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*Announcing
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WILLIAM TREMAINE

Full Circle

Going to be foggy tonight Harris told himself. Living in a harbour city for ten years gives a person that sort of premonition. The hot, sticky day, followed by the cool night with the wind off the ocean, the fog was as predictable as the tide. Going to be thick too, he repeated to himself. The thought made him glad his shift ended at twelve-thirty. The fog had not begun to form yet, and the city stood sweltering in the night.

The streets near the harbour were quiet now, although it was still more than an hour until midnight. The noises of the harbour filtered into the empty streets like soft music. The small stores were closed. The street lights stood every hundred feet, the circles of light like tiny nebulae, dim and white with an eternity of darkness between. On the upper floors of the buildings dull light fought through soot-stained windows of dingy apartments. Dimly lit doorways were torn here and there in the black walls of the building-blocks. Through these openings, rickety stairways vanished in the darkness between age-yellowed, water stained walls.

The wide, lighted windows of "Knobby's" broke the monotony of the street. Through the window Harris could see Knobby behind the bar. The counter shone with puddles, and Knobby was continually scrubbing the bar top with a rag well beyond the saturation point. As Harris pushed open the door Knobby's ample face broke into a huge, toothy grin.

"Pete, c'mon in . . ."

"Knobby". Harris nodded his hello as he pushed through the door into the clean warm light. He grinned, "Health officer is gonna close this place soon." He nodded at the flooded counter.

"Hell he will, this stuff sterilizes the place. 'S better than soap 'n water." He wiped his right hand on his apron and shoved it across the bar. Harris shook it warmly. "Good to see you again Pete. Why in hell didn't you drop in before this. You been on nights all week?" Harris nodded. "Why nights? You ain't in the bad books for the last week or two of work are you?"

"Only one week left. No. No. I'm sort of filling in for the next few days until I'm through. Sort of a joe boy. I've got no regular shift".

"Been seeing you go by every night for the past week or so anyway. If you hadn't come in before you took off I'd be looking all over town for you. Y'know, you owe me some dough for all the beer I don't sell when my customers see a cop in the place."

"What customers?" Harris looked around the small room. "Weren't any here in the first place."

"They all ducked out the back way soon's they saw the badge. This is a respectable place. My customers don't want to be scared by bulls every night . . . their beer don't sit right."

"Don't sit right! I'll say! That lye you pour would eat through any ordinary drinker's stomach in a minute. Y'know it's a wonder those big mitts of yours haven't dissolved long before this. Guess you build up sort of an immunity."

"Yeah," Knobby laughed, then wiped his hands on his apron again. Harris tugged a fourlegged stool out from the bar and slid on to it, glad of a few minutes rest before finishing his beat.

"How's the wife?"

Harris half shrugged, "Fine."

"She wouldn't be putting you up to this quitting bit would she?"

"No . . . It's all my idea Knobby . . . all mine."

"You know Pete, ten years is one hell of a long time to work before you realize you don't like the job." Knobby put both his elbows on the counter. "What really made you decide to chuck it?"

"I dunno," he shifted in his seat.

You know all right, sure you know. Knobby would never understand though. A bar is far removed from a law court or a jail, with the derelicts, the punks, and the pale faced, scared kids all thrown in together. Scared kids, never know anything all along but run, run, run. All we do is chase them. Chase them 'round a big circle. Around and around. It gets smaller and smaller . . . then there's no place for them to go . . . no place at all. They're lost then, and so is the meaning of the law that chases them.

Aloud he said with a shrug, "This company down town, Capital Collections, want a new local manager. I've got the best chance of getting the job. Good money too."

"Since when you been bothered 'bout money?" Knobby smiled, "that is 'cept for the beer money you owe me . . ."

"It's not just the money Knobby . . . there's no shift work attached to this." He felt the feebleness of the answer even before he had finished. His gaze dropped to the shiny counter.

Knobby would never understand the real reasons, Harris told himself. What purpose do you serve? Those kids don't see you. Only a blue uniform, and a big badge. At first the badge means something to you, something to polish, to be proud of. Then, someone spits on it . . . Worst of all it's not them that spit on it, it's the people behind it. Smug, satisfied . . . the Law. To them the law has no spirit. Just the letter, like a mathematics formula, all a, b, and c. No people involved, just numbers and letters.

". . . Yeah, Pete, but ten years is ten years, a damn long time. You must be pretty valuable to the city right about now. You're young . . . what are you now . . . thirty-five?"

". . . three . . ."

". . . well, there you are, thirty-three, and with the experience you got . . . weren't you on homicide for a while?"

"Sure, sure, homicide, and traffic, and morality, and youth and police detail, and . . ." He gave a cynical laugh. "Sure, I'm really experienced. Youth and police, what a farce. It's supposed to mean working with kids, you know, prevention of crime, making them better citizens and all that . . . What do we do? Send them off to reform school without batting an eye. Know why? I'll tell you why, because who's interested, who gives a damn? Nobody, that's who. You know how much is budgeted to preventive police work with those kids? Screw all, Knobby, not a cent . . . not a cent. That's why these little punks get started . . . no one shows them the way to grow up. They just grow, like weeds,, singly at first, then in bunches. Hell . . . we could help hundreds right here in this, this damned town . . . but instead everyone grabs for himself. And we expect them to act differently. The chief wants the mayor's office, the inspectors all want the chief's badge, and all the constables sure as hell wouldn't mind being sergeants. Not one of those bastards wants to do his job 'cause it needs to be done, no, just the money, and so they can stand up smug and say, all right everybody, toe the line. I'm a cop, an' I say so . . . Not one, not a bloody one . . ."

"So take it easy Pete, take it easy . . . We all got a beef some way or other . . ." Knobby laughed, a thin tight-lipped laugh, trying to calm Harris. ". . . might as well try to stop the tide as try to change some of those guys. Christ, Pete, don't try to be their consciences . . . don't try."

"Don't try, Don't try . . . how can I help . . . trying . . ." Harris crumpled his huge hands into a ball on the counter. He tried to compose himself.

"Look." Knobby changed the subject. "I'd give you a job here if I didn't think you'd drink up all the profits . . . keepin' bar is easy; don't need no conscience either. These guys are only responsible to themselves . . . Long as they slip their quarter 'cross the counter I'll serve

'em up. Can't do nothing for them. They're too far gone."

Harris smiled, coming out of himself, leaving the welter of thoughts behind. "I'd probably spill more of that stuff than you do. I'd make a damn poor barkeep. Thanks for the offer though, I'll keep it in mind."

Knobby scrubbed at the bar with the soggy rag. "Bet that's where all my profits go . . . if I wrung this out I'd probably have my fortune made."

Out in the street again Harris walked slowly along; his footsteps echoed dully in the empty street. The smell of cigarettes and stale beer that had been almost oppressive inside the bar lingered with him for few minutes.

Under a small, dim street light he stopped. He held his arm up to the light, looked at his watch.

Two more hours, two more hours on this beat, then home. Home . . . food, some good coffee . . . and Julie. Harris thought of next week. No more beat to pound, no more shift work . . . no more crap to take from citizens who "knew their rights". No more constable Peter Harris, just plain Mister Harris. Regular hours again. Damn, it would be hard to believe at first. Sleep regular hours, eat regular hours, and more time for Julie too. Next week. It feels good to think about that. Blind alley this job, just like this street, dark empty . . . almost no way out, except to turn right around. It will be good to get out of this alley . . . get back on the main street . . .

The door handles were all cold, hard, and unyielding. Inside the stores the night lights all burned brightly, like little beacons announcing that all was well inside, behind the locked doors. The stores on the street were all alike, dingy, small, their empty shop-windows open to the street like staring eyes of old men, no longer moved by the happenings in front of them. Old people, just waiting.

. . . I will miss this old street though. Knobby's right, ten years is one hell of a long time. A long habit to break. Plenty of time to start over though . . . something new. No more drunks, nor those whores up the block to chase every other week. The kids though, what's next for them . . . no place for them to go. Never was any place for them to go anyway. No place, 'cept running in the street. Knobby's right there too . . . can't be everybody's conscience. The poor bastard that gets this beat next can think of something . . . The chief will never do anything for him either though. Just a farce this. Maybe I won't miss it after all.

The shop door swung open when Harris pushed at the handle.

"That's funny", he said half aloud, "old man Kneff gone off for the weekend again and left his door open. Didn't even leave the night light on. Serve him good if . . ."

The black shape loomed up suddenly from the darkness before Harris was able to see clearly in the unlighted store. Harris was half shoved, half thrown against the door jamb, then he slid to the floor as the man thrust himself past and into the street.

Harris was stunned at first. He picked himself up, slowly gathering his senses, like a boxer recovering from a stiff body blow. Then he

was in the street, running, shouting . . .

"You, stop. Hey, stop!"

Down the street he could hear the rapid footfalls as the man ran out of sight somewhere in the blackness.

Run, run, run. Hard to run like this. Not that young anymore. Should be in better shape. Never catch him now. Street is too dark. Damn dark. Damn dark stores . . . damn old man Kneff. Never catch him now. Never. Run, run, run.

Harris stopped under a street lamp, puffing wildly. Everything was quiet again, except for his heavy breathing which seemed to echo from every wall. The man was gone.

From somewhere down the street, near the harbour, there was a shout. "Hey you, off that pier . . . off the pier . . ."

Harris moved quickly in the direction of the shouts. Suddenly he was at the harbour side. A watchman's shack stood at the side of the roadway leading to a long pier.

"What's the trouble?" Harris had addressed the watchman, a thin, small old man, who was peering into the darkness that shrouded the jetty.

The man whirled around startled. "Oh . . . oh . . . you. Some kid. Came runnin' like all get out . . . over there." He motioned to the street Harris had just come out of. "Runnin' like all get out. Right by me here, and out there. Like to bowl me over . . . I was punchin' that clock there. Ran right by me".

"Give me your flashlight." Harris held out his hand to the watchman. The old man handed over the light without a word as both strained to see into the darkness beyond the pool of light at the head of the pier.

"This is only some kid is it?"

"Yeah. Ran right by me there. Not supposed to be anyone out there, but he ran right out . . ."

"Must be the same one. I surprised him down the street at Kneff's store," Harris explained. "You go back to your office and phone the station for me will you? Ask them to send a car around to the pier . . . make sure you tell them it's nothing serious though. No sirens."

"You kiddin'?"

"No." Harris said firmly. In a lower voice he continued, "Make sure you tell them it's nothing serious. He's just a scared kid, got no gun or anything . . ."

"You sure?" The watchman stood his ground. "You never know. Damn kids. Why just last week . . ."

Harris cut him off. "Look, the more you stand here and talk the scarer he gets. A few minutes more he'll be so scared he'll swim to Dartmouth. And believe me that water's damn cold for a swim."

"O.K. All right. All right, it's your worry if he clouts you. I'll come back later and scrape you off the pier when he's through with you." Grumbling to himself the watchman turned and shuffled back to his little shack by the gate.

Harris poked the beam of the flashlight down the pier. It lit up the blackness, destroying all the fantastic images the shadows made, replacing them with cold, commonplace objects. Packing crates were stacked end on end, waiting for their ship to come in. The dusty windows in the warehouse bordering the pier reflected the shaft of light. A huge door gaped invitingly.

Take me a week to find him if he went in there, Harris thought.

The warehouse was empty.

The packing crates were like a wooden maze stretching the length of the jetty. Somewhere down there the boy was huddled, shivering with fright, pressed tight against the wall of the building.

Harris moved slowly down the roadway. He stumbled as he crossed the carriage tracks for the loading crane. The flashlight lit the packing cases in the front row, setting them in relief against the grotesque shadows of the crates stacked high against the wall. The light moved swiftly from one dark corner to the next, flickering back and forth like a yellow whip, stinging the shadows into momentary brightness.

Nothing.

Harris called to the boy crouching beyond the probing light. "Son. I know you're here somewhere. C'mon out. No one's going to hurt you." he hesitated. You liar. So this poor little bastard comes out, into the arms of the benevolent law man. Then what. They'll collar him, lock him up for a couple of months . . . months that pass like years . . . and forget about him. For what? To satisfy the law. The law that's equally indifferent to all. No one cares, but he probably has a good reason for running. If only someone took the time to find out why. Instead I only chase him. Harris felt futility grasping at him as he slowly worked his way down the pier. "I don't blame you for running kid", he said half aloud, "not a bit, not a bloody bit. Anyone runs when they're chased. But you're caught now . . . so come on out. Make it easier for you and me, and for anyone else who might care about you."

The yellow, naked wood of packing crates reflected the beam of the flashlight, but even in the brightness Harris could not see the boy at first. He was crouched, wild eyed and frightened, pressing closer and closer to the harsh, rough-cut crates in hopes of not being seen. When the light pointed him out he bolted, half sprawling on the cement, then running blindly down the pier.

"Wait . . . wait son, wait . . ." Harris kept the running shape in his light. But the boy could not hear now. His fear was alive, tugging at his mind and body like a huge hand, and he ran on.

By the time Harris reached the foot of the ladder leading to the cabin of the travelling crane the boy was almost to the top. Harris' boots rang on the metal rungs, and his hands were cold on the iron railings as he groped upward. Above he could hear the boy struggling with the door, vainly trying to find a place to hide. The door was locked.

The boom of the crane pointed up into the sky like a monstrous skeletal finger. A drum in front of the cabin fed steel cable between

the bones of the finger like thick, oily veins. The boy climbed slowly, desperately now, among the beams of the crane.

His fear was raw now, and he was crying, no sobs, only small, hoarse whimpers. He stopped in the crutch of two beams, breathing heavily, choking back tears.

Below Harris stopped, leaning on the railing of the narrow catwalk, afraid lest his movements send the boy higher.

"Son . . ." Harris tried to make his voice even and calm between gasps for breath. "C'mon down." He thought his voice was going to crack. "No one's going to hurt you. Come down. I don't want to see you hurt . . . c'mon."

What else can I say. Can't even see him up there . . . There's his foot dangling there . . . he's scared to move . . . just hanging on.

The foot swung slowly back and forth. The rest of the boy's body was hidden behind the beams. For the first time Harris was aware of the height. The boom of the crane stuck out at a crazy angle, seventy feet over the pier.

What can I say. Too high up here. Can't even see the ground in this dark. He gripped the rail tightly. Shouldn't have chased him up here. Harris shook his head.

"Son. Son, come down. I know you're scared, 'way up here in the dark. Believe me I don't want to frighten you. Only . . . come on down. Hanging up there won't solve a thing, they'll just wait on the ground for you. What about coming down. C'mon down, I'll take you home."

The foot swung slowly back and forth, but there was no answer. Harris could only hear heavy breathing and choked whimpering from above.

Harris stood for what seemed a century on the iron ledge. He should be calmed by now he told himself, and aloud he said, "Son, I'm going to come up . . . slowly . . . to help you down."

The foot swung up out of sight. "Take it easy now son . . ."

The boy stood up on the beam grasping the steel frame above his head. At the bottom of the crane arm Harris could see the boy silhouetted against the sky, slowly pulling himself up to the next beam. He hung for a second hunched over the higher beam, desperately trying to kick his leg up. "Leave me alone," he screamed, "Leave me alone . . ."

He lost his grip.

He clutched for a hand hold. The beams were cold and hard as his fingers grated over the metal, and then there was nothing more to hang on to.

Instinctively Harris reached out, as if he wished his arms might close the gap between himself and the boy twisting and plunging by him.

"God! No, God . . . God!" The rest was lost in Harris' throat as he slumped to the catwalk. His fists covered his eyes. He could see nothing in the blackness; he could only hear; the sound of the running feet of the watchman, suddenly drowned out by the grating, raucous whine of a siren, then . . . nothing.



D. F. LEITCH

THE SKELTON PROJECT

A Collection of Rather Original Documents

While the present selection from these documents does not contribute anything very significant to the growing body of critical works on Skelton, the editor felt that no opportunity to add to "Skeltoniana" from original sources should be missed. From another viewpoint it seems reasonable to assign a certain propriety to *The Skelton Project*—if not significance—because of the atmosphere of controversy and misunderstanding that has always surrounded the Poet. In that sense what follows can readily be considered in the dishonorable tradition that began with the publication of the "Merie Tales", in 1567.

PART I

Consisting of the original correspondence between John H. Driver, [Jack], of the MARTIN, BARTON and FISH AGENCY, Inc., 442 Madison Avenue, W., New York, N.Y., Mr. Louis Riel Crudney, sometimes addressed as Mr. Crudney, Mr. L. R. Crudney, Mr. Real Crudney and once as Crud., and Doctor Sidney Longinus, BSA., MA., PhD. of the COLLEGE OF ELECTRONIC REVELATION AND CULTURAL ENGINEERING, [COERCE], department of Commercial Linguistics, Keokuk, Iowa.

Sept. 27th, 1960

Mr. John H. Driver,
Martin, Barton and Fish Agency,
442 Madison Avenue, West,
New York 26, New York.

Re - Skelton Project

Dear Jack:

Now that the martinis have worn off, I am no longer very sanguine about the a/m project, but, in accordance with the suggestions in your phone call, I am forwarding, under separate cover, for electronic analysis, the following:

- (1) "The Complete Poems of John Skelton"
- (2) "Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins"
- (3) "The Operas and Bab Ballads of W. S. Gilbert"
- (4) "The Portable Dorothy Parker"
- (5) "Doctor Chase's Almanac — Autumn 1933"
- (6) "Elinor Rummung and The Formula for Oka Cheese — 1832"

Please do not lose numbers (5) or (6). Number (5) is the property of the Rare Books Section—Ontario College of Pharmacy Library and number (6) must be returned to the Trappist Monastery at Oka, where the hand illuminating was done over 100 years ago.

My skepticism about the ability of a machine to do much with either Skelton or Hopkins, is probably due to my lack of contact with these electronic marvels, and I know you will not take it as evidence of churlishness on my part. However, I still feel vaguely unchivalrous about feeding any lady — even Dorothy Parker — into the maw of a monster.

I am quite sure that the advertising business has benefitted greatly from the services of these two great electronic brains out in Iowa that turn out what you call: "Mathematical Literary Appreciation", (MLA), and "Collation of Rational Aesthetic Postulates". If the two "Brains" can be as effective with "lyric poetry" as they have been with its sister *genre*, "advertising copy", then I agree that the craft of Criticism will take a giant leap. [forward]

Even if criticism never becomes as single minded as advertising, any decent measure of simplification will be greatly appreciated by all undergraduate students and especially

Your friend,
Louis R. Crudney.

P.S. Each book or document has appended a list of, what I consider to be, the most useful items for analysis and comparison.

Oct. 1st, 1960

Mr. Louis Riel Crudney,
Thornhill, Ontario.

Re - John Skelton Project

Dear Crud:

Just a line to let you know that your material has been forwarded to the College in Iowa. I sent them, also, a copy of your letter to make sure that they start bowling in the right alley.

Matters have been discussed with my contact at the College, Dr. Sidney Longinus, and, now that he is in the frame with us, you should be hearing from him shortly.

Sid is a very sweet fellow, and I know you are going to get along fine together. I studied "Sententious English" and the "Art of Public Statement" under him, when he was at Babson's, and I deal with him a lot, now that he is an Associate Professor at Keokuk. He is building himself a terrific reputation in the Mid-West, and it is now an open secret that he "ghosts" practically everything for Sen. Karl Mundt of North Dakota and Avery Brundage of the U.S. Olympic Committee.

It is quite normal for you to have some misgivings about this kind of thing when you have had no previous experience, but I can assure you that we are going to give this can of beans a good stir, and plenty of pork will surface — never fear.

Vaya con dios,
Jack [Mr. Jack H. Driver]

Oct. 2nd, 1960

The College of Electronic Revelation & Cultural Engineering
Keokuk, Iowa

Dept. of Commercial Linguistics

Re - John Skelton, etc.

My dear Mr. Crudney:

It is with marked enjoyment and considerable pleasure, that I seize this opportunity to correspond directly and personally with you, a fellow toiler in the fields of Literary Endeavour, who is, at the same time, a citizen of our great, friendly, and free neighbor to the North, and one with whom I share the close comradeship and mutual esteem of that stirring character and cultured student, Mr. John H. Driver.

My general judgement is that, it must be mutually gratifying, to both of us, to be engaged together in a cultural project involving the use of that Mother Tongue to which both of us are deeply cognisant of the debt we owe as inheritors of a joint tradition — the great, magnificent, and splendid English Language.

Mr. Driver has unquestionably related to you, in general terms and broad outline, the functional operation and purposive aims of COERCE; but, to the end that you may completely apprehend the definitive specifics of this great programme, I am having enclosed a prospectus outline, in detail, of our operation. This, I am sure, you will find helpful in supplementing the magnificent collection of aesthetic data that you have already consigned to us, via the good offices of our mutual compeer, John H. Driver.

Having, in all good time, come into receipt of additional and supplementary data, we will set in motion our operational complex of human and electronic faculties and energies in order to synthesize the analysis of the literary components, with which you have so generously favoured us. I am requiring my secretary, Miss Rosenblatt, to add, by *postscript*, a list of suggestions for additional material related to the appropriate sections of the enclosed prospectus of operations.

In closing, let me hasten to add that, whilst I must confess considerable want of familiarity with Messrs. Skelton and Hopkins, I am completely at home, as one of her long standing and vocal admirers, with Miss Parker. In fact, one of my favourite, little, pedagogical jests that I use in my lectures on Tautology is: "for getting straight to the point, one could do much worse than spend his nights with either Dorothy Parker, or Clare Booth Luce."

With deep apology for the haste of this epistle, I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

Sidney Longinus, BSA. (Ridgetown)
M.A., (Reno Tech), PhD., (Brazzaville)
McCormick Deering Professor of Congruous
Communication, COERCE.

P.S. The prospectus is NOT enclosed. It would only mix you up.

Jackie Driver tells me you are an expert on Skelton. If so, you had better send us more dope to work on, and a clear idea of what you expect to get out of this deal. We will need the following:

- (a) An essay, or precis, on what you presently know and feel about Skelton and the others;
- (b) The major critical works on Skelton—if he is your chief interest;
- (c) A good literary history of the period and country in which your boy did his writing.

I am keeping everything in my desk until all the available material is in. Anything new that you send may be addressed to the Doc., but you had better mail it to me, c/o General Delivery, Keokuk, Iowa, and I will see that it gets fed into the works. If you don't do it this way, God only knows what will happen.

Good luck

Rachel Rosenblatt

Oct. 5th, 1960

Miss Rachel Rosenblatt,
General Delivery
Keokuk, Iowa.

Dear Miss Rosenblatt:

Your instructions were very helpful, and I thank you very much.

Jack Driver has, apparently, oversold me to your organization since I am not an expert on Skelton or anybody else. I am only a confused college student, trying to write an essay on a subject that I know nothing about, and on which the experts have already said everything, and more, that might be worth saying.

Since I already have over eleven dollars and three weeks tied up in this thing, I might just as well go ahead, and, with this in mind, I am enclosing the following:

- (1) A letter to Dr. Longinus.
- (2) A short essay that I had already written on Skelton, before I ran into Jack Driver in a bar.
- (3) A paper back edition of *Naked to Mine Enemies*, by C. W. Ferguson. (Pay no attention to the Art Work on the cover. This is a history of Cardinal Wolsey.)
- (4) A stolen copy of *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, eds. A. W. Ward and A. R. Walter, III, Cambridge: University Press, 1912.

Since I have run out of money and nerve, I can only refer you to the following works for critical material on Skelton:

- (1) Gordon, Ian A., *John Skelton—Poet Laureate*, Melbourne: University Press, 1943.
- (2) Auden, W. H. *The Great Tudors—"John Skelton"*, London: 1935.
- (3) Berdan, J. M., *Early Tudor Poetry*, New York: The MacMillan Co., 1920.
- (4) *The Complete Poems of John Skelton—Laureate*, ed. Phillip Henderson, London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1931.

I am sure your library will have the above items, or you should be able to borrow them some place.

Yours very truly,
L. R. Crudney.

Oct. 20th, 1960

My Dear Doctor Longinus,

I find it almost impossible to express my feelings about your recent missive so I will not even try — except to say that I thank you very much.

Regarding the Skelton Project; I am attaching hereto an essay on Skelton entitled: *Elinore Rummig and Phillip Sparrow: The Contrast and the Compass.*

This piece deals mainly with Skelton's powers of description, his irreverence, and his imagery, and, as a foil, I have used a number of excerpts from Chaucer to illustrate and evaluate the former's facility for brief and sharp characterization.

I hope this will not require the sending along of the complete works of Chaucer and his critics in order to satisfy the needs of your omnivorous "Brains" — as you call them. If you think it best to delete all reference to Chaucer, for reasons of speed, I will not mind in the least, and I am sure that Chaucer would be delighted.

Yours very truly,

L. R. Crudney.

Editorial Note: This essay has not been included in Appendix A, since it is merely a clumsy paraphrase of differing points of view expressed by Berdan, Henderson and Gordon — in other words, the usual, warmed over, unreconciled, scholarly dispute. It can be noted from Mr. Crudney's last paragraph in this letter, as well as from the desperately contrived nature of the essay in question, that Mr. Crudney is finding it increasingly difficult to maintain the proper attitudes of reverence and enthusiasm that a research project requires.

Nov. 12th, 1960

Dear Jack: [J. H. Driver]

Re - John Skelton Project

It is now over three weeks since I wrote my last letter to the College in Iowa. Since that time, I have heard nothing from them, and I am beginning to wonder if something has gone awry.

I cannot afford to miss the deadline for turning in my essay, nor do I feel I am in a position to exhort the "keepers of the machine" to speed up.

Would it be asking too much of you to make some casual enquiries of them or, better still, to express a little concern about the amount of time they are taking?

Since time, not quality, is of the essence, I will very much appreciate anything you can do, so that I may remain,

Yours in good standing,
Crud.

Nov. 15th, 1960

Dear Crud,

Re - Skelton Project

As per your request, I have been talking to our boys out in Iowa. It appears there was a little delay and some confusion, but all is now going smoothly.

You were part of the cause for the delay when you persisted in corresponding with Sid Longinus through his secretary, Miss Rosenblatt. She was recently hauled up before the Board of Regents, tried, and convicted of:

- (1) "*Lese Majeste* to Professor Longinus"
- (2) "By Passing — First Degree"
- (3) "General Lack of Cultural Tone"

—She is now working here in New York at the "Police Gazette", and seems quite happy —

Confusion reigned, for awhile, when part of your material had to be transferred over to the Dept. of Antique and Archaic Languages, presided over by Dr. Frederick Mole. Dr. Longinus' Dept. only deals with "The Modern Era", which dates from the end of

President Buchanan's administration. This, of course, created quite a problem, (not to mention a little bickering) over W. S. Gilbert, who was split, roughly, down the middle — between "Patience" and "Ruddigore".

You should now be hearing from them almost immediately, when you should receive two copies of everything — (including all correspondence, inter-office memos, charts, graphs, statistical tabulations and data comparisons) that is in any way related to your project.

I have taken the liberty of asking them to send me, also, a complete set of everything, and I know you will not really mind the presumptuousness of

Your buddy,

Jack Driver.

Nov. 20th, 1960

Mr. Real Crudney,
Thornhill, Ontario.

Dear Sir:

There is a large, first class, mail package, addressed to you from Keokuk, Iowa, that is resting at the Postage-Due Wicket.

The total charges on this item are \$18.47, and it would be appreciated if you would call for this at your very earliest convenience. The item is quite bulky, and, in addition to being in our way, it has a very peculiar odour.

Yours sincerely,

L. Balcer

ASSISTANT POSTMASTER

Thornhill, Ont.

PART II

Inter-Office Memos

The College of Electronic Revelation & Cultural Engineering

13 Oct. 60 MEMO #1 TO ALL DEPARTMENTS OF COERCE
FROM DATA CONTROL.

1 Project

- (a) Detailed Analysis and Appreciation—*John Skelton.*
- (b) Aesthetic and Technique Comparison of Subject
(a) with — *W. S. Gilbert, Dorothy Parker, G. M. Hopkins, Dr. Chase.*

2 Action Required

- (a) Research into all sources for relevant, raw data.
- (b) Communication of Data to Data Central by Binary symbolism.

3 Plain Language Intercommunication

- (a) Permitted — if brief and relevant.

4 Method of Transmission

- (a) *Athletic Dept.* — via bonded courier.
- (b) *Other Departments* — Pneumatic tube only.

13 Oct. 60 MEMO #2 TO DATA CONTROL FROM
COLLATION DEPT.

1 Re John Skelton

- (a) We cannot find any document entitled "Elinore Rumming" as indicated on your list of documents consigned to us.

2 Other Subjects

- (a) There is a fellow who has been coming in here twice a day, hangs around for about thirty minutes, mumbles in a foreign language and then slides out. He wears cuffs on his sleeves and needs a haircut.
- (b) Do you know anything about him?

14 Oct. 60 MEMO # 3 TO COLLATION DEPT.
FROM DATA CONTROL.

- 1 Re John Skelton — (Elinore Rumming item)
 - (a) Positive this was consigned to you as separate item entitled *Restricted; valuable and pornographic.*
 - (b) Make a thorough check and report immediately.
- 2 Other Subjects
 - (a) Your stranger fits the description of the Englishman from the Manchester Guardian who is doing the "think piece" on the school.

16 Oct. 60 MEMO #4 TO DATA CONTROL FROM ATHLETIC
DEPT.—(Coach Meathead)

- 1 Re John Skelton et al.

The coach says:

 - (a) "They must mean that guy *Skeltonicus* — a pretty rugged lineman but no idea of gettin' along with the first stringers — The Profs. thought he needed some smoothing out before we took him to the "Varsity" to "away" games. They sent him to Chicago for a summer job and he never come back — Lots of guts but he probably wouldn't have fit in."
 - (b) "Gilbert is still with us — kind of wise guy — Fast and shifty on his feet but if he don't shape up on his attitude — Boom! — No letter."
 - (c) "A Hopkins guy came out here for Spring practise, but he never seemed to know whether he wanted to play or not — Full of the old spirit one minute, and sulking around next — Never could dig him, and kind of glad he's gone."
 - (d) "Parker? — Parker? — Oh yeah! try the band — real cutie!"
 - (e) "Never heard of Chase".
- 2 Other Subjects

The coach says:

 - (a) "Where the hell are those shammy [sic] helmet bags?"
 - (b) "Don't forget what machine pays the bills around here!"

16 Oct. 60 MEMO #5 TO INFORMATION CENTRAL FROM
"INDOCTRINATION AND GROOMING"

1 Re John Skelton

- (a) We have stricken this man from the rolls. He is dead.
- (b) For your information, his real name was *Skeltonicus*. Coach Meathead brought him up here on an Athletic Scholarship. He was a terribly rough diamond, and I persuaded the Coach to let us send him up to Procter and Gamble in Chicago. They put him out on their display detail, and, on his second day out he was crushed to death in the collapse of a pyramid of Crisco in a Cicero supermarket.

2 Other Subjects

- (a) Can't you tell me where to send his football shoes and grey flannel suit?

16 Oct. 60 MEMO #6 TO DATA CONTROL FROM
COLLATION DEPT.

1 Re John Skelton — (Elinore Rumming Document)

- (a) We found it in the desk drawer of that junior comptometer operator you sent us last week. He claims he thought it was just a copy of "Spicy Comics". I am sending *him* back to you via the tube.

2 Other Subjects

- (a) It's the Englishman all right. For some reason, he seemed to think we served afternoon tea and "elevenses" here.
- (b) What are "elevenses"?

20 Oct. 60 MEMO #7 TO DATA CONTROL FROM DEPT.
OF AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS.

1 Re John Skelton — (Obscurity Comparison)

- (a) We cannot advise the use of the article in *Dr. Chase's Almanac* entitled: "How to Assemble a Manure Spreader", in making as obscurity comparison with *Skelton* or *Hopkins*.

- (b) The "obscurity" is only a matter of faulty type setting, since every third line is an excerpt from "The Ultimate Origin of Things" by Gottfried Wilhelm Von Leibnitz.

2 Other Subjects

- (a) When will the "Brains" be finished with that last article I sent you called: "The Old Goat as a Suburban Phenomenon".

24 Oct. 60 MEMO #8 TO DATA CONTROL FROM
MILITARY AND NAVAL AFFAIRS.

1 Re John Skelton — (*Bouge of Court* and *The Wreck of the Deutschland*)

- (a) *Bouge of Court* — surely you must mean "barge" — Check your spelling again.
- (b) *Wreck of the Deutschland* — Hopkins — am enclosing page 98 of *Janes Fighting Ships 1938* as being the only relevant material available.

2 Other Subjects

- (a) There was a limey in here this morning asking about the "Officer's Mess".
- (b) What gives?

29 Oct. 60 MEMO #9 TO DATA CONTROL FROM THE
"BRAINS".

1 Re John Skelton Project

As requested, we are sending a statement of reasons for delay:

- (a) Mechanical trouble with *MLA* after digesting with the *Cambridge History of English Literature* and *Early Tudor Poetry*. We are corresponding with Schenectady about this.
- (b) One of the mechanics borrowed an item called "Elinore Rumming". He took it to a smoker at the Elks Lodge and it disappeared. He expects to have it back in an hour or so.

2 Other Subjects

- (a) Those chamois cleaning cloths you sent us are absolutely useless around machinery. They are equipped with drawstrings and have big numbers painted on them.
- (b) If the machines don't get better services on essential Supplies, this whole organization will grind to a halt and you might just as well turn the whole place into a motel.

Oct. 29th, 1960

Mr. James Cordiner,
Dept. of Technical Services,
General Electric Co.,
Schenectady, New York.

Dear Mr. Cordiner:

I hate to bother you again so soon after all that trouble we had over analyzing political campaign posters, but, believe me, we are in real trouble this time.

We have been working on a project called "*John Skelton, etc.*" and among the material was a book called *The Cambridge History of English Literature*. By the time I had about two thirds of it into the MLA Computer the whole complex began to rumble and groan, and finally came to a dead stop — except for belch-like eruptions from the supply orifice.

About an hour ago we began to ingest a document called "Elinore Rummig" into the CRAP generator and it has gone completely wacky. It just sits there leering and winking its lights in a sort of sly manner. But worst of all it is not returning any data and is exuding a foul smelling secretion that is quite rubbery in texture.

Please wire me if you have anything to suggest.

Yours truly,

Robert E. Sherwood,

CHIEF TECHNICIAN,
The "Brains",
COERCE.

Nov. 1st, 1960

Collect Wire to:
Robert Sherwood
THE BRAINS

WARNED YOU ABOUT OVERLOADING MLA
MARK SIX STOP C.H.E.L. MUCH TOO HEAVY
MATERIAL FOR THIS MODEL STOP MACHINE
NOW BADLY CONSTIPATED STOP RECOM-
MEND YOU WASH IT OUT THOROUGHLY &
DOSE WITH ONE HALF VOLUME OF FINELY
GROUND e.e. cummings STOP SEND SAMPLE
OF SECRETION FROM CRAP GENERATOR
IMMEDIATELY REPEAT IMMEDIATELY STOP

Jas. E. Cordiner.

Nov. 4th, 1960

Collect Wire to:
Robert Sherwood
THE BRAINS

STOP CLEAN ALL PARTS WITH LIVE STEAM
AND PUT ON BLAND DIET OF EDGAR
GUEST FOR FIVE DAYS STOP YOUR GEN-
ERATOR IS NOW MANUFACTURING OKA
CHEESE STOP FOR THE LOVE OF GOD STOP

Jas. E. Cordiner.

PART III

5 Dec. 60 MEMO #10 TO ANTIQUE AND ARCHAIC
LANGUAGES — (Personal attention of Dr. Mole)
FROM OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Re - Farewell Dinner for Dr. S. Longinus

- (1) Your representations about non-attendance at the a/m function have been considered, but it is still the position of the President that all department heads must show up so as to avoid any appearance of:
 - (a) Discord within the faculty and,
 - (b) That Dr. Longinus is resigning under pressure.
- (2) We are, furthermore, quite certain that Dr. Longinus' extended remarks in the faculty dining room, which included references to you, could be interpreted several other ways than the one you have chosen to put upon them.
- (3) We can assure you that the ample security measures we have taken will prevent any recurrence of unfortunate publicity, personalities, or recriminations. These security measures include:
 - (a) Presenting the gold watch *In Camera*,
 - (b) Banning of all speeches, whether of appreciation or not,
 - (c) Barring of the press,
 - (d) Serving only one drink per person to everyone with the rank of Associate Professor and above,
- (4) Your request is therefore denied and you are hereby instructed to attend the a/m function.

Nov. 30th, 1960

Bursar of COERCE,
Keokuk, Iowa.
Dear Sir:

Re - Your Last Account

We are prepared to admit that item (4) — (John Skelton Project — services and necessary repairs — \$48,321.73), in your October Account, arose out of suggestions made by this Agency. However, this was not an "official" agency project handled through regular channels and accordingly, we do not feel that we are actually liable for any of this amount.

However, as a gesture towards continuing the past relationship, we are enclosing our cheque for \$18,000.00 and trust that this will help to smooth out some of the worst aspects of this unfortunate occurrence.

We have taken steps at our end to see that such a thing can never happen again, and in expressing our regrets, we remain,

Sincerely yours,

R. R. MacGregor,
TREASURER
Martin, Barton & Fish.

Dec. 10th, 1960

Dear Jack: [John H. Driver]

Your phone call of last evening has left me very deeply disturbed and I hardly know what to say in this letter I promised you.

I am terribly sorry about your job, and I wish there were something I could do. But I am sure that a letter to your former boss would not serve any useful purpose whatever.

I know you realize that my financial position would not permit me to consider raising any substantial part of Eighteen Thousand Dollars, and any small amount that I might be able to contribute would only seem niggardly or frivolous. Therefore, I know you will understand my motives in not sending along anything at all.

As to your future employment: I must say that I think you should consider this proposition from Dr. Longinus very carefully, before taking any step you might be sorry for. After all, the ghost writing of graduate theses must be just as competitive as it is disreputable, and I have an uneasy feeling that Dr. Longinus would not make the best partner in an undertaking where clarity and obscurity are of equal importance.

I hope you will not go to any further trouble and expense by making more long distance phone calls, since you can rest assured that I will get in touch with you immediately, should anything useful occur to me.

With the greatest regrets at not having said anything appropriate to this problem, may I beg to remain,

Your close friend,

Crud

The End

KEE DEWDNEY

THE FISH

*The little fish went far away,
The little fish came back one day.
I stood upon a bank of snow
And stared down through the ice-rimmed hole.
The sandy bottom, old creek bed.
Water shook its liquid head,
Laughed and kissed the window ice
And rolled beneath the other slice.*

*The little fish went far away,
The little fish came back one day.
A quickening ripple in the stream
Appeared, and shook me from my dream.
(A stick? Some weed? Not a fin!)
A fishy fin of slimy spines.
A little fish of oily lines
Flashed and coiled his belly white
And strolled beneath a shelf of light.*



Fouad Fanaki

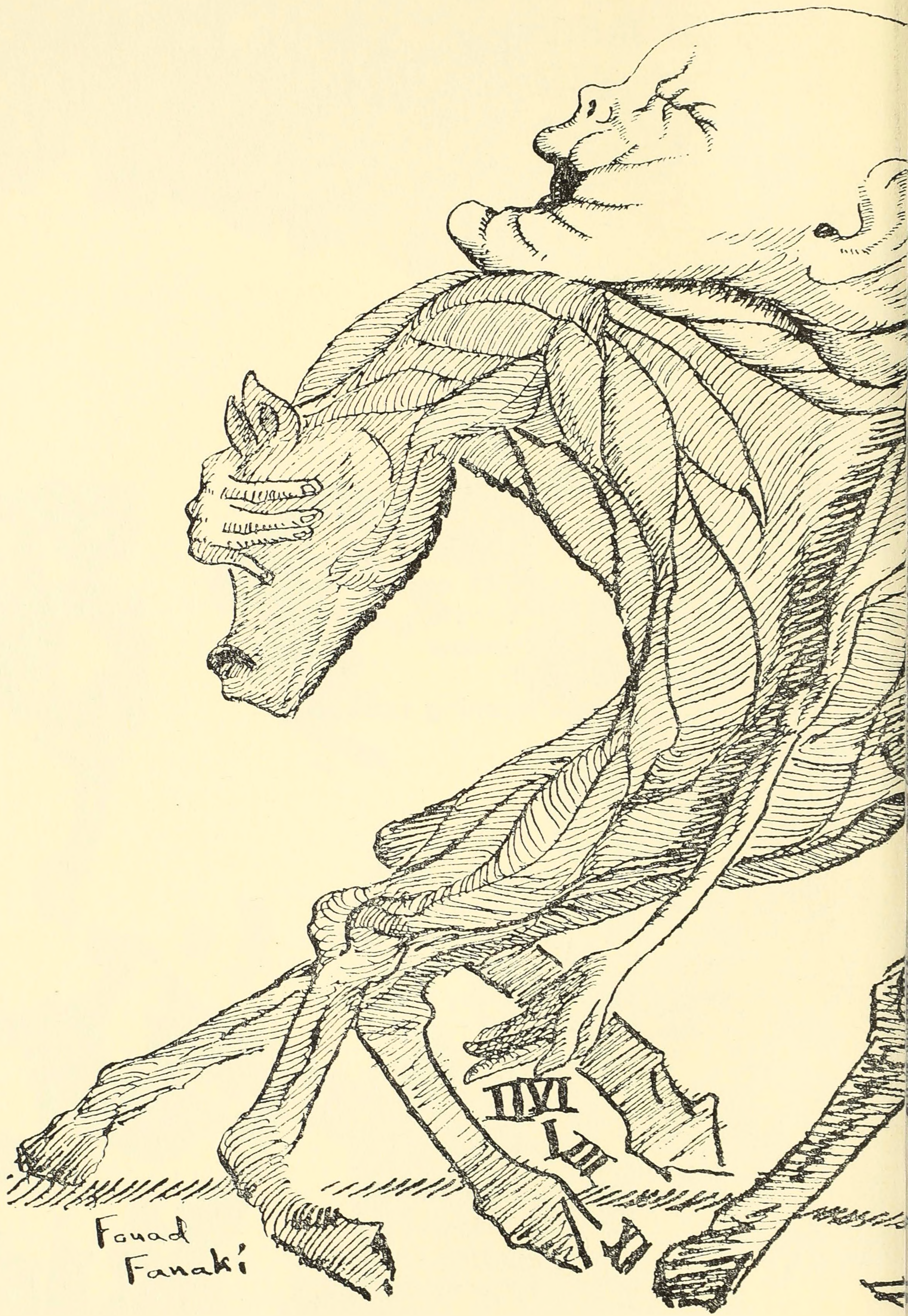
R. H. BUTLER

SPRING

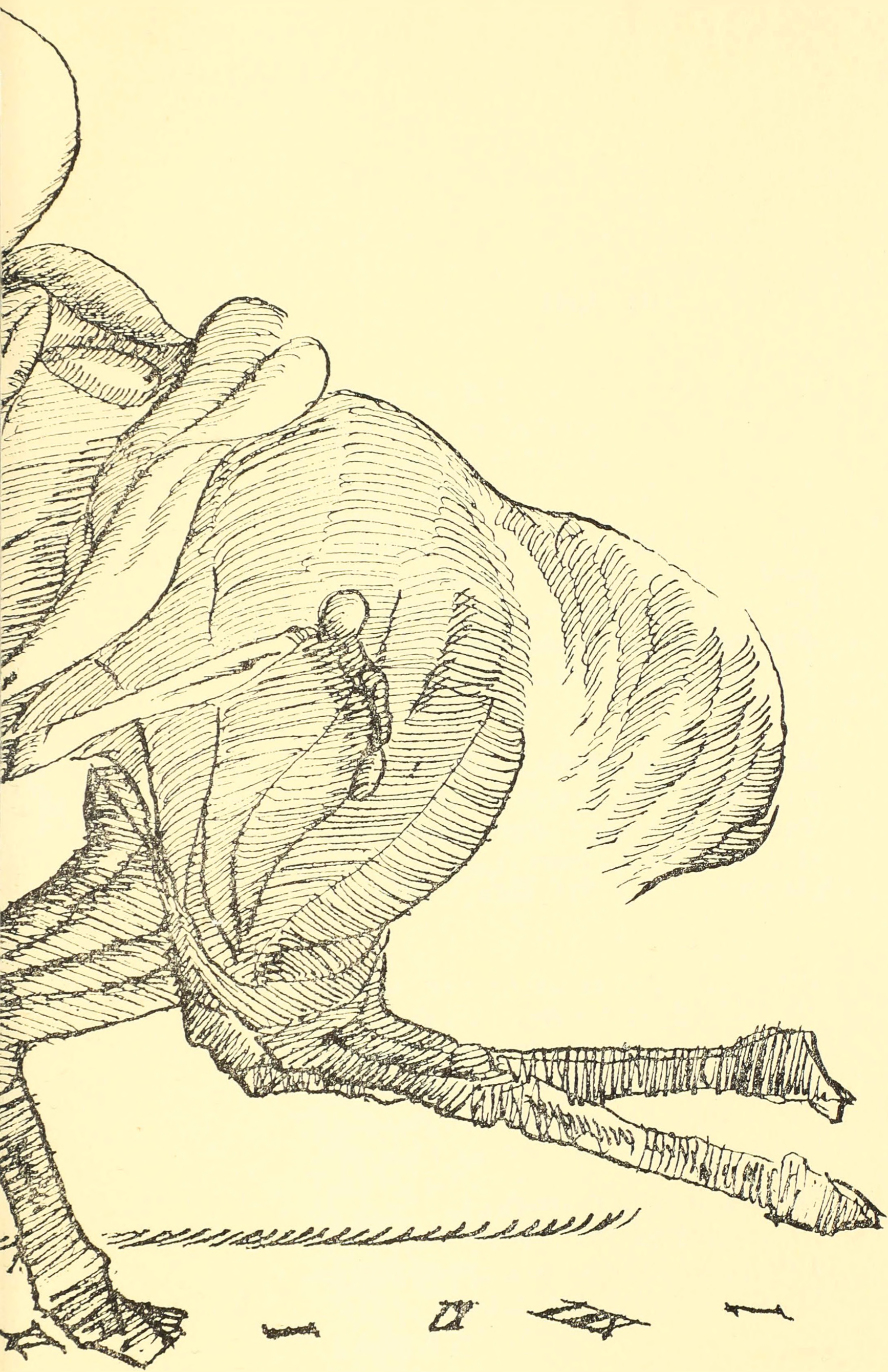
The Life Force, half asleep,
Struggles to the table,
Yawns, settles in a chair
And gulps his black coffee;
Wanders to the car-stop;
Sits beside the window
In his usual spot,
And reads the morning star.

The Life Force, half awake,
Hurries from the time clock,
Home; walks across the park
To air the soul, starved, dry,
Left to choke on the smoke
And grime of the day's work;
Supper; the eternal tube;
The setting of the clock.

The Life Force, half asleep,
Face to face in the dark,
Sweat, groan, hurried motion;
Pause; thrust; time suspended,
Sighs and heavy breathing;
Silence, then separate.
Back to back. Time resumed.
The Life Force is reborn.



Fouad
Fanaki



TIME

LINDA BROWNE

THREE POEMS

THE RING

"The star of my love is gone
And left the golden chain.
Small diamond-love, lost, lost!
And never found again."

So wept the Mother bitterly
And beat her breast in spite,
Yet never sought that jewel-ring,
Nor saw its hidden light.

And seeing thus its Mother weep,
The Child screamed in fear,
'Twas I! 'Twas I! who took the ring,
(The love of a single year).

"It lies in silent music,
In untouched melodies;
I dropped it in a soundless cache
Of dust-choked memories."

But never did that jewel shine,
Nor kiss the golden chain:
The false Child kept the shining star
Where once two loves had lain.

SUM (AND FORGET ABOUT THE COGITO)

Come bring your little pots of glue;
I, poor man, am cleft in two.
DESCARTES the axe uplifted hath
With murd'rous homo-splitting wrath.

Cement me! Cement me!
I hate this schizoid life:
The animal, the rational,
Know not their proper strife.

"United we stand,
Divided we fall."
O, DESCARTES, villain!
I am All!

THE PERSISTENCE OF MEMORY

Your image lives within my brain
And daily to my sleeping heart
Travels on the neuron-train
To foul up all my dreams again.

Oh blast your curst remembered smile
Which, Cheshire-like,
Unbodied quite,
Lingers on
When you're

Gone.

PETER COURSCHESENE

Just A Simple Story

There was once a tiny domain, a sheltered valley in England, that was ruled by a very wise king. The castle, and seat of his kingdom, stood like a dream, surrounded in mists, at the very bottom and centre of the valley. This was a most indefensible location, but the King had chosen it so that when he stood on the turrets he might survey every corner of his lands. To compensate for this low-lying position, the King had made a moat to be built. And because he had a niceness about all things, he caused it to be square, as this could be dug more exactly than a circle. A dreadful moat it was. Thirty feet wide it was, perfect to the inch, and filled by a natural spring that was highly alkaline and caustic. So corrosive was it, that if a knight should drop his target in, it would sizzle and smoulder, and be gone like a puff of steam.

Now, the King was a scholar as well as a wise man. He was a patron of scholars, and of the arts, and of all things intellectual. And annually he would put up a great sum of gold, and would have it known that whoever could solve a certain puzzle he had designed, would win this great sum of gold, would be admitted to the court, and considered for some office—for the king believed that men should

prosper according to their ability. Such was his fame, that men of knowledge came from all parts of the Christian world to mingle in this court of wisdom.

The King held also that women should be educated and treated as equals. His daughters—he had no sons—were tutored in Latin and music, philosophy and science, and all the diverse branches of study. Of his many fair daughters, by far the most beautiful was Alma. She was young and tender, but perhaps a little too gay. Her beauty had reached its maturity and filled out each line of her form with a tempting, ravishing charm. A mere glance was enough to seduce a man's mind. And all the near-sighted eyes (for such is the effect of too much study) of the court, were fixed upon her whenever she passed. She, aware of their attention, might lift her crinoline a little too high, when climbing a stair, and expose the graceful turn of her ankle—such was her coyness. But in her heart there was a place for none but Bowlin.

The King's eldest daughter, however, was not so beautiful. Indeed, among her sisters, she seemed quite ugly. She was well into her twenties, and still not wed, and not betrothed, and not even in hopes of being courted. The King had much anxiety at this, for as yet, there was no male heir to the throne, and until the eldest, poor Myrtle, was married, his other daughters could not be wed. And Myrtle too, had much anxiety at this—and she was the only lady in the court who held a place in her heart for any but Bowlin.

Bowlin was the King's nephew—or so they hoped. For the mother of Bowlin had had a reputation of being overly kind to men. Indeed, Bowlin looked more like the late Duke than the King's brother. But the King was generous toward his nephew, and provided him with an income.

Bowlin was like his mother in many ways. He loved nature. He spent most of his days in the fields and forests, hunting the deer and the boar. Sometimes he would simply ride in the shaded woodlands or bask in the flowery fields. He spent his evenings at The Three Fiddlers Inn, with his tankard of ale—at cards, or the dice. On these occasions, he would wear the doublet embroidered with the emblem of the dunce, which was used as a pass into the castle by those lesser scholars who lived in the village. This disguise did away with the respect due his royal blood, and facilitated his success with the tavern maids—with whom he was very successful indeed. It was very seldom that he returned before dawn, and when he did, it was not to his own lodgings. This caused him some difficulty, for the King had made a law in the castle—to keep his scholars at their books—that the drawbridge should be raised at sunset. Bowlin had, however, devised a secret means of crossing the moat, and when his amours were done, he would return to the village until the morning, to divert suspicion.

Bowlin had no taste for studies. In spite of all the King's encouragement, and frequent reprimands, he could not acquire an interest in any subject except music. This he loved. He was seldom without

his lute, and had a delightful way of plucking it as he spoke. In the mornings, the sun would rise, the cock would crow, and Bowlin would appear down the dusty road, languishing along on his white stallion, strumming his lute, and singing an amorous ballad. Everyone smiled when they saw Bowlin. The ladies loved him. The scholars felt a little sorry for him.

Kadistro, the shrewdest of the court, felt sorry for no one. He ridiculed Bowlin continually, and caused some enmity between them, though Bowlin concealed his feelings in a laugh. Kadistro was a proud and arrogant young man, contemptuous of anyone who displayed the slightest inefficiency, or lack of intelligence. For several years he had won the annual contest and had gained some rather grudging acclaim. This he mistook for admiration, and it gave him the confidence to make frequent passionate advances at the ladies. But they were ineffectual, for none could bear his conceit. Finding himself avoided by everyone, he grew even more scornful. Consequently, he was banned from the court and forced to live in the village with the lesser scholars.

Now it happened that a rumour began to spread throughout the castle. It began among the ladies. It seemed there was a master of seduction in their midst who was having midnight meetings with many of the gentlewomen. The scandal became the centre of conversation when several ladies admitted their intrigues. The fellow, it seemed, did not only make love to the women, but left them loving him. They refused to disclose his name, and only sighed dreamily when he was mentioned. The men became intensely alert for any signs that might show suspicions of such a rendezvous.

So it was, that very late one night, the old Count Millamouche, returning from the archives, was waddling down the corridor when he saw the fair Alma, clad only in her silks, hanging to the silhouette of a man, their lips clinging. The old man screamed, "Villainy!" in his high, squeaky voice. Immediately the iron heels of the King's own guards, who had been put in readiness for such an incident, came clattering up the stone staircase. But in an instant the man had gone, and the Count had not had a chance to recognize him.

The King heard the disturbance, threw on his ermine robe, and calling for a torch, strode through the castle to Alma's bedroom.

Though he stamped his foot several times, Alma insisted it was beneath her honour to betray such a lover. The Count was in a dither of giggles and exclamations, and when at last he was quieted, he could provide only one clue. The gallant had worn the doublet with the emblem of the dunce. The King demanded that the affair be kept in the utmost secrecy.

The sentries were confident that no one had passed either in or out of the castle all night, and that the drawbridge had not been let down since nightfall. The King ordered that in the morning, a thorough search be conducted for a doublet with a dunce emblem, and that until it was found, the drawbridge should not be lowered.

In the morning, as Bowlin came strumming down the road, the

search was begun. The guards investigated every room and closet. They looked through the towers and the dungeon. They turned through the straw in the stables. They ransacked the kitchen. They even searched the chambers of the King. And then they began again, studying every inch of the castle. But they could find no trace of a doublet with a dunce emblem. So the Captain of the guards came to the King and reported his failure. The King asked if they had searched the inner ledge of the moat. The Captain said he had, and felt that such a lover must be a demon of some sort — and certainly had vanished quite away. The King ordered that a search be made of the outer fields of the moat. "Why so?" asked the guard, for the moat could not be crossed. The King stamped his foot furiously and ordered that the search be conducted at once. And so, it was.

Soon the Captain of the guards returned to say they had uncovered nothing; that furthermore, a boat would rot to pieces before it could get across; that there were, for that matter, no manner of boats in the countryside, or in the neighboring countryside; that there never was a bridge; that no living thing could swim in the alkali, or jump the moat, and, in short, that only a bird could cross it Sir, Your Majesty, if he didn't mind his saying so, Sir.

At this, the King roared that a horse be made ready, for he would continue the investigation himself. So the King rode over the drawbridge and around the moat, and around it again — and again and again. And as the Captain had said, there were no clues to be found. Then he sat down on a rock and thought to use his intellect. At length he decided that the east corner would be the most likely place to cross, for here the forest grew almost down to the water's edge, and could be used to cover one's approach. Besides, the drawbridge sentries were on the west. So he rode around to the east side of the castle. There, after a long and tedious search, he discovered two long, sturdy planks, hidden among some shrubs at the margin of the forest. The Captain's men tried them on the moat, but to their disappointment, found them both to be a little too short. The King again sat down upon a rock to ponder. He looked at the planks — then at the moat. He lifted his crown to scratch his head. He looked at the moat again. And then his eyes began to glow, and a slow grin crossed his face. "That's it, by Jove!" exclaimed the King, and he climbed to his horse laughing, and rode back to the castle.

Back in his state room, the King said that it was again time for his annual contest. The prize was to go to the first man who could discover a way to cross the moat with the help of only two planks that were both a little too short — and nothing else. This year, there was to be a very special reward, the nature of which was to remain unknown, that it might be a surprise to all. So said the King. So was it done.

The appointed day came, and every man of the King's domain assembled for the contest. All except Bowlin, who had no taste for studies, and whose allowance was comfortable enough. The King was there to preside, and the Count and Kadistro were there, and all the

scholars and nobility, the meanest and the greatest. Myrtle was there too, to watch the proceedings.

The sun slid up the sky and watched. The crowd stood dead in thought, for each would have but one attempt. The hours wore on. The King smiled to himself, and Myrtle fidgeted. It was high noon when the first attempt was made. A mighty knight gripped one of the planks and rushed at the moat. He tried to pole-vault. But the heavy plank caught too soon, and he was flung into the alkali. There was a wild hiss, a few bubbles—and that was all. The King bit his lip. Myrtle wrung her hands. The next contender tried to use the planks as stilts, but they were far too awkward to handle. He was more fortunate, merely breaking a leg. The King laughed at this. Myrtle wrung her hands. So the day wore on, and a few half-hearted entries took the planks to the moat, and tried them again. But, finding the boards still too short, they shrugged, and gave up. The King frowned, and rested his head on his hand, and drummed his fingers on the arm of his chair. And Myrtle wrung her hands. It was almost sunset, and the crowd was dispersing. when Kadistro came forward. "Ha! It's elementary," he said, "The prize is mine."

"First, try!" said the King.

So, with a sneer, Kadistro dragged the planks back to the edge. He took the first, and laid it at a forty-five degree angle, across the corner of the moat. Then he picked up the second, and walking out on the first, laid it down from the center of the first plank to the inner corner of the moat. Then he laughed triumphantly, and came to the King.

"I claim my reward," he said through the cheers.

The King held up his hand and the crowd was silent.

"You shall have it," said the King, "But first, let it be known that there are good reasons why I have chosen to give a very special prize this year. Let it also be known, that never again will the King give such a reward, but that it will, as before, be a sum of gold." The crowd watched intently. The King turned to Kadistro. "Since," he said, "your ability shows you to be worthy of all I can give, and for other reasons, best known to you, I shall give you a choice. I urge you to choose wisely. This is your choice: you may have either the hand of my eldest daughter in marriage, or a year in which to widen the moat, by your own labor."

Kadistro's mouth fell open.

The crowd tried not to laugh.

Myrtle blushed.

During the day, Bowlin had taken advantage of the empty castle to plan a rendezvous with Alma. Now, as the moonlight fell through the casement window upon the sheets where they lay together, they could hear below the muttering of curses, and the clink of a single shovel striking stones. "How will you manage to come to me now, my darling?" Alma asked.

Bowlin answered, "Never worry, dearest."

TERRY LEEDER

QUEER

An old lady, kind of queer
Lives here
Letting her yard tangle with crab grass,
Long, shaggy, full of junk,
Her porch all cluttered,
Her house unpainted, rickety
Peering amid bushes.

Plenty of room to imagine
What she's like —
Old, tottering,
Lonely, queer — in fact
If we still believed in witches
We'd burn her.

BILL WYETT

THE FALCON

The swift-winged falcon, far aloft, did spy
A common pigeon flapping heedless by.
Silently, surely, the falcon struck her prey
And the pigeon's life was ended in the fray.
Oh woe, alas! that thus all life must be,
And men, like birds, wreak havoc endlessly.



Paul Stager

KEE DEWDNEY

THE PIG AND THE SUN

The pig watched the sun
Come up one day.
"Let's have some fun;"
Said the pig to the sun,
"Let's have some fun;
Together we'll play
While the people toil
In the soil all day."

"Oh good!" cried the sun
To the frolicsome swine,
"I don't have much fun
On this orbital line.
We'll play for a while
And I'll no longer shine
For mile after mile,
With the same old smile,
Down the same old line."

So off the two flew
Through the brightening air.
"The earth looks so new,"
Said the sun, "I declare —
To look at it this way
Gives one quite a scare!"
Said the pig, "We've all day!"
And on flew the pair.

Together they danced
O'er a field full of corn.
Said the pig as he pranced,
"Ever since I was born,
There's nothing I've tasted
That's better than corn.
For corn-haters, I've nothing
But bitterest scorn."

An old lady was putting
Some corn in her hat.
"How strange!" said the sun;
Cried the pig, "Fancy that!"
With the corn-picking done,
On the brown earth she sat,
Ate up the corn-cobs,
Then ate up her hat.

Said the pig with a frown,
"She's no right to do that."
And he quickly flew down
Where the old lady sat.
"Now see here, good dame,"
Sneered the pig, "you'll get fat!
Besides, corn is for pigs;
I thought you knew that."

The old lady's reply
Was willful and short.
"I eat corn on the sly,"
She declared with a snort,
"To augment my diet
Of hats and tin cans,
Gear-bolts and wires,
And electrical fans."

"Never mind the old thing,"
Said the sun with a smile,
And he burned up the corn
For a solid square mile.
The fire was swell
But a bit in excess,
For the lady as well
Was a flaming success!

Such disfavour they'd done
To the corn-eating lady,
That the pig and the sun
Both felt a bit shady.
Each blaming the other,
They flew far out to sea,
Where together they cried,
"Fiddle-dee-dee!"

The pig and the sun
Flew on for a week,
When the pig cried at last,
"I'm getting quite weak!"
"Me too", sighed the sun,
"I'm afraid it's the end,
For land is too far,
And my strength will not mend

Together they sank
To the wind-curved waves.
Together they sank
To their watery graves.
And later, much later,
By a trawler were found:
The sun quite extinguished,
The pig quite drowned.

FUMIO MATSUMURA

Departure

After all Ching was sorry to move from this place. The late November was unusually warm and pleasant. All crops had been harvested on the prairie. Huge puffed-up, cumulus clouds drifted like icebergs across the inky sky. From Ching's house on the bank of the Bow River one could see miles and miles of gently rolling prairie. The harvested wheat fields shone like gold, and the huge shadows of the clouds floated like dark islands in a golden sea. An old yellow school bus rattled across the field, and squeaked to a stop in front of Ching's house.

"Sorry, Ching does not go to school anymore. We are moving out," yelled Ching's twenty year-old brother, a husky Chinese fellow at the gate of the farm.

Ching hid behind a bush. After a few moments the bus again started moving towards the south.

"Well, I don't have to go to that school anymore," Ching thought, watching the cloud of dust that followed the bus.

"Now all the kids are back in school," Ching thought as he watched the bus disappearing behind the hill that hid Vauxhall, a town with three elevators, three grocery stores, and Ching's elementary school.

At the school a hockey match between Vauxhall school and the Taber elementary school had been scheduled for this afternoon. The hockey training had been exciting and the players were all so eager and good that the coach, Mr. Henderson, couldn't choose between the players. Ching didn't skate. His family had recently migrated from Hong Kong to southern Alberta, and they were very poor. During their two years in Alberta, the family had slaved like devils on their truck crop farm. And they had produced enormous quantities of potatoes. But they had produced too much; and markets seemed hard to find, apparently because Ching's father's English was extremely broken. Finally the family sold the potatoes to the wholesale house in Taber at forty cents a sack. And so the cost of production was not covered. The banker was angry that the loan for the machinery was not repaid. By raising hogs the neighboring farmers maintained a stable income; but Ching's father had no hogs. And so Ching couldn't possibly afford a pair of skates. In any case he was too small to be a hockey player. In fact he was the smallest in his class, so he maintained that he did not like

skating.

Mr. Henderson didn't like this, and neither did Ching's fellow students. Everybody thought Ching was crazy. How could he possibly dislike this fine Canadian sport? Mr. Henderson tried to get Ching to start skating, but Ching persistently refused to do so.

Practically everybody in this district had gone to watch the game today. Ching vividly remembered last year's game. The day had been very cold, and he had nearly frozen to death in his thin, scanty jacket. Every kid was buying chewing-gun and candies except Ching, who received no allowance. Some of Ching's school-mates had asked Ching why he was not buying anything. Ching had replied that he had already spent his money. People had said that Ching was a silly kid.

It was getting cold, and Ching moved into the backyard of the house where the barn and the kitchen of the main house formed a comfortable, windless spot, still remembering last year's incidents.

Yes, this chewing-gum incident reminded him of another painful affair. Some boys had chewed gum in the class without being discovered. One day Ching bought a stick of gum with a penny which he got from his brother, and he chewed while in the class. He just wanted to be friendly. Miss Ferguson, a tall, thirty-five year old spinster went wild when she saw that Ching was chewing the gum in her class.

That night Ching had returned to his home with a letter from Miss Ferguson.

"Ching," his father called from the house, which was a peculiar mixture of old Chinese and Western styles, with a red brick chimney, unpainted wall and roof, and a red-painted narrow dark entrance.

"Yah, Dad. What do you want?" Ching got down from the tree in which he was sitting and contemplating and yelled.

"Ching! What an impolite way to speak to your father," shouted Ching's father impatiently. "You are getting worse every day, and pretty soon you will see what kind of juvenile you will be."

Ching ignored the old man's complaints, and walked into the house through the back door. In the darkness there was a naked lamp hanging from the ceiling, and just below the lamp the old man sat on a chair, packing clothes.

"You go and wash the cows, and give them enough food and water. They are going to have a new master pretty soon, and I want them to be clean," said the old man to Ching without looking at him. Ching soon left the place before the old man could give him another shout.

Here Ching was with three cows and a small calf in the barn. A part of this barn was used by Ching's brother as a garage for his old Studebaker, and there was plenty of dry hay. Ching liked the place very much. In fact it offered him a cosy shelter away from any trouble. Yes, there were the neighbor's big, husky boys who always scared Ching, and there was his big brother who always wanted to give orders.

Ching started washing the cows, whistling, and splashing water here and there. He liked the job.

"Hey Bertha. How are you getting along, ha?" he spoke to one

of the cows and patted her back. "Heck, you are getting fat. Aren't you? Oh you goofy fella. You shouldn't eat too much eh?" He talked like a big boy.

For about an hour he cleaned each cow carefully, and thoroughly wiped them with dry cloths. He always liked to do a good job. He looked the cows over from the side, the front, and from every possible angle, and he was very much satisfied.

"Well, you guys are comfortable now. Aren't you? This time I am gonna give you a lot of food eh?" he spoke to them and he brought as much food as he could find. They were busy eating, and Ching could never get tired of watching them.

"So you guys behave yourselves when you get the new master eh?" Ching kept talking.

"What are you talking?" Ming, Ching's brother yelled at Ching as he came in. "You loony guy. You'd better stop talking to yourself. Are you crazy?"

Ching kept quiet, going back to the door slowly, still keeping his eyes on Ming.

"Did you pack and load all your stuff?" asked Ming.

Ching remembered some of his stuff in his closet and said, "No, Ming, but I will do it right now," and he started running away from his brother who didn't even notice how clean and well fed the cows were.

It was a terrible mess all over the room in which Ching had a small bed and a small closet against the wall just below a small window. Ching's brother had packed everything already, and Ching's things were all over the room.

"Gosh, who did this!" shouted Ching madly kicking the floor, when he found his paintings strewn all over it.

Ching liked painting very much, and in fact he could paint better than anybody in his class. Once he sketched cows so well that Miss Ferguson wanted to recommend the picture to the contest in the province. Miss Ferguson was shocked, and offended when she learned that Ching didn't want to present the picture to the contest.

"What a conceited child," she later told one of the school committees. After this incident Ching quit painting in the school. In the class he intentionally drew poor pictures; he wanted to be just like other boys. And finally everybody laughed at him when Miss Ferguson gave him an E in the art course.

And now Ching was really mad. He kicked the pictures, and stripped all the drawings from the wall.

"I don't need them. I don't need them. To heck with them," he cried, banging the wall.

"Stop making noise," the old man shouted from the next room. "Or do you need another whipping? Kids these days know no manners at all." The old man said the last few words to himself in a low voice.

Ching wiped his tears with his sleeve, collected all the pieces of paper, and went out with them, determined not to paint anymore.

The afternoon passed slowly. It was amazing that there were so many things in this small house, and it seemed almost impossible to load them into that small half-ton truck.

By the evening, everything was packed. Thank Goodness everything was over. The old man sat at the door and lit a long-necked pipe. Ching came and sat on a log, a few feet away from the old man, putting his elbows on his knees and holding his chin in his palms.

The evening sunshine reflected on the surface of the Bow River, and illuminated the gentle curves and bends of the river rolling across the rather dark prairie. It was becoming chilly and dark. Ching moved the log, so that he could stay in the sunny spot. A wind started blowing, and it slowly pushed golden clouds towards the south.

Ming came out with a dark parka, and stood beside the old man. He lit a cigarette, and looked over the darkening prairie. There were three elevators at the end of the horizon in black silhouettes. A glorious sunset it was. They watched the sunset until the last trace of the golden arrows disappeared. Winds started howling.

"Shall we move?" Ming broke the silence, putting his cigarette case into his pocket. The old man nodded.

"Yes, it's going to be late," said he.

The truck was running fairly fast. Ching sat between the two big men, and looked like a mouse among lions. In the darkness Ching wondered where he was going, but he could not ask anybody. Ching kept thinking; once Ming told Ching that there was a job in the east.

"Maybe that's it", Ching thought in a half-sleeping condition, and stopped worrying.

They came to Vauxhall where there was a junction of the main highway. The town was fairly crowded after the hockey match. Many people were roaming around the town. In the distance they could even hear the brass-band music. They must have won the game. The truck speeded up, and Ching sank between the two men even deeper than before in the hope that he would see no people he knew.

The truck slowed down at the school corner. Then the air was split by the crash of the town's brass band. School children suddenly swarmed around the truck. Ming slammed on the brakes. Ching was so flabbergasted to see the children smiling and yelling, "Good-bye Ching. We are sorry you are leaving."

Everybody was smiling at Ching, Miss Ferguson, George, Jimmy, and absolutely everybody. In the crowd Ching could see Mr. Henderson coming forward with his face full of warm smile. Finally he came to Ching, and grabbed Ching's hands.

"Good-bye Ching. This is my son's old pair of skates, but I hope you will like them," said Mr. Henderson, handing a pair of skates to Ching.

Ching received the skates, bowed twice, and escaped into the truck. And there he cried. Somebody patted Ching's back

But this time nobody laughed at him.



Fouad Fanaki

DROUGHT

JIM WHITEHEAD

Playing "Chicken" In Nigeria

I don't know a lot about African current events, but I did happen to be in Nigeria last year before the Nigerians finally gained independence. I guess that makes me an expert on Nigeria. Seriously though, I can only remember one event that might be useful in an evaluation of Nigeria's new position and I don't know quite how to fit it in with the rest of my information on Africa, which incidentally is derived solely from Time magazine and Dr. Thomas' appearances on TV.

It was a Saturday night and my father was driving us back along the one track dirt road which leads north out of Kano and ends at Katsina, about eighty miles away, near the north border of Nigeria. The mission station and leprosarium at Katsina is my father's home for four out of every five years. We had been to Kano, which is the capital and only important city of Northern Nigeria, and were returning with medicine for the hospital. We travelled at night because it was a lot cooler. The rains had been long enough gone so that the dirt road was dusty, but the tall grass, which grew right up to the road, was still green and there was still a little water in the streams.

We could hear them long before they came into sight, two open-box trucks packed with laughing natives in brightly colored dresses and sport shirts. We were driving about thirty-five miles per hour in a Land Rover jeep, plenty fast enough for that road at night. They gainly rapidly on us and Dad pulled over out of the ruts as much as

he could and stopped. I didn't see how they could pass but they didn't slacken pace perceptibly until they were upon us. At the last second the first truck wrenched out of the ruts and passed us through the head high grass at the side of the road. The second truck followed right behind.

I guess I was pretty excited but Dad calmly resumed our journey. "Remember that river with the wooden bridge?" he asked. I said I remembered the bridge well; it was about twenty miles north of Kano. It was long and narrow and had no railing.

"I think we will see those trucks again at the bridge," he said.

He was right. As we approached the bridge we saw both trucks; one was stopped about two hundred yards from the bridge on our side of the stream and the other was about the same distance on the other side. It was a strange sight; both truckloads of natives were still laughing loudly and their voices mingled with the crazy laughter of unseen hyenas in the bright moonlit sky above the bridge. The bridge itself seemed odd. It was flat, set high on poles and it had rather steeply inclined ramps at each end. The stream was a trickle flowing through a much wider expanse of thick mud on each side.

I could now see clearly that they were about to play "chicken". The rules of the game were frighteningly simple. It was a race for the bridge; the victor would cross the bridge first and the chicken would stop or turn aside before the bridge. There could be no doubt about which truck had won, since it was a one lane road and bridge.

We took in the scene at a glance and were just slowing down when the far truck sounded its horn, and the game began. The truck on the other side seemed to get the best start, but by the time they reached the bridge their lead was slight and both trucks were still accelerating. We had followed a short distance and saw clearly what was happening. The truck from the far side hit the bridge a split second before the truckload of brightly colored laughter from our side. I had a terrible feeling that they weren't going to have a winner, but at the last possible second, just as it hit the inclined ramp the nearest truck turned "chicken" and took off over the mud and water. Time seemed to stop as the grotesque, brightly plumaged bird flew over the mud.

It was an incredibly silent and long moment but it was over when the great bird turned truck again and landed in the mud of the far bank. The truck landed on two wheels and toppled over on its side, depositing its still laughing load of brightly clad natives upside down in the mud. That crazy, wonderful laughter continued, even increased, but the blaze of color changed to an almost uniform brownness. Brown muddy shirts and dresses, beautiful brown legs and even bare brown buttocks were exposed to sight and to the still laughing night.

I will never forget that sight, but it was only later that I realized that the natives I had seen in the mud were not rebels or crackpots but educated office workers and machine operators, the new middle-class of Africa. It was only then that I began to wonder about Nigeria.

MALCOLM FRASER

IN THE WINE CELLAR

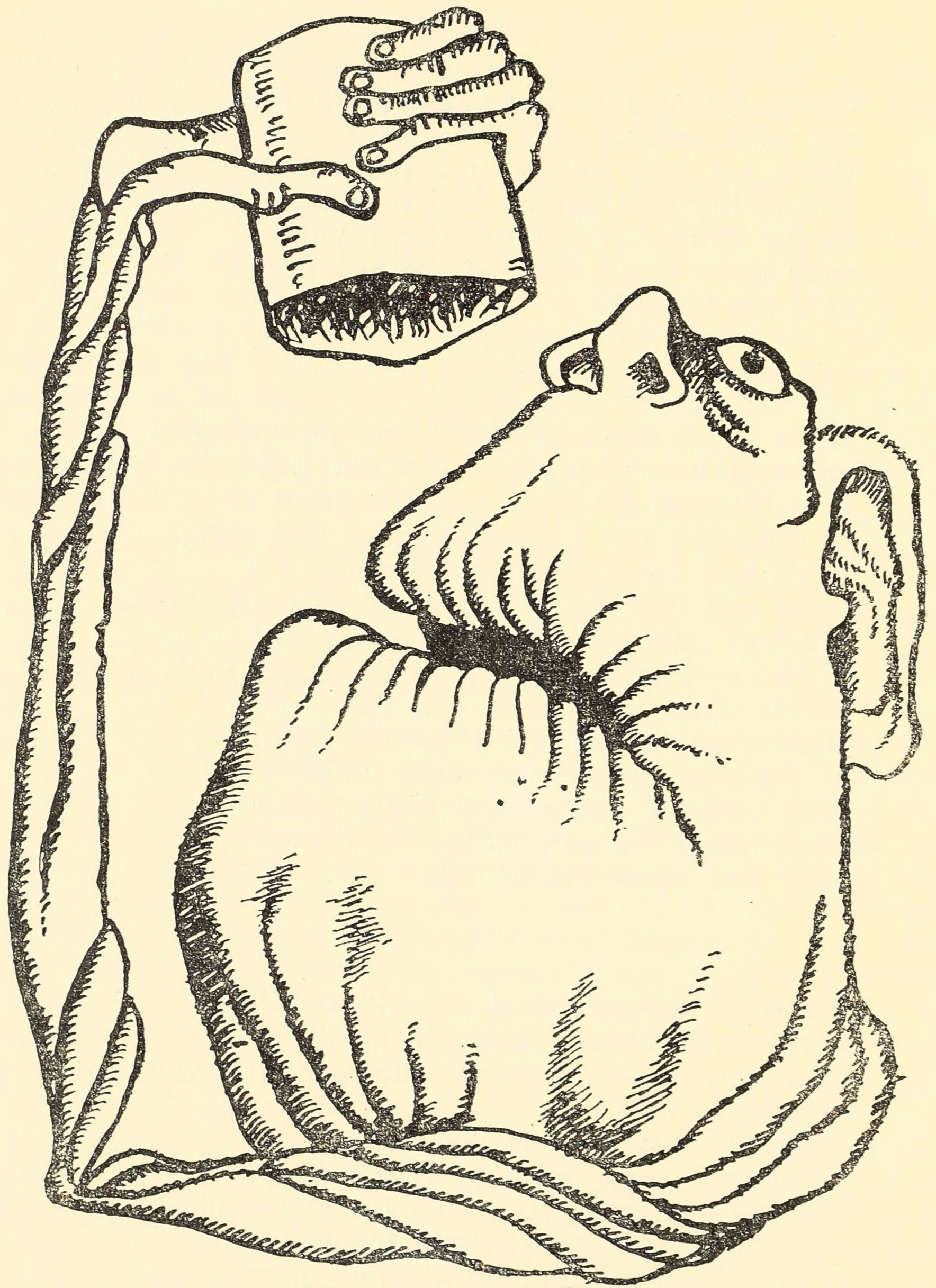
Come, forget your fears and journey to
my wine cellar.

There we may uncork a bottle brown
and in the cool depths find a village
to our liking. A place perhaps with
song upon the wind and the security
of a hot bath!

There is no clock to sound and no incessant
whirring twixt the ears. The sun will
filter through the trees and the greys
of dragging for a drowned soul will end.
There will be but one island down the
wind and that the island of love's uniqueness.
See that pale glass jar with jellybeans
of red and yellow, green and orange, that
stands upon the mantle o'er the fire?
Their many colors stand for the hours
of the clock that is not there while
their constant shape and sugar-crusted
coats mean the only state which one
may find upon the island.

We shall leave behind the bitter wind
that howls outside. But take heed for
on our way we must pass through a scented
garden in which grow gourds and sweet
fruits. Not to tarry is the word.

Come, our cups are dry from our journey
and 'tis a good sweet wine. The sediment
which lies upon the bottom there is but
a sad reminder that outside the streets
are filling up with snow. I have a friend
in the drabness of this clime and to my
friend I drink a cup. This one's not clear
for it is the bottom, but in drinking
down the thickest part we may reach for
that new bottle turned only last week.



Fouad Fana Ki

THIRST

BOB GARRISON

THE CLEF CLUB

I walk down the slow stairs into the night of the pale blue light,
Where cigarettes smear the air with foggy breath that tears my eyes.
The folk-singer chants with limpid lips and beardy face and
Fondles his guitar strings with knowing fingers. Everybody
Sits and coffee sits and the singer stands on a pile of dust.
I dissolve in the atmosphere and float in the smoke.
I lose myself in the foreign song and become a note.
I slide down the singer's throat and pass through his warm blood,
I slip under his fingernail and vibrate out the length of the string.
I fill the room with my echoing and bounce back on the singing
Tongue, slip through the teeth and become a word, following one,
Preceding another, a part of the whole, belonging.
Exulting, I ricochet from wall to wall and settle on a
Picture of something black, amorphous. I feel the picture caress
Me, and I caress it with my mind's hands, and do not want
To leave it, for it loved me and succoured me and I loved it and
felt it.

But I crept away to the grave on the other wall. It told me secrets
That I already knew but did not realize I knew until it lent
Me its cobwebbed whisper. I sat with a spider on its loft and
I saw the people melting in the candle-light on the tables
Looking like they wanted to burn away sad-eyed, sorry, all
Lonely in life's cellar, lonely together. I loved them then and
Passed from lip to lip in a cigarette and kissed all of them.
But they did not know it, so I cheated back into the song
And told them everything — and then I left because
I did not know them.

CATHY McVICAR

TWO POEMS

SUMMER PEACE

The farmer halts to mop his sweating brow.
The far-off fragrance of his new-mown hay
Comes drifting from the fields. His cocker pups
Are frisking on the lawn in joyful play.

Within the farm-house kitchen, jam is made
From berries crimson-stained and richly sweet.
A drowsy kitten lifts an ear to hear
The shrill cicada singing in the heat.

This is the essence of his summer-time —
Of new green peas and corn still in the husk,
Of evenings filled with rosy-tinted skies,
And fireflies like stars to light the dusk.

VALEDICTION

"So long", he said, and kissing me,
He left his heart with mine.
Then went away to fight the war
On some vague battle line.

I cherished those parting words
For all he had not said.
"So long" . . . with bravest unconcern
To cover up the dread.

But when the days slid into days,
The words began to burn.
So long . . . he had been gone so long . . .
And still did not return.

The letter came, but not from him.
I barely read the words.
"He died in action yesterday."
Yet still his voice I heard . . .

"So long". But now his tone implied
Eternity concealed.
And that which I could only glimpse
To him was all revealed.

RUTH STRANGWAYS

ASHTAROTH OF THE OZARKS

or

The Tattletale-gray Goddess

by Sir J. G. Graves

FOREWORD

Quite recently there has come into my possession a document which sheds light on the exciting possibility of a lost mystery cult, whose existence had not been so much as suspected even by experts since it was suppressed (so we suppose) by invading conquerors of another cult. The centre of the lost cult appears to have been the Ozark hill country of eastern North America.

With this brief introduction to serve as background I shall now let the document (a charmingly simple, repetitive folk song) speak for itself.

I. A PAGAN PENTECOST

"She'll be coming round the mountain when she comes", so runs the first verse. No effort is made to hide the fact that the awaited one is expected to appear on or near a mountain, and I feel (even though in the Ozarks it might be difficult to appear anywhere else) that this phrase definitely suggests a cult of the same type as those in other areas whose worship of a fertility goddess was centred on or near a mountain.¹

II. A STRAIGHT SIX?

The second verse is, "She'll be driving six white horses when she comes." Undoubtedly the number six is of special significance in the symbol system of the cult, and vestiges of this significance can still be found among the present-day inhabitants of the area in which the cult flourished. Their calendar, for example, has six months in each half year and six days in each week.² Another trace of this same symbolic importance is apparent in a second folk song, frequently heard at the time of the winter solstice festivities, in the lines

"On the sixth day of Christmas my true love sent to me
Six swans a-swimming . . ."

(Some versions have moved the swans to the seventh day, but this attempt at concealment is merely additional support for the importance of the number six.) These six swans are really the six white horses, which were flying horses. The horses were called the Pegasi, and they have given their name to a modern folk hero³ of the area.

III. SHADES OF "PSYCHO"⁴

Verse three at last allows us to grasp the significance of the recurring pronoun "she". Here we learn that "she'll be wearing red pyjamas when she comes". The significant word is "pyjamas": it is obvious to

¹ e.g. Mount Helicon, Mount Royal, and others.

² Sunday doesn't count, except in Toronto.

³ "Pogo" masc. sing. poss. ger. of "Pegasus."

⁴ etymologically related to "Pogo"—see chapter two.

anyone who is familiar with this local costume that the mysterious figure is a transvestite, or a sort of Tiresias figure. This inference is further supported by the fact that the Hebrew word for "she" is pronounced "he".

An interesting surviving form of this word "pyjamas" is the code form "P.J.'s". Reversed in order, these two initials are often heard as a form of address for the chief-priest figures of the present cult; in their original order they stand for Paul Jones, the name of a symbolic dance performed in two concentric circles, one made up of men and moving clockwise and the other made up of women and moving counterclockwise. It is thought that the dance portrays the opposing forces of life and death, or the waxing versus the waning year.

IV. THE WORSHIPPER'S WELCOME

"We will all run out to meet her when she comes", is the wording of the fourth verse—a wording which barely conceals the raw irony of the situation described, for the original song had not "meet" but "eat". You will remember from chapter three that "she" is really "he", and now it becomes clear that "he" is the incarnation of the God of the Waning Year and hence must die at the annual mid-winter sacrifice. We were given a hint of this in verse three in the symbolic color of the pyjamas, i.e. red. However, verse five deals with this matter more fully.

V. WHO KILLED COCK ROBIN

Verse five is, "We will kill the old red rooster when she comes." Here a slight ambiguity arises in connection with the pronoun "she": is its antecedent the same mysterious figure as in the preceding verses, or is it the rooster? (Remember, this latter alternative would not involve an error in gender because "she" is actually "he"—see chapter three). After carefully considering both possibilities I have concluded that both are intended, since the rooster is a symbol for the one who is coming.

However, pressing on to the major issue of this verse, we can no longer doubt that what is being described is the sacrificial slaughter of the Old King or God of the Waning Year. Every detail of the symbol points to this interpretation: the rooster is often called "the monarch of the flock;" the color "red" suggests blood, altar-fires, and flannel

pyjamas (see chapter three); and red also has associations with the liquidation of the old in connection with the inauguration of the new. This practice of ritual rooster-killing, still observable at certain seasons among the present people of the area, is covertly referred to in the folk-ballad from which my chapter heading is taken: "cock" is an obvious repetition of the rooster icon and "robin", though a partial disguise, begins with the same two letters as "rooster".

VI. FOUL PLAY

In this verse the ritual cannibalistic eating of the old king-god's flesh is masked in the innocent lines, "We will all have chicken and dumplings when she comes." An interesting anthropological note is that the consumption of chicken or other fowl to symbolize this Black Sacrament survives in the present cultus as part of the mid-winter feast, which is called "Christmas".⁵

VII. THEBES REVISITED

The last step in the cult's secret mid-winter ceremony was the finalization of the kingship of the new God of the Waxing Year in an oedipal rite of consummation with the priestess incarnating the fertility goddess or Earth Mother.⁶ In the folk song this relation has been removed one generation in order to veil its incestuous nature. The final verse (according to the document which I received), with which the lost cult fades back into the mists of time, sounds the climactic note: "I shall have to sleep with Grandma when she comes."

⁵ This tendency for a religious group to have a special foodstuff is quite prevalent, other examples being the Quakers and their oats or the Lutherans and their Diet of Worms.

⁶ Her name was probably "Mom", and various remnants of her cultus have been described by my colleague, Mr. Wylie.

LINDA BROWNE

The Tagger

She walks swiftly, self-consciously, from the Retarded Children's School Appeal Headquarters towards her allotted corner. From a string around her neck hangs the makeshift box containing a tangled heap of tags and an empty chocolate tin with a slit for money. The box is light and sways a little as she hurries through the crowd of late Friday afternoon shoppers. She passes others selling tags, grins faintly at them; like conspirators, they return the smile. These strangers posted at every corner are her fellows, united in a secret brotherhood of taggers. Unsuspectingly, the public moves past them, until the challenge, "Help the Retarded Children!" stops them for contributions.

"Help the Retarded Children!" cry her fellow tag-sellers. A strange chant, she thinks, that is not a command or a question or a plea. A sing-song executed with slight forward lean, the cry is a ritual devoid of meaning. Most holy and merciful Father, we acknowledge our sinful nature—clink, clink. Help the Retarded Children and forgive us our conscience. Silently the crowds hit metal on metal, coins in the tins, and button on the blue-lettered tags. The tribute paid, the symbolic

badges affixed, the crowds move on, somnolent pilgrims bearing the cross.

She feels distaste for these dreary rites, and vows not to stand, a glassy-eyed priestess, for two hours at her corner. But without the magic formula, how should she appeal to the passers-by? The people at headquarters had given no specific instructions to their volunteer taggers: with a sigh of relief, they had merely distributed necessary equipment and assigned positions. Now, as she reaches her corner, she wonders what to say.

She settles on, "Will you help the retarded children?" with delicate emphasis on the *you*. Unspoken emphasis, too, on the children, the separate, solitary souls; never the Children, whose only existence is blue capitals on tags. As the coins fall into the tin, and as she hands out the tag, she will explain: "Your contribution helps build the school for retarded children". Each penny a drop of mortar, each dime a stick of wood, each quarter a piece of brick: never once will she forget the reality of the children and the school.

The red and yellow poster behind her screams of Laff-Sex-Murder thrills at the shabby corner movie-house, Temple of Iniquity with Evangelist in outer courts. A strong wind tears around the building from the river and stirs the tags. They flutter like trapped birds, then fold their wings and lie still. The girl glances at the gray sky and wonders if it will rain. People scurry past her as if they seek shelter.

But leisurely three boys stroll by, POLECAT princes, leather-jacketed lords of the streets. Hands in pockets, jingle of silver, cigarettes adroop from mouth at forty-five degree angle, long hair oil-groomed: such were these lordlings, splendid with smoke and scent.

"Will *you* help the retarded children?" She smiles nervously, in deference to power.

Black stares from the POLECATS. A clever one spits expertly past the curb and remarks, "Hey, look at the retarded kid on the corner!" "Haw, haw, haw!" Scorn of the mighty washes over the tagger.

But one, shorter than the rest, lags behind, shoves a nickel in the tin, mutely accepts the tag offered him. His eyes meet the girl's for a second; then she finds herself smiling at his retreating back, emblazoned with its scarlet scrawl. Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father. another soul acknowledged.

Tap, tap, tap-tap: a carefully-groomed matron strides by purposefully. Heels strike uneven pavement with a harsh staccato note. In reply to the girl's question, she flicks a tag already attached to her purse.

"Sorry, I didn't see . . .", the girl apologizes, and the woman smiles briefly, crisply. Her enamel cracks not a bit and the fragrance of bottled petals lingers on.

Some young girls in dingy white uniforms hurry by. They work in the hospital kitchen, and chatter in strange tongues about husky suitors. Fitful sunlight picks out the gold of the slender hoops that pierce their ears. Suddenly their high, thin laughter breaks out, crystal goblets shattering, and then is lost in the wind.

Lips moving in soundless soliloquy, a stooped old man shambles past. No teeth, but a thin stream of tobacco juice squirts from the side of his mouth. Grease-stained fedora and army shirt with half its buttons missing, but he digs into a pocket and unearths a shiny twenty-five cent piece, Roman treasure in a poor man's garden. He fastens his tag, nods slowly, passes on. Some have no memorial but their righteousness hath not been forgotten.

"Hi there!" the voice explodes in the girl's ear. A red-faced merchant, bald, bangs two quarters, both American, into the tin. "Always glad to help, heh heh." He looks around, smiles appreciatively, takes two tags, winks a cold blue eye. Roasted pig with golden apple in his mouth, and two tags flapping from the service club button in his lapel.

Her hair screwed tight in pin-curls, a young woman wearing a faded blue maternity smock stops. Pale pink-lipsticked mouth twists into an awkward smile, eyes fix on a distant point. "Just in case my baby ain't right . . . I'd want it took care of . . ." With their seed shall continually remain a good inheritance: their children are within the covenant.

The crowds move past, singly or in twos and threes. They stop at the corner or avert their eyes. A space creeps between them and they hasten to squeeze it forward. A man and his wife, farmers by their clothes, ignore the girl. Their eyes are heavenward, contemplating the threatening clouds. Another man studies the dirty sidewalk and his own muddy shoes. Girls glide by, ugly ducklings being swans. Tired women march on, blank faces row on row. The crowds move past, strange as in a dream, and one-dimensional as in a film.

"Mummy!" The wail of a small child punctures the hum of the crowds. A red balloon eludes his sticky grasp and sails across the busy intersection. Fluttering ineffectually, his mother tries to placate the boy, but his wails become screams of anger. The red balloon crumples into a thin wet rag as a car rolls over it.

His mother buys him a tag, which the girl fastens to his jacket. He stops crying, but his round brown eyes, round like the balloon, are tear-brimmed. Suffer, the little children.

The POLECAT boys return with three girls in Jamaica shorts. The wind is turning their carefully browned legs blue, so they enter the show. No one under eighteen is admitted but they can pass for twenty, if they have to.

As the first few heavy drops of rain break into dark blots on the pavement, the crowds begin to thin out. Glancing at her wrist-watch, the girl sees that her two hours have passed. She moves into step with the passers-by. The rain is cold and streaks the tags; Retarded Children blurs meaninglessly. But the girl pays little heed. The chocolate tin rattles with many coins; their jingling as she hurries along is almost a song.

"Help the Retarded Children!" challenges a wearied voice at the next corner. But this tagger is sheltered from the rain; her tags are not blurred. She does not see the people passing.

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