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BROOM

AN INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF THE ARTS

Editor, HAROLD A. LOEB

Associate Editors, SLATER BROWN, MALCOLM COWLEY, MATTHEW JOSEPHSON

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HESPERIDES

OR

THE PLUNGER PLUNGES

Snow was falling. Not the white snow that falls in winter, but the tin snow that falls in New and Wall streets. It is a sparse and agitated snow, continually whipped into flurries by the wings of pigeons, tossed and tortured as it drifts downward until the lower winds of the street seize upon it and fling it back to the roofs. But sometimes as it flickers across the windows of the office buildings, a flake twisting to the proper angle catches the light of the sun.

It was at precisely 11:28 a.m. on the 17th of September, 1923 that one of these flakes turning as it fell, sent a tiny shaft of light into the left eye of Mr. Joseph J. Trackle. He, however, did not notice it. Leaning forward from the edge of his chair so that the torso of his body ran parallel to the floor, with his derby resting on the back of his head, with his left cheek glued to the glass breast of the sawed-off ticker, Mr. Trackle was far too immersed in quotations to receive the little message the flake of tin snow had so gently sent him from the sun.

—The market is soggy, he whispered.

Whereat the quotational pap which had faithfully fed him for more than thirty years, suddenly curdled. And thereafter the ticker maintained so absolute and dogged a silence that Mr. Trackle could hear his clerks mumble in the next room, or his watch tick in its little pocket over his appendix. After waiting for 67 seconds, and being no longer able to bear the silence, he began petulantly to yank and twitch at the tape. Whereupon the tape broke, as tapes do when they are yanked, and Mr. Trackle snarling to himself, slunk back into his chair, thrust his feet up on the ticker stand, shoved his derby forward over his eyes, and after performing a number of impatient flourishes in the upper left hand corner of a pad of paper, he wrote the following extemporaneous lyric:—

A Rotten market.

I have a head I have a head I have a headache

LV Love is all truth

Call Schuyler 6491 $\frac{1}{4}$ RBC is a good buy

No more raw oysters for me.

Schuyler 49 $\frac{1}{4}$ RBC 50 $\frac{3}{4}$ Rebecca Steel 52

good by Miss Pearly

491¼ Rebec

Mr. Mallet

—Mr. Mallet, cried Mr. Trackle, come in here (undertone) you sucker. Coughing rapidly to himself, Mr. Mallet scurried in.

But before proceeding any further, let us consider the solipsistic poem which Mr. Trackle in his two minutes and thirteen seconds of leisure has composed on the sheet of yellow paper. For in splicing its lines, hauling up the incidents, memories and associations which produced them, by dredging, sounding and similarly employing ourselves, we may not only gain an insight upon the whirling fermentation of Mr. Trackle's psyche, but we may also give the poem an organization which it now seems superficially to lack.

Let us therefore jump into the ring and start milling at once.

Item I. *A Rotten market*

The analyses of this phrase must begin with the following query:—Why should Mr. Trackle, having just previously used the adjective "soggy" to describe the unfortunate condition of the market, now use the word *Rotten* to describe it?

As there are four answers to this question, I will tabulate them as follows:—

A. The Subject (Mr. Trackle) did not use the word "soggy" to describe the unfortunate condition of the market for the precise reason that he had already used it. Like Shakespeare, he was loathe to repeat.

B. The Subject did not use the word "soggy" for the reason that he did not know whether it should be spelled with or without an E. This lack of surety would have retarded the free velocity of his pencil and would have doubtless produced that conflict which led him into so much difficulty later on.

C. The Subject chose the word *Rotten* because it began with an R, the majuscule of which he took a secret pleasure in writing.

D. *Rotten* described the condition of the market as well, if not better, than the word "soggy."

Item II. *I have a head I have a head I have a headache*

From the phrase *A Rotten market* to the sentence *I have a head* seems a wide and inexplicable leap on the part of Mr. Trackle's brain. But though it may be wide, it is certainly not inexplicable, as we will all see in a moment or two.

It has already been noted that the word *Rotten* for dejected reasons is the weightiest word in Item I. Such being the case it is natural that it should arouse from Our Subject's unconscious, certain images, ideas, and memories of a recent date. This was in fact true. For no sooner had Mr. Trackle's pencil produced the word *Rotten*, and even before it had completed the word *market*, there flashed into his mind a certain conversation he had held with his wife that morning before breakfast. The conversation was as follows:—

—Good morning, my dear husband, said Mrs. Trackle as she stepped into her husband's bed-room clothed in nothing more than a Japanese kimono, a pair of mules, and a boudoir cap.

—Are you in here again? replied Mr. Trackle who was lying in bed with the morning paper propped against his knees, while the valet arranged his breakfast beside him on a card table.

—Why Joseykins my dear, exclaimed Mrs. Trackle, this is the first time this morning I've been in your room.

—Did you ever see, asked Mr. Trackle of the valet, such a woman for bobbing in and out of a poyson's privacy? Look at her, with her hair all down over her eyes. She hasn't even washed yet. I can see streaks of dirt all up and down her filthy face. Get out of here you lazy-good-for-nothings. Phew, you stink!

—Controllez-voo, controllez, cried Mrs. Trackle, I've just been using a depillatory. But I came in to see if my little Joseykins would like his wife to eat breakfast with him.

—Well, he wouldn't. Not on your life he wouldn't, with such a dishevelled fatwoman as that. Get outta here.

Mrs. Trackle flickered out. But she had hardly closed the door behind her when

—Isabel! shouted Mr. Trackle. Come back here. Pat, lead that woman back into my presence.

Mrs. Trackle's nervous pastry face appeared again.

—Isabel, whimpered Mr. Trackle, I didn't sleep a wink last night. I had such a **TERRIBLE** *headache*. I was tossing and turning in my bed all night long.

—Well, said Mrs. Trackle oozing in through the door, if you will sit UP to three and four in the morning drinking cocktails . . .

—Is that all the sympathy I get after me tossing and turning in bed all night long? cried her husband. Is that what a loving wife should say to her husband when he hasn't slept a wink? Is that the sort of heartless fatty bumbums you are? A wife should be gentle, soft, and affable¹⁾ and not go around hello making disorder everywhere. She shouldn't breed disharmony. hello She should say to her husband, I'm so sorry Josey and is there anything I can do to alleviate you? But no. She wouldn't say that. SHE'S nothing but a nervous fatwoman. Pretty good, eh Pat?

—Very good Sir, replied the valet.

—But I AM sorry, Joseykins.

—Will you stop screaming in that raucous manner? I'm not at the other end of a bowling alley.

—O Josey, DO control yourself. Pat, I'll tell you. You have a little sign painted you know with 'Control Yourself' on it, only that 'Control

¹⁾ Note: Vide The Taming of the Shrew. Act II, Sc. 1.

Yourself' so you can show it to Mr. Trackle when you know, just a little sign that you can wear on the inside of your coat.

Mrs. Trackle indicated the inside of her kimono.

Mr. Trackle turned from page 10 of the Financial News to page 5 of the Sporting Section of the New York Tribune, September 17, 1923.

—I will, Mrs. Trackle, said the valet.

—Isabel, said Mr. Trackle, I don't think I'll go down to the floor to-day. I think I'll just lie up here in bed with this obnoxious headache.

—Now that's the best thing you ever said, Josey dear. Especially after such a night.

—That's it, always criticizing. Did you ever see such a woman? My God, will I ever get rid of this impediment? That's what you are, you're an impediment.

—Well Josey, replied the impediment, if you keep this up I won't be. And you better remember what Dr. Rock said about alcohol and your blood pressure.

—Dr. Rock's a sucker, replied Mr. Impediment Trackle. A cocktail or two can't disturb me. It's those damn oysters I ate. They *rot* in the intestines.

Though the preceding conversation has been long, longer perhaps than I implied it would be some few pages back, it has nevertheless given us a clue, particularly in the words I have indicated by italics, to the correct association between Item I and Item II. For just as the word *Rotten* produced a flareback to the word *rot* in the conversation recorded above, thus precipitating upon the plane of Our Subject's conscious a vision of oysters putrefying in his intestines, so also did this vision in turn drag up the opinion (however specious) that his headache was alone due to the poisonous effect of these oysters upon his blood. He therefore wrote, *I have a head*; which though it was both literally and figuratively true, was not what he intended to write. For upon completing the first four letters of the fourth word; i.e. *head*, he was unable to remember whether to spell *ache* with a K or with an H. He therefore repeated the phrase in writing, but again found himself baffled. Again he tried, but suddenly recalling the word 'back-ache' and believing that there was some profound orthographical consanguinity between the two syllables of that word, he finally completed the sentence, misspelled as it now stands: *I have a headacke*. Q.E.D.

Item III. *LV*

Immediately after Our Subject had completed the second line of his poem, the ticker buzzed. As he was short of three or four thousand shares of LV (Lehigh Valley) and rather nervous about them, Item III merely expresses his conscious or unconscious wish to read their latest quotation on the tape.

Item IV. *Love is all truth*

The fundamental association of this item and the preceding one is based, I am pained to admit, on no more lofty or profound a substance than that of a pun. It is indeed a distressing thought that Our Subject whose mind has hitherto proven itself to be one of the great spiritual and creative products of Our Modern Era, should at this moment stoop to so vulgar a trick. But I am certain that if every one of us should peek over the edge into his subconscious and observe what a blustering host of assonances, double entendres, and puns are jostling and swaggering through our thoughts down there, we would all immediately retire to the mountains and spend a year in mental discipline.

Be that, however, as it may.

Now Our Subject having written the abbreviation of a stock (LV), naturally felt it should be followed by something. But being unable to follow it up with an accurate market quotation, since he had broken the tape, his mind at once started to reconnoiter in search of one chez that great fountain-head of quotations; William Shakespeare. But to aid him in his search Our Subject deftly inserted an O between the L and V of his stock with an E added to make it all the more clear. He thus formulated the word 'love' which, perching on his psychic wrist like a falcon, immediately flew up and caught him the following lines:—

Love surfeits not, Lust like a glutton dies;
Love is all truth, Lust full of forged lies.*

Which quotation was, as he had many times remarked to his wife and friends, one of the most beautiful gems in all English literature.

Item V. *Call Schuyler 649*¹/₄

Having written the above quotation, thoughts of Love began to frisk in Our Subject's head. At first he envisioned Love as an austere Goddess of Herculean proportions clutching a flaming torch. But no sooner was this statuesque fancy projected on the silversheet of his conscious, than it was immediately blotted out by the more distinct image of Miss Pearly. For be it known that Mr. T's concept of Love was far more limited by Corporeal Desire than, let us say, is that of Plotinus. For though Our Subject would be the first to admit that Abstract Love completely estranged from fleshly connotations did certainly exist and in all splendor, he nevertheless surrendered its fortune and contemplation to the hierarchy of poets and philosophers. As for him, he would contemplate Love in the more palpable guise of Miss Pearly, the little Brooklyn diving girl whose personal charm and physical perfection had so enraptured him at a party the evening before. Thus softly dreaming on her charms he began scribbling her telephone number on the pad. . . .

*Note (Venus and Adonis. l. 803-4.)

But hold! Why but her telephone number? Why not her name, her street address, her employment?

Why her telephone number? Because, my dear fellow, when Mr. Trackle began dealing in terms of the Abstract, the Ideal, or the Prophetic, his mind immediately attached itself, or became the mouth-piece of some spectral telephone, at the receiving end of which God and His entire solar system respectfully listened. We have already witnessed a manifestation of this curious phenomenon in the conversation recorded under Item II, wherein Mr. Trackle while expanding upon the subject of the Ideal Wife, interspersed his discourse with loud telephonic cries of 'hello!' Why this peculiar relation between the telephone and Mr. Trackle should exist, is a problem I will leave for students of Anthropology, Ethnology, Theology, Pathology, and Mysticism to unravel. Nevertheless, such a relation existed, and the abstract idea of Love sifting through Miss Pearly's lovely body, was finally volitionally expressed by Our Subject in the concrete and telephonic form of *Schuyler 649 $\frac{1}{4}$* .

But here again another problem awaits us. Why the substitution of $\frac{1}{4}$ for the last figure of Miss Pearly's number which we know should be merely 4?

This is more simple than appears on the surface. For Our Subject having written *Call Schuyler*, and having just started to make the lower quirk of the 6, certain inevitable fears began to assail him from all sides. These fears sprang fully armed from the grim realization of his age, for Mr. Trackle it must be understood, though I have not hitherto brought the student's attention to the fact, was not a young man. He was, on the contrary, a few years more than 50, and for that reason not so tireless and sturdy a warrior in the lists of Venus as, let us say, a dashing young blade of 25. This realization, having moreover a definite empirical basis, at once assumed so painfully dominating an aspect of Our Subject's relation to the little diving girl, that his mind in self-defense retreating from the Arena of Love to those fields of combat wherein age in no way hobbled his prowess, immediately galloped into the Stock Exchange. Whereupon he at once realized that the 49 in Miss Pearly's telephone number was significant only because, with the addition of a quarter, it represented the price he had paid for 500 shares of Republic Iron and Steel ten minutes previously.

Item VI. *RBC is a good buy*

Upon distorting the telephone number into a quotation for Republic Iron and Steel, Our Subject was minded of the hot tip Mr. Breen had sent up from the floor. This tip was scribbled on a small piece of paper, thus:—

Roy says RBC
is a good buy.

Jim

As the ticker abbreviation for Republic Iron etc. is RBC (intimately known as Rebecca Steel), Mr. Trackle in this item has merely copied that

section of Mr. Breen's note which caused him to purchase, as I have already stated, 500 shares of RBC at the low price of $49\frac{1}{4}$.

Item VII. *No more raw oysters for me.*

Between Item VI and the Item now under consideration, Our Subject belched. And this belch carrying a small quantity of chyle upward from the stomach, through the throat and esophagus, until it finally reached his palate, Mr. Trackle imagined or did actually receive the gustatory sensation of putrefying oysters, slightly flavored with sour coffee. Which horrible taste so prejudiced his mind and stomach against all present, past, and future raw oysters that he immediately struck down on paper that resolution which this Item so forcibly expresses.

Item VIII. *Schuyler $49\frac{1}{4}$ RBC $50\frac{1}{2}$ Rebecca Steel 52*

Ah Mr. Trackle! Mr. Trackle!

Schuyler again!

How doth thine old mind root back to its young prey. How doth it lean again toward the lithe body of the diver. Ah well-a-day those black, slow-slugging eyes have beaten thee into a sorry pickle. And there is no help in thee. Thou art too froward in passion, Mr. Trackle; too gone i' the flanks. For didst thou not yestereen, fearing the frost of thy years had nipped the striving petals of thine own fruition, fill thine old body with wine and thy guts with the aphrodisiacs of shell-fish? And didst not also, when thou hadst bought the harvest with thy purse, and e'en when thou beheldst it lie all gleaming before thee like a field of wheat, didst not thy scythe in that bright-bitter moment fail thee? And now, for we drop bridges across the symbols of thy confession, dost thou not finger thy defeat in pain? And dost thou not, twisting her yielded but ungathered body into a bartered stock, lay thine own body beside as her quotation? And dost thou not make that quotation rise progressively from $49\frac{1}{4}$ to 52, whilst in a mutual tempo burgeoning, Schuyler to RBC flowers into Rebecca Steel?

Item IX. *good by Miss Pearly*

This item is so welded into complex meanings and associations, so fused with fancies and ideas, that it would be bootless toil to chip it off into its various elements. But as these various elements spring from facts already mentioned in this absorbing treatise, any student who has carefully read, inwardly digested, and objectively deliberated upon everything I have hitherto written, will assuredly be able to grasp its manifold meanings, however intangible they may seem to be. If the student is a Bergsonian he should do it by a flash of Intuition, and thus save himself and me a great deal of trouble.

But if the reader is not a Bergsonian; nor a student of occult psychology; nor in truth, has any intention of becoming either, and if moreover he has dashed through this treatise at break-neck speed, I will merely state *ex cathedra* for his benefit, two facts he can gulp down as he gallops on.

In the first place the *good by* refers this time not only to the prospective virtue of Rebecca Steel (vide Item VII), but also to the prospective virtue of Miss Pearly. Both would be good buys, yielding, should one go long of them, rich dividends and juicy profits. In the second place *good by* must also be understood in its connotation of farewell. For Mr. Trackle in the previous Item, having at last fused Miss Pearly with the Republic Iron and Steel Corporation, may for the nonce forget the little Brooklyn diving girl and trade his head off.

Item X. $49\frac{1}{4}$ *Rebec*

$49\frac{1}{4}$, the price. *Rebec*, Rebecca Steel, the stock. It's selling cheap. It's a buy. Nab it. Don't pass it up. Buy it. Buy RBC. It's going up. It's going up uP UP. Ah-h-h-h! MILLIONS OF DOLLARS

Item XI. *Mr. Mallet*

Having skipped over Item X in a light and rather impressionistic manner, let us now conclude the analyses proper with a brief consideration of this final item.

It is evident something is going to happen. Mr. Trackle's mind seems to be pressing on rapidly to some sort of resolution. His impatient pencil hastens to complete the last line of his poem. It leaves the T uncrossed and swoops down to the corner of the pad. His hand rises toward the derby and shoves it back from his forehead. His feet climb off the table. His body organizes itself erect in his chair. He is about to ejaculate. His mouth opens.

—Mr. Mallet, cries Mr. Trackle, come in here (undertone), you sucker.

\$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$

We have travelled far, my fellow student, but the end of our long pilgrimage is at hand. Let us not hasten, for in the far mist lies New York like a jade toy. Already (but let us linger, my friend) already can we see the spire of the Woolworth Building stride into the sky, and incense steaming from the roofs of office buildings. And now we can hear the roar, the clash and shock of traffic, and now the iron teeth of a rivetter chattering in the red angles of its girders. Now we see the clotted streets, Broadway and Wall, the slimed facade of the Exchange. We hear the shouts of traders, the hoarse stutter of tickers, a gong clanging, a telephone.

And now AVE! do we behold Mr. Trackle rising before Mr. Mallet.

Hurry! Hurry! Please Hurry!

Rising before Mr. Mallet, he clenches his fist as if to slam Mr. Mallet or some invisible opponent standing between them. He pauses. Mallet squares off.

The gong.

Kid Trackle's fist sizzles through space.

—BUY FIFTEEN THOUSAND REBECCA STEEL AT THE MARKET!

(End of First Part.)

SLATER BROWN

DISCOURSE IN A CANTINA AT HAVANA

I.

Canaries in the morning, orchestras
In the afternoon, balloons at night. That is
A difference, at least, from nightingales,
Jehovah and the great sea-worm. The air
Is not so elemental nor the earth
So near.

But the sustenance of the wilderness
Does not sustain us in the metropolises.

II.

Life is an old casino in a park.
The bills of the swans are flat upon the ground:
A most desolate wind has chilled Rouge-Fatima
And a grand decadence settles down like cold.

III.

The swans. . . . Before the bills of the swans fell flat
Upon the ground, and before the chronicle
Of affected homage foxed so many books,
They warded the blank waters of the lakes
And island canopies which were entailed
To that casino. Long before the rain
Swept through its boarded windows and the leaves
Filled its encrusted fountains, they arrayed
The twilights of the mythy goober khan.
The centuries of excellence to be
Rose out of promise and became the sooth
Of trombones floating in the trees.

The toil

Of thought evolved a peace eccentric to
The eye and tinkling to the ear. Gruff drums
Could beat, yet not alarm the populace.
The indolent progressions of the swans
Made earth come right; a peanut parody
For peanut people.

And serener myth
Conceiving from its perfect plenitude,
Lusty as June, more fruitful than the weeks
Of ripest summer, always lingering
To touch again the hottest bloom, to strike
Once more the longest resonance, to cap
The clearest woman with apt weed, to mount
The thickest man on thickest stallion-back,
This urgent, competent, serener myth
Passed like a circus.

Politic man ordained
Imagination as the fateful sin.

Grandmother and her basketful of pears
Must be the crux for our compendia.
That's world enough, and more, if one includes
Her daughters to the peached and ivory wench
For whom the towers are built. The burgher's breast,
And not a delicate ether star-impaled,
Must be the place for prodigy, unless
Prodigious things are tricks. The world is not
The bauble of the sleepless nor a word
That should import a universal pith
To Cuba. Jot these milky matters down.
They nourish Jupiters. Their casual pap
Will drop like sweetness in the empty nights
When too great rhapsody is left annulled
And liquorish prayer provokes new sweats: so, so:
Life is an old casino in a wood.

IV.

Is the function of the poet here mere sound,
Subtler than the ornatest prophecy,
To stuff the ear? It causes him to make
His infinite repetitions and alloys
Of pick of ebon, pick of halcyon.

It weights him with nice logic for the prim.
As part of nature he is part of us.
His rarities are ours: may they be fit
And reconcile us to our selves in those
True reconcilings, dark, pacific words,
And the adroiter harmonies of their fall.
Close the cantina. Hood the chandelier.
The moonlight is not yellow but a white
That silences the ever-faithful town.
How pale and how possessed a night it is,
How full of exhalations of the sea. . . .
All this is older than its oldest hymn,
Has no more meaning than tomorrow's bread.
But let the poet on his balcony
Speak and the sleepers in their sleep shall move,
Waken, and watch the moonlight on their floors.

This may be benediction, sepulcher,
And epitaph. It may, however, be
An incantation that the moon defines
By mere example opulently clear.
And the old casino likewise may define
An infinite incantation of our selves
In the grand decadence of the perished swans.

WALLACE STEVENS

FOUR POEMS

I.

when the spent day begins to frail
(whose grave already three or two
young stars with spades of silver dig)

by beauty i declare to you

if what i am at one o'clock
to little lips (which have not sinned
in whose displeasure lives a kiss)
kneeling, your frequent mercy begs,

sharply believe me, wholly, well
—did (wisely suddenly into
a dangerous womb of cringing air)
the largest hour push deep his din

of wallowing male (shock beyond shock
blurting) strokes, vibrant with the purr
of echo pouring in a mesh
of following tone: did this and this

spire strike midnight (and did occur
bell beyond fiercely spurting bell
a jetted music splashing fresh
upon silence)—i without fail

entered became and was these twin
imminent lisping bags of flesh;
became eyes moist lithe shuddering big,
the luminous laughter, and the legs

whereas, at twenty minutes to

one, i am this blueeyed Finn
emerging from a lovehouse who
buttons his coat against the wind

II.

my smallheaded pearshaped

lady in gluey twilight
moving, suddenly

is three animals. The
minute waist continually

with an African gesture

utters a frivolous intense half of
Girl which (like some

floating snake upon itself always and
slowly which upward certainly is pouring) emits
a pose

:to twitter wickedly

whereas the big and firm legs moving solemnly
like careful and furious and beautiful elephants

(mingled in whispering thickly smooth thighs
thinkingly)

remind me of Woman and

how between
her hips India is

III.

now that fierce few
flowers (stealthily)
in the alive west
begin

requiescat this six
feet of Breton big good
body, which terminated
in fists hair wood

erect cursing hatless who
(bent by wind) slammed hard—
over the tiller; clattered
forward skidding in outrageous
sabots

language trickling
pried his black
mouth with fat jibing
lips,

once upon a
(that is
over: and the sea heaving
indolent colourless forgets) time

Requiescat.

carry
carefully the blessed large silent him
into nibbling final worms

IV.

the wind is a Lady with
bright slender eyes (who

moves) at sunset
and who—touches—the
hills without any reason

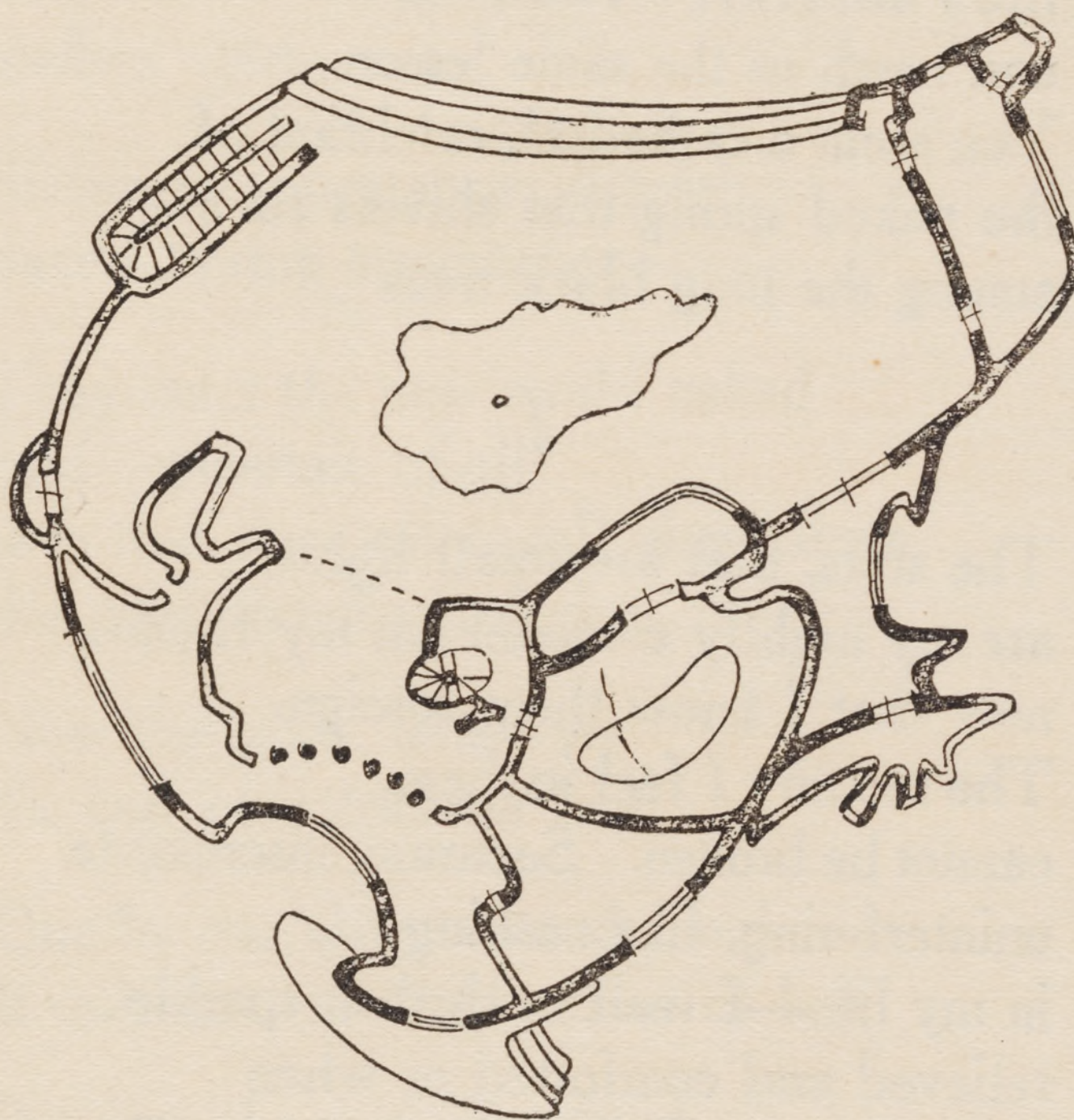
(i have spoken with this
indubitable and green person “Are
You the wind?” “Yes” “why do you touch flowers
as if they were unalive, as

if They were ideas?" "because, sir
things which in my mind blossom will
stumble beneath a clumsiest disguise, appear
capable of fragility and indecision

—do not suppose these
without any reason and otherwise
roses and mountains
different from the i am who wanders

imminently across the renewed world"
to me said the) wind being A lady in a green
dress, who; touches: the fields
(at sunset)

E. E. CUMMINGS



PLAN FOR A ONE-STORY HOUSE

FINSTERLIN

FOUR POEMS

1

The new cathedral overlooking the park
looked down from its tower
with great eyes today and saw
by the decorative lake a group of people
staring curiously at the corpse
of a suicide—Peaceful dead young man
the money they have put into the stones
has been spent to teach men of
life's austerity. You died
and teach us the same lesson.
You seem a cathedral, celebrant of
the naked spring that shivers for me
among the long black trees

2

The stars, that are small lights,
are my nightly companions, my friends
now that I know them foreign.
The security I feel in them
cannot be broken. Separate, inscrutable
uninterfering, like nothing
in my life—I walk with their sparkle
relieved and comforted or when
the moon moves slowly up among them
with flat shine then the night
has a novel light in it—curved
curiously in a thin halfcircle

By the road to the contagious hospital
 under the surge of the blue
 mottled clouds driving from the
 northwest—a cold wind. Beyond the
 waste of broad muddy fields
 brown with dried weeds, standing and fallen

patches of standing water
 the scattering of tall trees

all along the road the reddish
 purplish, forked, upstanding, twiggy
 stuff of bushes and small trees
 with brown leaves under them
 leafless vines—

lifeless in appearance, sluggish
 dazed Spring approaches—

They enter the new world naked
 cold—uncertain of all
 save that they enter—all about them
 the cold, familiar wind—

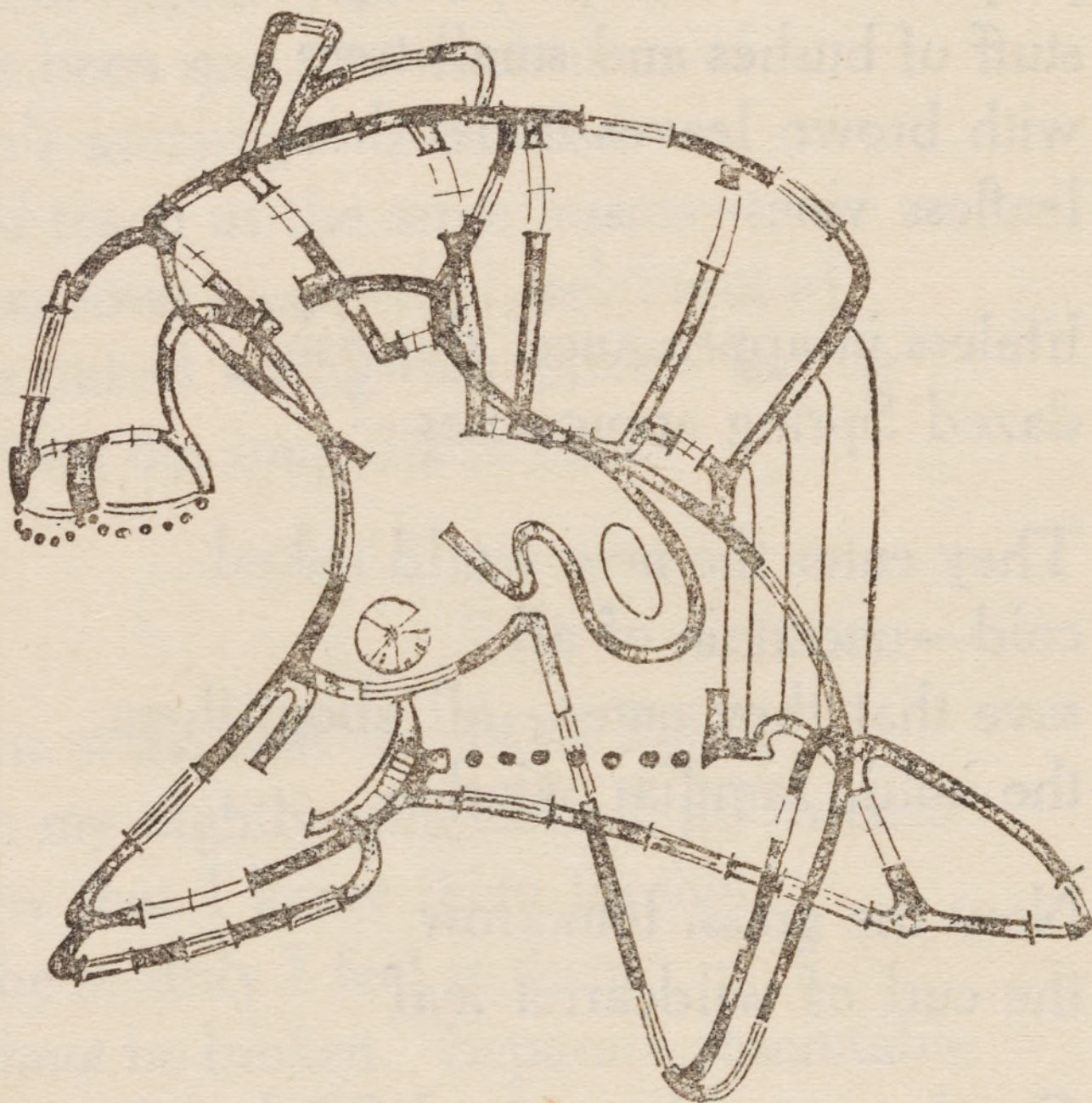
Now the grass, tomorrow
 the curl of wildcarrot leaf

One by one objects are defined—
 It quickens: clarity, outline of leaf

But now the stark dignity of
 entrance—Still, the profound change
 has overtaken them—rooted they
 grip down and begin to awaken

How has the way been found ?
 Among wires
 running through smoke
 walking through and over
 oily, stained waters—?
 On the highest airs

WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS



PLAN FOR A TWO-STORY HOUSE

FINSTERLIN

THE EXTRA

If the wind which descends in a spiral through the trees of Marmor Island, having swept away the down abandoned by the eaglet in the eyrie which hangs from the balancing rock, the rock which once he climbed (his bones, what have they done with his white bones?), which once was climbed by the good, the valiant Eugene Demolder, comes hypocritically caressing, with forehead wrinkled and with eye oblique, the greensward which descends from the fountain of Three Bums at the house of Dolores (what name have you just pronounced?):—ask the wind about the widow of the deckhand, and you shall hear what the wind replies. The greensward, at least, remembers. It is rather to the greensward that you should address your anxiety, which is not only of the throat but of the breast; of the breast, did I say, no, of the soul. And may I be excused for borrowing from the language of philosophy (a vulgar hoax) this vague word which designates with precision a reality so elementary that the first damned truckdriver of my acquaintance having wiped his dripping and alcoholic nose with the back of his sleeve would not think to question it. You understand.

Once in the rue Lepic I saw three men whom I did not mistake for princes in disguise. They had lost their noses during the war of 1914-1918. They were not ashamed. The youngest held a stalk of rhubarb in his left hand. Well, I regret to confess that the greensward of Marmor Island was ashamed. It blushed like a simple carrot, and the traveller, who had dropped his wallet for a moment to calm the eruptions on his shoulder with a fresh and benevolent hand, where was I at? believed himself in autumn. Do not stop here, you, passer-by with a three-day growth of beard, in spite of the sweat of your shirt and the blisters on your feet; surely you will regret it. It is to this spot that Dolores had enticed Eugene Demolder, that fatal evening when, at the Decorated-Swan Tavern chance proved so unfavorable to limping Victor, contrary to what might have happened if the wisdom of nations had been anything else than a dish washer in love with an officer of Engineers. The perversity of this woman, Dolores, will be easy to measure. She had foreseen the weakness of the solitary man, the triumph of black eyes, the electricity which is not caused alone, as absurd professors of physics believe, who are poorly versed in the science which they teach already, by rubbing cat's fur against a stick of ebonite. She had chosen this place on account of the brook which crosses it, carrying little chips of wood, a few Mayflies, the cottony seeds of poplars, moss and other materials which respire innocence. During this time, in the hold of the *Death to Tyrants*, what monstrous love unites the horrible husband of fickle Dolores and this unfortunate adolescent whose name has never reached my ears, so much do the unchained elements pity his reputation. He

had enlisted on board the *Aristocrats to the Lamp-posts* because he believed the sweet whispers of the world on Mercator's projection and the monotonous chant of sails. And now . . . if, as people say, such scenes are enacted daily, the Minister of the Navy should take measures. What do you think of God, o impassible portholes which include man and the fishes in the same glance?

Eugene Demolder regains his hut, coat slung across his arm, heart occupied with Dolores. Alas! he has lost the blue sage-flower of chastity, and he gives no thought to his loss. He is happy, poor idiot. And the cripple . . . what is his role? He wipes his nose. He is seated in the house of Dolores between the pot of catnip and the grocery-store calendar. His mistress is late to return. Here is the creature now. She utters a cry when she recognizes Victor. She thought he had been away and gambling. He looks into her eyes. The image of Eugene Demolder was not yet effaced from them. The cripple did not recognize his rival. It was at this moment that Vice, Vice with a tongue of saltpetre, appeared between the beams of the ceiling and descended to take his familiar seat on the shoulders of the accursed pair, who were delivering themselves near the dead fire to games which would make the devil lower his eyes if the devil were of this world. I only wish my nurse could see that. A little child moans in the next room; Dolores never knew its father's name.

While Eugene Demolder climbs the mountain to gather edelweiss (a diabolic flower if there is any such) to pin at the breast of his well-beloved, Mr. and Mrs. Demolder, his parents, are dying of poverty and sorrow. He was not able to attend the double funeral, Eugene; his laughing mistress wished to dance that day. It might have been a comic opera. But the adulterous woman is showing Victor a letter from the deckhand. Victor, although he cannot read, pretends to follow across her shoulder, on which he rests his badly shaven chin. His arms have slipped round the waist of Dolores and he has abandoned his joined hands to the demoralizing practice of twiddling thumbs. I feel that misfortune impends:

"My Dear Doloresse,

"The weather isn't always fair. The ground swell is the worst of all. I roll everywhere, in the shadows of every hold, a million thoughts for you: like cigarettes. Ten for your legs, ten, you understand, ten for your eyes, and I can always find the matter for ten more. Every time I make love I say to myself, if only Doloresse were there. This time it is a cabin boy who didn't want to the first time; things have changed. There are days when he makes me nervous: he moves his hair, silk you would say, over my face, my hands, my chest. Then his face seems invaded by the night. All at once; it's queer. Soon we shall land in a country where you can buy women for a postage stamp. That's where you can have your pick. Our cargo, they say we carry oranges. You can see

the joke. The cabin boy's body is white, white, white. It seems they are going to elect a president of the republic in France. The newspapers will be interesting. I can't think of anything else to say. I embrace you as in the land of snows, a long time since, you know. Your devoted husband, FELIX COVENOL."

When the female of the owl, after visiting minutely the grass-stalks of the clearing and the treacherous soil of swamps, comes beating its wings softly, comes like the baker's boy to find her young whose voices for hours past have sounded no longer in her ears, and for a good reason, the nest being destroyed, the owlets and the owl their father carried away:—when the female of the owl after vainly searching for her nest is obliged to realize the extent of her misfortune, and at first she is not willing, she rises moaning between the trees and higher than the custom of owls permits. She follows the glances of the moon and descends in a spiral as far as the door of a farmhouse and she recognizes her husband, on whom the Christians of the countryside have thought to revenge the death of the son of their God: well, what do you think she does? Will she sing a ballad and put a red rose in her hair? Will she put lotions on her hands and make her claws into jewels for the skin of men? Will she grow drunken on beds of lace, while young profligates drag themselves into the shadow of her caresses, will she grow drunken with the blood of the grapes of this province of the Gauls where there are still a few churches to destroy for the next time, will she grow drunken to the point of taking off her gown, to the point of throwing it on the floor without regard for its price, of forgetting to fold it carefully as she has done every evening, of dancing, dancing, dancing in the midst of desires, tobacco and broken glasses. No, not at all.

The law of universal gravitation, so they say, has been riddled with holes. What a pity that there was no photographer on the scene, provided with anti-halo films! Open your eyes wide, I can show you a spectacle no less grand than this metaphysical buffoonery. A wise prudence had always kept the mother of the cripple from sending her little Victor to school. Old peasant woman, she had not foreseen the science of Dolores and the vices of the deckhand! Observe how written words drive a path silently through the veins of limping Victor with his complexion the color of prunes. He parades his folly through the blossoming cherry orchards and his bleeding lips repeat: White, white, white. The clouds are young men's bodies swayed by the rolling of a ship. Victor grates the palm of his hand against the bark of trees. It is fifteen years since he had tried to sing: now he makes a hoarse and prolonged sound like that which bulls emit when they have been closed in a stable all winter and when the first meadow opens before them and they discover deep in clover the broad spoor of the herd. He runs. He stops a minute to spit. Meanwhile, on the village green, they are auctioning off the furniture of Eugene. The chest of drawers, the wardrobe and the rest transform themselves before the church, don't ring so loud, into a pair of

paste earrings and a coloured scarf. Then the peddler goes off with his knotted bandanna over his shoulder.

What stranger has set his foot on Marmor Island? He wears soft shirts and his hair is as blue as ink. He passes in the midst of children at play; he smiles to little Eric, then to himself. He is seen crossing the public squares. In the countryside he is found motionless in the open places; he does not seem to be hunting points of view. Dolores is waiting for the cripple at the fountain. He tells her his secret. She shivers with joy. A project is expanding in his breast, has reached his lips. Across fences the couple is watching, haggardly, the colts which pursue each other and nibble at brown flanks. At the point of infinity parallel lines will meet at last. For purposes of convenience, infinity is represented in a corner of the drawing pads which are used by school children to copy from plaster copies Michael Angelo's slave, that living scandal. But follow the twin thoughts of the lovers of Marmor Island; their common point is not, as you might believe, this English daisy with edges lightly purpled. Nor is the English daisy their point of departure. Strangers, they have come together once more only because of their desire, only because of the object of their desire. And that object . . . how he is tranquil in the crow's nest where he rests, his sleeves rolled back, one arm round his forehead, the other hand clinging to a rope which mounts to bathe in the sky, while the sea air and the sun are happy to caress so tempting a flesh without falling into mortal sin! And you, my good Eugene Demolder, why do you toss your naive shoes against the ceiling of your hut? Here is what happened: as he was carrying the jewels, bought from the sale of his furniture, to his mistress, Eugene looked through the window and surprised the guilty intimacy of the cripple and Madame Covenol. In a bar near the docks the stranger watches Eugene, who drinks, drinks. Then he gives a little money for the privilege of retiring with a tall pale painted girl who wants to weep.

Felix the deckhand dreams in the flanks of the ship. At last he knows what happens during a kiss on the mouth, this extraordinary voyage to the country of corals and luminous fishes. He will be emperor of the Indies. He is emperor of the Indies and king of Aurora. Aurora is a city with a soft skin, with easy morals, a city which glides into a background of palms. A bark among the reeds. What does the Queen say? It is the great fan which breathes, which caresses. Wakening. And you beside me. In a week we shall be on Marmor Island. You shall come with me. My wife will be glad. She is talking to Victor somewhere on the island, while Eugene spies on them from the shelter of a tree. The stranger is seen to pass, herborizing. He seeks huge ugly flowers, examines them under the microscope and places them, with a satisfied air, in the black tin box which hangs by a strap from his shoulder. Adolphe the cabin boy has begun to love his master and thinks of him when he washes his teeth. The man who makes the stars revolve when only his hand touches me. But there is no daisy on board ship to pluck petal by petal.

The sun which has just risen, if one can believe appearances, will view the landing of the deckhand and the events which follow. Near the docks there is one house which wakens before the others. A housewife begins to wash the tiles of the kitchen vigorously. They are in the shape of four-leafed clovers. To whom will they bring luck? Somewhere else the chambermaid of an inn is picking from her hair the bits of straw which escaped from her bolster. But it is a knife which Eugene is weighing. Excellent, honest Eugene. . . . I have no time to reprove your morals. Dolores sleeps like a baby. On the deck Felix polishes his buttons and watches Adolphe, who yawns. The cripple inspects minutely the barrel of his rifle. A face has passed behind the window. Victor opens the door. Nobody: that's odd. The little girl who, seated for hours and hours at the foot of the huge sunflowers in her familial garden, has been stringing beads on a black cotton thread, taking care to alternate regularly the colours blue, yellow, white, green, lavender, orange, blue, yellow, white, suddenly remarks two white beads side by side in the middle of her long string. She breaks the thread for spite, the beads scatter, she cries. The goat comes to play with the little girl, crushes the beads, and the last word is said.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, what magnificent weather, Dolores, standing on the threshold of her home, enjoys diabolically the drama which already is revolving round her smile. How she sniffs the air, how gaily she hums! She has crossed her hands behind her neck. On one road, the fury of the deckhand. On another, the terror of the cabin boy. The highways of the island will not be bored this night. Once more the lightning of a rifle in the underbrush. The stranger steps out of the Decorated-Swan. You have chosen a strange moment, Eugene, to come to reproach the woman who mocks you. She offers you wine. Don't stare at her throat in this fashion, unfortunate man. A caress wins every argument. Against whom has this hand been armed, this hand which only thought of twisting a woman's wrist? Transparent fingers of Dolores, pointing out the road to the mountain. Where is the deckhand? I heard cries, I thought I recognized the voice of Adolphe. Girls pass singing, arms round each other's waists, those at the two ends playing with their aprons. What is there red on this leaf? What is there moaning near the fountain? I warned you, traveller. A few flies circle. The report of a rifle and this flame. . . . I have seen gunshots in old lithographs. The stranger is seated on a heap of stones; with the tip of his cane he designs the sex of man and the sex of woman in the dust. He rises and speaks to the road mender, who shifts his cap on his head to answer. Broom will flower as long as there are lovers in the world. In the flowering broom of the mountainside, Felix is suspended by death. Horrible wounds. The head is almost detached from the trunk, the body is hacked in more than thirty places. A little yellow flower has fallen lugubriously into the wound of his neck. I have seen this knife in the hands of Eugene. Eugene! Only the echo answers, Gene! The ball entered his back at the point indicated by a cross and he tumbled into the

quarry. Poor, poor Eugene Demolder, now your body is only a little bouquet of gilly-flowers in the middle of the silex. It wasn't worth the trouble. And yet you were not a disagreeable spot in the landscape, with your little waxed moustache. We shall speak of you no more.

Around a billiard table already weary (it is a long time since an awkward player paid sixty francs for the first tear, the tear that left the first angular scar in the cloth), the cashier, the proprietor of the cafe, two or three clients, one of whom holds his seidel to keep it from flying away, the smiling partner, the impatient adversaries, a soldier who no longer carries his pipe to his lips—it will go out—, all of them animated by different sentiments, watch the fortunate player who is making a run. Where is the cripple? It is his turn. “How did you tear your clothes, Adolphe?” asks Dolores, but the pale cabin boy shakes his head, full of the horrible death agony of the cripple, and does not reply. He looks at his clawed hands, and hides them from his eyes. I begin to understand the joy of the animals which crawl over the infirm earth. Another billiard; in the adjoining room the child of Dolores lies stifled in its cradle. It never recognized the knee which weighted down its breast. Unfortunate mother, how can one fail to pity her? The punishment is too great. Yes? But rather observe Dolores: she doesn't give a rip. She draws Adolphe into her arms, her fingers penetrate the tears in his garments, and now the machinery is once more in operation.

Did you hear the branches crackle? Like broom, primroses are yellow. When I studied the catechism, I was given the dance of mosquitoes over the marshes as proof of the existence of God: against all probability, these little beasts do not tangle their feet. The mysterious stranger enters the cabin of Dolores and surprises the embraces of the woman and the child. “I know everything,” he says, and once more the lovers tremble. This time, this time, behold the vengeance of the skies! Not at all. There are, thank God, people beyond the reach of your God. Have you seen Dolores, how she is lovely with her hair undone? The stranger reassures the couple, he begins to undress, he speaks his name: Ludovic. Adolphe and Dolores exchange a long regard. Ludovic folds open the sheets and glides his body, so cold, so thin, between the two warm bodies, which he caresses, and which in the falling night (all the plants of the island have grown rigid and all the insects have turned over on their backs) suddenly begin to howl with pleasure.

LOUIS ARAGON

(Translated by Malcolm Cowley)

TOWARDS A MORE PASSIONATE
APPREHENSION OF LIFE AND
DEDICATED TO GORHAM
B. MUNSON

IT was an arduous task. ¶ The man must be a genius. ¶ He is astute in character. ¶ We went to the museum. ¶ Theory is better than practice. ¶ Do you believe in being ceremonious ceremonious? ¶ Words are the man. ¶ The man is a window or a door. ¶ A battledore or double door. ¶ Out of a door the picador. ¶ The door adores the picador the picador the matador. ¶ The matador adores dormice. ¶ He will stay for lunch.

HE debated a long time on the decision but finally discharged the man because he was disarmed as we discerned later. ¶ He surmounted his intangible difficulties with precision. ¶ His nomination took place after the assassination and the massacre was greater than ever before. ¶ His tuition cost a great deal. ¶ He ventured into the rain but eventually the adventure was a failure.

HE worked with alert accuracy. ¶ Eventually the president's attention was demanded. ¶ Eventually the president's attention was incensed. ¶ It was habitual to have perpetual horror of the creature. ¶ The distinguished man had a distinct disagreement and his disappointment disturbed his perfect composure.

IT is probable that he will be punctual punctual punctual and papa why is the man punctual punctual punctual because he is punctual punctual punctual. ¶ The rain descends. ¶ Gently the rain descends the infinitely gentle rain o rain gently descending and I am bored. ¶ Manifestations are geometrical not ethical.

MALCOLM COWLEY.

"AN AWFUL STORMING FIRE"

OR

"HER AND I ON A JOURNEY TO THE SECRET OF THE SUN"

BY THE AUTHOR WHO SOLVED THE MYSTERIOUS RIDDLE

I was standing on a busy corner waiting for a street car and smoking a cigarette in one of the world's largest cities, and while standing there a woman walked up to me and said, "Excuse me, and could you please tell me the time if you know what it is?" I told her the time of day it was. She said, "Thank you." And then she said, "I have been strolling around this corner for quite some little time and it is late. I must go, and would you please mind letting me have ten cents for car fare as I came away without any money. Had that party showed up it would have been alright and I would not be asking you for it."

I sized it up. This was a trap of her's, an excuse to get to talking in asking me the time of day it was. I liked her looks and did not have ten cents in change and so I gave her a quarter. She smiled sweetly and even blushed and said, "I thank you." Just then a car came along and she got on and as the next car that came along was my car, I got on and all the way home I had this accident on my mind and it set me to thinking of some of the many varied past and strange experiences I have had with women asking me questions on the street. Also with flirts and street walkers and quite a few I have come in contact with. Somehow another in this case it seemed odd, unusual. There was a strange feeling about it, why I don't know.

I had forgotten about the accident, and about three weeks after this I was down town and this woman came into my mind. As I was walking along the street and came to the corner, this woman also turned the corner. She came up to me and said, "You are the gentleman I asked the time of day and also asked you for ten cents car fare and you gave me a quarter about three weeks ago." I said, "Yes, you are right, I am the party." The nerve of her did not surprise me for this is what she then said, "Well," she said, "that was only a bluff of mine to get to talking with you and I cut short in my talk when I saw you were not that kind of a man who would fall for my game. And so I thought I would try and make it look to you I was decent and respectable." "Well," she says, "I am that way and the other way too. I like to have a good time on the side." And she said, "I bet you do too." I said, "Well, it all depends and I think you are right about it in this case." Then she said, "Where are you going this evening?" I said, "No place in particular." I never told her I was married and that my wife was away on a visit to her

sister's. "Well," she said, "let's take a walk." I said, "Yes, sure I am with you." So we strolled along until we came to a park, went in and sat down on a bench. It got late, around eleven o'clock and I suggested that we go over to the corner saloon that had a side entrance for women. She said, "You beat me to it, I was just going to say the same to you."

We went over and in. We had a glass of beer and several more beers followed. Then she said, "I must go, and could you meet me here tomorrow night?" I said, "Yes, I would do so." We went out and I wanted to get on the same car with her. She said, "Do me a favor and let me go by myself." I did so, having sized it up she did not want me to follow her maybe to see where she lived. I got on the next car and thought maybe she might be bluffing me about meeting her there the next evening. I sort of made up my mind not to be there, but I was kind of stuck on her. She had beautiful dreamy blue eyes and it was the shade or glow of purple in them that seemed to charm me or hold me in working for more of her company. And this in spite of me trying to wish I had never saw her or else wishing I had met her long before I did. There was something about her I cant explain. Her dark lovely titian hair also got a hold on my nerves. I'll say she was my kind and she was my style. There seemed to be something funny, odd or queer about the whole thing of this affair.

Well, I met her the next evening early and we sat in there all evening until twelve o'clock. She said to me that evening, "I used to be kind of sporty, but cut it out. I am a married woman. My husband knows nothing of my past. He is a traveling salesman and is away most of the time. My husband is a good man. He is good to me, but the devil is in me yet. I had to get back into some of my old ways again." We left each other that night as we did the night before. She would not let me on the same car. We got on different cars. I was to meet her the next evening at 9 o'clock on a street corner in another part of the city quite some ways out. Again I had my doubts, thinking she might be bluffing me. I made up my mind to see this thing through and it was something about her wonderful blue and purple eyes that seemed to hold me into this game and I have doubts if there is another woman in the world that has eyes like her's were.

Next evening I was on the corner at 9 o'clock where I was to meet her. She was not there. I waited for about five minutes and said to myself, "Bet it's a bluff this time." I looked up the street and saw a woman turn the corner walking rather fast towards me. I said, "That's her." It was, she came up to me and said, "I know you'll forgive me. I am awful sorry I kept you waiting." I said, "Oh, that's alright, I would be willing to wait here for you, well, until you just come." She laughed and said, "Yes, I believe you. I bet you would." She said, "Well, we will walk and stroll around this evening." We walked along talking about various things, turning in and out several streets. I was so interested in her I never paid any attention to where we were walking or what street we were on.

While walking along she caught hold of my arm and said, "Let's walk a little slower as I wish to say something to you. I am going to tell you something." She said, "The reason I did not let you come or bring me home was I did not want you to see where I lived. I wanted to make sure you were different from all other men I have ever met. I saw and find you to be such." She said, "You are so wonderful, different and there is only two men in the world that I am willing to trust and that is my husband and you, but neither of you can trust me because there is a serpent in me. You know it but my husband dont." Then she said, "I live up the street here and I would like you to come home with me to my apartments." She said, "It will be alright." I said, "Is this straight?" She said, "Yes, I assure you it will be alright. It is safe and you have no reason to be afraid or have the least fear. My husband is in a western city and will not be home for ten days." I said, "Allright, I'll take your word for it that everything is O. K."

We walked along and came to a house. She said, "I live here." As we walked up the steps I hesitated, but some kind of an impulse seemed to be drawing me on. She opened her hand bag and took out a latch key. We stepped into the place and she turned on the lights and then she bolted the door on the inside. We walked into the parlor. I took off my hat and laid it on the table. She removed her hat and coat and put them on a chair. Then she sat down on the sofa.

I sat on a chair in front of her and said, "What did you mean when you said there is only two men you could trust but neither can trust you because as you said there is a serpent in you?" She said, "I mean this. You, I know have had a lot of experience in life and I know men I can read them like a book, and most all men are alike and, of course, you know there are exceptions to all things, but in the case of men, they are all alike except a few and the few are so different, like day and night. Now, I told you quite a little about myself and when I said that neither you nor my husband can trust me. You know you cant from what you see and know about me, you know it from experience in life and as to my husband, if he knew a little of what you know he also would know that he could not trust me. So, that is what I meant when I said there was a serpent in me, and there is too. But in a case like mine if any harm comes to any one it will be to me, not to others." I said, "Yes, I understand you." But I lied to her, I did not understand her for I could not quite get next to her explanation, and besides I sized it up she was a poor judge of reading men like a book as she said. I had some ideas of my own and kept certain things to myself because I was anxious to see this matter through, the outcome of it, and I was careful not to make any bad cracks for fear she would dismiss me too soon. We got to talking about various things and she told me her name and age. Her given name was like one that is famous in history and her age was around that period where a woman enjoys at her best life the passions of love wanting to love and be loved, thrills, excitement and flattery that she doesn't know is flattery, and she was the picture of

perfect health and had it in her that she could show the strength or fury of a big tigress cat of the forest or jungle, and she also had it in her the weakness of a kitten which she showed most plainly.

She got up and got some pictures and was showing them to me. I looked with interest at one of her's and said, "How good looking you were when you had this picture taken." This was a bluff of mine, for she looked better to me then than she did in the picture. I did not wish to let her know it too soon that I was stuck on her. She said, "Look at me now. Cant you tell the difference?" I said, "Very little change from the picture and the way you look now, and of course you were dressed different and that accounts a whole lot in making the looks of you now and when you had this picture taken." She was playing her game and I was playing my game. She said, "Well, others have told me different and I thought different myself." I said to her, "Well, you told me I knew a lot and have had experiences in life and you got it right about me there, and might I say I am a pretty good judge of human nature and looks, and you look as good to me now as you did when you had that picture taken." She said, "Well, I believe you and what others have said about me they were sore or jealous at me and about me and I truly think from your talk I look as good myself now as I did when I had that picture taken, and it was imagination on my part in thinking the way I did and listening to what others said." She said, "You make me feel so good, come here, I'll tell you something, I wish to whisper it in your ear." I leaned over and she kissed me. Of course, I kissed her back.

We were sitting close together. I got up and sat down in her lap and kissed her again and again several times, and then threw my arms around her and was loving and hugging her close and tight to me. Both of us were kissing each other. I was looking into her dreamy purple blue eyes and I said, "You have quite a few freckles on your face." She said, "Yes, I have. I wish I could get rid of them. I have tried so many different things. They kind of disappear, but come back." I said, "Well, let them alone they look fine to me. This is just what I love, freckles, blue eyes and red hair." She said, "I kind of think you love me a little." I said, "A little, well its more than a little. I love you a whole lot." So we kissed and hugged each other again.

Then I said, "Bet I am heavy sitting on your lap, let's change, you sit on mine." So we changed positions. Then she threw her arms around me and started to squeeze me so hard I told her about it. She threw her leg up over the arm of the chair showing her bare knee. I said, "O, gee whiz, what an awful pretty leg you have." She said, "Yes, I have been told that I have pretty legs and arms, and what do you think of it, I have been told I would make a fine artist's model." I agreed with her and said, "Yes, I bet you would and do you know it that the finest artist's models in the world are in factories and offices. Rats on the society and rich stuff." She laughed and said, "You sure are a philosopher and you said something." Then I said, "I'll bet I can guess what size stocking you wear." She said, "All, right, what size do I

wear?" I said, "No. 8," feeling the edge of her stocking. She said, "You guessed it." Then I said, "Are you any good in telling riddles? I am fine at it." She said, "No, I am not much on it, but you go ahead and tell one." I said, "All right, here is one: Why is a woman's leg like a rainy day?" She said, "I don't know, I'll give it up." I said, "Because one would like to see it clear up. I know I would." She laughed and said "thats right, thats a good one." She then squeezed me again and started kissing me. I done the same to her.

Then she said, "O, yes, let me show you my rooms. We have four rooms." We went from the parlor into the dining room and then in the kitchen. We came back into the dining room and then she went into another room from the dining room. She turned on the light, it was a bedroom. I stepped into the room. She turned to me and said, "Do you truly mean it when you said you love me a whole lot?" I said, "Yes, I truly do mean it." She threw her arms around me and said, "I believe you."

We were standing there in embrace when suddenly the lights went out all over the apartment. Instantly it seemed as if we were in another world or strange place. It was pitch dark, but we could still see each other. She gave a little scream and said, "O where are we?" She reached out her hand and took mine and said, "Come, with me we must get out of this place." So I followed holding her hand. She came to something that had a black shining form. It was a queer place we were in. We could see the thing but could not see anything away from it. It was like being able to see ourselves but not anything away from ourselves. It was something moving in motion or alive. This form we saw was moving and kept in her way. She let go of my hand, stood still and looked around at me with a wild scared look in her eyes. She changed all over, seemed to age quick. She shook and trembled and said, "Let's walk around it." I followed her and we got around it and walked on. I was now walking by her side when we came to another black shining thing. It was moving and different from what we saw before. We stopped and looked at it. It seemed to be something like an elephant that had two heads on each side or end of it and it had funny looking legs. It walked awful funny. Fear in me kept me from laughing. Part would walk forward and then backwards, then it would stop and this movement would be reversed. Seemed as if the thing was trying to pull itself apart or separate itself for it was two things in one. She said, "O, I am so scared, what can those things be we saw?" I was commencing to feel kind of creepy or sort of scared myself and I said, "I dont know." And she said, "I wonder where we are." And I said, "I dont know that either. You got me in here and I dont know where I am." Then she said, "Well, I have got to get out of here and let you out too. You will have to follow me as you followed me into the room." I said, "All right, I'll follow you." She said, "Well, come on then." So we started walking on again. Again we came to a black shining form. This thing looked something like an alligator and it had an awful ugly looking

mouth. We started to walk around it but it would walk in our way. She said, "It is strange these things dont seem to harm us." I said, "Well, no doubt it is because we are not harming them." We started another way to walk around it but it would still walk in our way opening and snapping its big long jaws.

She turned around to me and said, "I wonder what has happened. O, God, what has happened and where are we." She gave me an awful look. All her beauty was gone. Her face was wrinkled, her eyes had changed to green and red. I got to feeling awful funny but was not afraid. It seemed in this strange place or another world or whatever it was that there was something about it that was holding me together and sort of keeping me my natural self. She said, "What can that thing be? We must get past it, so let's try again." I said, "All right, let's go." So we started again. The beast went back and forth and we could not get past it. She turned around and with a heavy gasp said, "O I thought you were gone and was not here with me." She said, "You wont leave me will you?" I said, "No, never will I leave you until you get me out of here, and then it will be best for us to part as we are both to blame, you more so than myself. You see, I am only telling you the truth. You got me in here and I am depending on you to get me out of here." She said, "Well, stay with me, I'll get you out." I said, "All right." So we tried again to walk past the beast, but the thing kept in our way. I said, "Let's go back the other way." She said, "All right."

We walked on and suddenly came to an incline that went down like a hill. It got steeper and steeper and suddenly we both commenced to skate or slide. It was smooth but rough. We took hold of each other's hands. It got steeper and steeper and all at a sudden we found ourselves it seemed as if floating in air or space. We went off the edge of the incline or else the incline disappeared from under our feet. She said, "Hold on tight to my hand." I said, "Sure I will." She looked at me and said, "I kind of feel a little better, this floating in space feels more free." She looked at me again and said, "O, what can this be. You dont look a bit scared and I am awful afraid in spite of feeling a little better." Oh, but she had changed and for the first time I told her how she looked and said, "I dont know what it can be unless it is because of you being scared has changed you." She said, "I cant help it and you wont leave me will you." I said, "Never, and please dont ask me again." She said, "All right, I wont ask you again, but we must get out of here." It seemed as if we floated here and there in all directions, not knowing if we were going any place at all, and all at a sudden we started going in one direction and it seemed an awful long time this way and that it would never stop or end, this floating or traveling in space pitch dark, but we could see each other just like in a lighted room or broad day light. It was a queer funny thing about it. Being dark and seeing we could see each other, but nothing away from each other.

Floating on, we got into what seemed to be like a draft or suction that took us in its whirl or drew us along or else it seemed as if we were going faster and we went like this it seemed for a long time and we saw in front of us a light with kind of a red dull glow, and it seemed as if we were going faster and faster towards it, and it seemed as if it was years and years. I looked at her and she was so changed I could hardly tell it was a woman or mummy-like form as she looked like last. I felt kind of queer and funny at times and thought I was changing into some kind of a form. I was going to ask her several times how I looked and if I was changing. Whenever I was on the point of asking her it seemed as if there was something that kept me from asking her as I could not form or speak the words to ask her. I even wondered why was this so and it seemed as if something was trying to tell me not to tell her anything more about how she was changing and had changed. Somehow another I dont know what it was that made me keep looking at her as she seemed to be changing or aging so fast and appearing to be getting into a strange form something like on the order of the forms we saw. As I looked at her again, I then thought of how beautiful she was when I first met her.

The draft or suction we were in also seemed to be sort of changing or else we were going faster, and she said, "This does seem strange this draft that seems to be taking us towards that red light." And she said, "Maybe we will get out this way." The light seemed to get bigger and as we went towards it we started to feel it getting warm or was it heat. Then again we started to get around ugly looking forms of different things going in the same direction we were. Some were going faster than we were, passing us, others getting near to us then seemed to slack up or get behind us. The heat was getting stronger and she said, "We must go back." I said, "We cant." We tried to twist ourselves thinking we could get out of this suction. We were now by ourselves, all the forms were gone, and pretty soon we came into forms or things again going the same way, all different, no two alike. They acted like before, some got ahead of us and others slacked up behind. It seemed as if we were now going faster and faster and the heat was getting hot and hotter, and we could see it was a great fire ahead of us, boiling mountain, waves lashing and leaping, rolling, chasing around in all directions and to describe it better, it was a storm of fire in a fire, an awful sight. We could hear a different sound or roar besides the suction of what seemed like wind or a draft.

I said to her, "Seems as if we are going into that fire." She said, "It surely does." I then looked at her and for the first time I felt real fear. She had changed so. Then I said to her, "I wish to make a cigarette as I have not had a smoke since you got me into this place and what ever it is I dont know, and so I'll have to let go of your hand to make a cigarette." She said, "Please dont let go of my hand and make a cigarette." She said, "Remember your promise to stay by me." Again I told her I was going to

make a cigarette and was going to let go of her hand. She said, "All right then, let go." I said, "Good-bye," and let go of her hand. She went from me quick and I saw her form go into that roaring furnace of storming fire and then suddenly I found myself walking in darkness feeling my steps and groping around, and I heard someone say, "You coward, you brute, you know why you wanted her." And from hearing this I thought to myself had she only knew the worst that was in me was that I only wanted her for pastime and an idle plaything as most men do a woman, and then again I heard someone say, "Beware, repent, or your turn will come only worse as you know of this place." And the next thing I know, a change was coming over me. I seemed to be coming or getting back into my natural self, or surroundings, and then suddenly I found and felt myself walking on a floor and then a door opened before me and I heard someone say, "Take warning and beware of this awful place and go out and tell of your terrible experience."

I went out the door and down the steps. I seemed dazed as I walked along the street for some time as if lost. I then turned and walked up another street and my clear senses seemed to be returning to me as I came to myself and looked at what street I was on, and as I walked to the corner it was just getting daylight, the dawn of a new day. It was a familiar corner I was on and while standing there I was smoking a cigarette and waiting for a street car. A car came along, I got on and came home and it was a few minutes after five in the morning that I arrived home, and to tell the truth I did feel kind of funny or weak or something on that order, and still I knew if I left this matter worry me or thought of it much that it would bring me down into a sick spell, and so I sat down in a rocking chair and started to read the paper having picked it up from the porch when I came in. I read the paper clear through, nearly everything it contained, news and advertisements.

Is the sun inhabited? Yes, I believe it is, and that its inhabitants if not in the interior of it, then in its law of gravitation surrounding its atmosphere, and who are its inhabitants? I don't know, but from my experience I'll say some of us are its inhabitants, and I do know that man's laws punish us for our sins and that man gets these laws of his from the principle of nature's laws, and so it stands to reason that nature punishes us in different ways for our sins the same as man's laws.

CHARLES L. DURBORAW

POISON

(A Drama Without Words)

1st Tableau

The background of the stage is a huge mirror. Ten characters dressed uniformly in black smocks are regarding their own images. Suddenly they face toward the public. They place the right hand above their eyes, scout fashion; they feel their pulse, consult their watches, kneel, rise, and seat themselves respectively on the ten chairs which have been arranged in the foreground. A detonation shatters the mirror to pieces, thus revealing on a white wall the shadow of a naked woman, which reaches the entire height of the theatre and which diminishes gradually until it attains a normal height. Evidently the woman has chosen this very moment to appear. She issues from the wall in the shape of a plaster-of-paris statue. She approaches the first of the ten characters; he gives her a pair of red gloves which she pulls on immediately. She leaves the first for the second, who gives her a stick of rouge with which she paints her lips. The third gives her a pair of smoked glasses. The fourth a fur. The fifth a blue wig. The sixth white silk stockings. The seventh a widow's veil, from which she makes a train. The eighth a revolver. The ninth a child. The tenth undresses himself and pursues her with a hammer.

2nd Tableau

The scene is a bedroom whose floor is covered with fragments of broken plaster. A black and liquid fountain gushes from the pitcher on the washstand. Beneath the bedclothes some huge form is hidden. An alarm clock rings. The door opens and a horse's head appears. For a moment it rocks back and forth, till the bed is mysteriously uncovered, from which a smoke issues so abundantly as to obscure the room. After the smoke dissolves you can see long hair which falls from the ceiling on a diamond of supernatural dimensions, suddenly visible on the bed. A man crosses the stage, rubbing his hands; he walks toward the wardrobe, before which he halts. He opens his mouth, raises his arms to the sky, then sits down at a table. He rings a bell; immediately a woman dressed in a robe of pearls brings him his breakfast on a platter. He waits till she goes out before he paints his own silhouette on the mirror of the wardrobe. Hardly has he completed his work when the wardrobe opens and the woman in the robe of pearls leaps into his arms. He pushes her into a chair and kisses her mouth, slowly. However, from the

still open wardrobe, there leap twelve soldiers and an officer, who take aim at both of them.

3rd Tableau

The stage represents a written poem:

*Between love and orthography
There is a pen to think
There is a cry
And blood flows round and round the square
Man is erect with summer
Liberty, liberty of the soil
Is lost alas! the b—— son of a gun
With velvet shoes
Tip of the scalp and of the queen
Less a turtle with love*

(Signed) HECTOR DE JESUS

A projector illuminates the poem, on which are superimposed Chinese shadows made with the hand: namely, a cat, an old woman, a jockey, a cup-and-ball, a racket, a mask, a palm tree, a shoe, a heart.

4th Tableau

The scene is a piece of crumpled silk. When the curtain rises you can hear the noise of glasses breaking. Vapors of many colors float in the air. A young man and a girl, the first in a sailor suit and the second in a dress of white wool, carry an armchair to the centre of the stage; a violinist sits down in it. He begins to play a popular song. At the end of the first few measures the silk begins to quicken with confused movements and is finally torn to the sound of fire-whistles, revealing feet, hands, heads and other parts of the body. A man and a woman, followed by a little dog and sheltered under umbrellas, move across the stage. The frightened violinist is now standing on his chair. Applause. He bows to the right, to the left, and falls backwards into the arms of the young man and the girl, who carry him away.

5th Tableau

The stage is empty. A character who has the air of being a painter comes to make spots of colour on the walls. While he is working two lovers bring a garden bench, where they install themselves. The man wears only his nightshirt, the girl is wrapped in a sheet. Suddenly the lover draws a

circle in the air and the painter, who watches him, bursts a hole in the back wall. He plunges his arm forward and draws out a cable, which he unrolls. There appears to be some light object at the end of it, but the whole wall now collapses and an ocean liner advances slowly over the stage. An electric lamp at the bow makes signals of distress.

6th Tableau

The scene is a kitchen. A woman is standing over the stove. Enter a man in a business suit, his face covered with blood. The woman offers him a bowl of soup. He drinks it at a gulp, then opens the window. He points his finger at something in the street. Sobs and moans are heard. Children rush in and throw themselves at his feet. He gives an amical tap to each of them and leads them all to the door. Somebody, doubtless their mother, appears in a dressing gown. She seems to be speaking naturally. The man watches her and invites her to look at the street. The door of the sideboard opens and several hundred oranges roll over the floor. The three characters lose their balance and fall.

7th—, 8th—, 9th—, 10th—, 11th— Tableau

The scene is a railway station, an office, a fireplace, a book, a picture, in front of which stands a man, then a woman, then a man, then a woman, then a man, bearing placards on which are inscribed respectively the numbers 7—, 8—, 9—, 10—, 11—.

12th Tableau

The scene is a mouth which makes the motions of speech.

ROGER VITRAC
(*Translated by M. C.*)

BOOK REVIEWS

LITERARY CRITICISM OF MUSIC

Musical Chronicle, by Paul Rosenfeld. New York. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$2.00.

It is the object of intuition and emotional sensitiveness to translate music into non-musical terms, usually ideas and emotions. The few simple descriptive terms which are applied to music, dealing chiefly with time, space and intensity—a theme, we say, rises or falls slowly or quickly, is played loudly or softly—intuition translates into others by association or substitution (it is not always easy to say which). Thus accentuated movement at a moderate speed may be associated with the term *martial*, or for the descriptive terms may be substituted the verb *march*; then the music is *martial* or *marches*. Further association may introduce a phrase like *the pomp of power*, while another substitution for the original descriptive terms may be *hewn out of rock*.

The way is thus opened for a wide variety of colorful descriptive phrases, intellectual meanings and even actions implying conscious volition. In fact, once the moorings are cut one may drift a considerable distance, so far even that there may be no apparent connection between the idea and the primary terms which describe the music; as when, for example, the form of a composition is said to be as deep as it is wide. This, however, does not overthrow the idea. For the only test we have is our own intuition, which traces the idea back to the primary descriptive terms. But from the fact that it discovers no connection we may not infer there is none. We are powerless against the intuition which does perceive the connection, since by its very nature each intuition is a law unto itself.

This is more obvious in the case of the emotions which music inspires, and which are often responsible for the apparently queer meanings ascribed to it. If a listener's soul insists upon soaring in ecstasy nobody can stop it; if another listener becomes drowsy that is his privilege. Our intuition may find no connection between these reactions and the music, nevertheless we may not conclude that none exists. There is in fact room in this literary type of musical criticism not only for the emotional upheavals of a Hunecker, but for the blunders of a Finck or a Sanborn; the bad temper and personal animosities of a Krehbiel or a Peyser; the charlatanry of those who, without being able to appreciate music or even to hear it, apply to it the extravagant prose, the literary figures and the terms borrowed from other arts into which some critics translate it; and the will-to-interpret of Paul Rosenfeld.

Nobody can contradict Mr. Rosenfeld when he claims to interpret modern music. For that matter nobody can contradict him when he claims to interpret the older music. Nevertheless in each case he offers translations which I at least cannot trace to the music he is discussing. I do not hear in Ornstein's sonata for two pianos the themes "speak violent sensuality drowned in black, violent passion submerged and become fear"; it is not apparent to me that "the thematic material has been forcefully wrenched, submitted to a superior and single conception. It is a little as though motives which had never before worked together had suddenly timidly conjoined their palms, and begun an harmonious and flowing movement. They are related to one another. They necessitate each other's presence. They produce each other with grace. They still dance with angular tic-like jerks; whimper and wail in Jewish egoistic over-indulgence in grief. . . . But it is as if an alchemist with his virtuous stone had touched many disparate, separate black objects and transfused them to a single dark lustrous metal. Relativity has made them clear and winged and light. A dense stream of rich sound pours from the two vibrating instruments; a flood yellow-gray as the warm, voluptuous winter sky over New York. Climax upon climax is churned."

True, I am not sensitive to Ornstein's music, among others'. But then I don't find in the music of Bach "in one of its most powerful expressions the principle completely complementary to the principle of our civilization", namely "the giving virtue", i.e. "the state in which men give to each other, and, in taking from one another, give each other the power to donate themselves ever more copiously." Nor am I aware, in the case of César Franck, of "a kind of pompousness, of vulgarity even; a habit of thinking things without really experiencing them" (are these synonymous?) which "spoils a good deal of his earlier music." For me at least Strauss's melodic line is not "a little wanting in edge and incisiveness", nor do I get from his music "the baffled sense of having heard a number of not clearly connected fragments, not the great inner satisfaction that comes through having been moved through thick matter in an unbroken course."

Now Mr. Rosenfeld's perceptions are, in my estimation, very acute, his sensitiveness to music is very genuine, and his intuitive judgments are extraordinarily accurate. True, his estimates of older composers conform to the accepted, prevalent notions—of Liszt as a charlatan, of Strauss as one whose genius was alloyed with baser metal, of Rimsky-Korsakoff as a painter of gay pictures for children's story-books, of D'Indy as a musical aristocrat; and even his acute observations on audiences, programs, patronesses and the like—his social criticism of music—are the ordinary currency of the musical gossip-shops. But no accepted, prevalent notion aided him in the following description of Schoenberg's music, which to me is uncanny in its accuracy.

"The music of Schoenberg is concentrated as something squeezed with relentless might in a fist. . . . The water has been forced out. . . . All steps have been abbreviated. . . . Schoenberg overlaps processes

of relationship which to minds of slower tempi seem irreducible and fundamental. In what appears succession of dissonances, he hears a common pitch. Elements which seem to have no common basis he approaches to one another as though they were blood-brothers. . . . Great bales of substance, far-lying, have been condensed. . . .

"As the mind hears closeness between far-lying things, so, too, it hears widths between close-lying chords. This music is compressed and almost painfully distended too. . . .

"Schoenberg's music moves with such spiritual rapidity; jumps so many intermediary processes as it goes, that at first encounter it seems almost grotesque. These rapid progressions, rapid changes of mood, abrupt sudden flights of sound . . . seem the starts and twitches and twinges of an over-nervous man. But the transitions are present. They may be indicated with epigrammatic terseness. The form is preserved. . . .

"The concentration is in the economical instrumentation. Schoenberg's sere, ghostly scores . . . are full of simple marvels of expressivity wrought with single instrumental voices. . . ."

To what, then, shall we ascribe the twaddle on Bach, Franck, Strauss and even Schoenberg?

In part to emotional upheavals, as the following passage seems to indicate.

"On the wings of the great-arched, ecstatic fugal choruses (of Bach's Mass) we are carried out beyond pain and pleasure and set naked breast to breast with the laboring divinity. The proud brass and grandiose drums, the great sky-floating* edifices of sound that are like great golden-mosaicked San Marcos rising high in the air, seem shaped out of stuff dragged from the very depths of the human heart, and offered in great lordly clusters to the light."

To these we may also ascribe "the titanic, virulent and incommensurable forces" in Bloch's violin sonata "upon whose breast man lies tiny and impotent", and the lurid struggle between them which only Benjamin de Casseres has equalled.

And in part to the fact that he practises musical criticism as a literary art. We often read what appears to be not a translation but a bit of fiction, a thrilling little story. Mr. Rosenfeld seems in the first place to regard music as a convenient peg on which to hang a rich, indigestible prose, no more consumable in quantities than *pâté-de-foie-gras*, a prose which seems to furnish its own excuse for being. Sentences, whole paragraphs, convey no intelligible meaning, and some seem to represent nothing more than a delight in the sound of words, singly and in rhythmic combinations, words often reminiscent of some imitator of Waldo Frank. We read of music "which in its fine asceticism, spare passion and ruddy tang, stands apart"; of "the warm, moist quick of sensation"; of an "unbreaking gray plinth of sound"; of "plangent

*Cf. James Joyce's "looked sky-brightly".

trumpets"; of something that is "flauntful"; of something else that is "quenchless"; of the "fleshing" of a concept; of an "ecstatic suffusion of the neck-cords" of a singer. A word that he likes he works to death, using it whether it makes sense in its context or not. In "Musical Portraits" it is *magister* or *magistral*; in "Musical Chronicle" it is *high*. And so we read, without being convinced, of "the high grace of quality"; "the high seriousness"; "biting and high instants of music"; "high, simple woe"; a "high, tremulous sense of beauty."

And in the second place, as he uses words without too much regard for their meaning, so he uses literary figures without too much regard for their aptness; e.g. the machinery figure applied to Stravinsky, which is carried to completion at a sacrifice of accuracy; or the material prosperity fanfare with which the chapter on Wagner opens "Musical Portraits", and which seems to be used from the sheer necessity of using something. Likewise, non-existent distinctions are drawn to furnish plots for thrilling stories. The composer was strong or weak in this or that imaginary respect, but now he is weak or strong. This appears to be the explanation of the far-fetched inside-outside-oneself distinction which he applies, in slightly varied forms, to Strauss, Ornstein and John Alden Carpenter. And once started on an idea he spins it out until it vanishes. For, being not a consecutive thinker but a manipulator of words, he crosses and recrosses his tracks, adds qualifying statement after qualifying statement, until the reader's brain spins.

This fatal penchant for literary style, this apparent unwillingness merely to set down what he actually hears, it is, in my opinion, that spoils Mr. Rosenfeld's criticism. It is a veritable will-to-interpret that carries him astray. But in the discussion of modern music the enthusiasm which discovers what doesn't exist is preferable to the hostility which overlooks even what does exist.

B. H. HAGGIN

IMPURE SPLENDOR

Escapade, by Evelyn Scott. New York. Thomas Seltzer. \$3.00.

"The afternoon leaves an attenuated smile of anaemic delicacy." Yellow torsos of flaccid women, a violent man with eyes like "grapes in hoar frost", cut tree-leaves of purplish wax, another tree the roost of vultures. "Crowded backs of sheep going up . . . the light touches the massed white wool . . . stillness of rocks." Apes, owls, reptiles, parakeets, sick and chained. Bluish babies choking; the tough old umber giantess beckons obscenely to soldiers, over the pocked wall, over muscular vines and the glittering dust. The scent of sweat and vermin in sunshine having "the late color of bruised apricots", the scent of sweat among gaudy broad scentless flowers. "The angels of gold have begun to sing." Pots of urine red-gold in the bold syrupy sun. Partial starvation, rotting teeth, filthy doctors, butcherous surgery, the agony of a torn abdomen, for years. "The bloated lily inflates itself."

A poignant spectacle; but there is dissonance in Mrs. Scott's composition. The organization of narrative is an elusive problem. A new concept as an æsthetic problem, criticism of it is rudimentary, and its terminology feeble and illogical. The major law is plain: to detach a portion of experience (the "subject"), to invent a scheme which can embody it, to perfect this embodiment until it fuses with its origin (the "inspiration"); and the test of achievement is the degree to which a finished book exhausts and becomes its material. Three types of order already exist: The bare cycle of events in time, or biography, akin to history (Defoe's *Moll Flanders*); this arrangement is not invented, but being a condition of existence has become traditional as thought, and being traditional, emotions have adhered to it which are, or are like, æsthetic emotions; the mind is enabled to evaluate, ethically and socially. The book to display a situation, akin to drama, in which a relation or mode of relations is introduced as a rumor or a "case"; then the narrator moves from station to station about this fixed object, analyzing, associating and dissociating, until it stands out, solid, in a clear light (*The Wings of the Dove*, or Mr. Hueffer's *The Good Soldier*); the mind is here directed to understanding and the emotional climax is that of the séance or laboratory, revelation, and release from confusion. The three types are at progressive removes from actuality; the third is the pattern novel, formal as music is, and may hardly appear to be narrative, being most like poetry (Landor's *The Dream of Boccaccio*, and *Ulysses*); its devices are wholly artificial—that is, arbitrary as experience; the mind is stimulated to apprehend, in the mystic sense, pure pattern, hidden mystery rather than hidden meaning, things as "ends in themselves."

Mrs. Scott has confused these possibilities of treatment; primarily, she has failed to envisage her subject as a unit. An organism is most likely to be harmonious and vital in all its parts when its core is detached like a crystal seed. A pattern may be imagined within a mass of irrelevance; but perfection is an exact coincidence of the pattern with its frame—the design being the book, to the last comma. But there is in *Escapade* no wholly executed intention, but a miserable converse of discipline. Fatally hesitant among the masks of her memory, the various utterances seeming to hesitate on remembered crusted mouths and immanent in the retching bodies, the burning insects and scarred birds, she wrote in the first fever of recognition of her subject; so that the roots of the book were already cut and tangled.

Since *Escapade* is an autobiography, it is possible to put one's finger on this nucleus from which it sprang. The things which happened contain three qualities: the poignant, the spectacular and the symbolic, each hostile to the effect of the others. The pity is chilled by the sensual sumptuousness; and in a spectacle, images of pathos displease as a striving for effect. Symbols are always likely to lapse into deceit; Mrs. Scott's religio-psychological symbols are stale and reminiscent of other books, and exasperate by their incessant interposition. As a document of anguish, to appal and wake pity and indignation, it is too ornate, even voluptuous. The great records of endurance or anatomies of suffering have been bald and stony, with rhythms matched exactly to the motion of events, not to an echo of poetry, keyed exactly to a dying husky piping, not to some stale and remembered music; as Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year*, an example of perfect control for one purpose:

“ . . . a garret window opened, and somebody from a window on the other side of the alley called and asked, what is the matter? Upon which, from the first window it was answered, O Lord, my old master has hanged himself! The other asked again, is he quite dead? and the first answered, ay, ay, quite dead; quite dead and cold! This person was a merchant . . .”

In the contemporary absence of retributive gods, in the decadence of hope, “the disease of hope”, high tragedy (as the poems of Mr. Eliot) has become a two-part polyphony of loathsome degradation, a fact, and imaginary loveliness, not a fact; the old note of Christ, a poet in a similar epoch, “pathos produced by the juxtaposition of the fact with the ideal, and of the creature with the creator” (Sturge Moore). One wonders if this is not the formal significance of Mrs. Scott's experience, the attitude which would make it yield most. The critic is forced to suggest a solution, since she has brought it to no ripe harmony. One wonders, but cannot escape the jangle, like instruments out of tune, of the various designs inherent in her book.

I may refer to certain critics to the extent of noting the irrelevance, indeed impertinence, of their insistence on Mrs. Scott's morbidity. Complacence and the astigmatism of comfort and justified irritation at falsities of style lead them to take strange liberties. I come to think of the book as a mass of raw material; and without overlooking its inferiority to its own potentialities, to

salute one who has endured an Inferno, deprivation and pain and fear and filth. The inadequacy of her intellect to penetrate the beastly sumptuous facade, the immature theories which were all the comfort there was, and now her inability to convert it quite into beauty, make it more rather than less moving as a human instance. The book ends in uncertainty, and should have ended in meditated uncertainty, where there were "toy houses of stucco, blue and purple" and a "night-blooming Cereus", its "dew-bruised blossoms . . . fringed, with honey-colored hearts", and "candelabra cactus rise gauntly on every hand, their flat branches like crucified arms." The last chapter is a fantasy in the manner of Joyce's brothel scene, ineffectual and but dimly relevant. A book full of striking infirmities, a writer curiously gifted. The waste is perhaps to be blamed on false gods and a body of criticisms fussily concerned with something known as "life" instead of with "order and discipline", with "the application in literature of principles having their consequences in private conduct" (Mr. Eliot). Mrs. Scott is worthy of most profound and appreciative dispraise. "When she rises to tell me good-by she unties an old cloth and pours into the lap of my dress a dozen ash-pink roses plucked off at the blossom, quite stemless. . . ."

GLENWAY WESCOTT

The Real Story of a Bootlegger. Anonymous. New York. Boni & Liveright. \$2.00.

I never knew for what essential purpose a lawyer existed until I read this book. I knew that the lawyer was attached to business and property interests as an inevitable adjunct. I knew that he was a secondary force outside the law. But it took this frank explicit story of the evolution of an industry that has grown to greatness out of the ruins of one brand new law, and several other laws as old as the Ten Commandments, to enlighten me as to the primary function of the lawyer in a society that tends to become fast and hard.

The lawyer exists to supply elasticity, stretching power, to the laws, to counteract the tendency to petrification in conservative rules of conduct. He is a Puckish spirit of modification hovering between the two opposites, good and evil, a creator of a middle ground extending from one pole to the other, an eraser of that frontier line dividing the two dynamic ethical impulses, and all to the end that good and evil may play and interplay in the spirit of fun.

His purpose nowhere attains so wide a scope, so spectacular a supremacy, as in a political democracy where moral aspects are reduced to service as masks of primitive energies. For under such arbitrary communal forms as the empire, the kingdom, the feudal aristocracy, he is but a dry convention. The bootlegger, as this book reveals, is the unveiling agent by which the full functional value of the lawyer is released to the view of the critic of our age.

There is more imagination at large in America than in any other country. Anything succeeds in America that is infused with a bold and controlled imagination. The American business world is glorified by the absorption of an imaginative energy, for so long denied expansion in other countries by an intellectual autocracy. Ergo, we are the richest country in the world, and our sportive main streams, sexual and convivial, rise to the highest water mark of eminence.

It is the American lawyer who conserves and administers the imaginative concepts whose magical manipulations have liberated the primitive appetites and energies of oppressed peoples. This book shows this, and furthermore that America is on its way to becoming self-conscious about the popular amusements and indulgences but that it has not quite outgrown the consciousness of a distinction between good and evil. Bootlegging is perhaps a final corrective. America will yet teach the world what freedom is.

There are minor faults of style in this book. A thin but distracting veil lies over the radical facts. The book is dubiously journalistic. The bad English is theoretically contrived, crudely faked. In some of the anecdotes an authenticity breaks through and reaches heights of simplicity. But the great economic significance of the book is unmistakable.

ROBERT ALDEN SANBORN

Harmonium, by Wallace Stevens. New York. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.00.

A singular breed of Sensitive Plants begins to flourish in the severe climate of America. Some, revolted by its moral and economic bars, may have fled to voice their bitter protest. Wallace Stevens remains. Oblivious to all elements, save the natural beauty which puzzles and humors and holds him, and for which he returns the music of his words.

One side of him is exotic: colors are richer, sounds are sharper in him than in other minds or in the real existence which the mass mind accepts. So that we have the poetry of sensuousness, a poetry which depends chiefly upon its exotic spirit to hold us, as in *Banal Sojourn*:

The sky is a blue gum streaked with rose. The trees are black.
The grackles crack their throats of bone in the smooth air.
Moisture and heat have swollen the garden into a slum of bloom.
Pardie! Summer is like a fat beast, sleepy in mildew, . . .

Yet, the fallacy of this manner, even in its most admirable and sympathetic exponent, is that it must go on being more and more *strange*. The cultured sensuousness of Mr. Stevens in his next book would have to be more and more intimate and scandalous, *ad absurdum*. I stress this side of his production because it has influenced many of his younger contemporaries, and in them, at least, leads to pretense, and murkiness.

On the other hand there is a mathematical, a *metaphysical* quality in certain of these poems which is entertaining in the highest sense. Poems such

as *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird*, or *The Cuban Doctor*, or *Anecdote of the Jar*, *The Worms at Heaven's Gate*, will be spell-binding for hundreds of years. The Jar is as finished and simple as any of the perfect Landor fragments:

I placed a jar in Tennessee,
And round it was upon a hill.
It made the slovenly wilderness
Surround that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it,
And sprawled around no longer wild.
The jar was round upon the ground
And tall and of a port in air.

It took dominion everywhere.
The jar was gray and bare.
It did not give of bird or bush,
Like nothing else in Tennessee.

The method of this is more impoverished, there is more under-emphasis than over-ripeness, and yet it has the geometrical interest of a piece of modern abstract painting. In the vein of *The Jar* Mr. Stevens strikes absolutely fresh qualities in poetry, and with the authority of a superb virtuoso. Stevens, Williams (Wm. Carlos), Marianne Moore, Cummings, and one or two others alone have such cultured hands. One more perfect thing must be quoted (*The Worms at Heaven's Gate*):

Out of the tomb, we bring Badroulbador,
Within our bellies, we her chariot.
Here is an eye. And here are, one by one,
The lashes of that eye and its white lid.
Here is the cheek on which that lid declined,
And, finger after finger, here, the hand,
The genius of that cheek. Here are the lips,
The bundle of the body and the feet.

Out of the tomb we bring Badroulbador.

It is, of course, Miltonic blank verse. The marching rhythms are made with the severity and precision of Baudelaire and Rimbaud. Otherwise, there are two sensational feats: the nonsense-name, "Badroulbador"; the use of the word "declined".

This first book of Mr. Stevens contains the groups of poems which aroused such interest when published in magazines. They are in many manners, and as a book serve to isolate an extraordinary personality, a man who is in turn shy, child-like, sensuous, sophisticated, discursive, who blushes for his sentiments, who is possessed of boundless curiosity. It is to be hoped that this curiosity will cause him yet to break loose in those directions (mathematical, metaphysical) for which his personality is most singularly fitted.

M. J.

FOR THE BIBLIOPHILE

GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE, one of the most arresting personalities among European writers of our time, was easily the modern prototype of Rabelais, Swift, and Sterne. ¶ Possessed with an Aristophanic demon of satire Apollinaire wrote the most astonishing prose and poetry of his day. ¶ During the four years since his death from wounds received in the Great War writers have declared him to be France's greatest war poet, in fact the only great poet who emerged from the war.

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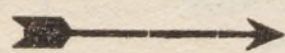
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