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EDITOR, HAROLD A. LOEB. ASSOCIATE EDITOR, EDWARD STORER. AMERICAN EDITOR, LOLA RIDGE.

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THE APOLLO OF VEII.

	Page
HYMN FROM A WATERMELON PAVILION — WALLACE STEVENS	185
SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR. ACT. I. — LUIGI PIRANDELLO	186
A LAST WORD — HENRY BELLAMAN	205
HEDGES — HENRY BELLAMAN.	206
JACQUES LIPCHITZ AND MY PORTRAIT BUST — JEAN COCTEAU	207
JEAN COCTEAU — LIPCHITZ	208
IMPROVISATIONS — CONRAD AIKEN	210
SCULPTURE — LIPCHITZ	216
MURDER — WALDO FRANK	220
STARS AT TALLAPOOSA — WALLACE STEVENS	236
CONVERSATIONS — S. FOSTER DAMON	236
ALL IS ONE — MARTIN ARMSTRONG	237
THE APOLLO OF VEII — EDWARD STORER	238
ETRUSCAN HEAD	241
IF YOU HAD THREE HUSBANDS — GERTRUDE STEIN	242
WASTE — LOLA RIDGE	247
POEMS — EDWARD STORER	248
THE LIMBO OF AMERICAN LITERATURE — GORHAM B. MUNSON.	250
DEDICATED TO THE ENEMY — GORDON CRAIG	261
MADE IN AMERICA — MATHEW JOSEPHSON	266
COMMENT	271

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THE APOLLO OF VEII

HYMN FROM A WATERMELON PAVILION

You dweller in the dark cabin,
To whom the watermelon is always purple,
Whose garden is wind and moon,

Of the two dreams, night and day,
What lover, what dreamer, would choose
The one obscured by sleep?

Here is the plantain by your door
And the best cock of red feather
That crew before the clocks.

A feme may come, leaf-green,
Whose coming may give revel
Beyond revelries of sleep,

Yes, and the blackbird spread its tail,
So that the sun may speckle,
While it creaks hail.

You dweller in the dark cabin,
Rise, since rising will not waken,
And hail, cry hail, cry hail.

WALLACE STEVENS

SIX CHARACTERS IN SEARCH OF AN AUTHOR

A COMEDY IN THE MAKING

ACT I.

CHARACTERS OF THE COMEDY IN THE MAKING:

THE FATHER — THE MOTHER — THE STEP-DAUGHTER — THE SON —
THE BOY — THE CHILD — (*The last two don't speak at all*) — MADAME
PACE.

ACTORS OF THE COMPANY:

THE MANAGER — LEADING LADY — LEADING MAN — SECOND LADY
LEAD — L'INGÉNUÉ — JUVENILE LEAD — OTHER ACTORS and ACTRESSES —
PROPERTY MAN — PROMPTER — MACHINIST — MANAGER'S SECRETARY —
DOOR-KEEPER — SCENE-SHIFTERS.

Daytime. The Stage of a Theatre.

N. B. *The Comedy is without acts or scenes. The performance is interrupted once, without the curtain being lowered, when the manager and the chief character withdraw to arrange the scenario. A second interruption of the action takes place when, by mistake, the stage hand let the curtain down.*

NOTE

The spectators will find the curtain raised and the stage as it usually is during the day time. It will be half dark and empty so that from the beginning the public may have the impression of an impromptu performance.

Prompter's box and a small table and chair for the manager.

Two other small tables and several chairs scattered about as during rehearsals.

*The actors and actresses of the company enter from the back of the stage: first one, then another, then two together: nine or ten in all. They are about to rehearse a Pirandello play *Mixing It Up*. Some of the company move off to-*

wards their dressing rooms. The prompter who has the « book » under his arm, is waiting for the Manager in order to begin the rehearsal.

The actors and actresses, some standing, some sitting, chat and smoke. One perhaps reads a paper; another cons his part.

Finally, the Manager enters and goes to the table prepared for him. His secretary brings him his mail, at which he glances. The prompter takes his seat, turns on a light, and opens the "book",.

THE MANAGER (*throwing a letter down on the table*). I can't see (*to Property Man*). Let's have a little light please.

PROPERTY MAN. Yes, Sir, yes, at once (*a light comes down on to the stage*).

THE MANAGER (*clapping his hands*). Come along! Come along! Second act of "Mixing it Up" (*sits down*).

(*The actors and actresses go from the front of the stage to the wings, all except the three who are to begin the rehearsal*).

THE PROMPTER (*reading the Book*). Leo Gala's house. A curious room serving as dining-room and study.

THE MANAGER (*to Property Man*). Fix up the old red room.

PROPERTY MAN (*noting it down*). Red set. All right.

THE PROMPTER (*continuing to read from Book*). Table already laid and writing desk with books and papers. Book-shelves. Exit rear to Leo's Bedroom. Exit left to kitchen. Principal exit to right.

THE MANAGER (*energetically*). Well, you understand. There is the principal exit. Here the kitchen. (*Turning to actor who is to play the part of Socrates*) You make your entrances and exits here. (*To Property Man*) The baize doors at the rear and curtains.

PROPERTY MAN (*noting it down*). Right oh!

PROMPTER (*reading as before*). When the curtain rises, Leo Gala, dressed in cook's cap and apron is busy beating an egg in a cup. Philip, also dressed as a cook, is beating another egg. Guido Venanzi is seated and listens.

LEADING MAN (*to Manager*). Excuse me, but must I absolutely wear a cook's cap?

THE MANAGER (*annoyed*). I imagine so. It says so there anyway (*pointing to Book*).

LEADING MAN. But it's ridiculous!

THE MANAGER (*jumping up in a rage*). Ridiculous! ridiculous! Is it my fault if France won't send us any more good comedies, and we are reduced to putting on Pirandello's works, where nobody understands anything, and where the author plays the fool with us all? (*The actors grin. The Manager goes to Leading Man and shouts*).

Yes sir, you put on the cook's cap and beat eggs. Do you suppose that with all this egg-beating business you are on an ordinary stage? Get that out of your head. You represent the shell of the eggs you are beating (*Laughter and comments among the actors*). Silence! and listen to my explanations please. (*to Leading Man*). The empty form of reason without the fullness of instinct, which is blind. You stand for reason, your wife is instinct. It's a mixing up of the parts, according to which you who act your own part become the puppet of yourself. Do you understand?

LEADING MAN. I'm hanged if I do.

THE MANAGER. Neither do I. But let's get on with it. It's sure to be a glorious failure anyway. (*confidentially*) But I say, please face three-quarters. Otherwise, what with the abstruseness of the dialogue, and the public that won't be able to hear you, the whole thing will go to hell. Come on! come on!

PROMPTER. Pardon sir, may I get into my box? There's a bit of a draught.

THE MANAGER. Yes, yes.

At this point, the door-keeper has entered from the stage door and advances towards the manager's table, taking off his braided cap. During this manoeuvre, the Six Characters enter, and stop by the door at back of stage, so that when the door-keeper is about to announce their coming to the Manager, they are already on the stage. A tenuous light surrounds them, almost as if irradiated by them — the faint breath of their fantastic reality.

This light will disappear when they come forward towards the actors. They preserve, however, something of the dream lightness in which they seem almost suspended, but this does not detract from the essential reality of their forms and expressions.

He who is known as THE FATHER is a man of about 50: hair, thin at the temples, but not bald, hair reddish in colour, and with thick moustaches, falling over his still fresh mouth, which often opens in an empty and uncertain smile. He is fattish, pale; especially on his wide forehead. He has blue, oval-shaped eyes, very clear and piercing. Wears light trousers and a dark jacket. He is alternatively mellifluous and violent in his manner.

THE MOTHER seems crushed and terrified as if by an intolerable weight of shame and abasement. She is dressed in modest black and wears a thick widow's veil of crêpe. When she lifts this, she reveals a wax-like face. She always keeps her eyes downcast.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER, eighteen, is dashing, almost impudent, beautiful. She wears mourning too, but with great elegance. She shows contempt for the timid half-frightened manner of the wretched

BOY (14 years old), also dressed in black. On the other hand, she displays a lively tenderness for her little sister

THE CHILD (about four) dressed in white, with a black silk sash at the waist.

THE SON (22) tall, severe in his attitude of contempt for THE FATHER, supercilious and indifferent to the MOTHER. He looks as if he had come on the stage against his will.

DOOR-KEEPER (*cap in hand*). Excuse me, sir.

THE MANAGER (*rudely*). Eh? What is it?

DOOR-KEEPER (*timidly*). These people are asking for you, sir.

THE MANAGER (*furiously*). I am rehearsing, and you know perfectly well no one's allowed to come in during rehearsals (*turning to the Characters*). Who are you please? What do you want?

THE FATHER (*coming forward a little, followed by the others who seem embarrassed*). As a matter of fact... we have come here in search of an author...

THE MANAGER (*half angry, half amazed*). An author? What author?

THE FATHER. Any author, sir.

THE MANAGER. But there's no author here. We are not rehearsing a new piece.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*vivaciously*). So much the better, so much the better. We can be your new piece.

AN ACTOR (*coming forward from the others*). Oh, do you hear that?

THE FATHER (*to Step-Daughter*). Yes, but if the author isn't here (*to Manager*). Unless you would be willing...

THE MANAGER. You are trying to be funny.

THE FATHER. No, for Heaven's sake, what are you saying? We bring you a drama, sir.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. We may be your fortune.

THE MANAGER. Will you oblige me by going away.? We haven't time to waste with mad people.

THE FATHER (*mellifluously*). Oh Sir, you know well that life is full of infinite absurdities, which, strangely enough, do not even need to appear plausible since they are true.

THE MANAGER. What the devil is he talking about?

THE FATHER. I say that to reverse the ordinary process may well be considered a madness: that is to create credible situations, in order that they may appear true. But permit me to observe that if this be madness, it is the sole *raison d'être* of your profession gentlemen (*The actors look hurt and perplexed*).

THE MANAGER (*getting up and looking at him*). So our profession seems to you one worthy of madmen then?

THE FATHER. Well, to make seem true that which isn't true without any need, for a joke as it were... Isn't that your mission gentlemen: to give life to fantastic characters on the stage?

THE MANAGER (*interpreting the rising anger of the Company*). But I would beg you to believe, my dear Sir, that the profession of the comedian is a noble one. If to-day, as things go, the playwrights give us stupid comedies to play and puppets to represent instead of men, remember we are proud to have given life to immortal works here on these very boards (*The actors, satisfied, applaud their Manager*).

THE FATHER (*interrupting furiously*). Exactly, perfectly, to living beings more alive than those who breathe and wear clothes. Beings less real perhaps, but truer. I agree with you entirely. (*The actors look at one another in amazement*).

THE MANAGER. But what do you mean? Before you said...

THE FATHER. No, excuse me, I meant it for you Sir, who were crying out that you had no time to lose with madmen, while no one better than yourself knows that nature uses the instrument of human fantasy in order to pursue her high creative purpose.

THE MANAGER. Very well. But where does all this take us?

THE FATHER. Nowhere. It is merely to show you that one is born to life in many forms, in many shapes, as tree, or as stone, as water, as butterfly, or as woman. So one may also be born a character in a play.

THE MANAGER (*with feigned comic dismay*). So you and these other friends of yours have been born characters?

THE FATHER. Exactly, and alive as you see (*Manager and actors burst out laughing*).

THE FATHER (*hurt*). I am sorry you laugh, because we carry in us a drama, as you can guess from this woman here veiled in black.

THE MANAGER (*losing patience at last and almost indignant*). Oh, chuck it! Get away please! Clear out of here! (*to Property Man*). For Heaven's sake turn them out!

THE FATHER (*resisting*). No, no, look here, we...

THE MANAGER (*roaring*). We come here to work you know.

LEADING ACTOR. One cannot let oneself be made such a fool of.

THE FATHER (*determined, coming forward*). I marvel at your incredulity, gentlemen. Are you not accustomed to see the characters created by an author spring to life in yourselves and face each other? Just because there

is no Book (*pointing to the Prompter's box*) which contains us, you refuse to believe . . .

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*advances towards Manager, smiling and coquettish*). Believe me, we are really six most interesting characters sir ; side-tracked however.

THE FATHER. Yes, that is the word (*to Manager all at once*). In the sense, that is, that the author who created us alive no longer wished or was no longer able materially to put us into a work of art. And this was a real crime sir, because he who has had the luck to be born a character can laugh even at death. He cannot die. The man, the writer, the instrument of the creation will die, but his creation does not die. And to live for ever it does not need to have extraordinary gifts or to be able to work wonders. Who was Sancho Panza ? Who was Don Abbondio ? Yet they live eternally because — live germs as they were — they had the fortune to find a fecundating matrix, a fantasy which could raise and nourish them : make them live for ever. !

THE MANAGER. That is quite all right. But what do you want here, all of you ?

THE FATHER. We want to live.

THE MANAGER (*ironically*). For Eternity ?

THE FATHER. No, sir, only for a moment in you.

AN ACTOR. Just listen to him.

LEADING LADY. They want to live in us.

JUVENILE LEAD (*pointing to the Step-Daughter*). I've no objection as far as that one is concerned.

THE FATHER. Look here ! look here ! The comedy has to be made. (*to the Manager*) But if you and your actors are willing, we can soon concert it among ourselves.

THE MANAGER (*annoyed*). But what do you want to concert ? We don't go in for concerts here. Here we play dramas and comedies !

THE FATHER. Exactly. That is just why we have come to you.

THE MANAGER. And where is the book ?

THE FATHER. It is in us (*The actors laugh*). The drama is in us, and we are the drama. We are impatient to play it. Our inner passion drives us on to this.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*disdainful, alluring, treacherous, full of impudence*). My passion, Sir, ah, if you only knew ! My passion for him ! (*points to the Father and makes a pretence of embracing him. Then she breaks out into a loud laugh*).

THE FATHER (*angrily*). Behave yourself ! And please don't laugh in that fashion.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. With your permission, gentlemen, I who am a two months orphan, will show you how I can dance and sing.

(Sings and then dances *Prenez garde à Tchou-Thin-Tchou*).

Les chinois sont un peuple malin,
De Shangaï à Peking,
Ils ont mis des écriteux partout :
Prenez garde à Tchou-Thin-Tchou.

ACTORS and ACTRESSES. Bravo! Well done! Tip-top!

THE MANAGER. Silence! This isn't a café concert you know (*turning to the Father in consternation*). Is she mad?

THE FATHER. Mad? No, she's worse than mad.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*to Manager*). Worse! worse! Listen! Stage this drama for us at once! Then you will see that at a certain moment I-when this little darling here (*takes the Child by the hand and leads her to the Manager*). Isn't she a dear? (*Takes her up and kisses her*). Darling! Darling! (*puts her down again and adds feelingly*). Well, when God suddenly takes this dear little child away from that poor mother there, and this imbecile here (*seizing hold of the Boy roughly and pushing him forward*) does the stupidest things, like the fool he is, you will see me run away. Yes, gentlemen, I shall be off. But the moment hasn't arrived yet. After what has taken place between him and me, (*indicates the Father with a horrible wink*), I can't remain any longer in this society to have to witness the anguish of this mother here for that fool... (*indicates the Son*). Look at him! Look at him! See how indifferent, how frigid he is because he is the legitimate son. He despises me, despises him (*pointing to the Boy*) despises this baby here because... we are bastards (*goes to the Mother and embraces her*). And he doesn't want to recognize her as his mother, she who is the common mother of us all. He looks down upon her as if she were only the mother of us three bastards. Wretch! (*She says all this very rapidly, excitedly. At the word "bastards", she raises her voice, and almost spits out the final "wretch!"*). , ,

THE MOTHER (*to the Manager, in anguish*). In the name of these two little children, I beg you... (*She grows faint and is about to fall*). Oh God!

THE FATHER (*coming forward to support her as do some of the actors*)! Quick, a chair, a chair for this poor widow!

THE ACTORS. Is it true? Has she really fainted?

THE MANAGER. Quick, a chair here!

(*One of the actors brings a chair, the others proffer assistance. The Mother tries to prevent the Father from lifting the veil which covers her face*).

THE FATHER. Look at her! Look at her!

THE MOTHER. No, no ; stop it please !

THE FATHER (*raising her veil*). Let them see you !

THE MOTHER (*rising and covering her face with her hands, in desperation*). I beg you Sir, to prevent this man from carrying out his plan which is loathsome to me.

THE MANAGER (*dumbfounded*). I don't understand at all. What is the situation ? Is this lady your wife ? (*to the Father*).

THE FATHER. Yes, gentlemen : my wife.

THE MANAGER. But how can she be a widow if you are alive ? (*The actors find relief for their astonishment in a loud laugh*).

THE FATHER. Don't laugh ! Don't laugh like that for Heaven's sake. Her drama lies just here in this. She has had a lover, a man who ought to be here.

THE MOTHER (*with a cry*). No ! No !

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Fortunately for her, he is dead. Two months ago as I said. We are in mourning as you see.

THE FATHER. He isn't here you see, not because he is dead. He isn't here — look at her a moment and you will understand — because her drama isn't a drama of the love of two men for whom she was incapable of feeling anything except possibly a little gratitude — not for me ; for the other. She isn't a woman, she is a mother, and her drama — powerful sir, I assure you — lies, as a matter of fact, all in these four children she has had by two men.

THE MOTHER. I had them ? Have you got the courage to say that I wanted them ? It was his doing. It was he who gave me that other man, who forced me to go away with him.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. It isn't true.

THE MOTHER (*startled*). Not true, isn't it ?

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. No, it isn't true, it just isn't true.

THE MOTHER. And what can you know about it ?

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. It isn't true. Don't believe it. (*To Manager*) Do you know why she says so ? For that fellow there (*indicates the Son*). She tortures herself, destroys herself on account of the neglect of that son there, and she wants him to believe that if she abandoned him when he was only two years old, it was because he (*indicates the Father*) made her do so.

THE MOTHER (*vigorously*). He forced me to it, and I call God to witness it (*to the Manager*). Ask him (*indicates husband*) if it isn't true. Let him speak ! You (*to daughter*) are not in a position to know anything about it.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. I know you lived in peace and happiness with my father while he lived. Can you deny it ?

THE MOTHER. No, I don't deny it . . .

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. He was always full of affection and kindness for you (*to the Boy, angrily*). It's true, isn't it? Tell them! Why don't you speak, you little fool?

THE MOTHER. Leave the poor boy alone! Why do you want to make me appear ungrateful, daughter? I don't want to offend your father. I have answered him that I didn't abandon my house and my son through any fault of mine, nor from any wilful passion.

THE FATHER. It is true. It was my doing.

LEADING MAN (*to the Company*). What a spectacle!

LEADING LADY. We are the audience this time.

JUVENILE LEAD. For once in a way.

THE MANAGER (*beginning to get really interested*). Let's hear them out. Listen!

THE SON. Oh yes, you're going to hear a fine bit now. He will talk to you of the Demon of Experiment.

THE FATHER. You are a cynical imbecile. I've told you so already a hundred times (*to the Manager*). He tries to make fun of me on account of this expression which I have found to excuse myself with.

THE SON (*with disgust*). Yes, phrases! phrases!

THE FATHER. Phrases. Isn't everyone consoled when faced with a trouble or fact he doesn't understand, by a word, some simple word which tells us nothing and yet calms us?

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Even in the case of remorse. In fact especially then.

THE FATHER. Remorse. No, that isn't true. I've done more than use words to quieten the remorse in me.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Yes, there was a bit of money too. Yes, yes, a bit of money. There were the hundred lire he was about to offer me in payment, gentlemen... (*sensation of horror among the actors*).

THE SON (*to the Step-Daughter*). This is vile.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Vile? There they were in a pale blue envelope on a little mahogany table in the back of Madame Pace's shop. You know Madame Pace — one of those ladies who attract poor girls of good family into their ateliers, under the pretext of their selling *robes et manteaux*.

THE SON. And he thinks he has bought the right to tyrannise over us all with those hundred lire he was going to pay; but which, fortunately — note this gentlemen — he had no chance of paying.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. It was a near thing, though, you know! (*laughs ironically*).

THE MOTHER (*protesting*). Shame, my daughter, shame!

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Shame indeed! This is my revenge! I am dying to live that scene... The room... I see it... Here is the window with the mantles exposed, there the divan, the looking-glass, a screen, there in front of the window the little mahogany table with the blue envelope containing one hundred lire. I see it. I see it. I could take hold of it... But you, gentlemen, you ought to turn your backs now: I am almost nude, you know. But I don't blush: I leave that to him (*indicating Father*).

THE MANAGER. I don't understand this at all.

THE FATHER. Naturally enough. I would ask you, Sir, to exercise your authority a little here, and let me speak before you believe all she is trying to blame me with. Let me explain.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Ah yes, explain it in your own way.

THE FATHER. But don't you see that the whole trouble lies here. In words, words. Each one of us has within him a whole world of things, each man of us his own special world. And how can we ever come to an understanding if I put in the words I utter the sense and value of things as I see them, while you who listen to me must inevitably translate them according to the conception of things each one of you has within himself? We think we understand each other, but we never really do. Look here! This woman (*indicating the Mother*) takes all my pity for her as a specially ferocious form of cruelty.

THE MOTHER. But you drove me away.

THE FATHER. Do you hear her? I drove her away. She believes I really sent her away.

THE MOTHER. You know how to talk, and I don't, but believe me Sir (*to Manager*) after he had married me... who knows why?... I was a poor insignificant woman...

THE FATHER. But, good Heavens! it was just for your humility that I married you. I loved this simplicity in you (*He stops when he sees she makes signs to contradict him, opens his arms wide in sign of desperation, seeing how hopeless it is to make himself understood*). You see she denies it. Her mental deafness, believe me is phenomenal, the limit (*touches his forehead*) deaf, deaf, mentally deaf. She has plenty of feeling. Oh yes, a good heart for the children but the brain, deaf, to the point of desperation.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Yes, but ask him how his intelligence has helped us.

THE FATHER. If we could see all the evil that may spring from good, what should we do? (*At this point the Leading Lady who is biting her lips with rage at seeing the Leading Man flirting with the Step-Daughter, comes forward and says to the Manager*).

LEADING LADY. Excuse me, but are we going to rehearse today?

MANAGER. Of course, of course; but let's hear them out.

JUVENILE LEAD. This is something quite new.

L'INGÉNUË. Most interesting.

LEADING LADY. Yes, for the people who like that kind of thing (*casts a glance at Leading Man*).

THE MANAGER (*to Father*). You must please explain yourself quite clearly (*sits down*).

THE FATHER. Very well then : listen. I had in my service a poor man, a clerk, a secretary of mine, full of devotion, who became friends with her (*indicating the Mother*). They understood one another, were kindred souls in fact, without, however, the least suspicion of any evil existing. They were incapable even of thinking of it.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. So he thought of it for them.

THE FATHER. That's not true. I meant to do good to them and to myself, I confess, at the same time. Things had come to the point that I could not say a word to either of them without their making a mute appeal, one to the other, with their eyes. I could see them silently asking each other how I was to be kept in countenance, how I was to be kept quiet. And this, believe me, was just about enough of itself to keep me in a constant rage, to exasperate me beyond measure.

THE MANAGER. And why didn't you send him away then — this secretary of yours ?

THE FATHER. Precisely what I did, Sir. And then I had to watch this poor woman drifting forlornly about the house like an animal without a master, like an animal one has taken in out of pity.

THE MOTHER. Ah yes . . . !

THE FATHER (*suddenly turning to the Mother*). It's true about the son anyway, isn't it ?

THE MOTHER. He took my son away from me first of all.

THE FATHER. But not from cruelty. I did it so that he should grow up healthy and strong by living in the country.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*pointing to him ironically*). As one can see.

THE FATHER (*quickly*). Is it my fault if he has grown up like this ? I sent him to a wet nurse in the country, a peasant, as *she* did not seem to me strong enough, though she is of humble origin. That was, anyway, the reason I married her. Unpleasant all this maybe, but how can it be helped ? My mistake possibly, but there we are ! All my life I have had these confounded aspirations towards a certain moral sanity. (*At this point the Step-Daughter bursts out into a noisy laugh*). Oh, stop, it ! Stop it ! I can't stand it.

THE MANAGER. Yes, please stop it, for Heaven's sake.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. But imagine moral sanity from him if you please, the client of certain ateliers like that of Madame Pace.

THE FATHER. Fool! That is the proof that I am a man! This seeming contradiction, gentlemen, is the strongest proof that I stand here a live man before you. Why, it is just for this very incongruity in my nature that I have had to suffer what I have. I could not live by the side of that woman (*indicating the Mother*) any longer, but not so much for the boredom she inspired me with as for the pity I felt for her.

THE MOTHER. And so he turned me out.

THE FATHER. Well provided for. Yes, I sent her to that man, gentlemen . . . to let her go free of me.

THE MOTHER. And to free himself.

THE FATHER. Yes, I admit it. It was also a liberation for me. But great evil has come of it. I meant well when I did it, and I did it more for her sake than mine. I swear it (*crosses his arms on his chest ; then turns suddenly to the Mother*). Did I ever lose sight of you until that other man carried you off to another town like the angry fool he was? And on account of my pure interest in you . . . my pure interest, I repeat, that had no base motive in it. I watched with the tenderest concern the new family that grew up around her. She can bear witness to this (*points to the Step-Daughter*).

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Oh yes, that's true enough. When I was a kiddie, so so high, you know, with plaits over my shoulders and knickers longer than my skirts, I used to see him waiting outside the school for me to come out. He came to see how I was growing up.

THE FATHER. This is infamous, shameful.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. No. Why?

THE FATHER. Infamous! infamous! (*then excitedly to Manager explaining*). After she (*indicating Mother*) went away, my house seemed suddenly empty. She was my incubus, but she filled my house. I was like a dazed fly alone in the empty rooms. This boy here (*indicating the Son*) was educated away from home, and when he came back, he seemed to me to be no more mine. With no mother to stand between him and me, he grew up entirely for himself, on his own, apart, with no tie of intellect or affection binding him to me. And then — strange but true — I was driven by curiosity at first and then by some tender sentiment towards her family which had come into being through my will. The thought of her began gradually to fill up the emptiness I felt all around me. I wanted to know if she were happy in living out the simple daily duties of life. I wanted to think of her as fortunate and happy because far away from the complicated torments of my spirit. And so, to have proof of this, I used to watch that child coming out of school.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Yes, yes. True. He used to follow me in the street and smiled at me, waved his hand like this. I would look at him with interest, wondering who he might be. I told my mother, who guessed at once (*The Mother agrees with a nod*). Then she didn't want to send me to school for some days, and when I finally went back, there he was again — looking so ridiculous — with a paper parcel in his hands. He came close to me, caressed me, and drew out a fine straw hat from the parcel with a bouquet of flowers — all for me.

THE MANAGER. A bit discursive this you know.

THE SON (*contemptuously*). Literature! Literature!

THE FATHER. Literature indeed! This is life, this is passion.

THE MANAGER. It may be, but it won't act.

THE FATHER. I agree. This is only the part leading up. I don't suggest this should be staged. She (*pointing to the Step-Daughter*) as you see, is no longer the flapper with plaits down her back.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. And the knickers showing below the shirt.

THE FATHER. The drama is coming now Sir. Something new, complex, most interesting.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. As soon as my father died...

THE FATHER. There was absolute misery for them. They came back here, unknown to me. Through her stupidity (*pointing to the Mother*). It is true she can barely write her own name, but she could anyhow have got her daughter to write to me that they were in need....

THE MOTHER. And how was I to divine all this sentiment in him?

THE FATHER. That is exactly your mistake, never to have guessed any of my sentiments.

THE MOTHER. After so many years apart, and all that had happened...

THE FATHER. Was it my fault if that fellow carried you away? It happened quite suddenly, for after he had obtained some job or other, I could find no trace of them, and so not unnaturally, my interest in them dwindled. But the drama culminated unforeseen and violent on their return when I was impelled by my miserable flesh that still lives... Ah! what misery, what wretchedness is that of the man who is alone and disdains debasing *liaisons*. Not old enough to do without women, and not young enough to go and look for one without shame. Misery! it's worse than misery. It's a horror, for no woman can any longer give him love, and when a man feels this... One ought to do without you say. Yes, yes, I know. Each of us when he appears before his fellows is clothed in a certain dignity. But every man knows what unconfessable things pass within the secrecy of his own heart. One gives way to the temptation, only to rise from it again afterwards with a great eagerness to reestablish one's dignity, as if it were a tombstone to place on the

grave of one's shame, and a monument to hide and sign the memory of our weaknesses. Everybody's in the same case. Some folk haven't the courage to say certain things, that's all.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. All appear to have the courage to do them though.

THE FATHER. Yes, but in secret. Therefore, you want more courage to say these things. Let a man but speak these things out, and folk at once label him a cynic. But it isn't true. He is like all the others, better indeed, because he isn't afraid to reveal with the light of the intelligence the red shame of human bestiality on which most men close their eyes so as not to see it.

Woman — for example — look at her case. She turns tantalizing inviting glances on you. You seize her. No sooner does she feel herself in your grasp than she closes her eyes. It is the sign of her mission, the sign by which she says to man: "Blind yourself for I am blind."

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Sometimes she can close them no more: when she no longer feels the need of hiding her shame to herself, but dry-eyed and dispassionately, sees only that of the man who has blinded himself without love. Oh, all these intellectual complications make me sick, disgust me, all this philosophy that uncovers the beast in man, and then seeks to save him, excuse him... I can't stand it Sir. When a man seeks to "simplify" life bestially, throwing aside every relic of humanity, every chaste aspiration, pure feeling, all sense of ideality, duty, modesty, shame... then nothing is more revolting and nauseous than a certain kind of remorse — crocodiles' tears, that's what it is.

THE MANAGER. Let's come to the point. This is only discussion.

THE FATHER. Very good, Sir. But a fact is like a sack which won't stand up when it is empty. In order that it may stand up, one has to put into it the reason and sentiment which have caused it to exist. I couldn't possibly know that after the death of that man, they had decided to return here, that they were in misery, and that she (*pointing to the Mother*) had gone to work as a modiste, and at a shop of the type of that of Madame Pace.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. A real high class modiste you must know gentlemen. In appearance, she works for the leaders of the best society, but she arranges matters so that these elegant ladies serve her purpose... without prejudice to other ladies who are well... only so so.

THE MOTHER. You will believe me, gentlemen, that it never entered my mind that the old hag offered me work because she had her eye on my daughter.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Poor mamma! Do you know, Sir, what that woman did when I brought her back the work my mother had finished? She would point out to me that I had torn one of my frocks, and she would give it back to my mother to mend. It was I who paid for it, always I, while this poor

creature here believed she was sacrificing herself for me and these two children here, sitting up at night sewing Madame Pace's robes.

THE MANAGER. And one day you met there...

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Him, him. Yes Sir, an old client. There's a scene for you to play. Superb!

THE FATHER. She, the Mother arrived just then...

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*treacherously*). Almost in time.

THE FATHER (*crying out*). No, in time! in time! Fortunately I recognized her in time. And I took them back home with me to my house. You can imagine now her position and mine. She, as you see her, and I who cannot look her in the face.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. Absurd! How can I possibly be expected to be a modest young miss "after..." a fit person to go with his confounded aspirations for "a solid moral sanity"?

THE FATHER. For the drama lies all in this — in the conscience that I have, that each one of us has. We believe this conscience to be a single thing, but it is many-sided. There is one for this person, and another for that. Diverse consciences. So we have this illusion of being one person for all, of having a personality that is unique in all our acts. But it isn't true. We perceive this when, tragically perhaps, in something we do, we are as it were, suspended, caught up in the air on a kind of hook. Then we perceive that all of us was not in that act, and that it would be an atrocious injustice to judge us by that action alone, as if all our existence were summed up in that one deed. Now do you understand the perfidy of this girl? She surprised me in a place, where she ought not to have known me, just as I could not exist for her, and she now seeks to attach to me a reality such as I could never suppose I should have to assume for her in a shameful and fleeting moment of my life. I feel this above all else. And the drama, you will see, acquires a tremendous value from this point. Then there is the position of the others... his... (*indicating the Son*).

THE SON (*shrugging his shoulders scornfully*). Leave me alone! I don't come into this.

THE FATHER. What? You don't come into this?

THE SON. I've got nothing to do with it, and don't want to have, because you know well enough I wasn't made to be mixed up in all this with the rest of you.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. We are only vulgar folk! He is the fine gentleman. You may have noticed, Mr. Manager, that I fix him now and again with a look of scorn while he lowers his eyes — for he knows the evil he has done me.

THE SON (*scarcely looking at her*). I?

THE STEP-DAUGHTER. You! you! I owe my life on the streets to you. Did you or did you not deny us with your behaviour, I won't say the intimacy of home, but even that mere hospitality which makes guests feel at their ease. We were intruders who had come to disturb the kingdom of your legitimacy. I should like to have you witness, Mr. Manager, certain scenes between him and me. He says I have tyrannized over everyone. But it was just his behaviour which made me insist on the reason for which I had come into the house, — this reason he calls "vile" — into his house with my mother who is his mother too. And I came as mistress of the house.

THE SON. It's easy for them to put me always in the wrong. But imagine, gentlemen, the position of a son, whose fate it is to see arrive one day at his home a young woman of impudent bearing, a young woman who inquires for his father, with whom who knows what business she has. This young man has then to witness her return bolder than ever, accompanied by that child there. He is obliged to watch her treat his father in an equivocal and confidential manner. She asks money of him in a way that lets one suppose he must give it her, *must*, do you understand, because he has every obligation to do so.

THE FATHER. But I have, as a matter of fact, this obligation. I owe it to your mother.

THE SON. How should I know? When had I ever seen or heard of her? One day there arrive with her (*indicating Step-Daughter*) that lad and this baby here. I am told: "This is *your* mother too, you know." I divine from her manner (*indicating Step-Daughter again*) why it is they have come home. I had rather not say what I feel and think about it. I shouldn't even care to confess to myself. No action can therefore be hoped for from me in this affair. Believe me, Mr. Manager, I am an "unrealized" character, dramatically speaking, and I find myself not at all at ease in their company. Leave me out of it, I beg you.

THE FATHER. What? It is just because you are so that...

THE SON. How do you know what I am like? When did you ever bother your head about me?

THE FATHER. I admit it. I admit it. But isn't that a situation in itself? This aloofness of yours which is so cruel to me and your mother who returns home and sees you almost for the first time grown up, who doesn't recognize you but knows you are her son... (*pointing out the Mother to the Manager*). See, she's crying!

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*angrily, stamping her foot*). Like a fool!

THE FATHER (*indicating Step-Daughter*). She can't stand him you know (*then referring again to the Son*). She says he doesn't come into the affair, whereas

he is really the hinge of the whole action. Look at that lad who is always clinging to his mother, frightened and humiliated. It is on account of this fellow here. Possibly his situation is the most painful of all. He feels himself a stranger more than the others. The poor little chap feels mortified, humiliated at being brought into a home out of charity as it were (*in confidence*). He is the image of his father. Hardly talks at all. Humble and quiet.

THE MANAGER. Oh, we'll cut him out. You've no notion what a nuisance boys are on the stage. . . .

THE FATHER. He disappears soon, you know. And the baby too. She is the first to vanish from the scene. The drama consists finally in this: when that mother re-enters my house, her family born outside of it, and shall we say superimposed on the original, ends with the death of the little girl, the tragedy of the boy and the flight of the elder daughter. It cannot go on, because it is foreign to its surroundings. So after much torment, we three remain: I, the mother, that son. Then, owing to the disappearance of that extraneous family, we too find ourselves strange to one another. We find we are living in an atmosphere of mortal desolation which is the revenge, as he (*indicating Son*) scornfully said of the Demon of Experiment, that unfortunately hides in me. Thus, Sir, you see when faith is lacking, it becomes impossible to create certain states of happiness, for we lack the necessary humility. Vaingloriously, we try to substitute ourselves for this faith, creating thus for the rest of the world a reality which we believe after their fashion, while, actually, it doesn't exist. For each one of us has his own reality to be respected before God, even when it is harmful to one's very self.

THE MANAGER. There is something in what you say. I assure you all this interests me very much. I begin to think there's the stuff for a drama in all this, and not a bad drama either.

THE STEP-DAUGHTER (*coming forward*). When you've got a character like me.

THE FATHER (*shutting her up, all excited to learn the decision of the Manager*). You be quiet!

THE MANAGER (*reflecting, heedless of interruption*). It's new . . . hem . . . yes . . .

THE FATHER. Absolutely new!

THE MANAGER. You've got a nerve though, I must say, to come here and fling it at me like this . . .

THE FATHER. You will understand, Sir, born as we are for the stage . . .

THE MANAGER. Are you amateur actors then?

THE FATHER. No. I say born for the stage, because . . .

THE MANAGER. Oh, nonsense. You're an old hand, you know.

THE FATHER. No, Sir, no. We act that rôle for which we have been cast, that rôle which we are given in life. And in my own case, passion itself, as usually happens, becomes a trifle theatrical when it is exalted.

THE MANAGER. Well, well, that will do. But you see, without an author . . . I could give you the address of an author if you liked . . .

THE FATHER. No, no. Look here! You must be the author.

THE MANAGER. I? What are you talking about?

THE FATHER. Yes, you, you. Why not?

THE MANAGER. Because I have never been an author: that's why.

THE FATHER. Then why not turn author now? Everybody does it. You don't want any special qualities. Your task is made much easier by the fact that we are all here alive before you . . .

THE MANAGER. It won't do.

THE FATHER. What? When you see us live our drama . . .

THE MANAGER. Yes, that's all right. But you want someone to write it.

THE FATHER. No, no. Someone to take it down possibly while we play it, scene by scene. It will be enough to sketch it out at first, and then try it over.

THE MANAGER. Well . . . I am almost tempted. It's a bit of an idea. One might have a shot at it.

THE FATHER. Of course. You'll see what scenes will come out of it. I can give you one at once . . .

THE MANAGER. By Jove, it tempts me. I'd like to have a go at it. Let's try it out. Come with me to my office (*turning to the Actors*). You are at liberty for a bit, but don't stop out of the theatre for long. In a quarter of an hour, twenty minutes all back here again (*to the Father*). We'll see what can be done. Who knows if we don't get something really extraordinary out of it?

THE FATHER. There's no doubt about it. They (*indicating the Characters*) had better come with us too, hadn't they?

THE MANAGER. Yes, yes. Come on! come on! (*moves away and then turning to the actors*). Be punctual please. (*Manager and the Six Characters cross the stage and go off. The other actors remain, looking at one another in astonishment*).

LEADING MAN. Is he serious? What the devil does he want to do?

JUVENILE LEAD. This is rank madness.

THIRD ACTOR. Does he expect to knock up a drama in five minutes?

JUVENILE LEAD. Like the improvisers.

LEADING LADY. If he thinks I'm going to take part in a joke like this . .

JUVENILE LEAD. I'm out of it anyway.

FOURTH ACTOR. I should like to know who they are (*alludes to Characters*).

THIRD ACTOR. What do you suppose? Madmen or rascals.

JUVENILE LEAD. And he takes them seriously.

L'INGÉNUÉ. Vanity. He fancies himself as an author now.

LEADING MAN. It's absolutely unheard of. If the stage has come to this . . . well I'm . . .

FIFTH ACTOR. It's rather a joke.

THIRD ACTOR. Well, we'll see what's going to happen next.

(*Thus talking, the actors leave the stage ; some going out by the little door at the back ; others retiring to their dressing-rooms.*

The curtain remains up.

The action of the play is suspended for twenty minutes).

LUIGI PIRANDELLO

(Translated By Edward Storer)

The dramatic rights of Signor Pirandello's comedy Six Characters in Search of an Author are secured for the following countries : U. S. of America, England, France, Holland, Germany and Hungary in all of which the play will be produced this year.

A LAST WORD

You are lying under coffin glass today.

So soon!

It seems we must have run

through all the days,

breathlessly,

to be here — so soon.

And the winds that sped with us

down the slanting roads —

they huddle back.

The motion, the tending,

the flight —

still like stars in deep water.

To-night you keep your tryst

with earth.

Will you remember —

in the vast ecstasies of silence —

will you remember that other night

in April?

And remembering, will the cool dark

thrill for you

as quiet waters thrill

at gold finch flight above them?

Oh, you must remember!

Can you hear me whisper it again —

can you —

against your coffin glass?

HEDGES

Hedges have good manners . . .
imposing order . . .

Things grow straight
and keep in place
and breeds don't mix.
White buds stay white
and red stay red
with no indecent streaking
in the flower.

Cedars have room
to shape themselves rotundly . . .
There are shears for vines
that rise by easy handholds.

But even a garden remembers . . .
remembers the thick choking,
the strangling climbers
blossoming scarlet above tense quivers.

Oh, the long straight rise to the sun!
Oh, the rough winds from the snows! . . .
the trampling,
the crowding,
the wild sap,
the unhampered seeding!

Hedges have good manners . . .
things grow straight in rows.
Weak things bloom free —
certain slow and strong things
wait the gardener's passing.

HENRY BELLAMAN

JACQUES LIPCHITZ AND MY PORTRAIT BUST

The critics have never been able to remove a hair from my head, but Lipchitz has decapitated me. This is how the thing was done. I passed one hour every day on a platform, held rigid by the mortal cold which radiates from stone blocks and falls from the slanting window panes like a meat chopper. I buried my feet in *sabots*, my body in shawls and an old army coat; my head pale, as a convicted prisoner's, emerging from the disorder.

The cold hypnotized me and gave me the strange feeling of surgical operations. Thus I found myself rigid and without strength, ready to submit to the experiment. The problem was to combine light and shade in my likeness, not by copying my face and then simplifying it, nor by deforming it afterwards on the pretext of style.

I have seen the unbelievable patience necessary for taming light and bringing it within arm's reach. The task is simple enough; it only consists in building a trap. Then the sculptor or hunter has no further worry. He lies in wait for the light, cajoles it, frightens it; bullies it, using all the means by which one tames the most nervous animals.

But though Lipchitz, after having completely renounced the sphere — which is the dormant force and epitome of the Greek ideal — rediscovered the skeleton of architecture and recreated about it a new flesh that has, shall we say, nothing of the human figure, he yet considers the portrait bust as an exceptional problem.

He avoids the monstrous. His figures, like certain painted effigies of Picasso, no longer repel as being caricatured humanity. They give us an image of *the truer than the true*, the real aim of the contemporary artist when he does not limit himself to simple decorative experiments.

Sculpture is an austere art. Painting is still a simulacrum. It hides its nakedness under rich colours.



LIPCHITZ

Jean Cocteau

The public likes to have a rôle reserved for it. Cubism already displeased it on account of the small opportunity it left for the collaboration of the spectator amused by the drawings.

Think of the courage of the sculptor. What are his artifices? In the case of Lipchitz, I shall point out two. The first is to distribute his masses in such a way that the statue unfolds like a façade. Mere curiosity will move the beholder to look behind. The second artifice is that the statue has a spiral development, and obliges the onlooker to go all round it. Thus the necessarily stable work — since Lipchitz renounces the trick of *L'homme qui marche* — will benefit by the dynamism which this manoeuvre awakens in the beholder.

A trifling artifice compared with those which painters, musicians and poets use without the slightest dishonesty.

Many artists of our group, born to be audacious, cherish certain routines. And it is in trying them and coming to grief with them that they obtain their charm. Chance perfumes these seductive works. Lipchitz, on the contrary, is consciousness itself. He goes where he wants to go. The beauty of what he is working at crowns his calculations. How many times have I seen him made ill when an indiscreet lady visitor has been looking for the likeness in one of his guitarists — regular buildings inhabited from top to bottom by a soul.

Therefore a fresh problem presents itself to Lipchitz the portraitist, since he never does things by halves. Neither the cast, the stylization nor the monstrousness. What remains? A hunt for light more difficult than writing different sentences with the right and left hand. A terrible hunt with all kinds of small arms, silences, unheard of halts.

The two quarries draw near; light first. It lies down and allows itself to be caressed. After comes likeness.

The capture of likeness was a very long affair. Brusquely, like the effect of a drug on the organism, it came from all sides. It was captured. And the day in which the two savage beasts understood each other to perfection and became domestic animals, Lipchitz decapitated me.

JEAN COCTEAU

IMPROVISATIONS: LIGHTS AND SNOW

I.

The girl in the room beneath
Before going to bed
Strums softly on a mandolin
The three simple tunes she knows.
How inadequate they are to tell what her heart feels!
When she has finished them several times
She thrums the strings softly with her fingernails
And smiles, and thinks happily of many things.

II.

I stood for a long while before the shop window
Looking at the blue butterflies embroidered on tawny silk.
The building was a tower before me,
Time was loud behind me,
Sun went over the housetops and dusty trees.
And there they were, glistening, brilliant, motionless,
Stitched in a golden sky
By yellow patient fingers long since turned to dust.

III.

On the day when my uncle and I drove to the cemetery
Rain rattled on the roof of the carriage;
And talking constrainedly of this and that
We refrained from looking at the child's coffin on the seat before us.

When we reached the cemetery,
We found that the thin snow on the grass
Was already half transparent with rain,
And boards had been laid upon it
So that we might walk without wetting our feet.

IV.

When I was a boy, and saw bright rows of icicles
In many lengths along a wall,
I was disappointed to find
That I could not play music upon them:
I ran my fingers lightly across them
And they fell, tinkling.
I tell you this, young man, so that your expectations
Of life will not be too great.

V.

It is now two hours since I left you,
And the perfume of your hands is still on my hands.
And though, since then,
I have looked at the stars, walked in the cold blue streets,
And heard the dead leaves blowing over the ground
Under the trees,
I still remember the sound of your laughter...
How will it be, lady, when there is none to remember you
Even as long as this?
Will the dust braid your hair?

VI.

The day opens with the brown light of snowfall
And past the window snowflakes fall and fall.
I sit in my chair all day and work and work

Measuring words against each other.
I open the piano and play a tune
But find it does not say what I feel,
I grow tired of measuring delicate words against each other,
I grow tired of these four walls,
And I think of you, who write me that you have just had a daughter,
And named her after your first sweetheart ;
And you, who break your heart, far away,
In the dullness and savagery of a long war ;
And you, who, worn by the bitterness of winter,
Will soon go South . . .
The snowflakes fall almost straight in the brown light
Past my window,
And a sparrow finds refuge on my window-ledge.
This alone comes to me out of the world outside
As I measure word with word.

VII.

Many things perplex me and leave me troubled,
Many things are locked away in the white book of stars
Never to be opened by me.
The starred leaves are silently turned,
And the mooned leaves ;
And as they are turned fall the shadows of life and death . . .
Perplexed and troubled,
I light a small light in a small room,
The lighted walls come closer to me,
The familiar pictures are clear.
I sit in my favourite chair and turn in my mind
The tiny pages of my own life, whereon so little is written,
And hear at the eastern window the pressure of a long wind, coming
From I know not where.

How many times have I sat here,
How many times will I sit here again,
Thinking these same things over and over in solitude
As a child says over and over
The first word he has learned to say !

VIII.

This girl gave her heart to me,
And this, and this ;
This one looked at me as if she loved me,
And silently walked away.
This one I saw once, and loved, and saw her never again.

Shall I count them for you upon my fingers ?
Or like a priest solemnly sliding beads ?
Or pretend they are roses, pale pink, yellow, and white,
And arrange them for you in a wide bowl
To be set in sunlight ?
See how nicely it sounds as I count them for you —
' This girl gave her heart to me,
And this, and this ! . . '

And nevertheless my heart breaks when I think of them,
When I think their names,
And how, like leaves, they have changed and blown
And will lie at last, pitifully forgotten,
Under the snow.

IX.

It is night-time, and cold, and snow is falling,
And no wind grieves the walls.
In the small circle of light around the arc-lamp
A swarm of snow-flakes falls and falls.
The street grows silent. The last stranger passes,
And the sound of his feet in the snow is indistinct.

What old sadness is it, on a night like this,
Takes possession of my heart ?
Why do I think of a camellia tree in a southern garden
With pink blossoms among dark leaves,
Standing surprised in the snow ?
And why do I think of spring ?

The snowflakes, delicately veering,
Fall silently past my window ;
They come from darkness and enter darkness.
What is it in my heart is surprised and bewildered
Like that camellia tree,
Beautiful still in its glittering anguish ? . . .
And spring so far away !

X.

As I walked through the lamplit gardens
On the thin white crust of snow
So intensely was I thinking of my misfortune,
So clearly were my eyes fixed
On the face of this grief which has come to me,
That I did not notice the beautiful pale coloring
Of lamplight on the snow ;
Nor the interlaced long blue shadows of trees ;

And yet these things were there,
And the white lamps, and orange lamps, and lamps of lilac were there,
As I have seen them so often before ;
As they will be so often again
Long after my grief is forgotten.

And still, though I know this, and say this, it cannot console me.

XI.

How many times have we been interrupted
Just as I was about to make up a story for you ! . . .
One time it was because we suddenly saw a firefly
Lighting his green lantern among the boughs of a fir-tree. . .
Marvellous ! marvellous ! He is making for himself
A little tent of light in the darkness ! . . .
And one time it was because we saw a lilac lightning-flash
Run wrinkling into the blue top of a mountain, —

We heard boulders of sound rolling down upon us,
And the *plat-plat* of drops on the window,
And we ran to watch the rain
Charging in wavering white clouds across the long grass of the field. . .
Or at other times it was because we saw a star
Slipping easily out of the sky, and falling, far off,
Among pine-dark hills ;
Or because we found a crimson evet
Darting in the cold grass !—

These things interrupted us, and left us wondering ;
And the stories, whatever they might have been,
Were never told. . .
A fairy binding a daisy down and laughing ?
A golden-haired princess caught in a cobweb ?
A love-story of long ago ? . .
Some day, just as we are beginning again,
Just as we blow the first sweet note,
Death itself will interrupt us.

XII.

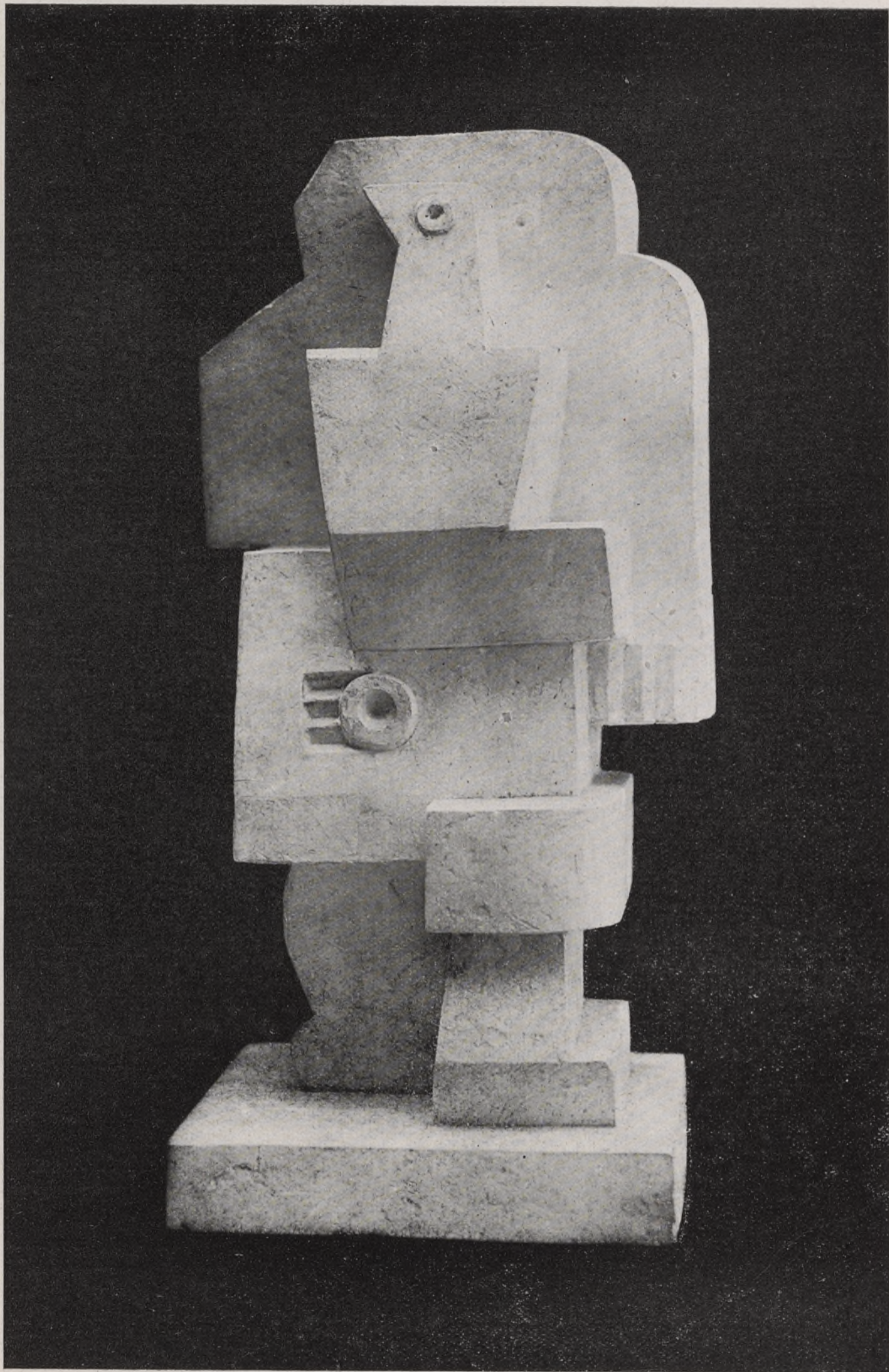
Like an old tree uprooted by the wind
And flung down cruelly
With roots bared to the sun and stars,
And fading leaves brought to earth —
Torn from its house —
So do I seem to myself
When you have left me.

CONRAD AIKEN



LIPCHITZ

Sculpture



LIPCHITZ

Sculpture

THE TECHNIQUE OF JACQUES LIPCHITZ

At the beginning of his career Jacques Lipchitz executed works which were distinguished by their artistic maturity. With rapid strides he advanced towards that complete grasp of form which is the final aim of all artists haunted by the ideal of perfection. Enamoured of harmony, he eliminated anatomic details, simplified his technique and circumscribed his figures within the limits of the oval or the sphere. He seemed thus to conform to the principles which govern modern sculpture in France, and cultivated with rare skill those artisan virtues which have sufficed to place among the masters a large number of second rate artists. But as soon as he foresaw the danger to his art from the breaking up of the plastic equilibrium, Jacques Lipchitz attempted a rehabilitation. To the spherical form, which was the essential basis of his work, he added the cubic formula. Light, hitherto distributed gradually over the volumes, modulated like painted surfaces, now exaggerates the differentiation of the planes in space. In eliminating from his works the spherical forms which might lessen the specifically spatial character of his sculpture, Lipchitz expresses depth, not by movement but by contrast of direction. His art is objective and self-sufficient. It excludes all sentimental relation between the statue and the spectator. It is characterized by the preponderance of the cubic element. The hermetic character of Lipchitz has been much discussed. Are the statues dehumanized *a priori* and stripped of all emotional content? We do not think so. But the artist, having decided to construct architectural unities, found it necessary to convert into uniform plastic elements the constituent parts of the heterogeneous bodies which he represented. Thus the hair, the flesh, and the draperies of a stone woman, instead of being differentiated realistically, form an homogenous organism, determined by the laws of the medium out of which they are created. Each fragment of such a work though incorporated in the whole, has assigned to it a special rôle independent of its representative value. On the other hand, this principle of economy imposes on the artist certain constructive processes such as the interpenetration of adjoining planes, whose object is to reduce to the minimum repetitions in the body. In binding contiguous masses Jacques Lipchitz achieves organic unity. The need for full expression has always been one of his gravest preoccupations.

Lipchitz's statues mean nothing but themselves. They are accessible only to those who show themselves capable of disassociating the plastic from the representative element, those who appreciate a work of art exclusively for artistic reasons.



LIPCHITZ

Sculpture

MURDER

At the hall's one end two doors, dim with the light that came through wired glass: making of all a cross with black tree, short luminous arms.

Now at one moment the two doors opened. Two women closed them and stood, shadows against frail light, looked at each other.

Each thought:

"She too is going to have a child!"

The tall woman smiled, the smile spoke.

"I have not seen you before. We just moved in."

The short woman smiled, but her smile was in the dark...

They walked down stairs feeling each other's steps. The short stout woman, careful of her steps, she was shy. She felt in her back this other — not like her name she had read on the vestibule plate... Breddan. — She don't seem Irish. The front door let them out. Sunshine vibrant and shrill, full of motes, full of wagons and dirt and children and themselves dancing there against the dark house and each other. The tall woman faced her. — She is lovely, she is like her voice...

I.

Anna Suchy opened her door. Sophie Breddan stood still against the little woman's silence, she understood it: she came in. Anna was thinking... often since their first moment she had thought — I wonder, could she like me? We are both Czech. But she is married to a swell Irish politician, my Michael's a Subway guard: I wonder, could she like me?

"Will you mind coming this way?" She led Sophie Breddan back to a dim kitchen: brown wall paper sucked away its light. She did not say that their front light room was always rented to Mr. Kandro.

"I hope I am not disturbing you," said Sophie.

"O no, I am sewing."

"I brought mine along too. We can sew together."

Often they sewed together . . .

Sophie's flat was all hers — just her man and hers. It was full of light. Next door on that side was the empty lot and the windows had sun, not alley. It was finer in Sophie's apartment. But Sophie never said, having once just stopped from saying : " Come over always, Anna. The light's so much better. " They exchanged visits.

Their men did not count : they did not speak of their men. Anna was afraid of meeting an Irish politician : Sophie had no feel of the being of Michael Suchy. It was not these things. Simply, they looking at one another, feeling the sacrament of their own life in one another, feeling themselves so, their men did not count.

They were not solemn, feeling herself in the other. They were like trees in the Spring, giving forth blossom. So Anna chattered. She sat there plump, far back in her rocker, rocking. Her feet did not touch the floor when she leaned far back and chattered. White stockings brimmed over the wrinkled shoes. They were like her chatter. Above them a grey dress : a round bare flat face with blue eyes, sharp like her chattering that came from a silence in her, solid and sure like her grey-covered body. Sophie sat at her sewing machine : while Anna chattered, listening she hummed. Naked arms, thin, very long upon the wood and the white cloth. Black hair drawn tight and knotted to the neck. Lips full against her slender all, red lips upon paleness : lips clear and blooded as if fine steel had chiselled their edge.

Sophie turned her face, unmoving her naked arms : then Anna saw her eyes like slow fires buried within a snow at night. Sophie worked and hummed : Anna felt her eyes. — She likes me, she likes me . . . In knowledge of that, Anna chattered like an infant at play in a warm high crib.

* * *

Sophie went to bed.

There was a doctor : two doctors : three . . . A trained nurse. A husband fluttering ever near, unapproachable, unapproached, like flesh of a man caught in a moving wheel . . . There was a dead child.

Sophie lay on, at the wheel's center, still : drop by drop life that had gushed from her crawled hesitant back.

She could reach out a hand, take another hand and press it, press almost a smile to her lips — not her eyes yet. She could feel sorry for her man, and suffer for him, feel her suffering not enough for his, and stroke at last quite

naturally his pain as she must have her child's misery who was dead. She was able to ask for Anna. Then Anna went to bed.

Anna's child was a girl... seven pounds... Hilda. Sophie lying grey in her bright room knew how Hilda had come into that dark other flat as the Sun always noiselessly into her own. There was night, there was day: so easily.

She placed her cool hands on her hot eyes, over her face. So she lay, behind and yet within herself. Swaying. Swaying within her arms and slender hands. She had a sense of her man in the other room, sitting in a chair and trying to reason.

"We must be sensible," she was sure he said to himself. Sensible. His boyish face was less ruddy, his lips she knew were a little twisted. Twisted and pale with being sensible. There were diagonal furrows on his brow with being sensible. His nails were bitten to the quick with being sensible. He was all tortured and out of himself with being calm there, sensible. Sophie stretched her body very long in her hot bed, down to where it was cooler: she forgot Victor. She stretched her feet, lying upon her back, in order to be longer. She was sudden at peace. Her arms were at her side, very flat: her palms lay upward upon each side of her face. Her face and her palms looked upward. Her lips were parted. Her face and palms, her mouth looked upward: her face and her mouth were warm with happy tears.

"I will be strong — right away — very soon. Next time it will be good: go well." She slept.

Victor Breddan sat tense in his chair and summarized the talk he had had with Doctor Lacey. He sat very tense at work, making up his mind.

This was a blow and he resented it. He did not know, but he resented Sophie who had brought it upon him. An unknown unsought, gaugeless element, his resenting, to merge in the making up his mind.

Victor was very young, successful. He was the Confidential Clerk of Supreme Court Justice Targett, and Justice Targett too was young for one in his position, ambitious for more position. He liked Victor, Victor knew... and there was a high way before them they must travel together. Victor sat very still in his chair, and leaned on the vision that was easily his, as if it had been himself, of Justice Targett writing a Decision.

It was impossible to bring the Doctor to a commitment. — "I do not know, I cannot say... whether Mrs. Breddan should be again subjected to childbirth."... There was a risk, and yet perhaps this was a mere mischance. One can't be sure... one cannot be too careful. She is young, healthy... And yet there's a risk... Always, perhaps? Better wait... The Doctor

did not feel he could be responsible : . . . why not let matters drift for a while ? was the retreat of the Doctor.

Victor had ideas of his own. The vaguenesses of Doctor Lacey came into the form of them like a gas, and filled them. Victor sat there, filling his mind that was already a form.

Victor was sure he loved his wife, and almost he had lost her. His savings were wiped out, there were debts : he needed savings. Beyond was the high way he must be travelling with Justice Targett : a high way with high barriers where one needed to pay high tolls. Risk, shock, wastage. So this had been : so at least for the time of the crucial years of his career ahead, it must not be again.

Victor Breddan sat in a calm body. His chestnut hair rose like an ordered hedge from his narrow forehead. His mouth was pursed. A dimple in his chin. His hands were clasped on a knee.

Then his shoulders moved upward. He got up stiff. He undressed. He folded away his clothes. He lay beside his wife.

She was moving warmly through a water of deep sleep. Sleep laved her, it was passionate soft like the touch of her child within herself, as had been her hand laid on her swelling stomach. Now, a cold current cutting like silver through the dark sea of her sleep . . . She awoke. Victor beside her. He slept soundly : he had filled up his mind.

2.

Rose from her bed and moved about her world a tall gaunt woman with lips cut as by steel, with lips moveless as she spoke. She lived ; the world called Sophie, called Mrs. Breddan ; she answered the world.

Her husband was calm with his filled-up mind. Each morning he went down town, at evening returned laden with papers and a weighted silence under all his words. Her husband was full with his ambitious life. She came to understand the hard will of her husband . . . She did not understand, but she felt that it was cruel. She received his cruelty, and the seed of fear that lives in cruelty like a seed in a hard shell she received also. She was a woman, she was a receiver of seed. She was a woman who needed other seed than the hard dead will of her husband.

He lay beside her at night. He was very near and aloof : a dull knife that her love threw herself upon, and that would not cut her. She was all whole : like a knot she lay writhed beneath her man who would not cut her and loose

her. She went forth from him into the hammering world : it also would not loose her. She was in no way burst open.

Anna Suchy kneaded her bread, nursed her child : with stout strong arms she held and released her husband. She was a multitude of duties. Her eyes were a little closer upon the bareness of her face. She had no time to visit Sophie in her flat. Sophie came more and more to her, explainless, silent.

Anna was glad. She bustled and chattered about the silence of her friend like a flock of sparrows about a branch in winter. Wherever her duties took her, Sophie was willing to be. Sophie lived in the need of helping, helping no matter how with Hilda. But Anna was a woman and a mother, simple and elemental beyond help. She had her nest to build, her child to nurture. Like any female. Built to work alone. And this was the closest of Anna's duties. Motherhood came from her fingers as her breasts like its intricate web from a spider's spinnerets. Sophie sat silent : at times she held the child, placed her in the crib, moved the crib. She sat with still eyes following the mother's hands and lips as she washed the baby.

Sophie came to swing with a dull beat between her emptiness and her friend's fullness. She dwelt nowhere. Neither her world nor the other world could she take wholly to her. She swung, dully. Her mouth was very still. Her eyes, seeking, swung contrariwise to her imprisoned body. She was in conflict : a slow dizziness came to live within the eyes of Sophie.

* * *

She knew that Anna loved her. She was thankful. She was thankful as a mute creature — as a cat is thankful who gleans of a strange creature's love the right to lie by a stove. Anna was strange to Sophie : she used her love like a mute hungry creature. And Anna in her love for Sophie was moved out of herself : out of her comfort, out of her domain : into a world of limitless horizon whither her mind and her instincts could not follow. Her care for child and man was of her flesh. It fitted, it was herself, it was within her like her heart that went on working. Her love for Sophie was not of her : it stood upon her. Sheer and separate it stood where God had placed it. Her love of man and child was buried in her like a heart : it did not see it had no need of seeing. Her love for this woman who came and did nothing and was silent was an Eye upon her. It looked out. It beheld. But what it beheld it could not bring to Anna's mind in words. For Anna had no understanding of the beholding of her love. She could only be gentle to her friend, and chatter cheerily, see and be sorry that she was unhappy.

Sophie walked westward through the high brimming Block . . . through others growing gradually neater, harsher, less alive . . . to the Park.

She sat among children.

They wreathed about her in curves and flares of movement that had her heart for center. They were about her as her feelings within her. Little boys with serious mouths in leather leggings and fur caps; little girls, gold-curled, bundled in blue-wool . . . played, shouted, leaped like particles of light in a concentric rainbow. Sophie sat still in the cold air, on the cold bench, feeling their luminous warmth.

Aside her, on benches, thrust away from her world, nurses in hard lines. She saw them talking among themselves, sufficient among themselves, opaque to children. Hard voices thrust back to the world of children orders. Voices of women, brittle and weak beside this chaos of colors.

Sophie's agony was bright with the dancing colors of children. Her agony was her life: she sat cold and still, but there was her agony within the flames of children, her life . . . burning her, making her yet warm.

Nurses were long strokes blotting. They covered something Sophie could not see . . .

Across the walk, alone, sat a nurse clad in blue. Blue cape caught lissomly about her slender shoulders. Blue brimless bonnet, tucked with an organdie white . . . bow beneath white pointed chin . . . sat clear on clear hair, Sophie's eyes met eyes that drew her. She crossed and sat with the nurse on the green bench. She said no word. Sophie and the nurse felt each other, saying no word.

A boy played with a hoop. He beat it savagely with his stick when it refused to roll: he got on his knees to beat it savagely. He beat at the heart of Sophie . . .

Sudden she said: "The mothers — all the mothers of all these children — what do they do? Where are they? They're not all working, are they? — not all dead? . . ."

The blue nurse did not turn.

"All dead," she answered.

Sophie waited.

"Alive . . . all dead."

— "All dead" was a high hard stroke of cloud, it beat, it bled the dancing of children . . . Children bled and drooped . . . children danced no more . . . "All dead."

Sharply Sophie got up. She walked away, slow.

She walked away from a world whose heart she was. She could no longer bear this being its heart. She returned to her flat.

She opened, shut the door. She sat in a chair. She was not conscious of her passage from the Park.

It was late morning. She did not stir. Sun placed a finger on her foot. His finger rose. His finger rose . . . It lit the matted hair on her ear. She had not stirred.

Her husband entered. She did not stir . . .

She turned her head, heavy . . . looked at her man with a look so weighted it took time to reach him. He bent and kissed her.

"Tired, sweetheart?"

Her mind threw a happening before her eyes she had not known when it was borne to her. Now . . . a tall blond boy — young man finely tall — with thick hair, thin hands, as she passed coming home on the Block, a tall fine man — he stops : he looks at her : he is graceful standing.

Tender inquiry in his eyes, as not now in her husband's! . . .

Sophie flung herself into her husband's arms.

She felt his hands holding her body, claiming it, drinking it, that way he had . . . hands eager for themselves.

"Me . . . me!" she cried silently in her throat.

He kissed her. He was very content, very happy. — She loves me. . . .

3.

Anna was small and ashamed, half suppliant, half exultant before the tense body of her friend. Sophie's face was turned away in order not to see : now her body saw and it throbbed like steel against her naked nerves.

Anna was going to have another baby.

Coming that day into her kitchen Sophie knew this. She said nothing, her neck strained fiercely now with her averted face. She turned her eyes full to the pleading eyes of Anna : she placed her hands on Anna's shoulders. She kissed her eyes.

"Have you known long?"

"No — I — just . . ." Anna was pale, eyes brimmed. She took Sophie's hand, the other . . . stroked them together, held them hot against her cheek. "You are so wonderful!" she exclaimed.

"So wonderful," smiled Sophie.

* *

One great change. Sophie no longer yearned to do caring things for Hilda. She was glad now of Anna's subjective motherhood. She did not realise, in its true terms, this change. Merely that she was more at peace: as she sat now in Anna's kitchen peace was nearer . . . waiting, waiting . . . and this she accepted, docilely, mute, as a driven beast after the work-day night.

The months went. Anna was heavier, more languid: she allowed her friend to do more things for her. She allowed her to sweep the kitchen, to bring fresh water to the room of Mr. Kandro. She allowed her to scrub the floors. She gave her orders. When Sophie broke a dish: "My! how can you be so careless?"

Sophie was in peace. She did not look at Hilda. She came at length not even to look at Anna. Nearly all days, as the time grew near, she came to Anna and helped her. She needed to be near her . . . near her in order to be waiting, in order to find the heart of waiting . . . She needed not to see her. She helped her.

* *

Sophie hated children.

She walked to the Park through the summer streets that were lush with them, that were a surge and a delirium of children; streets overflowed with shimmering boys and girls, streets banked with heavy women, walled with arrogant sucking women's bellies. But she walked always on. She walked as if she had been swimming through a sea. If she stopped she must sink. No Park bench, no heat, no shade of a thick tree could make her stop . . . Until she was in her flat, limp, with dry eyes and with a skin scorched by the passion she had walked through.

Walking so, she did not perspire. Now seated still, she was soon drenched with sweat.

She saw the tall boy — young man, finely tall — with thick hair, thin hands whose eyes, looking at her, gave her a tender touch. She never looked at him straight, he was there in her mind. He had a long, gentle face, pointed chin, blue eyes. He was good somehow in his rough grey shirt and his rough tweed suit and his low heavy shoes that showed the grace of his ankles. He was frightened of her. He was like a woman. He was this boy, forever sweet in her averted mind where he stood aloof, slenderly, silent . . .

... He walked directly in her path. She was flanked by warring children, earnest as only children. They were both blocked by children. They had to stand, facing each other, till the tangle unswarmed.

She saw him blush. His face was close. His eyes went out to hers, asking a question. Her lips that were always moveless quivered.

"You are unhappy," she heard him.

Her breathing was brutal strokes against her.

"Can't we go to the Park... and talk it over?" She heard him above the clamor of her breathing.

"No: I am married." She heard herself beneath the clamor of her breathing.

"But you're unhappy!" She thought her breast would break with this clamor of her breathing... She saw his eyes holding her. Then: — she saw his mouth part, break with indecision. Her breathing lessened. Since his mouth was so, she was able to pass him.

... She said to herself: "Am I unhappy?"

She said to herself: "Why should I... just I... be unhappy so?"

Then her thought turned: "I am unhappy."

She was afraid. Each time this thought came to her, came too the young man who had taught her. She did not want this. She put away the thought — thought of the young man also. All her thought, all her feeling were deep tangled in this thought. She came, more and more, more and more easily, to put away all her thought, all her feeling.

When she saw him in the Block, it was she who looked at him, like reaching down for a Word that she had buried. It was he who could not look straight: his face was clouded: turning away from her his face he turned into some inner shadow.

* * *

Anna went soon to bed, her child was a splendid girl, they christened her Louisa.

Sophie shut one dim door, the hall was a black stroke upon her cheek, and opened the other. It was late afternoon and she must prepare her husband's supper. She had been with Anna who lay in bed, very moist, very chatterful, eager to get up. For Anna's feet and hands knew how to do. But her tongue was awkward. It was easier to do than to tell Sophie how. She was hot and moist and comfortless in bed: healthy already: ready again to begin.

She was cross with Sophie, giving her difficult orders, cross also with Mr. Kandro who came early in order to be of use, these days with Anna in bed. The big dark man moved noiselessly about, trying to be of use. The tops of his cheeks gleamed white about the massed black beard: the white of his eyes gleamed under toppling brows. He was gentle and stupid, when Anna was cross he smiled at Sophie, and Sophie who almost never smiled felt warm and smiled — she couldn't to him — at Anna.

"Do you think Louisa is a pretty name?" Sophie asked Victor.

"It will do. Why?"

"That's what they've called — Suchy's new little girl."

Victor felt very vaguely a strangeness in Sophie's choice of words. Their dim recording of a world infinitely beyond his mind. He was cheerful tonight: he had many things to say: all else faded.

"Well dear, I've good news. I can get named for Assemblyman if I want to! And there's the money in the Bank."

He got up, he stood behind Sophie's chair, he placed his hands about her throat. "Now you tell me, do I want it?"

His hand were a little heavy. Sophie was glad she could say:

"You are choking me, Victor."

He slipped his grasp to her chin, tilted her head.

"It's up to you. You decide, Darling. You decide everything. Shall I go to the Assembly?"

"What do they do in the Assembly?"

"Don't you know? Make laws."

"You will make laws?"

He leaned and kissed her forehead. He was very sure of himself, sure of his wife, sure of the kind of laws he would help make in the Assembly.

"Well?"

"Laws are funny things," said Sophie.

"Women are funny things." Victor, a little hurt, stepped away.

"Women are serious things... Or aren't they?... " She got up.

"Tell me, Victor," she said, "tell me... of course dear, I want you to go to the Assembly."

He sat and pulled her down to him, and placed her on his knees. She was stiffly erect. She was as tall as he was. Now her head was above him. Above the neat containment of his profile, her full face, a smothered flame. But she did not burn him. He smiled, living in his neat life, thinking in his neat thoughts, speaking in his well-ordered words. She burned in smother.

His plans... his ambitions. He must remain free as he was... free of debts, free of worry. With her whole to stand by him and share his plans,

his ambitions. As he spoke, her head moved up and down, slowly, jerkily, in a sort of sardonic rhythm with his words. Her breasts ached.

She got up. She placed her two forefingers stiff against his eyes so that he needed to shut them.

"What would you do," she said, "if I put out your eyes?"

He laughed. "Women are funny things!"

She pressed her two forefingers. She felt the bulb of his eyes give in. She withdrew her fingers into fists. Fists very hard and fierce beat against her breasts, again and again, in silence, rhythmically, where they ached. He did not hear their beating — with shut eyes.

4.

Victor, high-keyed and glowing as never before, was drab to Sophie as never before. He was out of her world: he was happy and strong as she had never made him in the earliness of their love, when he was a boy laying his head on her lap and letting his fingers blindly stray to her face, to her mouth which kissed them. It was terrible, seeing him a man, and turned to a world that seemed to love him since it made him glow, and that was not she. He was less hers, less lovely to her. She saw him come in, bright-eyed, sharp-worded, in new clothes smart; he was drab to her. He told her of his nomination, she stood as a stranger willing to applaud as if that had been all he could want further of her. He spoke of his meetings, of his assurance of success, he showed her letters; he had hushed words for the silent work of Justice Targett. And she beheld him, outside the circle of her flame like a black dead world that had been once within it. He asked her if she did not wish to come to the Campaign meetings, she answered yes... and knew for the first time she had lied to her man.

He did not press her. He was too happy in himself, letting this new world tune him up and away.

* * *

She was alone now evenings, also, alone. She lay on her back, dressed on her bed, and tried to recall a world in which it seemed to her she had been alive. A world to which she woke with sunlight dancing under her eyelids. A world in which, walking from her flat to the street, there was purpose and cheer. A world in which it was natural to take food in order to go on living in it: natural to love in order to feel that she was living in it. A world in which the hours, for all the pain they held, pointed hopeward, sunward: where though at times the earth was packed with pain, about the earth was the Air, all about: infinite spaces full of the Sun... She lay on her back and reached for her man who was hers, who had his hands upon her and his lips. She could grasp nothing. Her mind

was dull. It had a way of stopping upon a crack in the wall as if it had been an abyss.

She left Anna alone. She lay on her bed, she sat in her chair. When Victor was not to be home to supper, often she cooked no food for herself. Once when the bell rang, and she knew it was Anna, she did not respond.

*
* *

Anna said to herself: "Sophie is very busy with her husband. He is running for the Election. She must be helping him or something". Anna did not believe this, she did not know what she believed: this she managed to say to herself. It was enough.

She was busy. Louisa was a big child for her four months. Already she gave her a little milk from the bottle each day. The hands and the feet of Anna forever at work in her rooms did not miss Sophie. Her eyes missed her: but her eyes spoke feebly, when her hands and her feet were at work.

She sat, half turned away from the kitchen table. In her hand was a large piece of buttered bread and cheese. In her lap lay easefully balanced a cup of coffee. Cake was on the table. Close to the door which was the safest place sat Hilda who was two: looking at her mother, crooning and begging for food.

"No, you — you have had your lunch. Let Mama eat, once, won't you? You'll get so fat, you, I won't have room for you here... I'll have to put you in the street if you eat all the time... Do you want me — you — to put you in the street?"

Hilda forged across vast spaces to the table. Her hands beat against the wooden leg that held the top that held the cake she needed. Anna gave her a piece. It crumbled against Hilda's rosy mouth and fell. Hilda followed to the sight of her feet where the cake lay crumbled. She was satisfied. An occasional glance up the table leg where was the table's top and the cake — when these crumbs were gone.

Anna talked with her mouth full of cake and coffee. She was very soft and comfortable in her kitchen: her grey dress was warm like the skin of her cheeks.

"You'll be a fatty!" she warned. "There." With a fat large shoe she shoved a piece of the cake into Hilda's reach.

The door opened.

Anna thrust her coffee away and jumped up, startled.

"Michael!"

Michael was not due until late that evening. But still it was he. Solid and heavy and sure, he stood in the door.

"It's me," he announced.

"What has happened!" Anna's mind raced through the catastrophes that his standing there excluded. Her children were alive, Louisa slept in her crib, Michael was alive also — not sick, not injured.

"They telephoned me . . . when I got to the Barn they give me the message. It's Papa."

"He's very sick!"

"Max says for us to come right over, while his alive. I came back."

He stood there, his cap in a fat hard hand, turning a round face upon his commanding wife. His face was slightly tilted to one side, and his eyes moved from Anna to the floor. Anna knew he was suffering. He was ill at ease in suffering. Almost, he was embarrassed. He looked a little as he looked to her when, for a reason connected with his food, he sulked. But he was warmer, more like a child: in his own soul, was softer than when he sulked.

Her mind worked.

"I can get Sophie. We can be back. When do you think?"

"In a few hours. Only we go there and see him. I can wait till he dies. You don't have to."

He blocked the door. She had to take him by the hand, lead him to a chair. His eyes looked diagonally down to the floor about Hilda, inattentive, who cried against the imperviousness of table legs upon whose top was cake. So he sat: Anna rang Sophie's bell.

She rang it again, again.

Sophie stood before her with swollen eyes as if she had slept. She wore a dark wrapper. It was open at the front and Anna saw that Sophie was half dressed. She had no corsets.

It went through her mind that Sophie looked sick — or funny. She knew the inconsequence of illness in a woman, when a duty spoke.

"Sophie" she said, "my man's papa — he's dying — over in Brooklyn. We got to go. I'll be back by supper. Will you come over and take care of Louisa? Just for a few hours, Sophie dear. There's milk over the stove to give to her — at five I have just nursed her. That's enough. She'll sleep most likely all the time. Will you come?"

"Right away?"

"Right away."

Sophie shut the dim door behind her. They stepped in unison across the hall. The other dim door received them.

Anna stuffed her body into a coat, found her hat. She changed her slippers to shoes. She had few clothes for going out.

"I'll take Hilda into the bedroom to be near the baby," Sophie thought. She looked long at the man who stood in the hall, fingering his cap, with eyes

forever diagonally downcast . . . Father of children . . . She said no word to him. He bowed, and she said no word, she looked away, seeing him still . . . father of children.

She was alone . . . behind the other door.

She stood a moment, looking where they had left. She felt alone. She pinned her wrapper high at her throat. She remembered the children with whom she was alone . . . not alone then. — In my own flat alone : not here . . . There with the truth of loneliness she had come not to feel it. Here, where there were many things, many voices, lives, she was not alone, she felt lonely.

A faint shiver rose from her stomach to her shoulders. She jerked it off her ears. She walked into the kitchen. Hilda looked at her, suspended in her ceaseless hopeful effort to reach the top of a table where was cake. Sophie took a bit of the cake, placed it firmly in Hilda's palm. She lifted her.

"Hold on tight, now," she said. She carried her out.

Through the hall of the flat she looked to the front room of Mr. Kandro. She noticed that it was far away : she did not think it was strange that it should seem so. His door was open. Sunlight was sharp there like a flame burning on a black stick. It made her know that she had on a wrapper and that she was not presentable if she should meet him in the hall : she forgot that she had met already Anna's man — and that she could certainly run over to her flat and get a dress, and put it on in the Suchy bedroom. Then she was aware of having come without her key. It was instinct, before she shut her door, to feel, that she had her key. This time she had shut it, not feeling.

She went into the bedroom of the Suchys.

She forgot key and wrapper. The shade was up, the room breathed quietly. A brown light, very full, in the room, was its breath like Anna's breathing that came also full from all her little body.

Sophie closed the door at her back, stood still, holding Hilda in her arms. There was the double-bed, covered with a great patch quilt. The bed was quiet and proud : the quilt with its blacks and reds was vibrance making the bed move . . . lifting it, bringing the corners of the room into a sort of wooden dance. At the bed's side was a low cot : at its foot the baby slept in her open crib. There was a bureau, littered. There was a rocking chair.

Dominant the bed. Under the arrogant vibrance of its quilt lived depths. Depths quiet. Sleep of a man and woman, sleeping and waking together. Birth. Still moment before birth — just a moment was it in her long perspective — when man gave wholly, shattered, gave himself, the world that was his, the world and its infinite reaches forward and back — and when woman took . . .

Sophie went quietly to the rocker, still holding Hilda, and sat down. The child was hushed. She held her cake in her tight fist. She did not eat

of it. Her eyes were wide. She held her body upright in the woman's arms. She was hushed.

Sophie faced toward the crib and the bed. She remained very quiet, long. She arose. She placed Hilda upon the cot. The child lay docilely on her back, her eyes still wide. Sophie crossed to the bed's other side. For a moment she peered toward the window. Then she lay down, softly, upon the bed. She did not touch the pillows: Her face was flat below them: her body was at an angle. The palms of her hands moved measuredly at her side, up and down, rubbing the quilt, as if they sought the quiet deep beneath it.

Her hands came to rest. She slept.

Hilda's eyes closed also, above her little cot. She slept...

The baby awoke... and began to cry.

She cried low, in measure, as if she were prepared to cry a long time. She cried a long time.

Her voice was a little green vine stringing its way across the brown breath of the room. It clambered up into the air: it lay athwart the window: it drooped upon the bed, touching Sophie's hands with its tender shoots. It touched her ears that slept beneath her hair.

Sophie awoke. She saw the room full of the green tracery of the infant's crying.

"Yes, yes." She sat.

She arose. She took Louisa from her crib, smoothing her dresses. She took her to the chair and held her against her bosom and began to rock.

Louisa cried. Her crying was the small white buds upon the vine.

"Yes, yes," said Sophie.

She held the baby forward in her arms and looked at her. She placed her lips on the wet cheeks, on the blinking eyes, on the tousled hair.

"Yes, yes..."

Holding her to one side, with her right hand she loosed her wrapper. She let fall her left breast free from its scant sheath. Very tenderly, very closely, with eyes far away, she held the baby against it.

Louisa's crying was red small flowers against the green of her hunger.

"Yes, yes," Sophie crooned again. She pressed the baby closer. The crying was a flame running fast.

Sophie thrust her forward upon her lap. She lay there, upon her back, her fists crumpled, her face tortured: a leaping passion she lay there.

Sophie's hands were very fierce, very swift. She tore the wrapper from her shoulders. Down to her waist she rent away her clothes. Her shoulders were sharp and white. Her breasts — small, pear-shaped, firm — were the breasts of a tall virgin.

Once more she gathered the baby from the torn clothes that lay about her on her lap, held her close. The nipples stood sheer. She crushed Louisa against them.

The infant wailed: Sophie pressed more close. The wail was a shriek. Sophie had no sense of her self separate from this life upon her.

She had no sense of its shriek above the shriek of her flesh. She folded her arms about the infant and crushed her close, feeling her breasts crush, bruise, feeling her breasts swell out and encase the child and the shriek. She drew her hands about her naked shoulders, she pressed with her hands and with her throat, with all her imprisoning self she pressed that had so long pressed-in what now was sweetly escaping. She moved up and down in her chair, pressing, pressing.

"Yes, yes," she said. And the child's shriek was over.

"Yes, yes. . . ."

In the silence, she knew that what had been within, so long, so terribly was now outside her. A sagging, a cutting thing within, breaking her back, clamping her throat, tugging the flesh of her breasts — now warm, now a being, like a babe, at her breast. And her self flowing upon it, giving it blood and milk.

She sat rocking, crooning. The rocking ceased, then the crooning.

She sat with wide eyes, wide lips, faintly upturned in a smile . . .

Darkness came like smoke into the room, filling at last all of it with a black stir save the room's center which was still and glowed and was a woman . . . a half naked woman clasping a child's body.

WALDO FRANK

STARS AT TALLAPOOSA

The lines are straight and swift between the stars.
The night is not the cradle that they cry,
The criers, undulating the deep-oceaned phrase.
The lines are much too dark and much too sharp.

The mind herein attains simplicity.
There is no moon, no single, silvered leaf.
The body is no body to be seen
But is an eye that studies its black lid.

Let these be your delight, secretive hunter,
Wading the sea-lines, moist and ever-mingling,
Mounting the earth-lines, long and lax, lethargic.
These lines are swift and fall without diverging.

The melon-flower nor dew nor web of either
Is like to these. But in yourself is like :
A sheaf of brilliant arrows flying straight,
Flying and falling straightway for their pleasure,
Their pleasure that is all bright-edged and cold ;
Or, if not arrows, then the nimblest motions,
Making recoveries of young nakedness
And the lost vehemence the midnights hold.

WALLACE STEVENS

CONVERSATIONS

Last night, ghosts of flowers floated
colorless, yet still perfect of frail form,
sea jellies in the night-waters ;
and with invisible voices they wailed :
" Pray for us ! Pray for us ! "
Alas ! Lost flowers, why should ye ask
for the prayers of a man ?
" That we may rise to be men, fool ! " they answered.
But I prayed instead the impossible prayer
that men should become flowers.

VOYAGE

It is an indisputable fact
that the load of grotesque humans
in this awkward ship
is moving directly toward
the glory of the rising moon.

It is not so indisputable
that they shall never reach it.

For I can see them,
strained through the sieve of many generations,
setting forth from the silver rim of the moon
in an irradiant galleon
toward the sun itself.

S. FOSTER DAMON

ALL IS ONE

I hear the flowing of great rivers
And the long slow breathing of the wind,
And solemnly, unceasingly,
Like gleaming fish
In weeds beneath dim water,
Stars on their universal way
Glide among woven boughs.

All is one,
Surely, indivisibly.
A falling pebble
Ruffles the pool's clear face,
And in those wavering circles waken
Powers that shall change the motion of Orion
And vex the dreaming of a thousand stars.

Deeds are immortal,
Once the rose is gathered,
Nothing can ever be the same again.

MARTIN ARMSTRONG

THE APOLLO OF VEII

On the 19th May 1916, in the middle of the great war, a new Apollo was brought to light by the excavators of the Italian government at Veio, the ancient Veii of the Etruscans. Although the professor superintending the work knew that his discovery was of prime importance, not only archaeologically but also artistically, the discovery remained the secret of a few persons until 1920. Then the director of the Etruscan Museum in Rome gave photographs and particulars to the Italian press, and the new Apollo caused a momentary flutter of excitement among those interested in antique art. The statue in question forms part of a group representing the myth of Apollo fighting with Hercules for a hind in the presence of two other divinities, one of whom can be recognized as Mercury. Another is probably Diana, but this portion of the group of statuary, which probably formed part of the decoration of a temple, is ruined. The subject is often repeated in ancient art, and there is a notable example of the struggle of Apollo with Hercules, on a bronze helmet in Paris.

That the statues in question, and especially the Apollo which is reproduced in this number of *Broom* are of considerable importance will reveal itself at a glance. These reproductions of the sculpture of the unknown Etruscan artist have not so far appeared — as far as we know — in any illustrated periodical out of Italy. The statues are not even yet shown to the general public at the Etruscan museum at the Villa Giulia in Rome.

The style of the statues is Ionic-Etruscan of the end of the viith or the beginning of the vth century B. C. Professor Giglioli of the Etruscan museum gives the date of the Veii Apollo as 500 B. C. The work is in terra cotta and has had to be considerably restored. The Apollo is covered with a coating of polished clay, which, as with many ancient terra cottas, has a yellowish color. The nude parts of the body are painted that brownish red which characterizes male figures in archaic sculpture. The statue was all of a piece, and made of clay about an inch and a quarter thick, and was baked entire, for which purpose holes were left in the plinth and the shoulders.

But the archaeological details do not concern us here so much as the artistic interest of the life-size god. The pose of the advancing figure, the tremendous force of the head and face, the curious malignity in the mask-like countenance add something fresh to our conception of this deity, wrought and rewrought in almost every kind of plastic material by the artists of Asia and Europe.

The statue raises for us once again the perplexing riddle: who were the Etruscans? The unknown Veian artist has contrived to give to the Sun god a touch

of that Sphinx-like character which is responsible for the charm of Etruscology, that fascination which led the old Englishman Dennis to spend years travelling about alone in the 'eighteen-forties through the forgotten and buried cities of the people that gave her earliest arts to Rome.

How different is the conception of the Ionic-Etruscan or Italo-Etruscan artist, author of the Veii Apollo from that even of the primitive Greeks. Without going into the technical details, which demonstrate a decadence of the pure archaic style, we find this example of Etruscan art has something of its own. In the expression of the face, there is something sinister and cruel, dark and hermetic. Far indeed is it removed from the sunny tragicness of the Greek art of the perfect period.

It has the strangeness of the names of the strange gods of Etruria, as Tages "a wondrous boy with a hoary head and the wisdom of age who sprang from the fresh ploughed furrows of Tarquinii", or dark Typhoon with his mallet, the satanic deity, or Phuphlums, a grimmer Bacchus.

Etruscan art is mostly known to the general cultured public by those later examples of it when it merges into Etrusco-Roman art, as in those monstrously smug funeral statues that we see on tombs and cinerary monuments. Even here something of the sensual divinity which characterizes the expression of works like the Veii Apollo and the Veii Mercury remains. It persists, indeed, diluted, in Italian art of much later epochs.

That modern sculpture has points of contact with the antique art is self evident. What is interesting to note is how close sometimes these points of relation may be. The preoccupation of modern sculptors with pure form has its analogy in the works of the ancients, where what is known in art jargon as plastic import or significant form occupied consciously or unconsciously the old time sculptors to a considerable extent. And probably, much more consciously than is generally supposed.

This form would seem to be the chief obsession of the modern artist. The vivifying spiritual influence he must find in himself. What does the modern artist accept whole-heartedly as his motive faith shall we say? Christianity? No. Paganism? It can only be a charming affectation. A kind of sublimated mathematics, the divinity of geometrical ratiocination? Maybe, in part. Utility? To an extent, yes, but it is a drab creed, without cross or laurel. The artist usually supplies his own faith, which can be but little else than faith in himself, an egocentric religion, whose ideality will rarely bear searching analysis.

And if the modern and the ancient artist sometimes meet in the cerebral sympathies of form, in this matter of faith or spiritual impulse they are far apart.

EDWARD STORER



The Apollo of Veii



Head from Etruscan Tomb Fresco

IF YOU HAD THREE HUSBANDS

PRESENT HOMES

There then.

Present ten.

Mother and sister apples, no not apples, they can't be apples, everything can't be apples, sounds can't be apples. Do be quiet and refrain from acceptances.

It was a great disappointment to me.

I can see that here is a balcony. There never was a sea or land, there never was a harbor or a snow storm, there never was excitement. Some said she couldn't love. I don't believe that anybody said that. I don't mean that anybody said that. We were all present. We could be devoted. It does make a different thing. And hair, hair should not be deceiving. Cause tears. Why tears, why not abscesses.

I will never mention an ugly skirt.

It pleased me to say that I was pretty.

Oh we are so pleased.

I don't say this at all.

Consequences are not frightful.

Pleasure in a home.

After lunch, why after lunch, no birds are eaten. Of course carving is special.

I don't say that for candor.

Please be prepared to stay.

I don't care for wishes.

This is not a success.

By this stream.

Streaming out.

I am relieved from draught. This is not the way to spell water.

I cannot believe in much.

I have courage.

Endurance.
And restraint.
After that.

For the end.

This is the title of a conclusion which was not anticipated.

When I was last there I smiled behind the car. What car showed it.
By that time.
Believe her out.
Out where.
By that.
Buy that.
She pleased me for . . . Eye saw.
Do it.

For that over that.

We passed away. By that time servants were memorable. They came
to praise.

Please do not.
A blemish.
They have spans.
I cannot consider that the right word.
By the time we are selfish, by that time we are selfish.
By that time we are selfish.
It is a wonderful sight,
It is a wonderful sight to see.
Days.
What are days.
They have hams.
Delicate.
Delicate hams.
Pounds.
Pounds where.
Pounds of.
Where.
Not butter dogs.
I establish souls.

Any spelling will do.
If you look at it.
That way.
I am going on.
In again.
I am going on again in in them.
What I feel.
What I do feel.
They said mirrors.
Undoubtedly they have that phrase.
I can see a hat.
I remember very well knowing largely.
Any shade, by that I do mean iron glass. Iron glass is so torn. By
what. By the glare. Be that beside. Size shall be sensible. That size shall
be sensible.

Fixing.

Fixing enough.
Fixing up.
By fixing down, that is softness, by fixing down there.

Their end.

Politeness.
Not by linen.
I don't wish to be recalled.
One, day, I do not wish to use the word, one day they asked to buy that.
I don't mean anything by threads. It was wholly unnecessary to do so.
It was done and then a gun. By that stand. Wishes.
I do not see what I have to do with that.
Any one can help weeping.
By wise.
I am so indifferent.
Not a bite.
Call me handsome.
It was a nice fate.
Any one could see.

Any one could see.
 Any one could see.
 Buy that etching.
 Do be black.
 I do not mean to say etching. Why should I be very sensitive. Why
 should I matter. Why need I be seen. Why not have politeness.
 Why not have politeness.
 In my hair.
 I don't think it sounds at all like that.
 Their end.
 To end.
 To be for that end.
 I don't see what difference it makes.
 It does matter.
 Why have they pots.
 Ornaments.
 And china.
 It isn't at all.
 I have made every mistake.
 Powder it.
 Not put into boxes.
 Not put into boxes.
 Powder it.
 I know that well.
 She mentioned it as she was sleeping.
 She liked bought cake best. No she didn't for that purpose.
 I have utter confusion.
 No two can be alike.
 They are and they are not stubborn.
 Please me.
 I was mistaken.
 Any way.
 By that.
 Do not refuse to be wild.
 Do not refuse to be all.
 We have decided not to withstand it.
 We would rather not have the home.
 This is not to teach lessons of exchange endurance and resemblance and
 by that time it was turned.
 Shout.

By.

Out.

I am going to continue humming.

This does not mean express wishes.

I am not so fanciful. I am beside that calculated to believe in whole pages. Oh do not annoy me.

Days.

I don't like to be fitted. She didn't say that.

If it hadn't been as natural as all the rest you would have been as silly as all the rest.

It's not at all when it is right.

I wish for a cake.

She said she did.

She said she didn't.

Gloom.

There was no gloom.

Every room.

There was no room.

There was no room.

Buy that chance.

She didn't leave me any money.

Head.

Ahead.

I don't want to be visible or invisible.

I don't want a dog named Dick.

It has nothing to do with it.

I am obliged to end.

Intend.

My uncle will.

GERTRUDE STEIN

WASTE

Dawn is like a broken honeycomb
Spilling over the waxen edges of the clouds
That drip with light.

Spires, swarming up the mauve mist,
Reach their rosy tips
Like little pointed tongues
First about a shining platter,
And every window is a brazier
That cups the living gold.

Even the squat chimneys
Rooting heaven
Catch the sun upon their snouts
And keep it balancing . . .

Only my heart,
Like a splintered vase,
Is envious of the light
It cannot hold.

LOLA RIDGE

GOLD

I let the rich gold sunlight
bind itself round me,
infinitely fine
wrappings of gold,
till I grew blind and
my heart seemed to stop,
and I thought myself
some Eastern emperor,
swathed in leaf of gold,
upright within the tomb
of his great ancestors,
deep in cobalt caverns hewn
in the savage earth.

BROKEN IMAGE

Like the tide
when it falls back
leaving upon the shore
delicate seaweeds and
watery fantasies dead,
so in the heart
love when it goes . . .

BY THE SHORE

Flowers flaming by the seashore,
crimson flowers,
shuddering in the breeze
as if the violent sea,
with its white fangs
had wounded earth,
and the blood dripped
perfumedly
o'er the salty stones.

DREAMS

Poppies in the corn,
like dreams among reality,
where man to live,
the white bread must savour
with rosy dreams,
delicate dreams.

ILLUSION

Where the moon's image lay
palely printed on water,
a summer moth
lay dying happily . . .
she thought she died upon the moon.

EDWARD STORER

THE LIMBO OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

I.

Critics are the conscience of a literature. When we speak of the "artistic conscience" of a writer, we mean his power of self-criticism. Hence, the above dictum is simply a logical extension of the term, "artistic conscience."

With the reminder that dated periods in literature are arbitrary and overlapping, I would make an 1860-1910 period in American literature which might be called the Neo-Colonial or the Neo-Puritanic Era. It starts approximately with the death of the New England School and terminates roughly with the rise of the present Young America into prominence.

During these fifty years American literature was either without a conscience, or with a diseased conscience, or, at the best, with only a very feeble righteous conscience. During this time the adventures of a vigorous plutocracy and the servitudes exacted by it, sapped the energies of America; the middle class moralists planted all their stodgy weight upon the creative spirit; Victorian England filled up the entire intellectual and literary horizon. The respectable morally-minded business-serving professor-preacher, e. g., Hamilton Wright Mabie, was an unchallenged blight and a White List of books was an imperial decree issued with divine sanction. Percival Pollard, Walter Blackburn Harte, a few others were desperate enough to protest in the name of literary art, but how far did their voices, choked up in magazines of weak prestige, carry into the American consciousness? At no time between the Civil War and 1910 was there a sizable corps of critical spirits in love with aesthetic form to war brilliantly for the emergence of a national literature embodying the realities of human experience in America. Looking back now, we perceive two results of this deficiency.

The first affects our three literary men of admitted genius in that period — Walt Whitman, Henry James, Mark Twain. The wreckage of Mark Twain's great gift in that conscienceless era has lately been ably demonstrated. What happened to the other two who fulfilled in a high degree the natural urge of their genius was a very thorough failure to achieve any immediate widespread contact with the minds and actions of their countrymen. Henry

James has influenced two creditable novelists in America, but compare this with the much larger following he has inspired in England. He took the art of novel-writing with the greatest seriousness, a preoccupation so offensive to most Americans that his expatriation was used to steer him away from our attention. So well has the charge of un-Americanism been pressed against James that today it surprises us to hear young Englishmen rendering tribute to "your novelist," to "the American, Henry James." This matter may perhaps be seen in all its absurdity if we recall Turgenev in exile at Paris and under the influence of Flaubert, writing novels in which the Russian travelling outside his native land was often the principal figure just as the American in Europe was a favorite figure for James. But where is the Russian who seriously contends that Turgenev belongs not to Russian but to French literature? Walt Whitman at least was indubitably an indigenous poet, but for long the bulk of his acclaim came from Europe. It was not until the last decade, when a species of Whitman Renaissance sprang up, that he could be said to have fermented the American mass in any recognizable degree. This slowness in making contact I blame directly upon the absence of alert intelligent critics capable of utilizing the wonderful springboards Mark Twain, Henry James and Walt Whitman presented, and for proof of this contention I point again to Russian literature. Here we find contemporaneous with the great Russian poets and novelists extremely able critics writing in powerful reviews who promptly expounded and praised the works of the former. The huge sales of Pushkin, Lermontov, Turgenev, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Gorki, their almost instant penetration into the intellectual and emotional life of Russia are acknowledged by historians of Russian literature to be appreciably due to the brilliant pens of the critics Byelinsky, Tchernyshevsky, Dubrolov, Pisarev and Michailovsky. These were men of a stature sorely needed in the ranks of American critics from 1860 to 1910.

The other results was the creation of a cloudy limbo to which the professor-preachers consigned whatever original and vital talent intruded within their range of reading. Only a few swam free and received the plaudits of the pundits, and these perhaps owed their reception to extra-literary causes. William Dean Howells, for instance, was nominated as our foremost novelist, not so much for his sustained control of good prose, as for his adoption of a suave undisturbing selected realism. On the other hand, into the limbo went a truly fascinating crew of doughty uncompromisers with art and life. A partial list includes Frank Norris, Ambrose Bierce, Stephen Crane, Lafcadio Hearn, Percival Pollard, Walter Blackburn Harte, Michael Monahan, Sadakichi Hartmann, Edgar Saltus and William Vaughn Moody. James Huneker they could not keep there. His enthusiastic personality came storming out,

and even vaulted into the National Institute of Arts and Letters. Part of the literary reconstruction in America has been the pulling out from this limbo of the powerful novelist Norris, of the mordant Bierce, of the subtle prose artist Hearn, and thanks to the efforts of Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Hueffer, of Stephen Crane, whose barbarically beautiful "Red Badge of Courage" and whose "The Black Riders and Other Lines," anticipatory by fifteen or twenty years of the vogue of *vers libre* in this country, probably hold a position of much less prestige than the works of James Lane Allen in the ranking lists of our reading public. Pollard and Harte have been recently discussed in print: Pollard's "Their Day in Court" will for long be an invaluable source-book for the literary history of this period. Harte and Monahan and Sadakichi Hartmann will probably always remain in the limbo and be discovered only by the curious from time to time. Their talents lack momentum, but let us honor them for their level heads and true eyes and gallant spirits which, in a time of most confused provincialism, chose and fought on the intelligent side. Hartmann was early in the field for Walt Whitman, Whistler, Swinburne, Verlaine and Mallarmé: he is a delightfully picturesque vagrom, but unfortunately he writes broken English, Monahan is a shrewd lover of books and writes with charm, geniality and insight. If he had developed a more personal idiom, and if he had placed more objectivity in his subjective essays, he might have had a chance for survival. These men should have been powers in the criticism of their day, but the times were against them. There were no giant critics to whom they might have allied themselves in a profitable warfare, nor was there any access to an adequate circulation for their thoughts.

In what plight they were may be visualized if we throw back twenty-five or thirty-five years a novelist like Sherwood Anderson. Anderson, emerging in the last decade, has found good publishers and influential magazines open to him. He has captured a reading public and received understanding and praise from a large number of important critics. The contemporary American novel cannot be treated without considering his creation. But a few years back and how completely his appearance might have been smothered. Condemned to tiny magazines, printed by small publishers, perhaps even forced to publish at his own expense, blackballed by the hordes of professor-preacher reviewers, he too would probably have disappeared into the limbo for decades. His ability would have prevented such a fate, you say. Well, look up the story of Ambrose Bierce again.

Edgar Saltus¹ and William Vaughn Moody will be treated in more detail.

¹ Edgar Saltus died July 31, 1921.

II.

Don't be frightened away from Saltus by President Harding's startling predilection for "The Imperial Purple." Against such approbation set Huneker's poorly worded remark that Saltus was a "pet author" of his, Wilde's "In Edgar Saltus's work passion struggles with grammar on every page," Arthur Symonds' "It seems to me that Edgar Saltus is an American writer altogether too little read," Mencken's glow over "The Imperial Purple," and Carl Van Vechten's excellent chapter on Saltus. The *élite*, then, have discussed him far more than the *canaille*.

Style is a synonym for Saltus. Put this passage descriptive of the suicide of Lenox Leigh in "Mr. Incoul's Misadventure" through the laboratory tests.

"Then he took from the package a phial that held a brown liquid, in which he detected a shade like to that of gold. The odor was dull and heavy. He put the phial down and stood for a moment irresolute. He had looked into the future. But in its Arcadias he saw nothing, save his own image suspended from a gibbet. He looked again almost wistfully; no, there was nothing. He threw off his coat and rolled up his sleeve. From the phial he filled the syringe, and with the point pricked the bare arm and sent the liquid spurting into the flesh. Three times he did this. He reached for the absinthe and left it untasted.

"Into his veins had come an unknown, a delicious languor. He sank into a chair. The walls of the room dissolved into cataracts of light and dazzling steel. The flooring changed to crimson, and from that to black, and back to red again. From the ceiling came flood after flood of fused, intermingled and oscillating colors. His eyes closed. The light became more intense, and burned luminous through the lids. In his ears filtered a harmony, faint as did it come from afar, and singular as were it won from some new consonance of citherns and clavichords, and suddenly it rose into tumultuous vibrations, striated with series of ascending scales. Then as suddenly ceased, drowned in claps of thunder.

"The lights turned purple and glowed less vividly, as though tough veils were being lowered between him and them. But still the languor continued, sweeter ever and more enveloping, till from very sweetness it was almost pain.

"The room grew darker, the colors waned, the lights behind the falling veils sank dim, and dimmer, fading, one by one; a single spark lingered, it wavered a moment, and vanished into night."

This passage is not one of Saltus's most purple: it lies level, however, with

the bulk of his writing. Some of his early books are composed in a concise chaste diction of remarkable clarity: a few of the later works exhibit an astonishing style-suicide. The Syren-lure of words, the splendors within reach of his pen made Saltus delirious for a short period and the vitals of his prose, clarity, were ornamented into intoxicating but incomprehensible obscurity. Swinburne's fault committed in prose. "A prose paranoiac," said Pollard. But the last books show that Saltus again caught control of his glittering instrument.

No other American writer cultivates sensuous appeals so much as Saltus. Behind the majority of his sentences Lesbian lutes play; from them perfumes rise, out of them colors stare or flash. His pages are stained with ochres and indigos and jets. He actually compels the reader to caress delicately, taste sybaritically, inhale observingly, listen carefully and see vividly what he writes.

The rhythm of Saltus is a swift staccato intoned with a very sensitive feeling for word inversions. He is a master of the short sentence, as difficult a mastery as that of rhythmically and clearly manipulating long sentences.

He has a fertile gift for striking metaphor and simile. "The item hung a hammock for her thoughts, rested her mentally, unrolled a carpet for the returning steps of health." "With whips in his word, he added": Of Ivan the Terrible, "A cholera, corpses mounted about him." "Her fingers rippled over the keys like rain." "When she laughed one could see her tongue; it was like an inner cut of water-melon." Such as these are as plentiful in Saltus's pages as precious stones in El Dorado.

Saltus can report expertly the conversation of the *haut monde* (alas, the brilliant repartee of the *haut monde* nowadays at least comes only from the clever author's brain). From "The Monster" I take the following conversation, casting it into stage dialog form, between the young daredevil Aurelia and her stupid fiancé Buttercups, nicknamed Parsnips.

FOOTMAN: Will mademoiselle give herself the trouble to pass into the salon?

AURELIA: No, I like it here. Besides I hate suggestions. Tell Madame Barouffska that I have come on a most unimportant matter which will probably detain me a very long time.

BUTTERCUPS: Yes, I often think that it is only unimportant matters that are really momentous. What is this one, if I may ask?

AURELIA: I have forgotten.

BUTTERCUPS: Perhaps then it was really important.

AURELIA: So it was! So it was! I remember now I wanted to ask her how she likes matrimony.

BUTTERCUPS: Caesar! You are not collecting data on the subject, are you?

AURELIA (*treacherously innocent*): You wouldn't wish me to take leaps in the dark, would you?

BUTTERCUPS: Certainly I would. Certainly I do — since you are to take them with me.

AURELIA (*same wicked look*): What a beautiful nature you have!

BUTTERCUPS: I'll tell you what matrimony is, two souls with but a single thought.

AURELIA: Yes. Two souls with half a thought apiece. There is real bliss!

BUTTERCUPS (*snarling*): Oh come, now! If you turn everything into ridicule.

AURELIA (*dreamily*): I asked the duchess, and she said.

BUTTERCUPS: The old harridan!

AURELIA: You know her manner. (*imitating her.*) My dear, matrimony is three months of adoration, three months of introspection, thirty years of toleration — with the children to begin it all over.

BUTTERCUPS (*frowning*): A rather voluminous definition.

AURELIA: Rather luminous I should call it.

BUTTERCUPS: While you were at it, it's a pity you did not ask her what love is.

AURELIA: Parsnips! You'll never believe it! She asked me!

BUTTERCUPS (*glowering*): Mistook you for an expert. What did you say?

AURELIA: I said, that while from studies and statistics I was inclined to believe that, theoretically, love is a fermentation of the molecules of the imagination, actually it is the affection of somebody else.

BUTTERCUPS: I don't understand that.

AURELIA: I added that from the same studies and statistics I was also inclined to believe that love is the tragedy of those who lack it, the boredom those who don't.

BUTTERCUPS: Eh? I don't understand that either.

AURELIA: I further stated that love is a specific emotion, more or less exclusive in selection, more — or less — permanent in duration and due to a mental disturbance, in itself caused by a law of attraction which somebody or other said was the myth of happiness, invented by the devil for men's despair.

BUTTERCUPS (*groaning*): I don't understand that at all.

AURELIA: Violet said she didn't either.

BUTTERCUPS: Now there's a woman of sense.

AURELIA: Leilah Baouffiska said she did understand, so I may suppose that she is stupid.

BUTTERCUPS: No doubt, she does seem to have made a mess of things. Why now did she leave her first husband?

AURELIA: It is not a thing I could mention.

BUTTERCUPS: What?

AURELIA (*perversely*): She caught him in the act. (*Appearing to blush.*) With her own eyes she saw him eating fish with his knife.

Surely, this dialog with its wit and epigrammatic quality can be read in the same evening with Congreve or Wilde.

Saltus's diction, then, has clarity, brilliant figures, sensuous appeal, rhythm, personal accent and wit. With this sharp, polished, jewel-encrusted dagger he carved out thirty odd books whose range from translation through fiction, literary criticism and historical panoramas to philosophy proclaims the author a versatile talent in possession of a well-digested general culture.

In his short stories and novels Saltus uses mechanized plots and mechanized characters with ingenious variations. Stripped of all but a synoptic verbiage, his stories appeal to the same naiveté in us which makes "mystery" or detective stories so popular. Like the latter, "The Truth about Tristrem Varick" or "The Paliser Case" utilized the lasso of suspense to pull us to the finis. Like them, Saltus offers little psychological dissection, none of the throbbing immensities of life, no third dimension of art as we are tugged along. But his entertainment is vastly better. He adorns our suspense with sulphurous language, he nearly drains off the cruelty and perversity in us, he never repeats himself as a virtuoso of the shudder. He is a Petronius in his perception of the art of suicide, a Wainwright in the aesthetic employment of crime — in sum, a Grand Marshal of the Poms of Satan. He takes very few and then very brief philosophical excursions in his fiction, but his attitude towards the universe has been profoundly acquired and its presence in the author, although apparently excluded from his fiction, does give added weight to his wiry structures. Saltus is saturated with Hindoo philosophy and is a thorough disciple of Schopenhauer and Hartmann. In "The Philosophy of Disenchantment" and "The Anatomy of Negation" he has written two compact readable and scholarly résumés of pessimism and of skepticism — perhaps the best handbooks ever published on these subjects. I quote the final paragraphs of "The Anatomy of Negation" in order to indicate clearly the philosophical position of the mind which devises such delightful fiction.

"There is no help there, nor is there any elsewhere. The Orient is asleep in the ashes of her gods. The star of Ormuzd has burned out in the skies. On the banks of her sacred seas, Greece, hushed for evermore, rests on the divine limbs of her white immortals. In the sepulchre of the pale Nazarene, humanity guards its last divinity. Every promise is unfulfilled. There is no light save

perchance in death. One torture more, one more throb of the heart, and after it nothing. The grave opens, a little flesh falls in, and the weeds of forgetfulness which soon hide the tomb grow eternally above its vanities. And still the voice of the living, of the just and of the unjust, of kings, of felons and of beasts, will be raised unsilenced, until humanity, unsatisfied as before and yet impatient for the peace which life has disturbed, is tossed at last, with its shattered globe and forgotten gods, to fertilize the furrows of space where worlds ferment.

"On this vista the curtain may be drawn. Neither poet nor seer can look beyond. Nature, who is unconscious in her immorality, entrancing in her beauty, savage in her cruelty, imperial in her prodigality, and appalling in her convulsions, is not only deaf, but dumb. There is no answer to any appeal. The best we can do, the best that has ever been done, is to recognize the implacability of the laws that rule the universe, and contemplate as calmly as we can the nothingness from which we are come and into which we shall all disappear. The one consolation we hold, though it is one which may be illusory too, consists in the belief that when death comes, fear and hope are at an end. Then wonder ceases; the insoluble no longer perplexes; space is lost; the infinite is blank; the farce is done."

Such a vision of the universe requires a drastic escape. Schopenhauer recommended compassion, others have countered with irony. Saltus says: First, health; second, indifference. His pessimism permeates him, his indifference cloaks him — almost. His preoccupation with cruelty, with the tensions of mental agonies, with the bloody nightmares of history lifts one corner of the cloak and the question occurs: Is Edgar Saltus a sadistic artist, is his pessimism fed by a furtive delight in the spectacle of mankind's sufferings?

Certainly, the spectacular cinematographic histories he has written of the Caesars and the Tsars were congenial tasks. His fiction may remain second-hand book-stall quarry for the curious but the "Imperial Purple" and "The Imperial Orgy" should last as long as "The Philosophy of Disenchantment" and "The Anatomy of Negation:" the former two definitively capture the theatrical qualities of the corrupt Roman and Russian lineages in a scintillating prose. Not the least wonder about Saltus is his consummate ability to reduce whole libraries of yawns into two hundred pages of compact excitement.

At the age of eighteen Saltus wrote a monograph on Balzac, the value of which is not wholly spoiled by his acceptance of the Balzac legend *in toto*. Indeed, the Balzacian's searchlight had not lit up so relentlessly then as it has since the soft spots in the legend. In 1917, a subscription printer brought out "Oscar Wilde: An Idler's Impression," a brochure which establishes Saltus's ability to write with charm and discrimination on other authors. He

includes intimate gossip, stores up some interesting anecdotes and renders an excellent tribute to Wilde.

Because of the scarcity of this book, I leave criticism momentarily to quote an anecdote. Saltus had been invited to Tite Street for dinner. Upon his arrival, he was surprised to find no other guests and the house apparently unfestive. Wilde met him in the drawing-room and drawled: "This is delightful of you. I have been late for dinner a half hour, again a whole hour. You are late an entire week. That is what I call originality." Saltus responded with an invitation to dine with him. Oscar remarked on accepting: "I have the simplest tastes. I am always satisfied with the best." Interesting also is Saltus's estimate of O. W. "Wilde was a third rate poet who occasionally rose to the second class but not once to the first. Prose is more difficult than verse and in it he is rather sloppy... In talk he blinded, and it is the subsiding wonder of it that his plays contain."

Returning to an estimate of Saltus, let us sum up by saying we have in him a temperament saturated with pessimism which expresses itself by the beautiful decoration of sinister themes. To see grandeurs in vast horrors is the last thing a commonplace person can do. Neither can commonplace persons accumulate effortlessly a legend about themselves. This Edgar Saltus has done. The recorded facts are his birth in New York in 1858, his education here and at the Sorbonne, his visits to European capitals, his three marriages, his wealth and its loss, and his long succession of books. In his work are many grains of pollen from the great pessimists and from Balzac and Gautier. Rumor goes on to elaborate upon his recluse habits, his gigantic indifference to the ordinary concerns of man, his Balzacian hours of work and his Balzacian theory that the artist must carry his sex in his brain. A glamorous romantic personality who has been enveloped in the limbo partly because of his disdain for journalistic advertising but mainly because the prevalent attitude of the literary moguls in the period in which he wrote most of his books was that which is given concretely in the following excerpts on "The Daughters of the Rich."

"It is strange that a practised hand like that of Mr. Saltus should have released to any mark but the waste basket a thing that suggests, both in tone and style, a muddy-minded schoolboy's first attempts to imitate De Maupassant." *The Nation* J1. 1, '09 (Paul Elmer More, literary editor).

Today he is still submerged because our aggressive seekers for a virile American Literature find him too exotic, too Gallic, let us say. But we can no more control literary cross-currents than we can keep the wind from spreading pollen far and wide. The English do not reject Arnold Bennet because he has learned much from the French novel. Why must we proclaim only the impossibly pure-blooded? Why have we not, as other nations have, room

in our literature for strange flora and fauna? Edgar Saltus has admittedly been greatly influenced by European art, but he has not imitated to the point where his idiosyncracies vanish. His work is his own.

To read Saltus is to take a showerbath of jewels. But it is not to explore a great ocean with thousand-league currents and wide treasure caves of gold. For that we can turn to William Vaughn Moody.

III.

The experience of reading the poetry of Moody is rich and full. His gorgeous imagery and color, his flexible lines with their delicacy and music, his dramatic sense, his studious control with its suggestion of untapped reserves of power are strengthened by a well developed and unusually strong interior organization. By interior organization I mean what painters call a third dimensional solidity and what Willard Huntington Wright calls documentary solidity in literature. Moody knew how to make aesthetic use of his passion, greater emotions, proud rebelliousness and philosophy: he knew how to fuse them with his design so that its elements took on body, became firm, modelled, and weighty, and yet preserved their balanced motion.

It is curious that some aspects of the interior organization of Moody's poetry should not have attracted critics like Van Wyck Brooks and Waldo Frank who are raking back and forth over American literature to create a usable past. It is curious that there should have been only one exemplar of Young America who has written about him. In 1914, in the *Little Review*, George Soule said: "Here, surely, is an American poet who speaks in eternal terms of the new inspiration; one who was sane and blazing at the same time; one who in order to be modern did not need to use a poor imitation of Whitman, screech of boiler factories and exalt a somewhat doubtful brand of democracy; one who was uncompromisingly radical without being feverish; above all, one who succeeded in writing the most beautiful verse without going to London to do it. When one is oppressed with the doubt of American possibilities it is a renewal of faith to turn to him. If Whitman is of our soil, Moody is no less so; through these two the best in us has so far found its individual expression."

There are three aspects of Moody that should attract young Americans of this school.

He was, first of all, a doubter. For him, as for us, the old gods had been shattered and he was profoundly groping for new ones. He had no facile optimism: he did not know whether God was in his heaven and Pangloss was right: he did not know even that imperialists in China and the Philippines were right (in fact, his patriotism, took a very eloquent stand against them). More reli-

gious than any contemporary, he contemplated Christ with wistful eyes and then half-turned away. The road to Calvary lacked completely satisfying orchestration for this questing adventurous pilgrim who winged his doubts with a strong hopefulness.

Secondly, Moody had a vivid sense of social sin. It is a thought of Randolph Bourne's that our ancestors suffered from personal sin, we from social wrongs. There was rebellion in the very base of Moody's soul against the degradation of mankind by the machine, there was superb anger against the captains of earth, reckless, aghast, gorged, who battened the hatches on souls, cursing, sighing, distraught and sad, there was wonderment at the social inequalities of the time. Here then we have another sensitive spirit recoiling from the wholesale sadisms of our present industrial organization.

Third, Moody worked out a great synthesis for himself, the outline perhaps of a future religion. It was a philosophical union of Pan and Christ, a harmony of Pan's lust of living and beauty-madnesses with the gentle anarchic brotherhood of man of the romantic Jesus. Moody was pagan to a delightful degree, but he could not accept gladiatorial shows and slavery. He was Christian in many of his outlooks, but the laughing earth and libidinous riotous man must be affirmed. His culture was of both Greece and Nazareth and most fittingly has Soule called him "a great pilgrim-pagan." His perfect physical endowment, his firm intellect, his stout heart, his gift of artistry, his vital erudition, his questioning religious soul gave him such fulness of life as rarely comes to anyone in a generation of Americans. He was a bachanalian, an artist, a lover: he worshipped Bacchus, Apollo, Eros. And these, I suggest, are the gods America needs. All this is in Moody's work but he carried it as an artist. His doubts and indignations and philosophy disengage themselves for us from an aesthetic experience. His projections were deep but his surfaces were proportioned. At present the greatest relevance is an exhortation to read the *Poems and Poetic Dramas* and it is to reinforce my urgency that I list May Sinclair, Robert Morss Lovett, Ridgely Torrence and Edwin Arlington Robinson as admirers of this poet.

He died in 1910. The era of experimentation and achievement in *vers libre* followed hard after and doubtless distracted attention from *Gloucester Moors* and *The Masque of Judgment*. Yet culture is traditional as well as insatiable for departures, and it is not rash to predict a growing discovery of a man who worked traditional metrical poetry into a complex full toned organ for himself, an organ distinguishable from that of any other poet. His poetry is a splendid fruition after which young American poets might well turn to revolt and experiment.

GORHAM B. MUNSON

DEDICATED TO THE ENEMY.

(continued)

IX

The Business man is an essential to any Theatre. But it is a mistake, . . . a fatal one for which everyone has to pay . . . when he is at the head of a Theatre¹.

For try how we may to attribute to him qualifications as head, we cannot admit that he understands the difference between a good play, a very good play, and a foolish play : neither can we allow that his judgment is sound in so far as eye and ear are concerned or that he has what we call good taste. That is not part of his Business — how should it be ?

The Business man has one object — to make a thing pay. It is necessary to a modern theatre that it should pay — it should pay its way anyhow, and after that provide for a rainy day.

The money which comes in from the public should not go into the pockets of shareholders. It should return to the Public, . . . and in this manner : . . .

Each year's profit should be spent on Improvement of the Theatre : Enlargement of the Theatre : Development of its capacity to delight, instruct, and satisfy the Public.

A School should be added to the Theatre : a library, a museum : . . . (some few theatres have fairly good libraries and museums, but the schools are not good). Each Theatre should have its own Pension Fund for its most faithful adherents.

If there was enough to spare, it should devote a yearly sum to helping other less successful theatres in extremity.

¹ I will go so far as to say it has proved THE fatal mistake — and it is has been slowly ruining the whole European and American Dramatic Art for the past hundred years.

It is now just a hundred years since Napoleon died : Byron is exiled : and the commonplace is found to be a relief to all true (and egoistical) democrats. The golden mean of a pinchbeck age.

There are very many ways in which the money could be made to benefit the Public and the Art at the same time.

All I insist on is that shareholders should not profit, for that merely forces a business man to the head of affairs, and very properly his sole thought is for his shareholders . . . Oh! he will talk very noble language, giving us the usual catchpenny phrases about his working solely for the Public's benefit: but that he cannot do this is clear, for his is a mind which is unable to comprehend what will benefit anyone except his shareholders.

The practice of having a business man at the head is widespread in England. It makes it abominably difficult for the actors and for artists to make headway. It is a very grave pity.

Sometimes a so-called "artist" acts the business man. There are a few such "artists" in London and in control at central theatres.

What they give us may be called "the grandest show ever known on earth," and it may even be a good slapdash show, . . . but to run it for their shareholders and not to put all profits to benefit Public and Playhouse and the Performers is wrong as it can be.

So it comes to it that neither a quite honest business man nor the dishonest "artist" ought to be in the position of head of a theatre.

I wish Law and Order — the Powers which be — and *not* only the powers which *may* be before long, could see such simple matters as these in their true light.

X

TO THE EGOIST

You have reason to be desperate, my dear *confrère*, if impelled by ambition, and governed by your ego, you attempt to be what you call the "Napoleon of the Theatre" . . . or the "Catherine of the Stage." Because your affair should be your Art, and I think that the less of an organizer you are, the less you will come to despair.

If before your art is seen by your contemporaries . . . the mob . . . or the Public, you are obliged to push, to advertise to engage what our dear cousins call "barkers," you are putting upon yourself a strain which you are not called to put upon yourself.

Suppose you have some push in you — which in your egoism you call will, — and suppose we exalt it to the heights and honour it with the name of Action, what is all your action really worth in this field of Art?

You value it evidently, and the Public — your Public — values it. But that is has true value is very doubtful. In fact, we may be pretty well sure that it is not worth a fig. That's the worst of it: — would to goodness it was as easy as that.

Burnt up, transformed, translated, transmuted into something really valuable to the artist, and you cease altogether from action. You are not to do as Napoleon does but as Beethoven does and as Mozart does. Remember that Wagner was just what you admire — a colossal figure in the world of Art . . . but by the side of Beethoven and Mozart he cuts a very poor figure — no?

And the term "the Napoleon of the Theatre," although we know what it signifies, is not at all a happy one; for Napoleon would have been the last man, had he chosen to conquer in the field of Art and disregard all other fields, . . . he would have been the last man to waste his strength organizing — pushing — Napoleonizing. He would have followed Mozart's lead.

Napoleon as artist would have wasted no energy guiding people, dominating human society, showing impatience when restrained, brooking no rivals, contemptuous towards those who refused to render him homage, looking on the world as a great banquet open to any comer and where long arms are the main necessity, grabbing the sign of the highest excellence, and to the devil with the others.

It seems to me that you sometimes do in a little way what Napoleon would never have done even in a big way had he been the artist you are; . . . what Beethoven never did, nor Mozart; what Wagner through his work shall suffer for having done.

Rule out ambition of that kind from your programme altogether . . . and you'll feel twice as strong and achieve ten times as much. Already you know they speak of you as Napoleonic — awfully dangerous.

You are probably just as impatient as the great men and women have been; you are probably an epileptic in a mild way. Be reasonable and direct this force that is more than you, in the way it will most profit us, your fellow men — and yourself. Artist — Egoist . . . think of yourself, I beg of you.

You need not be an altruist to do that. It would become you better to be a treble egoist . . . but have sense . . . show method in your madness. Put the right saddle on the back of your Pegasus, and don't, oh don't, put it hind-side-fore.

These "Napoleons," dear Reader, the Napoleons of the Theatre always come into existence because they get muddled early in life and imagine that an artist is a man of action.

But what has Art to do with Action, or what the deuce is the ass thinking of who calls on an artist to be a man of action?

Leonardo da Vinci, Shakespeare, Molière, Beethoven, Mozart, . . . do these names suggest to such a great ass — anything?

Let me help the great ass.

These artist had Patrons . . . who acted for them. These Patrons supplied the funds . . . How? Let me suggest a little more by a few more names . . . The Duke of Milan; the Earl of Leicester; Louis XIV; the Cardinal at Salzburg (one forgets his name); and the little Prince Lichnowsky.

There in their order, five patrons to five supreme artists . . . were men of action — of paltry action. The five artists were not (my dear and patient ass) men of action at all . . . Have you understood?

Our Theatres have lately somehow been clogged with men of action, Napoleons of the Stage.

Open the doors — let them and their glorious self-importance escape . . . or we shall have a thousand little Napoleons.

What we have been working for years in our Movement Towards a New Theatre is *to grow Artists not Men of Action*. For it is easier to produce five hundred men of action than one artist.

A man of action is a fine thing anywhere except where the Arts are to thrive. He may hover around, he may even show his remarkable powers of action by ordering a cathedral or two, a theatre or two, but he must not put foot in our workshop.

We are patient sort of madmen, we artist-workmen, but we have *oubliettes* close to our work tables.

Gentlemen posing as Patrons, as men of action, as connoisseurs, have thousands of times come meddling too near the table and have been known to disappear suddenly.

Who was that great fool at Salzburg who posed as being the Patron of Mozart? I forget who he was, but I know *where he is*. He is down an *oubliette*.

The Earl of Leicester, who failed to build Shakespeare a decent theatre — where is he? The Patron of Beethoven, that poor Prince Lichnowsky, where is he? . . . “in our memory locked” down an *oubliette* and drowned every time we think of him in our laughter . . . a farce of a fool.

I am making a list (I would give it here but it requires more time to make it quite complete), of the hundred or two hundred artists whose work we have had and in some cases still have, and short facts as to their sustenance . . . and their patrons.

I wish to show by this list that if there are fifty fine artists who are as poor as was Mozart, there are fifty who were as rich as Rubens; and that this being the case it is an exaggeration for Lord Rosebery to assert that

"Genius thrives on Poverty and Art is smothered by riches." Because some Greek writer said so before Lord Rosebery polished up the phrase for some meeting whereat everyone wept and crowed over the death of Robert Burns is no special matter. There are some lies which even started in Greece . . . Benvenuto's old proverb "cats of good breed hunt better fat than lean" is as apt to-day as when the Pope first heard it from old Cellini and made a bold effort to look less mean than he was.

But because Patrons betray us — because we be poor — this is no reason for becoming "men of action," "Napoleons of the stage." Our instinct on receiving a letter from Ours faithfully our Patron to tell us that he is sorry he cannot help us . . . (that is to say, our work) . . . that though he promised us two or three thousand a year to help the work he now regrets that owing to some one having persuaded his weakness to act differently . . . *i. e.* to break his word . . . he must now stop sending the sums he ladled out grudgingly month by month¹ . . . our instinct on getting such a letter is to turn business man, is it not? To become men of action, — to be free from such fellows. If that were possible — to be business man and artist, well and good: but it don't work — it really don't. No, the artist must remember that it is as possible to be backed by a wrong 'un as it is to back a wrong 'un. If the artist is of no use at all; if he is not able to create, lacking in vision and skill to express, then he is indeed a poor horse to back: — but say he has all the powers we expect an artist to have, then if things go ill he can assuredly claim to have been backed by a wrong 'un — and wait for another event.

My point is that whatever betide, the artist must never change his mind — it must be the mind of the artist once and for ever. Never the man of action, never the impresario, never the Napoleon of the Arts.

GORDON CRAIG

(To be concluded).

¹ I was told last month of just such a patron of the arts . . . an Englishman . . . who is one of the very wealthiest Lords of Great Britain, who used to dole out month by month his promised support, . . . but listen, . . . only after he had received two letters of reminder, a telegram, and sometimes a telephone message per month. . . Incredible but true.

MADE IN AMERICA

The cost of living in Europe becomes very cheap for Americans because of the high dollar exchange. Boatloads of Americans, therefore, transport themselves to Europe and, basking in its milder climate, blossoming under its floods of beer and wine, conceive a new culture which is entirely contrary to all the tendencies which burgeon between San Diego and Bangor. They "hate" the United States, nation of bad taste, shorn of liberty, ungente to their paranoias and inhibitions.

In Paris they are subject to the precise influences of the glittering French mind. Good Heavens! America is now all the rage here: the American cinema, American shoes, skyscrapers, business methods, even American drinks. They hastily turn a somersault and proceed to reconstruct a United States experienced from a safe distance of three thousand miles through European spy-glasses . . .

A very plausible thesis, this of Mr. Loeb. However, it is assumed *a priori* that the Americans in Montparnasse are in a certain accord in their decisions on matters of art and of ethics. In reality, the Americans who have poured into Paris impress one with their bewildering ranges of mediocrity. For the most part, they seldom speak French, never read the literary reviews published in Paris, and isolate themselves so completely with their compatriots in an expatriated and vicious American milieu that there is scarcely any liaison with French ideas.

There are, of course, a few men living in Paris (not necessarily in Montparnasse) whose capacities one respects but whose reactions to and affinities with the French literature of the day are remarkably different. Artists simply will not herd. It can no more be said of these men that they echo a French art under American influences than it can be said that all American writers are headed for the diffuse subjective naturalism that has recently been crowned in New York.

Mr. Loeb's observations on the American literary scene, proper, seem perfectly just. There is a dreadful lack of clarity among the critics of the "advanced" journals. The "iconoclastic spirit" still roars about, still rants at Puritanism, asserts that American husbands are occasionally prompted to infid-

elity, or that *vers libre* is a perfectly justifiable form of poetry. Writers who give a "cross-section of life" are rendered a helping hand in *Vanity Fair*. Prizes are awarded to persons who write sincere but wretched verses about the A. E. F. . . . Sic! Occasionally a self-conscious interest is evinced in something that is more exotic: in de Gourmont, for instance. Quite by way of snobism.

I have become convinced that the whole foul morass of all this is due to the desire, naïve enough, to vulgarize literature in America.

Certain individuals launch a pretentious magazine which is designed to support and publish pure literature. (Loud applause). Within a year they have succeeded in gravitating toward something solid and nourishing, something only a shade different from *Harpers'* or the *Atlantic Monthly*. Vulgarization, eclecticism. Give the best French, Russian, German minds to the PEOPLE! ("It is to the creation of an attentive and critical environment that the *Dial's* award testifies". And elsewhere something to the effect that "we would only be doing half our duty" if we did not heed the other half).

This is the risk we run in attempting with Mr. Loeb to "bridge the separation between 'highbrow' and 'lowbrow' which isolates the artist from the community."

There is a larger audience, to be sure, for the artist in Paris. But the true artist here is not fooled by this fact into compromise. I have been assured again and again by young writers that the gulf between the great public and themselves is wider than ever before. These conditions are due on the one hand to the suspicion and bigotry that are the wake of war, and on the other hand to the prohibitive efforts of some of the influential literary journals toward vulgarization. Under these conditions the *avant-garde* is even more intransigent than ever in its isolation from the public of the press and the theatre.

By 1918, thirty years of symbolist poetry, fifty or sixty evenly matched poets had nearly all been laid asunder. The hundreds of volumes of painfully wrought verses for which Remy de Gourmont was the spokesman become too tiresome to be intelligible. Henry de Regnier, Paul Fort, Fernand Gregh, and a host of Academicians may be read in the daily press or in *La Revue de Paris*, but they do not cross our trail.

It is André Gide who emerged from the war with the strongest literary following. Gide, an extraordinary personality, together with Jaques Rivière built up the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, the centre, if you will, of French letters today. Its characteristics were at once the art-egoism of Gide, mirrored in such kindred spirits as Jean Giraudoux, Paul Morand, Valéry Larbaud, and the diverse mysticism, at once, of Francis James, of Jules Romains, of André Suarès, of Paul Claudel. The indefatigable Marcel Proust is ranged with them. The N.

R. F., in short, has represented no one tendency. It has been eclectic to the point of inviting members of the Dada group to contribute, in its fear of not seeming catholic enough. It has been sagaciously directed, has reached a wide public, and serves the excellent purpose which the *Mercure de France* did ten years ago. Its crystallization *ad absurdum* was attained last winter with the establishment of a school for the instruction of young poets under the guidance of Jules Romains.

It would scarcely be fair, then, to regard the N. R. F. as the wing of French letters that offers something novel or corrupting. For the rest, André Salmon and Max Jacob, allied as they are with Cubism, are the exponents of a modernity which was purely of the moment and ended with yesterday. Giraudoux and Morand are whimsical and ironical enough but it is a rather facile manner at bottom. All these are the men who have largely attracted attention abroad, and who, Mr. Loeb suspects, may have persuaded some of the American writers in Paris into a revaluation of their homeland.

Very little, then, is offered in the way of nourishment for the American quester of literary gold. In spite of the appearance of a number of impressive looking *revues* and the surprisingly strong industrial support of art, the present hour is not an auspicious one for French letters. It is a moment perhaps, of too great transition. The writers who have been conspicuously presented are too obviously small talents, excessively mannered, using a paltry mask of modernity.

Jean Cocteau is a typical case. Trumpeted as the last word in modern deviltry, this man has almost succeeded in confusing and diverting whatever attention the public has been disposed to give to the newer art movements. His has been the glaring example of the cheap and offensive shifts for shocking the bourgeois which Mr. Loeb condemns. The method in his poetry has simply been to make un-musical and irritating verses which refer to expresses, steamboats, aeroplanes, the unconscious, the rubber heel, etcetera, thereby bringing his writings squarely up to 1922! He is again a clever man, occasionally worth listening to in the prose medium, although his poetry leaves a perfect blank in the brain.

There is still a small determined faction to turn to far younger men who have neither attained their ripest growth nor been accepted in the name of authentic literature. To an American who has been intensely conscious of his environment during the first quarter of this century and the trend of American life, the spirit and tentatives of this left wing indicate a striking departure from the other currents.

The stimulus came directly out of the brain of the Comte de Lautreamont, who chanted in his *Poésies* preface: "Man is great and his greatness consists

in that he will not know himself miserable!!... Greatness refutes sorrow. My thoughts are unchained. The heart of man is a book I have learned to esteem.

"Man is the conqueror of chimeras, the novelty of tomorrow, the order that rules chaos... He judges all things. He is the depository of truth, the collector of certitudes, the glory not the butt of the universe...."

Out of Lautreamont and Rimbaud came the stimulus toward an affirmative Promethean attitude. The whole nineteenth century erred, according to Lautreamont, in that its literature echoed and re-echoed the note of doubt, despair, and humility, instead of affirmation, self-assertion and human triumph over nature which embody the actual achievements of that century. The '90s were even more sterile in their refinement of skepticism, sickness and ennui.

The young men who at the close of the War courageously advanced these ideas as the basis for a new art in the pages of *Littérature* during 1919-21 are the present left wing of French letters referred to above. Louis Aragon, André Breton, Paul Eluard, Philippe Soupault, Tristan Tzara have been producing prose and poetry since the close of the War which sought a mood of humor instead of pathos, aggression instead of doubt, and complete freedom of method for the restrictions of the previous age.

It matters little that this movement encompassed Dadaism which frightened and offended so many, nor that Dada is unquestionably dead. A strong impetus has been given to unlimited experiment with form, to a greater daring and a more penetrating humor. Apollinaire, who at the time of his unfortunate death was very close to these young writers, urged them to the greatest possible liberties. To be at least as daring as the mechanical geniuses of the age which has attained the veritable realization of the miracles forecast in primitive fables. To be the prophets alike, the fable-makers for the incredible ages to come!

The machine is not "flattening us out" nor "crushing us." The machine is our magnificent slave, our fraternal genius. We are a new and hardier race, friend to the sky-scraper and the subterranean railway as well.

We are at home under the sea as well as in the air, and we can sing and laugh as heartily under these transformed conditions. The whole scene, strangely enough is much more provocative of mirth than of condemnation.

The work of these younger men makes no bow to the public. Liberated as they are from all tendencies to make the public a little more "highbrow" and themselves a little more "lowbrow," they carry prose and poetry into new rôles. The novels of Aragon, *Anicet* and *Telemaque* obey the requisites of poetry for music, color, freedom of movement. *Les Champs Magnétiques* in which Breton and Soupault collaborated is a novel without plot or characters.

The poems of Eluard are written in prose rather than in verses, but they are not *Poèmes en prose*. There is place here to indicate little else than that these men who may well have their best work yet before them are confirmed explorers who are turning up fresh soil. From a purely philological point of view their experiments with argot, with profanity, with the unconscious zones in natural speech mark them apart from their contemporaries. The French language becomes less thin and pellucid, gains body and richness.

So much, briefly, for their technique. We can scarcely follow them in these directions. Our language tendencies are Elizabethan. And in America there has been an equal groping toward purer forms of literature in isolated corners, here and there among younger writers.

Witnessing as we are the gradual Americanization of the Eastern Hemisphere, it would surely be a strange surrender of our prerogatives to imitate Europe, or Paris, for that matter. The fundamental attitude of aggression, humor, unequivocal affirmation which they pose, comes most naturally from America. The high speed and tension of American life may have been exported in quantity to Europe. But we are still richest in material. Our preposterous naive profound film will never be surpassed by artistic or literary German cinemas. No cities will quite equal what New York or Chicago or Tulsa have.

We have only to roll a great big boulder over all the little American author-insects who are still imitating a discredited French naturalism of fifty years ago. We have only to free ourselves of fixed ideas as to how a prose-story or a verse-poem should be written. Reacting to purely American sources, to the at once bewildering and astounding American panorama, which only Chaplin and a few earnest unsung film-directors have mirrored, we may yet amass a new folk-lore out of the domesticated miracles of our time.

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON

COMMENT

We have received the first number of *Secession* a new literary review published by Gorham B. Munson in Vienna. According to the editorial pronouncement, *Secession* exists for those who are preoccupied with researches for new forms. One of its collaborators writes that *Secession* can really be a pretty good organ, because, after all, the sky is its limit. *Broom* wishes every success to its young contemporary which, at least, will not be hindered by lack of room.

The first number aligns itself in a general way with Post-Dadaism. Tristan Tzara and Louis Aragon collaborate in translations. Malcolm Cowley, Matthew Josephson, Will Bray and the editor contribute the American portion.

The responsibility for the review is laid in part upon the *Dial* in an *exposé* which closes: "The existence of this *Yale-Review-in-a-Harvard-blazer* is one of the bitter necessities calling for *Secession*."

Since Cezanne. By CLIVE BELL, (Chatto and Windus, 7s. net).

Mr. Bell continues emphatically to assert, and finds a remarkable number of different ways in which to reiterate, that significant form is the one essential property of a work of art. His position has become less confident, however, with the passing years, for the old Clive Bell would never have asked "I do not disbelieve in absolute beauty: only, can we recognize it?"

If we remember rightly, once upon a time Mr. Bell was not only sure of his own ability to recognize it, but also of the capacity in this direction of all sensitive humans as well.

Since Cezanne well accomplishes its stated purpose. "To put the public in the way of aesthetic pleasure."

In the May number of *Broom* an error occurred in our acknowledgement of *E pur si muove*. The author of this book, a study of the constructive bases of the various aesthetic trends of Europe, is Mr. Elie Ehrenburg. The international magazine of modern art, with which we confused it, is *L'Objet* published by Russians in Berlin, under the direction of El Lissitzky and Elie Ehrenburg.

The new magazine outlines its purposes in a long manifesto written in three languages. To quote in part: —

"The appearance of *L'Objet* is a symptom of the exchange of experiences which is recommencing between the young artisans of Russia and of the Occident.

" *L'Objet* is the junction of two related trends. We assist at the birth of a great constructive epoch. It goes without saying that reaction and bourgeois obstinacy are still powerful in Europe as well as in Russia, unseated from its old foundations. But all the efforts of old believers cannot retard the construction of new forms of life and of matter. The days of destruction, of sieges and trenches are over.

" It is time to build on the cleared-off soil. That which is dead will disappear of itself, but the empty ground has no need of programs or of schools, but of work.

" *L'Objet* does not deny the past in the past. — It invites modern work for modern times. That is why the vestiges of the day before yesterday, such as impressionism, symbolism, etc. are hostile to it. We consider the triumph of constructive methods as the essential trait of our time. We observe it as well in the new economics, as in the development of industry and psychology of the Moderns in art.

" *L'Objet* stands for constructive art which does not embellish life, but which organizes it. We have called our review *L'Objet* because art exists for the creation of new objects. It is that which explains the attraction which realism, weight, volume, the earth have for us.

" But it must not be concluded that the word *L'Objet* means for us objects of current usage. Naturally in the case of utilitarian objects fabricated in factories, in the case of the aeroplane, or the automobile we see the art of form. But we do not wish to limit the production of artists to utilitarian objects.

" *L'Objet* considers a poem, a plastic form, a play as indispensable objects. *L'Objet* will observe with profound attention the reciprocal relations between modern art and all the various manifestations of reality: science, politics, technique, customs, etc.

" In suffocating atmosphere, in exhausted Russia, in somnolent Europe one cry rises.

" Live — stop making declarations and contradictions — make objects".

OTHER BOOKS RECEIVED

Rahab. By WALDO FRANK (Boni and Liveright, New York).

The Foundations of Aesthetics. By C. K. OGDEN, I. A. RICHARDS, and J. WOOD (G. Allen and Unwin, London, 7s. 6d. net).

La Danse de Çiva. By ANANDA COOMARASWAMY (F. Rieder et Cie., Paris).

ERNESTO FRATONI, *Gerente responsabile*.

Printed in Italy by "L'Universelle" Imprimerie Polyglotte — Roma.

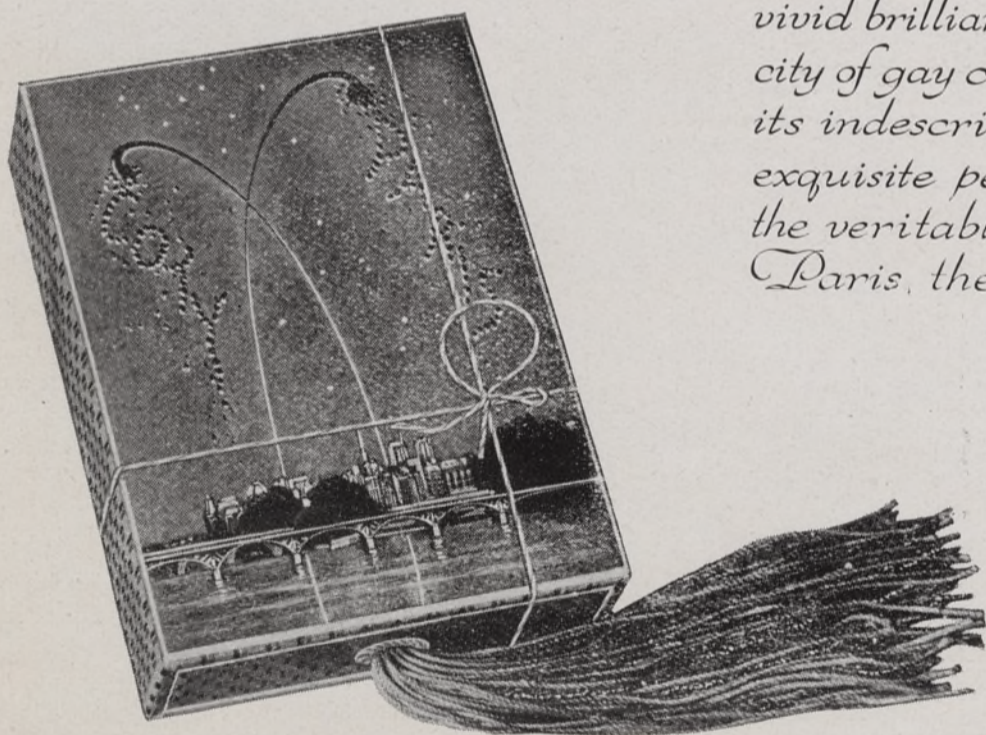


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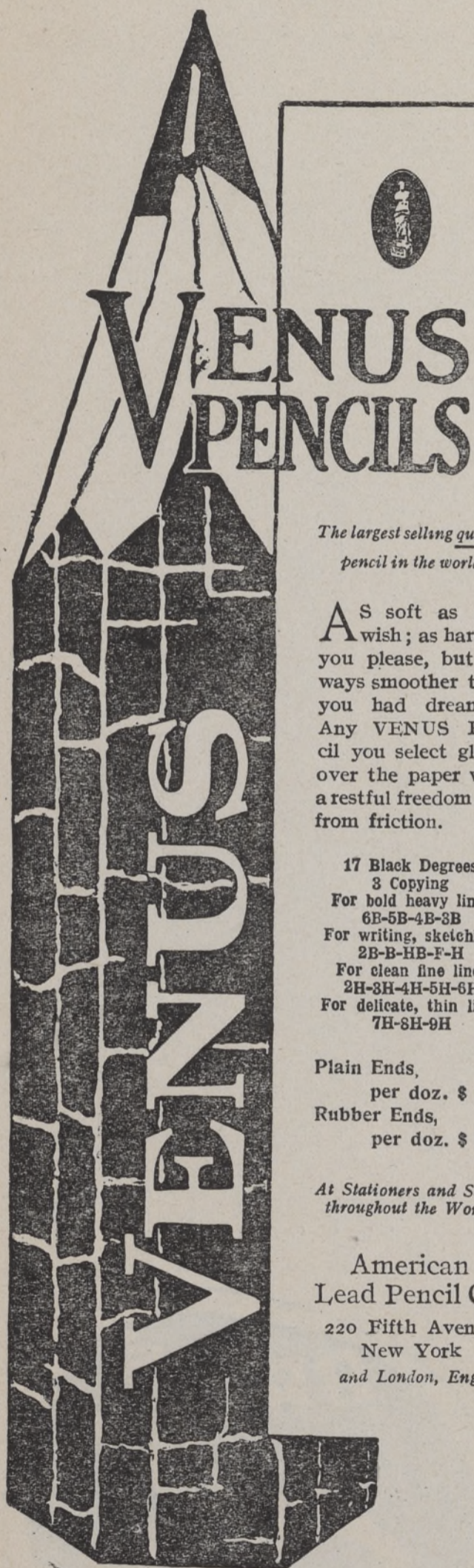
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