

East
and
West

1959

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COMING UP FOR AIR

To explain our absence, if that were at all necessary, would be difficult not so much because of the truth or lack of it that the reasons may contain but because those who are waiting for such an explanation have already formed their own answers. It has been a failure of course, like most of us are failures in the daily act of living in this modern world — I qualify 'modern' to denote only the particular failure — but then this appearance of ours will illustrate, I hope, the success of *Life* itself over the failure of the act of living.

The creative act after all, is in itself unique, a thing of beauty not forever but for the moment. And who can say it is not for such a moment in our life that we are all not living our many days, serving the sentence of monotony and drudgery, drinking cups of coffee, walking miles of streets, shaking innumerable hands. It is for such a moment, for such an eternity perhaps, that we live, and continue to live with our own failures and shortcomings, our particular problems, our special morals and conditions. And then suddenly, the moment of beauty is there before you, unexplainable, sometimes unfelt, like coming up for air through all the million seconds of breathing.

And while it is the privilege of every created being to experience this unique moment — and how many of us have been blind to it in the present and only longed for it wistfully after the moment is lost — it is for the creative artist to express this rapture through the medium of words or music or paint or stone. So that for the countless less gifted ones their lost moment is once again

brought before them to recapture all over again. Perhaps that is why some sort of an answer can be given to "Why Art?" but not to "How Art?". How to reveal this most exquisite, most private part of him except through the body which he must clothe his art in. It is thus easy to understand that the work of art is a creation, as result of the particular experience, but invariably not during the experience. What I mean is that it is necessary to 'live' or 'experience' but it is possible to recreate the same only after the experience is over. To that extent we demand of the work of art a mastery of the craft and the medium. That it should be integral with the other qualities, that is, to be able to inspire the participant not only emotionally but cerebrally, and above all be touched with that indescribable genius which distinguishes each separate work of art.

And then again we believe that a certain amount of participation is necessary for a thorough enjoyment — how I hate this inevitable word with its suggestion of drawing rooms and foam seats, and pictures on the wall and things on the mantelpiece — of art. A certain sympathy, shall we say, which is the price the participant must pay if he has to fully appreciate the object of art. I do not expect that anyone who is suddenly confronted with one of picasso's cubist nudes, is likely to think of it as a great work of art. So sympathy would also include a certain degree of awareness of the climate, a matter of time and place, I remember the shock which one of my American friends, and one who I consider as a fine example of the modern intellect, had when I suddenly played for him on the phonograph, a classical Indian rag played by one of its leading exponents.

Which brings me to the subject of universality that art must attempt to transcend these limitations of time and place. Perhaps all great and true art does, for I know that the greatest artists have achieved some measure of this. For instance let me take two great works of modern art. Satyajit Ray's film "Aparajito" and Tennessee Williams' play, "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof". I am deliberately quoting two examples of art which are thoroughly regional, so provincial in their setting and so isolated in their language and medium of expression, that it would be hard to believe that Brick

from the Mississippi Delta, could ever imagine if he tried, the setting or the way of life or the atmosphere of a Bengali town. As difficult as it would be for Apu to comprehend the ways of Maggie the Cat. But as separate works of art and touched with the genius of their Creators, I am not surprised that both could convey their separate meanings and values to a universal audience, as well as the artist intended.

Perhaps it is good to believe that this is so because the world is shrinking and it is possible that before long human beings will get to understand each other and talk to each other person-to-person, from heart to heart and realise that each is touched with the same humanity as the other. After all the root tragedy of modern life is the loneliness, this solitary condition of the dog beneath the skin. And if art can help to break down this artificial reserve, then what further can you expect of it?

So it goes, so it goes, this perpetuum mobile. We have all the reasons to explain why we are dying. But Death is not the answer to our problem. And it does not really matter. We have made our existence a fact that cannot be destroyed and that keeps us alive.

There— We have set our standards and specified our requirements. Now, it is up to you !!

William Carlos Williams

**AN OLD-FASHIONED
GERMAN CHRISTMAS CARD**

Armed with
a bass-violin
horn

clarinet and
fiddle
go four

poor musicians
trudging
the snow

between
villages in
the cold

Martha Millet

TWO POEMS

SHARED

The loaf of friendship
shared between hungerers,
now in timid greed,
now in calm awaiting,
does not diminish; ranges
Sweet-fresh to bitter

All teeth cannot chew

once soft, once tough,
seldom anticipated;
discovery, doubt
in morsels and mouthfuls.

Even if half a loaf,
good food for wanters
for solitary walkers under stars
who bid a presence,
from the steps draw voice.

SUCH SATISFACTORY WEATHER

“Two tremendous concussions, touched off by split-second nuclear fission, mushroomed a pillar of fiery clouds 30,000 feet into the air.”

Five little girls skip rope, skip rope,
Five little girls are chanting.
What it means is to their feet
That want to catch the rhythm:
“Pepper, salt, mustard cider,
How many bullets killed the Kaiser...?”

“The first to return were crewmen checking radio-activity of the possibly lethal waters, ships and islands ... ‘Radiological activity was about as expected,’ a brief announcement said.”

Are they your little girls,
Your little girls skipping rope?
Here is one with braids in air,
One with creamy fluff of hair,
One with short straight strands of black,
A blue pin to hold them back.
Fun is in their eyes.
Pink is in their cheeks.

“The cloud was generated by two tremendous concussions touched off by the nuclear fission. The test was designed to measure the effect of atomic explosion on metal, flesh, air and water.”

Fresh scrapes redden on their knees,
Temples race the rhythm,
Of the tangle of Double Dutch
They make a laughing triumph.
Cones of sun are twirling
Juggling specks of dust.
Clouds buffet playfully
Like good-natured fellows.

“The bomb was dropped with very good accuracy. I must say here that I am very well pleased indeed with the excellent performance of our task force in this operation.

“It could not have been better.

“We were all extremely lucky to find such satisfactory weather on July first.”

Five little girls skip rope, skip rope.
Pavements are their challenge.
Five little girls are skipping rope
In a July afternoon.

Roy MacGregor-Hastie

TWO POEMS

SOMEWHERE IN THE LONG MEMORY OF TREES

Somewhere in the long memory of trees
you will find me,
pattern of falling leaves
behind me,
leaving the landscape stark in the midnight sun.

Outlined against the clear blue sky of Love,
thin branches
of men in the banks, churches, above
their paunches,
timing the last rehearsal of this, the longest run

of the play of the mind's seasons.
We, who have no reason
for Summer,
live out the Spring running,
roots deep in the warm winter,
safe now from the autumn freeze
of the minute flower,
measured the brown bark image of perpetuity.

THE CLOWN

(for Graham Gambie)

Here is the ring we stand ;
you, with the sawdust cream against the white
of shoes turning to face a greying crowd.
I, with my pen light
in the darkness of the world beneath my hand.
We who are not allowed
to act our pantomime of life in solitude
know only paradox of loneliness and shame ;
discovered in our hermitage, become a show,
only the paint, the mask of gaiety and Fear
can give us privacy and Art.

Shamble and pirouette,
sell for an hour the minute of the heart ;
eternity and death,
these are the jokes you mime.
I, in the panoply of verse
cover the same bodies with a shroud,
cover the nakedness of time.

Outside the tent, the night.
Witness the agony of consciousness
lifted, and comfort the sufferer in sleep,
only to twist the knife, bone-blunted, deep
when the harsh light of day brings to the mind
the willed absentiae, the life we would not find.

Only another scene.
 Now like a child losing a treasured toy,
 try, as the only thing to try,
 plead, that the mob give us the strength to scale
 their mountains, hideous and vast, hysterical and cold
 of laughter and indifference.

This is the last ;
 the tinsel armour, lifted reveals a shabby, unprotected soul.
 Now round the centre pole
 that holds aloft the ceiling of our circus world
 cluster the plaudit moths.
 There is no way out ;
 only the change into the clothes
 that suit the lamp post and the gutter near our home;
 only the certainty of purgatory
 tomorrow, and a matinee in Hell.

Clarence Major

TWO POEMS

WINTER CHURCH GLASS

prelude of winter
 sun thrower
 (horse toyed rocked itself)
 baked leaves like stones
 (without a boy in the church glass)
 at the youth's naked head
 (tripped him in the slippery spilt smoke)
 and his rockers need fixing
 (no season reigning inside?)
 where girls have thrown bricks
 to break the religion down
 to a status of stripped money hoarding
 (beneath the seasons attractive trees
 of no importance, left to explain themselves)
 under the toy horse
 cracked in the head where the eye is splashed
 (breathing in the fight of the glassed churches
 sung stumbled naked through the throat
 tipped but not turned over in the prelude)

THE MIND HAS BEEN PUT ASIDE

The mind has been put aside,
 Polished like brass flashing ;
 Put aside of the storm of emotion,
 Wasting on the architectural era.
 Suspended mind, bogged down by help,
 Mechanical hands extended in help,
 Some energy to turn the television on and off,
 Another electric emphasis of unbeauty—
 But wise in elected death-programing.
 No gardens any longer, no roses, no longer ;
 —Of Heaven?— No longer,
 Of pride, of circling the moon, the sun...?
 Of searching?—No longer,
 Mind thrown aside, collecting rare dust,
 An accumulation of filtered intrigue.

Suchoon S. Mo

TWO POEMS

LANDSCAPE

An infant had fear of the sea,
 For it was deep and so blue.

He ran about over the beach,
 Calling the name of mother and God.

He came to a cliff and there he stood
 And wondered, feared and shivered again.

Then, he heard his voice among waves.
 He saw another infant in the sea.

Help me, for I am drowning.
 Join me to share my unknown fear.

The infant had fear of the crowd;
 The infant feared of his being alone.

Indecisions tipped his balance.
 The infant fell headlong onto the sea !

That night the moon was sober and full.
 The infant's corpse was no longer seen.

SHADOW

There is my shadow at the corner of the street,
 Mystic yet plain, waiting for me to come
 Half drunk out of the peddlers' saloon.
 Hands in the pockets, teeth in the mouth,
 Toes in the broken shoes, anger under the hat,
 My solitary shadow by the dazzling street light
 Is leaning against the wall of the post office.
 The traffic light blinks and the breezes pass by.
 No one is seen; no one whistles... no one after all.
 It is deserted on the street; it is deserted
 Between each two buildings, between ticks and tocks
 Of the self-conscious watch, and between
 The red and green of the traffic light.
 It is deserted, it is deserted
 From the Bible to Koran,
 From here to there, from the Yangtze to Indus.
 A stranger among friends, an orphan in the crowd,
 A skeptic, agnostic, and the shadow, shadow, shadow!
 By the street light, against the wall, clad in black,
 Lost between eloquence and silence,
 Lost between darkness and brightness,
 And lost between you and me, there is my shadow
 With a plain look, plain darkness and plain silence
 Waiting for my foot-steps uncertainly to come,
 Half-drunk and half-surprised, out of the peddlers' saloon.

Lori Petri

TWO POEMS

CLOSING DOORS

Some are forever closing doors,
 Although this often must be done
 To curtain tragedy's black shores

Or blinding rays of local sun.
 But these seem always shutting out
 Contemporary moods of light
 Or, in ambiguous fear and doubt,
 The ambit of star-soaring night,

And ever grabbling darkly back;
 Whether in memory or in truth,
 To lock, once more, gates on a track
 Stretching, it may be, into youth,

Instead of seeking untried frames
 And venturous new knobs to turn
 Whilst hurling old ones to the flames
 Of virgin morning, there to burn.

NAMES

If we did not give fitting names
 To ugly-visaged things, perhaps,
 But routed onomastic claims
 And lent them lovely nominal wraps,

Calling the slimy garden slug
 A dewsnail, which he is in truth,
 Putting a tag on age to drug
 It into simulacral youth,

And fixing an azure verbal shield,
 Though grey, on inner and outer skies,
 Might they, in partial view, not yield
 The look our labelling denies?

Marion Schoeberlein

TWO POEMS

RAINER MARIA RILKE

Tender orchid of the poet flowers
 With brain and body sensitive to life,
 He kept far from the world of men and strife,
 And kissed the feet of God in all his hours,
 He ate the crumbs of love that life gave him,
 He drank all nature up within his poems,
 Though poor, the palaces of kings his homes,
 His disillusioned soul broke often from
 The too heavy rose of sorrow and grief,
 He wanted death like one slips on a robe
 And slippers at the end of day; he'd probe
 Into the eternal finding relief;
 He married poetry. the marriage was
 His only story, his one happiness.

SPRING SHAWL

Lean out wild eyes into the spring and die,
 Forget the things you must, remember why
 The dark lid of the winter's lifted now
 By God - and in the kettle lilac bough
 Is brewing - beautiful enough to be
 Eaten by souls who taste its poetry.

Day after day of spring will be giving
 Our hearts new reasons, hopes for believing
 The leaf, the tree, the green grass in the wood:
 Day after day we're haunted by the mood
 Of God as He walks softly planting things,
 Wildflowers in His Hands, everything sings
 Of peace and strength and we can safely place
 Our dreams in spring's old-fashioned shawl of lace.

Betty Turnoy

POEM

Approach in the clearing stranger and stranger
 eyes mired in the hollow of brows
 blood roils in the sluicing veins
 and the beast like an extinct race
 springs to its incarnation.

Who raises his hand between...

O, love, quiet this battle
 and quicken the heart of the rude world
 that courtesy soon may seal
 the wounds of the innocent.

But when the dead wander faceless
 without settling in the air
 in dreams raising hummocks on our skulls
 we feel the cold kill of the incurable...
 their absence, our reproach.

Alan Marschfield

WARNING GENTLE

I shall be old and very wise,
 Before I learn the hurt I've squandered.
I'll be cleaned out of ready lies;
My dens will be burnt up or sold.
 Tell if the butterfly has blundered
 To singe itself on marigold.

I shall be farther than the grave,
 A sadness away from the menstrual moon
And all my wits gone with the wave
When I am scholared in that truth.
 Say if the boy who saw too soon
 Erred when he died of youth.

I shall smell very queer, my dears,
 When all my love has turned to leaves
And you I bruised are gone to tears;
I shall learn then the way to live.
 Ask why solicitude bequeathes
 To beggars when they rave to give.

Willis Eberman

SARUS CRANE, FEEDING

Pecking at pebbles, the smoky sarus crane
stands on left claw, then lopes away
on reed-bent red legs; the three-forth-beaked
face sways up on snake-graceful neck, looks
 about,
lowers to feed. Rust-black, the long head, the
red rimmed eyes watchful of me. Grey, egg-shaped
body, smoke feathers whip up under the wind;
the three-taloned claws, like long fingers
stalk forward; and grey, sharp beak lifts,
muddied, . . . lowers again, proding pebbles for
 kernels.

James McCormick

SEED

I am the sum of my ancestors'
Seed.

My sons' sons will spread my
Seed.

Will impregnate history and
Flourish.

And fight and succour,

Heal and kill,

Fornicate,

Procreate,

And fill this world with ordinary

People.

Harry Hooton

HARRY'S TOTAL REJECTION OF
ALL SINCE ARISTOTLE

A NOVEL

I'll give you a rhyme for YOU

The state of being yourself, being you is YOUth.

And I don't write about truth, but about NEWth.

I am not a humanist but a NEWmanist.

And I am not a poet - I am a NOVEList.

My words are NEW.

IT SMELLS (A septic satire)

I am no exhibitionist

My light to myself sufficient is

A modest violet I shrink

And stink to myself alone

THE UNVERSE (not a poem)

The universe, as it is, and it is
 Idle to deny it.
 Is as it is,
 Whether square or round.
 And there is no reason, purpose, god, design in it -
 Other than what I put in it -
 But there is something behind it;
 I'm behind it,
 Pushing it around.

MY POEMS

My poems aren't meant
 For ordinary people,
 For ordinary people
 Don't want
 my poems.
 My poems are purgatives for
 Extraordinary people
 Stupefied by education people
 Who won't learn from the ordinary people
 Who know too much to read
 And do not need
 My poems.

GARDENING AND BUILDING NOTES

You must get manure to make a garden—
 If you like manure handle man and make it.
 You must have steel to make a city—
 People who like men make men sick...

Man is the gardener, not the garden.
 The gardener gives us roses, not gardeners.
 Man is the master, not the mansion.
 Scaffolds are for buildings not criminals.
 Man is tenuous, unknown, unknowable, passes speech,
 understanding,
 A faultless builder - but a rotten brick !

A SERMON IN STEEL

My text is that a thing is right or wrong only in its context.
 My subject is myself, you, man, the creator, the unknown.
 My object is to leave the subject, and reach - the OBJECT,
 Preach sermons to our creatures - not to men but stone.
 London, Rome, Athens, Babylon - man's footworn stone
 stairs ;
 Stone weary of human tears, that still hears their endless
 prayers ;
 Stone that reaches its eloquence - as the words of their
 builders fade ;
 Stone that these hands have touched, redeemed to pray—
 To us, our creative steel, in new cities we have made.

G. Bacovia

FINAL POEM

I must take to drinking to forget what no one knows;
hidden in a deep cellar, not saying a word
I will sit, smoke and be incognito, even to myself -
perhaps there is no other way to avoid the world...

Let life howl in the streets and death
walk the pavements, misery alone in the snow
for warm, comfortable poets to lament in passing.
I know...

hunger is never sufficient of a dream
to make a dream;
hail, storm and the wet earth above me
will be the end of my contemporary history.
They tell me the world is waiting for me,
waiting to love me...this I doubt,
love being a twosided affair. I could find out
by saying as they do "Oh, come, Monumental Future,
Come."

But I would rather beg leave to forget what no one knows,
sorry for my own crimes as I must be for those
who see me from the other side of the street; no word
of reproof ever passes their lips. They smile sadly :
"Perhaps there is no other way to avoid the world?"

Magda Isanos

IF IT HAD BEEN SHARED WITH JUSTICE

In the passes of the mountains above me,
I lie divided, my head matching the rock,
ringing with unsung praise of the peaks
I can never reach; nor can they be enlightened.

If the pain of this world
had all been shared with justice,
some sorrow for you and some for me
I would not die so young.
I could have enjoyed for a long time yet
the sun and the green branches;
I could have sung for a long time yet
to the sound of the organ of woods and trees.
There were so many gardens to be plundered;
I could have gone to the end of the bowl's roundness
of apples and handkerchiefed flowers.

If the pain of this world
had been shared with justice,
for more years would I reap
the brightness of the fields.

But I must call out to my friend
 to bring me the needles of the mountains,
 high in the skies, near the winds
 that come down to blow about my head ;
 near to the silent fire of the shepherds.
 Life - for some you have always been
 a table laid, for me a tight rein
 where the hooves of my horse thundered.
 There is no balance of happiness or fear in you
 as I meet you, regret you, leave you and forget you.

Eugen Jevleanu

RETURN TO LIDICE

Do you remember ?...

It was winter.

Snowflakes were slowly sifting down
 swansdown pillowed on the cold air
 trembling, uncertain of what lay there
 beneath them on the hard ground.

We had left Prague behind us in the morning,
 its steeples melting in the mist;
 the car crossed fields flat as the tray in the warmth
 where we had stolen an urban rest.
 To the right shone Morawska Ostrava.

We were going to Lidice. None of us
 asked questions. We looked through the window
 at brown villages and the blue forest
 as they too flew out of our sight.

The war had ended. There, where yesterday
 the tank had passed, now there were miners;
 over the struggling woods slow clouds of smoke
 rose from the peaceful furnaces into the air.

We were rushing towards Lidice, when.....suddenly
the car left the road pushing aside the smoke
and snow, crossed the field in high winter,
made a small detour, then stopped.

“What is this?”, I asked, “Why have we stopped,
here where there is nothing?
(We were going to Lidice.)
“Here,” said the guide, “here is the village.”

We looked for as far as the eye could see
at the snow weaving now soft fabrics
with which to mantle the ground that was
desert, scorched tree, ravens...and Lidice.
And in all this nothing...a small museum.

We went in, the Czech you and I. He said:
“This is all that is left now.”
We bent towards the far wall
in a gesture that might have been a bow ...

In a glass case, gathered together in a box,
a handful of tiny, charred things:
a pen, a piece of money, a rusty leash,
a whistle blown up by the dynamite,
a doorknob, some maimed spectacles
mended with wire, for an old man's eyes,
a blank, brass, wedding-ring,
a mattock, a thimble, a frame ...

And in a corner, by the door, another case,
with two small skates and a doll ...
My fingers found the tears in my eyes
but I did not want to cry It was snowing.

I wanted to go out. I looked at you
but the small skates kept me back ...
It was snowing hard, now...how brightly
they would shine over the hard ground.

Our guide was past weeping. He said nothing;
all we could do was to take his hand
in ours, building a high wall of hatred
against the past, and this kept the wind away
from our hearts; we turned to watch
with the wind from the stone window,
behind which were the snows and the barren land,
beyond which were the dream fields of grain.

But the sky wept. And the skates did not move.
There was just time enough to wonder if we had arrived
(We were going to Lidice) and it was cold on the ground
as the warm snow fell, softly, about our eyes.

Tudor Arghesi

TWO POEMS

TO THE STARS

If what this old book says is true—
that out of spit and earth you were born,
prefabricated, not conceived—
that mockery is well revenged, the score
settled, perhaps accidentally...

It was a mistake to *think*, you miserable worm,
and slightly sacrilegious when we realise
that the Great Builder of Bridges,
Cutter of Ravines,
Gusher of Springs
intended you to remain locked in the prison of the Self.
Without a special dispensation you were meant
to represent an instance of a universal law;
sterile as the stone, unable to distinguish
between one elemental need and another
you were intended as the highest branch of a tree
incapable of talking to the roots.
What right have you to this "Higher Nature",

leaving your belly? Your end was to be sleeping
your grief way, replacing the urge to understand
by what a stallion meditates among the mares.

The first day on which you awoke to the world
its architect, who had not foreseen to word
without God, was placed in quite a difficult position;
the first philosopher was no Jehova
but the Devil; Thought, the Original Sin,
made it so very difficult to begin
again at the Beginning. Light flashed out of suffering
and chance, stronger than the rocks, eternal as the Law
and the last angel became the first coward,
anxious to escape and live. Dark martyrs
are drowned by darker waters, torn to the last rib
by impenitent lions, but not the new You,
briskly, heretically striding through centuries,
others behind you - an untheistic anger driving
you on, pursued closely by a righteous storm.

On impulse you went up to the stars to count them
perhaps, burnt the blasphemous hand, but held high
the white embers; it is too late to go back now—
for God's sake let it burn, infernally, on an empty hearth.

TESTAMENT

All I shall leave you when I'm dead is a name,
guide in a syllable, printed large on a book
which they say is mine. Take it in long evening
which goes from my forefathers to you,

through the ravines and the deep ditches
 over which they climbed; the book is a step
 which you must take. Let it be your friend;
 it is your charter, the first of the slaves
 who poured their sack of bones into me.
 For the first time we speak with a pen,
 exchange our spade for it, make an inkstand out furrows
 for the new harvest; the old have suffered with their oxen
 and gathered the sweat of a hundred years to wash

the words

I brought to life. They are the cradles for those
 kneaded during the thousand weeks I chose
 to transform them into new icons and dreams.

Out of their rags I made buds of the new trees and
 flowers;

out of the old poisons I made the honey
 I drank for the sweet power I left in it,
 I took an insult and wove it into a caress;
 from the ashes of the hearth I took the dead
 and made them live again in a god of stone
 and paper holding the world in its lap,
 to watch over you.

The old pain and the sorrow of our country
 I heaped up into a single violin
 and as the master played it he danced like the he-goat in
 the Spring;

out of the mould, out of the mud and the slime
 I made beauty in a new image of truth;
 the whip turns into words and turns
 to the children of all our crimes, a live shoot,
 the reward of the old branch we must burn;
 out to the light it comes for the last time
 and ends in the fruit of a barren age.

A princess sprawls in an old fable
 taking a quiet hour from the divan;
 the words of fire and steel and the soft whisper
 are joined together in the book that a slave wrote,
 that God reads, knowing that between its pages
 lies the wrath and sorrow of an old country
 that is yours, and will soon be mine.

Bhawani Prasad Misra

THE SELLER OF SONGS

Yes Sir, I sell my songs
I sell songs
of different varieties
I sell songs
catering to all tastes.

Please see the things, I will tell the price
It is not useless, I will tell the use
Some songs I wrote in infatuation
And some I composed in dejection
This song will make you forget headache
This song will bring your beloved nearer
Yes, in the beginning I was ashamed
But better sense prevailed in me after
Yes, people have sold their integrity.
Please, don't get worried at my talkativeness
I sell my songs after all with a difference
I sell my songs
I sell songs, Sir

This song is of the morning, go and see it
This song is very effective, try it and use it
This song was written in solitude
This song was written in Poona
This song climbs even a hill
This song can be lengthened as you please
This song removes your hunger and thirst
This song wakes up the dead and the ghost
This song is the breeze of the sanatorium
This song is the medicine for T. B. and tedium
Simple and crude

Songs do I sell

I sell my songs, Sir.

Yes, there are more, will you see
If you like to listen, I will sing;
Yes, rhymed or unrhymed what d' you like
Yes, they are immortal verses, and verses that quickly die
No, there is nothing to feel
I am having the quill and the inkpot
If you don't like these, will I write anew?
If you don't like new, I will write the old.
These days the poets' work is double
Both the pen and the shoulders are busy
Some hours for writing and some for hawking
Yes, I will not charge for this balatement,
I sell all kinds of old and new songs

I sell songs, Sir.

Yes, I will write a song of birth and a song of death
Yes a song of victory and a song of surrender
This song is silken and this is of khadi
This song is of bile and this is of the gas.

There are some more designed, these wings
 Please have this latest, filmy, things
 This is a song of dying after thought
 This is a song of going from shop to home
 Don't think that it is fun
 I go on writing from day to night
 And different kinds of songs are created.
 Those songs which get sulky and then reconciled
 Oh too much of a heap, well I remove.
 As the customer pleases, well I move.
 But this one is the last one and the best one
 Better go and ask about it inside
 Well selling the songs is a sin
 But I am helpless and so I sell the song.

Yes Sir, I sell the song.

Shamsher Bahadur Singh

TWO POEMS

ONE RUBAAI

We thought our thought to be beloved
 We thought ourselves less than our thought.
 'Being was' Thinking was nothing, says Shamsher,
 And what a being! Even that was not what we thought.

THINGS SPEAK

Things speak
 not we
 They unveil
 the things.

The face of truth
 The eyes of lies
 What - Look !
 The profile of truth
 is the profile of time
 The fearless masses
 abide in truth
 Are bright in truth.

Penury devil, time
 terrible, cruel
 clime, gruelling
 brain, houses labourers.

What color
 is truth

Ask

One united !

One - Mass
 misery: one

Many flags
 flutter in the air
 Penury devil, time
 terrible, cruel

clime, gruelling
 brain, workers all over houses

One mass-boon
 Unity, monsoon
 -Or, otherwise
 freedom is finis.

Shakuntala Mathur

THE MAKER OF A LEADER

Decorated
 Drawing-room with silken curtains
 Bathrooms washed
 with soda and phenyle

The towels are like hands
 laundered, white,
 the bearer is coming out of the villa

Peons in livery,
 secretary with diary
 car at the gate
 people await

Whom
 The Leader ?

Who is going ?
 The lane is as stinky as the hut
 The hut is as stinky as the heap of filth
 The water tap is far away
 from the home

Broken vases in the hand
mass-laden

A girl from the door
Sneaking like a lizard,
The child is moving
like a street arab - pup
with an empty bottle
of kerosene

The cart is full of filth,
standing in the mid-street
waiting for the scavenger
this domain of dirt

The chimney call of the mill
sounds like a siren,
like a knell from a distance,
hungry.

Who is going?
The maker of the leader!

Raghuvveer Sahai

THE ONE BECAME MANY

I, You, this, that—
The four corners of the mind
These individual limits
When will they break?—
When you will be away from me—
This will be mine
And that will be mine
Will be—
I shall be in my own
Then—
Amen!

P. Machwe

NOSTALGIA

Evenings in Malwa,
deep, grief-laden ;
bound with soft-memories
moist-blown, cool-breezed
All the burdens and bindings
of use and sorrow
are lifted away, they flow
without any excess,
formless...
Mind is divided by memories.
Distant waves
fill in every pore,
As in this hot summer
eastern sky dome is overladen
with looming gray inky clouds
tamed
Here, Sweet Home !

Faiz

THREE POEMS

OH RESTLESS HEART

Darkness wells up, comes flooding on -
Night's blood, spouting from every vein;
Creation's pulse flutters as though
The two worlds' panting life were on the wane.
Let night's warm blood stream on : these shades
Are powdering for the cheeks of dawn.
Daybreak is near; oh restless heart, be still.

Yet clanks through music's veils the chain,
Omnipotent yet fate's web close-drawn;
Tears into life's pure winecup flow,
Custom that clogs his feet is still man's bane.
But let true heaven-born madness fill
Our madmen, wine our wineshops — soon
Fate's empire shall be overthrown,
While tyranny of custom fades,
Let the chain's links clank now, clank as they will.

TO A POLITICAL LEADER

Long years those hands, unfriended and unfree,
 Have clawed against night's dark unyielding breast
 As straws might dash themselves against a sea
 Or butterflies assail a mountain's crest;
 Till through that dark and flint-hard breast of night
 So many wounds have pierced, that now all round,
 Look where you will, is woven a web of light,
 And from far off the morning's heart-beats sound.
 The people's hands have been your coat of mail,
 Your wealth; what else has given you strength, but they?
 You do not wish this darkness to prevail,
 Yet wish those to be lopped off, and day
 Now throbbing in its eastern ambush, doomed
 To lie under night's iron corpse entombed.

LOVE, DO NOT ASK

Love, do not ask for my old love again.
 Once I thought life, because you lived, a prize -
 The time's pains nothing, because you were pain;
 Your beauty kept earth's springtimes from decay,
 All the round globe held only your two eyes;
 If I could win you, fate would be subdued.
 It was not true, all this, but only wishing.
 The age knows other torments than of love,
 And other raptures than a fond embrace.

The fell curse of uncounted centuries,
 Inwoven with all their satins, silk, goldlace -
 Men's bodies for sale on street and market-place,
 Bodies that caked grime fouls and thick blood smears-
 Flesh issuing from the cauldrons of disease,
 With festered sores dripping corruption, - these
 sights haunt me too, and will not be wiped out;
 Not to be wiped out, though you are lovely still.

The age knows other torments than of love,
 And other raptures than a fond embrace,
 Love, do not ask me for that love again.

(Rendered from the originals in urdu by Victor Kiernan)

Sri Sri

SAD VOICES

What shall we tell you
 Why we are weeping
 We do not know
 Why we are weeping
 You ask us for a meaning
 Well we do know nothing
 Who? Why? What?
 We do not know anything
 When? Where? Why?
 What questions are these that you ask?

Ask the throatless wind
 Or the spread sky
 Yes, it's a terrible thing
 What was not expected has come to be
 Do you still ask
 Why we are weeping
 Not one or two
 A family or a tree or a town
 A country A sub-continent
 But the whole world today
 Is submerged in this sorrow

This is an International tragedy
 On a Cinemascope scale
 The Jew in Wall street
 And the African dark
 The king in his palace
 And the Coolie in his factory
 Not one or two
 Not a hundred or a thousand
 But from this end of the world
 To the other
 Is engrossed in this evil.

Do you still ask?
 Shall I continue?.....

(Translated from the original in telugu by Srinivas Rayaproli)

Buddhadeva Bose

TWO POEMS

MORNING AT CHILKA

Ah the delight of dawn
On Chilka's shore!

The total sky that opens
Pure and clear, abandoned, beautiful,
Intolerably beautiful like the rise and fall of a voice
When song is full and free.

Ah the falls of light! The haze of mist on hills
Leaning on slopes of light, while between
Chilka gleams and shimmers.

You were here by my side, but you have gone
To look at a train just in at the station.
Whiff goes the train. A pain whips my blood.
O how I love you!

Flood in the skies, brightness on the air.
Three cows are nibbling grass, intent, as if
Nothing else mattered. But nothing matters
Except what you and I have missed so long, and found
Here, by Chilka's shore.

Silvered now, the lake lies still,
Put to sleep by the extravagant sun
Pouring hot in kisses—And ours? oh, already
The rainbow hangs on the flood, to span the tides in our veins
I never thought as much. Did you?

Yesterday as our boat rocked along the lake, we saw
Two butterflies racing, chasing us across the waters.
'Ah foolhardy fliers!' you laughed. And I, to bear the joy,
Looked away where the water dimmed the sky,
And looked again at the float of light and deep,
The light of Now, the dark of new horizons
Trembling in your eyes.

KANKAVATI

Name, your name is the song,
Kanka. Kankavati!
Flowing from my heart to the world,
Kanka, Kankavati!

Bulge and pull of seas exploding on the night,
Tolling of bells in temples dark and deep,
Echoing peaks and caves when lightning strikes,
Red in triple tongue, loud in thunder—
Are all proclamations of the music in my heart—
Kanka, Kankavati!

Wheels of work all day drone your name, Kanka,
Turmoil of dreams cries out your name,

Silence before sleep croons your name, Kanka,
Little leaves of thought whisper your name.

Song, your name is the song.

Tell me, what have the stars to say, those burning
eyes in blindness?
what is the meaning of winds, among the reeds and waters?
And what the word of the water, lipping bold peninsulas?
All affirm and swell the music in my heart—

Kanka, Kankavati!

Fire of stars would die, if they did not ring your name,
Nor thought nor leaf would stir, but to whisper 'Kanka!'
And words just be words, if they did not live your name,
Nor ever word become song, but to cry out 'Kanka'—

O Kankavati!

(Translated from the original Bengali by the author)
"with Acknowledgements to 'KAVITA'—Calcutta"

P. Lal

MY LOVE WILL NOT, I FEAR

My love will not, I fear,
Last the entire fiscal year,
Though in one night it may condense
Ten budgets of experience.

If you think me worthy of
A simple and deficit love,
Take me dearest hold me close
Before the current bargain goes.

Reginald Massey

LINES TO VERA

A woman ought to be
like a piece of poetry.
She should have a sense
of the dramatic
and yet a head for reality.
She must, of course, have a
convincing conclusion.
A woman should be
as sweet as a sonnet.
But she must possess
an elegy in the heart.

Monika Varma

THE WINDY WORDS HUSTLE

The windy words hustle the bustling cluttered paths
And the skull-toed blood wheezing
drains the scurrying heart of vowelled words.

Breaking the citadel of the syllabic night
you deep delve for the lark in damask flight
And all the pulled clappers of your winter bells
sigh Sold as they hang you in your narrow cells.

The brown Jack-reapers unspeaking
on the man-torn breast of the earth
Follow the heron's flight, their wings a shouting white,
in the blue-arched arc of the dog-dayed air.

ORANGES
ON A TABLE

acquire
the subtle distinction
of Mahogany.

No longer
a thought
on the tree
in spring

but nude
as green
its body
a summer arm

Yellow and slow
woman-close.

Not an ultimate order
Of the orange sky
but the angular
desire

of the stone
that blocks
the river's run.

LES SALTIMBANQUES

Simply say
The mute clown yonder
And the sufficient singer there
Are the living ghosts, at the eye's
concupiscent remove
The private part played
For the public-eye
Which is always the self.

The laugh we stopped
And the tear that never broke
its eye, the impotent
excitement
of our normal lives
Hides in the seeking
for them elsewhere,

POEM

In India
women

Have a way
of growing old

My mother
for instance

Sat on the floor
A hundred years

Stirring soup
in a sauce-pan

Sometimes staring
at the bitter

Neem tree
in the yard

For a hundred years
within the kitchen walls.

PORTRAIT

By stitchery secured and fastened
She opens like a window
Her glazed charms, a sequined throb
In her anatomic heart

The lady's anklet
Ridden with germs to prove
Partition as of bud or bone.

She turns Hyde Park
Corner at Two P. M.,
An eye adrift, a dog
Strapped to her wristlet

Big Ben strikes
A steel pointed symbol
And her passions aflame
She steps into a passing Victoria

A lady to the edge

THIS IS JUST TO SAY

I do not grieve everytime
there is a death in the world
but Today
A girl died I know who
I saw last
picking flowers with a thin
smile on her face

Now sorrow sits thinly on my own
Though I have seen its various shapes
Cloud my heart like a sudden shadow

The death of a dog beneath the wheels
of an express train
Someone dead on the street and the live
Collecting coins on his body

The death of someone not seen but heard
as in the next room
suddenly stopping the heart;

My own with its bewildering terrors
Its agonising questions and the
Philosophic answers from the seashore.

The death of loved ones never properly
expressed
and the death on the wide screen with its
tensions magnified, stretching the sentiments
On a violin engrossed in beauty

The death of little boys smouldering in the rain
The death of the heart and the newspaper resolve,

"Oh do not let the dead live beyond their life
Let not cold tears fall on the warm flesh
And your tears disturb the world in laughter."

But yesterday a girl died who I see today
picking flowers with laughter in her body
and no death in her eyes.

INCIDENCES

Wormwood and water return
the smell of morning
mildew of memory and the fresh

spider stain on the roses
in the drawing room
do not relieve
the recurring monotony of days
hung like wax
on the skin of my life.

But I,
"Inside myself there is a world
where the moon becomes
the empty hollow of a spoon
and the sky a blue sufficiency
in the winkless eye
and the Sun a turn
from dark to light
from the mind's tight
to the unclosing, soft-circled..."

"Lightning, does not break
the thunder's absolute vigil
The nightingale does not
declare the soft end of day
The sea does not recede
where the sands concede
Inside,

Inside yourself,

there is a world

subject to the many excursions
of my soul."
Said the rain
(softly on the city.)

G. V. Desani

THE SECOND MRS.
WAS WED IN A NIGHTMARE

In clouds so dense that I could see no more of myself than the shoulders, I saw an oval opening, and I walked out of it, and found myself on a nearly flat ground, and in the dead center of it—towards which I walked—I found an enormous dome, with no under-structure, nothing to support it.

Under the dome, I saw a huge ape, about the size of eight or nine average size apes, sitting on a revolving stool, and most intently playing an organ, and—as the music issued from the organ—I felt the vibrations through my very bones, and I asked a passing shape—forms were passing all the time and there was great traffic about me—who the ape playing the organ might be. He replied that the great ape's name was Eric, and that he had been a-playing that very organ—J. S. Bach's music exclusively—for centuries, indeed many centuries before J. S. Bach was born, and that he would continue playing it for all he (the passing ape) knew, for centuries to come. Appaled, I asked him if I was dreaming. "No, you are in the fifth dimension," he replied, lying to me.

I left the traffic and got myself under the dome, and I was trying hard to attract Eric's attention, and failing to do that, I picked up a wooden plank, a fair size plank, and landed it on his exposed backside—as much was outside the the seat of the revolving stool—and there was an awfully loud report, but the ape did not stir, remained seated, and, although one of his paws went to his backside automatically, to soothe the hurt, he continued to play J. S. Bach on the organ.

In desperation—I was feeling desperate by then—I began to shout "Eric! Eric!" as loudly as I could, causing a frightening echo under the dome, and although there was the magnified returning "Eric: Eric:" he remained seated, his back towards me, still a-playing J. S. Bach on the organ.

There upon, I walked behind him and—having had an intuition about it—I *blew on his neck*. Immediately, Eric turned towards me, and he spoke to me fast, in high Gothic and Sanskrit—which I began to understand instantly—and he said to me, first in ancient Gothic, then in Sanskrit (that bit I remember perfectly) that his name was not Eric, not exactly, but Sandoes, and that it was an occult secret, and he pronounced the S in his name with a sibilant hiss, and if I could—he challenged me—pronounce his name, he would be my Guru, my spiritual guide, and tell me more secrets.

Now, I did just that for him, and perfectly: "Sandoes! Sandoes!" I said, and I pronounced the S with a sibilant hiss. Eric was astounded. He said, he thought, that it was *impossible* for a human being even to attempt to pronounce his name: Still, according to his promise, he became my Guru, and the first secret he told me was that an initiate-to-be (which I now was, by Eric's grace) should always maintain silence, a brief silence,—the secret mute—after he had pronounced the full name. I did that, too, for him, I said, "Eric, Guru Sandoes," and was silent for a moment. He blessed me and said that I had done something that was *impossible* for a human being to do. Accordingly, he declared me as no longer a human being, but an initiate,—like himself.

The news about my having been gifted with a spiritual guide, and no other than the great Eric himself, created a sensation among the traffic passing outside the dome. Everybody stopped reverentially, as I approached, and if anyone didn't, he or she turned into a crow—there were thousands of them now—and a word came from Eric, which was passed on among the traffic, that such crows could revert to their original blessed shape—become apes, that is, and no longer remain crows—if they would repent, and go to the wishing well and wish, with the reservation that *they would never know the wishing well when they see it, verb. sap.*

Getting quite cross about this reservation of his—a puzzle really—I started a frightful disputation with Eric, and shouted my arguments, (“*I demur!*” “*I assent!*” “*I grant!*” “*I deny!*”) all of which echoed under the dome, and it was a very fast debate between us indeed, involving metaphysical, theological, cosmological and and phrenological (I couldn’t understand why phrenological) matters, and it went on for a day and a night, carried on entirely in a nasal sort of German, with umpteen *Jas* and *Neins*, and Eric said to me, by way of conclusion, *Ja*, that there was no more to be said, and that crows could become apes, if they repent, and go to the wishing well and wish, but that *they would never know the wishing when they see it, Nein.*

The finality of it, the cocksure attitude, got me so worked up that I was looking for another plank, bigger than the one I had used before, and while I was searching, a passing shape told me—to my utter amazement—that the *whole* thing, the *entire* argument with Eric, the metaphysical, theological, cosmological and Phrenological disputation *had been broadcast by Radio Jakarta*, and overheard by humanity, lord and lay alike, and that, (continued the ape), it had already become a human tradition, a cult, a rotary and acclaimed as a new doctrine, the latest French thing, and that its adherents included prime ministers, publishers, actors, medical men, statesmen, all sorts, and women and the clergy, and that it had attached to it a secret school as well, with its own theosophy, and signs and symbols, which the initiates alone understood, and that the occult side of the doctrine had already become a most elaborate cabala. In awful alarm, I asked him, “How long has this been going on?” and he replied. “Why back into centuries.” “We are in the fifth dimension!” I shrieked. He agreed, again lying to me.

Getting no further with Eric—he continued to play J. S. Bach—I composed a hymn of praises, and I was looking for a platform on which to stand and offer it to him. It was then that I was suddenly swept off my feet by about a million apes—so many they seemed—all members of a grand chorus, who rushed in from all sides, to the center of the dome, to sing something entirely mighty, and epoch-making, all to the glory of Eric, Guru Sandoes—embelished with the secret mute—my spiritual master, that I began to feel less than

dirt under his hind paws, and I threw away my hymn of praises, and myself joined the mighty chorus, which was half male and half female, mile upon mile of apes, standing in strict order, all adoring Eric—who continued to play the organ, and now led us with music—and I knew then that this adoration of Eric by the chorus would become a mighty tradition in the three-dimensional world, and that it would survive a million years, while my disputation with him would have been forgotten, and this realisation made me feel sorely unhappy.

I was weeping silently, and Eric, seeing this, took pity on me, and said to me, that the chorus incident would be wiped off the slate of time—it would be sacrificed—and he prophesied that my disputation with him would survive instead, even my unsung hymn would survive, remain for ever, till the end of time, to my everlasting glory, with the reservation that *I should Perish first, be wiped off the slate of time myself, and become the world’s sacrifice, Ja.*

Lured by the promise of immortality, I agreed to his reservation, and I walked outside the dome, and met a passing shape, who told me that Eric and I were being worshipped on the earth, by all manner of human beings, that very day, as symbols of a most sacred craft, and that a certain poet-musician of India was, in fact at that very moment, being inspired to compose a great hymn in our praise, and hearing this, I felt reassured of my immortality, and I heard myself proclaim to the winds, “Hark ye, apes have become gods! Apes have become gods!” It was a moment of great triumph for me.

Yet, as soon as I had said that, I realised with utmost rigour and horror of the fact that I myself must have become an ape! “Like Guru, like Chela!” In utter melancholy, and fearing more than I had feared anything on earth—including the former wife—I dared not look behind me, or feel, because I might find something showing and hanging, to my everlasting shame!

At that stage, a female ape stood by my side—Eric’s daughter—and addressed to me endearing ape-terms (which I began to understand perfectly) and she said to me, concluding her address, that

from now on, it was to be home cooking for me, and let's make music together (she said to me). I thought quickly, both as man and a former married man, and realising that I needed the kind of love and support which a woman alone can give, I quickly accepted her suit, and immediately approached her father—who continued to play J. S. Bach on the organ—to marry us, be the priest, father-in-law, best man and witness, and grant us his blessings.

As minutes passed, and the moment for the marriage views approached, I broke down and lamented loudly, in words which seemed to come from the very depths of my soul, "Woe is me: Fates, here I am, a creature man, turned an ape!"

Hearing this, Eric was much moved, and he said to me that I was no lay ape. I was one of the craft—an initiate. "Woe, O Eric!" I went on, regardless, and addressing the millions of shapes, apes and crows, all crowding us, I wept, "Woe is me, I am turned an ape! Regard ye, folk, I am turned an ape!"

Eric tried to console me and he smoothed the hair on my head, with gentle strokes of his paw, and my hair stood on edge at his touch, and my bride too was much affected, and I went on lamenting, spoiling it all, and again addressing the multitude, I wept, "Oh, woe is me! I am turned an ape! Ah, regard ye well!"

Finding my grief overwhelming, Eric summoned forth his wife, the Mother-in-fact and the Mother-in-law of our kind, to grant me courage, to face with fortitude my circumstance, and to exalt my consciousness.

She materialised out of the multitude, and came towards us, riding a tricycle. She was about the size of four or five of our kind bar Eric and she went round and round, as they do, in the circus, and ringing the tricycle bell, she said not a word, to me but stared at me steadily, now and then, silently willing power and wisdom on me.

A few moments of this, and I was as one awake, as one transformed, and with her grace, there came to me then the greatest

illumination of my life, an exalted intuition, so far denied to any other aspirant to immortality, literary or other, Shakespearian or Alexandrian, genius or non, and simultaneously, all my doubts vanished, and I was sure. I knew that the cause of my grief was a fatuous illusion, a falsehood, a mirage, and that, in truth—although on my way to be sacrificed for the sake of the three dimensional world—I was on the threshold of the greatest voyage and gain of my life.

Beholden beyond words, in abject gratitude, I went lower still, down, on my nature-bent knee, and with folded hands, I told the Super-Intelligence present, cutting circles on her tricycle and ringing the bell, that mine was already a genuine tragedy. O Holy Mother! and my life with the ape—my woman and your daughter—had yet to be lived. Those were no small assets, no—the tragedy, and the martyrdom to come—with which to distress and agonise the multitude. And we could together—the creature and I, although ape and female she was innocent of the vast issues at stake—for pity's sake, for a reverend saintly sorrow's sake, by rights, claim the tears of the unborn millions, ape and man, the posterity, everlastingly, and so attain by thy blessings, O Mother-in-law! a marvelled memorial: achieve a perennial fame, yes, *immortality*: A true *le Mort d'* (present) *Author*. a living *Tibatian Book of the Dead*:—the epic-Supreme of an initiate turned ape, and, mark you *voluntarily* agreeing to marry an ape, and *voluntarily* agreeing to live on a mockery of home cooking—twigs, leaves and such—and having apes for issue, his little boys and girls, and suffering at all hours of his day and night,—a tragedy and plot unheard of, unknown, uninvited, unimagined! Truly a tale of travail and woe, a story to sadden and appal and haunt the hearts of the ages to come, the *yugas*,—and so become an imperishable evergreen.

And she understood me perfectly, and said not a word, and as she continued to go round in circles and ringing her tricycle bell, Eric, my Eric, certain, too, of my illumination, and my immortality, through suffering and sacrifice, shook me warmly by the paw, as an *equal*, and placing on it a penny, my *dowry*, with becoming courtesy

and growing respect asked, "Shall we proceed with the ceremony now, friend?" and I replied, not a moment too late, "Amen, Ericus. Let's! Naked we come, naked we go! Ashes to ashes, earth to earth! Second time lucky, me and her!"

K. S. Duggal

BURNING IN THE MOONLIGHT

For a long time Painsa Khan stood staring at the walls of his house. He had had a sleepless night. The cool moonlight shimmering all over his body at last made him drowsy and drop off to sleep. The ox dragging the persian wheel heard him snore but continued going round and round. The wheel turned with squeaks and groans and the water ran down the channel. In his sleep Painsa Khan's arm fell across his hairy chest. The breeze blew through his glossy oiled hair and scattered it over his face. It uncovered a scar left by a hatchet. His dirty black feet were soiled and full of bruises, the ankles dry like a cob of corn. On his fleshy rounded arms were tattooed figures of girls.

Painsa Khan slept and dreamt. He saw five horsemen come towards him in full gallop and enter his court yard.

"Ask and it shall be given to you, Painsa Khan. Whatever your spirit desires ask and it shall be given. The water of your well is marvellously sweet and cool. Let God's creatures drink of it."

Painsa Khan became a little nervous. "What shall I ask?" he wondered. "Oh yes; In truth God has been merciful but just short of a son. One must have an heir, mustn't one? And you never know about life."

The first horseman promised : " All right. You will have one son."

The second horseman : "No ! Two".

The third horseman : "No ! Three".

The fourth horseman : "No ! Four".

The fifth horseman : "No. ! Five".

"And one more favour", said Painda Khan with a happy smile. "The white bull is somewhat lame in one foot. If.....Hey there; Where are you off to ? Hey there !"

The horsemen vanished.

Painda Khan turned on one side. Sharfo, the village nurse, had been patiently waiting for him to get up. She saw him move and decided to wake him.

"Ho, Chaudhuri Painda Khan ! Hey Painda ! Get up, you worthy soul."

"What's up, Mother Sharfo ?" asked Painda, getting up in a hurry.

Sharfo rubbed her hands as she spoke. "Not a very cheerful thing. You have the fifth to make the set of five, my son."

Painda Khan got up from the cot and stood against the trunk of the mulberry tree. He thought he would say, "What's it matter, Mother Sharfo ? Girls, too, are God's gifts and bring with them their own fortune. I lack nothing." But he could not utter a word. He remained speechless.

The nurse, returned home along the water course.

For a long time Painda Khan stood against the mulberry tree holding on to an overhanging branch. At last the branch snapped. The moonlight piercing through the foliage floodlit his body.

"Curse you", he cried angrily, looking up. He, then unyoked the piebald ox and took it out for pasture.

Painda Khan spent the day under the meagre shade of a scraggy keekar tree. He was lost in contemplation. The cattle irritated him; when it came to taking them to water in the afternoon, his body ached all over. Thorns pierced his skin through his tattered shoes and he stumbled over little pebbles. He ate nothing the whole day. He did not send for buttermilk nor go home for his meals. He could not stand the sight of the red wild berries which he used to eat in large handfuls. He went back to the well several times but did not drink a drop of water. He lay on the ground; and when the shade of the tree left him he did not move but remained under the scorching sun. A little calf was being restive and would run into the growing crops. She made Painda very angry. "Shame on you, shame. You, too, would torture me." He picked up his stick to chase her. Then he put it away and sat down.

Painda Khan had promised to give sweets to many people. He had also promised to kill the goat. Last Thursday he had asked the moneylender for a bag of sugar. For months he had been working single-handed with just one thought; "When I have a son he will help his father." He had cherished many hopes in his breast. All of them remained unfulfilled.

Like a boat cut adrift from its moorings, Painda Khan meandered homewards. There was absolute silence in the courtyard. His mother was in the kitchen. She had her head between her hands and was full of grief. The children saw the elders in mourning and began to look tearful. His eldest daughter Shallo had been crying all day. She wanted a baby brother to play with; but all she got were sisters and more sisters. The thought of more sisters was poisonous. Painda Khan shut up the cattle in the pen. He got out his sickle and with a loud "Ya Allah" went out to get some fodder. He worked for many hours but haphazardly. He cut his finger twice. The stars came out but even their twinkling could not get him to hum his favourite tune, "O Moon, where is thy moonlight?" On his way home, when he stopped at the well to drink its cool water,

he thought of his dream. The water trickled down through his fingers as he was lost in thought. He went back home thirsty.

"Go in and see Noor Nishan", whispered his aged mother in his ear.

Painda Khan evaded her.

"Listen, my son. She's been crying bitterly all day", said the mother again.

At last he went in.

In the darkest corner of the room Noor Nishan lay huddled on a string charpoy. Besides her pillow an oil lamp flickered. Crying had made her eyes blood-shot. Her face was like a squashed lemon.

"It was a daughter in the end, wasn't it? You dirty bitch", said Painda Khan. "And you who boasted so much! What else could one expect from you with a face like that?" he added. Just as a persian wheel once turned, runs on its own for some time, Noor Nishan's tears, restarted by Painda Khan, continued to flow all the night. She did not look at the little babe nor bother to feed her.

Only when Noor Nishan's breasts overflowed with milk did she let Ghatto drink; otherwise she left her all day long and did not bother. If her eyes were bad, they got well on their own. No one washed them or put any ointment on them. If she lay on the floor, she was left to sleep there and no one cared. Her elder sister's tattered left-overs were given to her to wear. No one could spare a square inch of cloth for her. Even so Ghatto grew and flourished.

Then, somebody poisoned Painda Khan's precious pair of bullocks. Painda took their loss to heart and wept loudly on their inflated bellies. Worse luck followed when all his land went barren with saltpetre. He laboured in vain to get rid of it. When the monsoon came the roof of his cow-shed collapsed. Then his persian wheel broke and he had no money for its repairs.

Seven years went by. A storm of troubles came into Painda Khan's life and he was rendered destitute. But he would have nothing to do with Noor Nishan. They quarrelled all the time and she went to stay with her parents. Several elders of the village came to see him about a reunion, but all he would say was: "She is welcome to live here and eat my humble fare, but I cannot bring myself to talk to her." Many a time when he went to bed he had visions of the five horsemen. Painda Khan would stare hard at them and gnash his teeth in wrath. His old mother watched him burn inside with anger and get weaker and weaker. At last she died, the desire for a grandson still unfulfilled.

With the exception of Ghatto, all the girls had grown to womanhood. But Painda did not have even a pice to spend in getting them married. Then his eldest Shallo, played a dirty trick. One day when Painda was out of the village she eloped with a lowborn peasant villager. Painda Khan, who traced his descent from the proud Rajputs, was humiliated. For a long time, he refused to leave his home.

Painda Khan tried hard to get his other daughters married. But none of his relations would agree. He put his turban at the feet of many elders but no one would consent to making a match. His cup of sorrow was full to the brim.

One afternoon, bare-footed and in rags, Shallo returned. Painda Khan was wild with anger. He vented it in hacking at a block of wood. He did not greet his daughter nor ask her about her misfortunes. The whole tribe was agog with malicious gossip. Painda Khan had allowed an immoral daughter to live at home.

Poverty beset his home and family. Sometimes they had nothing to eat. But Painda Khan did not say a word. He did not pray to Allah nor beg of his neighbours. One evening when he returned home, the whole house was in an uproar. He saw his daughter Ghatto bleeding profusely from her forehead. On enquiry he found that she had been hit by a stone thrown by her elder sister. His anger made his eyes blood-shot.

But he just went out to the fields through the other door. For a long time he stood leaning against the mulberry tree beside the well. The shades of twilight came on. From the mosque the call to prayer went up. He stared blankly at the sky and saw the white clouds roll by. They had no tears for his sorrow. He was just about to return home when he saw the pampas grass before him move. He stopped. He saw his second daughter Shanno come through a neighbour's field and clamber across a wall. Some five minutes later he saw more movement in the pampas grass. This time, Jahana, the cobbler, came down the same field and went across.

Painda Khan went home. He lay down on his charpoy without eating his meal. After mid-night he got up slowly. There was a full moon in the sky. In the far corner of the court yard Ghatto lay fast asleep. Painda Khan went up to her cot. He saw her childish face and hesitated. He looked up at the sky. The stars smiled and the moon stared back at him. He picked up the child. She murmured "Allah" and then slept on her father's shoulder. Painda Khan went out. Beside the well he shut his eyes and dropped the load off his shoulder. There was a loud splash. He looked around. Not a leaf stirred. He returned home. He picked up his second daughter. The girl spoke in her sleep. Painda Khan put his hand on her mouth. There was another splash. The world was silent as before. The stars still twinkled. When he brought the third one, he stood beside the mulberry tree and watched the stalks of pampas grass. There was a third splash. This time it was not so loud—as if the well were already too full. A pair of doves sleeping in the mulberry tree fluttered. Painda Khan watched them for a long time till they settled back to rest.

A cool breeze started to blow. Painda Khan liked the sound of the wind through the wheat stalks. Then he went home. A quarter of an hour later when he came back to the well his spear was smeared with blood. Beneath the mulberry tree he yawned and felt that after an age the weight on his head had at last been taken off.

For a long time, Painda Khan stood against the trunk of the mulberry tree exactly where he had stood when Sharfo the nurse

brought him the news of his fifth daughter. Painda Khan was reminded of his unsaid words - What's it Mother Sharfo? Girls too are God's gifts and bring with them their own fortune. I lack nothing.

And what is it that Painda Khan lacked then?

The moonlight piercing through the foliage was shimmering all over Painda Khan and he felt as if he were burning in it—burning in the moonlight as he had done all these years.

(Translated from the Punjabi by Kushwant Singh)

Irving Halperin

THE FAKIR

About two weeks after Carl Fisher, an American graduate student of sociology, had gone out of curiosity to see a fakir, his friend's letter arrived. "What are the leaves you sent me? How did you come by them? And why ask me to do anything so weird?"

Fisher had anticipated that his friend Alan would grumble but the important thing was that he swallow the leaves and report back the results.

The second letter came a week later. "I hardly know how to begin.....I wonder what your reaction will be. To come to the point—the leaves have vanished. They were in the top drawer of my desk. I've searched everywhere, several times, but they are not here. I had made up my mind to take them—only because you asked me to. But poof—they're gone! No doubt a 'natural' explanation for their disappearance may be found, but I tell you that everything else in the room is in place, even the letter from you. everything but the leaves. What do you think happened to them?"

Here I am, half way around the world from him, Fisher thought and he asks what do I think! But at that moment, even without a shred of evidence, he could think of only one person.

Even more natives were in the yard now than on his previous visit. But, Fisher remembered, it wasn't only natives that believed in the fakir. Edwards, the English manager of the Club, insisted

that the fakir had cured him of diabetes. And Turner, the Scottish teacher, had sent a beaker of the fakir's water to his sister in Glasgow; supposedly, she promptly recovered from a heart condition.

Fisher found the fakir's secretary, an old, serene looking man, and immediately told him about Alan's letter. "Don't worry. My master will help your friend. He has from God great powers." Sardar said confidently and as though reciting a formula. Then the American recalled a story he had heard from the secretary during the first visit. The fakir had been living in the hills outside the city until his parents were murdered by thieves. Then God appeared and commanded him to go to the city and help the people until he received further orders.....

When the fakir came out of the bungalow, the secretary sharply gestured to the natives to give way. They fell back, forming an aisle, and the fakir, followed by Sardar, went through the cindery yard up to two stunted pomegranate trees. There he stopped and held out slender, sensitive hands; two boy attendants, kneeling, tilted stone jugs. Water flowed out of them and over the fakir's outstretched hands. Their faces bright with adoration, suppliant after suppliant splashed water inside their garments, over their breasts and groins, wherever they had been afflicted.

The fakir looked to be about twenty-five, Fisher's age, and was of medium height. Shadows darkened his bearded face. He wore an ordinary dhoti, a flowing crepe kaffiyeh, sandals. His hair was parted on the crown of his head, which was trained over the heads of the natives and at the sky. He looked weary, resigned.

I don't feel any pity for the man, Fisher reflected. Hadn't he brought this ordeal on himself by playing shaman before the ignorant? No, if anyone was to be pitied, let it be the wretched natives who were crawling on their bellies before the man.

Presently the secretary signalled to Fisher that it was his turn. The student went before the fakir, kneeled and braced himself—really, he thought, it was like having a gun placed against one's

head by a highway robber—against the odious water. The taste, like rotten eggs, was no less disagreeable than the first time. He swallowed the water and shuddered thinking *oh no!* as his stomach started rumbling. Even now, dysentery bugs might be settling into the intestines.

The fakir did not look at the student, and not even at his secretary. It was difficult to determine whether he was listening while Sardar spoke to him, presumably about why the American had come again. He kept his head down and grunted impatiently, as though thinking, 'Why must I be bothered with this?' Fisher began to wonder whether the old man was an accurate translator.

"My master says geography is no problem to God, and so he will give you something else to send to your friend." "Did he say anything about the leaves?" "Nothing" Sardar replied, looking away.

Then the same boy attendant who had brought Fisher the leaves the last time came trotting up to him, balancing a sheet of paper, in the centre of which was a mound of powder. "Take this," the secretary urged. The American did so. "Your friend should swallow the powder with water and think of God. You see, it is not the fakir who cures the people but God, who is attached to whatever he has made. So God is everywhere. He is in the water and the powder. But people must believe before he can help them." Then the fakir turned away, as though to dismiss the student.

"That's all!" Fisher told himself. Even supposing he took the trouble to send the powder and then it too disappeared? Would the fakir guarantee otherwise? Anyway, Alan wouldn't be persuaded to be a guinea pig a second time.

Some twenty yards away, a circle of suppliants had completely enclosed the fakir and his secretary. Then, abruptly, the two men broke through the circle and came swiftly toward the American. "The fakir wants to know whether you are going to send the powder." They were studying him with grave faces.

How did the man know what I was thinking? Fisher speculated. Was it that obvious? Or perhaps the way I had been holding the powder? "I don't know if I am or not!" he snapped back, a moment later regretting the intensity of his reply. Why should they have the satisfaction of seeing him angry?

"Even so, your friend will be better," the secretary translated. The fakir pivoted sharply and strode back to the center of the yard where the natives at once engulfed him. What brass! the student fumed.

Sardar, who had remained beside Fisher, his eyes narrowing as though the American were concealing something, asked, "Is it true? You really will not send the powder?" And when the other remained silent, the secretary persisted, "The fakir has great powers." The student shrugged his shoulders, thinking, Now what the devil does that mean! Did the man himself know what he was saying? Or was it simply words, words, words to cover up a lack of intellectual discipline. But what would have been the point of arguing with someone whose judgment was so biased?

".....has gone inside to pray and warn the Devil of pain to leave the people," Sardar was saying. "I will ask him again about the neem leaves."

"Please don't go to any more trouble on my account."

"But I too would like to hear what happened to them," the other said in leaving.

After the old man was out of sight, Fisher opened his hand and allowed all of the powder to drift to the ground; then he went rapidly across the yard.

As he reached the gate there was the sound of running steps behind him. It was the boy attendant who had brought him the leaves and then the powder. The lad's face was pleading, as though his status in the fakir's service depended upon the results of this mission. "Master say you come back."

Fisher was again shaken. How had they known he was leaving? Was someone assigned to shadow him? And what did the man want? To talk about the leaves? Or perhaps to admit that he didn't know what had happened to them either? All right, he'd stay—but only because he was being asked to. He turned back and re-entered the yard, the boy flying before him; the secretary and the fakir were waiting before the pomegranate trees.

He wanted to get a good look at the fakir's eyes, thinking that might be a way of sizing him up. But the other stood in the shadows of the trees so that his face was veiled.

"My master has prayed for your friend and he will be better." Why doesn't the record change? Fisher thought acidly.

"Do you still want to ask about the leaves?" Sardar inquired.

If not about the leaves, what had he been talking to the fakir about until now? He indicated his assent.

Then the fakir's eyes partially emerged from the shadows. And the American was surprised to see that now he looked gentle, almost benign. "Does your friend believe?"

Momentarily, Fisher didn't grasp the question. Believe what? But then he understood. "No, he doesn't believe in God."

The fakir lifted his shoulders as if to say, "Well then, what do you expect?" "Because your friend didn't believe," Sardar relayed, "the leaves were taken from him."

The student thought about that for a moment. "Why, will my friend get well if he doesn't believe?" he asked.

"That is the beauty of God. He has mercy on those who don't know. And sometime He is hard on those who do and yet act evilly." The fakir was smiling patiently, as if explaining the obvious to a child.

Fisher found himself becoming attracted to the disarming simplicity of the fakir's replies. "I have only one further question.

Why did you ask whether I was going to send the powder? I meanhow did you know I was thinking that?"

The fakir smiled, as though good-naturedly amused by the other's puzzlement. "There must have been something on your mind or I wouldn't have known it."

Then the fakir gave the American a cordial parting salaam, said something to his secretary and went toward the bungalow.

"What do you think of my master?" Sardar asked.

Fisher decided it would be simpler not to speak about his mixed feelings. "He's certainly very remarkable."

"You know, the fakir must have liked you."

"Oh?"

"He asked me to tell you to come say good-by when you leave India. And he said this.....that you are searching too, even though you don't know you are....."

Then the old man went toward the bungalow, his dhoti flowing like a white ribbon through the darkness.

James Purdy

SERMON

Ladies and people, you must realize, or you would not be sitting here before me, that I am the possessor of your ears. Don't speak, I will talk. You have sat here before, and have heard things men or, in some cases, ladies told you. I have no intention of telling you the same things, but will proceed just as though you were all in the privacy of your own bathhouses. I was not called here to entertain you. You could entertain yourselves if you weren't here. The fact you are here means something. (I will not mention the fact of my being here.) We face one another across the hostile air, you waiting to hear and to criticize, and my half-staring at some of you and not seeing the rest of you, though perhaps wanting to. Some of you are rude. Many of you are old and homely, others are not up to the speech I have in readiness. We all of us know all of this. It is in the air I look through to see you. Yet we all feel we have to go on. You have left the comfort of your living rooms and bathhouses to be here. I have come because I am a speaker and had to. None of us are really happy, none of us are in the place he feels he might want to be. Many of you feel there must be a better place for you than the one you are occupying now. There is a feeling of everything being not quite right. You feel if you only knew more or could do more you would be somewhere else. The fact is, however, you are wrong.

I say this looking at all of you now. You are wrong, and I am powerless to add or subtract from that fact. You came originally wrong, and you have been getting worse in every way since that

day. There is, in fact, no hope for you, and there never was. Even if you had never been born there would have been no hope for you. It was hopeless whether you arrived or not. Yet you all arrived, you got here, you are *here*. And it is all so meaningless, because you all know there is a better place for you than here. And that is the trouble.

You will not accept the *hereness*. You will not accept me. Yet I am the only thing there is under the circumstances. yet you reject me, and why,—well I will tell you why. Because you have nothing better to do or be than the person you are now, occupying the particular chair you now occupy and which you are not improving by occupying. You have improved nothing since you came into this situation. You have tried to improve yourself, of course, or things connected with yourself, but you have only finished in making everything worse, you have only finished in making yourself worse than when you were sent, worse than what you were when you were born, worse even than what you were before you entered this great Amphitheater.

There is, in short, no hope for you, as I said earlier. You are bad off and getting more so, and sadly enough when you get in the worst shape of all so that you think you will not be able to go on for another second, the road ahead is still worse yet. For there is no hope for you even when things get so impossibly terrible that you will kill yourself. For that is no solution. In death you will only begin where you left off, but naturally, in worse shape.

Yet you continue to sit here watching me, like skinned tadpoles whose long dead brains still send messages to your twitching feet. You twitch as you listen to me but you hear nothing. You have never heard anything.

And now you are waiting for the message, the solution to all my speech. You have been thinking, "What he says is terrible and frightening, but now will come the Good Part, the part with the meaning".....Ladies and people, listen to me. I have no Good Part to give you. My only message, if it can be called one, I call it one, I call it nothing, my message to you is there is no message.

You have made a terrible mistake in coming to the Amphitheater tonight to hear Me, yet you would have made a mistake no matter what you did tonight for the simple reason that you have no choice but to make mistakes, because you have no plans. You are going somewhere because you think you have toThat is what you are doing, and how therefore could you do anything but make mistakes. You continue to act and you have nothing to act with but the actions. Hence you are doomed to lectures and books hoping to save yourselves in the evening. Another attempt at action. You are doomed because you will go on trying to be other than you are and therefore you succeed always in continuing as you have been. There is no choice. You are listening even now with your pathetic tadpole faces because you know you are not getting my words. Give up trying, dear auditors. Be without trying to be. Lay back in your seats and let the air have its way with you. Let it tickle you in the spots where you are always fighting its insistant moisture. Don't let it retreat. Let things be. Don't try to be improved by my speech, because nothing can improve you. Surrender to what you are continuing *against*, and perhaps you will not have to go ahead with everything. And I know how weary you are of going ahead. Oh don't I know it?

You are beginning to look at the Giant Clocks, meaning you have stood all you can for one night. I do not pity or sympathize with you and at the same time I do, because you do not belong here, as I said earlier. Nobody belongs here. It has all been a mistake your coming here. I, of course, am a Mistake, and how could my coming be a success? Yet in a sence it *is*, ladies and people, for the simple reason that I have prepared no speech and have not thought about what I am saying to you. I knew it would be hopeless. I knew when I saw your faces that you would only listen to what you say to yourself in your bath-houses or your laundry cleanup-kitchens. You know everything anyhow and have continued to improve on what has already been done. Hence you are hopeless.

I have talked here tonight in the hope you would not hear, because if you didn't you might not so thoroughly disgust yourselves, and therefore me. But you have sat in exactly the rapport or lack of it which I expect from the human tadpole. You have been infinitely

repulsive to me, and for that I thank you, because by being infinitely repulsive you have continued continuity and what more could any speaker ask? What if you had *BECOME* while I was talking. The whole world would have changed, of course. You would have all become alive. But the truth of the continuum is that it is continuous. You have not failed History, the continuous error. You have gone with it, but *continuing*.

And so I say to you, pale and yet red tadpoles, you are hopeless and my words are spoken to tell you not to hope. You have nothing with which to win. It is doom itself that I see your bloated eyes and mouths begging for. How could I say anything to you then but to return to you the stale air which you have been breathing in my face all evening. I return it to you, therefore, not in flatulence, that would be to flatter you, but in air in return. And I thank you. I *mean* this. I thank you one and all, ladies and people. I take pleasure in my activity though I know you do not, are not expected to take any, and would be miserable if my pleasure became real to you. And so farewell, or rather goodbye, because we will meet again. There is no escape from it. That is why we are all so repulsive to one another: infinitely so. Life is immortal. Its eggs are too numerous for it but to spawn at the mere touch, and therefore with real emotion I say *So be it*. Come when ever you can, I am always here. Goodbye, and yet not goodbye.

GOD

Murthy V. N. Sripada

**YOUR AUTOBIOGRAPHY
WRITTEN BY ME**

You don't have to read it, you know it.

Similar shadows follow, on horse shadows, or on bird shadows,

or with fire tails, on fish shadows, on whale shadows, on hippo shadows, on huge crane-shadows,

You do not like to admit but the shadows run the objects
You are walking upside down,
Your birth is a chance but your death is scientifically executed.

And the Indian said in his savage language "He is the man : he is the war : Get him out : We speak peace : We hate war : Young men die : Women sing sad : Even children die : He kills all : Even the old: Get him out: We speak peace: " Even the savage Indian language, even the savage savage.

The array of men, of human beings, stood on either side, watching waiting watching watching waiting like cattle to be passed into a slaughter-machine like drunkards waiting in queue at brothels like the sick men in the army camp or like ... Choose your own god-damn simile We want no war We want no war And the lips quivered, the women at home crossed in the air as the chief spoke again: We want peace He is the man ... They translated the voice, into the elements around, the stones, the dust, the sick mountains, the lone patch of dry cloud waiting.

Meanwhile the sun set and the Grecians slept in their camps and the chiefs plotted lines on the atlas spread over the table ; blind hands; blind pencils; blinded power; the bleached bones and the remains of the skulls hung under the vestibule. Long after the sun was born the moon was born; long before the moon is dead and the sun will die.

The voices recurred in the air ; an appeal was sent scross the seas, across the skies and the space. The savage words interpreted into the elements of universe.

Our father which art in heaven
Our father which art
In heaven our father
The children will die; the women cry; they sing sad ;

Over a canvas made of stone, iron, and dust, blood pencils painted in abstract the hallelujahs, the tears, the threats of despair, the ice and the fumes of the volcano throat: the artist painted like a stenographer.

Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated: It was 1948 years ago, 9 months ago. "But I refuse. The star will rise again in the Eastern

skies; the shepherds in white clothes, wings will cross the mountains journey along the valleys, alone in common silence; the deer will drink from the rivulet; in the refrigerator there will be no blood drops; we do not live in rat's alley; the earth below will not give away; Jesus will not be crucified: Mahatmaji will not be shot; I can kiss you again and raise the moon to your lips; again in the still lake the wood sleeps; we can start all over again; I will have children, grand children and great grand children and rock in the chair with a Romeo Juliet and the woman knits across the hall; we will picnic in the Red trees and drink from the fountain and dance nude; you shall wear the moonlight; there is a whole life to live; I would say NO if they ask me questions; the history will not come to an end;..." I paid a penny for these thoughts. The young man attending the University sank into the saddle and broke out with these dreams and wept. The tears would flow as a curse on the fumes a layer beneath the earth.

But.....

No No No Dont say that The cloud is acquiring water and descending like a dove. These are the wings of peace, these are the heavens: please do not spoil it please do not destroy please O God almighty you stinker praying at the altar of the marble idol, the Hindu priest knelt. He crossed his chest and recited from the Quran as the temple rang in bells to the hallelujahs sung to the great God Zeus.

No No history is a fool, is a lie, is a cheat.....the past of mankind is wretched; Napoleon is as wretched as Hitler. The jukebox sang a cheap song: a million years it seems had gone by since we shared our dreams and the intellectual monsters sneered with horse teeth and foam.

The great king of the Red Indians stood there while the words were carried through the royal corridors with all the ancient unnecessary majesty, to the white king clad in Royal attire without a bone. As he listened the fire dragon emitted flames through the horns, the teeth.

And Achilles killed Hector and there was a silence over the Trojan walls: And Paris killed Achilles: a vulture set itself on the

Grecian camp: they shall drink sea-water instead of beer, get mad uniformly and celebrate Achilles' demise: Ajax killed the sheep and the sheep killed Ajax: the sea waves broke their heads on the shores like serpents that detest human sight: along the rain brow in the skyscrapers, the gods sat, amused, watching the rituals of death underneath, chewing gum, fingering the jewelled nipples of the cellophane women while Urvashi the court dancer, danced on wine-leaves snake-winding, strip-teasing while the fossils of Hippo gathered in the beer parlour a thousand layers beneath, sky-scraper deep, guffawing as the human fossils entered in chorus.

The white chief puckered his lips.....They poured oil into the Olympic fires; they tested the machines; under the sea-bed the under-earth sub-submarines marched to the new war song; the flexible machine-guns like sex-symbols breathed in; the bedlams held mock-conferences; men crept in mock-battles in the thorns, preserved life-savers under the skin and already men died in the mock-concentration camps as the white chief puckered his lips.....

In the corners of a snow-house in Iceland a young man was brooding "A dime for your thoughts" There would be no war, I thought; now the ice would break into volcanic lava and I would remain roofless. There is no hope no hope no hope Gandhi will be shot again will be shot thrice; Jesus will be nailed inch by inch; they would erect brothels for the exclusive use of soldiers. Dear Francis This is mid noon and the sun is a boiler's eye-ball.

'THEY LIFTED US OUT OF OUR WOMBS AND DROPPED US NOWHERE'

The white chief said: "Even if I have to break the sun on your head, I would do it" They would preserve the lips in a refrigerator: I live like a man: I live like their conception of man: In the nightwood I engender with a bitch: I eat horse flesh and iron bones and break my whiteball in the mother's womb: To the brim you contain my sins, the essence of my courage, bravery, war-medals, horsemanship: That is an honour. Earth records my life in calories: While I claw out your body and eat your tongue in the frenzy.....I can not speak anymore; my thoughts will be censored

CODA

I think it was Scott Fitzgerald who has said somewhere, "I grow envious everytime I see a Knopf binding". Several years later, and without any of the personal element in it I could very well repeat Fitzgerald's words about any of the number of poetry books and magazines on my table. Whether it be from New Directions or The Inferno Press, The Philosophic Library or the Falcon's Wing Press or Kavita Publications or from countless other publishing houses and presses from New Delhi to Buenos Aires, it would seem that there is no dearth of the right type of publisher for the right type of book. The modern poet's worry would certainly not have to be about a publisher or a press that could do him justice but rather the other way around, whether he could come up to the publisher. From the look and feel of the covers on my table I certainly think that the book publishing business, and I am referring to the purely literary variety, is having a boon that no self-respecting writer should ignore. And I certainly cannot accept the fact that they "sell well" like any other modern commodity knowing full well that fewer people are really reading poetry in 1960 than in 1950, and so on. Seriously I mean! with an interest and exhilaration towards it as one would to other forms of entertainment like Television or Jai Lai or just plain drinking in nightclubs. Poetry is after all the easiest and, to an extent the most natural art-form to dabble in. One bursts into poetry at the pimply age and after the indigestion is all cleared from the system by the various means of having to make a living, breed children, pay Doctor's bills and take the wife out to the parties, then at the settled age, Poetry comes up again—to sit or rather squat on the wine coloured rug by the Hi-fi set, and pick up a book of poems which the Atlantic has described as "...simply the best poetry manuscript to come out of this decade ..."

Such preoccupations with the arts are interesting because they are the things to do in certain groups of society and because they give you the feeling of being set aside from the common run of people. Because they do not demand much of one's energy, the latest thing would be a book of not more than 10 or 15 poems, hand printed on lovely grained paper, an abstract stylized two coloured effect

on the cover which gives just enough explanation for what is inside the covers, and perhaps on the outer back cover, a few biographical details of the poet like for example John Smith, 38, Harvard graduate in anthropology, married, no children, likes to walk, sometimes plays Tenor sax with the 'Crazy Six', has been suspected at various times of being a communist, atom spy, and an occasional homosexual.

I am sorry for being so obvious and so bitter. Reading American poetry and books about American poetry and American poets, reading the American little magazines with their beatniks and the Jazz poets and the daytime poets and the nighttime poets, the poets in pony tails and the poets of the hoola-hoop school, I feel sick—of myself, of this world and this present state of writing. Why, for Christ's sake, in America where there are so many competent poets and critics and so many wonderful ways of living well, does writing have to go on being a fashion show for the beautiful but bloodless creatures with "lips preserved in a refrigerator".

The worse is that in very few other places in the world is anything worthwhile happening. Europe is dying, if not already so, and Asia is busy building Dams and Steel plants, but not really benefitting by the experience of the United States on one side and Europe on the other. And America is really the place where all the talent is. And where the mistakes of other countries are carefully avoided and where great things in the field of art and literature can be expected. Everybody who was anybody in Europe is now in America, and the average American's IQ is higher than anywhere else, and in fact they have the "mostest" of everything. Including Poetry and the arts. Poems with commas and poems without, poems with words and poems with sentences, poems that are green and red and yellow poems that sing to music, poems that are re-painted or photographed or hung in the air. Every possible form of the poem has come out of America. And for this I say Thank God, for out of all this occasionally emerges a poem that is a poem is a poem is a poem.

All the same, though it makes me feel old fashioned, I begin to wonder whether my definition of poetry has changed since the old college days, or whether this really is the poetry of this age and generation. For the cliché has been scrupulously avoided and the references to contemporary life are just suggestive (and obscure enough to evoke a whole private way of living. I think Modern American poetry has done a lot for poetry or rather that the

American writer has done a great deal of good for English poetry, which once the Second World War was left behind, all the smartest expressions of Auden & Co could not salvage from being repetitious and casual. But then I also wonder why it is that when I read Rilke (even in translation) or Lorca or Pasternak (the poet) or Valery or Gide or Kafka - I am picking out deliberately the obvious influences of modern poetry - I do not get the feeling of being won over by their cleverness or artistry but basically by their sincerity and absolute lack of pretence in thought or expression. And yet when I read the poetry that these same have inspired, the schools which these have unconsciously created in the New World, I can't get rid of the feeling of virtuosity and perfection that is particularly American. Whether in the way he lays out a hydro-electric project right in the middle of no-where or in the way he makes a poem, the American know-how shows. And dazzles the beholder and stupefies him! The city of Los Angeles had exactly such an effect on me.

Lorca lived 30 odd years and wrote a few hundred poems and plays. But in America they will continue to write commentaries on his work, keys to his poems, explicators for their hidden meanings. Perhaps all of these will help to understand Lorca better, a fuller and richer understanding of the artist and his work. But withall, does it, can it, do anything to the essential poetry that is Lorca's:

"Verde que te quiero Verde
Verde Viento....."

Recently I read somewhere that an American poet had written poems after Lorca and defies the reader to tell which poem is not by the real Lorca. I admire this young poet for his virtuosity, but cannot feel happy about the climate which forces an artist to turn to such means of self-expression. It'd be the logical conclusion if this particular book went into three editions and made the top on TIME in the non-fiction series.

So perhaps as I started out to say, I might as well change my original definition of Poetry. And thank myself for living in an age where, if I could ever get to write a worthwhile poem, I could have it printed and presented in the way it deserves. Rather than find recourse to suicide in a lonely cold garret like Poor Chatterton.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- The Diary of Alexander
Patience *Gil Orlovitz*
Inferno Press, San Francisco, U.S.A.
- Passage After Midnight . *William Pillin*
Inferno Press, San Francisco, U.S.A.
- Four New Poets *ed. Leslie Woolf Hedley*
Inferno Press, San Francisco, U.S.A.
- The Garden *Vincentferrini*
Heuretic Press, Gloucester, U.S.A.
- Thine Alabaster Cities . *Martha Millet*
Sierra Press, New York, U.S.A.
- Dangerous Jack, a
fantasy *Martha Millet*
Sierra Press, New York, U.S.A.
- The Rosenbergs *ed. Martha Millet*
Sierra Press, New York, U.S.A.
- Pilgrim's Terrace *Tram Coombs*
Editorial La Nueva Salalanca, San
German, Puerto Rico.
- Poems *Francis Golffing*
Villier's Publications, London.
- Bodily Responses *George Buchanan*
Gaberbochus, London.

- Sonnets of Love and Liberty **Walter Lowenfels**
Blue Heron Press, New York.
- A Coney Island of the Mind **Lawrence Ferlinghetti**
New Directions, New York.
- Life of a Man **Giuseppe Ungaretti**
New Directions, New York.
- Prismatic Voices **An International Anthology**
Falcon's Wing Press, U.S.A.
- A World without Jews . **Karl Marx**
Philosophical Library, New York
- A Dictionary of Thought **Dagobert D. Runes**
Philosophical Library, New York.
- The Mirror to the Mind . **Roy MacGregor-Hastie**
Jose M. Jurado Bocanegra, Cadiz.
- Singing Forest **P. Brian Cox**
Bharati Association Publications,
India.
- Modern Indian Poetry . . ed. **A. V. Rajeswara Rao**
Kavita Publications, India.

NEW ENTRANTS

Martha Millet is a mother, poetess, humanitarian. She lives in Long Island, New York and has recently edited a brave book on the Rosenbergs. **Clarence Major** is a 22 year old American Negro from Chicago, and editor of "The Coercion Review" and a candidate for a Guggenheim fellowship. **Suchoon S. Mo** has sent us his poems from the State Hospital South, Blackfoot, Idaho. **Lori Petri** is from Novato, California and is a frequent contributor to the little magazines. **Marion Schoberlien** is one of the "Voix Prismaticques", the International anthology of distinctive new poets recently put out by the Falcon's Wing Press. **Alan Marschfield** and **James McCormick** are two of the younger poets from England. The **Roumanian poets** are presented here through the courtesy of **Roy MacGregor-Hastie** who did the translations originally for the Australian Broadcasting Commission. The poets can be reached care of Aurel Rau, Editor of STEAUA, Cluj, Rouman'ia. **Prabhakar Machwe** is a well known Marathi writer and also an able translator. He is presently with the Sahitya Academi, New Delhi. **Bhavani Prasad Misra** and **Shakuntala Mathur** are with the All India Radio. **Shamsher Bahadur Singh** lives at Allahabad, India and **Raghuveer Sahai** is on the editorial board of "Kalpana" a hindi literary magazine published from Hyderabad, India. **Faiz** is a very well known urdu poet from Pakistan. **Buddhadeva Bose** is a well known modern Bengali writer. He teaches at the Calcutta University and edits a Bengali literary quarterly "Kavita". He has also been on a lecture tour of the U.S.A. **Reginald Massey** has published several of his poems in The Illustrated Weekly of India. **G. V. Desani** is one of those Indians who is very well known in England and Europe and much less known in his own country. He has been described as a modern Rabelais, Runyan, Sterne and Mark Twain. His two books "All about H. Hatterr" and "Hali" which have been out of print for some time have been commended by T. S. Eliot and E. M. Forester. **Irving Halperin** has a Ph.D. in English from Washington University and is presently teaching in the Language Arts Division of the San Francisco State College. He has been to India on a Fulbright grant. **Kushwant Singh's** novel "Train to Pakistan" was a Grove Press Contest winner. He is at present editing "YOJANA" for the Government of India.

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