaint, more of a congratulations for being yourselves. The pendulum swings from Allen Young to Richter Norton and the diversity was entertaining, informative and just great. I am left desperately wanting to read Burns's novels and poems by Norse and Jonas.

Fag Rag is still the only gay male paper that I will be proud to be seen hawking in Harvard Sq., and Joel Starkey is living in a dream world. I wish he wasn't but unfortunately he is. I heard several faggots express sadness/disappointment/anger at Fag Rag's "prick on every page" publication, but the illustrations fit the content and...

Dear Charles Shively, I am going to make a salad of all the vegetables from this year's Fenway/Victory Garden's garden plots and serve it to all the men I know, except the Fag Rag staff. Sorry about the defoliation and the serious hampering of indiscriminate promiscuity as an act of revolution.

For some reason, I thought it important to let you guys know that a woman who is having little to do with "gay liberation" and the faggot population in general still enjoys reading Fag Rag very much. You're OK.

Love,
Barbara Piccirilli

POETRY COCKSUCKING & REVOLUTION

From ancient times, faggots have faced many enemies: the family, church, state. Parents, preachers, psychologists and politicians have all betrayed us. Meanwhile, poetry and poets have been our bedside friends--consistently, even blatantly true to us. Pindar, Cavafy, Horace, Sadi (the most quoted poet in Arabic), Shakespeare, Rimbaud, Catullus, Whitman, Goethe, Verlaine, Holderlin, Hart Crane, Kleist, Lorca, Virgil--hardly a country or generation has been without a faggot poet.

This is no accident. Poets speak with their tongues; they make sex not only with their mouths but with their words as well. That is the essence of poetry--not some cross word puzzle/awkward muzzle--but a licking, liking, loving to feel where words come from. (As Bill Barber says a gay poem is one sexually attracted to other poems.) A tongue in your ear, not directions for baking a cake or orders for conquering Eretria or a demand for payment or an insinuation to spend money--poetry is from the tongue, direct sexual energy. Not directed, but direct existence; in essence, direct experience.

Poets have specifically supported gay liberation. Just leafing through Ian Young's faggot anthology, THE MALE MUSE, you read often of some poet getting a group going; Jim Egging in San Antonio, Paul Maurice in Guelph (Ontario), Perry Brass with COME OUT or Ian Young and UTHA. Yet poetry has been the poor country cousin in the gay liberation movement no less than in the movement to conquer space. Even among our own we live unwelcome. Nonetheless,

It is all here between
powdered legs &
painted eyes of the fairy
friends who do not fail us
in our hour of
despair. Take not
away from me the small fires
I burn in memory of love.

Such anyway has been the fate of poetry in FAG RAG. I recall some of the early struggles. At the start, one of our most prolonged debates extended around Jon Franck's "Steven." The poem describes "Sex with a lover/ who's grown still more beautiful/ Since we've lived our separate/ ways." Our argument concerned the politics of anal sexuality. "Steven" was denounced for defending rape, fucking and violence; the phrases "downward plunge," "squeezing" and "love-lunged" were supposedly male supremacist. After several meetings and many hours of hard arguing the poem was rejected.

In laying out that first issue much jest was made about John LaPorta's "Nightmare away from my Lover"--satirized in the office as "Nightmare away from my Mother." Lines were read (in the poet's absence) to many groans and laughter. Such as "a maggot in the/ Ax-handler's eyes..." and descriptions of "calling morphine down." Later I talked to John about why such a reaction and he said that most faggots were afraid to experience things like death, love, loneliness; our very lives were dedicated to hiding; in cutting open those wounds/realities, the poet exposed the shields. So people became very nervous.

POETRY AS MASS COMMUNICATIONS

if I may
treat this verse, for once
as the prose
of a newspaper article
or even a theoretical
on the nature
that magic
words are means of masses
in communication
with someone
in themselves
and that magic words are cheap
nowadays
but they should be free
I'm not even saying
that these words shouldnt
be put to music
and become a song, a
voice and forget print
altogether

--Charles River



Sativa photo by Jim Arnold

At the time of FAG RAG TWO, the aftermath of May Day was still strong. Maoist politics the rage, meeting regularly at the Red Book Store, we kept poetry in the back half of the paper and distinctly emphasized politics. A striking full page poem came in anonymously (from within our group) saying "their feelings/ways of relating to other people/... is what determines femme-identification./ being femme means rejecting a lot of things we thought were defining characteristics of our personalities/ it means taking on characteristics which may seem affected."

In those days, I think that question of "affectation" in movement rhetoric and the question of traditional poetry pressed a lot of us. We got together in the winter of 1971 with Aaron Shurin and called ourselves "The Good Gay Poets." David Eberly, Ron Schrieber, Charles River, John LaPorta, myself and on occasion John Wieners (incarcerated sometimes by Taunton State Hospital). Marge Piercy's dedication in HARD LOVING inspired us, "from the Movement, for the Movement." We met about every week up into the summer of 1972 and put together the centerfold of FAG RAG THREE--itself a little anthology of faggot poetry.

At one weekly gathering, David Eberly said, coming out as a poet is as hard as coming out as a faggot. We were all at different stages of coming out both as poets and as faggots. For myself this was the first time I ever felt comfortable about reading my poems to others or even thinking of myself as a "poet." So in coming as a poet into the move-

ment, I was like those faggots who entered gay liberation without the bushes, baths or bars.

Luckily I had had little if any contact with the "poetry world"--never having been exposed to an "English" course in college--and I came to see (shocking to me) that most poetry runs like any other Imperial Industry--grants, publications, books, anthologies, professorships and editorships involve competition, in-fighting, politics and distrust. Sativa said to me recently, "I dropped out of college and have become a poet but find it's the same system--worse even, poets aren't just satisfied with money and fame, they aim for more, immortality."

Beyond letting everyone know what you do in bed, coming out as a faggot poet directly challenges the Imperial Poetry System. Most establishment poets are faggots, but (as in the State Department, English Departments, industries) they hold their power because of their "discretion." Every faggot poet fights then on two fronts. You can't just be a queer poet, you must destroy the existing profession of poetry. You can't just be a good queer "citizen," you must destroy the state.

Ideally our poetry should serve and be part of the "movement." If it were itself a form of liberation, a way to find each person's voice, a communion of organizing discontents--then the relationship between gay liberation and poetry would be simple. But we live with some strong stereotypes and roles for poets which



Poetry, Cocksucking & Revolution

are meant to keep them incommunicado, isolated, irrelevant. Poets are supposed to be the ultimate individualists--dedicated to their art above all else--not serving the people.

Because of the split between traditional poet and poet in the revolution, many have been caught in a bind. They might want to be poets of the people (but alas the people don't want them). They might want to break down the forms but can't find an audience to cooperate. I saw an instance of this recently at John LaPorta and Charles River's reading for the Hundred Flowers Bookstore in East Cambridge. The florescent lights were replaced by candles; the poets sat on the floor; applause was discouraged because it would imply the poets were performers/slaves rather than message sharers. As much as they tried, the traditional form persisted: the people sat quietly and listened, participating little more than when they watched TV.

While poets might believe everyone is a poet, few poets themselves take much interest in the poetry of the "people"--i.e. other people. I noticed this in myself (and in a man of the people) recently in San Francisco's Dolores Park. On the way to a poetry reading, I sat on a bench to go over some poems and was approached by a man ("wino" stereotype looking; said he was 60) who insisted on joining me. I said o.k. want to hear one of my poems (perhaps secretly thinking that would send him away). Oh, no, he said, you listen to mine. He had it memorized and stood up (offered me a drink) and read an eloquent, lilting (he was, as he said, "Irish") song of his life. I held his hand silently and left for the reading (he wouldn't come).

Ideally a gay liberation paper should provide a place where outcasts like the man in the park can find a voice. Like Perry Brass said about another paper, "Working on... COME OUT! gave me the 'voice' that I needed, to know that what I had to say

My Legacy

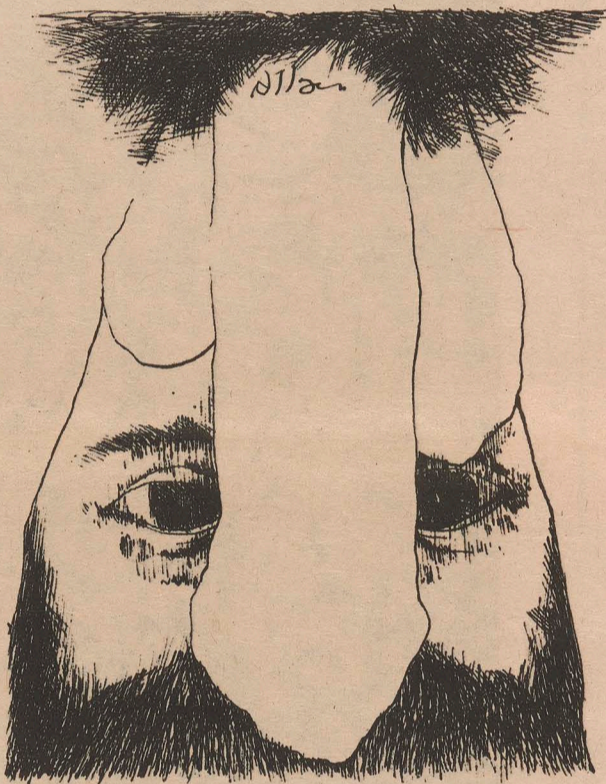
Reus Salvador

Somehow I hope this reaches you
for in this note, more than ink
is a life lived in sadness
with no hope of salvation.
I rise every morning
and greet the sun, stretching its rays
in to meet me.
Yet, somehow I know my life is empty.
I am living for nothing,
my life has no meaning.
I neither bloom, nor bear fruit
but only sway with the breezes
and wait for the strong winds to take me
and move me in rhythm.
But I can not bear fruit, I must not bloom.
I look down at my bed and think,
it's much too large for me alone
and how cold the nights become
when I know I am alone.
The pale moon knows my sadness
and so I open my veil for him
and let him pour his silver light
upon my waiting chest.

was part of a larger experience, an experience lived, expressed, and often suffered by many of my sisters and brothers who up to now have had to live in lies and shadows."

I think FAG RAG has partially succeeded in giving some people an otherwise unavailable outlet for their voice. What it has not been able to do is create a new kind of audience, new readers for poetry, new expectations for the poet. Some poets have been eager to be published in FAG RAG; yet they seldom if ever turn a hand to help distribute it, proof read, clean the office, etc. Nor do they always read the poems published there other than their own. Out of town poets could offer to help distribute and circulate FAG RAG; some do: Paul MacPhail (whose "Lamentations of a Faggot" appeared in FAG RAG TWO) and Kenneth Dudley (whose poems are in this issue have both given indispensable help from Seattle and Detroit. More often FAG RAG gets angry letters for not acknowledging receipt of some poems or correspondence as our "audience" makes traditional demands on us. Poets want FAG RAG to be just like the PARIS or PARTISAN REVIEW--only accessible to them.

But that wish is self-contradictory because it leads us in our liberation to imitate our oppressors. And impossible because no matter how much we might try to look straight (NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS, POETRY, KENYON REVIEW, etc.) we would still bear the stigma of our sexuality.



In the world of poetry, no "gay" poem can be "serious" unless it applies to the world of straight white men; otherwise it is supposedly less than universal. One poetry magazine rejected my LICENSE TO INNOCENCE by saying that "'gay' love is not accurate enough for one who attends to words." I guess everyone knows what the "accurate kind of love" is. The minister at the church where we have readings complained to me just before I was to read about all the "dripping cocks" in my poems. And at a rally of poets for McGovern, as Allen Ginsberg was reading, a male yelled "get serious man." (Allen was in fact reading a political poem without any particular homosexual content.)

What so much of the poetry establishment is "serious" about--their "profession," their "excellence"--is the way they deny, hide and distort experience. Male poets in fact have been and are for the most part "cocksuckers." But that part of their being-human-ness scares them shitless; their whole crossword puzzle, web of performance, system, design means to cut off and hide that (among other parts of their) experience. An all the more important subterfuge since faggotry is punishable by banishment, imprisonment, ostracism and enforced silence.

Worst of all, we do not take ourselves seriously--our own love, expression and experience. Some poets hesitate to give FAG RAG poems. Faggots do not themselves take FAG RAG "seriously." I read at a California college recently, where the gay professor (who had visited in Boston) had never heard of FAG RAG; and when he introduced me, he wouldn't mention the paper. For the reading I had

epithalamion

Undressing (you in the locker room) between metal doors I noticed (as I passed) out the corner of my eye but instantly forgot in a flurry of bodies then in that darkness spinning mirror scales all the light you sat near timid at the edge of the forest meadow. You do not know me hunted and yet hunter but we touch toe, ankle, calf, knee thigh fold and know together talk won't get us there. How my fright alerted me you were he growing up a few steps behind; the child I loved and continue to love afar even now your wedding taking place. The bride how beautiful! fawning guests fanning themselves with starched silken fans. No one talks about the groom his beautiful wrists, the hairs which ornaments that miniature forest of tree tops bending slightly with wind sluggish in summer. You are the July groom beauty no rose named for you. That room of dizzy lights could be anywhere yet in San Francisco both of us men making love didn't dare talk for fear recognition in this city of fantasy comes true.

Salvatore Farinella

St. Nicolaas Dag

--for Nico

i. past
it's far from the plains of Nebraska to the Pacific coast. the Donner party froze in the snows of Nevada mountains. some survived. when food ran out they ate each other. to live meant to be a cannibal. a natural act, an act of survival.

ii. present
you wear long dresses when I see you. buy new clothes to wear to work. manage a store of bright colors & a household every day. go out to bars & parties. sometimes you barely sleep. you are so many persons to me at night alone in bed I dream of your prismatic changes.

iii. now
the distance from Back Bay to Somerville is not so far. one river separates us. according to the Farmers Almanac it will be cold & wet all winter, & bleak in Boston without you. in March we can walk across the Charles. in April we can swim.

Ron Schrieber

House

for ron, nico, susan, tom, mary, tim

In the house in Boston

the turnips tasted like chicken
the water pressure in the showers
was fantastic

Every once in a while
impossibilities are revealed
as frauds this is what
happened here

Unaccustomed as i am
to public speaking
i would like to
thank you
for
it

Terence Winch

chosen some less explicitly cocksucking poems (simply because I'd just read the more explicit things elsewhere and wanted to be fresh); Sal Farinella who was reading with me, said that was the best reading he'd heard me give. I felt he was saying, straighter is better. Maybe I was just being paranoid--after all we were in Southern California.

FAG RAG has generally sidestepped the "serious" question; after all, we do like to be outrageous and hilarious--something little welcomed among the pompous, long-faced critics. But we do confront the question--more and more pressing now--of what poetry to print. In fact, we are publishing a poetry issue because so many contributions have accumulated. In an attempt to give a voice to as many faggots as possible, we have tried to publish at least one poem from every poet who thought of us. Unfortunately, we can't print everything we receive. We don't have the money, support or energy; consequently, for every poem printed about eleven have been returned.

I think we should reject the whole idea of criticism. What it is is an elaborate grading system where poets and poems are sorted like eggs for the market. Colleges teach this trading system, which is incomprehensible without years of study and mystification. We have simply tried to print poems that the five or ten of us meeting off and on have found speaking to us.

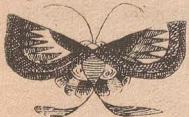
Beyond deciding what to put in the issue, I think there is sharp disagreement among FAG RAG people about the question of whether in fact, "Everybody is a Poet and Don't Know it." If you accept the idea that everyone is a poet (as I do), then you also have to give up a lot of ideas about poetry magazines, readings, books, papers, etc. The idea that one poet can or will or should speak for a whole people or a whole experience must go by the wayside. EVERYONE MUST SPEAK; EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO THE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION.

A jazz piano player/lover once told me that every musician has something to say. Some may have more; some less. But you ought to listen to them all and learn what you can. I think that's the way to be "serious"--not putting down some style/school/system, but openly listening, learning. We need this kind of "ear" among poets. Some of the most vociferous in saying "everyone is a poet" are the last to listen to anyone else's voice. Our ears need to be tuned to those silent screams permeating the voice of each faggot.

Speaking for myself, I think FAG RAG not only gives voice to those millions of silent screams but that we are also struggling to define a new sensibility, a new existence, to legitimize our lives, our love. We are part of a much bigger movement of many peoples in many places fighting against straight, white civilization. In her preface to "Laying Down the Tower," Marge Piercy wrote, "We must break through the old roles to encounter our own meanings in the symbols we experience in dreams, in songs, in vision, in meditation.... What we use we must remake. Then only we are not playing with dead dreams but seeing ourselves more clearly. The defeated in history lose their names, their gods and goddesses, their language, their culture."

What faggots need is to forge a "culture," "life-style," "sensibility" to lend gay energy to our lives. We need yet to find, have yet to forge forms correspondent to our experiences of being cocksuckers. I don't think anyone will find them in "coherence," "logic," "harmony" or other traditional standards of "excellence." Nor will we find them in mimicking heterosexual stereotypes of love and marriage. I think they will be found in some basic experiences--heart beat, head swell, eye lash flicker, stomach, intestine, lung, liver, pancreas or other secretions. Wherever, we all share in the search. Everyone is a poet, everyone has yet to live love--to dwell in their own energy, their own loving, their own being.

Charley Shively



isolate and understanding

Who can tell the straight from queer behind Brooks Brothers button down? In here clothes gone skin glistening we are all pigskin footballs. They dangle at their limits so much chicken skin

Isolate
and dew on orange peel
Isolate
and moon at harvest

brushing away clouds from her eyes: scrotums to the plain eyed realist. Romance is the view over shoulders of perfect youths caught turning the corner. We are searchlights in the labyrinth belly to belly lighting up brief moments of understanding through fingertips. I understand so much when (stranger that you are) your fingers hesitate before lift off and you leave in this dim corner me and dawn coming on with a passion.

Salvatore Farinella

2nd Attempt

roger told me he sat for days,
razor blade poised.
what had he meant?
the shaved face showed it:
at best he managed a cruel truce with sex.

the second attempt seemed more like death.
he slipped into the flat lip of sleep,
certain of rest.

David Eberly

Upon Mata Hari Paul Mall

To her only Postman

*With a daring green frequent payroll,
for Turkish adventures on parole,
without mercenary recoil baccarat toll*

*in and out of jail swing moritat dawn patrol
Cover soil dispersion of southern trekkish turmoil
a corky useless birds of prey empty sale.*

*Regretted foreign correspondence details jail
history, as too obvious literary trial
swoop concert hall crisis in terms rogue pale*

Sacrifice crossing customs anticipating mail.
Jacqueline Wiener

winterscape

in the heart of winter
storms break
one after the other

i have begun to notice the sky
the movement of clouds
white or gray in the morning
changing to brown and blue
at sunset

rain again today
another storm is moving in
along the coast

last night
a torrent
outside my window

as we lay together
in each other's arms.

n. a. diaman

27 feb 69



"acrobat-baraboo" Sculpture by Allyn



LNS

Convention Time, 1972

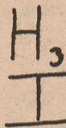
III.

I

Akua'ba of nickel-plated
Steel spelling the letters
OHI. The huge



discoid head upon the
slender neck of



augering

Sturdy frame for unborn um-
bilical appendage.

Caldermobile. Antithesis of
stone Motion in space.

Scales shifting, fish swimming,
shadows skimming.

Colorless crowds, crowded colors

On casuistical canvases done

Up in cavilling caviar camp.

Pinball on the pleasure principle.

Patience pacers for the

Modern moguls--counter-aristocracy

Of literati.

II

Shoeless darkness
Nylon re-enforced igloo of
Vinyl transluence.
Itinerant attendants.
Twice-doubled doors signalling
Sanctity of discrete air.
Waterbed "deja vu"?
Eerie surreality of sound
and sight and smell and
sense (No taste here! We're
beyond all that.)

Sound, Influence of sphere.
Quadriphonic quintessential
Santana. Electronic
Beehive buzzing with vapidly.
Laser beams rubber bands,
Handwrithing on the Wall.
Heliospherical leitmotif.
Shimmying rainbows like water-
Refracted.
Component choreographed Shiva's
Dance of Light, -Burning light
Blinking off or dead light
Blinking on?
Olfactory nuances wafted to
the Brain. Fragrance of hosed/
Hoseless feet headier than
Lemon.
Sensation of diluvian dimensions
Weightlessness.

Timelessness.

Senselessness.

Scheduled caesura.

CONVENTION TIME, 1972

6

A FEAR OF SILENCE

From a whisper
to a scream
From a flame
to an ember
From hot dicks in a dance bar
to hot meals I can afford
From eye shadow
to vitamin E
From a scream
to a whisper

What have I lost?
Have I gained?

Kenneth Tyrone Dudley Wise



SALUTE TO THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION
SONATA ON THE DEATH OF HITLER
FUGUE ON THE MARCH OF SATAN

memorial
memorial for mortal
memento, mortal
the pimento mortal in the portal
immortal mortal portal of brick and mortar
mnemosune
mnemonic
demonic
memento of morio
morio pimento the
regimento capitans
und
memorungenstrasses, bernhoff und
spitsbergen heidelberg
Memortal of immemorial memory
portal to through route to see sea through
immortal portal of brick and mortal mortar
red, pink, white, grey, piss-yellow
on the morning, immortal
memorial of
mortal
mortal
mortal
mortal. Thank you for remembering.

I AM A COMPUTER
I AM A COMPUTER
I AM A TELEPHONE
I AM A TYPEWRITER
I AM A COMPUTER TYPEWRITER BY TELEPHONE
GIVE ME YOUR NUMBER,
GIVE ME YOUR NUMBER,
MAY I DIRECT YOU TO MORIO PIMENTO?
DO YOU KNOW THE CAPTAIN?
WE HAVE FILES.....

John LaPorta

to an artist

sometimes you dog my sleep
and then
i can't help thinking of you
i can't help but wonder how you are
how badly did i hurt you when i said
i could not accept blind adoration
or the relationship you craved

can i ever communicate
the horror of that hot afternoon in your studio
when i told you i could not play god
Youth incarnate and lover
i could not pretend to a vision
that you desired to see
how desperately i wanted to forgive you then
were you but to admit i was human

your supplication humiliated me
mocked the illusions i'd once held
at twenty-four i knew too well
the corruptions of my generation
and my own mortality
you did not need to apologize
for your generation's crimes against mine
your beauty was enough
you transcended the stereotype
of aging faggotry

should i apologize for your illusions
that i was bigger than life
wouldn't i have been crueller had i lied
and declared cynically that i loved you
no
i could never live a fantasy
such a fantasy
for anyone

John Kyper

The "Dome" Creator encountered
Relieving the sentry at
The portals of His Citadel
Soon admiring my Acapulco
Artifact from the Golden
Age in museum staff demi-John.
One year Yale -- early
self-trade from the Major
League. (I this past five
less half John
three lies believed and he
Ten years Berkely (from
Old Eli free?!)

Hot

He "Lot" in hom-demi-mondese,

But Platonic were we
Sativa drifts to "Dome"

anew, Ponderous pipe

Postulate proliferate:

Participant pleasure

Positive philosophy of

Art his - (the American's) story

Here not Miami.

IV

Now new cryptic-captioned
"Dome" day dawns. Mellow
mellifuous mood . . .

uh-ahh

uh-ah-h-h

uh ah-oh-h-h-

uh-oh-h-h-h-h

uh Oh-h-h-h-hm

uh-oh-h-h-h-hm-m-m-m

Oh-h-h-h-h-h-h-h-m-m-m-m

Eureka! "The Sound of Breath"



Sativa Sagittarius Pinxit

poetry is not fantasy, cant keep the night
awake again cant release the beast in man
cant expose the vision plain cant rip off veils
when veils are not
nor spread the tales of sailor men
nor their legs when home again

fall down streets of towns unknown, the price
is still quite ripe suck the cares and
rim them slow as you wait and walk the wharf
for theres drunken nights and heavy tricks
and pin-ball machines busted flat by
heavy hands in a cow-boy heart and a
bulls-eye never found

kiss away tomorrows palm so drunk that one
cant walk drop the pants in shore-leaves
shining the war, the bunk, the toast

and wake the night within is man
a sailor smile is showing
smile his buck tooth salt-lick smile
the beast is captured born a son to
spread his legs and home again

Keith Craighead

This is my first time in Mississipi

It seems that some part of
me has been here before.

I think it is that part of me
that I have incorporated of my fathers
in myself.

The chilling harmony.

The plantation
The patriarchy

Scenes from Detroit, Boston, S.F., D.C.,
points north and west.

Where is the strange fruit
for me to suck.

Where are the black men for me to fuck.

No connection
No exchange
cut-off

Kenneth Tyrone Dudley Wise

Photo of Kenneth Tyrone Dudley Wise by Charles River



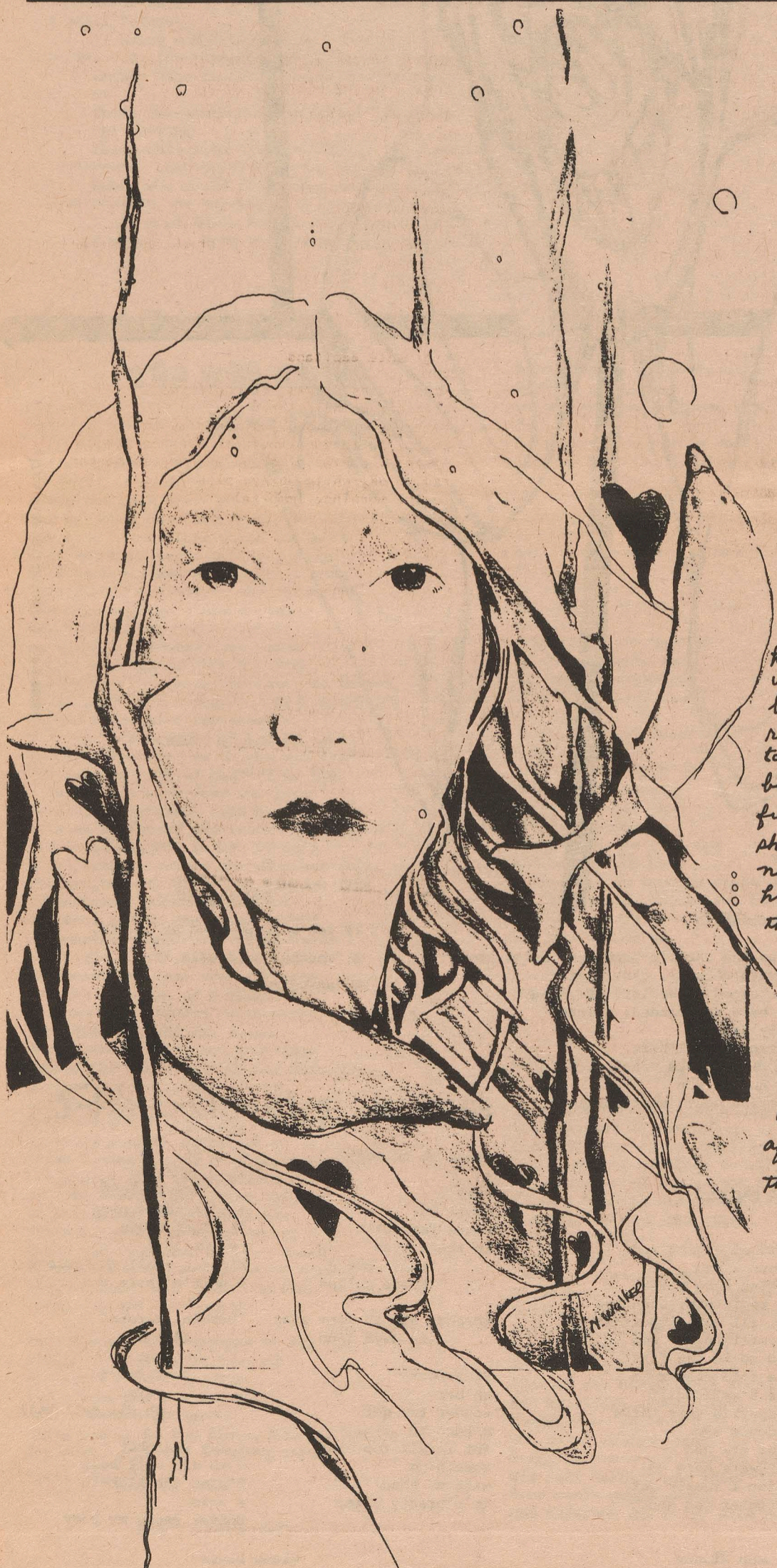
THE SUPERMARKET

Can I sell you some meat sir?
Oxtails maybe? or maybe a rump roast?
I have a special on tube steak today.
You name it,
I got it.
And if I haven't got it,
give me a second
and I'll get it for you.
Whatever you need
I've got.
I'm your nigger
in the alley
I'll sell you hole,
I'll give you soul.
Yea, I've got rhythm,
spread for the orchestration.
I'll stoop for the mother load.
Oh it's rough trade you want huh!
Come here-white bitch
taste of these fine black loins
feel of my silken skin.
Smell my black ass you mother-fucker
Fear me-love me
touch me
see me

The market is flooded.

Kenneth Tyrone Dudley Wise

A SOON TO-BE-RELEASED-FUCK-FLICK



COURT APPEARANCE

their bodies
flowers
tennis stems
teaspoon gardens
labeled tears
morning glory runners
table roses or at
sunset wild bird
of paradise shoe scuff
back blade leaves
suntan rib work
lilies grow waist high
wild borders set on
high monument towers
how many children
grow gardenia cornices
fashion station for
simple marigolds in ivy
following a
tendrill game

charley shively

hearts of satin
into deep blood
blond mead green
revery of yellow
tones to button
bubbles search
fins finials
shark skin nose
noiseless parting
his hair speechless
this wild tutor
pants
into lips says
'come to me
big fish and
game gambol
circular weeds
after your eyes
there is no rest
we swim forever
Charley shively

Lands End
shortly after dawn
i took a remote path
busy daydreaming
poetizing the moment
when i saw
a long haired
beautiful dark
man
crouched next
to a ravine
sketching an
intricate branch.

he smiled and
nodded....i paused
long enough to
evaluate that a
smile doesn't
necessitate lust
i continued on
the path
basking in the
memory of his smile
and hairy chest.

Soon i heard
a rattling....
it was the artist
running toward
me with his
supply box and pad.

he embraced me
a full sensual
kiss on the mouth.

the scene became
blurred with
his kisses
his chest/stomach
cock
a fantasy of skin
and touching
and the cool morning.
i couldn't catch
my breath but
i caught his load
as my own crotch
erupted

I lay there
my blood rushing.
he said, "wow"
and disappeared
into the trees
just as my
eyes begin
to focus
and the taste of
his come lingered
in my mouth
until i forgot and
lit a cigarette.
larry seth stewart

Only because we are this close, and
so many walls have fallen between us,
do we meet on the rubble inbetween
and hurt each other so with our love.

Michael Shernoff

A Night, A Bridge, A River

(Beneath Brooklyn Bridge)

Spansion and wave
river cat eyes bobbing
wind whipping shirt-tails
frosting the chalice of beer

Poems colliding with river tugs
tankers answering in epics
Brooklyn lay down
its blanket of shadow
June snapped the blood

Teeter-totter shouting...
"I can hold you higher, higher.
Why don't you grab a star!"
Swings made dizzy
puppets of spring ballooning
fairy-land lights leading the way
through gossamer streets

Home-way you broke off an elm twig
you charged like a Sioux
striking bare legs with wet kisses of leaves

Morning marigold burst against
the wall where the elm
hung crucified with scotch-tape
the last leaf hung happily exhausted
last leaf trembling about to tumble

I searched the sheets, under pillows
the telephone screamed in the sunshine
like the bite of a rabid dog

"I left when you fell asleep.
I left with the taste of your hair in my teeth.
I left the crying elm on the wall."

Now I remember cheap hotels crowd
with broken lilies, ladies, raisins,
who once teetered spring
on the poems of a windy night...
welfare clients of love.

Maurice Kenney

"Little Boy"*

the
ant ran
along through
grass and sand
trying to find
it's home
buried
by
an
infant's hand.....

* "Little Boy" was the nickname
of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

Steven Abbott

Letter to the Man I Love

To answer all your questions
Let me say:
This is the long night and

I do not want to be alone.
This is the warm night, this
Is the blue night; blue as

Air across your body as it sleeps.
This is the soft air, this is
The soft hope; hope

Of seasons that the body knows.
This is the season of the arm and leg;
The tenderness of thighs.

This is the gentleness of tongues,
The supple grace of lips
That speak the words the nipples

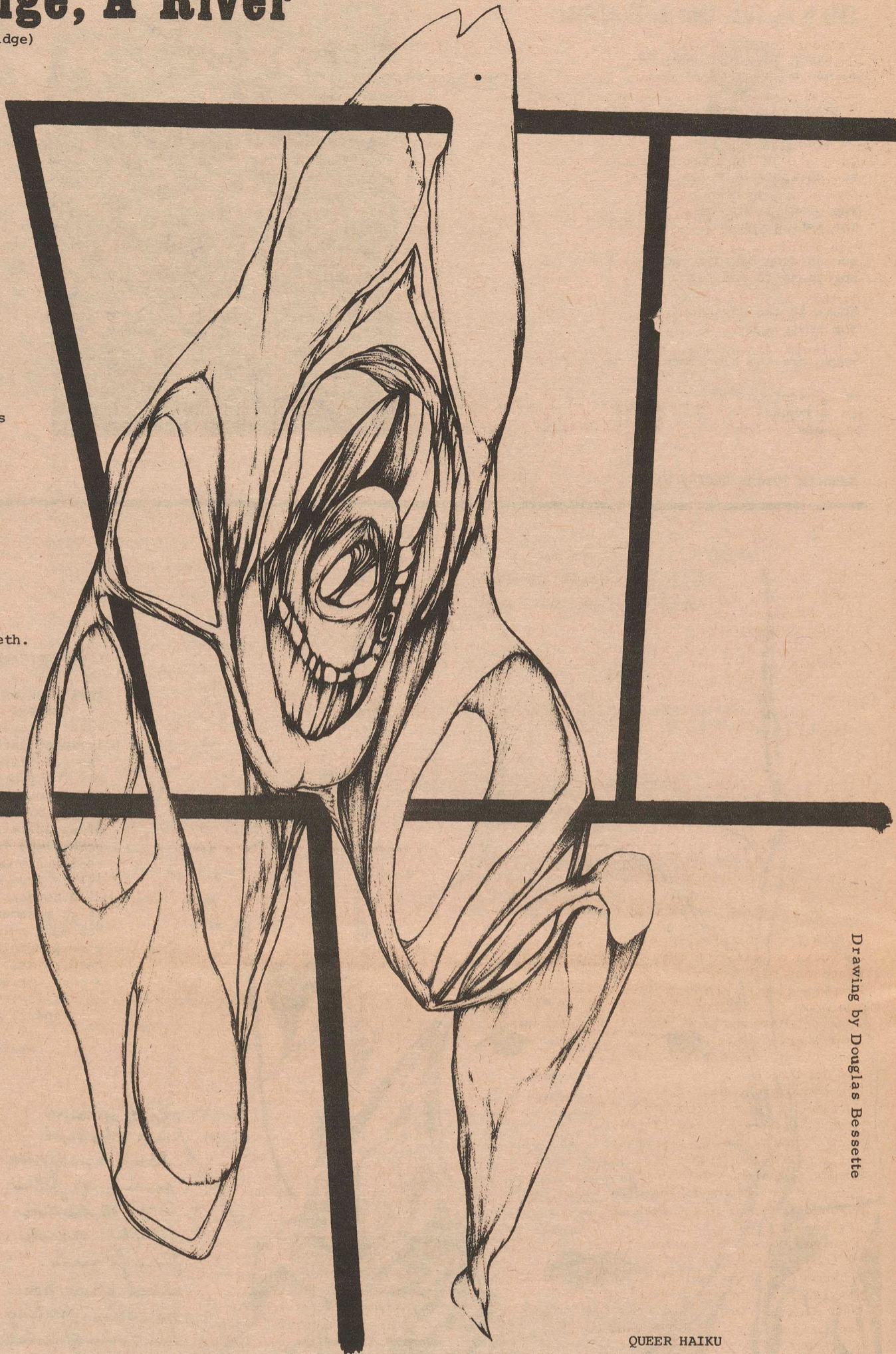
Want to hear. This is the magic
Invocation : Let me slow undress*you,
Let me know the sorrow of the shirt

As it leaves the shoulder, departs
The arm; the easy knowledge
of the pant leg, the quiet

Touch of socks upon your ankles.
This is the mystery, the word
My hand would speak.

This is the song my arms would offer
To your chest, the invocation that
My eyes deliver : ah, love.

8 Phillip L. Allen



Drawing by Douglas Bessette

The New Bar-Mitzvah

In air gelid as the rabbi's hand, the brist room
tightened us with whiskey, cantillation.
As the baby screamed to be left one, you,
your left arm bare and banded, fainted
into your curly hair.
The others noticed but I hurt
to raise your circumcized young cock
bright as an August sun
and make my goyish mouth your foreskin.

Michael Lynch

FATHER AND SON BANQUET

They were finished eating and
we just got there, you
bastard, counting shoe boxes,
checking cash registers, ordering
people around, all more important
than little humiliated me who
didn't want to go in the first
place eating a cold dinner in
the dark while a well-built
 juggler in a sparkle vest threw
fire batons around and
you made Mother cry and
now I wish you were here so
I could tell you I really got
off on that juggler you son
of a bitch.

Owen Wilson

QUEER HAIKU

If you were penised as an oak,
I, mouthed as a well,
Metaphysics?

--Louie Crew

Speak uh th soft

Speak uh th soft
a
part
meant th
young fags want
in there eyes
there bodys
there smiles

through all th warm eyes
th warm lips

Pray four
th bar
tender two get
a hard-on
for it all too mean
something
with my head
it's pretty clear

give me
three
days alone
+ it's there nice
th clear brain
pee pull
Kick-in + all th variety
+ shit's there too

'Heroin, Heroin'
sd sum
where
that sweet
warm
uh all call hall

i say star-boy
+ th all call hall
b'gins tuh kick-in
a hole
shiver racks my body

Glenn Davis

Blues for A.J. and Me

i almost loved you kid
with your prussian mentality
and your antediluvian morals
and your italian eyes
in whose reflections
i still myself.
i'm not glad you left
but i'm glad you didn't stay
to torture me
how could i have known
that i frightened you.
days of words and incantations
with mornings of certainty
and carnival colored evenings
that put my ego to bed.
in this very strange place
in the very best of times
hoping to hear you again
and laugh at your screams of innocence

as you curse me
along with every possible thing
that i stood for.
now it seems from where i lie
so peaceful and unhurried and incredibly dull
chasing fireflies for a little light
pausing to pull down the shades
buying expensive (but stylish) sunglasses
throwing away the candles
then wondering in my foolishness
why it's so terribly dark in here.
i see no need
to apologize for feeling so morose.
when there was love and understanding
didn't i like the sun?
the smile on my face
hasn't been replaced by a sneer.
i'm not attempting fashionable cynicism
just patiently wondering

why i have to go through this again.
you're doing fine now, but you still dream
of mountains and streams and Attila the Hun.
i guess you remember my address
you aren't really alone like me
ah A.J.
i don't like being alone
who knows what we might have found
or what we lost.
thank you
for giving me something to believe in
i surely had much fun.
if from someday and somewhere
you'd like to come see me again
please don't my poor fool
i'm not here anymore.

Jim Jones

I DON'T WANT TO BE A MAN

If being a man obligates me to mistreat those who are weaker than
I, I shall refuse.

If to be a man I must emulate those who are neither good nor wise,
I shall refuse.

If being a man is no more than the striking of poses--the shadow
rather than the substance of strength--I shall refuse.

Rather than be afraid of appearing to be weak, I will show myself
as I am.

Those who would have me forego the delight I take in my individuality
will not succeed.

Those who would have me despise the feminine virtues of charity, grace,
tenderness, and wariness at the prospect of battle will not succeed.

Those who would force upon me drab uniformity in speech, manners,
acoutrements, or hairlength I will resist.

I am among those forces now assembling for war against the evil and
the ignorant who have been tyrants for too long.

Jerry Heft

About the trade

who was a man

Miss Frankie

Before I touch, his nipples are
as coats of mail--Oh that! my dear,
since our park meet, his other mem-
ber has been hard and throbbing loud.
The body craves that which the mind
does not have sense to give, you see!
As I snake-tongue and my teeth chew
from turgid tit toward the throat,
his lips moisten a moment and
his tongue, she dances avidly,
so timidly retreats, and hands
direct my head to suck his dick.
That's why he's here, he says--so there!
While mouth and tongue and dick and balls
become acquainted intimately,
his legs are wrapped around my neck.
My hands massage his thighs and duff,
His muscles--all of them--they are
a quiver not with fear but joy.
My tongue expresses from his meat
between his spuds and trick-tracks down
his inner thighs, so hot so soft.
Such pleasure wracks but does not ruin.
The tongue--sly girl--she tangoes from
a rendezvous with the back of
one knee and up the water-smooth
and muscle-crammed leg while hands
glissando up the other leg--
Oh loose! the legs they fly open
so like the arms of a widow,
who has been grieved while young and virgin,
upon greeting her man again.
The tongue obliges and boogalooos
around the trembling rim now knowing
another riddle of the sphinx.
And how could I ignore those hands?!
They would not stay upon my breasts
or in my hair or on my ass.
Those fingers would not stroke my toit
but wander like the restless child
or like children or flies returned
to worrisome, verboten sweets.
Those hairy hands tarry awhile
where put, and then scurry toward
my dick--and why?! And as we screw
they journey down again and play
intensely and contentedly.

And he would have charged me for him
seeking to take advantage of
my need but ignoring his.
And I remember now the moth,
unlike madama butterfly,
flies freely to the flame, however bright,
for what it is and no-thing more.

April 17, 1974

Craig A. Reynolds

Cross Town Lover

Randy spends the whole day
Picking up people.
In the evening he comes home
To me.
He's very good at his work,
Because he likes driving a cab.
People like his trip.
He treats them fare,
And knows why they leave
Big tips.
Last night we went to bed
Early.
To sleep, late.
His passengers don't know
How late.
They just know he sits
In the driver's seat
And enjoys himself.
They don't know that
I'm there.
In the "empty" front seat
Next to him.
Holding his heart
Holding his mind.
After they get out
At their stop,
Randy hands me the tips
And on the way home
I buy flowers for the night stand
By the candles which burn late
For the people we meet
Who don't know us.

Donald Stanley Meuse

summer at twenty

Recalling the salt sea sounds
And the bask air bringing
The boy's scent and carrying
The flavor of his body to the
Celebrations of the August boardwalk,
Where I held his adolescent life
Beneath, between the piers,
amidst the piles__
Sunken into a cool, evening
Sand that ran a grey tint
Of dampness and moist pleasure,
Rumpling in his day old clothes,
And withdrawing his patched
Cut away jeans to expose
His white bottom bare
Against the burnt umber torso,
And bristling brown legs,
Pressing my anxious hard love against his
Sun saved melons__and
Gripping his agent cock to the taste of
His salt suction and whiff of
Sand smelt puppy youth
And fragrant dry hair, warm simmering

Thomas Nashe

Used to Smile

used to smile when word first
started circulatin bout gay liberation
used to smile while gatherin
at rap sessions in this jungle/this prison
this jungle of concrete and steel
used to smile and silently condone
somma my brothers' put-down-rap
bout gay liberation bein an endless quest
for mister-mister nuts
used to smile cause me believin
in somma my brothers' jive reactions
couldn't see no sense in strugglin
for society's permission to bust
mister-mister nuts
since i'd already boldly ruffed-off my human
right to bust mister-mister nuts
used to smile mostta de time
cause i thought dat i was bein revolutionary
when i kept my mouth shut bout
gay oppression/bout human love
cause somma my brothers had told me
dat gay liberation was irrelevant/was unrevolutionary
used to smile mostta de damn time
til i got hip dat wasn't ah damn thing funny/wasn't
revolutionary
bout people bein oppressed cause they loved
cause they perfectly loved mankind

eusi profile

SCREAMS

Once a pair of dainty queens.

One wore blues; the other greens.

While basement shopping at Filenes,

Fought o'er a pair of aqua jeans.

Tugging and shouting like two pre-teens,

Four-letter words rolled off in reams,

Until the denim, so it seems,

Gave up the fight and split its seams!

Donald Stanley Meuse

LIVES OF THE POETS

LIVES OF THE POETS #3

STEPHEN JONAS, JOHN WIENERS, RENÉ RICARD, with the participation of SCOTT REICHARD, recorded by GERARD MALANGA.

Friday 30:1:1970 boston

GM: That's a poster I sent out for poetry readings. I don't know if I sent you one or not. RR: Turn it over so you can see the photograph. Open it up. All the way. (TV sounds) You still have the cat. SJ: He's here under the table near the chair in there. This is a nice brochure. JW: He never got one reply from it. SJ: Well you know you say it on such a grand scale that...that a... GM: It scares people. SJ: No, the poetry audiences aren't wide enough to cope with anything like it. William Carlos Williams estimated there were ten people in the United States that could be communicated to by a poem. GM: Oh no, no. I know what you mean, but there's a whole level that relates to what you're saying also in terms of...of...it has to do with politics of course, in terms... SJ: Do you know Charles Henri Ford? GM: Oh yes, he's a very close friend of mine. SJ: I've admired his poems for years (GM: Oh, really?), the ones in the New Direction series they've published. He's an excellent poet. RR: I think that your *Earache [Exercises for Ear, London, Ferry Press, 1968]* book is one of the best poems I've ever read (SJ: You do?); it's without a doubt the most lovely (GM: I bought a copy down in N.Y.) an exciting book... And "that other queen," really! Is that supposed to be Adrian?...[Adrian Cathcart, René's cousin & Boston poet, *Exercises for Ear, # 46*]

"byronic"

rené &
that other queen

described scott's
profile
acute

as my lover's
nose is

non-
theless a brief
interruption

occurs just

below at the
occipital shelf
meaning

i suppose
he is anything
short of greek



Photo of René Ricard by Gerard Malanga

"René and that other queen"? Is that Adrian in the poem? SJ: I don't know (RR: In which you mention my name?) Oh, I don't quite understand that myself René, it was written...I started writing it in the South End when I was living over there and I took the subway and came home to the Hill, Pemberton Square at John Broderick's and Anthony Senna's apartment. So when I got there Anthony had a sitter and he was painting so I went into the back bedroom and finished the poem. The Chinese characters

This conversation was taped only a month before Stephen Jonas' death (perhaps suicide) from an overdose of Doriden. Jonas was born in Georgia as Rufus Jones; in New York City he called himself Puerto Rican; in Boston, Portuguese. He was a gnostic, grand poet whose work is largely unpublished and unappreciated today. (See FAG RAG NINE/GAY SUNSHINE 22.) John Wieners' work should be well known to FAG RAG readers (see review in FAG RAG FIVE). René Ricard's set of poems, "The John in Sterling," collected writings from the Yale Tea Room, appeared in GAY SUNSHINE 21. Scott Reichard is now studying to be a doctor. Warhol superstar Gerard Malanga was interviewed in GAY SUNSHINE 20; his latest book *INCARNATIONS (POEMS 1965-1971)* will be published in October by Black Sparrow Press.

that were on Broderick's wall were in the poem but they're not from the Chinese text. I was misguided. I thought...the poem says the Chinese text of the classics, but it wasn't.

It was just commercial Chinese writing. RR: . But the one about Scott's nose? (pause) Talk about the Scott's nose? SJ: Oh, that one. RR: Byronic? I remember the evening at your house; it was Adrian and I at your house. SJ: Oh, these are from the *Exercises*. RR: Right! Right! But oh, I don't like the *Transmutations*; they're too thick. I like the light, gay, you know, pleasant exercises... JW: Did Scott leave any pills yesterday? SJ: No, they're all over at Prescott's [Prescott Townsend obituary in FAG RAG FIVE]. RR: Is he living there? SJ: First floor, ya. RR: In the living room or on Phillips Street? SJ: No, he's living on Lindall Place. He had the top floor but he was staying over here... RR: In the garrett? SJ: Yes, some queens, some friends of Anthony Senna's moved in the apartment and Scott's mad because... RR: So, they displaced Scott for that. How's he paying the rent? SJ: Well, he has welfare. RR: Welfare! He's completing his schooling with welfare? Can I do that? SJ: Sure. You file and--well he has a doctor... RR: A psychiatrist? SJ: Yes, he writes scripts for him and everything and every six months renews the welfare thing for him so he can get... (pause) RR: You're Cancer? SJ: No, Sagittarius. (Scott Reichard walks in.) SR: Hi. SJ: Do you know Gerard Malanga? SR: Hi. SJ: These people came over here, with this Jewish kid about one magic evening night [Steve Jonas held affairs called "Magic Evenings" for many years.] so they asked me for a manuscript and so I thought they really wouldn't publish it anyway, so I gave them one of the "Foundation Orgasms" and in a letter he sent it back returning it saying he couldn't publish it. I broke up; I couldn't stop laughing. GM: Couldn't republish it? SJ: He stopped on the Ant's Forefoot "No. 29 Orgasm" and he thinks they are all that type poem--completely harmless...but this is one in the series of the Kennedy-Lincoln Money Bankers Orgasms By God Denominations that I gave him and he said it was too much; especially the racist problem in it. SR: René! RR: Well, you didn't even say hello. You know Scott just recognized me this very second? Poor demented creature! SJ: Someone wants me--they're going to do a memorial issue [Caterpillar, #12] for Jack Spicer. JW: Oh, Clayton Eshleman. SJ: Ya, and he wants me to do a thing on Spicer, but I just can't sit down, I'm no good at prose.

GM: Clayton Eshleman is so...he's like Bob Wilson [NY bookseller]. RR: He is, right. SR: (on the subject of teeth) These cemented in, Steve? SJ: One tooth is joined to another tooth and caps are put over it. GM: That's what I had with mine. RR: He got them done at a clinic. GM: Oh, well he had his done free! SJ: The tooth is ground down to practically nothing and the two front teeth they grind down to the level of the gum line. GM: They're like a tee-pee. I spent...mine cost \$1,500. SJ: And I've just begun. They've finished the lower half, this was the most expensive. Is yours all gold underneath in the back? GM: No. I have a minor bridgework gold on the bottom; then I have a silver jacket on the top of one tooth. They got to do this side because there is a missing tooth there. SJ: I had to go to City Hospital for two days while they killed the nerve. They used that hydro-drill. GM: They burn it out? It's so painful. SJ: Did you get a paradental too? GM: What's that? SJ: Where they cut the gums. GM: The two teeth where I didn't get root canal; they would've had to pull it out. RR: I have a cavity. SJ: I had such bad gums that he had to do an operation on my whole mouth. Scraped the bone. GM: Yeah, that get's kind of messy...kind of painful. SJ: What, do you have your tape recorder? GM: Yes, dear. Doing my autobiography. It's called "Immortality & Me," a title suggested to me by the young movie star, Genevieve Waite, star of the film *Joanna*. RR: The microphone's

the size of his cock. GM: It is not! My cock's much bigger than the microphone, René. RR: You should see the microphone with a hardon. GM: That's something else... (to cat) pussycat...Did you see my pictures of Charles Olson in the *Boston Globe*? SJ: No, I didn't. I just ignored anything I saw in the papers about Charles. GM: They weren't too bad, really. RR: (inspecting bookshelves) Where are the poems of Frank O'Hara? That's a fabulous book. I read that recently--the Ouspensky book. SJ: I owned that book jointly with Jan Balas. GM: Oh, really? We spoke to Jan yesterday. SJ: She called me last week... RR: You've got the funniest books. (laughter) GM: *The Gnostics and their Remains*. RR: Oh, do you believe him? GM: Charles had a lot of books like this, too. SJ: Charles was a Gnostic. GM: Yeah? SJ: So was Gerrit Lansing, Jack! GM: I had the greatest time with Charles when I went up there to interview him. [Lives of the Poets, #1: an interview-dialogue with Charles Olson, *Paris Review* #49, 1970] And I shot films of him. We just blew each other's minds. Incredible time, SJ: I heard about it. I was in Gloucester that day when you were taking pictures. GM: You were? Well, why didn't you come over? SJ: Well, I thought it would be too many people invading Charles, so I didn't go over. GM: Oh, no, there was only Harvey Brown, Gerrit Lansing,

WHITE RABBIT PRESS

Like as with the number

One

Which I cannot praise too much

First impression(his)

Snow(mine)

and hound tracks one

'round in heaven's year

Still (small i)

Joy & low ceiling good

fortune

Knowledge a break-in-the-night-close

Bloodstain Masks

'guts

I tell you that

Gypsy

behind the Driver sets

all of us

off onto

Dark Journeys

There's paradox

for you !

Better yet Returning the

old year redeems

Michael,

the Sea and Other Pieces

Image Coming together

Link Flowers (the common

all summer)

White Rabbit

Press on

Promiscuous and

Come again again

Thank you for

so much'

In

--Knight errant

Stephen Jonas



Photo of John Wieners & Gerard Malanga by Gerard Malanga

and myself. And it would have been perfect with you there, because Harvey and Gerrit didn't say very much. Charles had to do most of the talking. I mean--he was great you know, but it would have been fabulous if you had been there too. RR: (comment aside) Library of Alexander! SJ: These are wonderful (referring to the poems of Jack Spicer) Are these the last poems? GM: No, these were written ten years ago. JW: Robin Blaser's getting three volumes of his work published. GM: Yes, by Harcourt Brace and World. Isn't it divine? SJ: That's good. GM: Scott, what school are you going to? RR: New England Prep. How much is tuition? SJ: \$1500 isn't it? SR: No, \$600. RR: And they pay all that for you? GM: Have you been writing much, Steve? SJ: No, not much. GM: Are you going to have another book published soon, though? SJ: Well, Jack Wieners has manuscripts for a proposed book that Harvey Brown's going to do, but I don't think Harvey will do it. GM: Harvey's going to do a book of mine. JW: He says he'll do a lot of books. GM: But he keeps on rejecting a lot left and right. JW: I saw the photographs of René's wedding yesterday. It's just so beautiful. SJ: The wedding of Miss Destiny (laughter). RR: No staircases in this balcony. SR: Did you marry money? Are you a wealthy man? RR: Heavens no! JW: They live in a \$200 a month pad. SR: Oh yeah? Sounds good. RR: Well, so what. It's the only house you can get in the South End. SR: Well, I didn't say "so what." RR: ...unless you want roaches. SJ: I did my best work in the South End. RR: You did? SJ: Sure. RR: Well, you were fun then. You used to cook. SJ: So many things happen in the South End that you can get poetry out of. And Beacon Hill is absolutely divine. JW: Well, you lived in back of a vine-covered cottage. GM: You have to adjust yourself to your new environment. SJ: Well, see, I haven't been on the Hill for over 10 years. RR: I hate the Hill. I think it's over-rated. SJ: It is over-rated. RR: All those stupid little kids with methedrine amphetamines walking down the street. GM: Whispering mescalene, mescalene under their breath. RR: And they crawl out of the sewers there's no sex, no nothing; they just sit around and get high. If I'd foreseen this I would've never been a hippie as long as I was. GM: That's right, you were a hippie for a long time. They're eternal hippies any way. RR: Perennial ones. Do you like the youth of today? SJ: Yes. RR: You do? Then you're so grand. Once a month! It depresses me. RR: I've known Steve for twelve years and he hasn't changed. SJ: Twelve years! GM: Ever since René was a tot. RR: I've been here since I was eleven. SJ: Really? Where? RR: I saw you in the Purity Supreme Market stealing chuck... SR: Stealing what? RR: Chuck steak, and I said, "Oh...how glamorous! That's what I want to be when I grow up--a chuck queen. SJ: I used to steal chickens under my coat. RR: I wasn't one of them. May I have a cigarette Steve? SJ: Ya, sure. RR: Do you have money to buy more? SJ: Ya. RR: This time buy some Camels, they smoke so much better...James Polk! You have without doubt the giddiest... SJ: Those are American heroes! RR: Your books are camp, there's no getting around it. SJ: You can't know anything about the Jackson era unless you

know something about Van Buren, Polk, Calhoun... RR: and Jefferson--well, let me tell you, you could have written all those poems without having read one of those books. SJ: No! Exercises for Ear are deeply embedded in the Confucian doctrine. RR: Confusion? SJ: Confucian doctrine. RR: Confusion; exactly!... and really you would have been much less confused if you hadn't read Confucious. SJ: Oh, René! (about to lose his patience with all of us) I didn't read Confucious, I studied him. RR: Oh, my goodness, the hair's breath of distinction. Oh, Steven you have always overestimated my... SJ: Well, the Confucian doctrine is very central to the comprehension of any of my writings. RR: Organisms, yes, those horrible Organisms! (laughter) SJ: But denominations, No! (laughter) RR: But your other things are pretty ones, the decorative pieces; the set pieces are much prettier--they read like theater, they're just gorgeous--some of the nicest dialogue and monologue... SJ: They're not just pretty poems though, they're deep. RR: Don't give me that garbage! Do you put yourself down? SJ: They only put you on to think it's very easy but it isn't. RR: It depends on the auditor. They're deep to some and they're light to others. The lighter the person, the lighter the poem. SJ: I don't know. RR: I mean profundity is a subjective perception. SJ: And then there are certain poems in there that deal with the economic situation, too, which calls for some knowledge about the American history of economics. RR: Yes, right, like the one beginning, "34¢ for a loaf of bread." What is this world coming to? Ya, I read that one, too. I loved it. (laughter) GM: How many books did you have to read to write that? RR: No, but really, I can't tell you how much I've been praising that book and how pleased I was you published that. SJ: I'm glad you did because Poetry Chicago panned me. RR: They're fools. They don't understand you...well, nobody... GM: They didn't pan me. SJ: They know, the woman that writes the review was a Communist. JW: Margaret Randall? RR: Oh, they're so rhetorical...so rhetorical--and I like the very very spoken ones, you know the ones I can hear you in. SJ: Yes, but I have one that is Dionysian rites located in the South End. RR: That was good. Did you just write that? SJ: No, that's a long time ago. That's one I sent to Duncan McNaughton. Did you send him a poem yet? JW: No, I'm trying a book together for... GM: What's Duncan McNaughton doing? SJ: He's doing a new magazine called (JW: Father!) Father. Oh, I'll send him some poems I wrote to my father. JW: He wants New England born people. GM: He only wants New England born people? JW: For the first issue. GM: Well, I was born in New England. JW: Why, tell him that! RR: I was born in New England. JW: Where were you born--oh, maybe Massachusetts Hospital? GM: I was born in a chic part of Boston. RR: Lying-In Hospital. GM: Now they have to publish me. I'm blue blood (JW: Were you born in Boston?) RR: You were fuckin' born in the Bronx. Just open your mouth and everyone can tell. GM: Tell them I was born in Boston (gleeful scream). RR: Oh, you know we wrote...we wrote sets...oh we won't tell you what, Steve, you'll get all flipped out and start stomping and breaking

furniture over our heads because you're so academic...GM: Oh, we just wrote a letter to Poetry Magazine. RR: Well, we wrote Charles Olson's last conversation. GM: Oh, René, you cunt. SJ: You did? RR: Yes. SJ: You're sending it to Poetry Chicago? RR: Yes, (laughing) we're sending it to Poetry Chicago. GM: Oh, I wrote a piece on the Orgasm poems and René helped me on it. RR: I did? What did I say? GM: Yes, remember? On the transmutations. RR: Oh, the criticism. GM: I never got it together but as soon as I do I'll send it to Steve. RR: That was an important book. SJ: The difficulty that comes in the Orgasms is because there's so many voices. There's no one person, one voice going all the way through saying something. One piece of dialogue is set off against another piece of spoken dialogue. And if you know history you can know whose dialogue is what. Any "body" discount is downright inequity and if I wrote and said this is my Will, the American people would say I died insane. Now that pops up in my Orgasms. "Now who in the Hell said that?" Well, if you know John Adams--his writings--well you know that John Adams said it. JW: I guess you would. SJ: So you build up a Tower of Babel out of dialogue against dialogue. It's one of the most difficult ways of writing--to use dialogue. RR: Eclecticism? I don't think it's so difficult. SJ: Well, that's the way the Orgasms are made up. RR: I know that's why they're very difficult because they don't have your voice in them. Except an occasional exclamation...ejaculation. SJ: They're all persons, they're all persons. I mean I'm behind a mask speaking for someone else. But people are misled that read them; they think they are my personal opinions. RR: I like when you read the "Mask of Comedy." Oh, come on! You are the most dogmatic individual in poetry today. But it's like reading the Pope! SJ: Oh no! (RR: It's like reading the "Rape of the Pope" by Locke (sic)). GM: When did you start writing, Steve? SJ: Six or seven years old. GM: Really? (RR: What was your first poem?) SJ: My first real poem is in the Exercises of the Ear. I wrote it...Remember that Jack? RR: No. I mean the first poem as a kid. When you were a child. SJ: I don't have those; they are down in Rockland County, New York, stored away in my step-father's house. RR: You don't remember any lines? SJ: No, they were mediocre. RR: They were couplets? SJ: Yes. RR: They rhymed (prodding)? Well, you know that's why I like your work...that Divertimento by Mozart is still my favorite poem. SJ: That's a doubtful choice, René, though I cannot offer you my not too unsumptuous bed. RR: I like it when you wear the Mask of Comedy, when you strap on that big dildo and walk into the arena.

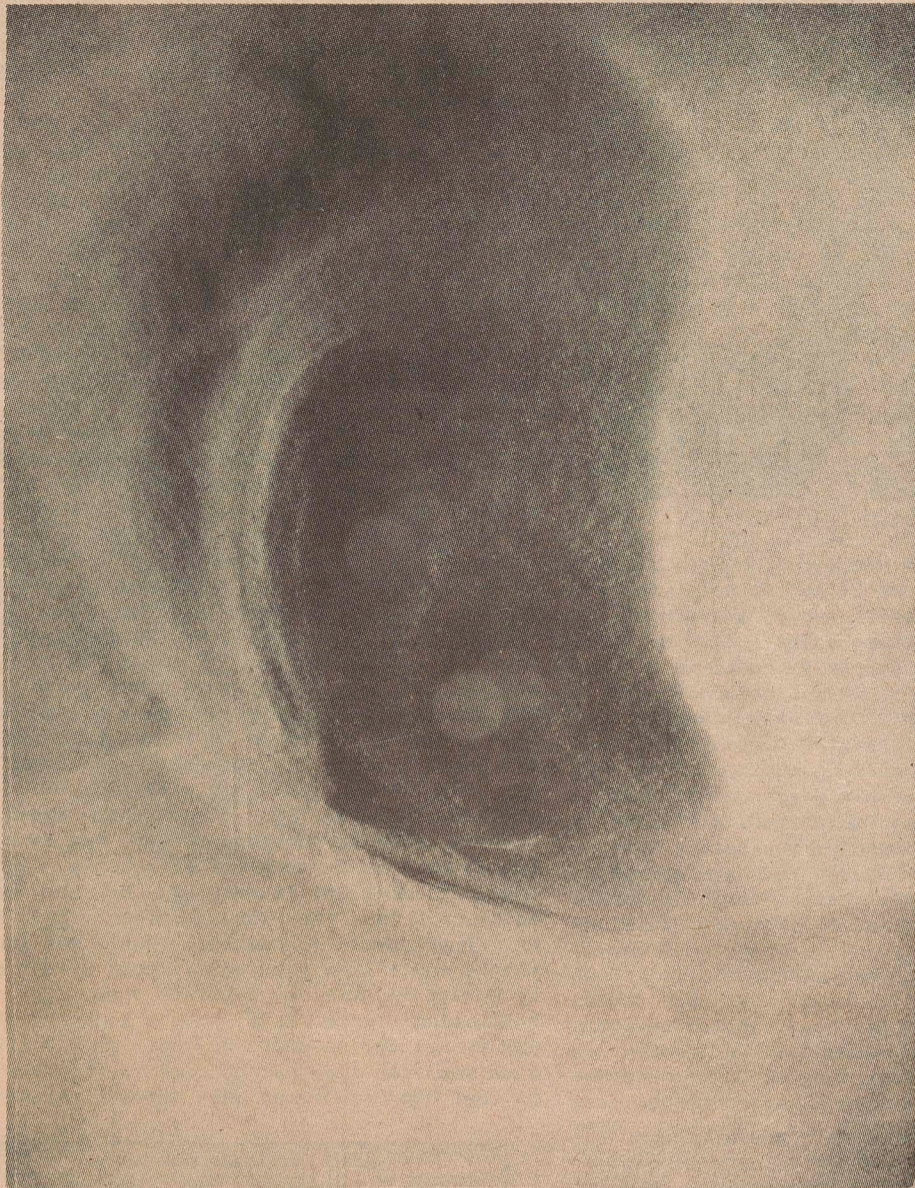
MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH			
3 DATE OF DEATH	February	10,	1970
	(Month)	(Day)	(Year)
4 I HEREBY CERTIFY that I have investigated the death of the person above-named and that the CAUSE AND MANNER thereof are as follows: (If an injury was involved, state fully.) Glutethimide (Doriden) poisoning.			
5 Accident, suicide, or homicide (specify) <u>Unknown.</u>			
Date and hour of injury	February 10,		1970
IF ACCIDENTAL, was injury causally related to the death?			
Where did injury occur?	Boston, Mass.		
(City or town and State)			
Did injury occur in or about home, on farm, in industrial place, or in public place? <u>Home.</u>			
Manner of injury <u>Ingestion of large amount of Doriden.</u>			
(How did injury occur?)			
Nature of injury			
While at work? <u>NO.</u> Was autopsy performed? <u>NO.</u>			
6 Was disease or injury in any way related to occupation of deceased?			
If so, specify			
(Signed) <u>Michael Duongo, M.D.</u> M. D.			
(Address) <u>Boston</u> (City or Town) Date <u>2/11 70</u>			
7 <u>St. Mary's</u> (Place of Burial or Cremation) <u>Resurrection</u> (City or Town)			
DATE OF BURIAL <u>Feb 21</u> 1970			
8 NAME OF FUNERAL DIRECTOR <u>St. Michael's Funeral Home</u>			
ADDRESS <u>44 Commonwealth Ave Boston</u>			
Received and filed <u>FEB 2 1970</u>			
A TRUE COPY ATTEST: <u>[Signature]</u> (Registrar)			

It's much better than when you quote an old musty volume. SJ: In few of my orgasms, my voice comes through, and the poems can be taken to be personal but in most instances they are personae. I located most of them in the South End and I used their voice and their dialects--so that nationality background could be exhibited in the dialogue. RR: Why don't you write a play, because you write the best dialogue today. SJ: I've been thinking about that for a long time, and I might do it--I might try my hand at writing a play. GM: But, don't make it arty, be as raunchy as possible. SJ: No, I wouldn't be arty, but...RR: No rhetoric! GM: No, no rhetoric: Just use gutter trash language. RR: You use other's. SJ: I use other rhetoric, yes. I use a lot of Pound rhetoric and a lot of Olson's rhetoric. GM: Olson hates rhetoric.

THE POET IN DISGUISE

FOR STEPHAN JONAS, HIS MEMORY

Exercises For Ear



RR: He thinks rhetoric! He lives rhetoric! He died rhetoric! You should write a play because you have a command of other people's voices. SJ: I might try...in one of the Orgasms I was talking about money, and I said, "Greenbacks," "Hardcash." Then I went up to see Gerrit about this and he says, "Jonas, you have the Western notion about money along with Andrew Jackson and Martin van Buren and Charles Olson. RR: You're so obsessed with money. SJ: Well, I tell you, René, it's impossible to do anything about anything in your own world today unless you know something about money. How it's made, who controls it, and who distributes it. And when you find out you live under a usurious system of banker-controlled economy-- RR: Well, who doesn't know that? GM: My checks, every time they bounce, it costs me \$4.00 a check and back in 1951 it was only one dollar, according to Charles in his *Letters for Origin*. SJ: But this is real money. SJ: I don't know much about contemporary politics except...because there is only one man in the Congress of the United States who has his head screwed on right about money and that's Wright Patman from Texas. He's the only one who knows his p's and q's on money and when Lyndon Johnson was leaving the White House he made arrangements to build his library in Texas to house his manuscripts. He's an old friend of Patman's and he called Patman to the White House and told him to cool it on the bankers because he was going to have to go to the bankers to get some money to build his library. SR: How do you know that, Steve? RR: What a camp! SJ: Don't put in any milk, I don't want anything in my coffee. RR: Don't question Steve's sources as long as they're accurate. GM: Ya, they're all up here (pointing to the bookshelves above Steve's head); they're about ready to topple in on top of Steve. SJ: No, I read all the contemporary magazines: Time, Newsweek, Life, and certain things will stick out like a sore thumb and I'll remember

it and when I write it comes out. GM: Television too is a great source for you, probably. SJ: I haven't used much of television, although once I used television when John Rothchild got on after he made the merger with the DuPont Chemical Company which was supposed to be a highly kept secret. He got on TV advertising a clean mustard gas for Vietnam. GM: Well, who did DuPont merge with? SJ: With the Rothchilds. GM: In England? SJ: In America! In Delaware. The Rothchilds are now in chemicals. GM: What are they on? SJ: They're on chemicals! GM: But what is the firm name that they're with? It's not Rothchilds? SJ: The Rothchilds and the DuPonts merged three years ago and I just happened to pick up a Wall Street Journal on the street and there was little fine print at the bottom of the page announcing the merger. I.E.DuPont and the Rothchilds; and I told Gerrit Lansing about it when he read the Orgasms (that it was in there), and Gerrit said, "How in the hell did you know about that? It's supposed to be one of the well-kept secrets of the generation." And I just saw this little piece in the Wall Street Journal, but there was no big to-go about it in the papers; yet the most important world merger which has ever come about was the Rothchilds and DuPonts. (pause) RR: Use the needle? JW: I thought the needle was sprouting roots in my arm. Did you used to inject methedrine? RR: I didn't take injections for it...GM: He was more advanced than I was...I never did get used to the needle at all. RR: You know how I got hepatitis? It was that last poke I ever took. I remember the shot had fallen to the floor and I scraped it up off the floor and injected it with glass! GM: Oh, René. RR: That's how you get hep. SJ: Jesus. JW: Did you quit the spike when you came to Boston? RR: No, Had I quit before that because I couldn't take any more when I came down with hepatitis. JW: You were really far out then. He used to come wearing curtains to Max's Kansas City. SJ: Rene, then

you can't drink now, can you? RR: Oh, I drink like a fiend. GM: No, for after a year you can't. SJ: Well, Jack still doesn't drink. JW: Not very much but I suffer from it when I do. RR: It hurts right here, right? Does it hurt here? JW: Yes. JW: In 1961 they threw me out of Bellevue with it because they accused me of stealing (RR: syringes?) (laughter) drugs from the medicine cabinet. (GM: You probably did!) They threw me out of the charity ward (laughter; GM: I'm sure...) An Indian day nurse claimed she saw me receiving money in exchange for a brown manila envelope I was giving to some of my visitors. GM: Probably some poems in the envelope. JW: David Ratray and Clive Matson came up to see me and it was raining so I gave them cabfare to go home. RR: Oh, whatever happened to David Ratray? GM: He's in New York City. JW: He works for an encyclopedia company. RR: Is he still doing it? Is he still married? (GM: Yes.) I see him-- JW: So the next day the doctor said, "You know, we think it's best.. GM: What happen to Clive Manson? He's one of my favorite young poets. He was sort of a protege of yours. JW: Ya, he's still around. GM: But you probably were stealing some drugs...JW: I wasn't. GM: Ya, ya, caught you red-handed. JW: I wasn't taking anything. GM: Do you mean that ever since 1963 you still suffer from drinking? JW: I still have swollen... GM: Listen, why don't you go find out about that? Go to the doctor. JW: No, I'm all cured now. GM: Yes, but tell the doctor you drink and you still suffer from the drinking. SJ: You want to cook dinner? GM: Well, we have to go soon. SJ: There's a big piece of swordfish--SR: Oh, ya, will you defrost that for me? GM: Thanks for the interview, Steve...

Interview, photographs & poems
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on beacon hill
i never thought
Rene, John & I would come so much
to seeing you
a white star on a field of blue
with red & white all around

if you had to be
someone other than a poet
who would you be

I'll tell you who
I'll tell you who I am
my name is rufus jones
alias raphael santos alias stephan jonas
bostonian poet
im someone youve never met
twice in the kitchen
dishes
no one will wash & dry
a bed room stretching from ny to boston in poems

america is killing off her poets

true democracy need never exist
for you to write a poem
abt it

the sky is a day dream
exercises for ear is not a dream

can you turn the spot light down
a little please
mr stephan jonas doesn't feel like having his photo taken
today hes going away
this poem doesn't show that

he was a man who never was
he was three in fact

evening of a day in late january
last time i saw him

today came this dream abt masks
now the world of poetry is changing
into a drag
queen with a mean look on her face

i wonder whos going to make it this year
now that olson is dead
then steve jonas
then jack spicer

i only look at the books they're not in
all i see are poets' political sins

20:vi:70 nyc

GERARD MALANGA

For Steve Jonas Four Years Gone Green

bitter root knots
sunk in pine
cut nails
of stealers
muggers killers
all over these streets
they say wading
in your life

Beacon Hill
Esplanade
South End
trailing all ways
from Georgia
entrails

tin horn lovers
playboy physiques
gone Steve Reeves
better
in reverse bitterness
blond taunting
indifference

he left before
i was ready
ivory lungs
play games below
your belt
blood sliced
neat in cans
spread over hands
a smear as sure
as leaky Cowper's glands
you cant help notice
Lindall Place
a hippie palace
on an edge
trimmed with thread

precarious

how you could rail
against sentimentality

fences in these leaves
we passed on sidewalks
alone poets
buzz along
most of our wishes
otherwise realized
machete voices
pissing absinthe puss

I walk on your sharp bones
catching in my throat

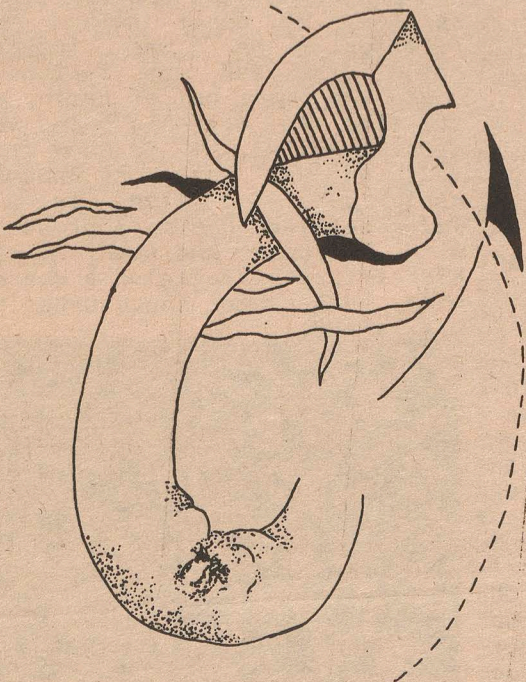
charley shively

Drawing by Douglas Bessette

SUNDAY MORNING

The sun has risen so quietly
neither of us awakened. Now
the cheap shades glow from beyond.
There is the sensation that this will be
another hot day. I have just come
from a dark nightmare. Beside me
this new boy, still as death, sleeping.
One fly annoys the air, mixing it
with redundant circles. What can we do
with another Sunday? Everything I tell you
will be lies today.

William Barber
San Francisco



returning to benno's
sun in scorpio on full moon

There is a silence in each empty window
a moon in each empty window
a moonlight that covers the lawn

there are so many other things
a blue wind rolls from the autumn hill
a mist crawls over stones
one lonely cloud frosted with moonlight
returns home to sleep

any moment now a darkness fills each footstep
in the snow

covered ground
with a walking sound
coming close,
moving further away

Gerard Malanga

A Young Poet in his 24th Year (a version of Cavafy)

Alex Smith

Brain work now as best you can.
A partial pleasure's wasting him.
He's in a nervous bind:
still he fills his lover's kiss with his,
his hands caress those perfect limbs.--
He never loved before with such great passion.
But the full life of love is lacking:
that long life of each rich day
which both of them must want with equal strength.

(And they aren't equally given to homosexual love;
he alone is driven by it.)

So he wastes himself, wholly on edge.
Besides, he's out of work,--that's partly it.
He manages somehow to borrow
some here, a little there (sometimes almost begging for it),
and so he scrapes along.
He kisses those adored lips, spends himself
on that fine body which now he feels
to let him have his way. Now
he drinks and smokes, drinks and smokes,
drags himself through loud cafes,
wearily drags the sickness consuming his beauty.
Now brain, work as best you can.

AS IS

If he praise me for an easy friend,
if he praise freedom in the love of friends
and revel in the likeness of one moment's

drenched shared blackness,
knowing that there is a friend,--

say nothing of this marvel so light light,
let enthusiasm trust in differences
love's thought bears witness to.

Alex Smith

How lovely it is
the smell of shit
steaming from my bowels.
How quaint it is
to wipe it up
and place it in a bowl.
How strange we are
to make a secret
of something so
"common and ordinary"
--For certain it is
shit we must--
fetish or not--
to keep, and go on
living.

"Gene" McLaughlin

This is Dedicated to the One I Love, Mama Cass

cervelle - brains

taille - cutting, pruning

envie - envy

flocons - flock

squelettes - skeleton

jailliront - to gush out, to burst forth

there are your eyes on the table
your eyes are the envoys of solitude
your eyes pale and luminous
fill the day and the evening
like symbols and ciphers
like squid's perfume
your violet and hyacinth eyes
semaphores floating in milk

there are your eyes on the mattress
your eyes full of north and of day
pale and fragile
it is snowing in your eyes
your green and blue and ochre eyes
your gray bird eyes
plumage of your face
where veins of thoughts like sparrows'
feet

limpid and menacing

here are your eyes on the white blanket
your eyes are the needle in the ocean
the mica of methodical rocks
the cry of nature in the bowl of earth
eyes vigilant and drowsy
your orange and alabaster eyes
your eyes of obsidian and crushed ivory

burn your daydreams

here are your eyes in the toaster
and now your termite eyes are eating the building
your eyes on the plate, i think i will nibble them
here are your eyes bobbing in the winebottle
your eyes of gin and melancholy
radar eyes, octopus eyes in the grip of the wind
nuclear eyes, eyes of bronze

like a swallow of seawater
like the sting of a scorpion on top of a wedding cake
like a confectionary death under the quilt of anguish
like the falling chimes in a winter garden

THE GARDEN OF YOUR EYES IN THE SOUP OF REASON
EYES OF PEARL, CARBONATED EYES
VITRIFIED EYES, EYES OF LIME AND CREEK-WATER

Gary Jane Hoisington

REMEMBERING AUDEN

In dealing with a figure such as W. H. Auden, one is always tempted to tack on the label of Great Gay Poet and to offer him up as a positive role model for the gay community. In doing so, one has intentions which, we suspect, might better be fulfilled by an attempt to uncover what sort of people need such models in the first place. Certainly not us. Besides, our intentions are not nearly as lofty. It is too easy to convey an impression of the man as either a gay person who happened to write poems, or as a poet who happened to be gay. Rather, we have sought to depict a man who happened to like poems and to like other men. We have sought to describe rather than explain. We have left open the possibility that, especially in an existence as vast and as heterogeneous as Auden's, that neither his art nor his sexual preference (nor, for that matter, his class background and upbringing) can establish a total claim on his character.

We deliberated several possibilities before we decided on the interview format. We could have done a lengthy biographical sketch, and then suffered under a mountain of conflicting data. As there is no definitive biography of Auden, we would have incurred a historical responsibility we were not equipped to handle. We could have carried out a scholarly interpretation of the poems—a task which needs to be accomplished especially in the case of the love poems, which the "straight" journals have all but ignored, preferring to concentrate on politics and prosody; but we wish to reveal something about the man who produced the poems. Therefore, we chose the interview, a form in which the subtle trend of the conversation allows the character to reveal himself.

Wystan Hugh Auden was born in 1907, and died early in the autumn of 1973. He lived about sixty-six years, the average tenure for a man of his time, a fact which, no doubt, would have greatly pleased the poet. By the time the interview goes to press, we will have reached the first anniversary of his death; so if such an article needs an occasion to be written, this will serve as well as any. Since the man is dead, we must rely on those who knew him for his story, preferably those who knew him well. We cannot read his character directly off the page; we must infer it, reflected indirectly in both the character of and the information given by the person we interview. So the interview form has pitfalls of its own. The entire interview must be written in the third person, where, because we question one person about another, we risk sounding like the town gossip feeling out the latest big story.



FAGRAG: When did you meet?

BUTTON: We met in 1953. Actually, I met Chester at a dinner party and then we were driven home by one of the guests. And we dropped Chester off first. Chester said, "I'd invite you up but I live with this old eccentric English lady and I do not think she would like my bringing guests in at this hour, but come by tomorrow for cocktails." So I met Auden the next day.

FAGRAG: Your reaction?

BUTTON: My first and last reaction to him was that I was simply bowled over, the conversation was so good, the thought was so clear. He knew so much that I simply sat at his feet and listened, my mouth hanging open most of the time. With the possible exception of Arthur Waley, Auden had read more than any other living human being. He had read everything, just everything. All sorts of obscure things. He read German as well and was an expert on Goethe and Schiller. Even his literary friends were bowled over by the amount he had read. He would look in scholarly texts, such

Also, we must steer a narrow path between two extremes. On the one hand, we face the danger of excessive reverence, creating a favorable but unreal impression of the poet; this would amount to a project in bad faith. On the other hand, we risk getting caught up in trivial and amusing details, seeking after the scandalous and the eccentric, and ultimately engaging in a sort of literary grave robbery. This, the threat of bad taste, is what we most wish to avoid. Such is demonstrated in the course of the interview, where we applaud the efforts of Auden to get back boxes of scrapped letters and manuscripts and a pornographic poem which had been stolen. Yet we are so fascinated by the poem—indeed a marvelous tour de force, and we gloatingly refer to the publication of the more revealing letters of Hart Crane, letters which were finally wrested from the hands of his family. We are dealing with a literary superstar, a rare creature akin to Goethe's little dog that eats broken glass and shits diamonds. Few can resist following after and picking up the droppings no matter how ridiculous they may look in the process. But it is hoped that after many evenings of cutting, pasting, rearranging and reconsidering that we have presented a balanced and tasteful impression of the poet.

The subject of the interview, John Button, has insisted many times over that he is a painter, not a writer. He was not one of Auden's colleagues, but rather one of his "household friends," a select group of people whom Auden enjoyed having around, and who neither pursued literary careers nor pretended to do so. His keen memory and his tasteful guidance have proven as vital in the shaping of the final copy as in the initial gathering of the facts. Our aim has been to present the poet as he came across as a person, in all his diversity. We have centered on three aspects of his life—the literary, the sexual, and the quotidian—and how they are intertwined. We have tended to ask John what Auden said on this or that matter, to enable the poet to speak for himself as much as possible.

John Button was born in San Francisco in 1929. He attended the University of California at Berkeley with a major in English, and the California School of Fine Arts. After spending two years in Los Angeles, largely on the couch of Dr. Frederick Perls, he moved to New York to pursue his career as a realist painter. He met Auden in 1953 and was a continuing friend in Auden's household for twenty years. Button shows yearly at the Kornblee Gallery in New York and teaches drawing and painting at the School of Visual Arts. His work is represented in many public and private collections, including that of W. H. Auden.

Steven Abbott and Thom Willenbecher conducted and edited the following interview/conversation which took place in John Button's New York home on Saturday afternoon, August 3, 1974.

as Robert Graves' two-volume work entitled THE GREEK MYTHS and point out the errors off the top of his head, because he could remember. There were times when the household would be very difficult and trying. Chester would play opera records too loud and that put an end to conversation. The scheduling was sometimes difficult because if the subway got tied up and you were five minutes late, Wystan would be angry. It was not easy being a close friend of Auden's but it was worth it.

FAGRAG: Did his friends call him Wystan, Hugh, W.H.?

BUTTON: Usually Wystan, though his drag name was Miss Master meaning Master Poet, but it was sometimes corrupted to Mix Master.

FAGRAG: When you met Wystan was his life as scheduled as we understand it was. For example, Teatime at four o'clock, cocktails at six-thirty, etc.?

BUTTON: Yes. The schedule was rather bizarre. He drank at least ten martinis before dinner and then a bottle of wine and then he passed out. He went to bed quite early—right after dinner. He got up quite early in the morning and it is assumed—although he never came out of his room except to make tea—that he spent the entire morning reading and writing. In the morning, he did not talk with anyone at all. He was famous as a filthy housekeeper: the glasses were greasy and there were dirty socks in the sink. For example, I was in Malne one summer and a friend, James Schuyler—a poet—wrote me a letter saying that he had been over to Chester and Wystan for dinner. He said that he was in the kitchen with Chester helping him cook the dinner. Quoting from Jim's letter, Chester turned to Jim and said, "Open

the refrigerator, darling." And so Jim went over and opened the refrigerator and pointing to some black slime on the bottom Chester said, "Would you pick out one or two of the freshest looking basil leaves for your mother?" The refrigerator was just enough to gag a maggot.

FAGRAG: Do you know anything about his conversion to Episcopalianism?

BUTTON: I do not think we can call it a conversion since he was brought up in the Church of England. He continued in that same church and he was a regular, proper churchgoer. He went to communion service every Sunday at eight o'clock so that he would not have to go to the big service when all the people were there. He preferred the smaller eight o'clock service. He never talked much about religion. He was interested in catholicism and was furious when they took the mass out of Latin, which sort of ties in with his being very much a traditionalist. I do know from stories that he was much more Bohemian in the early days—and lived in a loft. He later settled in a more proper apartment with bedrooms and such. We cannot call his return to religion a conversion. He went back into the church in which he was raised.

FAGRAG: We understand he toyed with anagrams and palindromes?

BUTTON: Yes. He wrote the longest palindrome ever written in English. It reads: T. Elliot, top bard, notes putrid tang emanating is sad. I'd assign it a name: gnat dirt upset on drab pot toilet. It has eighty-five letters and 22 words and reads the same backwards and forwards, not counting word divisions and punctuation.

FAGRAG:

Auden said, "I live by my watch. I would not know when to be hungry unless I had my watch with me." Is this descriptive of him?

BUTTON: That sounds very much like him. I am sure it is true. He lived by rules which were the rules of propriety and respectability from which he never deviated.

FAGRAG: Did this effect his social behavior?

BUTTON: He often did not know when he was being rude. For instance, by asking you to leave his apartment at a certain time.

FAGRAG: At Oxford he would tell his guests that the interview had come to an end.

BUTTON: In fact, on the invitations to his Birthday party... He gave himself a Birthday party every year at which he would feature one superstar from the literary world. For example, he once had Robert Graves. Another time, not one, but two Sitwells. Once Stravinsky... But at the bottom of the invitation it would say: "Carriages at One A.M." An old English euphemism meaning: Get out at One, the Party is over. At the bar, which would close at one, he would serve cheap New York champagne. And the waiters, who were usually tricks of Chester's, would offer people their coats and invite them to leave.

FAGRAG: How did Auden feel about his own sexuality?

BUTTON: That is very complex. At home among the "household friends" he talked quite freely. In public there was never any mention of this until very late when he came out--two or three years before his death. Then he would go around and give lectures at Columbia, for example, and speak to the gay student group. And then, of course, THE PLATONIC BLOW /whose pirated title was A DAY FOR A LAY/ had been published by then. So, to those in the know, the disclosure came as no real surprise. There was no question in his mind that everyone who knew him knew he was gay. But that was a private matter and he did not mix the private and the public, except very late. And even then it was a mystery why he changed his mind and decided to come out.

FAGRAG: We understand Auden felt sex of any kind was boring, that sex was the great leveler and did not differentiate people. Do you have a feeling for his attitude toward sex?

BUTTON: I never heard him talk about it. It was my impression that he had very little sex. I remember once he and Chester had a disagreement because Chester liked to cruise a lot and liked rough trade. Wystan himself tended to prefer highbrow queens or smart college boys. Wystan finally put his foot down about Chester bringing crowds and dangerous types into the house. That changed their lifestyle considerably. That was the right thing to do; they were always getting ripped off. Chester was once arrested during the Wagner years when they used to send agent provocateurs around picking people up. Chester got one of those and was arrested. This was when it happened. Wystan pulled strings to get him out of the mess. It was not so much that he did not want these people in his house, it was for Chester's own good. Wystan loved Chester who imperiled himself repeatedly.

FAGRAG: Sort of a Hart Crane type. The letters that Crane's family have been trying to quash are finally being published. Any further thoughts on Wystan's attitude toward sex and love?

BUTTON: Yes. I think he also said sex was funny. And he also used to say that pornography was funny. He could never portray sex in a sexy way. It would always come out funny instead. I do not think he was ever interested in sex. He never went out looking for it in the

time I knew him. It would come around or he would meet someone at a party. Often aspiring fellows would write to him and if he was intrigued, he would invite them over. One time a boy from one of the soft-core magazines wrote Wystan a letter saying how he admired his work and Wystan invited him over. And (1) Wystan did not find him good-looking--although ninety per-cent of us would have disagreed; and (2) the boy was stupid. So, they had tea and Wystan asked him to leave. What I am saying is that he did not have hot pants. My guess is that a sexual experience with him would be very gentle and quiet. He was far more interested in the whole complexity of love than in the act of sex.

FAGRAG: True, though not the idea one gets from THE PLATONIC BLOW.

BUTTON: I suppose the poem was a witty response to what his friends told him they did last night while out cruising. The speaker was just a sort of character. By "platoníc" he meant ideal or perfect.

FAGRAG: In the Greek sense. When was THE PLATONIC BLOW written?

BUTTON: My guess is that it was written in the forties and stolen in 1965.

FAGRAG: By whom?

BUTTON: It was alleged to have been stolen by Gardner Glaama who had stayed there overnight once. Allegedly Glaama himself admits having taken it and given it to the FUCK YOU PRESS owned by Ed Sanders, who sold it in the Peace Eye Bookstore. Soon thereafter, the place was raided by the cops for selling salacious literature. Among the evidence was a copy of THE PLATONIC BLOW. I heard about the raid on the radio and called Wystan to tell him how unfair it was for the poem to have been stolen and then confiscated when he never wished it to be made public. Wystan said, "If it comes out in court, I shall simply deny having written it." However, he had already given a copy of it to the Morgan Library for safe keeping. It seems he had no objection to publication after his death, but he was furious to hear about the theft. So far as THE PLATONIC BLOW is concerned, we should point out that this version /reprinted here/ is correct. The versions in VECTOR and AVANT-GARDE magazine were garbled. The first stanza begins, "It was a spring day" and not "He put down his glass and stretched his bare arms along the back of my sofa."

FAGRAG: Wystan on the blurb of THE PLATONIC BLOW, according to Kenneth Rexroth, said, "He had learned more about writing poetry from writing THE PLATONIC BLOW than from anything else he had ever written." Is this serious, or as we suspect, a put-on?

BUTTON: This may or may not be his statement. First of all I would not trust Kenneth Rexroth, and, second, this may be a put-on. On the other hand, Wystan did think of the poem as an exercise to learn more about prosody. The blurb on THE PLATONIC BLOW has nothing whatever to do with Auden, the man. He probably would not have understood the jargon. Yet the words are not "nasty" either. I think the motive on the part of Ed Sanders was simply to publish something by a famous writer in order to show that famous poets, too, have their private hang-ups.

FAGRAG: Do you feel Auden's Edwardian upbringing influenced his character? Did he have difficulty overcoming his background?

BUTTON: I suppose he did break with the Edwardian tradition when he moved from Great Britain to the United States. In fact, he and Isherwood came at the same time. Wystan could not bear the stuffiness, although he retained an awful lot of Britishness as part of his character. He would often say: "It is not done; one does not do that."

FAGRAG: This leaves the impression that Wystan was sort of chi-chi, high-tea.

BUTTON: High-tea, low-tea. It is funny that you should bring those phrases up.

Wystan would use those phrases. He did not like elegance. English middle-class propriety was a yes, but elegance he did not like. He very often used the phrases high-brow, low-brow and middle-brow. High-brow was OK, low-brow was OK, but middle-brow was OUT. This explains why he did not like Aaron Copland's music or Gian-Carlo Menotti's operas; in his estimation, they were middle-brow.

FAGRAG: And his speech?

BUTTON: He had a deep growling voice--a college-professor type of voice, though with a richer vocabulary. He had a tendency to pontificate. When one talked with Auden, one had the feeling that he was not talking with you. This might apply to characters in drama as well. He was a generous man, too, but I have the feeling that he was generous in principle only, and that his generosity was not very warm. I always had the feeling that he was not a very warm man, and, yet, I always admired him very much, the smartest man I have ever met. I only once saw him show any emotion and that was on a day when they were leaving for Europe for the summer. They were playing a tape of his and Chester's translation--which has never been published or recorded, so far as I know--of THE MAGIC FLUTE. Wystan was swaying back and forth with tears in his eyes because they were leaving everyone and everything behind for the summer. I was very moved.

FAGRAG: Auden's media image seemed very conservative. We have reservations about this.

BUTTON: I have always thought it was a bit unfair that everyone talks about his conservatism later in life. Are you familiar with a group called The Catholic Worker?

FAGRAG: Yeah.

BUTTON: They publish a newspaper called The Catholic Worker. They are anarchists who are very left-wing. They used to have their headquarters on the Lower East Side not far from Auden. It is still operated by a wonderful old leftist lady from the thirties named Dorothy Day. They had an old tenement building on Chrystie, just below Houston at the continuation of Second Avenue.) They had a soup kitchen where they gave meals to impoverished men from the Bowery and they had a library where these poor old men could sit and read. They had meetings and helped out the poor little unions that did not ever get national or newspaper coverage. They really did wonderful work. Well, the fire department got very upset because their fire escapes were not right or the windows would not open...

FAGRAG: ...or the left-wing politics. Unfortunately, the New York fire department still has a lot of clout...

BUTTON: ...Without any warning, the fire department went down there, closed them forthwith, fined them. It was going to take a lot of money to put the building in order so they could re-open. At home Wystan was listening to the radio news

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AUDEN

broadcast. After the raid came over the air-waves, he went down with his checkbook to pay Dorothy Day's fine for her. Then, in order to get the money for Dorothy to re-do the building, Auden went on a tv quiz show and earned the money. He could not afford it himself. He was not as rich as people said.

FAGRAG: Another media distortion is the image of Wystan as a cosy old man with homes all over the world. Yet he really had to work the college campus speaking route.

BUTTON: True. This tired him out. He was heavy and a little decrepit. It was very hard for him to go out and do one night in Minnesota and one night in Michigan and one night in Ohio. But he had to earn a living. He lived in an apartment in a slum here in New York. It is true that the place had plenty of room--it had three small bedrooms. Wystan and Chester lived there and they usually had to have a roommate to live with them in order to afford the rent. And this was usually some close friend of Chester's. They ate fairly well. Chester did all the cooking. Wystan often did the shopping. They did not have a cleaning lady--that is probably why the house was such a mess all the time. To stay on the subject, he had a little place he rented in Ischia outside of Naples harbor and then was finally able to buy a modest house in Austria. This came very late. Most people make their money by the time they are forty and can afford to buy a second house. But Wystan was in his fifties before he could buy his first house. I do not call that rich or luxurious. I never visited the place in Austria. I gather that it was somewhat more comfortable.

FAGRAG: Did Auden find domestic relations to be conducive to his writing?

BUTTON: Yes. That is obviously true in the case of Chester. Since Christopher lived in L.A., they did not see much of each other. There was a trio: Isherwood, Spender and Auden, who was the youngest of the three. Auden had known the others for a long time, though I do not think he was influenced by either one of them. On the contrary, they were influenced by him.

FAGRAG: Did Auden feel their personal interaction affected his writing?

BUTTON: During the period I knew him he was not close to Isherwood or Spender. Isherwood lived in Hollywood and Spender in England. Because they collaborated on so many things, there was a great deal of interaction between them, but this collaboration took place very early, in the thirties.

FAGRAG: Did he find living with Chester helped him keep to his writing schedule?

BUTTON: I am sure of it. I had not seen it, but I am sure when Wystan finished a poem that Chester would be called in to hear it read aloud. He wrote the poems in longhand. But he often said that it was interesting to see them typed because the type-print was so hideous that all the errors were glaring. I am sure that he and Chester talked a good deal about Wystan's poems. This was a private matter between them and it did not come out very much among their friends.

FAGRAG: How did the GAA tribute to Auden originate?

BUTTON: The GAA had a cultural committee who approached me for a tribute just after Auden died. I felt I could not do it alone because I am not a literary person. Then we got the idea of having a panel. I called Richard Howard to ask if he might like to work on a tribute and he said that he would be delighted. I thought I would read from the essays and Richard from the poetry--and we would talk about it. Then we decided just to have a conversation with each other and talk about Auden's relation to gay life. Richard began by saying that in the fifties--when our generation got to know

Auden--gay liberation had not yet happened, and it was very glamorous to come to New York from a smaller city. One of the people that it was most exciting to meet was Auden. But Auden--being from a generation previous to ours--had great difficulty in coming-out and talking about his sexuality in public. Wystan seemed to me to be a somewhat stuffy man, compared to my own "so-called" sexual liberation. Yet Wystan was and has to be included in that group of people in their mature years who made gay liberation possible.

FAGRAG: Which poems were used to illustrate Auden's sensibility?

BUTTON: Richard tried to talk of the change in Auden's attitude toward coming-out. He read HEAVY DATE and LULLABY, now known by the first line "Lay Your Sleeping Head my Love," as examples of very closeted work. Whereas, two later poems, one called SINCE and the other THE COMMON LIFE were very much more open. THE COMMON LIFE is dedicated to Chester.

FAGRAG: Do you think the time at which he grew up delayed him from coming-out publicly until he was in his sixties, as was true with E.M. Forster?

BUTTON: I do not know. But Forster had the same attitude toward coming-out that Wystan had. He did not allow his gay novel MAURICE to be published until after his death. But it was really a generational thing. It is unfair to take gay liberation views and tack them on to someone who matured two or three generations before, and in a different culture.

FAGRAG: True. What was the message of the tribute?

BUTTON: Richard and I tried to explain that it was no breach of the code of etiquette to say that Wystan was a closet queen and that when he did come-out, if you take coming-out to mean coming-out in public, it was painful. Of course, Isherwood came out much earlier.

FAGRAG: Was Chester mentioned?

BUTTON: Yes. We talked of his very strange relationship with Chester. Chester used to remember to the very day the last time they had sex--which had been years ago before 1953, yet they continued on like lovers, except for no sex, and they slept in separate bedrooms. I suppose that except for literary matters, the entire estate went to Chester when he died. Wystan remained faithful to the friendship wherever it might lead because he had committed himself to that friendship. Chester could totally rely on Wystan.



FAGRAG: When did they meet?

BUTTON: I think that they met in Ann Arbor when Auden and Isherwood were reading together and they got together afterwards--probably in 1939, when Chester was a graduate student. Chester--a boy from Brooklyn--was a great beauty when he was young.

FAGRAG: Did the ups and downs of his love life in any way affect, parallel or counterpoint what he felt were the ups and downs of his writing?

BUTTON: There were no ups and downs. There was an occasional young man with whom he might flirt for a very short time but no emotional involvement. And then there was Chester--and that was absolutely even. They squabbled and fought and adored one another and all those other things, but it was so even. To suggest that there were ups and downs



just does not ring a bell for me. I never heard him complain about love, nor did I ever hear him extol it, except in the poems.

FAGRAG: Did he ever define or discuss male love?

BUTTON: I never heard him talk about it. He talked about homosexuality freely but only among his inner circle. Certainly, the very long friendship with Chester speaks for itself.

FAGRAG: Did he feel that the discussion of homosexuality had any place in "serious" literature?

BUTTON: He once laid Christopher Isherwood out. Isherwood wrote a novel entitled THE WORLD IN THE EVENING about a homosexual relationship. He came to New York shortly after it was published. I happened to be there. Wystan simply laid Christopher out for not explaining what they did in bed: "We have to know who was fucking whom. And you never make that clear in the book." That would be a public pronouncement. I suppose. He was talking with a literary colleague and he felt that Isherwood was not making things explicit enough.

FAGRAG: Of course, Auden almost never describes homosexuality in any of his published work. How do you feel Wystan would have felt about gay liberation had he known more about it in his lifetime?

BUTTON: Politically he would have been for gay liberation had it existed, had there been a big movement. There was, in fact, a movement that started in 1951 which eventually became the Mattachine, but it had little national impact. However, had there been a gay liberation movement he would have agreed with it in principle. Wystan had a lot of friends who were a good deal older than he, for instance, he knew the daughter of Hugo von Hofmannsthal who was the librettist for DER ROSENKAVALIER and various Strauss operas. The daughter had known Tchaikovsky and the following story was



told at a small gathering here: Tcharkovsky was invited in 1891 to New York to conduct the opening concert at Carnegie Hall. He stayed at the Astor Hotel and was arrested on a gay charge the first night he was here. Of course, political wheels went into motion and the case was dismissed immediately. When Wystan told the story, it was with a great deal of sadness. How unfair that was. It was the sort of thing that could happen to anyone.

FAGRAG: Was Wystan outraged at the time he told the story?

BUTTON: Yes, I think he felt a certain amount of outrage.

FAGRAG: In PRANCING NOVELIST, Brigid Brophy refers to Jocelyn Brook's 1951 study of Firbank, in which Auden confesses that he would have wished to write like Firbank/Potter, Carroll and Lear/...

BUTTON: ...Auden adored Firbank. Not only did he adore the eccentric language used: "She stirred languidly her cup," misplacing the adverb, but also Auden found that sort of thing charming and wonderful. He loved the ultra-camp of Firbank...

FAGRAG: "The Women Queens of England." So his tastes ran to the frivolous?

BUTTON: Yes. In fact, the whole point he made about Firbank was that Firbank was frivolous and that he would not like to know anyone who did not like Firbank's work.

FAGRAG: Did Auden know Firbank?

As the poets have mournfully sung
Death comes to the innocent young.
The rolling in money,
The screamingly funny,
And those who are very well hung.
W. H. Auden

BUTTON: He never knew Firbank, but he knew Osbert Sitwell who knew Firbank, and he was always pumping Sitwell for stories about Firbank.

FAGRAG: Whom among novelists other than Firbank and the mystery writers did he read?

BUTTON: He liked Jane Austen. He detested Proust as he detested most of French literature. In fact, he not only detested French literature, he called it Frog literature and Frog music. He never used the word French, it was always Frog.

FAGRAG: Who were his favorites among twentieth-century poets?

BUTTON: I do not think he liked much twentieth-century poetry. He certainly did not like undisciplined poetry. I think he liked Robert Lowell, Elizabeth Bishop and Marianne Moore. He did not like the younger generation--Frank O'Hara, John Ashbery. However, in 1956 while he was the sole selector of the Yale Younger Poets, all the poems submitted were so bad in his estimation that he refused to recommend any of them, and called John Ashbery on the phone to tell him that he was the Yale Younger Poet for his first published work entitled SOME TREES. So while Wystan was not overly fond of Ashbery's work, he respected it enough to give it the reward, and time has proven him right.

FAGRAG: Is there a story behind Wystan's unwillingness to let his manuscripts be published? Auden once remarked about how he disapproved of the publication of rough drafts, for example, the manuscripts of Eliot's THE WASTE LAND.

BUTTON: Well, there is a tragic story about a man, the late Bill Aalto, who was a wild admirer of Auden and served as a personal secretary who typed up manuscripts and answered correspondences

for which Auden did not have time. He became quite kooky, saved the contents of all the wastebaskets and kept them in boxes. Later Auden learned that Bill had all the boxes of first drafts and other things. Wystan wanted them back, but Bill would not return them. Meanwhile, Bill took up with this boy, and then died, leaving everything to the boy. Wystan approached me to see if the boy would give them back to me, and he would not. Sometime thereafter, the boy and a new lover were killed in the famous Village Gay Murders case--twelve were killed, but only six of the killings ever got into the papers, I believe. I wrote Wystan, who had moved out of New York, and said "God knows what's happened to those boxes now." I tried very hard to find out what happened to them, but we never got them back. The point of this story is that he never wished those manuscripts to come out. He felt very strongly that with all the so-called new critics...

FAGRAG: ...and pop psycho analysts...

BUTTON: ...that all of this was irrelevant to the work. He tried to protest very hard and even to take action, but he never got them back. They might be of interest to a library or a musty old scholar somewhere.

FAGRAG: Did he decree in his will that all his personal manuscripts and letters be destroyed?

BUTTON: I do not know if it is in the will. But when someone writes a letter it becomes the property of the receiver. So the will has no authority over this matter. But he did write all his friends and ask them to destroy his letters. He did not want them published. But they probably will appear in print someday.

FAGRAG: You indicated sometime ago that Auden and Isherwood had essentially different attitudes toward coming-out. Could you elaborate?

BUTTON: I can tell you one story. Remember when two English men--a homosexual couple, in fact--defected to Russia in 1952 with a lot of political secrets? It was a very celebrated event and a lot of people still talk about it.

FAGRAG: That was before our time...

BUTTON: ...When that happened I was living in Los Angeles and had contact with Isherwood. When he heard about the defection, he absolutely blew a fuse and said, "How could they do that. How could they go to a country where homosexuality was even less acceptable than it was in England?" In Russia, they had terrible punishments, capital punishment, I believe. And Christopher said, "I could never do a thing like that, no matter what my beliefs are, because at the core of me I am homosexual. That is the most important thing about me." This shows an enormous difference between him and Auden. Isherwood was angry over the defection. I think, in fact, that he knew the couple.

FAGRAG: All politics aside, what details can you give on the marriage between Auden and Erika Mann, Thomas Mann's daughter?

BUTTON: This has been printed everywhere, but Auden married Erika Mann to get her out of Germany and into this country, when they were very fearful for her life. He did not really know her well, but sometimes in very campy moods, he would refer to "my wife."

FAGRAG: Had he any contact with Erika Mann after the marriage?

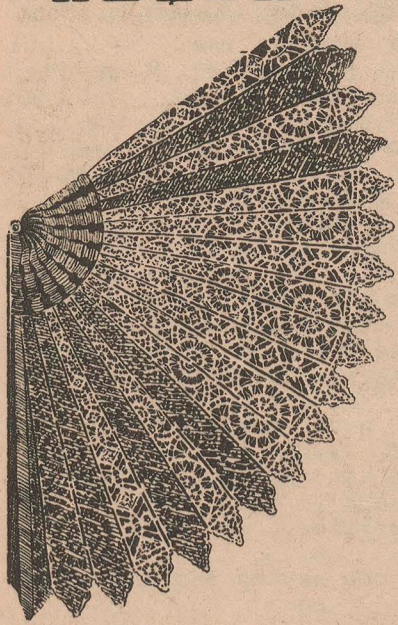
BUTTON: Oh, maybe once every five years or so. There was never a divorce, an annulment or anything like that. In fact, they were still married when Wystan died. It was an act of kindness and desperation. There was certainly never any sex involved.

FAGRAG: Did Wystan have any contact with Thomas Mann?

BUTTON: No, not much. I think they were friendlier earlier, but this friendship waned because Mann lived in Los Angeles, and Wystan hated California.

FAGRAG: As does Gore Vidal.

AUDEN



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FAGRAG: Did he attend many "cultural events?"; "social events?"

BUTTON: He very seldom went out. He went to very few parties. He preferred parties at home. He saw an occasional movie, maybe once a year. He occasionally went to the New York City Ballet. He was a great friend of Balanchine, the choreographer, and with Kirstein, the director. In fact, he translated Bertolt Brecht's THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS for their production. An absolutely wonderful translation, one that I think has not been published. So he would occasionally go to the ballet or the opera, but not terribly often. And he almost never went to movies.

FAGRAG: We understand he went to see LOVE STORY.

BUTTON: You can imagine why he would have gone to see it. It was written by a classics professor from Yale, and I am sure that held some interest for him.

FAGRAG: Did he ever talk about his philosophical or psychological beliefs?

BUTTON: No. He never did, he never would have, but I think he might have done this in letters. That is the way he preferred to carry on such conversations. He liked very casual conversation. He talked occasionally of psychoanalysis, but I doubt that he ever visited a therapist. His conversation tended to be more about human behavior and specifics than about philosophy.

FAGRAG: When you spoke with him, what did you generally talk about?

BUTTON: Oh, whom we had seen, gossip, mutual friends, sometimes his latest project. I remember, when he came back from Europe one summer, he and Chester had just translated THE MAGIC FLUTE. A wonderful NBC production that George Balanchine directed. Balanchine was another person Wystan admired tremendously. Well, having dinner with him one night, we went through the translation, and we were rolling on the floor because it had marvelous jokes in it. It is a rather stately opera, and parts of the translation came out like Anglican hymns. One of the characters had been slightly changed, and was

defined more clearly than in the original. Someone asked him if he knew where he got the idea of making the changes. Wystan replied, "An angel told me."

FAGRAG: Auden wrote, "The shame of aging is not that desire should fall (Who mourns for something he no longer needs?): It is that someone else should be told." How did Wystan adapt to the process of aging?

BUTTON: I think he adapted very well. He accepted aging, accepted his age, and he thought a lot about it. The reason why he left New York was because he thought he might have a heart attack and not be found in time; and he wanted to live in a community. His doctors often told him that he should stop smoking and cut down on his drinking, but Wystan said, "No. These are things that I like to do and I'm not going to give them up."

FAGRAG: Did his aging effect his interaction with his friends?

BUTTON: He did not change. An awful lot of his "household friends" were far younger than he, and that did not seem to bother him. He acted his age. Also, he did tell Chester to stop bringing around those rough types, as you recall.

FAGRAG: Might we speculate that it was not so much the drinking or smoking that caused Wystan's sudden death (as one would imagine), but the constant travel and heavy work schedule?

BUTTON: I cannot say what might have caused what might have been a premature death, but I know he worked very hard. Anyone who smokes or drinks as much as he or I cannot expect to go on forever. However, there was a recent study by a



University of California professor saying that heavy drinkers have a far smaller chance of getting a heart attack than people who do not drink. Even Wystan's drinking was very disciplined. He did not start drinking until the evening, I suspect when the clock struck six. He did not drink during the day, and he was not an alcoholic by any stretch of the imagination. But when the hour came around he started off with a water glass full of martini. Although he would stagger and stumble when he was drunk, the speech would never change. It still came out in paragraphs. Just amazing. The English are very proud of being good drinkers. Wystan could certainly hold his liquor.

FAGRAG: There was a point after he published ABOUT THE HOUSE when he stopped writing plays and conventional poems, and concentrated on brief, disconnected aphorisms and poetic sketches. Did his personality change as he changed his style of work?

BUTTON: No, I would not say so. He was given to enthusiasms, though I would not call them personality changes. If he were deeply engrossed in writing, say, THE RAKE'S PROGRESS, or an essay, or translating an opera, he would become very enthusiastic and talk at length about the subject matter. Many of the essays came very late in his career, and I believe that these reflected a reversion to his childhood enthusiasms--mining, metallurgy. These subjects came up a lot in his essays. But again, these are not personality changes, but enthusiasms.

FAGRAG: He had no periods of depression?

BUTTON: None that were visible.

FAGRAG: Remarkable...

BUTTON: ...To say that he was not moody would not be quite true. There were times when he got cranky, which was mostly due to Chester's playing opera records too late and not letting him sleep--most of the ordinary things that everyone goes through. The only time I ever saw him show anything like an emotion was when I saw tears running down his cheeks. And that was mostly sadness at leaving New York for the

summer. He liked New York a lot. He said that New York is a Victorian city, because it is based on the Victorian Idea of the City of the Future.

FAGRAG: Any other myths that need debunking?

BUTTON: There was a bar in the Village called the San Remo--partly gay, partly literary, partly artistic. James Agee was there all the time. But I have often heard people say that Auden was in there every night. I do not think he was ever in there, even once.

There is an old queen we call Sims,
who always hums when she rims.
An unusual ass
Gets the B-Minor Mass,
But the rest all get Anglican hymns.
W. H. Auden

FAGRAG: When Ezra Pound lived in Italy during the last years of his life, American students and amateur poets would often drop by for advice on how to succeed in the literary world. His mistress would ask that they recite one line from any of Pound's poems. If they could not, and that was usually the case, they were told that Pound did not live there. How did Auden deal with hangers-on and would-be-poets who would come around completely uninvited and ask for advice on how to write poetry?

BUTTON: Well, first of all, if they came around uninvited they would not be admitted. If somebody did show up, or if somebody brought a friend from academia, he was, if anything, polite. He would never breach etiquette. He would simply terminate the conversation or change the subject. It was obvious that he was not going to take someone by the hand and make them into a poet.

FAGRAG: Did he have any problems with college sophomores who lowered themselves into the room with pulleys in search of autographs?

BUTTON: No, indeed. There were in fact a lot of aspiring young literati, and if he liked them and found them polite and personable, he would talk with them. If they were dumb or boring, he would shoo them off.

FAGRAG: How did he deal with academics and critics who wrote about him and other poets? Did he respond to their questions?

BUTTON: He was very generous in this respect. He was close to Lionel Trilling and gave any help he could.

He wrote another limerick based on the old myth-not heard too often nowadays- that you can tell a person's cock size by the width of the wrists.

A man came out of the mists.
He had the most beautiful wrists.
Some scandals occurred
Which have long been interred,
But the legend about him persists.
W. H. Auden

FAGRAG: Did Auden seek to seclude himself from the public?

BUTTON: No, not at all, surprisingly. Even some of the magazines have been mistaken on that account. VECTOR stated that he had no telephone. Well, not only did he have a telephone, but it was listed in the Manhattan directory. He did not believe in an unlisted number. He was very principled about that. He believed that (1) if you are going to have a phone, you ought to have it listed properly; and (2) he rather liked to have people call and if he was W. H. Auden, the poet.

FAGRAG: An anecdote (or two), perhaps?

BUTTON: The mother of one of his friends was quite old. She was sweet and interesting, but a little difficult to have around because she could not see very well and could not hear unless one screamed directly into her ear. Wylan said in her presence, though she certainly could not hear him, "The trouble with Our Lord is that, although He knoweth when to give, He knoweth NOT when to take away."

FAGRAG: Wicked.

BUTTON: He was fond of changing the sex of persons in famous poems or in the Bible or in Shakespeare. In one of Spender's poems, he would change "I" to "your mother." Alter "I think continually on those who are truly great" to "Your mother thinks continually on those who are truly great." He loved doing this with the Bible, which shows something of his lack of piety. I remember him saying once, "Your mother is the resurrection and the life. If she be lifted up, she will lift up all men unto her."

The Bishop elect of Hong Kong
Had a dong that was twelve inches long.
He thought the spectators
Were admiring his gators
When he went to the gents. He was wrong.
W. H. Auden

FAGRAG: Didn't Auden repudiate many of the political poems he wrote in the thirties?

BUTTON: He behaved conservatively and it is true that later in life he did not like some of the leftist poems he wrote in the thirties. But, on the other hand, one could not possibly call him a conservative politically. He was a socialist. Here is an example of how unconservative he was: He wrote an essay for the New York TIMES on the two Oscar Wilde films released a few years ago. Really, this was an excuse to talk about Wilde's life, the arrest and the horrible trial. In the essay he criticizes the British class system quite strongly. He remarked that all Wilde's friends turned away at the time of his trial because he did not belong to their class. Wilde was middle class and his "friends" were upper class. The piece is a big indictment of the British

class system. Auden wrote this essay late in life after he became a so-called conservative. This was not a conservative point of view. And it is one example of Auden talking about homosexuality in public.

FAGRAG: Obviously, Auden continued to develop and experiment as he grew older: his tone became more playful, he brooded a lot less. Did he become as willing to experiment in his personal life as he did in his literature. Could this have led him to come out?

BUTTON: Humm. One overriding point about Auden's aging is that he continued to grow. Like Matisse and Stravinsky, he produced more and better work the older he got. So many artists become stale, repetitive, lazy or commercial. Auden never was any of those things. He had an essential balance and sanity that enabled him to continue to grow and yet remain fresh. There is never anything glib or trite in the late work. It becomes more and more honest, and perhaps that's the key to understanding why an Englishman in his sixties could come out.

DISSENTING NOTE

Auden has certainly been an overblown hero for defunct LIFE magazine and the literary establishment. He was so Anglo-Saxon looking--no taint of Jew, Caliban, Orient or South Seas--real roast beef. As the United States replaced the pox Britanica, Auden came to New York City.

He's an example of what the GAWK (San Francisco's Gay Artists and Writers Collective) poked fun at in their give-away packet titled, POETRY CAN MAKE YOU A STAR, CREATE YOUR WAY TO FAME, FORTUNE & FUN. Can't you just see yourself in Gotham Book Mart rubbing hands with all the fancy literati?

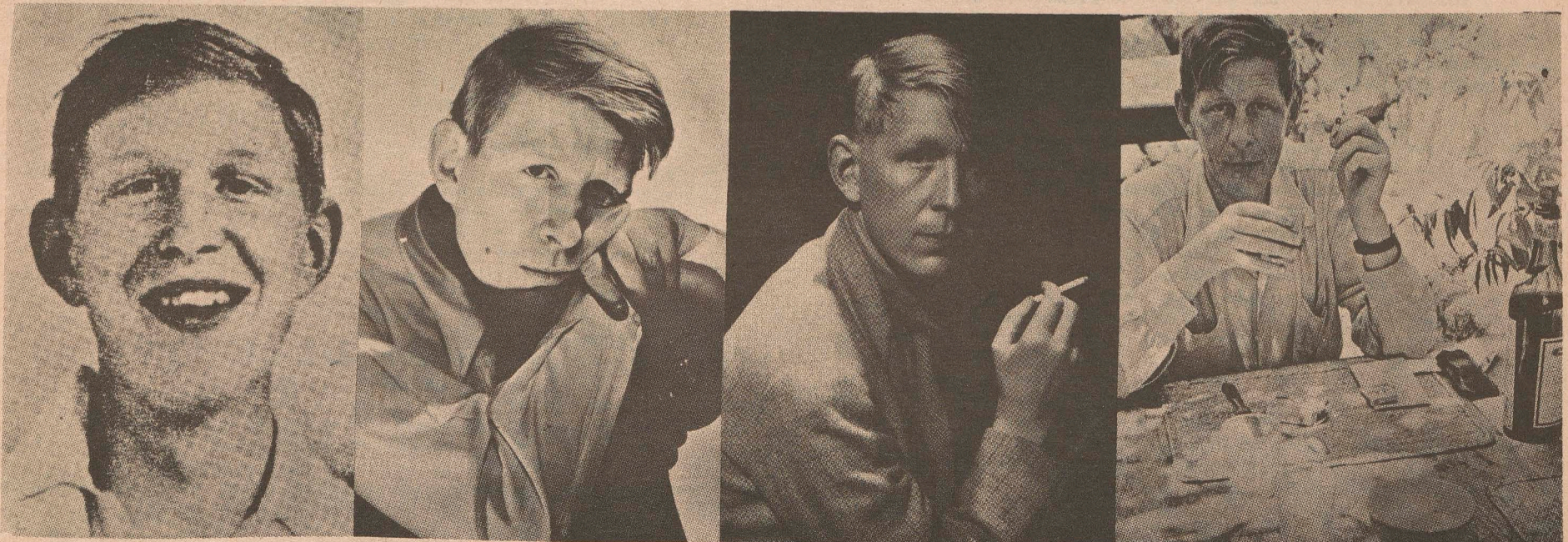
John Button has a fabulous queen's eye for detail and anecdote. But I think he misunderstands Ed Sanders' publication of THE PLATONIC BLOW. The poem first appeared in FUCK YOU: A MAGAZINE OF THE ARTS. FUCK YOU intended to open people up, blow their minds and clean out all the uptight pretences typified by Auden.

I think FAG RAG should do the same thing; that's what we had in mind when we named the paper. When you stop trying to please the establishment, you begin to step on a lot of toes. We lack what used to be called "good manners."

The "alleged story about one individual involved in THE PLATONIC BLOW remains in the text against my objection. Button himself seems to indicate that Auden had no copy of the poem which was in the Morgan Library; yet somehow someone stole it from his apartment. Should we call Sherlock Holmes or Perry Mason?

Actually I think less harm will come from printing a few lies and misrepresentations than from the kind of hero worship which interviews of this type encourage. FAG RAG is the last place Auden's style should be encouraged.

--charley shively



she's a five o'clock queen
 if you know what I mean
 she's determined to be who she is
 she gets pissed on the rocks
 and remembers old cocks
 she remembers the cocks that she missed
 she'll sit in the bars
 counting pink purple stars
 she'll call the bartender by name
 she'll sit there till four
 till he locks up the door
 and her make up is always the same
 but what will she do
 when her queenship is through
 when the ladies in waiting don't wait
 when she hangs up the gown
 and her make up makes down
 when she finds what she is to late
 but there's hope for the queen
 who stops making the scene
 when she finds that the scene just won't do
 when she looks in the glass
 sees her soul through the mask
 of a five o'clock queen who is through

anthony bruno

They're No Better Than Me

Oh to be a Harvard Boy.
 With the added privilege
 of being a Hasty Pudding Belle;
 To parade on stage
 with rouge and skirts
 and not to hear the yell:
 "Ya god-damn closet queen."

No they're not fags.
 The long-legged beauties
 are potential world leaders;
 so they never hear the yell.

Vince Puleo

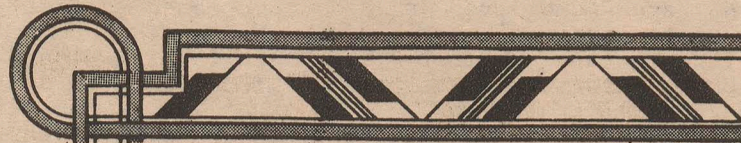
Trespassing

I don't know what this
 means to you. I know
 that this is your building
 and that I, perhaps, am
 trespassing, as I inch
 along these, your corridors,
 my tongue on tiptoe, trying
 to find the one room where
 that picture of you is
 that semblance that is
 more than just another
 resemblance. Oh, we are
 closer now. Yes, I hear
 breathing.

William Kushner

stuart
 byron

"Things co-respond"
 —Jack Spicer



In Memory of

2

For I too was a young boy (though you may not believe it)
 And I too have my correspondences
 I too the father

Who built with his own two hands
 The abominable toychest!
 After that I respected him too long.

And the gutter
 and the rubber ball

and the plastic strap
 And oh the story of the golden prince and the bird
 That Grandmother told

(We buried her last year
 (The greenness of the grass hid her
 (There are correspondences

3

"History, then, is organized remembrance, the
 Correspondences the historians..."

Nevertheless, sir, I would submit
 That just as History is remembrance/ so one can remember History
 I mean in the absolute sense, as one remembers
 The gutter and the rubber ball.

For if that is not so, how, then, sir,
 Do I remember the cutting of the hair
 By the enchantress

(hair black words black eyes black hands
 soft and white)

Of the Philistines, and a strong man brought to grief.
 And then the fall of the arena, the pillars breaking
 Brought to a powder the pillars by a blind man's revenge.
 And the fire, and the panicked crowd and the faith
 Crowned in death.

All this I remember, though it happened not to me.

And later, years later, another crowd, not of pagans but of Jews

leaving,

a king

plotting,

a prince

leading,

a plague

retreating

Retreating...

and not one plague, but two, seven, ten—
 black locust clusters

and

seas of blood

and

snakes and frogs

and

oh babies dying

And then fire etching words on rock I remember,

Remember

I saw it

It happened on wide screen

But I saw it

And I remember it—as I remember the greenness of the grass with which it
 Corresponds

1

McLaughlin, what do you remember?
 A greenness of the grass, and a dog in the greenness,
 His foot wet like the grass, wet and cool?

Is that what you recall
 Sitting on the porch of the fraternity house
 your eyes glazed
 your teeth clenched
 but not angry

Is that what you remember?

Nature to a young boy
 You knew as you knew the second-hand bookdealers of Rochester
 (There are correspondences

There are correspondences:
 The melting fireplace and the Middletown walk-drive/
 "Little Star" and the Flying Dutchman/
 Stevens' words and yes the fraternity porch...
 Correspondences there are, and we live by such
 And memory is their catalyst, you said

Or is it that only the catalyst is left
 The catalyst itself primary, memory itself nourishing
 And sustaining the correspondences
 Sustaining the young boy
 Sustaining life, the death
 Sustaining the porch

Also there was the story of the money
 I mean the money that you stole, whose details I forget.
 But you were a young boy, and the flying world of house
 tables and chairs
 Caught you in your corner

But your father believed you
 After that you respected him no longer...

Is that what you remember, McLaughlin?

There are correspondences.

CULT FIGURE

I enter your bookshop again
 By this time, you've appeared
 in ballads, sonnets, odes
 elegies, chansons, fragments...
 Wearing the same unbuttoned shirt
 you squint at me
 unaware of your fame
 unaware of even Maude Gonne
 This time you're carrying a Persian
 rug over your shoulder, the small
 white gazelles nipping at your arm.
 You ask me how it's going.
 I tell you I'm going to undress
 you in my next poem.

R. Daniel Evans

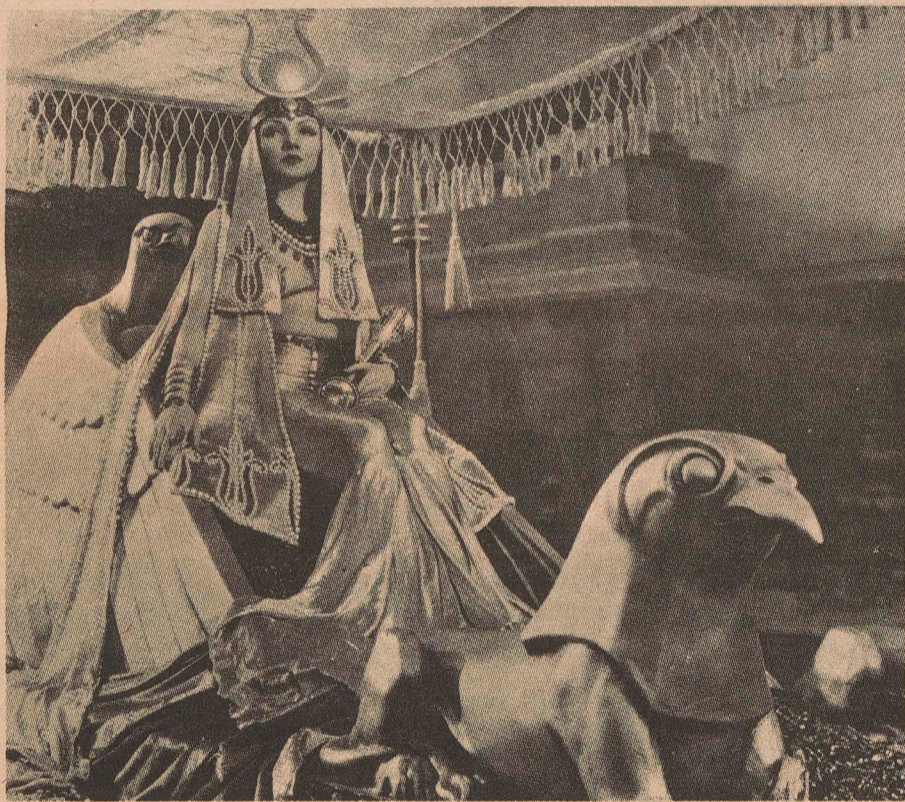
HOMOSEXUAL SCENARIO
(For Leo)

I whiten your hairy fingers
 with gripping pressure of my sweating
 right hand.
 My left
 guides a fresh supply of blood
 to blue veins swelling--
 your uncircumsized penis rises.
 Busy hands.
 Not folded in prayer tonight.

J.D. Butkie



Cecil B. DeMille



4

All I could think of were the caterpillars.
 Caterpillars!
 On a city street in July and August!
 Where did they come from? We did not know. We were
 Four and five and six and they were hundreds—
 Hundreds of little amber beasts crawling on our trousers.
 We squashed them between our fingers like soft yellow clay.

And they did not return, no, not ever, for I
 Searched cement streets for them several seasons after.
 But they did not come, they have never come back
 —Not even the next year, for there were no butterflies.

But JoAnn, you have come back, and you have reminded me.
 I had forgotten it all, but you were a correspondence.
 "Yes, yes, Stuart, don't you remember? That
 Was the summer of caterpillars! They were all
 Over the place! Don't you remember?"

Yes, yes
 I remember, and I remember....you, JoAnn, with your
 short-cut hair
 and your plain dress
 and long sad nose
 You cried the first day of kindergarten, you cried for mother.
 Where did you go for ten years? I do not want to ask
 For you have come back
 And you are like a butterfly

Making Over (rover)

I put on makeup
 and walked around the house feeling
 like a Susanah yolk something young
 with that natural stuff
 only now she has wrinkles that faggy moviemmen can't hide
 and that's not the youth and beauty thing
 from too much junky suzy
 selling Alberts wrings by the sea
 in Jamaica and me in my house
 feeling me oh no Sue I'm not trying
 to feel you or make a pass at
 identities - I like suitcoats o too much
 but that's unreasonable
 I just like youf style you crazy kid
 and I like my man size pancakes
 hungry jack eats ass between commercials
 or does he?
 and I'm sipping my beer suzy
 where are you I'm here in the house
 wet from all those slow dreams
 now that I'm away from him and her and them
 and I'm quiet with these dim lights
 but its only 70% rain tomorrow
 and I can dip between pours
 and I'll be dark like corvair shadows
 and I'm insane for tom tulips legs
 jealous and not right
 but all too curious
 so I'm drivin with the top down tomorrow
 and goodnight susan
 you must be tired too

Koke Vacha

5

Came you from the West—West—
 From the City of the Angels, Bruce Corwin,
 Came you to the East, to Middletown,
 Connecticut, where the buildings were older than your parents.

And so here you were in the East, which you
 Did not understand. "Where I come from,
 The streets are wide, the highways white,
 The schools made of red brick. We
 Take people for what they say, we do not
 Search for their reasons. We
 Cheer. I
 Shall go home."

Ah, Bruce, Bruce, you must know,
 too

Of Cecil B. DeMille on the caravan West—
 In 1912, the caravan of movie makers on the way West.
 Near morning they came to a fine and open place,
 In Arizona. And some said, "Let us stay here." But
 Cecil B. DeMille would have none of it. "No, we will yet go on,"
 Said Cecil B. DeMille. And so they did, until
 a
 place
 called
 Holly Woode....

And thus was destiny finally manifested.

6

I speak this from Paris
 where now I live among
 the new rich
 and the new franc
 and "a new wave
 In the French cinema." And a new friend says, "America
 Is the only place where a serious interest in the film
 Is not intellectually respected."

And I think of Cecil B. DeMille,
 Of DeMille in Chicago, 1952, the Republicans assembled—
 Dirksen against Dewey, the defeated Taft,
 The triumphant general, and—
 Cecil B. DeMille, charging 'round the floor,
 Feet paced, eyes glazed, shouting "THIS
 Is the greatest show on earth...!"

I speak this from Paris
 to you, Bob McLaughlin
 and you, JoAnn Perotti
 and you, Bruce Corwin
 Somehow we all
 Correspond. You, you three, call for the return to wonder,
 But haven't we learned that wonder can
 Be raging horses
 on a colored screen?
 For this was America, and I was once a child.
 I feel locked in the toychest again. My heart pauses.
 I think, "He who has caused the waters to part
 Is dead."



tres gay

wipe that tell-tale sneer
off your briar-patch smile
squint to the tune tinted pancake lights
basting brown-gray glazes of tobacco smelting
swimming pupils focused-
focusing on your latex lip-service brother.
we come together to help stamp out the pain
of looking inside ourselves
behind prisms
embellished with our fantasies,
singling doubling
idly strutting blow-ups in night light
blowing kisses
metered to the rhythm of:
'look at me, but don't linger babe'
daring not to whisper:
'let's make love before you buy me a drink.'

someday i'm gonna be the son
of a masked stranger
swaggering beneath blackened sunsets
hardened for the drag race to ride me-
ride me out of town.
why is it such a drag to be trashy
failing
repeatedly
climbing on the backs of my brothers
weaving their intrigues in the house of another sign
failing
till i least expect my target
beating down surplus adrenalin
pasty from age.

if it doesn't happen
i'll probably commit suicide at 3 a.m.
eating glazed donuts with my fly open
while prowling cars steer clear of me
dragging down castro street
in gay apparel
falalalala lala la la.

norman lubowsky
october 1973

cut and print farewell

miles crossing billboards
of weather-beaten talk
scripts strung out telling ourselves
to change the genre of ticker-tape medleys.
schemes sounded out
dressing ourselves in drag adaptations
courtesy of 20th century fucks.
we lay claim to the copyrights
of "single unattached faggot
living alone"
and alone
and alone
and a loner
groping our way to co-starring confidants
in your local elginized time square balconies
parks
baths
trucks
in twilight prime time rush hours
returning to the scene
after scene
after scene
after scene
with leading men playing heavies
to my bearded bitchy ingenue
and your mild-mannered turned wolfman mad scientist.
isn't it about time
we stopped playing sorority sisters
fake glass suicides on the heels of rejection
and graduated to the seventies:
sublime serene
stock company sensuous
waiting our turn
to get gender-fucked on a king-size waterbed
from coast to coast.

for bob
on location
november 30, 1973
norman lubowsky

John Wieners

A Comparative Study of *Studies for an Actress and Other Poems*; *Women's Newspapers*; *Homophile Bulletins*; and *The Underground*.

Too big to go into, that's a mild, mon mere, understatement, for the schiff-abbreviated Kudos to Da. Sharf length of comparison to do as a Oregon fulcrum backside, touring the alas, erstwhile lamented Poet, Jean Garrigue's last \$1.95 soft paper tabulation. Now stop me, if as you have, heard this

one, but, data-computing factlady
teetering long at the pool.

simpered: ice Collier'. Macmillan New York Publishers . London.

reminding your reviewer
'Moondial', 'Movie Actors Scribbling Letters Very Fast in Cruc-
ial Scenes' &

decimated coll. 44 pm.
the title verse approximates closer processing.

"This that they want which will fulfill
This that she does not know, which she must do."

A nineteenth century duet. "(After Having heard Galina Vishnevskaya
sing in

Dubrovnik)"
"Performing in them alien acts,
The I that was another, that odd she."

3 & 4

run by Headmistress Iseult. Did you see the latest, j. G.

"...then to change,
If it's in changing that things find repose."

You know, I love this newspaper so much, that's too big? isn't it with
its Viva piece-buns. Fanning power in-deed. Can you not afford what subsis-
tence allowance the I. st. in division Contagious pallor hard to mean, easy to
hate, and oh so, easy to viz-a viz Thursday semi-late, in possession of
like contents. stay said vampire.

You wouldn't like this, if you lived with them. Startling, pier, agé. just
make me some money.

Fascination — preparations for a "quik" curtain, or weekend at The Ms. America
bty. Pageant, where I believe Ms. Garrigue contracted fatd neuralgia, indulgent
to an involuntary midnight plungd off her hotel's window ledge, allows me, in the
guise of a silent watch-fob retainer to hazard estuarial memmorial topics a load
autopsitic a concernd combine per oral refuse in up direction of Third Ave. "After
Reading the Country of the Pointed Firs"— *Country Without Maps* and in the course
welcome afternoon interviewer Canadian youth came up, samaritandly nickt propriety
Chatres Jr Prose Poems — 866. since they appear by way of legacy in perpetuating
tactile N.E.'s Community calendar. Edwin's VV & H.B.'s tabloids conditionally to
eulogy smash up-the-arse of our American public corps.

Usual Tops smatter intrinisc radiance.

Our society consists of multi-structured layers in various media;
authorship, multiplication; mis-management and monied attainment. A gross
leader rules imaginatively à la pinnacle. From variety means & mineering
relationships; in housing, convivial decor, marketing employemait. Seven
voluminous invaluable proofs that the subject grew, wizened legislated and
mated.

Since 1956, until last winter my frail powers expanded; more so em-
barcking in her quest. A wave, a wac, a seed, a vestibule. Apt as an august
aye eager labor.

'kept the dazzle and the ache...
and be me steadfast hours,

77 - from 'T. Gift of Summer' 7&8

in party, as league (giving a "multiple warhead Navy Missile
the name of god)!"

"Also glittering are the hides of the horses
that policemen sit on like Order and Reason...
the order of Poseidons and nuclear umbrellas,"

'Resistance Meeting : Boston Common.'

p. 63. 3 s.64

to carp d.v. Genet's hearening au recours Diaghilev's novel *The Triumph of
Neptune in Paris Was Yesterday* the year '27. Topic thirty-four.

As candy-bars; poems cast quick to mold. Drool, old hand bare parlor.
Banking at present with 1st Nat. Fed. an elegy to Jack, and Enna; Mr. Ellis
and Spanish saints triggered a long-awaited epitome to North Atlantic sway.

Living in the country specializes in fine points. Privacy, belief in
the hereafter and the local town hall (census, over-due, polling places,
village characters, scouts fields public health, chores tabs, board.)

Experiments in or out of humane purposes, as with associated subjects,
never apply to author Jean's forte. She main streets common headaches, as exp.
unexplained torpor. Idle ostentation

'at breakfast they are sober, subdued.

Young and incomparably unbroken

.. 36. 'Grenoble Cafe'

Confusion reports "the death of Mme. Curie" for our scientific research in their overcoats, an American Pole franc lea. — o. the consequence of resonant pirating juxtaposing quit professorial insularity heinous descending so .o. ... capitalists said.

By this or not/line 17.

Any man's death takes a piece of you, imagine losing Rosemary Lanvin or fox-gloved Laura *mon automne maquillant visage*; newports' AA or SS, could you try CC. seizing dancing, smoking, flying.

When I was in New York, last February the very month I hrd. the 92nd. Y '56 demonstration, and where I met their posthumous all Peter and no knockers members of the NY school; Betty Ford was much in attendance unannounced, you see, keeping Metropolitan diners caparisoned, like poems do. In neat, expensive grants. But once, a poet opens her mouth, you'll never forget them. Heirarchies of legendless troys, voluptuaries in voted perfection, blank trances vigorously audible inviting static. Club habitues class signature, surprisingly simulated mandarin Hi-Hat, Herorge' Wein's Storyville Carter Peg Saison brasserie keeping clear innovative prodigality.

Few places gone. more less mark dour. Janie herb brooch in attesting most big bitches. Retrospective Partisan revue state serials entrench corporal hope. What spade overturns authenticity, un-eccentrics please remit,

Final summary.

25 seasons touche' —ablaze from the frst Kiki, a last horrible matricide. Maxy Bodenhein sattoafter, emigre pea tripod fabld deckd skimmy fingrd antè Puerto rican internecine, hastily cognizant tender Wooster buttons, fresht co-op b.w. the grasp absentdanonymous motifs finaigld immature allocations au retour the Cloisters, MacDougal, Ted & Eli's haberdashery West 8th, even Gotham, e.a.w. a sparse melopoeia stifling.. papa monkey-grinders in anticipation. Never weeks passed that some tid-bit did n't come our way some big shot's doing wigd out, or the punctual mags demandd confrontation Dior harrid matriculation; seeing Washington monument, cradle libertè Eve at Irene amulette beaches stock rumour. Grand Broadway Christine Cavannas reconnoiters mid-way by shot-chance feast nordfjord contact pseudo destiny one good turn deserves second try sure as anybody some uppity need fills those wills. Redeemed in part, or full like breeds manner call kindness Neophytes from Fag Rag as couldn't bring themselves to investigate lesbians only conjecturdly projecting post-operative '60's, when they needed it, waning from S.Z. Skouras, Veteran's loans, hepatitis or Miles' SDMPWC.

I tried to adulate Leslie; Maggie mum in part. Stan Getz. Perez. that matter Lady lymph taciturn limp grecian spark doused; abundantly a manly trade picture on tour for three acts heartbreak, can't this mood get eternal lush year's account amiss'

Whether independent evaluation linger certainly mediocre pocket succumb cultish retention.

Cousind I thirstd guarantee, fraternizd bordellos outrèprecinct. Skimpily of task, only resound fieldfact when askd apro to inveterate circumstances. Badbilge currid here and there, ce vont a gue vous dire crimp total efforts meatshit.

Jean Carrigue



WINTER

Sunlight, Straining to peer at me through my bedroom window, like some pathetic voyeur.

The naked skeletons of lush green New England trees brush against the glass, silently waiting, for the explosion of spring to set them free.

Why get up to face the world when it's so much easier to never leave the warmth of these familiar covers with their all to familiar smells of lovers, that met in a wild love dance for one special night.

Breakfast! Yecch! Besides, it's almost noon.

Mt. Auburn street can look very much like the eighteenth century, if you want it to.

Bouncing up and down on the cobblestone sidewalk watching for the spaces between the bricks, that the snow hasn't found.

Couples strolling elegantly down the paper promenade leaving soft silent tracks in the slowly melting snow.

Old men in the park huddling to keep out the cold, discussing what they'd do if they were 18 again.

Then there are the others, walking, sitting, watching, the snow, as it slowly dances it's way to the frozen ground.

They try so hard to look like they are waiting for a long lost lover who will someday come. Perhaps he's forgotten where the park is, no matter, we can find each other. Walking back, Hand in hand. To a dinner of hamburgers bordalise, and chateau Boones farm 1974 by the light of coffee can candles.

The glow prevails, time passes quickly, when you're in welcome arms. Passion comes, then goes, and it's time to watch another familiar back sway into the twilight. Like so many others I knew so well.

Time for sleep
The sun will come all too soon
and force me to recognise
his new day.

Christopher J. Guerin



A LOVE POEM

Gentle in the lap of love
The bed, board and body
Of you to more of my liking
In the quilts of morning
I am writing for some love advice

With the Image of your fingers
Fastened to my body
Like electrodes
Plotting the score of my manhood in you.
On a lie detector
Or the Evening Truce
Between venom and boredom
When we curled together
Innocent and happy
As a pair of socks
Fresh from the washer
The Chambers of our hearts
The nights you and I made love
Ruffled in my sleep
Have left these marks
I say you ruined me.

I love you.

Don Apple

"Getting Gay in New York"

three poems by George Whitmore

1. At PETER RABBIT

He is drunk
and wanting me to love him
even though I haven't
hinted it was so.

Thinking nothing of it
I say later on

that I had come here
looking for him.

Don't say that, please,
he whispers urgently, and looks away.

But it has pleased him, I can tell,
and I slip my arm
through his, and he smiles again.

We dance until the bar closes
pressed in tight
with all the men who are too short,
too fat, too crazy to leave
like us, and the homeless boys.

I get very drunk
and pretend that I love him
just because he wants me to.

(I know what the definition is
of this love of his.)

2. At THE NICKLE BAR

(To a photograph on the wall of
the urinal.)

Ah this poor penis on the wall
pumped up just to the permissible point
nods out at me over its scrotum

so prodigious-looking in its perpetual
aching, slick, lifelike magazine colors
though not accessible, thus diminished

finally below its fevered dimensions,
not even now appendaged to a face
or hands to pull its foreskin back

and bathe it in hygienic Des Moines--
all absented to this new romance
with me and the fact of the photo here

where it does business best and most
of the customers stay on past one,
two, three, drinking harder, longer, more.

So mine was never so honored as this
by the eyes of a thousand appreciative men.
Belittled and sobered it's back under cover.

Still, if its head should rise up tonight
I trust I will find it relief somewhere,
if only in the haven of my own live hand.

3. At RIIS PARK

We met out in the ocean beyond the small waves,
both of us swimming naked
with our suits around our necks;
but there was no naked embrace there;
it wasn't necessary.

There are some who you know
have a smile
that promises very exacting and parcelled joys.
His smile was like that,
as was mine.

Nevertheless, he introduced himself
later on the beach.
A screaming, shouting crowd of men
were tossing a naked boy
in a sheet out on the edge of the surf.

The spectacle was not so much
in the laughing boy
but in the crowd, who, too
were tossed about when the waves came in
and thrown into each other's arms.

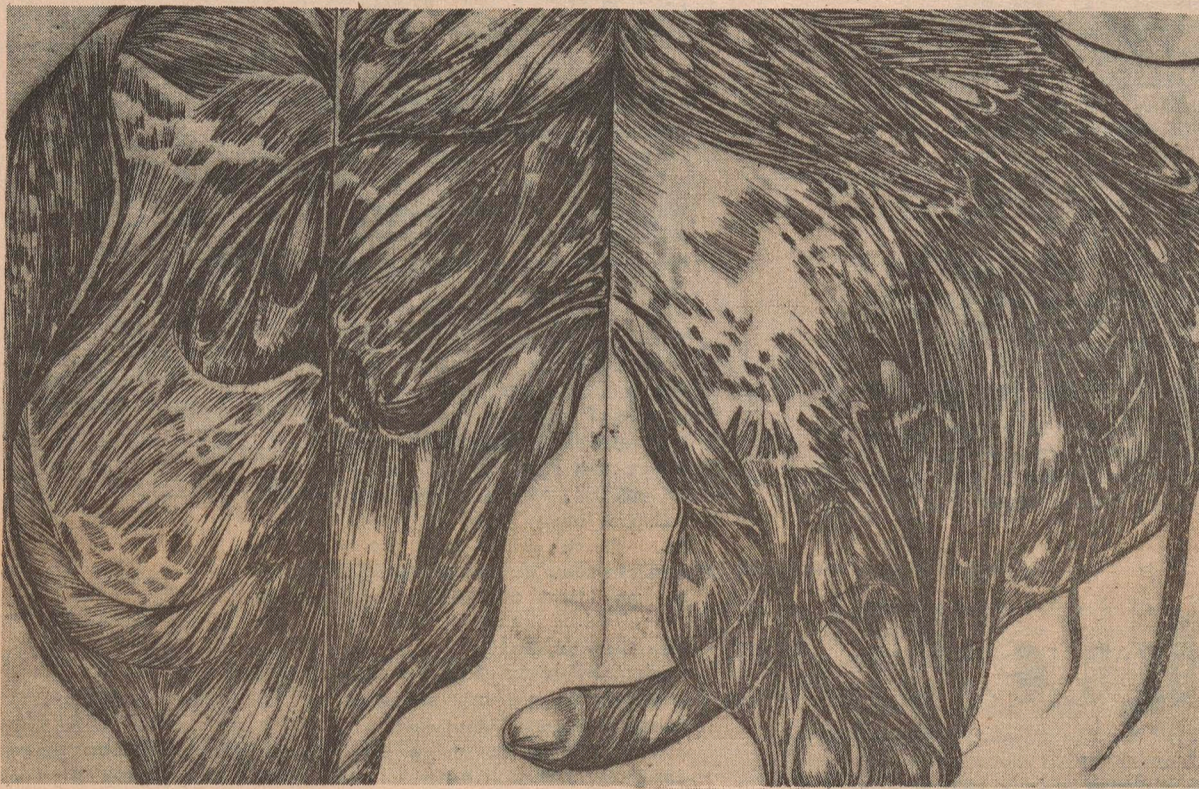
He was a lonely man,
looked at me like a poor relation,
one who practices virtue in all family things,
records the genealogy of the spendthrift
and his scattered tribe.

There were three moles
on his shoulder,
sitting out on the skin; familiar--
a lover's marks on a lover's shoulder.
Fingers had passed over these three moles
countless times on countless errands,
on their ways to his earlobes
or their circuit around the nape of his neck.
or to his belly
past the brown nipples
and the navel
into the damp shag below his belt.

We stood talking
while the crowd thinned out,
watching it as one watches the sunset in literature.
I said good-by then and walked back
up the beach.

I lay down on the blanket beside
my lover.
When he woke he asked me if
I had been sleeping all this time too.
I said that I had
since I had been waiting
beside him for much of the afternoon
for some sign
that it had not ended (love) between us weeks before.

George Whitmore



"Study for Wings" by Douglas Bessette

For the 20th Century Phaedrus

Ed Cates

Far out of the city--
In a town where people are people,
In the last town the last train of the night will pass through,
Your house sits like a toad by the side of the road.
Late at night the lights change every minute
& our voices vaporize to the corners of the room--
They say:

there is no present
there is no past
there is no future

When the wind passes your window, dark & pensive,
The silence is fulfilling.
The room says:

Two friends spend the night together
& nothing is new with the world.

Menage a'Trois (A Lover's Prayer)

Ed Cates

In a comfortable condominium
Out in suburbia
On a hill overlooking the city,
Blank eyes roll heavenward
Limbs are forced outward
& Two forms are speaking in tongues.

A stained sheet's momento
Holds blood sweat & semen
An ear sound embodied
Holds graced ecolalia
As lover holds lover
Way out in suburbia.

"We know not why
We do what we do"
Our thoughts are like darkness in light.
And outside our window is one shining star
Guiding our menage a' trois:

In the name of: (the mind)
&: (the body)
&: (the mind&body)
I share mine with.

Metamorphoses

I really don't understand what happens.
I have thought & thought--
I have planned other strategies, all to no end.
It happens all over again:
When the two of us are partaking
In the peace which passes all understanding
Suddenly--pffft!--we're two snails on a rock
Worn smooth by the waves of the void, or:
Wham!! Two waves of light pass each other in space:

-1

c= 300,000 km/sec

Going nowhere, or:

Hai! Hai!

I pass you in a strange town,
Having not seen you for years & barely recognizing you
When

Suddenly--!!!!!!!

Or else:

Zork!

We sink like rain into the ground
& both come out at the place that all the waters of the earth empty.
There, I stand up, as if in water,
I get out of bed, now assuming your body,
Sweating your personality--
I turn, telling myself I'll be right back
& secretly, anxiously, while you are falling asleep--
I spend half of the rest of the night
Looking through all the rooms of the house,
Trying to remember what century I think I was born in.

....Ed Cates

Anthem (Everybody Out!)

:to be sung by a lonely
faggot, backed by a
lone french-horn on
a dimly-lit stage.

Cruising 'round the corner of my dreams--
I see you leaning back against the lamp-post,
Gazing at me with your glistening eyes...
I can hear you calling.

I reach out and you take my hand.
We embrace in the shadows
Letting loose love that's been tied by lies:
We think we're free as long as we hide.

When the sun's first rays come through the shades,
I open-up my eyes to find that you've gone...
Afraid to be seen outside of the dream,
We separate and close our hearts.

:a second french-horn
is added here with
lights raised slightly.

But I only want to open up--
To cast off the shackles of deception,
To be myself all day,
To love who I love to love!

:here our lonely faggot
is joined by 400 of his
smiling brothers, spelling
out GAY with their bodies,
moving together, singing
loudly along with full
orchestra, hands clasped,
cocks in full salute,
with lights blazing and
dancing in the theatre
aisles!

COME OUT OF YOUR SHELL!
STAND TOGETHER IN THE SUNSHINE!
COME OUT OF YOUR SHELL!
STAND TOGETHER IN THE SUNSHINE!
COME OUT OF YOUR SHELL!
STAND TOGETHER IN THE SUNSHINE!

:this builds to ecstatic chanting
that doesn't fade away
but leaves the theatre and flows out
into the streets.

Bill Mitchell

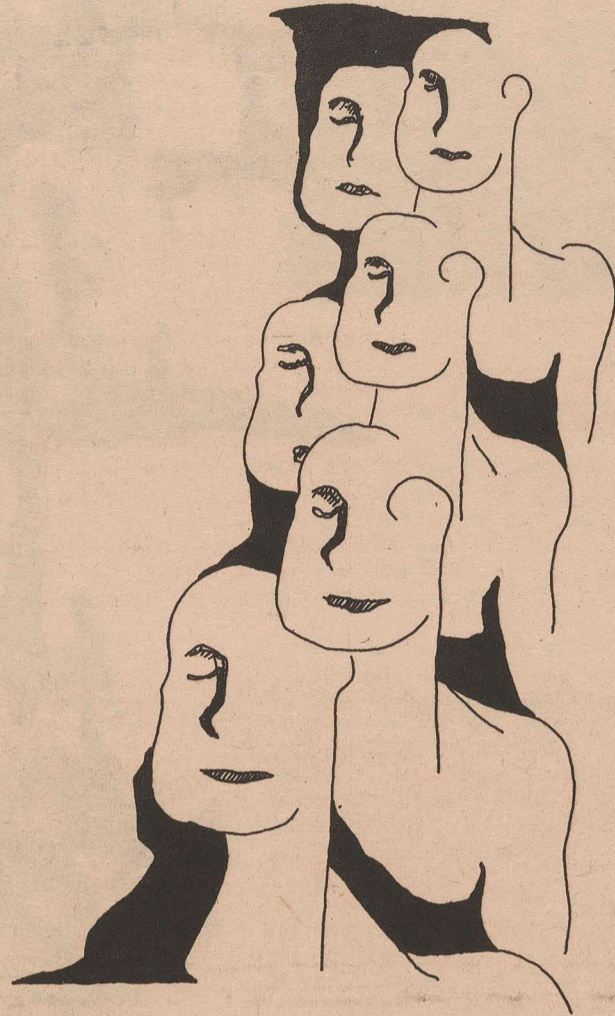
WHEN

When
he
put
it
in
my
mouth
I said
that's
not
where
I
want
it

Where
do
you
want
it
he
asked
and
when
I
told
him
he
laughed

Nice
man
though
he
put
it
mmm
where
I
told
him
I
want
it

William Kushner



This Day

"The blue boat that is this day."
--Victor H. Cruz

-1-
Dupont Circle. The fountain
will soon be clogged
& closed down, then fill
with leaves holding their breath
until they turn blue. Today
no one has his hands
in his pockets. The sky
is blue, the inside
of a blue blimp. We
inside the blimp sit
round the fountain's edge
while a little boy
ejaculates pigeons.
He will grow up queer
& covered with pigeon shit.

-2-
The block is crowded
almost a block party.
The people cruise
keep an eye out.
It begins to squeak
like a Gene Austin recording
on a 1900 victrola. The
sky was blue before dark
indigo. Now the blue boat
picks up everyone.
We are all sailors.
Everyone dances like Gene Kelly
in the blue rain to dawn.
This day.

-3-
Bailing out this day
with a bucket
we try not to sink
into the blues
(what's bluer than a
porcelain sink
filled with dishes
under a naked light)
but the bucket
has a hole in it
fuck it
through the hole
blue skies don't rain,
they snore.

-4-
I am not alone
I am being shadowed
around Dupont Circle
by a rhumba band.
The drummer wants to
paint my thighs blue.

-5-
One more blue day
comes into sight
like a row boat
as I swerve around N
to Dunbarton.
No one is in it.
It follows a foot behind
as I nod to two men.
They see a cop but
it is only my blue boat
with a billy club.
The block empties
as I circle with my empty boat.
All the sleep the winos have missed
piles under the boat like a wave.
I walk into a sapphire of surfers
through trap doors.
I am the blue sky.
I lick the mirrors & windows blue
with the light of my tongue.
A fine time to snuggle under the
blue blanket that is this day.

--Jim Everhard

SOMETHING IN THE AIRE by James Mileski

If god abolished Sodomy,
if god destroyed it there,
then why are we still with it,
is it something in the aire?

But if effaced by the god,
then how can, can it be?
There must be more than meets the eye
-I'll not disturb the piece.

MODEL AIRPLANES

I fit into other people's lives:
My Tab A into your Slot B,
I allow you to put the pieces together
Then I call my self victim,
But I never tell you where
My Tab A fits best -
Till later -
When you have become accustomed to my A in your B,
I yell manipulation,
You get confused,
I yank out my A and go home.

Owen Wilson

Swish

--Jim Everhard

-1-	the queen's ball gown	how's swish
	a horse's tail	tricks
	your tail	
	mine	swish swish
	satin on satin	an exercise
		for hippy people
	any place I	swish time
	hang my swish	the sound of swish
	is raining	swishing my way
	traffic	rodan meets the velvet swish
		the maltese swish
	the night's traffic	superswish

the good, the bad & the swishy
gone with the swish
a streetcar named swish
around the swish in 80 days
the godswish

-2-
your hips are as screwy
as Captain Queeg's ball bearings

-3-
if you've got it, swish it

THIRTEEN:

A
FIFTH FOR TH FOURTH
AT
JIM'S.

for Jim, of course

i
among th
PLANTS. PAINTINGS
BIEDERMAYER CHAIRS
& th
Tilestove
from
OSLO
comes th
Longhaired & quite delicate
little
greatgreat
Grandson of ROBERT BRUCE
EXCLAIMING: : :
O HOW
PRETTY! ...
Bowing.
Smiling
Prancing & complaining
because
HIS apartment isn't as pretty
ALSO.

HOW
LOVELY TH BOY
TH
FIREWORKS. HOW LOVELY.

ii
OH HOW
PRETTY TH TADASKI:
th
Crystal from which I drink my whiskey.
th original
Colville & th Picasso
near th
Windowsill.
th pet
Cat.
th
Carpets & stoney hearth ...
... th
REAL WOOD table.
th
Silver & candles
&
Cushiondeep divan
in which you
Lie.
Experimentally disabled
(for 1
Minute.)

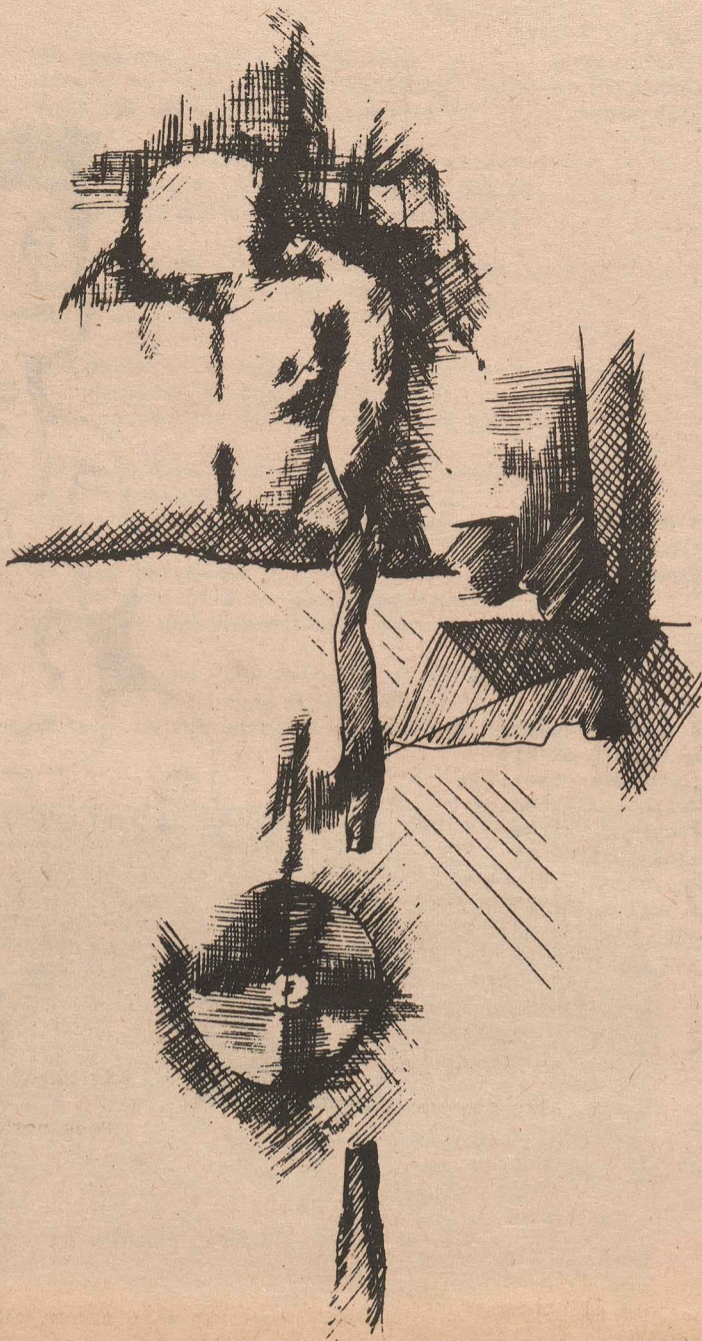
HOW
LOVELY TH SPARKLER
TH
ROCKET. HOW LOVELY

iii
HOW
PRETTY TH VIEW OF TH CITY
Jim's
Balconyview of th pines
&
Twilight crowds of peoples...
HAPPY
FOURTH OF JULY:
you
shout down eight floors.
Ignoring
Houston
Highrise
Mores.

HOW
LOVELY LITTLE RUSSEL
AS
LOVELY AS TH SPARKS
TO WHICH HE

SHOUTS:
HOW
PRETTY!
Rockets
Break th sky.
th
Sparks fall dizzily
Bloody.
Verdant.
Sizzling on th grass
to
Die.

v.
th
Boy's gone out
th
Punk is gutted
GOODNIGHT LITTLE RUSSEL.
GOODNIGHT.
TONIGHT YOU WERE THIRTEEN.
NEXT
YEAR.
YOU'LL BE
THIRTY.
GOODNIGHT LOVELY BOY.
(YOU
TOO. OLD MAN.)
(HOW
PRETTY!)



first breath

It was the voice of Creativity
deep within my being,
that begged me to come out,
urged me to let go,
admonished me for my fears,
prodded me to be me.

It was Creativity
with its Will to Be
oozing through the weaker spaces of my closet,
who persuaded me
gently

But firmly
"How dare you keep me captive!
When you dance, i hunger to come
out of your fingers and hips.

But you stop me.
When you draw, you hide me
from your friends, lest they see
what you really are
inside.

When you sing, you nudge me
to the lower octaves.
I cannot be confined any longer.
If i am not expressed, i die."

So I gave in,
and drew in my first unshackled breath.

satya

A LITTLE POEM

Said the straight man to the late man
where have you been-
I've been here and I've been there
And I've been in between, I was on the inside
Looking on the outside, do you know what I seen
Much confusion and disillusion all around me-
I talked to the wind but the wind didn't hear me-
my words were carried away; I've talked to the wind
but it just didn't hear me, a single thing I had to say
You tried to possess me, it didn't impress me-
Nor did it upset my mind-
you wouldn't conduct me or instruct me,
don't you think it was a waste of time:

Alfonso Price

rome 1950 ~ austin 1970

o
otherwise
VIRGIN
Giacome:

yr
Pants.
yr
SHORT.
LITTLE.
BLUE.
PANTS
Hang there on th chair
behind yr
Coffin.
yr
Mother gives me coffee
in yr
CUP.
yr
LITTLE.
GREEN.
CUP...

there is still the
Smell from yr lips.
did she

Know.
little
Boy I loved
you...
LOVE. ...
does she
Look at me & see that I have shared
you... made
Love to you before you were laid
there
Forever in that wood.
o

otherwise virgin
GIACOME. MAY
she! - know you were
Part of th sensual pleasure
of
Life!
but I am
Lacking
th strength to
Tell
her. afraid of
Hurting
her
More - No!
of having her tell me

GO!
SIGNORE!
FOR
THIS - HE IS DEAD!

Eggeling



together

We came away together.
He loves horse racing
(today I guessed the long shot
in the sixth)
and he plays football.
I study and read and sometimes
try to write poetry,
as now while waiting
on this Autumn afternoon
(Vivaldi's 'Autumn' on the stereo).

My facial features are more classic;
his---more blunted and rough.

I have fantasies of high spiritual
development, lofty, serene,
sometimes a bit elite.

Fantasies.
My body is under-developed;
his---muscular and strong.

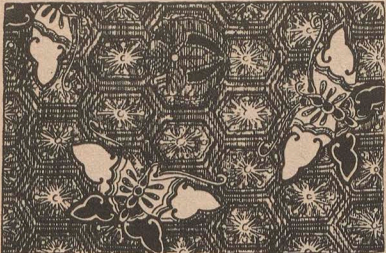
Harold E. Pickett

It's All Crystal Clear

I looked into his eyes and
saw a shallow pool,
The water rippled and
cooled my brain,
But he turned his head away.

"Come back," I shrieked,
I grabbed his hair,
But when I caught his eyes again,
He blanked his brain,
And there was nothing to see.

Daniel Herzog



portugese hunk

We made love
for hours....
as i fucked you.
i fantasized
about
you/me/making
us a home.

Visions of having you
to fuck at the end
of the day.

I said, "i love you"
and meant it....
you hugged me
and said, "how delicious".
Finally you slept and
i couldn't
for my wide awake
dreams of you
and a new life
kept me awake.

i held you
all night and
felt a thousand
things and
in the morning
you woke and
left me.

the night
was over
and you
went about
your life

and i
wonder
if i'm a
fool
or if i
should be
grateful
for a
vivid
imagination.

larry seth stewart

touch

that men
should never touch
seems natural

to those
who are surrounded
by monstrosities
of steel and glass
a holding back
reserved

a love not spent
those are the rules

they know
those are the walls
which cut them off

and from a joy
undreamed
each caged

within himself

n. a. diaman 19 nov 69

FOR BILLY

Begging Da Vinci's pardon,
sensations better shared, including

a gibbous moon that enters
stratus right,

and pipes to rocket aspirations
starward,

the Stevens poem ticketed
Tehautepec

the surprise of bathing-suit
shade on black skin

nectarines, ripe sliced
to share at breakfast

prime me:
move the lunatic inside to
seek a sharer, and
therein raising Mr. W.H.²
find inspiration, object
and a period

D.B. Kreitzberg

KHRYSTOFER

Khrystofeer sits in
a lemon drop tree
showering diamonds
down all the day long
He hunts columbine
for chocolate bees
priming the toadstools
who sing him their song
Peerless through curled flocks
of wizard down love
managing making
without much ado
Khrystofeer acts from
a voice up above
only to go have
a drink at the zoo

D. Alan Schirmer

To love you
Means that I must hate all those
Who would do you harm

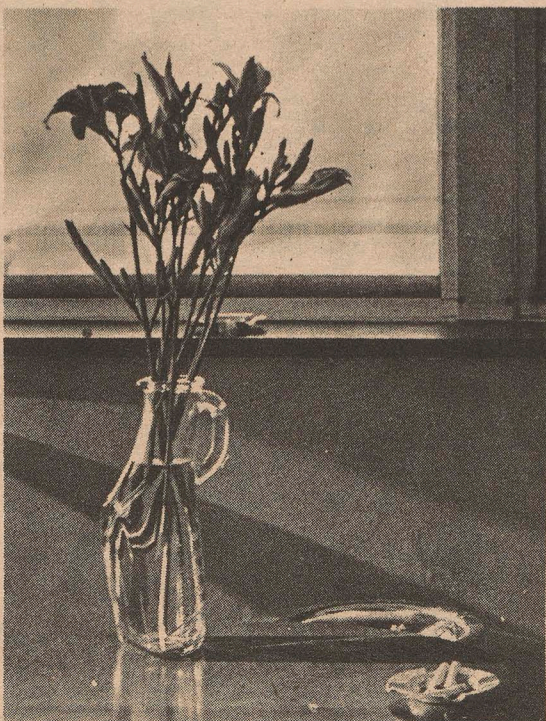
To love me
Means that I must hate all those
Who would do me harm
And that means that I must hate you sometimes, too
And it tears my heart apart

Sometimes it seems that I must hate the whole world
To love you
It is not a burden to me
But there are others, too, whom I love

The greatest gift that I could ever give
Would be a chance for you to find your truth
And that truth to live
But being not God nor fate
That I cannot do
And so I stand aside in helpless agony
And hope that you love yourself enough
To give yourself that chance
To live

I love you

Caleb Murdock



GRETA GARBO

The park's darkness
Increased
With the cripple's loneliness.
The leg, braced, ached.
His coiled fingers shining
Like ice or wax,
Were as broken
As your heart must be.

Handsome he smiled, asked the time
And paused to comment on the weather of the night;
He must have known I was a poet,
Although he did not pose,
But, fearful, he hid
The brace and mangled hand
As you hide your face
And slouch into the resolution of the dark.
God meant his youth
To be broken,
Your beauty aged!
War and time take what they want!
The soldier's memory
Of straight leg and fingers
Does nothing to erase his pain
And give him the love
He seeks nightly in a Brooklyn Park.
Nor does your glory,
Or fame,
Or multi-reflections
Erase
Wrinkles or sooth gnarled hands.

Both the lily
And the weed
Have a single season:
Strange!
One spring
Seems sufficiently enough!

Maurice Kenny

THREE THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED SECONDS WITH A GAY KLEPTOMANIAC

Sixty-five dollar an hour
psychiatrist
with a Georgia drawl:
finally wide-eyed.
I wet
one of his greying sideburns
with a kiss just as
my official sixty minutes ran out.
A delightful first and
last session
on stealing things.

J. D. Butkie

To A Former Lover

Oh, I have never wanted to retreat
Into the past but how I still recall
The friction of our scraping limbs, the heat
Our kisses fed, the sweet extended fall
As when two eagles plummet and pursue
A blur of fur, a terror-stricken hare
Whose screams and frantic efforts to elude
Serve to amuse the predatory pair.
They, by their twisted, convoluted flight
Enhance the frenzied pleasure of the kill,
Until they pounce in uncontrolled delight.
The rabbit convulses and is still.
And I yet crave the unkind sustenance
Obtained by such ecstatic violence.

Jonathan P. Feldman