

# East and West

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# EAST AND WEST

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## REMEMBERING THE DEAD

We think of people like Christopher Sripada and Marcella Hardy, magazines like the Little Review and Transition. We think of dead cities like Rome and pieces of stone at Kajuraho and Mahabalipuram. We think of fashions in art like Surrealism.....We think of the dead as the live do with pity and terror and admiration. We dare not think of what the future contains but we are terribly concerned with the present, and being human we cannot help thinking of the past in perspective and with prejudice.

\* \* \*

You know how it is when a couple of kids get together and like each other an awful lot and hate each other and want to be with each other and do things better than each other, tied with invisible cords of flesh as it were and desperately trying to break away and all the while secretly glad that it could not be so.

They used to dream a great deal those days, these two. Of cities across the Plains and Oceans and wonderful new things beyond that they'd discover and bring back. And all the while their soil would remain unchanged, eyes open with admiration waiting to wallow in the dreams which they'd bring..... But you know how dreams get to be when they come true, a little ragged at the edges, off centre and slightly awry.

\* \* \*

Christopher died on the 27th of January quite early one morning ! He was murdered by bacteria and people and himself and the world. The usual things. But he was an unusual person.



We'd read the manuscripts together like in the old days when we'd discovered a faded copy of the Wilde-Beardsley 'Salome'.

In characteristic fashion he'd liked what I'd not put in, and a little less what I'd put in. But I rather think that alive, if now, he'd have liked the result.

\* \* \*

And still they ask us?..... what is your policy, rather what is your axe and where do you want to grind it? Shall I repeat for this world of wood that we have no backing and no front. No publishing company pays for our existence and we do not like to advertise shoe polish. We'd rather that one fine morning we'll find ourselves dead as one fine morning we'd discovered ourselves alive. Existing as of a piece. But not quite so. We are not free of the past, And the act of creation has taken a very long time!!!

\* \* \*

Among comments made about our first issue :

"..... a slightly audacious venture..... heavily accented in favour of the West..... faces two grave pitfalls: cliquishness and artiness ..."

"..... a bold experiment; but one cannot... say that the light of a new dawn filters through the glass panes of the laboratory windows... with an original glow..."

"..... the reader is able to glean after a little groping in the dark... poems simple in diction seem to require a detailed and elaborate commentary to make their meaning clear..."

\* \* \*

Naturally I have quoted only some of the adverse comments. We are sure that trying to reply attacks against us would be meaningless. But I must remember to enter in my diary the things that I as an editor must do :

1. Be not so audacious.
2. Try to publish more writing by Indians and less by Americans.
3. Publish nothing which cannot be understood at the first attempt.
4. Make a statement of policy and stick to it come what may.
5. Be, or atleast try to be, 'a serious non-political big little Magazine with all the ingredients of a little review.'

We may as well go back to what we started out with. We cannot stick to deadlines and schedules, specify the numbers of pages for prose and poetry, balance East and West, number of languages or number of countries represented and how representatively represented. Infact we would like to come right out into the open and say that the title has no particular significance. Like so many things in this world it just happened. We were still toying with titles when suddenly, for being so long without a name, people started calling us by a name. Often one writes a masterpiece and then he has one hell of a problem finding as masterly a title. So he calls it "A Fable" or "A Poem".

Viola! There you have it!!

\* \* \*

Do I dare? no certainly not. We'll set nothing on fire, we'll propagate no great truths. All we want to do is run a pretty good magazine. We do not know if this is the country for it or these are the times but we are in it. We want to publish good creative writing. And this we clarify. It must be good. It must be creative. It must be writing. We've read some pretty good stuff in the languages which English knows nothing about so we thought we'd do something about it. English and Asia is a pretty good combination... We make no reserves except the physical ones, distressing details like money which we dont have, the international situation, the climatic condition etc.

No, this sounds too much like a statement of policy. Like a nice blue NEON Cross we saw glowing in the night outside a modest little Church.

\* \* \*



Which reminds me of a sentence I read some where " ..... little magazines have more contributors than readers..... "

Actually the readers do not bother us very much. We gave away most of our first issue free all over the world. We never did have much of a business sense anyway and honestly we do not know where our next issue is going to come from. Somewhere around the corner we hope will turn up a philanthropist who will list us among institutions like Children's hospitals, temples and sanatoriums!

But the contributors?

We still hope that somewhere hidden away in some self-conscious corner we will discover a Kafka. Perhaps not. We certainly do not want to give up because we do not get as much good stuff to print as we would like to. We always thought that what the lonely-genius-writer wanted was just such a magazine such as this to whom under the comfortable anonymity of an envelope he could send on his masterpiece. We hope to exist in that hope.

\* \* \*

Christopher died without bringing to fruition a talent that we genuinely believe was quite a rare one. And we hear that only the other day Marcella Hardy passed away after a life 'dedicated' to the vain pursuit of arts and letters and trying to establish some sort of a synthesis of the cultures of the East and West, to both of which she could lay a good claim to in her own self.

\* \* \*

Meanwhile sitting on the balcony of love and watching below me a procession of the Dead, I stretch out my hand to see that the one I love is still with me.

*Kenneth Pettitt*

**ASIA**

I get Asian letters :  
yr I is my apology  
and yr Asia is  
my fixation.

An I for an I,  
let's be friends  
friendship is  
the only justice,

and that is yr  
aproximation :  
yr proximity is  
my duration.

My endurance is  
yr Asia.



*Leslie Woolf Hedley*

### THREE POEMS

#### A DAY IN 1955

We lean hungry on threshold of war

and no one has asked me  
if I recall the thundering fear  
the quick snap of fire from sun blind sky  
or my opinion about dying this day

the body politic will convene  
on whim of senile anger explode  
making a billion bodies targets for guns

and no one has asked me  
how I stumbled through their last rage  
dug my foxholes into whirlpool sand  
drained of honour less than animal

and no one has asked me  
how to divide loot slice up nations  
for all spoils I saw were corpses

if they declare war today or any day  
they declare it without my consent

I refuse to kill or be killed

and that statement is a poem  
to build a civilization on

#### LETTER TO CHRISTIANS

How many times do you expect your Christ  
to die for your world

there were legions of Christs annihilated  
by long swords of animal opinion  
into bloodied lives like weeping waves

you killed them all in your anger

I think you were born with cocked triggers  
running over boundaries invented as pasttime  
and commerce of exploitation

I have not lost loving you  
although I take perpetual inventory  
barring my doors and windows  
careful of turning my back to your smiles

love comes with understanding  
and I know why you kill  
every beautiful thing that grows or loves



you never needed any one to save you

it takes a patient process for storms to still  
for flowers to finally spring clear of dirt

I await man's coming of age  
for the gods are already here

### A MIDNIGHT POEM

This month the moon is bold  
white as a cow's belly

meadows between mountains rest  
under golden rust of light

pale coats of cloud pass  
brushing clean over the eyeball

the moving ocean breathes deeply  
a living lung beneath my feet

animals I have never seen tremble  
in that love between hunger and hunting

in all this gentle green natural night  
there is so much quiet martyred dying

*Lawrence Lipton*

### TWO POEMS

#### DEATH OF A POET

(For Dylan Thomas)

Let's strike a mean and say his life  
Was half as holy as a priest's. He told  
His beads with rosaries of loves  
And walked unfrocked among the saints  
Dispensing blasphemous indulgences,  
Elfin and with silver shod  
A tousled head all flittered with  
The pollen of wild flowers, his spoor  
The scent of unicorn, an antic god.

A wracking time to be alive in  
Bruising as a shark's fin, catamount  
And sly as any sidewinder to snake him  
Unawares, rotten under any moon  
And stinking in the sun for lack of love,  
And yet he moved among them white  
And winged shouting life against all death  
Unlearned in the art of dying  
Life-enthralled until his dying breath.



So young, so soon. Let's think of him  
 As one born swaddled in a winding sheet  
 His life a brief rehearsal for eternity,  
 As one who broke the barriers of sense  
 And suffered all thereafter that one must  
 Who goes with onagers and deathless birds  
 Up to that high stone seat where one dies,  
 Goes mad, or wakes from dreaming to come down  
 Word-wild, song-struck and with a poet's eyes.

# EZRA LOOMIS POUND

Someone pied the form. Mad Pound  
 a selfmade gone mad,

a god of History  
 gone loco, daft,

remembering everything and everything

just a little wrong  
 off centre — just enough.

A news reel of the centuries

cut by a madman, scrambled  
 on the cuttingroom floor.

A votive window of many-colored glass  
 cut with lapidary care  
 and set up in a privy.

A book handset  
 and pied by a tramp printer,  
 pie-eyed, or out of spite,  
 and tossed in the hell-box

*Ars artium omnium conservatrix*

and printed on tattooed parchment

bound between iron covers  
 locked with brass against

grave robbers bent on plundering  
 a plunder's tomb.



*William J. Margolis*

**TWO POEMS**

**GENTLEMEN, THIS IS WAR**

Gentlemen

    This is war,

No, Nelson, don't get up,  
Don't leave yet

        There's something  
for you to do, too.

    And Peterson, tell your men  
to drop the psych search  
    We don't need souls now.

As I said, Gentlemen

    This is war.

Fletcher, roll in the charts  
Show us where the bastards are  
And Skeever, brief us  
    on the population densities.

Fine.

These profit margins are correct  
Rockmorton

I assume?

    Not as high as last year's  
but they'll do.

All right, Nelson, say your prayer  
and then I'll push the button.

— Heavenly Einstein....

Gentlemen

    This is war.

**I AM AGAPE WITH LOVE**

I am agape with love  
but

    all my heros  
have fled this  
    Heavy burning ground

the mystic seeker  
    of my youth  
is now a pedant  
    dilletante

        on peyote  
the dhوتي-man of India  
no more a man  
    a Saint

No more aghast  
    am I  
at fingerpointing



and skygazing  
 at nothing  
 all  
 do it  
 with me

Now

I

am

I

&c.

no more  
 but

it was nice to have  
 something

Now I am a gap  
 no more is holy  
 only I

I make myself lie down  
 and all pastures are  
 of my making, green  
 or otherwise.

*James Boyer May*

## TWO POEMS

### REMIND YOU ON THE DAY OF PUL

When the elephant runs mad,  
 the woman smells Ganesha....  
 her fears turn reverence....she sees  
 huge foot upon the mouse, her first  
 intruder where her child-mind formed.  
 King purposes are misconstrued  
 through Freudian deceit that cites  
 another symbol — not huge feet —  
 that reared proboscis, super-long,  
 curved sounding shrilling unstaffed key  
 for warning Jerichos....foreknown  
 to trumpet, crumbling walls of maids  
 to be sate-fallowed deep with salt —  
 ened ash from ruptured flesh-broke temples.



## GRANDMOTHER

Antiquities of fiddlebacks and Dresden,  
old solaces where lonely years  
rock, gazing back on glories, Roman  
never....merely remnants of  
    longed humble teraphim....

    There shall be writing-desks  
    in heaven, with glassed shelves  
    above, enclosing small  
memorials....hinged rosewood boards  
to open, for inscribing tea –  
time missives.

        Cookyless, the jar  
        which will then hold these  
ashes, law prohibits strewing  
on the wind beside treed waters  
sliding always past a sachet bank  
of grasses, where she first loved —  
    before antiquity.

Curtis Zahn

## PAVAN FOR PEGGY C.

Frequently, her days wore their nights  
Like opera-hats. That's  
a fashionnote of eras when Generals  
Were redundant in their spleened armor  
And seagulls suspiciously announced  
Radioactive sheets of breadslice, then swooped anyway,  
Fought and lobbied  
And encircled each other for the bombing.

After war, goodness dropped in on occasion  
To inquire how well bad was doing, going,  
Aware that always it must stare up at  
Ceilings, and whistle.  
There'd been no change —  
Yes was holding No, or perhaps  
Maybe was making a last ditch stand  
Against the probable.  
And months were the only thing that moved at all,

And the years moved in and came to stay  
To see, to smell the fight, to hear  
Hoarse old voices churning and spurning  
Each other while she went about



Kissing desperately  
But our environment was infertile ;  
Even rabbits had enjoyed a bad spring, the plants  
Came up taut and aggressive,  
Prepared to do violence to their attackers,  
They, prematurely warned to the very  
Glint of men  
While the hot, hard eye in the sky  
Burnt and froze this girl, running  
Its invisible hands over a nation's unmentionables.

*Betty Turnoy*

## POEM

Some countries condemn the nervous  
others live in separate states  
spread to the continent their colors  
contaminate sick boys and nurses.

By this rock, my beloved, expert  
of darling or stone,  
the sentinent boundaries of face  
turn beholder :

The pupils smart with seeing  
the beveled edge of flowers  
and the too green grass.

Nor is there night, such ashes  
as the dread kneel into  
nowhere nourish except as sorrow pulls  
long forenoons of children  
under a circus of dreams.

Oh man appearing primitive  
there is much marvel  
under a mask you murder  
and call on sweet your saviour  
an abacus of bleed.



But the sky is generous of space  
 and gives itself in gullies  
 a bird's amount of air, mountains  
 break over margins, merge  
 below the water luff  
 old snowdrift and the savage  
 as by crossed currents, tempered in time.

*Norman Disher*

**ON THE DEATH OF A FRIEND**

**IN THE PACIFIC: 1945**

Lovely old graves,  
 delicate and deep,  
 we are here....

Nor for gold,  
 love, the Glories,  
 not for the fountain  
 or the Portuguese sailor  
 nor for the wandering cloth settled  
 serenely on the ruptured cliffs,  
 are we here.

Not for ivy,  
 italics, or parental truths,  
 nor for these rumors,  
 but for the everlasting whisper  
 of our own misfortunes,  
 are we here.

Lovely old graves,  
 delicate and deep,  
 we are here....



Harry Hooton

SEA SEMEN

I thought once as I stood surrounded  
 By raucous Apollos and perfect models of Venus –  
 Who awkwardly jumped or gracefully floundered –  
 That a fellow feeling, Oh Sea, existed between us.  
 I could feel the contempt in your waves  
 For these holiday slaves,  
 For the teats, torsoes, thighs  
 Of the always in pairs,  
 For their lips, limbs, eyes  
 Flaunting their love affairs....

Like you, Sea, I take my pleasures alone,  
 Pair and compare with none.  
 What is there more  
 Indecent, irreverent than these swarms of flies seething  
 to the brink

Of sea and shore –  
 Insects that shrink  
 From depths of thought, stay where the Titan waves  
 impinge

Their trivial bordered lace upon the sand,  
 Live their little lives upon the fringe,  
 Blaspheme you in secure indifference and cringe  
 Within safe distance of the land.

Home to your hovels, slaves, your day's play is done!  
 Your sun is setting, the evening star –  
 Elsewhere to grovel! Leave me that the tide leavens on  
 To leap over the valleys some sculptor, some master  
 Scoops and gouges afar –  
 Where out of saliva-lined gullies is ladled  
 The limbs and loins of Leviathan vaster  
 Than your Olympus ever cradled.

I sing your praises Sea as none other, Oh semen-strong –  
 They do not know you, under their rainbow awnings,  
 towels,  
 Wasting their time on one another – but I belong.  
 Out of your womb, out of your blue-green bowels –  
 You are my mistress now as once my mother,  
 No longer pairless, incomparable prime mover,  
 I will ravish you, not as your son but lover,  
 Tear from your hydrogen atoms new seed,  
 Rear oceans in space, forget this foul breed!



*William Carlos Williams*

**SAPPHO, BE COMFORTED**

There is only one love  
let it be a sparrow  
to hold between the breasts  
          greet us daily with its small cries

what does it matter?  
I, we'll say, love a woman  
but truth to tell  
          I love myself more. Sappho loves

the music of her own  
songs which men seldom  
mean to her, a lovely girl  
          of whom she is desperately fond:

This is myself though  
my hateful mirror  
shows every day my big nose.  
          Men are indifferent to me, my sweet,

but I would not trade  
my skill in composition for  
all, a second choice, you  
          present for my passionate caresses.

*Srinivas Rayaprol*

**FOUR LOVE POEMS**

I

Love is all  
But only  
In the particular moment

Of surrender or deceit  
Or the close coition  
Of desire  
That is not desire

Love is all  
But only  
For the eye  
That sees

Or the dormant hand  
In the heart  
That stirs  
The privacy of pain.



## 2

And a lost road  
Has brought me this way  
The blind girl smiled  
As she held my deceptive hand

A thousand sheep bled  
Beneath my harshwood stave  
While her flowerblind hand  
Held my cloth of rucksack and skin

You are He, her lips smiled  
Her idiot eye on my body  
I, casual, indifferent  
Took her on the mountain slopes  
And left her the mudbrown day.

## 3

Child, she said,  
Be outside my love  
For I bear the burden  
Of your iniquities

Just like your father  
In anger and in love  
Find in me only  
The receptacle of your deceptions

While constant I stand  
Helpless in love  
And my unwilling womb  
Accepts your cruelties.

## 4

Remember when as children  
We slept in our grandmother's coffin  
A box of oak with camphor smells  
And the roses in your hair crushed within

Grown now and forgotten  
In memory's green sorrow  
And the mildewed breath of insincerity  
We sleep in our own.

And I can see beside me  
your uncomfortable face, and our jaded bliss  
Showing like cancer spots  
Beneath the rose-leaf

Smoke brown flames  
Across the flat white moon  
And Time passes like a knotted hand  
Before the window bar's golden bloom

The eye that lies beneath the object's delight  
The heart that beats behind the clocking heart  
Is but a small sufficiency  
For the ingrown sin in the bone.



*Rajasekhar*

FOUR POEMS

THE ALPHABET

Your breach and my bank  
and your words remembering  
the clasp of leaf and the feel of tears  
annotate legends of a lost summer

The white walls stare neutrality  
at our convalescent faces  
and the shame of flesh  
keeps a vigil through night

And as deaths revolve in dreams  
our tongues will move my love  
between emptiness and the wall  
into an autumn of words

UNDER THE BOUGH I WISH

I will cease speech and prophecy  
abdicate enemy and following  
and watch from the river's fringe  
the single bird singing to himself

I will read the old clarities  
in the water's subtle face  
and share with the tree  
its shameless green of life

With my back turned on land  
where summers wither the tree  
and men shoot birds  
I will dream in a different skin.

WOMAN IN EVENING

The woman walking her shadow  
holding in her heart the stone of evening  
is the cactus  
green in the gold of sun  
spiny, succulent and futile

She, a moon over sands  
defining a waste of wish  
lifts her manifold hands  
for a rain of birth



And as she paces  
the alley of evening  
muffling in her womb  
the shrill delight of child  
she touches the root  
of the male hurt  
of living.

#### CHRISTOPHER SRIPADA

I will not sell your memory to the stranger  
advertising your love of man and laughter  
nor display before friends and kin  
your ware of words spoken or written

I will not boost to myself  
your acts of life or thoughts of death  
nor let the char-woman do your room  
of dreams and liquor

Harlequin boy  
suddenly silent  
in the Big Top's  
whirling laughter  
the wind makes its song  
in your hollow bone  
and I will not break  
the heart of your silence.

*P. Lal*

#### THE LAWYER

Strange words are wise to him :  
Regret, surprise,  
Devotion and the rest are dim.  
This is a case of spectacles on nose :  
Heart harmless, business bellicose.

Good sir, reflect on this –  
How ships are wrecked  
On seas where nothing is amiss.  
Still waters being doldrums, let us say  
Routine's the mother of decay.

You are not different.  
You talk as if  
Life is what's said, not meant.  
You sail through doldrums, purposely  
A painted ship on a painted sea.

Sir, I had thought  
Life not a circling fan  
But graphs that lead up to a plan.  
Now I must pause and learn the latest art :  
Brain's neon signs, and darkness in the heart.



C. R. Mandy

## DU TEMPS PERDU

All memories are mirror'd here  
 — the slant of eyes, the soft cadences of tone,  
 The silences both eloquent and gay,  
 So that, remembering, the mind recaptures  
 The gentle ghost of yesterday.

But can it return and, wide eyed, seek  
 The complex harmonies of human touch?  
 Be visible to moonlight and soft rain,  
 Grasp the lost ecstasies anew  
 And share delight again?

O, it is here, and all the lost has been  
 Re-lived, reconquered in the muted hour.  
 This is the tale the dream had fondly plann'd  
 Be tranquil thus, in loveliness undimm'd  
 And mock at Time's demand.

\*

\*

\*

When I went back, the winter-wedded weather  
 Hung like a clock across the cold night's limbs.  
 And I was a boy again, in a long vanished hour,  
 Demanding of arrogant noon its bright unseen delight.

And one could pray there, with timid signals of despair,  
 Seeing not the present, but night and the past together  
 (In the winter-wedded weather)  
 With small grey ghosts of thought, raping the mind's  
 recesses,  
 Purloining peace, and touching the heart at will.

O, one could sense lost childhood there,  
 And the gay, glib tongue of the swallows at midsummer's  
 eye,

Ripe corn, and the fulness of the roses,  
 And doves in white simplicity  
 Caressing the calm, soft air.

Now the eyes are dim  
 And the mind at the end of its tether  
 Carries a senile whisper down the years,  
 In the winter-wedded weather.

\*

\*

\*

A coin upon the lids, you say,  
 — The eyes alone are left  
 From that high-summered hour,  
 All else bereft  
 As grim Tibetan tower.

No coin is needed, sir,  
 The eyes can testify  
 Beyond the poor body's rust,  
 The abject heart defy  
 In its empiric dust.



The eyes alone are left  
 From that far field.  
 Gone now the amber gleam,  
 — The full, the golden yield ;  
 Clouded the slender dream.

Dotard ! The tissue's naught,  
 The eyes can yet convey  
 All the immortals sent  
 — Wild solstice of that day !  
 And I'm content.

\*

\*

\*

The time for waking up is safely past ;  
 The world eludes us, and its preening doves.  
 Through half-closed lids the cosmos of your face  
 Now gently moves.

The cobweb on the window sill is raked with golden light  
 The tide of day doth through the lattice seep,  
 And we like snails recoiling in their shells,  
 Return to sleep.

\*

\*

\*

That was a small world, captured in the moonlight,  
 Replete with enchantment, and sentient imagery.  
 Paved with a wish fulfilled, or cupp'd like a firefly's glow  
 In the mind's grave ecstasy.

And yours was an amber hour in that lost realm  
 Beyond reality, ephemeral, free.  
 With death in each second there, or a fresh dawn stirring  
 The heart's complexity.

Yet you would return to that intriguing shore,  
 Away from the tangible moment and a routine dully  
 plann'd.

Back to the shadowy lip and the quickened pulse's beat —  
 To die in a dream again in lotus land.



*George Keyt*

**THE RENOWNED UNCREATIVE**

We the remembered  
Of the uncreative dead  
Who have never spoken after  
The things we said  
Why are we dismembered  
With those of the dead who never cease  
But speak and see, embracing  
Other voices, other eyes,  
Throwing their resurgent sighs  
and facing a continual dearth of peace?

Held slipping in stretched hands across the brink –  
Stooping, peering, they grasp us by the dark water  
Endless night –  
We who never are allowed to sink  
and vanish like the others from their sight.

We who lie dead across the dark water  
The tractless moat never to be crossed,  
We who are heard, though we have never spoken after,  
Through ears which hear silence, and are tossed  
On restless waves of dead action into sight  
Where eyes see only in an absent light.

Helpless our hands to indicate the curves  
Where alien rhythms emanate from those  
On our behalf who throb with other nerves  
And strangers to our world and our repose  
Who see us less and never hear, but praise and blame  
The effigies they make of us, our fame.



*Raghavendar Rao*

**SARABAND AT SUNSET**

Be always a stranger to her, Sorrow,  
Stranger as leaves are to lovers.  
But should she suffer the green fires of man's night,  
Seasons, share her sorrows into elusive arabesques,  
That I, a mere pedlar of words, might flesh them with  
my breath

That I may kill my hours in this seasonless world  
Where she left me suddenly at winter's turn.  
May never the ugly crows of ill-luck  
Cross her sunshine paths, flowered by her feet,  
Watching the weather wished wind  
Swirl human desires like autumn leaves,  
I enter her submarine city  
Where her limbs sway like sarcophagous seaweed  
And her serpent green eyes glint with evil  
Should the miracle of her cobra-coiled flesh  
Shinining in the Sun in treachery  
Should it end for me in just this farewell smile?  
A syrupy silence fills the sleeping streets of my heart  
My words congeal into diamonds  
And the song is a wound on my lips.

*Lila Ray*

**A DAY IN EARLY WINTER**

By the opaque  
silver lake  
stand flowering grasses.

silken, white,  
plumed with light,  
slanting through the shadows

into day,  
iridescent, grey  
lean stalks of green and straw

down-swinging  
wheeling, winging  
a heron hangs whitely  
on a splayed flight feather  
in the soft mauve weather.



*Kenneth Pettitt  
Murthy Sripada  
Srinivas Rayaprol*

# CHAIN POEMS

1

Where the waters of your face roared a cluttered song  
Beside vacant mountains  
The intricate flower folds like a mold

Where the earth is a removed sky  
All uncovered earth receding  
There beyond where the explicate truth denudes

You rightly sing  
Where the wheels of your eyes turned a crooked sail  
By rig or rail your cluttered song.

2

Yourself the nodes of a song  
Belongness being wrong by daylight  
In subtled smiles you stole that music  
That music was wrong

Myself the rubber hunger of my mother's breast  
Incest, that song to flesh belongs  
This flesh has no rims  
But sin's ridges and ends

Yourself the deep edge of a forest in my eyes.

3

There is a time for which  
There is a time for what  
Dinner six O'clock like a stoplatch  
Time for the time which does not wait

A silence of events, last night's  
Unbuttoned thoughts.



## THREE POEMS

## BIRTHDAY

The first line of a poem was I,  
Writing me  
God considered many women  
As a rhyme,  
I wondered if a new designation  
Was to be my fate,  
If the poet of poets would pass me off  
For free verse.  
At length upon his contemplation  
Flashed  
The second line of a couplet, It was you,  
Beloved.  
Unrhymed and friendless was my birthday  
When  
Completing it in concord came  
The day of your birth.

CREDO

I shall tell what I feel  
                   As I feel it to the one I feel for.  
 I have no rash desire to be a poet.  
                   My purpose is to speak the truth.

If fate is favourable  
And life as long as I hope  
I shall bring each of my flowers to blossom  
Making myself known wholly before I go.

Why speak of fame or a bad name now?  
My best is yet to be given.

Friend, let me forget fame in labour  
Or my works will be meagre.  
You seek to assess my strength in vain.  
Comparison is futile.

The whole of my art is to leave  
My heart's impress upon another heart.

I shall be content with her affection  
 Though I have no place among the great.  
 If to my dear one I grow dearer  
 I shall be all I wish to be.



## EPITAPH

If there must be an epitaph for me  
 Write –  
 The man was young,  
 To his last breath.  
 To his last gasp,  
 To his last throb,  
 Young.  
 He loved to be gay  
 And he loved gaily.  
 Gaily he went about his work.  
 Pretexts to be gay kept him alive  
 And such pretexts came his way,  
 Thanks to a favouring chance.  
 So he had no regrets.

(Translated from the Bengali by LILA RAY)

*Asoke Vijay Raha*

## THREE POEMS

## CONJUNCTURE

Abruptly, with a shrill crash,  
 The iron door breaks open.  
 All chains give way.

The dun bull of evening stands beside a trident.  
 His huge hump  
 Pushes up into the sky between the night and the day.  
 His horns hook the clouds  
 And beneath the heavy folds of his neck hangs a great  
 copper gong.

Suddenly the roar of doom –  
 Earth splits –  
 Mud and the smell of jungle are everywhere.  
 Shadows rock with the quake.  
 Through the darkness the gong sounds.  
 Sniffing the air the bull disappears  
 Towards the Western hills.



## A SUDDEN VISION

At the turning we met suddenly -  
 In the lap of the blue mountain  
 In the swing of the sunshine's sparkling net  
 The green woods noisy with birds  
 The curving green of the river  
 And from the green water a fisherman lifted silver fish  
 With a net of gold.  
 At the turning we met suddenly -  
 A line was etched in light  
 In the corner of my heart.

## AN EVENING

A sitar is playing on the radio; the Bengali news is over.  
 I listen as I walk. The tune runs in my head.  
 The suburbs of this country town skirt the woods.  
 Evening comes to the thickets with the scent of the wild.  
 A hillock of red earth confronts me unexpectedly at a  
 corner.

From behind it peeks the peak of a mountain.  
 As I draw near night comes with howling jackals.  
 Bats beat their wing in a wild fig tree.  
 I start as an owl screeches over my head.  
 The half-moon is caught in the telegraph wires.

( Translated from the Bengali by LILA RAY )

*Sudhindranath Datta*

## NIGHT

Suddenly the autumn evening like an aged courtesan  
 Covered with excessive rouge the spread of inevitable decay.  
 And besieged by separation the meeting became a soliloquy  
 As the magic mascara of tragedy  
 Brought to my eyes, turned away from reality, sudden  
 insistence.

So, in fact, I told her that day in an assured voice :  
 If in the tyranny of autumn the leaves drop  
 Or pine needles gather in the forsaken grove,  
 Let them.  
 Let the migratory swan leave the withered lotuses in the  
 lake  
 And fly away beyond the seven seas in its quest for a  
 charmed nest.



Still nothing will be lost. Germinated in the elixir of death  
The mummy seed of memory will still produce  
At the end of my green-stalk imagination the  
incommensurable asphodel.

Time, no doubt, is a nihilist, but even he believes in  
essence:

And that is why the relay of earthenware lamps in his cave drawings,

Undisturbed by the wind, shall achieve the tranquil glow  
of steady flames.

The beneficent one, that great ascetic, he reached by dint of works

That void where only cycles function. And later  
Pilgrims through the ages gathered at the holy shrine  
To fill with richly coloured legends their minds  
In which all that rose were slow clouds of incense.

The centuries pass, and gradually in that enriched cave  
The bat builds his nest, while the owl doses in recesses,  
dreaming of rats,

And the thrifty jackal hides in murky corners half-eaten  
corpses,

And earthworms knot themselves before the prostrate idol.  
The satiated old condor, too, from time to time sits at  
the entrance.

Overgrown with opuntia, soothing its acidity.  
And in their excrement and filth is submerged time and  
again

The worthy symbol of the past, while the crumbling plaster

Fixes the skeletal walls in a macabre grin. Sometimes  
The wealthy townsman comes picnicking with his hired  
female

And after the snack, lighting a coloured match, stares

There where on the wall prurient hands knead female flesh,  
To return at eventide, leaving behind empty tins and torn  
paper-boxes,

The scattered ashes  
Adding to the despair of dusk and the after-distaste of  
spent festivity.

And then as the wind rises, suddenly blowing out the evening star,  
Darkness and ablepsy in the midst of a nightmare turmoil.

(Translated from the Bengali by P. K. SAHA)

Courtesy of "ORIENT REVIEW"



Tan Yun-Shan

LINES FROM THE SEASHORE

Fish and lobsters listen silently  
When I play my flute here.  
O, dear friends,  
Do you know where I am?

\* \* \*

Insects murmur my only appreciation  
When I read my poems here.  
O, dear friends,  
Do you know where I am?

\* \* \*

When the rain falls on the face of the sea  
No trace is left of you or me.

\* \* \*

Swift clouds weave in the water  
The feelings of a wanderer  
And stars emblazon his breast.  
Men pluck the blossoming branch  
and dream of the fruit with longing.

\* \* \*

The sea is the only poem  
One never wearies of reading.  
The sea is the only picture  
One never wearies of watching.  
The sea is the only song  
One never wearies of hearing.

(Translated from Chinese by W. PACHOW and LILA RAY)



Krishna Rao

## THE FOLDS OF MEMORY

Lazily he slid his tired limbs into the folds of the easy chair. The crumpled folds of his street-clothes looked sadly at the walls. A row of books peeped with dusty eyes at the shirts in the corner, at the trousers on the wall, and the evil smelling heap of socks. When their various eyes met, the eyes of the shirts and the trousers and the socks drooped with human shame.

In the hearth stood an iron stove balancing a silver bowl. Black ants peeped across the rim of the white bowl. His eyes rested on the line of black ants tunnelling through the mass of white rice. But the singleminded movement of the ants soon scattered his settled looks. Curtains of black and white dropped over his mind.

His claustrophobic mind stared hard at the black curtain. Out stared, the black curtain broke up into a wilderness of folds, and the white curtain split into threads of moonshine. He in the folds of youth's raiment, And she, with a white tiara of jasmines in the undulating waves of black tresses.

He folded his face in the black terraces of her hair. The urgent scent of hair-wash rose, wave upon wave, covering him with a gentle stupor. The eyes of his mind slid down the walls, flowed across and collected in the middle of the room.

In the folds of youth he, and in the plaits of shy eyes the other She. He slowly unwound the plaits of her shyness and looked into her eyes. Himself mirrored in her eyes, he could no more unravel the folds of shyness. And he dissolved himself in the black of her eyes.

The folds of black remained. His mind looked deep into the shyness. The black deep eyes folded in shame. Before they could melt under the gaze there came a knock on the door. Caressing back into crease the folds of tired limbs sprawled on the easychair, he stood up settled the folds of his clothes and opened the door.

A postman, his clothes all crumpled up, with a serried bundle of letters under one arm, handed him a parcel. He folded the door. Slow hands opened the parcel. Folds of hair. Folds of her hair; but no urgent scent of hairwash rose wave upon wave. Seeing those folds of hair, his tired limbs crumpled fold by fold into the easy-chair. And a fear rose, wave on wave, that the postman would ring again, and stand with a parcel of the shy folds of her deep eyes.

His crumpled limbs trembled with the new fear. The curtains of black multiplied and swished round his mind. The folds of shyness interwound with the folds of hair, wash in the folds of the curtains of black hair, the deep eyes lit with sight.

The room became full of black folds. The folds of books looking with dusty eyes; looked deeply into the black folds billowing in the room, and reposed on the folds of stillness.

*(Translated from the original in Telugu)*



Curtis Zahn

## DISGUISED FROM ONE'S SELF

His grandfather was a man who interminably pulled out his watch and remarked, "exactly twelve-seven," but his father would glance at his wrist and say, "I believe you're a little late, Brackett," and his mother could drive any model car provided it was a Cadillac, and she had been one of the first to correctly pronounce "penicillin." And after the divorce Brackett took her name, Claire Smells – she had been a Dowl – but everywhere along the shoreline they gave him Brackett Hacket, for the father had been a lawyer, a very old lawyer.

As a boy, Brackett was often surprised on brilliant beach mornings examining crab and kelp, but now, like John Charles John and Mary Maude Mary, the poets he played honest, stubborn tennis on the resort courts. Often, he rowed with his cousin, Miss Johanna Smells; often the painter's eye recorded his wide chin skypointed; a hat on the back of the small, old head. On such occasions he didn't look like a man who'd come to repair television sets. He had a laborer's dignity when he bronzed himself vertically, in ragged raccoon trunks, in a new Stetson which had gotten miraculously old. His fishing rods projected from the skiff like police-car antennas, an old chair's back-rest was attached to the scow, there was a pond-calm portrait of a man here to stay, a man loyal to blood, and one who'd fought off civilization's sickness for forty years but one who'd caught it as far back as his great grandfather. Herons stood disconsolately on his rickety, respectable, private pier, and he felt as though he heard seagulls shout to themselves "bombs away" as they came in low over the garden furniture which he'd finally painted white.

The surf roared at him, assiduously endeavoring to put him to sleep or keep him awake, he was never to know which. But all of his life – and one had the feeling that at forty it had been lived – he was burdened with the knowledge that Jesus had found himself at thirty years of age. Hitler had been born with full power; Hitler emerged from the womb speeding down an eight lane highway at one hundred miles per hour, whereas Brackett Hacket, for drubbing scrubbing years plagued by mosquitos, Aspirins, sunburn and hang-overs, had somehow circumvented the zenith of his power complex. It rocked back and forth inside him, a furious ocean of diabolic surge that choked the energy of seven men and thirteen women wrestling under his skin. How to let it out without destroying civilization! But it did get out in scurrilous little ways. It played piano, it painted one or two pictures. It collected data on the softshelled crab and other allied crustacea. It bullied at whiners and whined at bullies, and it caused him to drive his '41 Cad at the incredibly slow speed of thirty-five miles per hour. Friends or acquaintances were continually lighting his fuses and causing detonation, but his periodic explosions were neither good nor bad, nor were they even great or small. His whole family had been conditioned before psychology came, before Napoleon went. His detonations were moist fire-crackers whose very chain reaction did no more than set off the rest of the package. Hell, he thought precisely, Hell, his energy rattled around in tin cans and made small noises that prompted admirers to groan with disappointment. The groaning was oral, anal or even the barking of gophers. But he knew. There were dozens of unopened telegrams crammed under his hat – informing that – too bad, he missed the boat. He was packed and ready to go. He never took a trip. He lived in suitcases year after year, blissfully pregnant with the mystic knowledge that some day, some person, somewhere, somehow, was going to hand him his ticket. And clouds of whitewashing gulls seemed to flap around his ears, steamboat whistles attached themselves to his wind instruments, and one had a desire to throw him a bouquet, or a life-preserver, or a copy of the Reader's Digest.

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The tawny girl whose eyes said No is one of these persons who has such desire. Her legs are of sufficient length to make Austins awkward, and this was said to be good, very good, for even in Maine you are still in America. And her breasts were dimensional, her shoulders wide, the hips narrow, exactly as western cowboys are said to be; as motion picture actors and actresses and life guards. Few people had asked themselves why this should be or if, in fact, it was, and virtually no one in New England had researched the topic. It was enough that the tawny girl whose eyes said No had legs and hips and breasts and shoulders of incredibly large or amazingly small proportion. Men, their eyes stolen from their moral sockets, found themselves watching her. And if they didn't, their wives did. And their wives hated the tawny girl with genuine fear, false loathing and routine contempt. And a not unattractive girl watching her dine *Al Fresco* yearned that an owl would fall into her soup.

"It is a shame to let it all go to waste," a younger, thrice-married man said unto himself, "her breasts aren't getting any younger." And he heard himself with authority, for as a promising surgeon he had owned and operated upon famous women. "She's twenty-nine if she's a day," the matron beside him realized with horror. And she sipped her husband's drink while he was making a long distance call to China.

"But does she really know how to swim?"

"With hips like that — are you kidding, Colonel?"

These voices you overheard. The former from a great old boar of finance whose white moustache stimulated cartoonists, whose voice was a guiltmoan of civilized bewilderment. The latter was from John Smells Hoover, whose great father, an old lawyer, had a great grandfather. Destiny wanted him to be introduced, she's taken twenty years from his life — the twenty he'd spent knocking around Europe, at least — and put vinegar into his words. "Of her, tell me, Colonel."

"Not very much to tell — you know? Won some kind of bathing beauty contest or other — Miss Pencil Sharpeners, 1950 or

something." Hell, he didn't know; perhaps she'd been Miss Navel Orange — in a French bathing suit, no doubt?

In a French bathing suit. Brackett Hackett tortured himself and his groins warmed and twisted and turned like frozen spaghetti. "Have another frozen daquiri?" the Colonel moaned. "Not much more to tell than you see there. Won a contest and got an all expenses trip to the resort and there you see her, most of her, that is to say. Hell, man, I'll introduce you —"

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The tawny girl whose eyes said No said "Martini, I guess," and she saw him across four feet of plate glass on which were newly cleaned ashtray and empty, tall-stemmed glasses. She gave him forty years and eighty thousand dollars in iron vaulted securities. He could not give her jealousy. He could not even give her love. He could give her what she wanted if — and here she drew her wide lips into a carnivore's smile — if she ever found out what in God's name it was.

"You are extinct," she said.

His knuckles bulged. Out of the corner of his unconscious he was aware of an owl swooping past the Japanese lanterns. But he thought back to his grandfather and the knowledge armed itself and fought its way up to the present, and he replied, "And you — what are you?"

"I am going places. With these —" She raised her long, shapely, prized, curvaceous, twice-insured tawny leg. It was brown as a gopher's. "But I won't walk there. I'll ride in Cadillacs." She smiled away the last sentence. "You hate me. They all do. But there's only one thing worse than hate — that's being so innocuous that nobody hates you." To herself she thought, his famous grandfather must have had guts. Smells — with a name like that? Why was it that all of the aristocratic old families — the ones whose homely daughters and worthless sons cluttered up the social pages — had such preposterous names? Belcher. Snodgrass.



J. P. Swill? And now she knew, because with a name like that you've got to make money and acquire position. A name like that is with you all the time, driving you, causing curious looks on new faces, asking you to stumbly please spell it again, making you dread the laughter that floats up from little groups after you've gone. "I also belong to a minority group," she said aloud.

"What did you say?"

"Martini." Nothing about her moved except lips. Their eyes duelled silently, seeing deep inside each other's vacuums, hating what they saw but conditioned by the civilization which lives and loves and learns every afternoon at five. A mushroom, she told herself, but not one grown in sewers. One man's mushroom, another's toadstool, he calculated, poisonous only if you over-indulge. He was aware that she was aware that he was aware that she was aware. The realization burned holes in his trousers. Never again was he to cut out illustrations of shellfish and paste them in the bold, leather-bound scrapbook. "I'll throw away my scissors," he cried out softly.

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In the rowboat, even close to the piers and floats and people he did not feel self-conscious about his beard.

There are two reasons for this, he announced analytically, (1) a week's growth on a sandyhaired man is scarcely noticeable at fifty feet, and (2) people may not know or believe that it is Brackett Hackett, though the skiff itself is identifiable. Now he wished that it were not the only boat in Hackett's bay that was painted red.

"Even the boat is a member of a minority group." This he said to the tawny girl whose eyes said nothing at all at that moment. And he rowed methodically onward while the picnic basket lay in her lap, among the prized thighs of Miss Pencil Sharpeners 1950. And he repeated the pain to himself, the pain that was eight days old now. He put on the record and played the scene again, hearing the words cut by the jagged needle; he was baiting her hook,

the skiff was anchored and he was saying. "this we call Nigger Fishing. Meaning you use bait and sit, instead of casting, the hard way, sportsmanlike."

"Negro fishing," she said.

"Negro fishing—it sounds absurd. It has always been Nigger where I was raised."

"Where I was raised too."

She gave him mystery in a smile but he could feel her teeth and he began to be extinct again.

"Remember when we first met? I started to tell you that I was going places?" And she inspected her legs again, from a range closer than thousands would see them, from the two dollar seats. "Remember what I said?"

"I remember." His thoughts, as methodically as his rowing, moved backwards, inched out time and event. "I remember. You said 'Martini'."

Her hair swung negatively. "But before that I said, 'I also belong to a minority group.' That means we're both minorities. Your name is John Smells, but you pass for Brackett Hackett. I am a Negro but I pass for white."

His mild eyes electrically denied what the ear told, and inside, the heart was tired. And the gulls beat maddeningly around the ears. He fought them off, not certain that they might not be owls.

In death's words she told him how it felt, and the sounds stole around trash barrels in alleys while a poorly played banjo mourned and hooded men came and went. And he argued bitterly that everyone had some strike against them, some scar.

"In death's ass they do."



But the beauty of her phrase escaped him. His ears had heard all they could taste for one day. He complained, "Not only am I a smell, I collect data on crabs. I'm a floating museum piece and my family have inhabited stately old museums for centuries. My car's a forty-one. I have a pronounced twitch in my left cheek when they excite me."

"Even with all that," she said mercilessly, "you get by. Your scars are honorable. You can walk down a street among strangers and be anonymous." She gave him her teeth which, oddly, had become even whiter. "Some people cannot do this. I cannot do it even, because I am spectacular looking. And if people envy my spectacular appearance, what would they do if they ever found out that my father shines shoes in Houston? If they knew that my mother is indispensable around children? Where would I be?"

He said tiredly, "In Hackett's Bay, Maine."

"You never will know what it's really like—"

He felt deprived, left out. Suddenly he realized that her conversation had gotten up to the present. She was speaking now; not eight days ago. He knew, because the picnic basket lay happily in her thighs and he had started to grow a beard. "I'll get a pretty good idea before I'm through," he told her lamely, triumphantly. "I already get queer looks from Colonel Trotter and cousin Johanna. And old McFroble at the hardware thinks I'm eccentric, and Faye Grey won't go out with me."

"Go where?"

"Well, anywhere. You see we usually go to the Audobon Club picnic. Sort of a standing date."

\* \* \*

"A month's growth," the octagenarian had exclaimed animatedly, "what's the gag, Brackett?"

This, then, was what it was like to be a minority, to wear some awful handicap outwardly, physically, publicly. The expressions on passing faces; they would leak surprise, then glance furtively away like the offended eyes. The man with one arm, the woman with a broken nose; Negroes, Oriental, jaws. All of them drew eyes like Picasso. Pulled the disinterested glance from abstraction to reality, morbid reality, commanded lenses to focus and caused them to tap out a rigid message to the brain. And, in the split second before the brain answered, well, the damage had been done. The eyes had revealed their truth. The brain could tell them to look away quickly; indeed yes, but not quickly enough. You got the look. And even though you seldom got the look from the same person twice, nevertheless you were always introducing your handicap to new eyes.

"A month's growth," the barber had said. There existed both admiration and hurt in his words.

"Just clippers all 'round'," he said apologetically. "No, I don't belong to a cult. No, there isn't an old time fiesta." And he wondered, did the seagulls recognize him? On the street he walked at a run and he smiled for the clichés given him by people who had known him and his father and his grandfather. In the boat, rowing past Vanderpin's Landing, an unfortunate wind caught up the voice of a girl and her swimming date and brought, "who does he think he is—Thoreau?" And in front of drug store windows he felt self-consciously suffocated as he idly watched Gillette Razor displays. But he continued to see the tawny girl whose shame he shared and now discovered heroism moving his feet, even as he envied her whiteness, knowing that the experiment was one-sided. For if he were disguised as a minority she got by as a majority and wherever they went, eyes whistled admiration at her. And the same eyes, when they found him, told only of an eccentric, a dull grey eccentric at that, sitting opposite spectacularly. Often the Colonels, guilt moon drifted his way, a fogbound sound below the other conversations.



"well, old Brackett's joined the House of David."

"He looks like the old man of the mountain," said the matron whose husband had excused himself to telephone Europe. And an attractive girl wondered if owls would nest in his beard.

"Trying to attract attention, Brackett?"

"Lose a bet or something?"

"Who are you trying to hide from?"

And women on street cars edged closer to the windows; girls hid behind ample skirts, the police lit warning fires in their glances.

But the words only rattled against his ripe ears, never getting past the sentry. The martyrdom of a minority was a thin, sharp edge to live. Soon the brain accepted. Soon enough it was giving out refutations. And all the while, the soul was storing up righteous ammunition, was burning the fire of laughter into their curious aces.

These things he announced to the tawny albino girl whose eyes now said "Oh?" To her he related that he would forever wear a beard, even a two-foot long beard, were it not for the fact that the Union Club shellbake was to be staged soon. And attending this traditional and yes, stuffy occasion, would be uncles and aunts; even grandfathers and archaic friends. But the reason imperative for shaving it off was cousin Johanna who was adamantly intolerant about things like that, and anybody professing to be liberal or human must readily understand his reasons in this special instance.

*K. S. Duggal*

**MEENOO**

As the bell rang the children ran out of their classrooms in loud clusters like ripe fruit shaken from a branch.

And like the fruit that is picked up, the mothers, fathers, man and maid servants picked up the children. Some had packed themselves in the school buses. Others were waiting for the buses to return for the next trip. Some were running in the open. Some were playing. Some were swinging by the branches.

Meenoo came out of the class-room. He ran towards the almond tree where the old servant would wait for him daily.

The servant was not there under the tree.

Meenoo was puzzled. It had never happened before. For a moment he stared blankly at the gnarled trunk. Then he told himself that the servant was delayed for some reason, and he went back to join the band of children gathered round the candyman.

In English schools the kinder-garten is the lowest; and there are three classes in it. Meenoo was in the last. His home was nearly a mile and a half away.

In the morning he always came with his friend in his father's car. This boy was not in his own class; he was in a higher one. And Meenoo's class ended earlier than his friend's. And so in the afternoon the old servant would come to take him home.



He always came before the classess were over and stood under the tree waiting for him. But not today! What could have happened today?

Meenoo stood near the candyman, a long while. The boys had bought their sweets, and gone away. Meenoo stood alone.

Swinging his satchel he ran towards the boys playing round the bus stop. Every now and then he glanced at the almond tree. The servant had not come. The buses returned and started on their second trip. One, two, three, four, five, six – all the buses left.

Meenoo sighted a boy of his class sitting in the swing. 'Your servant didn't come?' the latter asked as Meenoo reached the swing, pulling a lollipop from his red lips. 'No,' Meenoo said and tears filled his eyes.

'Don't worry,' the boy assured, jumping out of the swing and coming towards him. He put his hands round Meenoo's shoulders and they scampered to the school garden to look for butterflies. It was a long chase and then the boy's father came.

'His servant didn't come to fetch him' said the boy to his father explaining Meenoo.

'There's nothing to worry, his dad will come soon enough,' said the man as the car jerked into motion. Again Meenoo was alone. The almond tree stood still. The servant hadn't come.

Meenoo spotted a bunch of children playing at the far end of the playground. The sun was hot and the children were far away. Meenoo dragged his steps slowly in their direction.

They were strange children. Not of his class! They were playing a game – each of them, in turn, would run up the tree fast as a squirrel, and drop plumb on to the ground. Meenoo watched them silently, laughing happily with them. The boys were strong and big. And meenoo was small. Once a ball dropped at his feet. He picked it up and threw it back to them. Even so he was not invited to join in their play. They were lost in their game. But

a little latter they too, went away with their servants and mothers and fathers. But they were the last to leave. Now even the playground had emptied itself. Meenoo picked up his satchel and returned to the almond tree. The servant had not come.

The sun grew hotter. Meenoo's throat was parched. The long wait and the running about had tired him. He sat under the tree and resting his back against the trunk fell asleep.

Menoo slept long. His eyes opened suddenly. There was utter silence in the school. All the children and the teachers had left. The sweeper had done the cleaning and gone. The caretaker had bolted the doors and the windows and gone home. In the big silence the walls appeared to be waiting to swoop and swallow him up. The trees stood in complete peace. Meenoo was struck with panic. He felt his blood draining away. His head reeled. Everything went dark before his eyes. A shriek tore itself from his throat. Sobbing helplessly he ran towards the school gate.

He stood by the gate and tears rolled down his cheeks. Cars and buses were speeding across the street. Tongas and rickshas were moving at a slower pace and men were walking. Meenoo lost himself in this spectacle of motion and the tears dried in his eyes.

He then made targets out of empty cans and threw little round stones at them. He stood on the gate and swung it this way and that. And as the gate moaned like an old crone he felt happy and elated. He then stood counting the passing cars.

'Hello child, who are you waiting for?' asked a voice.

Then it struck Meenoo that he was still alone. No one had come to fetch him home today. And he was waiting, thirsty and hungry and tired.

He looked in the direction of the street from which his father's green car always came. Or the khaki clad servant.

'Who are you waiting for, child?' asked the man on the bicycle again.



'No one has come to take me home today', and Meenoo again looked in the direction of the street.

'Who comes to fetch you?'

'My dad's servant.'

'And if he does n't come?'

'Daddy comes.'

'What does your daddy do?'

'He works in the big office.'

'And where do you live?'

'The Big House.'

'Shall I take you home?'

'No, my daddy'll come.'

'Are you quite sure?'

'Yes, he will come.'

Can a parent ever forget his child? Meenoo's face shone with conviction. The cyclist rode away.

Meenoo remembered his mother's words. Never go out of the school alone. Never follow anyone else home other than the servant.

And Meenoo also remembered the stories his chums told. How children are stolen, tied in bags and taken far away. Among hills and woods full of tigers and lions and elephants. How they are hung upside down, their feet tied to the branches of a tree. How they make a fire right under the head and collect the juice as the brain melts under the heat.

When he remembered about the men who melt children's brains and make magic ointments out of it he let forth a loud shriek and rushed into the street. He was soon tired and changed his run into a trudge. He approached a candy vendor and stood looking at him. The vendor moved away and Meenoo stood watching him till his back disappeared.

He began to walk again. There were two roads stretching before him - one to the left and the other to the right. Meenoo correctly took the road on the left. After a short while he saw a

traffic island with seven narrow streets running out in all directions. Meenoo was always brought in a car and fetched back on a bicycle. Now that he had to walk, the surroundings seemed all different. It was the road on the other end of the island that led to his home. While skirting round the island Meenoo lost track and got onto the wrong road.

As he went along all the houses seemed new. As each house seemed strange his fears increased. With each step he took he felt as if he had walked back two steps. He knew vaguely that he was on the wrong road. Yet he went along hungry, thirsty and tired.

Suddenly he felt a surge of joy. There before his eyes stood the hospital where he had been treated only six months back. It was the same hospital where his baby sister was born a year ago. He thought he remembered the route from there to his home. He spurred towards the street. A speeding car stopped with a shriek of brakes. With the sudden hoot of the horn and the car skidding almost on his neck. Meenoo lost his head. His eyes reeled and darkness spread before him. He scarcely knew how he reached the pavement. He lost himself completely in the tangle of streets. One street ran into another, was crossed by two more, opened into a skein of alleys, it was all a wilderness and Meenoo did not know where his feet led him.

He cried as he walked. An old man met him, and asked, 'Why are you crying, Child?' Meenoo did not answer him. Farther on, a car passed by. There was a man and a woman seated in it. The man pointed towards the crying child and spoke something. And the car disappeared with the same speed. A refugee woman stopped him. 'Why are you crying, Child?' She asked. Meenoo ran without answering. The woman stood looking at him quizzically. Her eyes seemed to say 'What a pretty pearl of a child and such tears!'

Then a policeman spotted Meenoo. He put him in a taxi and drove to the police station. Meenoo cried and struggled. At the police station they gave him sweets and a cocacola. They pried him with questions and noted his home address.



The policeman went to Meenoo's house and found the mother and the father deep in their siesta. The old servant who used to fetch Meenoo from his school had gone away on leave and the father had forgotten about it. The mother had gone shopping and returned after the father's arrival. They ate their lunch and dozed off to sleep.

When the policeman came with news of the child they hurried to the station.

Soon as they reached the place the mother rushed towards the child. Meenoo stepped back. The mother stared at him in puzzlement. The father stepped towards Meenoo. And Meenoo looked at him as though he were a stranger.

'Isn't he your daddy, son,' asked the policeman.

'No,' said Meenoo in a voice filled with bitterness.

'And isn't she your mummy?' asked the policeman turning towards the mother.

'No,' said Meenoo in the same bitter tone.

*(Translated from the original in Punjabi)*

## THE HALF-MAN

## AND THE OTHER HALF

*Murthy V. N. Sripada*

Alarm goes on. It is past that time. I shouldn't be being here. I should have been being there. What would he say? One slips into a cigarette. No time to fool with the bed. Gather your coins, littles, keys and quick. Night set a long time ago. Let's hurry. What am I doing here? Put your socks in the shoes. Put your shoes on. Lucy is always never. Lucy, my sweet; Bingo!

Renza rolls down the stairs. Out into the green open. Green grass grows green lawn. Side walk turns before he turns. A train by. A car by. Cars and trains by. Late trains by. A man high on by legs. A freeman is an inch taller and a lot better. O, yes, the third house to the left has a woman and a bottle. What was the joke? Sinner in heaven. Blonde on one knee and a bottle on the other. Bottle has a hole. He chuckles rushby. A happy moment in his dirty life.

Lucy should be being in the office by now. Coffee please. Just coffee. How do you do, Mr. Vacirelli. How do you do coffee just please, Miss. I shouldn't have been here. Did you read the Life. Sherwood in Collier's. Does he talk all the time. Some people, have to, talk all the time. Some people, have to, all the time. People are always doing always. Yes, Miss, this is a troubled coffee. Any thing anytime now. Did you hear about the, donut, explosion, please, certainly, in Russia. We are bawdy. I have to be going,



Miss. Busy man. 21 cents with tax. I hate tax mutual. What in the hell have I done with the token. Pockets have donuts, bottle in the heaven. A smile subdues. A relatively happy moment in his dirty life.

Already - nine - one - hour - late - what - would - He - say - what - is - eternal - things - of - earth - are - not - substantial - you - don't - take - anything - with - you - when - you - die - then - why - not - die - you - can't - buy - punctuality - can't - stretch - PST-DST - clocks - run - behind - other - clocks - in - this - world - busy - of - people full; might as well visit men's rooms, wonder what little girls' room is like. The things that Lucy touches are precious, her beautiful fingers made of gold. Wonder what a big girl is like I bet Lucy in her chair swinging on her curves. These god damn zippers. Man's astounding innovations. Lucy plus Alex. Bill plus Benita. He always does that. He protects Holland from sea. And the mountain looks on Marathon. Give and give generously. If you are dissatisfied with the sanitary bla bla. Pay your tribute. Men's walls give more news than SFE.

Good morning Miss Ward. Rows of chairs with desks of typewriters. Keep pluggin till Holland wakes. Polish the gears. Lucy Ward stiffens her mouth up. Clipped mouths can't smile. Clip your mouth when you are young but smile smile smile. Lucy plus Alex. Is the boss in? Of course he asks for me. What did I do now?

What has he done now? The goddam clock. Now is the time. Collect your few. Separate incoming outgoing mail from outgoing ingoing mail. Don't tear the papers that should be burnt. Don't fiddle when you talk to me. Put the pen cap back, not on the cigarette. Don't gasp. Don't pant. Don't relax. Now tell me why you are late. I don't care why you are but why ARE you? You haven't done a thing all day. You haven't done a thing all year. What do you mean. This isn't a country club. C'm on Renza, let's get some work done.

Yes sir; No sir; Thank you sir: It was little after; It won't happen again; Clocks run mysterious ways.

Time never flies. Now big birds fly. Take it. Take it all. Meaning well. Out through the swingin doors. Is my daddy in there. Stick your chain up. A sad crow. Sadder with water from the treetop. I got the bourgeois blues. The saints will never come marchin in. Jesus will save us. Jesus drops like an atom bomb. The final day. The other world. A crack in the tea cup opens. You can't stretch it. One can take just that much. Quit it. Then go to Siberia; of hungers and unquenching. Twenty five cents. Once the life of a millionaire. World is decaying. Joue' guitar-la, Danny, joue' guitar-la.

Renza thoughtfully removed his coat, took his tie off, his hat off, hung them down the hook. Sadly arranged himself at his desk, unbuckled his shoulders, removed his head and set it on the table. His fingers worked away on the machine keys while his head kept a vigilant watch on the clock for it will be twelve twelve twelve twelve .....

The head watches the clock and Lucy. Lucy turns, returns Alex's. Papers and smile. Lucy plus Alex. Bill plus Benita. High pins in her tone. Scratches her bare knee. Crooked meaningful smile under her armpits. Lucy has a touch of moustache. She may have a newborn child. Alex's. The head weeps. A most unhappy moment in Renza's wretched life.

It is twelve.

Renza Vacirelli spits in the ink bottle, puts a weight on the papers. Christ, he put the carbon wrong side up. Let's enjoy twelve. Puts his hat back, coat on, shoes on, laces in. Carrying his head under his arm walks away like Jokanan with the Examiner. A cramp in his head.

Fresh air smells better, feels better. A happy moment in his dirty life. Occupies a booth reserved for two. Sets his head on the table. Removes his coat. Unbuttons his shirt. Coffee and hamburger please. No, make it a milkshake. A siphon please. Minute service, 60 minute service. Takes a special man to hang on for sixty minutes. Ancients good at that. Poor Lucy. May I



share your booth please. Certainly M'm. His body rises from his seat and settles again. Woman of the stone ages. Tears his tee shirt at the stomach. Unscrews the lid. His teeth grind the hamburger into a wet soupy mass while his fingers break the french fries meticulously. Carefully he removes the wet mass out of his mouth, mixes it with the bits in specified proportions, dumps it into the stomach and puts the switch on. The wheels go on grinding the mix further. Intial slag in the apparatus. He pours in some liquid mustard, a gram of salt, sugar and some butter to fill in the required calories, Siphons the milkshake in. Sets his clock for a five minute operation. Puts the lid back on, tie on, coat on and belches. A satisfied moment in his life.

Meantime his eyes skim through the papers. Third Atomic Explosion. Stanford at the Rosebowl. Rev. Monohill speaks at the children's church memorial at 8-30 p. m. Children are not invited. Christ is coming. Winston Churchill, John the Baptist, the forerunner, elected, in the wilderness. Great hallowe'en midnite showing. Put masks on. Children are not invited. Bring your children along. Go get yourself scared. Man killed his wife. Wife died. Doctors are anxious. Fourteen deaths in California. Give and give generously at the ancient altar. Let our bells be heard far and away. Does Truman run again, a serial by Jeanne Honeymoon, I almost married a communist. Cast your vote for Robert Taft. Forces of the free world, strike. Onward Christian soldier under the banner of Lenin : Renza Vacirelli, you are a free man.

That time again. 63 cents please. Prices are going up. Yes they are. Can't eat much longer. At this rate. We sure can't. An impersonal moment in his shameless life. Next please.

He rolled on his wheels again. Still ten minutes to go. Miss Ward, may I have a word with you. "Yes?" Will you dine with me. "I would like to but I am doing something else" ..... some other time may be, may be; of course enough time for Alex, that bitch, a gentleman calls a lady a bitch when she doesn't give in. All women are only more so than all the others. Why doesn't a decent one join his booth. Life is better rolled in cigarettes and

whiskey. He sets his sad nut on the table and loses himself in the keys again; without a whimper. This is the way his world ends.

The head takes a smoke and pumps into the neck and on. The fingers move faster. Haven't done a thing all year, it seems. A slave-driver that he is. To the publishers and dealers. Alice Calmers inc. Dear sirs. Herewith we acknowledge. Encl. 3 copies. Why can't he have a decent job. Where he can use his head and rest his fingers. Head turns and smiles. Cynical head.

Five at last. Two way street to the house. Can't buy candy in a gridiron pattern. Chew gum to silence your nerves. Good for your teeth. Streets have busy teeth. Sun sets and a conflagration of lights will soon rise. Renza Vacirelli left Italy when he was knee-high; he is leaving office now. Down the stairs, out into the open. Must eat, Everybody who is anybody wants to needs to has to eat. Have to pay debts again. That goddam Chinese place never cashes his checks. "Men that walk through these portals are the world's finest men." "Our customers." The men that own these portals are asses. After all that he has done. Why, they live on Renza, more or less.

The worst part of the month is the whole month. The worst part of the day is half-a-day. Half his income to federal tax. Federal tax goes to Europe. Why should we have to support the whole world. If they don't know how to live, let'em die. why do we have to go and fight in Korea. Why should they have to send wheat to India when they don't go along with us. At this hour Renza generally hates. He hates his room. Hates the apartment house, the unmade bed. Socks, socks all over the place that stink like hides. He will burn them all, the whole works, the house, the street, every damn thing that he can set his match on. Who cares what happens to the other guy. Never met a single person on that street. Never met a person in that apartment house. Love your neighbor, moya. Hell, you have to know him first. Once you know them you can't trust them. You can never trust anybody. For sure, you can't trust a woman, especially your wife. Who knows with whom she takes an Austrian bath. Man may be both good and bad but woman is all evil. Modern woman is more evil. God doesn't



make them in his own image. O, Jesus, come and dance with me. Life is never smooth. He can't marry. He can't trust. He just can't meet the right woman. He can't get the right job. So many jobs in this world. So many women in this world. Why can't he have one at least like the sinner had. It was the most tragic moment in Renza's miserable life.

The setting sun spilt blood on the western sky. Another day was burnt in the dirty, wretched, shameless and miserable life of Renza Vacirelli. He throws his head down and walks home slowly. The man with high legs walks by.

You can't get a decent dinner cheaper than dollar seventy five. Prices are going up. The stupid government should stop these price controls. Dollar isn't worth a dollar any more. Dollar for dollar, you can't beat Pontiac. Renza figured that it would take him five more years to buy a Chevy. Many a time he decided to stop drinking that beer and save up. Of course, by no means, he is an alcoholic. Why, he could stop drinking right then. Nothing to it. But, a beer a day is all right. It doesn't hurt nobody. "Waiter, a beer please". Beer consumed in judicious quantities on the premises over 21 legal years is good for you. It builds up your intestines. Not ever having had time to acquaint himself with even the fundamentals of physiology, Renza did not stop to consider his original statement whether it was required of his intestines to grow in size. But wouldn't that be wonderful to have a nice yacht, a pretty blonde, soft sands inviting you ashore with beer to cool off that tiresome cruise. He took a dim view of Mr. Jackson who loves to display his hatred for water. It is rather hard to tell what Mr. Jackson truly thinks of him. Renza had been a good worker in the Jacksonville garbage department for years now. Never was he even mildly complimented by Mr. Jackson. The services that he rendered may not be meritorious but one cannot say that he is not conscientious. But it is well known that Mr. Jackson has a hard exterior. Inside that shell of his, Mr. Jackson has a heart larger than the sky. Renza conjectured that Mr. Jackson inspite of himself liked Renza in spite of Renza. This pleased Renza as he knew that the truth of the coconut did not 'lay' in the shell. However, he further reflected, It is quite likely that men of Mr. Jackson's size posses slippery jelly-

like hearts. He figured that even if worse comes to worse, he would be in charge of his section within the next two decades, of which he was not sure as he thought that it was doubtful considering the quantities of beer he had been taking in daily, that he would live to see it.

"Hello, Renny, you are late today."

"Yes, Walter, I had my first beer with my dinner. Can you imagine how much those bastards charge for a beer?"

Walter feigned that he could not imagine as he knew that even if he really did Renny would not give him time to do so.

"35 cents. Thirty five American cents."

"No kidding."

"Why, thirty-five cents is almost worth a dollar these days."

"Hello Renny."

Renny would have gone on with it if it had't been for Jim who wished him. He was supposed to be cold to Jim. "Hello, Jim". Renny was hurt since the night before when Jim not only took his five dollar bet seriously but on top of it, collected the money. Jimmy was no decent man, he conclusively thought. "No, Jimmy, you don't have to buy me a beer." He was about to say that he would feel indebted to him adding that his mother disapproved of such acceptences since he was that high. Making a bet could be friendly, he further reflected but taking it seriously was beyond the ethical standards of Renza. If he were to take Lucy's fancy for Alex seriously, why, he would be no place. A girl in the United States, especially one like Lucy, should have to have her fancies before she settles down with what she really wants and is good for her. In the strictest confidence he told himself, "Look, Renny, if you wanted to have a little fun on the side even after you have married Lucy, it would be all right".

"What did you say?"



"Nothing," answered Renny.

"Listen, Renny, I was only kidding when I took that fiver from you. Here, take it back, it's all yours."

"No, no Keep it. It's yours. You have won it. I have made a foolish bet. Then there is no excuse for being foolish."

"We are all foolish."

"I suppose we are. But I am not going to take the money back."

"O yes you are. That is if you value me as your friend."

"Come Jimmy, I have always liked you. Why, you are the best friend I've got."

"Renny," Jimmy's eyes flashed a twinkling redness and anger that comes on with good friendship, "Just a minute." "Hey, Walter, a couple of beers and a couple of shots"

"No, Jimmy, you have had too much already."

"Don't you tell me what I should have. This is a free country and I can drink myself to death if I want to."

"Sorry Jimmy, I was just trying to protect your interests."

"Well, in that case take these five bucks back. I don't imagine you would like to pick a fight." Renny quickly admitted that if he were not so short he would have fought with Jimbo. In that case, Jimmy declared that he had better take the money back and Renny did so. "Let's have our last beer at the Blue Heaven."

What with the spring evening, the flimsy ladies, the barely dressed night, just dry, just windy and soft.....A sweetness hung in the air like earth in cosmos. Renny and Jimmy toddled along towards the Heaven. As they walked out Renza's mind wandered

back into the day, his office, Alex's Lucy, her occasional smile of good will, why Renza should compose himself, become steady and gentlemanly and dignified, why he should stop scratching, biting his nails, signing in late to the office, earning only 250 a month, his extravagance, why he should put a little aside.....

"Jimbo, I would rather not.....go home."

"We are not going home, Renny. Just this time."

Renza kept a soft-pace and a strong elephant at heart. Mid-street it occurred to him that at that rate he would have less than five hours sleep. The streets looked chequered and turned as he turned failing the direction he should take. But all of a sudden it gets clear to blur up again. Somehow it was cold and clear when a hot discussion sprang in his interior to subside again proving as ever with a great rational and judicial understanding that a few more beers would not upset his budget especially if that were the last time he was going to indulge in such extravagance. "Of course, we don't live forever," he said to himself.

The discernible vagueness in his statement appended with the pathos in his tone affected Jimbo Sartoni deeply, from which depths his paternal instinct for Renny, who was two bits younger, rose to the surface to crystallize into "Renny, are you all right, boy?" followed up with an excited cheer-up song depicting the beauties that lay stored in the vast christendom and the romance of nature that is discernable in the glory of morning sunrise, late sunset, communion between animals, vegetables and minerals pollination of flowers and insects, love of all kinds that is being exhibited in all species that dwell this earth, our greatest possession.

Meantime Renny, having had his beer descend to fill up the bowels over the brim, was looking around to empty his vessel. He was well aware of the morbid fact that the gas stations in that area were closed at that hour of the night of which he, of course, thoroughly disapproved, had no choice left but to seek a solitary nook to promote his wish.



Jimbo, who had been eloquently delivering an exhilarating dissertation on nature's abundance and God's generous creation which he had picked up from a recent issue of the Christian Science Monitor, stopped short to recognise the fallibility of his unpremeditated and ill timed oration, glanced stealthily at Renny's visage that appeared to demonstrate a still more pathetic expression. Alert and quick, as Jimbo had always been, he desisted from an analytical scrutiny of Renny's extraordinary behavior and offered his life and works to raise Renny *de profundis* adding eagerly that he was not interested in the reasons complex as they would be and would not mind being a sympathetic listener if Renza, out of his own volition, being a free man to chose the years that should record his deep-down feelings, gives a spontaneous expression to his woe.

As the street turned, the lights flashed "COME IN, JESUS SAVES" and "CHRIST IS IN SESSION".

Instantly Renny said "Jimbo, you go ahead to the Heaven. I will crank in a snappy prayer and meet you in a whiffy".

Jimbo's christian scientist heart was filled with the glory of God. His mildly intoxicated state glorified it all the more. Rejuvenated, as if at the return of the prodigal to the hogs, he said like a good American, "Okay, boy, make it snappy."

With heavy bowels, Renza walkad towards God to find solace in that dark weekday night. Jimbo turned around to watch Renny's heavy gait and unable to contain himself ran back to him and with a sweet pat uttered "God bless you, Renny, God bless you." Sincerity and sympathy could be noted in the crack of his tone.

It was appproximately after midnight when Renny humbly walked into the colored session.

"At this time of the night, at this hour in your lives, the goblins meander through night, the night of darkness howls." Renza quietly meandered to a solitary corner.

"But our Lord is awake. Never you forget that. Jesus is up casting the dart of judgment on the sinners. He can tell which

man or which woman is about to sin. A bad tooth doesn't have to ache for our Lord to spot it. Our Lord never gets any sleep. As long as we sin he never finds time to rest his soft head for even a second. We gotta stop that, We gotta put an end to it. O brethren and cistern, we gotta stop that. We gotta stop that beer-guzzling and sinning on the street".

Renza unzipped to empty his sins amidst the well-protected holy surroundings under the very nose of the never-failing, ever-vigilant Eye.

"Let's all unite in our Lord's appraisal for the trouble he takes in shepherding us into right paths. Let our acts be approved by the kindly wink of his eye." The preacher's kindly wink and seemingly sardonic but highly spiritual facial expression were lost in the dull lighting of the communion.

A steady stream of Renza's sins emanated from his corner meandering out into the open to glow under yonder neons.

"You don't have to worry. You don't have to suffer. You don't have to wet your pillow no more. You don't have to bother and dump your sorrows in alcohol. You don't have to sin. This is the time, Now, to rest your souls against the sturdy oak of our Lord. Ask for his forgiveness, NOW. It ain't too late. Let us pray."

As the congregation rose for a short silent prayer, Renza walked out quietly crossing himself, deciding that he would have to confess the next Sunday.

*In the unseen and unfelt waves of the night, it is felt that a man was setting his alarm and settling down to prepare for the next chapter.*

Having unloaded his burden through the proper channels, Renza, although feeling slightly guilty, once again found himself an inch taller, his heart all set to take off like a big bird. If it were not for his unadulterated faith in the Savior and his Sunday confessions, he would have been now wallowing in the murky depths of unsolved anxiety. However, in spite of his christian deeds every now and



then whenever time permitted, there was no way out of his unfinished well of deficit budget. He reflected nostalgically under the slight umbrella of intoxication that exfoliation of such peripheral evils could be easily managed when he would settle down with his beloved Lucy, if and when she would offer her sweet hand in holy matrimony. The possibility that Lucy and Alex would really plus themselves into eternal connubial bliss had been instantaneously repudiated by Renza as improbable and highly unorthodox. After all Renza observed with satisfaction, he had accumulated enough knowledge to swing a better deal in spite of his financial shortage than his younger contestant, namely Alex. Of course there had always been the wish that he would like to be in Alex's shoes which he quickly discarded as he believed that stronger bonds that supercede the fleeting sexual fancy were necessary to erect a family structure that will fructify the relationship in the long run. In spite of his careful analysis the desire returned sharp spasms when he looked the other way over a few beers.

*The unseen and unfelt waves registered slight snoring and further images.*

Blue Heaven was busy. Jimbo was conducting a serious conversation, almost a heavy controversy, with Max and a few others. On one side stood an array of half men and half women.

"The same, Max," Renny ordered looking at his watch. At this rate he would get hardly five hours sleep.

"Renny should know all about it," said Max. "C'm'n Renny, isn't it true that we Jaxtons had been extravagant the last year in our garbage disposal?"

"How do you know?" Renny asked disinterested in the statement.

"Well, it was all in the papers."

"It was? Let's take a look." Renny skimmed through the article which mentioned his name as one of the workers in the gar-

bage department responsible for a correct estimate and appraisal of the existing garbage situation.

It was an unusual experience for Mr. Vacirelli to see his name in print. He visualised his picture in print in future papers, as the saviour of the critical problem of garbage collection. How Lucy would smile at him again in admiration and love, how she would realise her fault in choosing Alex for her fancy, how Mr. Vacirelli would take her in fondly..... He could see his years of hard work in the department paying off although it was quite regrettable that they could not see the exceptional worker in him earlier and how they would feel bad about it.....

"Tell us Renny is it true?"

"Donovan, a beer and a double shot." Sipping slowly and thoughtfully, Mr. Vacirelli declared:

"Well, yes. We had been rather extravagant last year. The direction our community has been taking of late in garbage output has been on my mind for quite a while now. I am afraid this may upset our budget, if not the national budget. We have to clean up this situation. As it is, garbage is collected by teams who work under a collective and individual enterprise system. Increased output of garbage results in increased cost of collection. In such a case, which is the case today, considering the lack of resources, that is the niggers, for an enlargement of the collection crew, the men, as they are, have to work harder and consequently wish higher wages which result in higher profits for the organization to function properly." For the first time, Mr. Vacirelli spoke in a steady stream with rhetorical inflections which pleased himself, among others. A grandeur and a neon glittered on his face. As he talked he consumed rapidly, his words becoming less stilted and more blunt, his vocabulary limited.

"Consequently, we citizens have to pay more to get our cans, bussed out. Also there is this garbage disposal problem. Our sanitary fill is getting full. To locate another area is a problem that I will not be able to solve unless proper cooperation and appreciation can be received from the public, that is, you."



As he was lecturing, he spotted Mr. Jackson and Lucy walk in. Although he felt slightly taken aback at their sudden appearance which was not all too unexpected, he was quite elated. Alex rose from no where and remarked in a high-pitched tone. "It's baloney. I don't believe it. Let's have some facts. Personally I believe that last year Jaxtons have been rather thrifty, prudent and frugal. After all I work in the same department as Mr. Vacirelli does." By now, the whole bar was filled with citizens actively participating in their communal problem, involving a man disagreeing on something that he knows nothing about, with the other who knows still less thereby setting an ideal situation that the democratic American is generally exposed to. A slight tumult and general dissatisfaction was noticeable in the crowd which almost concluded that Mr. Vacirelli had been feeding them the hog stuff with no factual basis. Vacirelli took a deep gulp, cleared his throat and eyes of the millions of people listening in. To his personal satisfaction and to the amazement of the others that drew their admiration, he quoted the following figures:

"Jaxtons in 1951 disposed  
2465 tons of garbage

23380 tons of rubbish including paper boxes, ashes and tree  
trimmings

4873 tons of refuse including tin cans etc.

323 cattle

45 goats

342 squirrels

59 cats

13 dogs

2 unclaimed dead bodies

and broke 43 garbage cans which were given to them at the expense of every one of you. Gentlemen, compared to the 1950 survey this is at least four-fold. Wouldn't you call this abnormal and extravagant? Do you need any more proof?"

Jaxtons stared dumb-founded at the man's ingenuity. Renza Vacirelli went on, "This can be redressed without delivering our

free system of garbage collection and disposal into the hands of the municipality. After all, it is our American way not to socialise, but to foment individual competition and, in the end, realize our full freedom."

Through wide cheers that christened the aisle, Mr. Jackson pushed his way to the catafalque, shook Mr. Vacirelli's hand and said, "Mr. Vacirelli, you are an able man and a conscientious worker of high calibre." He added, "I will recommend you for a higher job." "You are quite a guy, yes sir, you are quite a" so mumbling he walked away. As Mr. Jackson faded away fifteen Lucys came up kissing him with fifteen thousand lips which felt softer than a beer glass and more intoxicating. Mr. Vacirelli was greatly gratified. It seemed as if he were climbing up in a lift from a subway some place in London with unseen voices announcing the details of transportation. An uncontrollable joy filled his soul as he travelled over the fleecy clouds holding hands with Lucy and shaking those of Mr. Jackson displaying his knowledge of the urgent social problem in all its ramifications. Never before had a man who was so grand, majestic, and complete dwelt these clouds. The space was a sweet orchard; God smiled like a moon and a cool breeze aggravated his tentacles while his antennae received celestial notes unfolding the arcanum of human life.

"Goodnight, Lucy, good night." "My darling" Lucy kissed him fondly asking him not to worry about Alex as he didn't mean anything to her.

\* \* \*

The door opens. The lift descends. The streets are empty and dark. Say, ten million souls dwell this city. They are asleep in their separate tombs. Renza, with a beer-can in his hand, floats into the middle of the street, stands up with high legs parted, the city is desolate, quiet, there is waiting and stillness in the air, the anxious ears and the continuous consciousness, with hollow cheeks, sharp eyes, well-trimmed beard, Renza Vacirelli, six feet two, large forehead, a kindness, a stature, a living dignity, addressing the centuries from Gettysburg, indisputably superior, the replica of the



hero on the noblest pedestal on earth, the sleeping humanity quietly passing by, in the chillness of the present, in the never-dying, standing on length at the middle of the street, alone but with millions listening in, a remarkable personification of serenity, tenacity and living truth, the existing idiom, Renza, in midstreet, midlife, displaying the boldness and courage of endurance, mounting, facing walls, half-crooked, legs-parted, mounting, addressing time and himself until the alarm goes on.

*Marcella Hardy* | **THOUGHTS ON STONE**

It is unnecessary, for taking in the quality of Mahabalipuram, to follow the prescribed itinerary. Any random path from any point leads to excavated caves, sculptures, monolithic shrines, or carved friezes and each discovery is a fresh delight.

Tradition will have it that this lonely, rock-accident area was once a busy port town and for sometime, the residence of kings. But, the mind is reluctant to follow tradition in this, it cannot but jar with the setting. Undoubtedly charm has always been an integral part of "The Hill by the Sea"; else, why should this have been chosen as a sculptors' paradise? The charm is still all-pervading and it is enough merely to be there and to sit—anywhere will do—listening to Nature's silence, to that peculiar enchantment of the spot itself that wrought in the minds of the stone-workers, long ago, and bid them create. And they created, with all the joyousness and labour implied in creation—sweat, for it can be hot among the rocks; strain, for the rock is tough and rebellious; time, for the concept is vast; yet triumphant, for the achievement is great.

There is bewitchment in these elemental massed-up rocks. The presence of vast vertical sheets of bare rock towering above the head brings a tingle to the fingers. Oh, to chisel and to fashion on that stone! Nowhere else, perhaps, is the urge to create forms out of stone so insistent as here, in Mahabalipuram; not even in Ellora where sculpturing has probably never been surpassed. It is perhaps because Ellora is so grandiose that the individual shrinks to



ineptitude. Not so Mahabalipuram where simplicity of result calls for emulation.

Nevertheless, it is truly a misleading simplicity: it is simplicity of a consummate experience that distils the elemental significant curve in which all life is implied. Take those elephants on the rock-face of the "Descent of the Ganga". Not a line too many, not a line lacking. Line, here, though is the wrong word for it was a process of cutting away from a flat surface just enough, and only that which would animate the rock, suggesting movement, mass, dignity, the perfection of a nature-wrought creature. Or that other elephant by the side of a monolithic shrine, with not an artifice or conceit, standing freed from the parent rock, gifted with the mystery of life.

All animals, in fact, were born fully fledged from the fingers of those stone-workers. Twentieth century sculpture elsewhere may have made forms as perfect, but it has lacked in absolute the creator to creature tension which must have inspired the primordial spirit when fashioning in gross matter a tension which filled the created forms with the divine breath. This is what lifts this seventh century sculpture above many another. Should any subject be mentioned in particular? The tender pair of stag and doe at rest; the monkeys caught at their favourite occupation; the winged kingdom grave or gay; the gentle cow, the noble bull..... the context of rural life conceived as a blessing.

But the human form was not overlooked. Here, it may be claimed, is the dignity of Man completely conceived and portrayed. Man who has the power of resorption into the First Principle from which he emerged; he is the highest animal form and, therefore, though clothed in a body, he has a responsibility: he is no longer a child at play but possessed of the imminence of the Absolute. In this likeness are the deities carved from the dull matter of rock which lend this rock its colour and rhythm; movement in the immobile, smoothness in the rugged, lightness in the massive.

A profound relationship exists between the worked rock in retreat of the beach and the lonely structural temple standing on the shore, now protected, but for twelve centuries battered by wind

and spray. Sitting on the window jamb of solid stone facing the perpetual sea, turned away from a shrine of Somaskanda illumined every morning by the rising sun, the seconds and the enchanted hours slip into infinity, unnoticed. The pulse of the waves is one's own pulse; it is likewise the pulse, the rhythm, the perpetuity of excavated shrines and carved rock-forms seen again in mental vision across the flying spray. It is not strange that Mahabalipuram was chosen to express beauty and religion; what is strange is its abandonment. That must still remain a mystery.



Henry Miller

## THE IMMORALITY OF MORALITY

What is moral and what is immoral? Nobody will ever answer the question satisfactorily. Not because morals are constantly changing but because the principle behind it is a factitious one. Morality is for slaves, for men without spirit. And when I say spirit, I mean the Holy Spirit.

What had Jesus, in whose name so many crimes are committed, to do with morals? The word seems never to have crossed his lips. Elie Faure refers to him as "the great immoralist". At any rate, we know this for certain, that Jesus strove to give us a way of life, not a moral code.

It goes without saying that those who strive to maintain the status quo are the most immoral of all. To them the great sin is — to question the prevailing order. Yet every great thinker, every great artist, every great religious teacher did just that.

The subject becomes more complicated when it is admitted that these rebels or iconoclasts found a way to live in the world without being part of it. "To render unto Caesar what is Caesar's....." Ambivalence? Contradictoriness? Hypocrisy? Not at all. Still less, defeatism. No, the great triumph of these original souls lay in their discovery of a solution beyond the opposites. By not resisting evil, which Jesus meant absolutely and which no one seems willing to accept, these few shining examples of light and truth evaded the pitfalls which beset the ordinary believer.

Every one wants a better world, every one wants to be other than he is, every one disclaims responsibility for the evils which beset us. Every one believes in a paradise or a heaven, whether here and now or in the hereafter. No one seems able to support the idea that this may be the one and only world for us. Yet, unless one does accept this unpalatable fact, there can never be a paradise—either in the beyond or here and now.

If there ever was a period when man did not possess a soul, certainly in gaining one—or even formulating the idea of one—the whole aspect of creation has changed. As a soulful being, man is no longer a "creature" but a partner in creation—divine creation, for there is but one kind of creation. Realizing the significance of his own nature, man has altered the nature of prayer. No man of spirit endeavors to placate or propitiate the Creator. Fully conscious, erect, face to face with his Maker, man can but sing His praises. The only form of prayer worthy of man is a prayer of thanksgiving.

But do we remember this in our trials and tribulations? No. What we all unreasonably demand is that life be given on *our* terms. We forget the extent to which, through inertia, through silence, through abject submission, we have contributed to our own defeat. We forget that we have seldom collaborated with the Creator, which is our own and only task. Ever straying from the Source, we naively wonder why we find ourselves howling in the wilderness.

Every day the choice is presented to us, in a thousand different ways, to live up to the spirit which is in us or to deny it. Whenever we talk about right and wrong we are turning the light of scrutiny upon our neighbors instead of upon ourselves. We judge in order not to be judged. We uphold the law, because it is easier than to defy it.

We are all law-breakers, all criminals, all murderers, at heart. It is not our business to get after the murderers, but to get after the murderer which exists in each and every one of us. And I mean by murder the supreme kind which consists in murdering the spirit.

There is one thing I believe to be implicit in the story of martyrdom which Jesus enacted. It is this, that we do not need to



repeat the sacrifice which he made. By assuming the burden of guilt and sin for mankind Jesus meant, in my opinion, to awaken us to the real meaning of life. What is the purpose and meaning of life? To enjoy it to the utmost. We can do so only by making ourselves one with life. "The life more abundant" means simply and unequivocally "life everlasting", nothing but life.

I have an old friend whom many would characterize as an unconscionable rogue. A rogue he is, but a delicious one. A rogue who is closer to being on the path than any righteous man I have ever met. He does nothing for the world, and very little for himself. He simply enjoys life taking it as he finds it. Naturally he works as little as possible; naturally he takes no concern for the morrow. Without making fetish of it, he takes inordinately good care of himself, being moderate in all things and showing discrimination with respect to every thing that demands his time or attention. He is a connoisseur of food and wine who is never in danger of becoming a glutton or a drunkard. He loves women and knows how to make them happy. Though married, he does not deprive himself of extra-marital relationships. He causes no one suffering and, if you asked him about it point blank, he would probably answer that he never suffered in his life. He never thinks about suffering, either his own or other people's. He exists as if the world were perfect and made expressly for his own delectation. If there be a war, and if he is obliged to fight, he will fight—no matter on which side. He doesn't worry about whether he will be killed or not, but only about doing as little killing as possible. When he's radiantly happy, and he's almost always happy, he sometimes loves himself so much, is so delighted with his own happiness, so to speak, that he will kiss himself—on the hand or arm, whichever is most convenient. I believe he would kiss his own ass, if he could, in certain moments of exaltation.

Now why would one want to call such a lovable fellow a rogue? Obviously because he isn't playing the game as we expect it to be played. Obviously because he is enjoying life so thoroughly. Obviously because he doesn't worry about *our* misfortunes. Obviously because he doesn't care who rules the world. And most of all because he knows on which side his bread is buttered.

Those who don't think of him as a rogue call him childlike. This is meant to be even more condemnatory. That one can freely consort with publicans, sinners, harlots, drunkards and criminals is understandable to certain minds only if the person in question be regarded as a nit-wit. My friend often refers to himself as a "half-wit". He does so smilingly, much as a Dostoevskian character would if he had a bit of the saint in him. Indeed, by poking fun at himself, minimizing himself, refusing to uphold or defend himself, my friend has a way of disconcerting the other fellow which is not only laughable but genuinely salutary. If he were pressed, for example to say whether he believed in Christ or not, he is more than apt to answer: "I don't give a shit about Christ. What did he ever do for me?" He would answer that way out of annoyance, because he finds it stupid that people should ask one another such questions. But he is indubitably closer to Christ than to Satan. He is more like Christ, I wish to add, when he does those things which seem to be contrary to the way of Christ. Which is saying a great deal. Yet how can I better drive the point home? Jesus was never harsh with sinners, as we all know. He was harsh with moralists and hypocrites, with those who observed the letter of the law rather than the spirit of the law. Jesus had no social status whatever; he was fluid and flexible, until he had to do with those who were intolerant.

My friend knows very well when he is "sacrificing to the elementals", as he loves to put it. He doesn't use the word sin. When he gives in to the demands of the flesh he does it with the ease of a man relaxing after a hard day's work. He doesn't want to put too big a strain on himself, that is all. I'm not a hero, he means to say, nor a saint, nor a martyr. *I'm just me.* With such an attitude it follows that he seldom suffers from hang-overs and never from guilt complexes. He's always ready for the next issue, whether it be a feast or a spot of dirty work.

Sometimes I wonder if he will ever die, he's so bright fresh and new all the time. Never seems to be soiled, never gets used up. What health and vitality, what joy, radiates from his countenance! It's almost shameful to look that way in a world such as ours. And when he kisses himself all over, because the meal was good and



he enjoyed it so much, he seems to be thanking the Creator in dog-like fashion. But if it be dog-like, his behavior, it is without a doubt meritorious. Would that we were all more dog-like!

If he lives on another twenty or thirty years—why not forty or fifty years?—he will have all the attributes which the Orientals find in their “gay old dogs”. Which means that he will be as wise as the serpent and as gentle as the dove. He will not be hungering for immortality because he will have enjoyed everything life offers *in the flesh*. He will not have to prove anything by dying any more that he had to prove anything in living. Asked which is best for man, this way or that, he will be able to answer: “Any old way!” Or else—“*The way you are.*”

This is what I mean by morality versus immorality. Be moral and you get yourself crucified; be immoral and you ruin yourself. “There was only one Christian and He died on the cross.” There is more truth in this saying of Nietzsche’s than is generally suspected. Jesus did not die on the cross in order that we should follow his example. He died on the cross in order that we might have life everlasting. He did not need to die on the cross: he might have given battle to the world and triumphed over it. He might have become the Emperor of the World instead of its scapegoat. He said: “I have overcome the world!” That was a far greater triumph. He overcame the world so thoroughly that it has never been able to get rid of him. The world is permeated with his spirit. It seeks in vain for a solution of its ills other than the way he pointed out. If it denies him, it is none the less subject to him. “I am the light of the world,” he proclaimed, and that light still shines. “The Kingdom of Heaven is within you,” he announced, restoring to every man his divinity and supremacy. When he healed a man or woman, when he cast out the devil, he would say: “Go and sin no more!” He never defined sin he never fought against it. He annihilated it by not recognizing it. That is morality and immorality.

When I was quite young I read Lecky’s *History of European Morals* from cover to cover, hoping to get to the bottom of this subject. I discovered only what one would discover if he looked at anything through a kaleidoscope. After Lecky I read the theologians,

and after the theologians the mystics, and after the mystics I read the Cabalists. And so on. All I seem to have discovered, of importance, is that with every expansion of consciousness a radical change in morals ensues. Or, to put it more accurately, every innovator, every individual with a fresh vision or a larger vision of life, automatically destroys the existent moral code—in favor of spirit. But his disciples soon establish a new moral code, one just as rigid as the preceding one, forgetting that the spirit will again break the vessel which contains it.

We know all too little about the great precursors—Manu, Prometheus, Zoroaster, Hammurabi and such like. But what little we do know of them permits us to believe that the great truths they handed down were simple in essence. From the earliest times man seems to have been endowed with a conscience. When we penetrate the wisdom of the truth-sayers we discover that conscience was not meant to be a burden, that it was to be used instinctively and intuitively. It is only in periods of decadence that truth becomes complicated and conscience a heavy sack of guilt.

The neurotic character of our age is not only a sign of our guiltiness, it is also an indication of hopefulness. Instead of openly expressing their rebellion against the stupid and abominable scheme of things, men are expressing it through illness and maladaptation. The sick ones in our midst, and their number is increasing by leaps and bounds, are the criminals who have yet to be found out. They are undermining the social fabric even more than the industrialists and the militarists, even more than the priests and the scientists. Unable to buck the existent code, they render themselves inoperative—by becoming mental and moral cripples. They fail to realize, most of them, that it is precisely because of their spiritual nature that they have unwittingly outlawed themselves. They are symptomatic, in a negative way.

It sounds like defeatism to say to the young of our day, “Do not rebel! Do not make victims of yourselves!” What I mean, in saying this, is that one should not fight a losing battle. The system is destroying itself; the dead are burying the dead. Why expend one’s energy fighting something which is already tottering? Neither



would I urge one to run away from the danger zone. The danger is everywhere: there are no safe and secure places in which to start a new life. Stay where you are and make what life you can among the impending ruins. Do not put one thing above another, in importance. Do only what has to be done—immediately. Whether the wave is ascending or descending, the ocean is always there. You are a fish in the ocean of time, you are a constant in an ocean of change, you are nothing and everything at one and the same time. Was the dinner good? Was the grass green? Did the water slake your thirst? Are the stars still in the Heavens? Does the sun still shine? Can you talk, walk, sing, play? Are you still breathing? With every breath we draw we are utilizing forces that are absolutely mysterious as well as all powerful. We are swimming in a sea of forces which demand only to be utilized and enjoyed. The problems which beset us are human problems, problems largely of our own making. The great problems remain untouched: we have not the vision as yet to recognize them. But in accepting our everyday problems, accepting them gladly and unreservedly, we may make ourselves fit to cope with the greater ones to come. The mathematician is not appalled by the problems which face him in his work, neither is the surgeon, nor any one who engages seriously in whatever pursuit. Why then should man, as a species, be terrified of the problems which beset him? Why should he deny the monster which he has created with his own hands? If he has spawned a monster, let him devour his own monster.

The great sacrifice which we must all make, each and every one of us, is to burn away the dross. In other words, consign to the living flame that which is dead. If we put off the task, if we refuse to face the issue, the day will come when "the quick and the dead" are judged. There is a day of judgment, make no mistake about it. Life is continually weighing us in the balance. The day of Judgment is not an invention of the religious-minded but a psychic or spiritual phenomenon obedient to the moving calendar of our own conscience. It is always Hades or Easter on the day of reckoning. It has been so since the beginning. And it promises to be so eternally.

This is the cross which man carries and on which he can burn with the flame of eternal life or be pilloried like a thief. There is no escape. As it says in the Avestas: "Evil exists not, only the past. The past is past; the present is a moment; the future is all."



## THE NEW CONTRIBUTORS

**Lawrence Lipton**, resident of Southern California is the author of 3 Novels. **William J Margolis** edits "The Miscellaneous Man"; a quarterly of dynamic Individualism from Berkeley, California. **James Boyer May** who edits 'TRACE' the annual directory of poetry and literary magazines throughout the world, has recently published a book of poems. **Curtis Zahn** from Southern California has appeared in several of the American National Periodicals, **C. R. Mandy** is Irish by birth but has made his home in Bombay, India, from where he edits 'The Illustrated Weekly of India'. **George Keyt** is the very well known painter from Ceylon. **Raghavendar Rao** is a lecturer in Political Science at the University of Gauhati, Assam. **Lila Ray** is American by birth and is the wife of the famous Bengali writer **Ananda Sankar Ray**. **Asoke Vijay Raha** teaches Bengali Literature at Santiniketan, the University founded by Rabindranath Tagore. **Sudhindranath Datta** is a well known Bengali poet. **P. K. Saha** writes short stories and poems in several of the Indian periodicals. **Krishna Rao** is with the All India Radio and has published several short stories. **Henry Miller** lives in Big Sur, California and is the author of several books including 'The Tropic of Cancer', 'Black Spring' etc.

**Marcella Hardy**, born in Scotland of Belgian parents, passed away recently at Madras, India where she had been living for the past few years in active pursuit of several varied cultural activities, which included editing a literary periodical, "CHAKRA", the study of religious thought, both of the East and the West, establishing a French group at Madras and writing to several newspapers and periodicals on Indian Art and Literature.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

The New Dimensions by Peace . by **CHESTER BOWLES**,  
Harper & Brothers, New York.

Selected Poems . . . by **JAMES BOYER MAY**  
Inferno Press, San Francisco.

The Diary of Dr. Eric Zeno . by **GIL ORLOVITZ**  
Inferno Press, San Francisco.

Power Over Things . . . by **HARRY HOOTON**  
Inferno Press, San Francisco.

Spectre in the Fantastic  
laboratory . . . by **JAY PELL**  
Inferno Press, San Francisco.

The Stone Elegies . . . by **SEYMOUR GRESSER**  
International Literature and Art Co.,  
Baltimore, Md.

Why I Came and other Poems . by **JUSTO P. TOLENTINO**  
Manila, Phillippnes

The Twilight Song . . . by **M. V. V. K. RANGACHARY**  
Kakinada.



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