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By James Surowiecki

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Yet doctors are pushing similar treatments for men.
Is it medicine or marketing? By Jerome Groopman

James Brown feels good

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THE NEW YORKER

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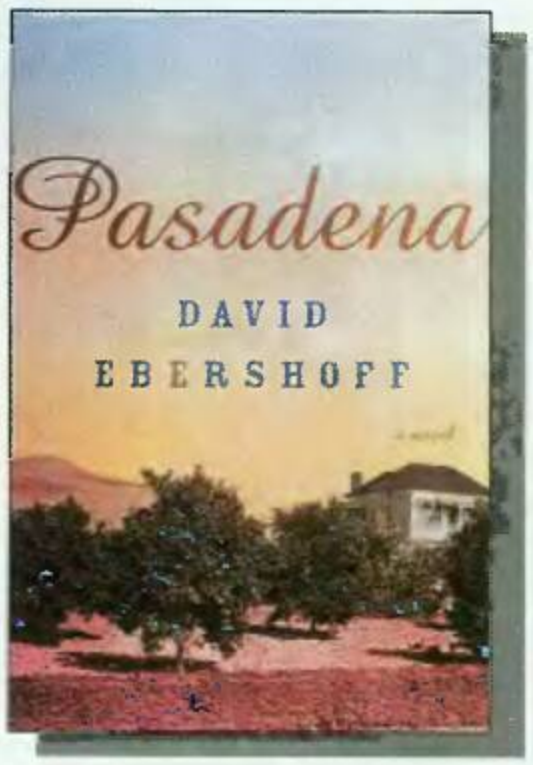
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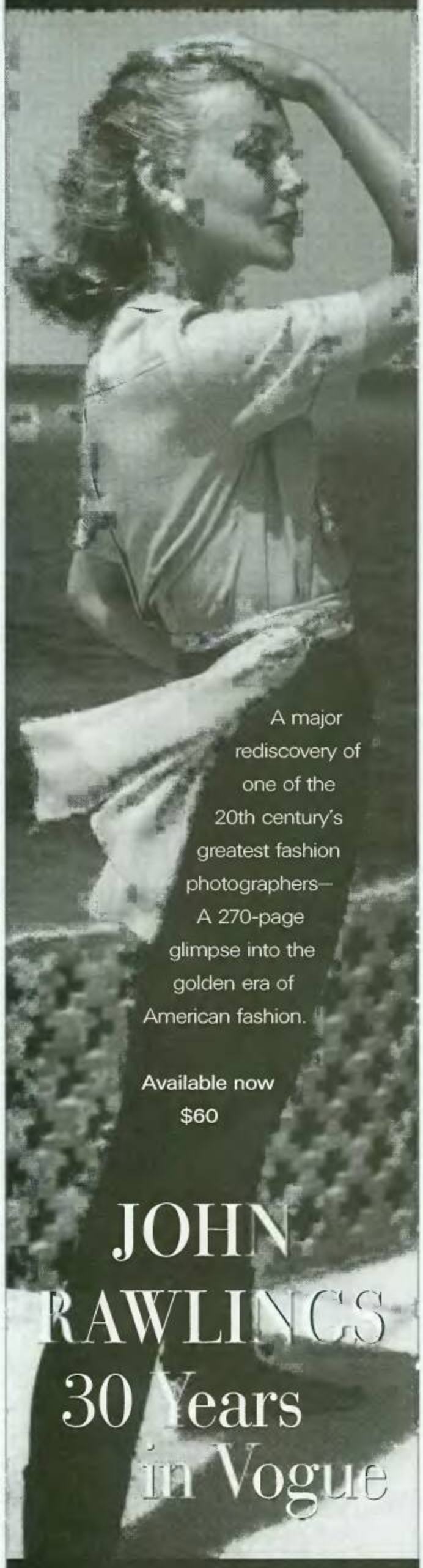
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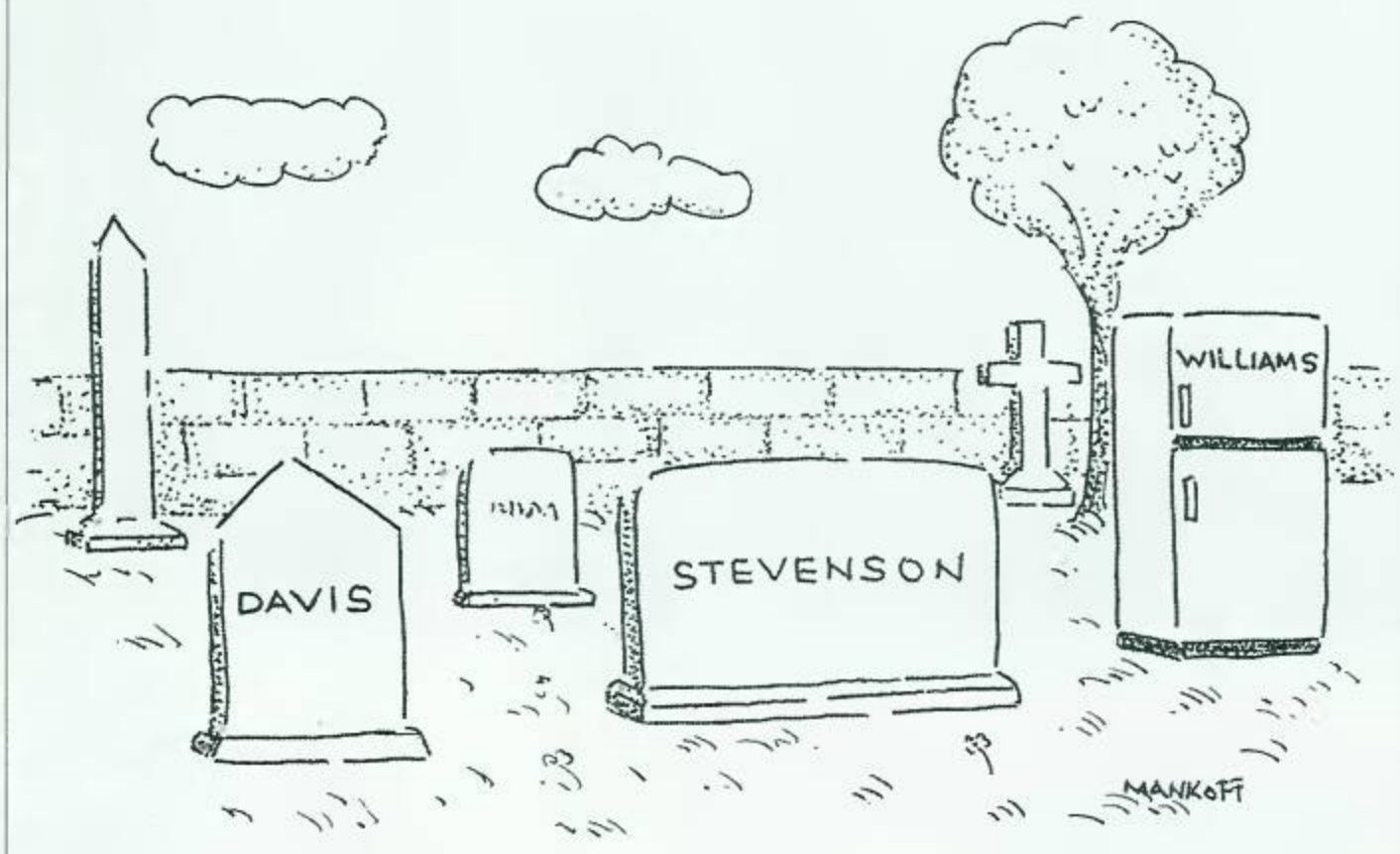
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THE MAIL

THE VETERANS' MEMORIAL

As the former executive director of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, and the person responsible for making Maya Lin's design a reality, I share Louis Menand's admiration for Lin ("The Reluctant Memorialist," July 8th). But it is simply wrong to say that "the veterans betrayed her." On the contrary, we—the V.V.M.F.—made sure that her concept was built. James Watt, the Secretary of the Interior, as Menand recognizes, had ultimate control over the site, and he threatened to kill the memorial if the design's opponents were not accommodated. In an angry, four-hour meeting sabotaged by Ross Perot, we fended off demands to modify Lin's design by making the Wall "white and above ground" with a flagpole at the vertex. Yet, without some resolution, the concept was doomed. In order to save it, a supporter proposed adding a statue at the site, which broke the deadlock. In fighting for the very survival of a memorial, it was simply not a priority for us to notify Lin immediately. Subsequently, the opponents made many attempts, including an Act of Congress, to situate the flag and statue so as to spite Lin's design. We defeated them and outmaneuvered Watt in order to place the flag and statue in an "entry plaza" on the edge of the site. Lin sees it as a problem that, as Menand puts it, the veterans couldn't release their "moral ownership" of the memorial. We couldn't, and we didn't: it wasn't a memorial to Lin; it was a memorial to those who served and to those who died in Vietnam. We bought and paid for her concept, yet respected her prerogative to make design decisions. If she was the mother of the memorial, we were the father.

Robert W. Doubek
Washington, D.C.

I was the chairman of the board of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund when Lin's design was chosen, and am also a Vietnam veteran myself. The suggestion that "the arts professionals knew how to read Lin's drawing," while "the veterans" lacked the capacity, is untrue, and invokes a mindless stereotype of "the veterans." As with the public in general, and many in the art world, some did get it and some didn't. But, at the moment the winning entry in the contest was unveiled to the memorial fund, I was the first person who said, "It is a work of genius." I stood by that assessment, as did many other veterans, and stood by Lin in the worst of the race-baiting and name-calling that followed the unveiling of her design. The Wall was not built by a "miracle," as Lin has written, but by the strenuous, dedicated, intelligent effort of the veterans who pressed ahead alone when no one else believed in the cause of a memorial.

John Wheeler
President, The Vietnam Children's Fund
New York City

DOWN WITH STEINBRENNER

"From the beginning," John Cassidy writes, George Steinbrenner, the owner of the Yankees, "saw baseball as part of the entertainment business" ("Yankee Imperialist," July 8th). Cassidy's portrait may make Steinbrenner a more sympathetic figure for some readers, but not for those of us who—perhaps because of memories of growing up in a three-team New York—don't think that he has ever understood what baseball is about. (It is telling that, as Cassidy also writes, Steinbrenner's hero is General Patton.) We cling to the pre-free-agency illusion that the sport, at its highest level, transcends entertainment, and feel that its ardent lovers must continue to assert this belief; and we cannot agree to countenance Steinbrenner's hegemony.

Bob Liss
San Francisco, Calif.

•

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN



THE THEATRE
OPENINGS & PREVIEWS

Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.

THE BOYS FROM SYRACUSE
Rodgers and Hart's 1938 musical, with a new book by Nicky Silver, in a Roundabout Theatre Company staging. Scott Ellis is the director. In previews. (American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. 719-1300.)

FRANKIE AND JOHNNY IN THE CLAIR DE LUNE
Edie Falco and Stanley Tucci star in Terrence McNally's 1987 play, under the direction of Joe Mantello. Previews begin July 26. (Belasco, 111 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

HAIRSPRAY
A new musical, based on the 1988 John Waters film, with a book by Mark O'Donnell and Thomas Meehan, and songs by Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman. Jack O'Brien is the director. In previews. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

HARLEM SONG
George C. Wolfe's latest is a musical history of Harlem show business from the nineteen-twenties to the present. In previews. (Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 307-7171.)

I'M NOT RAPPAPORT
Judd Hirsch and Ben Vereen star in a revival of Herb Gardner's 1985 comedy. Daniel Sullivan is the director. Two previews on July 24. Opens July 25 at 6:30. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

SPANISH GIRL
Second Stage Theatre wraps up its New Plays Uptown series with a play by Hunt Holman, about a college undergrad whose former summer fling comes calling. In previews through July 27. Opens July 28 at 3. (McGinn/Cazale, Broadway at 76th St. 246-4422.)

OPENED RECENTLY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
28	29	30	24	25	26	27

ALL OVER
Rosemary Harris and Michael Learned lead a well-cast ensemble in the Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of Edward Albee's 1971 play about living with mortality. They portray the bitter wife and loving mistress, respectively, of a dying man of great wealth and social standing, who have come together at his deathbed—along with his dejected son and angry daughter (Patrick Garner and Pamela Nyberg), an old family friend (John Carter), and a very canny old doctor-and-nurse duo (Bill Moor and Myra Carter). Thanks to the fine performances, all the sting, humor, and sadness of Albee's view comes through: we're all inherently selfish, so loving the dying is often easier than loving the living. Emily Mann is the director. (Gramercy, 127 E. 23rd St. 307-4100.)

AS YOU LIKE IT
Shakespeare's comedy, transported to a contemporary urban environment by the Worth Street Theatre. Jeff Cohen is the director. (Tribeca Playhouse, 111 Reade St. 206-1515.)

CAPITOL STEPS: WHEN BUSH COMES TO SHOVE
The Washington, D.C., comedy troupe returns to New York with their latest satirical revue. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

CHICAGO CITY LIMITS
A new revue from the improv company, "Chicago City Limits' Director's Cut," which incorporates short films and videos. (Chicago City Limits Theatre, 1105 First Ave., at 61st St. 888-5233.)

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS
In the Aquila Theatre Company's excellent production of Shakespeare's intricately foolish story, the laughs are many and the delights deep. The producer-director team of Peter Meineck and Robert Richmond start with a reverence for the playwright, then employ just about any theatrical technique that will illuminate his words—among them song, dance, song and dance, dumb show, vaudeville, and burlesque. The seven cast members, led here by Mark Saturno and Louis Butelli as the two sets of twins, mix remarkable range with insane energy. Anthony Cochrane's music wittily underscores some scenes, and it fairly drives others. The setting, the Turkish port city of Ephesus, affords the opportunity for a bright and exotic production design. The costume designer, Sarah Hill, uses the inevitable fezzes and caftans, but in the world of Aquila Edwardian jackets and forties sundresses work perfectly well, too. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 239-6200.)

ELLE
Alan Cumming has adapted and stars in Jean Genet's play about a photographer sent to Rome to make a portrait of the Pope. Stephen Spinella is also in the cast. (The Zipper, 336 W. 37th St. 239-6200. Closes July 31.)

ENDPAPERS
The first full-length play by Thomas McCormack, the retired C.E.O. of an independently owned publishing house (St. Martin's), about choosing a successor as C.E.O. of an independently owned publishing house. The play is highly literate (imagine: grammar jokes!) and full of zingy one-liners. The characters are not just types but unavoidable types: the crusty chief, the heir apparent, the office lesbian, the well-dressed hatchet, the ambitious blond assistant who is bound for glory. All are well played by an ensemble cast, under the direction of Pamela Berlin. The set, by Neil Patel, is perfect: you may feel as if you'd never left the office. (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

FOOL FOR LOVE
Tim Corcoran's precise, insightful direction is the heart of this revival of Sam Shepard's 1983 play about a misbegotten love. The evening's power lies mainly in the monologues, which are superb. (29th Street Rep, 212 W. 29th St. 206-1515. Closes July 27.)

THE GOAT; OR, WHO IS SYLVIA?
Edward Albee's ninety-minute anecdote about a happily married, successful architect who falls in love with a goat called Sylvia. It takes all of Albee's expertise to tease this joke into an evening; but it allows Mercedes Ruehl some hilarious moments of high dudgeon as she trashes the house and her husband (Bill Pullman) for "cruising livestock." David Esbjornson is the director. (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE GRADUATE
This pointless production, starring Kathleen Turner as Mrs. Robinson, is endless and full of dead air. There are exactly two pleasures here: Victor Slezak, as Mr. Robinson, and Murphy Guyer, as Benjamin's father; they depict beautifully the anger and anxiety that underlie their postwar poolside bonhomie. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/15/02.) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE GUYS
A dialogue between a fire captain who lost eight of his men on September 11th and an editor who helps him prepare their eulogies, written by Anne Nelson, a journalist, and directed by Jim Simpson, the Flea Theatre's artistic director. It's an artful and moving re-creation of the relationships New Yorkers formed as a result of that day—of the way that people "jumped tracks" and suddenly saw into each other's lives—and an admirable tribute to the men who died. (The Flea, 41 White St. 206-1515.)

ICE FACTORY FESTIVAL
The third offering in SoHo Think Tank's annual summer celebration of new works is "The Hush," a silent comedy/detective thriller by the U.K. troupe Hush Productions. July 24-27 at 7. The festival continues through Aug. 17. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 966-4844.)

INTO THE WOODS
Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's 1987 fairy-tale-derived musical isn't so much a rethinking of



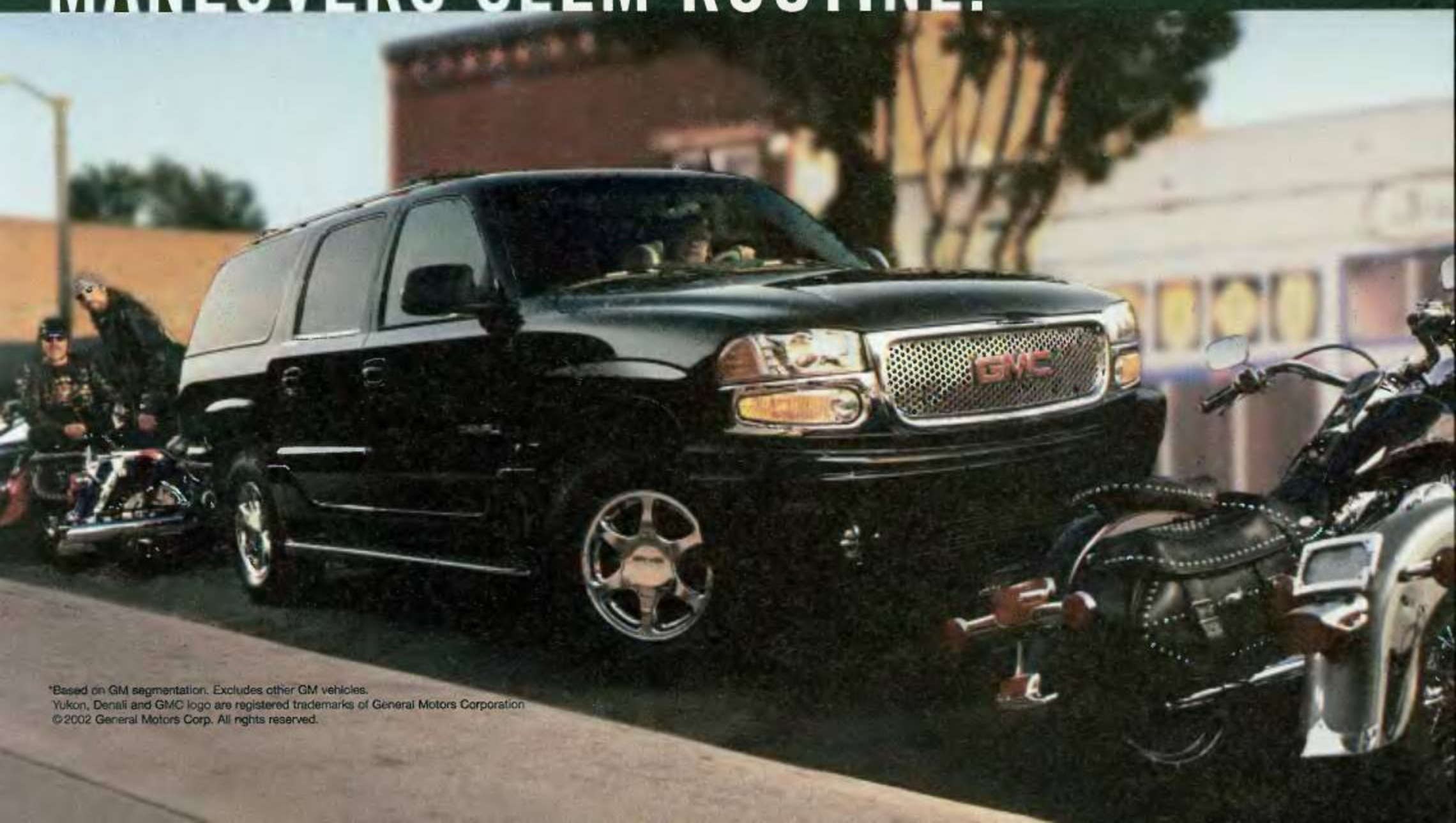
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fairy tales as it is a parable about growing up and finding your place in the community, and about learning to live with uncertainty and ambivalence. The archetypal material is treated with suitable directness and simplicity, and yet the show lacks none of the intelligence or emotional honesty we expect from Sondheim. Mr. Lapine is the director. (5/13/02) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

KAREN FINLEY

The performance artist presents a work in progress, "The Distribution of Empathy," which explores the emotions of New Yorkers after September 11th. Tuesdays at 9, through July 30. (Cutting Room, 19 W. 24th St. 691-1900.)

KING LEAR

Shakespeare's play, in an outdoor staging by the Classical Theatre of Harlem starring Paul Butler. (CTH Courtyard Theatre, 645 St. Nicholas Ave., at 141st St. 206-1515.)

LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL

July 23-24 at 8: "Happiness: An Epic Poem," a solo music-theatre work written and performed by Laurie Anderson. (Alice Tully Hall. For information about tickets and schedule, call 875-5928.)

METAMORPHOSES

Ovid's tales, loosely adapted and directed by Mary Zimmerman, who had the ingenious idea of staging the caprice of the gods in a swimming pool. The production is fun and full of wonder, but it illustrates rather than dramatizes psychic struggle. The show's gimmick, the pool, turns out to be its metaphor—refreshing and shallow. (3/18/02) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

MORNING'S AT SEVEN

Paul Osborne's 1939 back-porch drama is bland stuff, sort of Chekhov light, but the pleasing all-star cast puts this rickety workhorse through its paces. Directed by Daniel Sullivan. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Closes July 28.)

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

The Gorilla Rep's free outdoor production of Shakespeare's comedy. (Fort Tryon Park at 190th St. For more information, call 330-8086.)

OKLAHOMA!

There are stupendous pleasures in the Royal National Theatre's version of Rodgers and Hammerstein's 1943 American classic. Many of them are due to the high-spirited, humorous choreography of Susan Stroman, and to Anthony Ward's picturesque set. But technique, which can make a show work, is not enough to make it wonderful. (4/1/02) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

THE PLAYBOY OF THE WESTERN WORLD

J. M. Synge's classic 1907 comedy about a young man lionized by a remote Irish village after he shows up in their midst with a story of having killed his abusive father—and the fallout when the father shows up only slightly bloodied. The show explores issues of reputation, love, lust, and the thrill of scandal in a surprisingly modern way, and in remarkably beautiful language. The Irish Rep cast is strong, especially Aedin Moloney, as a lonely widow. Kirk Bookman's warm lighting makes the most of David Raphael's detailed stone-cottage set. Directed by Charlotte Moore with a sure hand. (132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

PLAY YOURSELF

Craig Lucas directs a New York Theatre Workshop staging of Harry Kondoleon's play, about an aging Hollywood actress. (Century Center, 111 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

THE PRINCE AND THE PAUPER

Mark Twain's novel has been adapted for the stage and musicalized by Neil Berg (score and lyrics) and Bernie Garza and Ray Roderick (book). (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

PRIVATE LIVES

In Noël Coward's comedy of bad manners, two wonderful actors, Alan Rickman and Lindsay Duncan, play the embattled exes Elyot and Amanda—dandies of detachment who jilt their new spouses and run away together to a Parisian love nest. Howard Davies's radical notion is to play Elyot and Amanda's physical passion for real. This allows him to capitalize on the wonderful chemistry between Rickman and Duncan, but it also throws the comedy weirdly off kilter. (5/6/02) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

REBEL WITHOUT A PAUSE

The comedian Reno goes to bed around 8 A.M.; her friends know never to call her before early afternoon. So she realized that something extraordinary was happening on September 11th when her phone started ringing just before nine. Her apartment was five blocks from the Twin Towers, and her account of the next few hours, days, and months is insightful and very, very funny. More concisely than almost anyone else has, Reno cuts to the core of many New Yorkers' complicated emotional reactions to the upwelling of blame, fear, patriotism, and heroism that has surrounded us. One part of her show consists of vaguely related passages of knee-jerk—and uncharacteristically dull—political commentary, but Reno still gives one of the clearest testaments yet to what that day was and what it's wrought for us all. (Lion, 410 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

RED HOT MAMA

Sharon McKnight portrays Sophie Tucker in a tribute to the vaudeville star. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 48th St. 935-5820. Closes Aug. 4.)

RICKY JAY: ON THE STEM

The master magician's tribute to the flimflammery and weird entertainments that have cropped up over the years along the length of Broadway, "the stem that winds the watch" of New York City. Prepare to be happily hornswoggled. Directed by David Mamet. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422. Closes Aug. 4.)

SHOPPERS CARRIED BY ESCALATORS INTO THE FLAMES

Faux Shepard meets low-rent O'Neill in Denis Johnson's play, and the results aren't pretty. A blue-collar family, some hangers-on, and a barking Chihuahua gather for a revelatory night at the home of the dad, Oliver Wendell Homes Cassandra, in Ukiah, California. There's not much in the way of action (save a couple of spasms of meaningless violence), just an endless recounting of the past woes that have led these people to their current state of drunkenness, desertion, denial, and dementia. Having failed to provide a cogent narrative, Johnson tries to cover with cleverness: the announcer on the blaring television comments on the stage proceedings, the characters' names are fraught with symbolism, one participant derides an onstage action as "too trailer trash." It comes off not as irony but as an admission of the playwright's shortcomings. Under David Levine's direction, the actors all seem a beat off, clearly underplaying the material, but to go at it full bore would be in nobody's best interest. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE

Just like the 1967 movie it's based on, this musical is supposed to be all madcap Jazz Age fizziness, but the harder the cast sings and dances, the flatter the enterprise falls. The colors seem garish rather than gay, the manic energy feels forced at gunpoint, and the



The beloved East Village night club Brownies will close after more than a decade of ear-ringing rock and roll (see Night Life—Clubs). DOUG ALLEN

only thing you recall about Sutton Foster's Millie after you leave the theatre is her huge white teeth and bouncy black bob. Call it thoroughly boring, shrilly. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

THUNDER KNOCKING ON THE DOOR
Leslie Uggams and Chuck Cooper lead the cast of a musical set in rural Alabama in the sixties, written by Keith Glover (book) and Keb' Mo' and Anderson Edwards (music and lyrics). (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

TOPDOG/UNDERDOG
The Public Theatre's production of Suzan-Lori Parks's play stars Jeffrey Wright and Mos Def as a pair of brothers named Lincoln and Booth. George C. Wolfe is the director. (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200. Closes Aug. 11.)

TRANSPARENCY OF VAL
A new comedy by Stephen Belber, about a boy who grows up in a matter of minutes. (Clemente Soto Velez Cultural Center, 107 Suffolk St. 539-6506. Closes Aug. 3.)

TWELFTH NIGHT
Kristen Johnston, Christopher Lloyd, Oliver Platt, Jimmy Smits, and Julia Stiles are in the New York Shakespeare Festival's only outdoor staging of the summer. Brian Kulick is the director. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 539-8750.)

21 DOG YEARS: DOING TIME@AMAZON.COM
Michael Daisey spent three years at Amazon during its headiest, do-no-wrong period. And now he's telling all. He's a charismatic performer, and up until the end, when he becomes a bit self-righteous, his show has the insightful hostility of the best comedy. The audience doesn't learn anything new about the dot-com bubble and its discontents, but it's fun to get the view from the inside. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 239-6200.)

VERONIQUE
A recently rediscovered drama by John O'Hara, which satirizes life in Greenwich Village in the twenties. (Bank Street Theatre, 155 Bank St. 561-9635. Closes Aug. 4.)

VOYAGE OF THE CARCASS
Dan O'Brien's comedy is set on an iceberg during a polar expedition gone bad. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

LONG RUNS

AIDA
Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4747.

BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.

CABARET
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.

CHICAGO
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

CONTACT
Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.

DE LA GUARDA
Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E., at 15th St. 239-6200.

FORBIDDEN BROADWAY: 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.

42ND STREET
Ford Center, 213 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.

THE FULL MONTY
Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.

THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.

LOVE, JANIS
Village Theatre, 158 Bleecker St. 307-4100.

LES MISÉRABLES
Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.

NOISES OFF
Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.

PERFECT CRIME
Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401.

THE PRODUCERS
St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

PROOF
Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.

RENT
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.

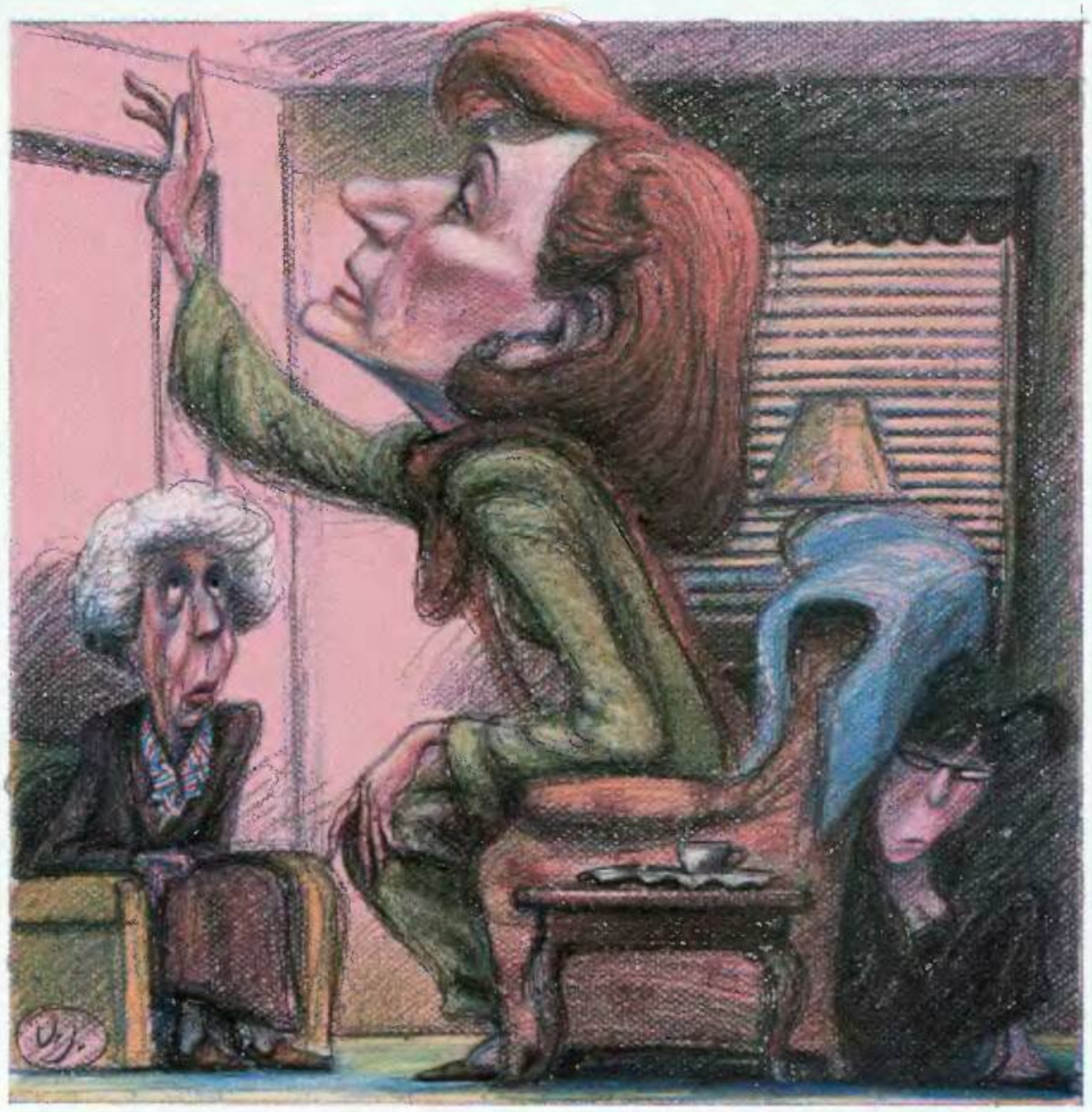
STOMP
Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.

THE TALE OF THE ALLERGIST'S WIFE
Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.

UNDERNEATH THE LINTEL
Soho Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 239-6200.

URINETOWN
Henry Miller, 124 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

"OFFERING"
The wife-and-husband dance team of Eiko and Koma (in collaboration with Lakshmi Aysola) create a slow-moving sculpture in several outdoor locales. July 24 at 8: Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza. ♦ July 25 at 6: Tudor City Green, South Park. ♦ July 26 at 6:30: Clinton Community Garden, W. 48th St. near Ninth Ave. ♦ July 27 at 6: Bryant Park. ♦ July 30 at 6:30: Madison Square Park. (For more information, call Dancing in the Streets, at 625-3505.)



Harry Kondoleon's "Play Yourself," at the Century Center.

VICTOR JUHASZ

DANCE

LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL
Merce Cunningham, master of the fleeting present, doesn't usually look back. But for his company's fiftieth anniversary, he allows *us* to. This engagement's time line of iconic and dissimilar dances (from 1956, 1965, 1984, and 1987, and a new work from this year) starts with "Suite for Five," in which, Carolyn Brown says, "the music, by John Cage, is full of silences, and the center is kept empty—as it always is." For the troupe's first twenty years, Brown luminously embodied the Cunningham ideal of dancing ("a spiritual exercise in physical form"); she helped restage the dance. The new work is "Loose Time," performed before a huge Terry Winters scrim of black skeins floating on a sea of blood orange. The several dancers' clusterings and dispersals, sudden flickerings and sustained stillnesses, are as odd and moving and evanescent as ever. (New York State Theatre. 307-4100. July 24-27 at 8.)

OREGON BALLET THEATRE
The Portland-based troupe presents five works by the founder, James Canfield, including "Up," a suite of dances set to seven versions of the song "Blue Moon," and "Coco," an homage to Coco Chanel. (The Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. July 23-26 at 8 and July 27 at 2 and 8.)

OUT OF TOWN

JACOB'S PILLOW DANCE FESTIVAL
July 24-26 at 8, July 27 at 2 and 8, and July 28 at 2: Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company. ♦ July 25-26 at 8:15, July 27 at 2:15 and 8:15, and July 28 at 5: Salia ni Seydou. "Much of the dancing in Africa comes from ceremonies for the end of the year, for births and deaths," the lanky Salia Sanou says. Sanou, with his compatriot Seydou Boro, directs this small, well-travelled troupe from Burkina Faso. The choreography reduces the exuberant West African tradition of undulating torsos and winging arms to a sober, striking trace. "Our goal is to explore how one can dance differently in Africa," Sanou says. "A dancer from Burkina Faso will recognize himself in the dance, but he will also feel lost. He will think, Oh, I didn't know it could be done that way." (Becket, Mass. For information about tickets, call 413-243-0745.)

NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

RIVER TO RIVER FESTIVAL
Free concerts in lower Manhattan. July 24 at 7: **Vernon Reid** and **James (Blood) Ulmer**. The two guitarists, who worked together on the 2001 album "Memphis Blood," make explicit the affinities be-

tween Robert Johnson, Jimi Hendrix, and Ulmer's old cohort Ornette Coleman. (Nelson A. Rockefeller Park, Battery Park City. 528-2733.) July 25 at 7: **Roseanne Cash** presents a night of grade-A country music. With **Mojo Mancini.** (Castle Clinton. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 835-2789.) July 30 at 7: The clear-voiced and clear-eyed singer-songwriter **Dar Williams.** (World Financial Center Plaza. 528-2733.)

MORCHEEBA

Led by the vocalist Skye Edwards, who hovers more than she sings, this London-based trio creates a stylish wash of low-riding strings and trip-hop grooves. It makes a pair of New York City appearances (see also Irving Plaza) in support of its latest release, the Brazilian-influenced "Charango." (Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. 307-7171. July 24 at 8.)

ROBERT PLANT

Once upon a time this messianic front man used his perpetually bare chest, flaxen locks, and piercing wail to insure that Led Zeppelin would always be known as the preëminent architects of hard rock. More than twenty years after Led Zep's demise, Plant continues his on-again, off-again, solo career with "Dreamland," an album that covers songs by such unexpected artists as the folk troubadours Tim Buckley and Bob Dylan. (Hammerstein Ballroom, the Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. 307-7171. July 24 at 8.)

JAZZ IN JULY

July 24 at 8: Richard Rodgers's centenary gets a classy nod from the keyboard wizards Dick Hyman and Derek Smith at their annual piano party. Special guests include cabaret-icon-in-the-making Eric Comstock, the bassist Jay Leonhart, the guitarist Bucky Pizzarelli, and the venerable trumpeter Joe Wilder. July 25 at 8: Ralph Sutton, who died last year at age seventy-nine, was the dean of modern-day stride players. Paying tribute to the Master will be an international cadre of piano ticklers, including our own Mike Lipskin, Germany's Bernd Lhotsky, the U.K.'s Nevelle Dickie, and from France, Louis Mazetier. The vocalist Lorraine Feather also joins the fun. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5500.)

MIDSUMMER NIGHT SWING

The final week of dancing under the stars at Lincoln Center gets under way on July 24 with the **Billy Strayhorn Orchestra.** July 25: **Yerba Buena,** fresh off a tour opening for the Dave Matthews band, brings in its Cuban-inflamed funk. July 26: The Astoria, Queens-based **Groupo Saveiro,** a favorite of local Brazilian expats. July 27: It's altogether fitting that the legendary tenor saxophonist **Illinois Jacquet** should celebrate his eightieth birthday at the helm of his beloved big band. This is an authentic swing aggregation that snaps, crackles, and pops with impunity, goaded on by the imperturbable swagger of the leader's horn. (For more information, call 721-6500. All shows are at 8, with dance lessons starting at 6:30.)

CENTRAL PARK SUMMERSTAGE

July 25 at 7: Eighty-one years old and showing no signs of calling it quits anytime in the near future, the pianist **Dave Brubeck** can still get a crowd going with such perennial jazz anthems as "Take Five" and "Blue Rondo à la Turk." It doesn't hurt that the ultra-melodic bassist Michael Moore is now a valued Brubeckian. The tenor saxophonist **David Sánchez** has been a mainstay of the new Latin-jazz fusion movement for the better part of the past decade; for this passionate young talent, the clave carries as much weight as the cadence of hard bop. July 26 at 7: The **B-52's** and the **Tom Tom Club** join forces for a benefit show. July 28 at 3: The velvet-voiced English singer **Beth Orton** returns with songs from her new album, "Daybreaker." (Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. 360-2777.)

OLGA TAÑÓN

The smoldering vocalist who is known as the queen of Puerto Rican merengue. (Apollo Theatre, 253 W. 125th St. 531-5305. July 25 at 8.)

ROCK STEADY CREW

Back in 1977, when the Bronx was burning, the borough redeemed itself thanks to the Yankees, who won their first World Series championship in more than a decade, and by the Rock Steady Crew, a group of flexible and fleet-footed dancers who

ON AND OFF THE AVENUE

The Warmth of the Sun

"It has those little Emilios on it—that means it's one of our original patterns from the archives," says the saleswoman at the **EMILIO PUCCI** boutique (24 E. 64th St.; 752-4777), vouching for the authenticity of a saffron-and-heliotrope beach towel spread out on the shop's floor. The towel, a riot of swirls and crazy curlicues, has tiny Emilio signatures, as subtle as Hirschfeld Ninas, hidden in its print. It may be $250, but it's about as dazzling a towel as you'll ever see, and, according to the sales help, it's a hundred per cent washable, which is always nice when you're dealing with an item whose sole purpose is to be spread out on sand. "We've been in this location over thirty years," the clerk says of the plush, old-fashioned Pucci store, the sort of place where the deep-pink carpeting exactly matches the pink front door. "Our customers love it this way."

The sleek **HERMÈS** flagship (691 Madison Ave.; 751-3181) may not feature a pink staircase, but it does offer, along with those famous $4,000 Kelly bags, what appears to be a faux-shagreen-lined elevator. If the status beach towels here are even pricier than the ones at Pucci, the subject matter is more various: among a wide range of animal-themed offerings is an example printed with a school of cheery goldfish on a yellow or green background that is $360 for a standard size and a whopping $660 for the double-wide version.

People who would rather leap around after a little ball than lie on a designer towel might like the paddleball set at **CRATE & BARREL** (650 Madison Ave.; 308-0011), a mesh bag that contains a pair of paddles and two balls for $3.95. It's inexpensive, but you can't accuse it of being dull—the sky-blue paddle is decorated with big turquoise and orange bubbles, and the store thinks it's attractive enough to display it doubling as a coaster. Crate & Barrel isn't shy about the colors of its other summer stock either: a bright-aqua foldable chair called the Popsicle is $15.95, and there's a matching Popsicle chaise for $22.95.

The Museum of Modern Art has decamped to Queens, but there are still a couple of **MOMA SHOPS** in Manhattan, including one that seems right at home in a red brick Victorian pile in SoHo (81 Spring St.; 646-613-1367). Among the items intended for the design-sensitive outdoor cook is a gray laptop-size case that holds a set of extendable stainless-steel barbecue utensils and a pair of orange plastic salt and pepper shakers ($70). A classic chef's apron by Giuseppe Bodrito made of reflective silver fabric is meant for moonlit grilling ($45); leftovers can be packed up in a family-sized PVC cooler bag from M&Co whose wavy blue print looks like the bottom of a Hockney swimming pool ($30). Weekend guests determined to bring a really interesting house gift might consider Karim Rashid's chess set, with highly stylized pieces made of an oddly luminous soft thermal plastic rubber ($60). The set, like Rashid himself, has developed a cult following. Though it would look splendid set up on a summer-house veranda, the game is hardy enough to withstand the rigors of a day at the beach: the Lucite board doubles as a box, and the chessmen themselves, in glowing shades of lime and tangerine, are unlikely to disappear in a sand drift.

—Lynn Yaeger



EDEL RODRIGUEZ



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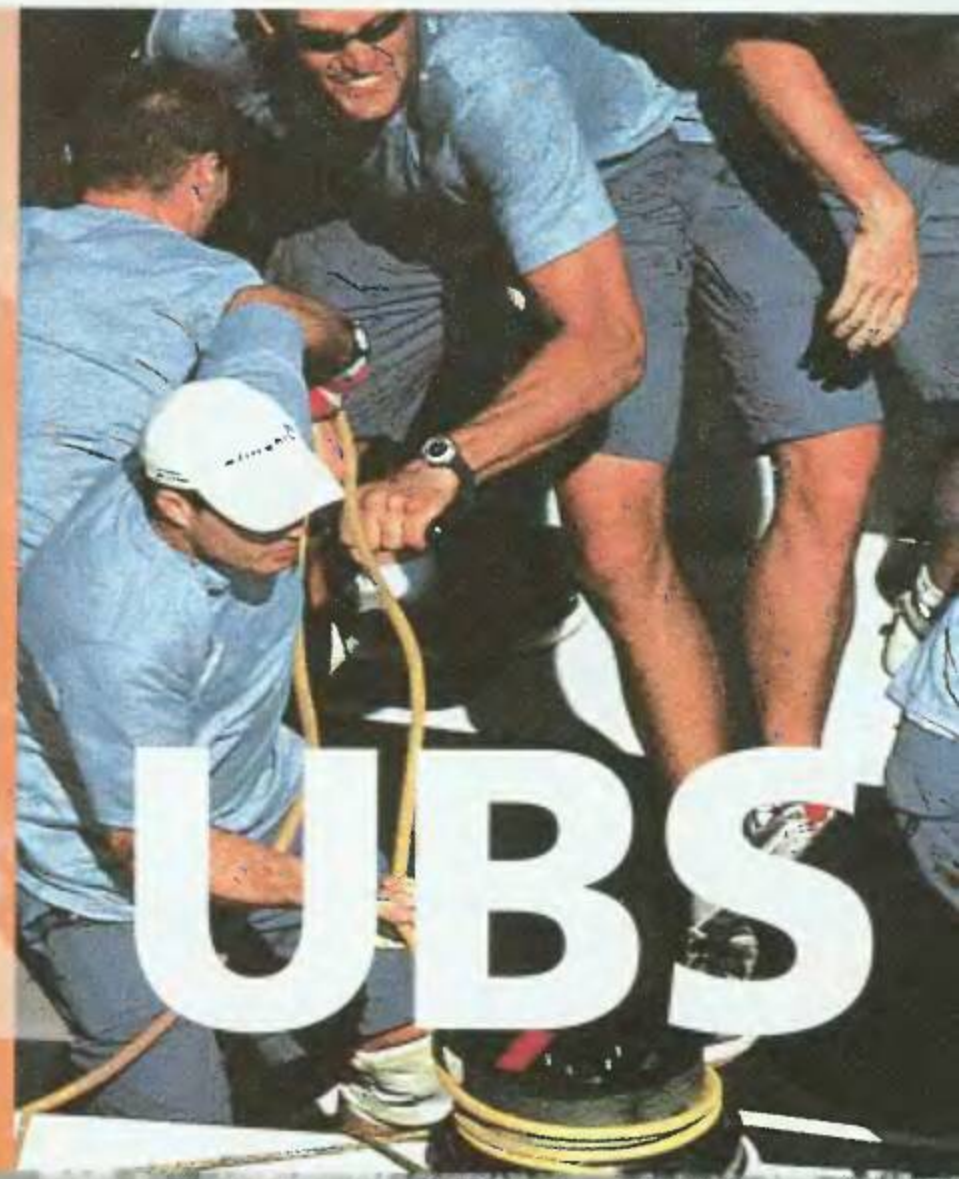
Sailing requires not only teamwork, but leadership, strategy and skill; traits highly valued by all of us at UBS. We are proud to sponsor the UBS Challenge, and thrilled to bring America's Cup racing back to Newport, R.I. for the first time in nearly 20 years.

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UBS

July 27-29
U.S. Championship

July 31-Aug 4
UBS Challenge Finals

Newport Regatta Club
Newport, R.I.

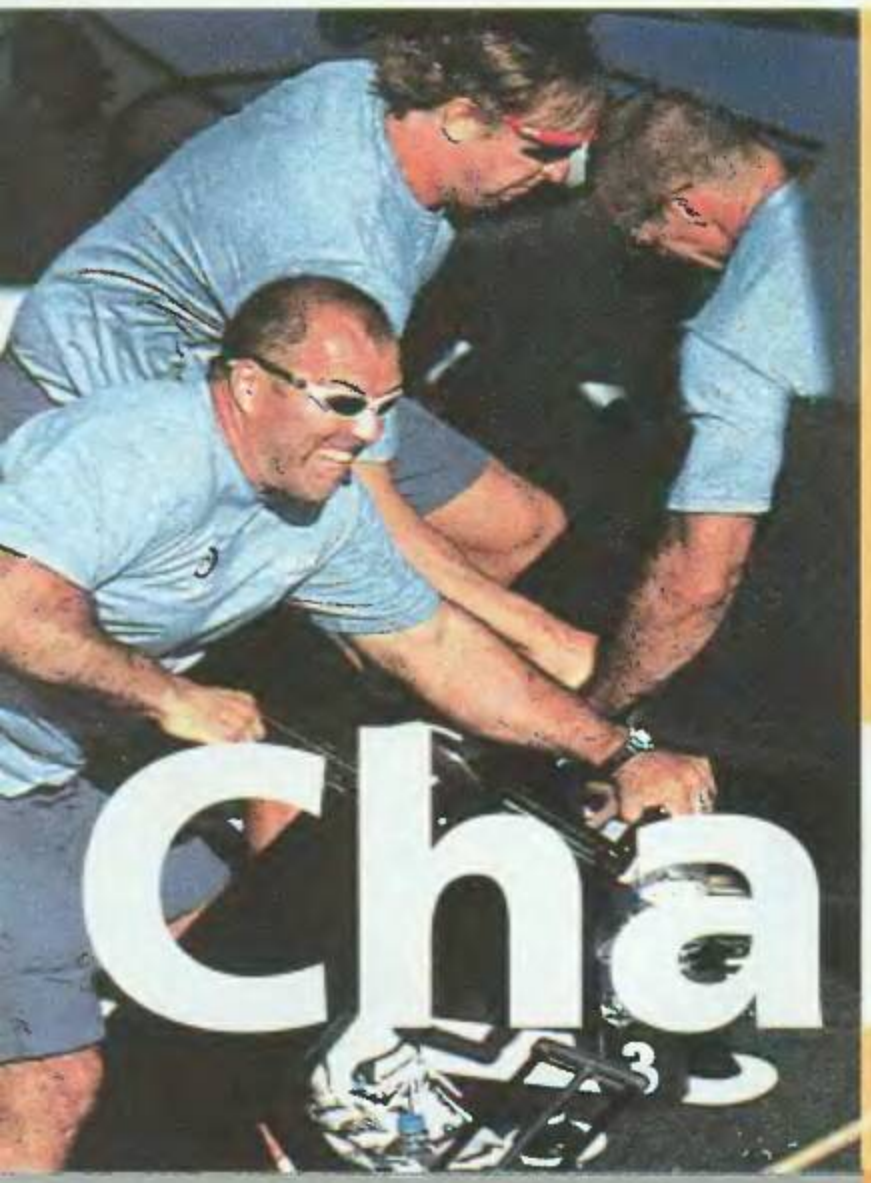
Hosted by the New York Yacht Club

UBS is Main Partner of Alinghi, Swiss Challenge for the Amercia's Cup 2003. Photo credits: Phillipe Schiller, Thierry Martinez.

The UBS Challenge is a multi-tiered competition featuring both professional and amateur sailors. It includes the UBS Regional Qualifiers, the UBS Challenge U.S. Championships and the UBS Challenge Finals.

The UBS Challenge U.S. Championship features the winning teams from the UBS Challenge regional races as well as the 2001-2002 College Sailor of the year, the top U.S. Women's Match Racing Team and the top 3 teams from last year's U.S. Match Racing Championship.

The UBS Challenge Finals mark the first time America's Cup contenders have competed in Newport since 1983 and it is the last opportunity these crews will have to race against each



Challenge

other before the 2003 America's Cup trials. The top three finishers in the UBS Challenge U.S. Championship will compete against the world's top professional sailors, including nine America's Cup Teams.

We invite you to join us for the races July 27 through August 4, at Goat Island in Newport. If you cannot attend, tune into WADK 1540 AM and 99.3 FM.

For additional information about the races visit www.ubs.com/ubschallenge.

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The UBS-sponsored Amer Sports Too team during the Volvo Ocean Race.

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helped give birth to break dancing. Twenty-five years later, the crew celebrates its longevity with three days of events this weekend, including a free outdoor concert and battle on Pier 54 (West Side Highway, at 14th St.) on July 27 starting at 1. The performers include Dilated Peoples, the Arsonists, Non-Phixion, and many others. July 28 starting at 3: The action moves to the Manhattan Center (311 W. 34th St.) for a concert and performance featuring Gang Starr, the Beatnuts, and the Rock Steady Crew. (For more information, visit www.rocksteadycrew.com.)

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—July 27: The sensitive and prolific Arkansan troubadour **Jason Morphew** stops by the Old Office for a solo piano show. July 29-30: **Tuatara,** a side project of REM's guitarist, Peter Buck, and Luna's bassist, Justin Harwood, traffics in world-beat-inspired improvisation.

MAXWELL'S
1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-653-1703)—July 27: **Graham Parker,** who once, along with Elvis Costello and Joe Jackson, comprised the Angry Young Men of New Wave triumvirate. Since those heady days Parker has taken his wry and self-effacing love songs down a less celebrated path than his peers. He is now a singer-songwriter with essentially a cult following, but his seminal album, from 1979, "Squeezing Out Sparks," remains a crucial document of its era.

VILLAGE UNDERGROUND
130 W. 3rd St. (777-7745)—July 26: The **Mountain Goats'** John Darnielle has made his reputation, and a flood of albums, out of a staunch devotion to low-fidelity recording, most often on a department-store boom box. His frantic strumming of an acoustic guitar, combined with a high-pitched delivery of ultra-literate lyrics, can be initially off-putting, but repeated exposure reveals a hidden thread of real tunefulness and introspection.

WARSAW
261 Driggs Ave., Brooklyn (718-387-5252)—July 24: **Me'Shell Ndegéocello** is a wildly versatile and accomplished musician who sings with blood-boiling passion. And she plays a decidedly funky bass guitar with as much authority.



The composer and pianist Lalo Schifrin, at the Blue Note.

JOHN RITTER

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BROWNIES
169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—July 26: The Brooklyn trio known as the **Brought Low** brings back the days of seventies hard rock. With the **Figgs.** This local trio, which achieved a small measure of renown for being Graham Parker's backing band for a few tours, plays a sharp version of three-chord pop punk. **Note:** After thirteen years of cramming four local and national touring acts into each night of music (and there were so many nights: Elliot Smith, Son Volt, Supergrass, Sugar Ray, and Veruca Salt all made their New York débuts here), the club will close on Aug. 3 and then will reopen by the end of the month as a yet-to-be-named bar. "In a place this small it gets really frustrating to put on live music every night. There's just too much to do," co-owner Mike Stuto says. "It just stopped being fun for me."

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—July 25: **Morcheeba** (see Concerts). July 30: **Default** is yet another band that sees fit to co-opt the throaty baritone of Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder for the purposes of implying soulful sincerity.

JAZZ AND *STANDARDS*

BLUE NOTE
131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through July 28: Composing the long-form opus "Gillespiana" for Dizzy Gillespie back in the early sixties bought the Argentinean pianist and composer **Lalo Schifrin** a place in the jazz-history books; composing the 1966 theme song for the television show and subsequent Tom Cruise vehicle "Mission: Impossible" bought Schifrin just about anything he wanted. A number of big jazz guns including the trumpeter **Jon Faddis,** the drummer **Grady Tate,** and the bassist **Ray Drummond** help Schifrin celebrate his seventieth birthday. **Ron Carter** takes over on bass on July 26.

IRIDIUM
1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (582-2121)—Through July 28: **Henry Threadgill's** band Zooid is your basic winds-oud-tuba-guitar-and-drums outfit. Last year's "Up Popped Three Arms" confirmed that this slinky unit is one of the more engaging ensembles that this composer-improviser has yet devised. Mondays belong to the electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JAZZ GALLERY
290 Hudson St., near Spring St. (242-1063)—July 26-27: The **Jay Hoggard** quartet. This resourceful vibraphonist may have spun off in too many stylistic directions, from avant to smooth jazz, over the years to solidify an identity, but his infrequent visits can be a treat.

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—The razzle-dazzle saxophonist **James Carter** has had the Hammond organ on the brain lately (he recently added one to his own band), so it's no surprise that he's seeking out one of the remaining masters of the instrument, **Dr. Lonnie Smith,** who leads his trio here through July 28. These effusive players should make beautiful, rambunctious music together.

JOE'S PUB
425 Lafayette St. (539-8777)—July 26: The **Preservation Hall Jazz Band** will let you feel like a tourist in the Big Easy without leaving downtown. The band may be missing many of its original members, but everyone involved can still channel the primordial urge to stomp.

VILLAGE VANGUARD
178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The most persuasive elements of sixties modal bop can still be found in the work of the veteran pianist **Larry Willis.** As in the case of such similarly rejuvenated peers as Eddie Henderson and Gary Bartz, Willis has retained his original energy while unearthing new depths of meaning in his improvisations. Heard in recent years in Roy Hargrove's band, Willis goes the trio route here through July 28, with the aid of the sublime drummer **Ben Riley.** The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—**"Gauguin in New York Collections: The Lure of the Exotic"** crowds the downstairs of the Robert Lehman wing with a few familiar masterpieces—the Met's "Ia Orana Maria (Hail Mary)," the Albright-Knox's "Manao Tupapau (Spirit of the Dead Watching)"—and many lesser paintings, drawings, sculptures, prints, documents, and oddities (portrait ceramic vessels, a carved walking stick representing a serpent and a wooden shoe). Saluting the Empire State's ravenous hunger for Gauguin, the unchoosy mélange affords a pungent sense of the artist's uneven, seductive mojo. Through Oct. 20. ♦ A magnificent retrospective of the works of Thomas Eakins (1844-1916), perhaps the greatest American artist before Abstract Expressionism, endorses the opinion of the artist's older friend and hero Walt Whitman: "Eakins is not a painter, he is a force." Cannily intermingled paintings, photographs, drawings, sculptures, and miscellaneous artifacts—such as grisly casts taken from parts of dissected cadavers—reveal the artist as a yeoman genius, strenuous in all things. Eakins made aesthetics sweat. It is astonishing how contemporary he feels today. Through Sept. 15. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MOMA QNS)
33rd St. at Queens Blvd., Long Island City. (708-9480)—The museum's new home, until 2005, opens

with a slew of shows perfect for the big, blue renovated factory building near the Fifty-ninth Street Bridge, including the ongoing **"To Be Looked At: Painting and Sculpture from the Collection,"** and **"AUTObodies: Speed, Sport, Transport,"** the museum's car collection. (Open Thursdays through Mondays, 10 to 5, and Friday evenings until 7:45.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—**"Moving Pictures."** When artists post production credits at the entrance to photography exhibitions (Gregory Crewdsen) or première their latest work at the Ziegfeld (Matthew Barney), it's clear that contemporary art has fallen under the spell of cinema. The Guggenheim tracks the seduction from the late sixties to the present in a rigorous and entertaining show of photography, film, and video from its permanent collection. The show opens whimsically in the lobby, with Nam June Paik's "TV Garden," dozens of monitors of varying sizes peeking out from a jungle of potted plants. It continues up the ramp chronologically, from early conceptual work by Acconci, Mendieta, and Nauman to a mini-multiplex: five small theatres screening works by young artists from Pierre Huyghe to Shirin Neshat. Through Jan. 12. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—Joan Mitchell, the long-underrated second-generation Abstract Expressionist who died in 1992 at her home near Monet's Giverny, spoke paint. A sumptuous retrospective confirms her as a major artist. Mitchell's varieties of abstract landscape conjure nature (including the difficult human kind, in ornery and exacerbated moods) out of pigmented stuff with authoritative abandon. Lessons of Pollock, de Kooning, and, yes, Monet are apparent but thoroughly subsumed. As with great Monets, you sometimes can't tell what you are looking at. It's paint, sure, but as a medium of metaphysical mystery. Through Sept. 29. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, and weekends, 11 to 6; Fridays, 1 to 9.)

AMERICAN CRAFT MUSEUM

40 W. 53rd St. (956-3535)—**"Changing Hands: Art Without Reservation"** presents decorative objects—textiles, jewelry, ceramics—by contemporary Native American artists whose work both draws on and challenges traditional forms. (The first of a three-part series, this show focusses on the Southwest.) Highlights include Christine McHorse's gourd-shaped vessel, which rivals any Edward Weston pepper with its lustrous glaze and curving organic form, and Charles Supplee's corn-shaped pendant, with lapis lazuli, coral, and diamonds in lieu of kernels. Some works err on the side of heavy-handed whimsy, as in Diego Romero's bowl, which relocates Manet's "Déjeuner sur l'Herbe" to New Mexico's Frijoles Canyon. Through Sept. 20. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

AMERICAN FOLK ART MUSEUM

45 W. 53rd St. (265-1040)—The museum began its collection in 1962 with the gift of a gate in the shape of an American flag. Forty years later, the same gate opens **"American Anthem,"** a densely packed show of art and objects dating from the Colonial period through the present day. Works range from the utilitarian and conventional (quilts) to the decorative and bizarre (a gold-painted tower of turkey bones). Many objects celebrate American patriotism, as in an intricately carved cabinet topped with a silhouette of the Statue of Liberty from the late nineteenth century. A stark contrast to ideals of freedom is provided by the troublesome inclusion of a three-dimensional "game of chance" from the mid-nineteenth century depicting a slave auction. Through Jan. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 6, and Friday evenings until 8.)

GROLIER CLUB

47 E. 60th St. (838-6690)—**"To Set the Darkness Echoing,"** a survey of Irish literature from 1950 to 2000, takes its title from the last line of "Personal Helicon," a Seamus Heaney poem. Heaney's Nobel Prize medal closes the show that opens with Samuel Beckett's manuscript for "Waiting for Godot." In between, there are plenty of handwritten manuscripts, letters, and related memorabilia from Edna O'Brien, William Trevor, and Brian Friel, among others, giving ample evidence of Irish grace under the pressure of composition. Through July 27. (Open daily, except Sundays, 10 to 5.)

MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Fifth Ave. at 104th St. (534-1672)—Aaron Rose photographed the demolition of the architect Charles McKim's masterpiece, the original Penn Station, from 1963 to 1966 but left the film undeveloped for more than thirty years. ("I couldn't get my heart into making something beautiful out of it," he explains.) Two years ago, when he finally printed the pictures, he accepted fate as a collaborator and chose not to correct the "fogging" of the negatives, with the attendant deterioration of imagery and loss of tonal range. The resulting pictures, bathed in a hazy glow, appear shot through the lens of memory. Through Oct. 6. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

GALLERIES–UPTOWN

Summer-hours warning: many galleries are open Mondays through Fridays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. Others follow the normal Tuesday-to-Saturday schedule. It's best to call ahead.

"SUMMER IN THE GARDEN"

In the early twentieth century, American sculptors turned from public monuments to smaller works intended for private settings. A dozen such garden statues, from Bonnie MacLeary's tabletop fountain of a girl bitten by a crab to Janet Scudder's cherub perched on a globe, form the centerpiece of this show, which also includes paintings and garden furniture. A kitschy pair of French-coiffed standard poodles by Louis Paul Jonas (intended as gatepost sculptures) could be the ancestors of Jeff Koons's puppy. The examples of furniture, reproductions from Mount Vernon and Edith Wharton's estate, are numerous and fetching but make the gallery feel a little like a showroom. Through Aug. 30. (James Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. 535-5767.)

Short List

JOHN GRAHAM

York, 21 E. 65th St. 772-9155. Through July 31.

GALLERIES–CHELSEA

SIOBHAN LIDDELL

The artist specializes in gossamer. In this ethereal installation, she strings orange and yellow thread in undulating arcs across the gallery—visitors must weave under this fragile canopy to get to the delicately messy drawings in the back, which blend the vocabulary of maps (contour isobars, latitude lines, perspectival leaps) with playful and simple presentations using pen, paper, and string. Through Aug. 9. (CRG, 535 W. 22nd St. 229-2766.)

"MONITOR"

This second edition of the gallery's "Monitor" series offers a roomful of glowing boxes, many with headphones attached, allowing entrance to a sealed world where performance antics reign. A pert cheerleader lip-synchs raw gangsta lyrics; a man boogies through a daisy field. Many pieces fixate on television—such as Christian Jankowski's "Telemistica," in which the artist consults TV psychics about his career, and "CNN Concatenated," Omer Fast's satirical splicing of various anchorpeople's voices into a running monologue of angst. One work, by Wolfgang Staehle, stands out for its lack of attitude. Staehle reprises his piece from last September—the wall-sized projection at Postmasters which showed the view of lower Manhattan and caught the fall of the World Trade Center. This smaller work, another live feed from near the Brooklyn Bridge, mutely transmits the transformed skyline. Through Aug. 9. (Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. 741-1111.)

Short List

JOAN MITCHELL

Cheim & Read, 547 W. 25th St. 242-7727. Through Aug. 18.



"Poolstructure 5," by Kathleen Johnson, at Schoormans (see Photography).

GALLERIES–DOWNTOWN

JULIA CHIANG AND RYAN MC GINNESS
In the main room of this "Dream Garden," a small island surges with real and artificial plant life and magical figures, including one silver-painted toy horse with pussy-willow antlers twice its height. On the walls, McGinness's characteristic silhouettes show dark idylls of nature—one Cremaster figure has a C-clamp threatening his pointy ears. The second, smaller gallery shows no such mixed feelings about its utopian theme—its carpet of sod sprouts round, glossy, purple ceramic hearts. Through July 27. (Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 343-7300.)

YONA VERWER
This series of abstract evocations of Judaica by the Dutch-born painter Yona Verwer, who became observant as an adult, recalls the mystical roots of the faith. The show's title, "Urim and Tumim," refers to gemstones engraved with the names of the Twelve Tribes of Israel and consulted by the Jewish high priest in moments of crisis, when, according to rabbinic scholars, the inscribed letters would be illuminated and rearranged to reveal divine guidance. In Verwer's work, the primitive letters denoting the clans loom coolly above bruised, chaotic swells of divine instruction, a wistful reminder of a time when deific counsel could steer the faithful through troubled times. Through Aug. 28. (Russian-American Cultural Center, 55 John St. 744-5168.)

Short List

YOSHITAKA AMANO
Koenig, 249 Centre St. 334-9255.
Through Aug. 3.

PHOTOGRAPHY

EMMET GOWIN
These aerial photographs of military test sites, toxic-waste-treatment facilities, mining operations, and other scarred, gouged, and brutalized stretches of the planet are lyric poems about environmental abuse. Each relentless, bleak, and alarming image sucks us in, and not just because Gowin is a master printer. For example, "Effluent Holding Pond, Chemopetrol Mines, Bohemia" both fascinates with its eerie beauty and unsettles by its mere existence. The effect is insidious: the images of golf-course developments in Kyushu, Japan, soon come to seem as malignant as the photos of Iraqi troop placements or U.S. weapon-disposal trenches in Utah. Through July 28. (Yale University Art Gallery, 1111 Chapel St., New Haven, Conn. 203-432-0600.)

KATHLEEN JOHNSON
This L.A. artist uses disposable underwater cameras to explore the shallows of white-walled pools native to Californian back yards. The large panorama prints focus on the steps that lead into and out of the water and on the shimmery white light in the blue, blue water that slides over the rounded edges of the underwater architecture. Unlike Ed Ruscha's deadpan series on California pools, Johnson's images take you down into the water and leave you there, breathing easy. Through Aug. 9. (Schoormans, 508 W. 26th St. 243-3159.)

"WHERE IS ELVIS?"
Like a giant "Behind the Music" flip book, this show tracks Elvis from breakthrough to breakdown. The King first appears flanked by his parents on a greasy blacktop drive, then running a comb through his trademark bouffant, then heavy and heavily sedated in glittering coveralls, in Lincoln, Nebraska. Recent work includes a mob of naked Elvis dolls posed as if dancing on a balcony, and a large, Warholian closeup of his Nixon-issued Department of Justice ID. None of this will bring him back, but a shot of Jerry Seinfeld in full Vegas regalia is a cheerful reminder that Elvis's star power lives on. Through Aug. 16. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. 334-0010.)

STEPHEN SAVAGE

Short List

"THE BICYCLE"
De Lellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482.
Through Aug. 16.

"BYSTANDER"
Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 627-6000.
Through Aug. 23.

See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, the Guggenheim Museum, and the Museum of the City of New York.

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S
July 30 at 6: In coördination with Stack's, the house offers the only 1933 double eagle still in existence, based on the supernal 1907 design by Augustus Saint-Gaudens and considered to be the most valuable coin in the world. The pre-sale estimate is approximately five million dollars. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S
July 24 at 10 A.M. and 2: The house offers the Herb Bridges collection of "Gone with the Wind" memorabilia. ♦ July 30 at 10 A.M.: Maritime art. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 636-2000.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC
OPERA

LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL:
"THE NIGHT BANQUET"
Guo Wenjing's treatment of "The Night Revels of Han Xizai," an erotic scroll painting from the tenth century, is the second of two new Chinese chamber operas based on ancient themes that the festival is presenting this summer. Influenced as much by Bartók and Shostakovich as by traditional Chinese opera, the piece examines the subjects of sex and power in the context of an increasingly open and individualistic society; the American première production, directed by Chen Shi-Zheng, is performed by Ensemble Modern with a cast of Chinese singers. In Mandarin, with English supertitles. (LaGuardia Concert Hall, Amsterdam Ave. at 65th St. 721-6500. July 24-27 at 8.)

GLIMMERGLASS OPERA
July 25 at 8 and July 30 at 2: Haydn's **"Orlando Paladino,"** with Lisa Saffer, Brenda Patterson, Paul Austin Kelly, and Troy Cook; Guido Johannes Rumstadt conducts. In English. ♦ July 26 at 8: Robin Guarino's production of **"Pagliacci"** and **"Cavalleria Rusticana"** reverses the usual order of the two verismo masterpieces, and attempts, somewhat shakily, to integrate them by turning the first opera's Tonio into a Pirandellian overseer. The cast of "Pagliacci," which features Marie Plette, John Mac Master, and Ned Barth, is adequate; the leading singers in "Cavalleria," Eugenie Grunewald, Keith Ikaia-Purdy, and Brian Montgomery, are exceptional. The conductor is Stewart Robertson. ♦ July 27 at 8 and July 29 at 2: Tazewell Thompson directs a new production of Poulenc's **"Dialogues of the Carmelites,"** with Maria Kanyova, Joyce Castle, Robynne Redmon, Sarah Coburn, Anne Evans, and Jason Collins; Robertson. ♦ July 28 at 2: Mark Adamo's **"Little Women,"** with Jennifer Dudley, Christina Bouras, Caroline Worra, Sandra Piques Eddy, and Chad Freeburg; John DeMain. (Cooperstown, N.Y. 607-547-2255.)

CONCERTS IN TOWN

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
CONCERTS IN THE PARKS
The British conductor Bramwell Tovey begins the orchestra's welcome round of free summer concerts with a program that ranges through Dvořák, Bruch (the "Scottish Fantasy," with the violinist Leonidas Kavakos), and Liszt (the heaven-storming tone

BOOK CURRENTS

Sights and Sounds



"The '45' is here to stay, and let there be no doubt about it!" These were the words of Frank Folsom, the president of RCA Victor, who unveiled the revolutionary seven-inch, forty-five-r.p.m. record in 1949. Folsom may have been guilty of wishful thinking (the introduction of the compact disk in the nineteen-eighties spelled doom for the 45), but his statement remains fairly accurate: vintage singles, made of "indestructible" vinyl, remain the stuff of collectors' avid nostalgia, spurred on as much by the records' eye-catching packaging as by the crackly sounds retained in their microgrooves. The art of the 45—which included contributions from Pablo Picasso—is explored in the forthcoming **45 RPM** (Princeton Architectural Press), a mammoth tribute to the orphaned format edited by Spencer Drate, himself a graphic designer for the music industry.

The consumer-friendly packaging of pop music predates records, as documented in **AMERICAN LIFE IN OUR PIANO BENCHES** (Wisconsin), by Jean M. Bonin. This tidy collection of sheet-music art includes everything from the 1882 anti-vermin anthem "Rough on Rats" to the megahit of 1899, "Maple Leaf Rag," by Scott Joplin.

Rock archivist Michael Ochs owns about a hundred thousand long-playing records. A sliver of his collection is reproduced in **1000 RECORD COVERS** (Taschen), a brick-like tome that traces the colorful evolution of the twelve-inch format introduced by Columbia in 1948. From early rock-and-roll covers that actually depicted rocks and kaiser rolls to Roger Dean's "Hobbit"-inspired fantasias to a profusion of "Abbey Road" spoofs (including one featuring the Red Hot Chili Peppers clad only in tube socks), "1000 Record Covers" is a tribute to the days when looking at a record was as exciting as listening to it.

—Mark Rozzo

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poem "Les Préludes"), and cools off at the close with Northern music by Grieg and Sibelius ("Finlandia"). (Great Lawn, Central Park. July 24. ♦ Van Cortlandt Park, the Bronx. July 25. ♦ Miller Field, Gateway National Recreation Area, Staten Island. July 26. ♦ Heckscher State Park, East Islip, Long Island. July 27. ♦ PNC Bank Arts Center, Holmdel, N.J. July 29.) ♦ Alisa Weilerstein, a young and electrifying American cellist, makes her Philharmonic début in the first of three concerts. She plays Saint-Saëns's Cello Concerto No. 1 on a program that also includes music by Rossini and Rachmaninoff (the "Symphonic Dances"). Asher Fisch conducts. (Cunningham Park, Queens. July 30.) (All performances begin at 8, and all except the New Jersey concert conclude with a fireworks show. No tickets necessary. For more information, call 875-5709.)

BARGEMUSIC

July 25-26 at 7:30: The violinists Todd Phillips and Carmit Zori, the violist Robert Rinehart, and the cellist Julia Lichten perform works by Haydn, Webern ("Slow Movement," a late-Romantic fragment), and Smetana (the Quartet in E Minor, "From My Life"). ♦ July 27 at 7:30 and July 28 at 4: String quintets by Mozart (the Quintet in C Major, K. 515) and Dvořák, performed by Zori, Rinehart, the violinist Ani Kavafian, and others. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-2083.)

LINCOLN CENTER FESTIVAL: ENSEMBLE MODERN

An eclectic program from the amazingly virtuosic (and endlessly adaptable) Frankfurt ensemble, perhaps the best contemporary-music group in the world. They perform music by Guo Wenjing, Helmut Lachenmann, and Elliott Carter (the "Triple Duo"), along with "Tessalation Row," a string quartet from the downtown jazz-punk brutalist Elliott Sharp. (LaGuardia Theatre, Amsterdam Ave. at 65th St. 721-6500. July 28 at 7.)

MOSTLY MOZART FESTIVAL

July 29 at 8: The thirty-sixth annual season begins with a free outdoor concert in Damrosch Park. Edo de Waart conducts the festival orchestra in two Mozart favorites, the "Marriage of Figaro" Overture and the "Jupiter" Symphony; Lang Lang, whose playing is a highly combustible mixture of a joyful and incisive musicality and a stupendous technique, is the guest for a performance of Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No. 1 in G Minor. (No tickets necessary. There is no rain date for this concert.) ♦ July 30-31 at 8: De Waart and Lang move the show inside, repeating the Mozart and Mendelssohn works and welcoming another guest, Susan Graham, who sings arias by Handel and Gluck. (Avery Fisher Hall. 721-6500.)

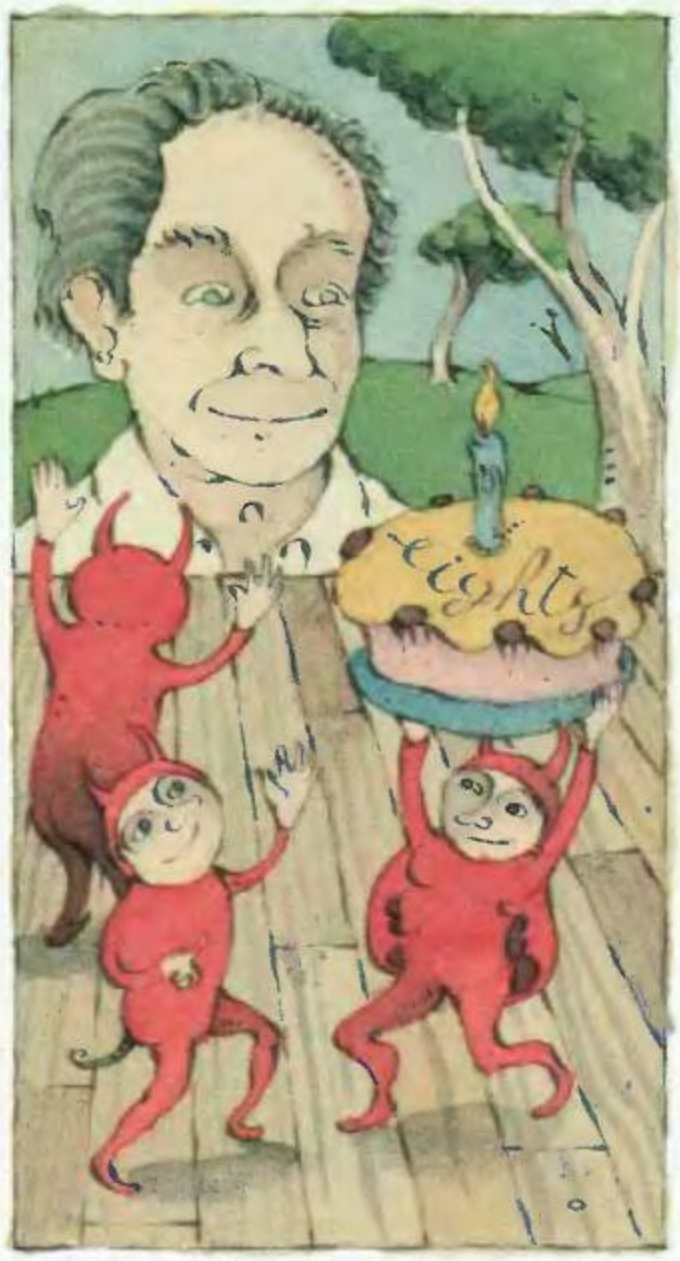
CONCERTS OUT OF TOWN

NEWPORT MUSIC FESTIVAL

This busiest of Northeastern festivals enters its final week, presenting a whirl of concerts that take place at the yachting town's legendary "cottages." Two highlights are listed below. July 24 at 9: The festival début of the Georgian pianist Alexander Korsantia in a gala concert of sonatas by Haydn and Prokofiev and Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition." ♦ July 26 at 5:30: One of the festival's final "Chopiniads" offers a bevy of transcriptions of the composer's solo piano works (by Kreisler, Cassadó, and others) for a range of instrumental solos and combinations. The players include the pianist Pedja Mužijević, the violinists Geoff Nuttall and Barry Shiffman, and the Quartetto di Fiesole, who help out in Chopin's own chamber transcription of the Piano Concerto No. 2. (Newport, R.I. 401-849-0700. Through July 28.)

CARAMOOR FESTIVAL

July 25 at 4:30: Will Crutchfield directs a group of young singers in an intimate evening of scenes and arias by Vivaldi, Scarlatti, Pergolesi, and other composers of the Italian Baroque. ♦ July 26 at 6:30: A relaxed evening of music new and old. As part of Caramoor's long-standing commissioning project, "A String Quartet Library for the 21st Century," the Pacifica Quartet performs the world première of Marta Ptaszynska's "Mosaics," preceded by one of



SERGIO RUZZIER

In celebration of Lukas Foss's eightieth birthday, the Tanglewood Music Center presents his opera "Griffelkin" (featuring the young musicians of Boston Children's Opera) on July 25.

Beethoven's Op. 18 Quartets. The new work is repeated, after a dinner break; then Ursula Oppens joins the group for Dvořák's Piano Quintet. ♦ July 27 at 8:30: David Robertson leads the Orchestra of St. Luke's in a program of Steve Reich (Eight Lines), Mozart (the Piano Concerto No. 17 in G Major, with Orli Shaham), and Beethoven (the Symphony No. 8). ♦ July 28 at 4:30: The pianist Richard Goode ends the weekend with a recital, playing four Debussy preludes along with sonatas by Mozart, Schubert, and Beethoven (No. 26, "Les Adieux"). (Katonah, N.Y. 914-232-1252.)

TANGLEWOOD

July 25 at 8:30: When Lukas Foss was eight, his mother told him the story of "Griffelkin," a "devil child" who for a birthday present gets twenty-four hours to wreak mischief in the world. When he arrives in New York City, he falls in love with the blue sky and a little girl and doesn't want to go back. Years later he made it into a children's opera for NBC, which Tanglewood will present in concert to close this year's Festival of Contemporary Music. The cast includes the soprano Kendra Colton, the young forces of Boston Children's Opera, the Back Bay Chorale, and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, conducted by Gil Rose. (For information on the festival's other concerts, call 413-637-5230.) ♦ July 26 at 8:30: Susan Graham, singing Berlioz's "Les Nuits d'Été," is the guest for the first of three concerts with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Hans Graf. Music by Weber and Tchaikovsky (the Fifth Symphony) completes the program. ♦ July 27 at 8:30: Jeffrey Tate conducts the orchestra in a concert of Brahms (the Piano Concerto No. 2, with André Watts), Ravel, and Elgar ("Cockaigne"). ♦ July 28 at 2:30: Graf returns to the podium for an all-Mozart program including the Piano Concerto No. 20 in D Minor (with Frank Braley) and the Requiem (featuring the singers Heidi Grant Murphy, Paula Rasmussen, John Mark Ainsley, and Jonathan Lemalu, with the Tanglewood Festival Chorus). ♦ July 30 at 8:30: "Tanglewood on

Parade," a program of Ravel, John Williams (music from the movie "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone"), and, of course, Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture." Graf and Williams conduct the B.S.O., the Boston Pops, and the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra. (Lenox, Mass. 888-266-1200.)

MUSIC FESTIVAL OF THE HAMPTONS

The East End series enters its final weekend. July 26 at 8: A recital by the mezzo-soprano Emily Golden, offering music by Schubert, Bolcom, Poulenc, and Saint-Saëns. ♦ July 28 at 5: The festival presents a mini jazz concert by the pianist Bill Charlap and his trio, with a cocktail reception following at 6:30. ♦ July 28 at 7:30: A closing recital by the pianist J. Y. Song, who plays music by Chopin and Foss, and, with the violinist Eugene Drucker and the cellist Rafael Jezierski, Beethoven's "Archduke" Trio. (Snake Hollow Rd., Bridgehampton, N.Y. 800-644-4418.)

ASTON MAGNA FESTIVAL

The early-music group presents an evening of Monteverdi madrigals on the themes of love and war, along with instrumental music by Rossi and Manni. (Olin Hall, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. 845-758-7425. July 26 at 8.)

MOHAWK TRAIL CONCERTS

William Bolcom and Joan Morris, American music's perennially madcap piano-and-vocal duo, present "These Foolish Things: A Hundred Years of Cabaret," in which they perform standards by Cole Porter, Kurt Weill, Lieber and Stoller, and others. (Federated Church, Charlemont, Mass. 888-682-6873. July 26-27 at 8.)

NORFOLK CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

July 26 at 8: The Yale Opera presents an evening of Spanish-themed songs and arias by Schumann and Bizet. ♦ July 27 at 8: The clarinettist David Krakauer concertizes with his band, Klezmer Madness! (Routes 44 and 272, Norfolk, Conn. 860-542-3000.)

MARLBORO FESTIVAL

The venerable festival continues its weekend concerts, performed by some of the world's leading artists and their very talented students. Programs are announced one week in advance on the festival's Web site, www.marlboromusic.org. (Marlboro, Vt. 802-254-2394. July 27 at 8:30 and July 28 at 2:30.) ♦ **Note:** In a special, added concert, the festival presents its annual evening of Bach cantatas, directed by Blanche Moyse, on July 26 at 8:30.

BANG ON A CAN SUMMER INSTITUTE

For its final concert, the Bang on a Can All-Stars, with faculty and student guests, perform a six-hour "marathon" featuring works by Louis Andriessen, Todd Reynolds (the captivating "Still Life with Mic"), Martin Bresnick, Julia Wolfe, Steve Reich, and many more. (Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, 87 Marshall St., North Adams, Mass. 413-662-2111. July 27 at 4.)

PIANOSUMMER: VLADIMIR FELTSMAN

The commanding Russian-American pianist, highlighting his own festival, plays music by Bach and Chopin (the Four Ballades). (McKenna Theatre, State University of New York at New Paltz. 845-257-3904. July 27 at 8.)

MAVERICK CONCERTS

July 27 at 8: Strata, a trio of violin, clarinet, and piano, offers music by Poulenc, Mozart (the "Kegelstatt" Trio), Brahms, and the Philadelphia composer Robert Maggio. ♦ July 28 at 3: The festival lives up to its reputation for innovative programming, hosting a concert by the violinist Charles Libove and the pianist Nina Lugovoy playing exotica by Medtner ("Three Nocturnes") and Pizzetti ("Tre Canti") along with sonatas by Debussy and Grieg. (Woodstock, N.Y. 845-679-8217.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

"ELEVATED CITY: A HISTORY OF THE ELS IN NEW YORK"

The Transit Museum's latest satellite exhibit, which is tucked away in its Gallery Annex behind the West Staircase in Grand Central Terminal, tells the story of the city's—and the country's—first rapid-transit system. Photographs, maps, models, and a few artifacts (including a fragment of a support column) recall the era between the trains' first appearance in Manhattan, back in the late eighteen-sixties, through their demise in the middle of the last century, after the widespread construction of the subways. One of the small show's more charming entries is a brief film from 1950 about the Third Avenue line. Shot shortly before its demolition, it takes the viewer on a trip back through time from the Bronx to South Ferry. (Mondays through Fridays from 8 to 8 and Saturdays and Sundays from 10 to 6. Through Nov. 6. For more information, call 878-0106.)

READINGS

July 24 at 7: The actor, director, and writer Ethan Hawke, whose latest book is the novel "Ash Wednesday," joins Jonathan Safran Foer, whose first novel is the acclaimed "Everything Is Illuminated," for a free alfresco reading. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. 360-2777.) ♦ July 24 at 7: William F. Buckley, Jr., reads from his latest novel, "Nuremberg: The Reckoning." (Barnes & Noble, 240 E. 86th St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ July 24 at 8: Mark Zwonitzer and Charles Hirshberg offer passages from their biography of the pioneering folk musicians in the Carter family, "Will You Miss Me When I'm Gone?" (Rocky Sullivan's, 129 Lexington Ave., between 28th and 29th Sts. No tickets necessary.)

TALK

July 25 at 7:30: Ethan Nadelmann, the executive director of the Drug Policy Alliance advocacy group, takes the pro-decriminalization position in a debate with Peter Provet, the president of the substance-abuse agency Odyssey House, about the legalization of marijuana. (Makor, 35 W. 67th St. 601-1000.)

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MOVIES
OPENING

AUSTIN POWERS IN GOLDMEMBER
The swinging international man of mystery (Mike Myers) returns for his third film, directed by Jay Roach. With Michael Caine, Beyoncé Knowles, and Seth Green. Opening July 26.

THE COUNTRY BEARS
A Disney movie in which a bear cub (voice by Haley Joel Osment) runs away from his adopted human family and helps reunite a once famous country-music band. Opening July 26.

HAPPY TIMES
Zhang Yimou ("The Road Home") directed this drama about a middle-aged bachelor and the blind young woman he employs at his "hotel"—a refurbished bus for couples in search of privacy. In Mandarin. Opening July 26.

I AM TRYING TO BREAK YOUR HEART
A black-and-white documentary about the band Wilco and the recording of their fourth album, "Yankee Hotel Foxtrot." Directed by Sam Jones. Opening July 26. (Cinema Village.)

THE KID STAYS IN THE PICTURE
Brett Morgen and Nanette Burstein directed this documentary portrait of the Hollywood producer Robert Evans. Opening July 26. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

LAN YU
Set during the Tiananmen Square uprising, Stanley Kwan's drama tells the story of a destructive affair between a closeted businessman and an architecture student. In Mandarin. Opening July 26. (Quad Cinema.)

WHO IS CLETIS TOUT?
A mistaken-identity comedy in which Christian Slater and Richard Dreyfuss play two thieves wanted by the Mob. Written and directed by Chris Ver Wiel. Opening July 26.

FILM NOTES

THE BOURNE IDENTITY
In this latest iteration of the international thriller, two young people—an amnesiac American who possesses mysterious violent skills (Matt Damon), and a beautiful European vagabond with a taste for adventure (Franka Potente)—race across Europe to escape powerful forces eager to kill them both. Adapted by Tony Gilroy and William Blake Herron from a 1980 novel by Robert Ludlum, the picture has tons of up-to-date surveillance equipment, and it features an unfamiliar Filipino martial art called *kali,* a kind of stuttered karate (block, block, slash, kick). But the movie is still a relic of the bipolar Cold War, and suffers from a fatal lack of purpose. Great actors like Brian Cox and Clive Owen are wasted in tiny roles, and Julia Stiles, as an operative lucky enough to be assigned to Paris, is stuck in a closed room wearing headphones all the time. Directed by Doug Liman, who used to make nifty little movies like "Swingers" and "Go."—*David Denby* (Reviewed in our issue of 6/17 & 24/02.) (Battery Park 16, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 34th Street Theatre, and Village East Cinemas.)

THE FAST RUNNER (ATANARJUAT)
A three-hour marathon of ice, snow, and raw seal meat. This Inuit epic is quite a trek, but many of the visual sequences—the Arctic in summer and winter—are sublime and unprecedented. A ten-minute episode showing the hero, Atanarjuat, running across a frozen sea has been hailed, justifiably, as a masterstroke, but there are many other discoveries, like sunshine filtering through the cracks of an igloo and the gray-on-gray polar horizon. Directed by the Inuit filmmaker Zacharias Kunuk, the movie's straight-arrow tale of murder and revenge carries it through the more tedious "Nanook of the North" moments. But even these digressions—for example, scenes that show the way the Inuit greet each other, carry themselves, and cut their food—stay with you. At the extreme



north, the basic motions of life somehow seem startling and fresh. In Inuktitut.—*Michael Agger* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

I AM CURIOUS (YELLOW)
In her search for political commitment, the angry young heroine, Lena Nyman, goes around as an inquiring reporter questioning people about nonviolence, the labor movement, socialism, and so on. The picture improves when sex and politics mix; there are some free—and very funny—sequences of simulated copulation. The film caused a great stir in 1967 because the U.S. Customs Office seized the first print that the distributor (Grove Press) imported; by the time the ban was lifted, people expected something really sizzling. Written and directed by Vilgot Sjöman, who also appears as the director. In Swedish.—*Pauline Kael* (Moving Image; July 27.)

THE ICEMAN COMETH
Eugene O'Neill's great, heavy, simplistic, mechanical, beautiful play has been given a straightforward, faithful production in handsome, dark-toned color. A filmed play like this one (originally released in 1973) doesn't offer the sensual excitement that movies can offer, but you don't go to it for that; you go to it for O'Neill's crude, prosaic virtuosity, which is also pure American poetry, and for the kind of cast that rarely gathers for a stage production. The play is essentially an argument between Larry, an aging anarchist (Robert Ryan), and Hickey (Lee Marvin); Larry speaks for pity and the necessity of illusions, Hickey for the curative power of truth. Ryan has O'Neill's "tragic handsomeness" and the broken-man jowls, and at the end, when Larry is permanently "iced"—that is, stripped of illusion—we can see that this is the author's fantasy of himself: he alone is above the illusions that others fall back on. Yes, it's sophomoric to see yourself as the one who is doomed to live without illusions, yet what O'Neill does with this conception is masterly. And Ryan (who died shortly after) got right to the boozy, gnarled soul of the play.—*P.K.* (Walter Reade Theatre; July 27-28.)

K-19: THE WIDOWMAKER
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Astor Plaza, Battery Park 16, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, 19th Street East 6, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

LANGRISHE, GO DOWN
In this adroit 1978 British telefilm, set in the nineteen-thirties, Judi Dench plays one of three sisters living in a decaying ancestral Anglo-Irish estate located outside of Dublin. Jeremy Irons is the perennial student who rents a cottage on its grounds and half suavely, half clumsily seduces her. Under David Jones's direction, both actors are brilliant in a tale that moves from erotic awakening to Strindbergian torment. Dench has never been more sensual—her character likes to take "air baths," which involve running naked through the grass at night. Irons delivers an original portrait of an intellectual narcissist, someone able to make his connoisseurship pass for sensitivity and to turn a sulk over unrealized ambition into an aria of angst. Harold Pinter adapted Aidan Higgins's novel.—*Michael Sragow* (Film Forum.)

LAST DANCE
An inside view, from concept to performance, of a recent collaboration between Maurice Sendak and Pilobolus on a haunting dance-theatre piece entitled "A Selection," which honors the children of the Holocaust. The filmmaker Mirra Bank documents the rigorous, sometimes contentious atmosphere surrounding the work's development, but the movie is at its best when it quiets down and catches the dancers in motion.—*Bruce Diones* (Quad Cinema.)

LOVELY & AMAZING
A comedy about self-dissatisfaction, featuring a mother and three daughters in Los Angeles. Jane Marks (Brenda Blethyn), the mom, undergoes liposuction and flirts with her doctor; Michelle (Catherine Keener), stuck in a loveless marriage, can't sell the little chair sculptures that she makes; Elizabeth (Emily Mortimer), an actress, thinks that she's ugly and encourages her bedmate, a narcissistic actor (Dermot Mulroney), to judge her naked body, limb by limb; Annie (Raven Goodwin), an African-American girl adopted by Jane, worries over her hair. The writer-director Nicole Holofcener has a gentle touch, though she doesn't pull her themes together as much as one would like. The movie is intelligent and funny but a little unfocussed. With James LeGros and, as Michelle's eager teen lover, Jake Gyllenhaal.—*D.D.* (Angelika Film Center, BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 2, and Empire 25.)

MEN IN BLACK II
Except for a few funny moments, pretty much a bore. The director Barry Sonnenfeld must have believed that the best part of the original was not its hip, mordant wit but the conventionally junky sequence at the end in which Will Smith got smacked around a lot and doused in slime. "MIIB" is mostly dull physical comedy and slapstick special effects, and it seems to have been made for unusually literal-minded children. With Tommy Lee Jones and Lara Flynn Boyle as Serleena, an evil Kylothian monster with many long tongues.—*D.D.* (7/8/02) (Battery Park 16, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

METROPOLIS
Fritz Lang's 1927 pop-visionary epic has always been, from sequence to sequence, a milestone of precision craftsmanship on a gargantuan scale. No director has ever raised so many shivers from choreographing geometric hordes of extras—they move like organic machines or bristling anacondas and leviathans. The inclusion, in the current print, of forty minutes' worth of footage never before seen in America brings some sense to the motivation of Rotwang (Rudolf Klein-Rogge), the unhinged inventor who is creating a mechanical woman. We learn that Rotwang and the industrialist-tyrant Joh Fredersen (Alfred Abel) once vied for the hand of the same beauty—she married the tycoon and died while giving birth to his son. When Fredersen orders him to give his automaton the face of a labor prophetess named Maria (Brigitte Helm) instead of the woman they both loved, Rotwang takes vengeance by commanding his robot creation to corrupt the ruling class and foment apocalypse. Lost scenes rendered here only with titles lay out Joh Fredersen's search for his rebellious boy, who has become a member of Maria's Christian workers' movement—and her lover. With this subplot, the picture operates as a proto-noir suspense film, as well as a mad-scientist extravaganza and an all-out disaster flick.—*M.S.* (Film Forum; July 24-30.)

MINORITY REPORT
A frantic return to form for Steven Spielberg, whose pulse seems to have quickened after the sluggish musings of "A.I." We are still stuck in the future, but it comes with a twist from the mazelike mind of Philip K. Dick. Tom Cruise plays John Anderton, a bright spark in the shadowy field of Precrime. With a little help from three oracles known as the Pre-Cognitives, he is able to predict, and therefore to prevent, approaching murders. The homicide rate has plunged, although the monitoring official from the Justice Department (Colin Farrell) looks worried about the ethics of the program. Where "A.I." was a wandering quest, this is a straightforward chase, as Anderton finds himself accused and hunted down. Spielberg is able to flex those muscles—his ridiculous powers of suspense—that threw him so hard into the movie business in the first place. Like "Jaws," the new film is none too serious, though it is forever touching on serious things; the world it unveils may look dark, yet the plot accelerates with the lightness of comedy. With a great supporting cast, including Lois Smith, Neal

McDonough, and, most startling of all, Samantha Morton as a Pre-Cog.—*Anthony Lane* (7/1/02) (Battery Park 16, Beekman, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, Empire 25, Metro Twin, Murray Hill Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Union Square.)

MR. DEEDS

It's billed as an homage to the 1936 Capra classic, but the only tradition being watered down is the Adam Sandler movie. He's one of the more gifted wisecrackers around, but most of his routines—the deadpan sincerity, the over-the-top regular guyness, the non-actors he lines up for odd cameos—

THE PIANO TEACHER

Michael Haneke's calmly lucid masterpiece is about a seemingly unmanageable subject: a sadomasochistic piano teacher, Professor Erika Kohut (Isabelle Huppert), who maintains a sternly proper façade at the Vienna Conservatory while tormenting and playing dirty tricks on her talented students. Erika tries to control the insolently charming and handsome young piano student (Benoît Magimel) who wants to be her lover. She's a remarkable dramatic creation—an appalling but plausible human being brought to life by one of the world's bravest actresses. This is a genuinely



MICHAEL KUPPERMAN

DREAM TEAM *A seven-week retrospective of the films of Akira Kurosawa and his favorite actor, Toshiro Mifune, begins this week at Film Forum.*

seem stale and second rate in this, his seventh starring vehicle. The over-all experience is like listening to a decent pop song you've heard too many times. The chief pleasure is John Turturro, who steals the movie as a "sneaky, sneaky" butler with a foot fetish.—*M.A.* (Battery Park 16, 59th Street East Cinema, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.)

MY WIFE IS AN ACTRESS

The lovely Charlotte Gainsbourg stars with her husband, Yvan Attal, in this French comedy—a slow burn about the art and illusion of moviemaking. Gainsbourg plays an adored actress, a sexy siren, and Attal plays her husband, a sportswriter who is driven to comically neurotic and jealous heights by her work on the screen. The screwball set-up is played very gracefully—Gainsbourg and Attal are so appealing together that their lines dance around each other rather than provide pratfalls. Yet a beguiling emotional honesty in the screenplay punches the film up; it's an astute romantic farce. In French.—*B.D.* (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

shocking movie (one scene of self-mutilation is hard to take), but it's supremely intelligent, too, and there isn't a trace of sensationalism. In French.—*D.D.* (4/1/02) (Cinema Village and Thalia Theatre; July 27-30.)

THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE

Entertaining, though overlong. The director, Tay Garnett, knew almost enough tricks to sustain this glossily bowdlerized 1946 version of the James M. Cain novel, and he used Lana Turner maybe better than any other director did. Cain's women are, typically, calculating, hot little animals, and his men doom-ridden victims. Here, Turner's Cora—infantile in a bored, helpless, pre-moral way—is dressed in impeccable white, as if to conceal her sweaty passions and murderous impulses; John Garfield plays the drifter who becomes her lover. Cora's harmless husband (Cecil Kellaway) seems a nuisance to have around, so they decide to finish him off while he's relaxing in the bathtub.—*P.K.* (Bryant Park; July 29.)

READ MY LIPS

A half-deaf but observant secretary (Emmanuelle Devos), who reads people's lips and attitudes and feels like a loser, and a mangy ex-con (Vincent Cassel), with a blank look in his eyes and an endless capacity for trouble, make a very odd couple. But the writer-director Jacques Audiard, working close to his actors with a camera devoted to glances, reactions, and tiny gestures, gets us to believe that these two hard cases are destined for each other. The woman requires some waking up, a little danger or excitement, if she is not to expire from boredom and depression; the man needs some sense talked into him if he is not to be sent straight back to prison. They form an alliance and renew themselves by ripping off unsavory characters. The movie turns into a breathless and rather audacious study in the sexiness of a nonsexual relationship. In French.—*D.D.* (7/15/02) (Angelika Film Center and Paris.)

REIGN OF FIRE

Fire-breathing dragons menace postapocalyptic society in the director Rob Bowman's fantasy-adventure romp. The film stars a buff-beyond-belief Matthew McConaughey and the hunky Christian Bale, who participate in some spectacular lizard-slaying stunts. The sets and costumes recall the "Road Warrior" series, and Bowman shamelessly encourages a scenery-chewing hysteria in his leads. Mesmerizing junk.—*B.D.* (Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Sutton 1 and 2, 34th Street Theatre, and Village East Cinemas.)

ROAD TO PERDITION

A solemnly beautiful art concept—which is not quite the same thing as a great movie. Tom Hanks plays a Depression-era mob assassin, a family man with a small moustache and a stiff walk. The talented English director Sam Mendes ("American Beauty"), along with his collaborators, the cinematographer Conrad L. Hall and the veteran costume designer Albert Wolsky, draw their visual ideas and moods from old movies and comic books, distilling the memory of crime fiction—rather than the memory of crime—into imagery that could not be more iconic. Hanks moves through a stylized world of fedoras, long dark coats, and thick-woven suits; there's also lots of rain coming straight down the way it did in noir movies of the forties and fifties. Visually, the picture is all of a piece, but it's a self-conscious piece of work—all dark-toned academic classicism. With Paul Newman as the head of a crime family in a small Illinois city, Stanley Tucci as Al Capone's right-hand man, and Jude Law, made over into a ferrety grotesque, as a photographer of corpses who kills people on the side.—*D.D.* (7/15/02) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Battery Park 16, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, 34th Street Theatre, and Village Theatre VII.)

SUNSHINE STATE

The writer-director John Sayles will never be a natural filmmaker: he doesn't love and trust the camera enough. But this leisurely, ruminative movie about real-estate mischief and transiency in Florida has some of the most witty and large-spirited writing he's ever done for the movies and some of the best acting he's ever coaxed out of his performers. The movie chronicles the attempt of developers to take over a couple of decrepit beach towns north of Jacksonville and the ambiguous response of the locals—some fighting, some selling out. Edie Falco has the best role of her career as Marly, one of those Americans who possess more intelligence than they can use in an unsatisfactory job. Marly looks for men and makes bitter jokes that her listeners don't always understand. Angela Bassett is a failed actress who returns to the black middle-class beach town she left when she became pregnant at fifteen. The good talk swirls around these two, and the talkers include Alan King, Ralph Waite, Jane Alexander, Bill Cobbs, Mary Alice, Timothy Hutton, and Mary Steenburgen. It's a shrugging, life-goes-on movie about a state in which people pull things up by the roots, including themselves, and move forward.—*D.D.* (7/8/02) (BAM Rose Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and Union Square.)

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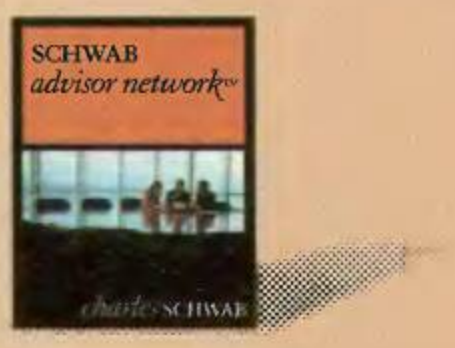
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TADPOLE
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Sunshine Cinema.)

THRONE OF BLOOD
Akira Kurosawa's 1957 version of Macbeth is a virtuoso exercise, as stylized and formalist in its way as Eisenstein's "Ivan the Terrible" movies, though not as ponderous or as inexplicably strange. This is like a demonstration of the uses of violence, décor, pageantry, and costuming, and it's almost a textbook in the techniques for making a movie move. Besides that, it has the great Isuzu Yamada washing her bloody hands, and West or East, there may never be a more chilling Lady Macbeth. Kurosawa is at his playful best when Birnam Wood advances on the castle. The ending, with Toshiro Mifune's Macbeth



At Moving Image, the films of the sexual revolution, including "I Am Curious (Yellow)."

stuck full of arrows, like a porcupine-quill cushion, suggests the wildest Kabuki tradition. (Eisenstein was also fascinated by Kabuki.) The action can seem like an orgy of masculine delight in warfare. The film's greatness is in Kurosawa's glorious bad taste; he flings mad, absurd images onto the screen. In Japanese.—*P.K.* (Film Forum; July 26-29.)

ALSO PLAYING

EIGHT LEGGED FREAKS
Battery Park 16, Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Metro Twin, Orpheum VII, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.

LATE MARRIAGE (5/27/02)
Cinema Village and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

ME WITHOUT YOU
Angelika Film Center, Cinema 1, and Empire 25.

SEX AND LUCÍA
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

SONGS FROM THE SECOND FLOOR
Quad Cinema.

STUART LITTLE 2
Battery Park 16, Chelsea Cinemas, East 85th Street, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 64th and 2nd, 34th Street Theatre, and Union Square.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn.
Battery Park 16, West St. at Vesey St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinemas 1, 2, and 3, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, on 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Twin, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Pioneer, 155 E. 3rd St. (254-3300).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Sunshine Cinema, 139-143 E. Houston St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
34th Street Theatre, 312 W. 34th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—Through Sept. 8: "Carnal Knowledge: The Sexual Revolution on Film, 1967-1972." July 27 at 2: "I Am Curious (Yellow)" (†). ♦ July 27 at 4:15: "Midnight Cowboy" (1969, John Schlesinger). ♦ July 28 at 2: "Carnal Knowledge" (1971, Mike Nichols). ♦ July 28 at 4:30: "Coming Apart" (1969, Milton Moses Ginsberg). ♦ Repertory nights. July 27-28 at 6:30: "Tristana" (1970, Luis Buñuel; in Spanish).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—Through July 28: "Under My Skin: The Films of David Cronenberg." July 24 at 7, July 27 at 2, and July 28 at 7: "Dead Ringers" (1988). ♦ July 24 at 9:30: Two episodes of the television show "Scales of Justice" (1990). ♦ July 25 at 7, July 26 at midnight, and July 27 at 7: "Naked Lunch" (1991). ♦ July 25 at 9:30, July 27 at 4:30, and July 28 at 2: "M. Butterfly" (1993). ♦ July 26 at 7, July 27 at midnight, and July 28 at 9:30: "Crash" (1996). ♦ July 26 at 9:30, July 27 at 9:30, and July 28 at 4:30: "eXistenZ" (1999).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-777-3456)—A Jean Grémillon retrospective. All films are in French. July 24 at 6:50 and 9:30 and July 25 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Lumière d'Été" (1943). ♦ July 26 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "Pattes Blanches" (1949). ♦ July 27-28 at 2, 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "The Strange Mr. Victor" (1938). ♦ July 29-30 at 4:30, 6:50, and 9:10: "A Woman's Love" (1953).

BROOKLYN BRIDGE FILM SERIES
Empire-Fulton Ferry State Park (718-802-0603)—Free outdoor movies. July 25 at 8:45: "The Way We Were" (1973, Sydney Pollack).

BRYANT PARK
Sixth Ave. at 42nd St. (512-5700)—Free outdoor movies, starting at dusk. July 29: "The Postman Always Rings Twice" (†).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—July 24-30 at 1, 3:15, 5:35, 8, and 10:15: A restored print of Fritz Lang's "Metropolis" (†). ♦ Through Sept. 12: "Kurosawa & Mifune," a retrospective of the collaborative works of the director Akira Kurosawa and the actor Toshiro Mifune. All films are new prints and in Japanese. July 26-29 at 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, and 10: "Throne of Blood" (†). ♦ July 30 at 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, and 9:50: "I Live in Fear" (1955).

FLORENCE GOULD HALL
55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Through Aug. 13: "The Sly Grin: Contemporary French Comedies." July 30 at 12:30 and 6:30: "Western" (1998, Manuel Poirier; in French). ♦ July 30 at 3:30 and 9: "Cool It" (1984, Michel Blanc; in French).

SOCRATES SCULPTURE PARK
Broadway at Vernon Blvd., Long Island City (718-956-1819)—Free outdoor movies, starting at dusk. July 24: "Pizzicata" (1996, Edoardo Winspeare; in Italian).

SUNSHINE CINEMA
139-143 E. Houston St. (358-0573)—Midnight movies. July 26-27: "Flesh Gordon" (1972, Howard Ziehm and Michael Benveniste).

THALIA THEATRE
2537 Broadway, at 95th St. (864-5400)—Through Sept. 8: "Classic Thalia: A Tribute to Martin and Ursula Lewis." July 27-28 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30 and July 29-30 at 7 and 9:30: "The Piano Teacher" (†).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through July 25: The New York Video Festival. Titles listed without directors indicate several works grouped by theme. July 24 at 4: "The Gone Buildings: N.Y.C. & 9/11." ♦ July 24 at 6: "Inside/Outside: The Spirits of Place." ♦ July 24 at 8:15: "Haunted Places." ♦ July 25 at 4: "Little Fugitives: Children, Palestine, and War." ♦ July 25 at 6:15: "A Map of the World." ♦ July 25 at 8:15: "Between Resistance and Community: The Long Island Do-It-Yourself Punk Scene" (2002, Joe Carroll and Ben Holtzman). ♦ July 26-Aug. 1: "The Return of the American Film Theatre," a selection of plays from the early-seventies television series. July 26 at 1 and 9:30, July 28 at 4, and July 29 at 9: "The Homecoming" (1973, Peter Hall). ♦ July 26 at 3:30, July 27 at 6, and July 29 at 4: "Luther" (1974, Guy Green). ♦ July 26 at 6:15, July 27 at 8:30, and July 29 at 6:30: "The Man in the Glass Booth" (1975, Arthur Hiller). ♦ July 27 at 1 and July 28 at 6:30: "The Iceman Cometh" (†). ♦ July 28 at 1 and July 30 at 8: "A Delicate Balance" (1973, Tony Richardson). ♦ July 30 at 5: "Galileo" (1975, Joseph Losey).

ZOHAR LAZAR

POSTMARK
bermuda jazz fest



Photos courtesy of the Bermuda Jazz Festival/Lou Hammond & Associates, Inc.

Festival headliners, keyboardist Herbie Hancock and vocalist Dianne Reeves, have both broadened the musical horizon by integrating a variety of styles into the jazz tradition.



PARADISE WITH A BEAT

DAN OUELLETTE

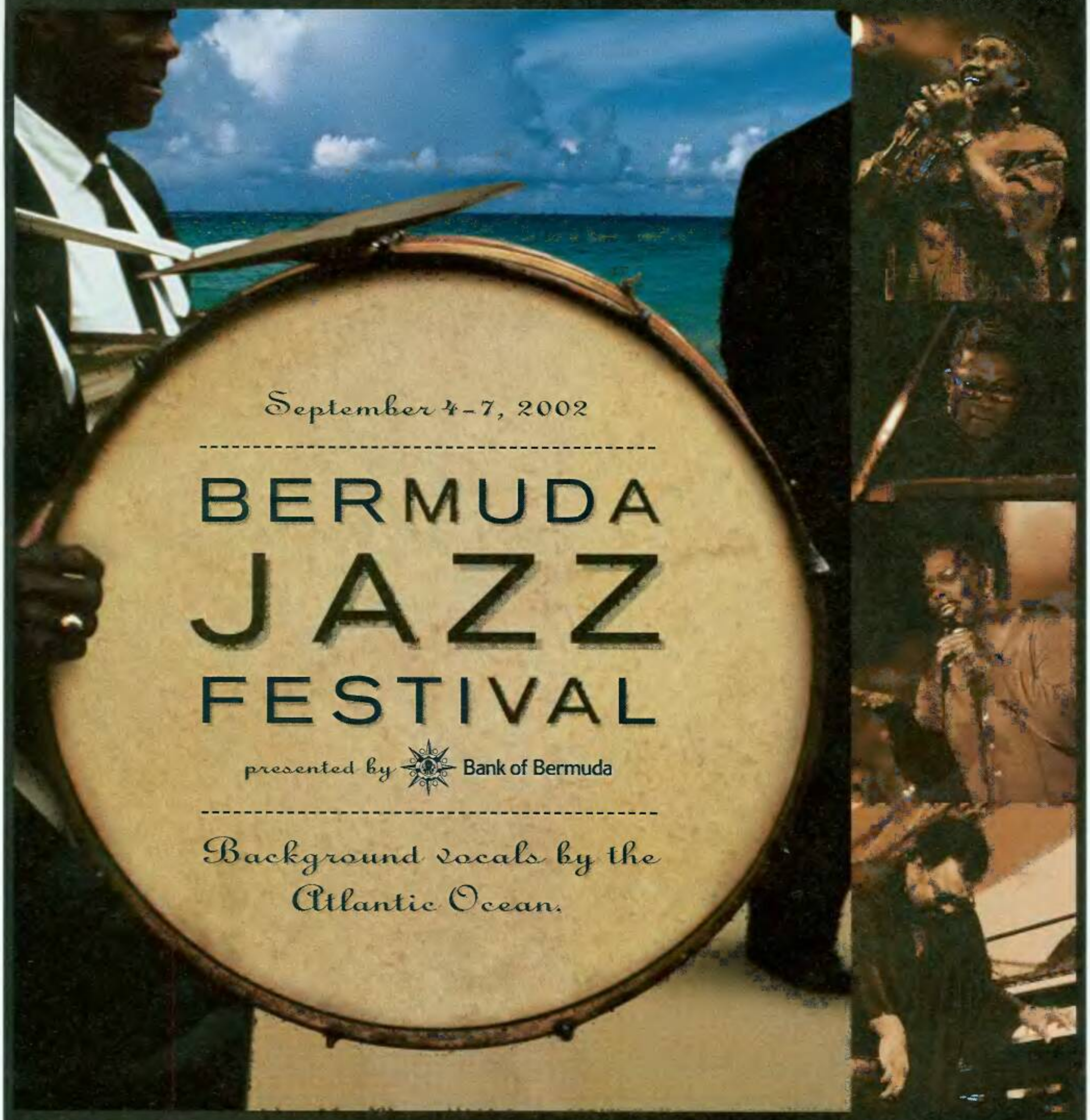
An art form as well as entertainment, jazz intrinsically lends itself to festivals—good-cheer social gatherings attended by connoisseurs of fine music. Jazz festivals have proliferated in the last decade and, like jazz itself, have become as diverse as the cities that host them.

Some, like the North Sea Jazz Festival in The Hague, are housed in labyrinthian convention centers; others, like New York's JVC Jazz Festival and San Francisco's autumnal classic, present shows in different venues scattered citywide. There are floating jazz fests like the one on the Queen Elizabeth II's transatlantic voyage, fêtes in parks in Québec City, and tented affairs in Marciac, France and Aspen/Snowmass, Colorado. But perhaps the most beautiful setting in which to savor jazz is Bermuda, the subtropical resort of pink-beach islands that lies six hundred miles east of the Carolina coast. Celebrating its seventh year, the Bermuda Jazz Festival (September 4–7) takes place at the historic Royal Naval Dockyard where musicians perform on a fifty-foot, open-air stage that floats serenely on the turquoise ocean.

"I didn't know perfection until I got there," says pianist Marcus Johnson, a featured artist on this year's evening of smooth jazz with vocalist Angela Bofill, flutist Bobbi Humphrey, keyboardist Bobby Lyle, and saxophonist Jimmy Sommers. Johnson last performed there in 2000. "I'll never forget it. It was a breezy night and the moon rose behind the stage. It was breathtaking playing in front of five thousand people."

This year's Bermuda Jazz Festival has not only grown from two days to four (which includes a pre-Dockyard bash produced by local promoter Choy Aming at the Hamilton Princess Resort), but will also feature its most musically expansive bill to date. Artists range from piano master Herbie Hancock (an acoustic jazz and electronic jazz-funk innovator, as well as a member of Miles Davis's

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classic sixties quintet) to neo-soul singer-songwriter India.Arie, whose debut CD "Acoustic Soul" was nominated for seven Grammy Awards last year.

In continual evolution since its birth over a century ago, jazz encompasses a variety of styles—from swing to bebop, free to fusion, smooth to hip-hop funky. Reflecting this diversity has been a key factor in programming, says Paxton Baker, president of BET Event Productions, the festival's new producer. "We scheduled smooth jazz for Thursday and decided to put a different imprint on the other nights. We wanted more flavors. So on Friday you get Herbie with his trio, as well as legendary South African singer Miriam Makeba."

On Saturday evening, India.Arie joins genre-busting keyboardist George Duke and singer Dianne Reeves, who has won the Grammy for best jazz vocal for the last two years. She's looking forward to performing—and relaxing—in Bermuda, one of only a handful of dates she's agreed to during her summer touring hiatus. "My music has a lot of breadth. I like bringing different styles together, so the way this night is booked appeals to me," says Reeves, whose repertoire is steeped in the jazz tradition, but also informed by the blues, pop, gospel, and R. & B.

Unlike many jazz fêtes where all the acts are imports, the Bermuda Jazz Festival proudly showcases local talent on the main stage. "This makes for a richer experience as musicians listen to each other and create together," says Dwight Miller, who worked with Paxton to book the festival. "When you mix the locals with the internationals, there's potential for magic."

Bermudian saxophonist Shine Hayward performs on Saturday, and an all-star steel pan band opens Thursday evening, with guest Andy Narell. The world's premier pan specialist, Narell has forged a recording career playing the tuned instruments fashioned from oil drums and mentored steel pan bands in Antigua, South Africa, and New York City. "Pan originated in Trinidad in the forties, spread throughout the Caribbean, and then all over the world. Bermuda has had a pan community for a long time," says Narell, who will sit in and spark the set with his glinting rhythms.

Bermuda's jazz party begins with several pre-festival events, including jazz brunches and music at restaurants and hotels. During the fest, there will be a lunchtime jam, a d.j. beach party, and after-hours club action. But jazz isn't the only attraction. For a break from the music, go horseback riding or deep-sea fishing, kick back on the smooth coral sand, dip into the tepid azure waters, golf on the seemingly ubiquitous links, or don a snorkel for superb diving to wrecks along Bermuda's barrier reefs.

"Bermuda has everything," says Marcus Johnson, who will extend his stay after his performance. "This will be my vacation. I'll be golfing, swimming, boating, and clubbing. I tell people to get ready to party all night, then relax all day."

(Dan Ouellette contributes to *Stereophile* and *Down Beat* magazines.)

POSTMARK
bermuda jazz fest



India Arie's grooving soul music is one flavor among many at this September's Bermuda Jazz Festival.

KIND OF BLUE

Once a bastion of power as the largest British naval facility outside of the U.K., the Royal Naval Dockyard, decommissioned in the fifties, has been transformed into a visitors' destination. There are shops displaying Bermudian crafts, as well as restaurants and British-style public houses that serve such island specialties as conch chowder, rum cake, and ginger beer. The flagships of the Dockyard are the Clocktower Centre and the Bermuda Maritime Museum that was opened in 1975 by Queen Elizabeth II. In 1998, the Bermuda Jazz Festival took up residence at the Dockyard. A 5,000-seat amphitheatre was built on a boat ramp that extends to the buoyed stage. This venue paved the way for the festival to mature into a first-class event, transforming the pink shores of Bermuda into a distinguished jazz outpost.

For more information on the Bermuda Jazz Festival, including special air and hotel packages, call **800-BERMUDA** or visit **www.bermudajazz.com**.

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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

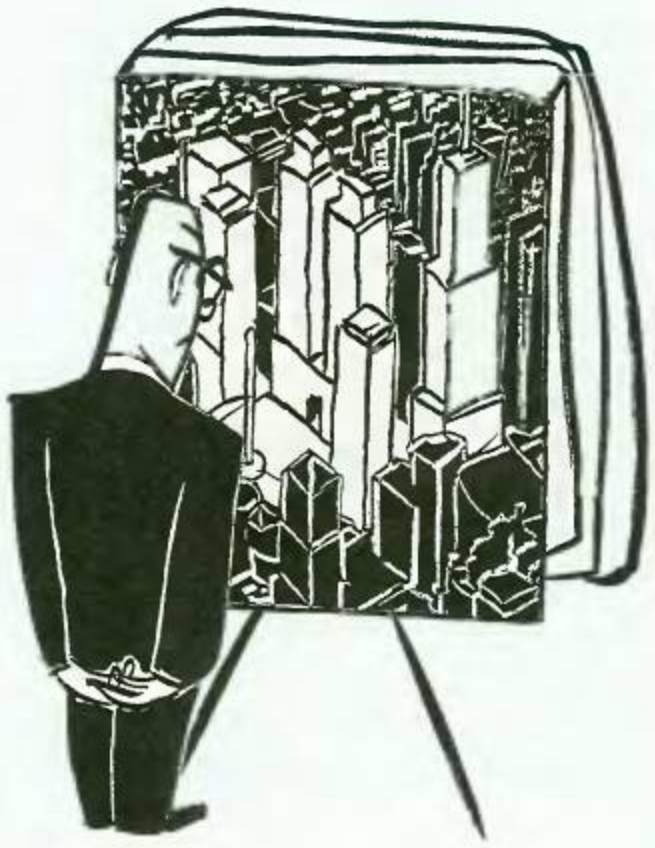
COMMENT
UP FROM ZERO



When Larry Silverstein, the developer who leased the World Trade Center from the Port Authority, said that the best thing to do after September 11th would be to rebuild the twin hundred-and-ten-story towers in the form of four fifty-story towers, nobody took him seriously. His idea had neither the dignity that the circumstances demanded nor the daring to inspire something brilliant and new. Silverstein's plan seemed hopelessly banal.

Never underestimate the power of banality—at least, not in the world of New York real estate. Last week, the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation unveiled what it billed as six different "concept plans" for Ground Zero, and all six of them looked a lot like what Silverstein proposed nine months ago. That isn't surprising, because, while the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation was created to figure out what to do at Ground Zero, the Port Authority has been setting the parameters, and what it wants is for the site to keep producing cash. The schemes do include a few amenities, like streets, that had been overlooked when the Trade Center was designed, in the nineteen-sixties. They also include a bigger, grander train station, which would link the subway to the PATH trains, in a "Grand Central for downtown," and they set aside a portion of the sixteen-acre site for a memorial. But they all start with the idea of building a cluster of medium-sized skyscrapers that, as the Port Authority required, would replace all the office space that was destroyed—eleven million square feet of it, as much as there is in downtown St. Louis. In addition, the six plans call for building more than half a million square feet of retail space, which is the equivalent of dropping a good-sized suburban mall into lower Manhattan.

That would be fine if lower Manhattan were Tyson's Corners, or the Houston Galleria, or one of those pseudo-cities that dot the American landscape. But it wasn't like those places before September 11th, and it is even less like them now. The issue isn't whether there should be commercial development at the site. The terrorists wanted to destroy the business of the city, and it is right, even necessary, that commercial life should flourish as part of the act of restoration. But the starting point of any design has to be what is best for the city, not what is best for the balance sheet of the real-estate developer and the landlord.



People feel proprietary about Ground Zero, and their passion makes planning all the harder. Everyone has his or her own notion of what to do, and those notions are subject to change, for a variety of motives and reasons. Governor Pataki, who, along with Governor James McGreevey, of New Jersey, controls the Port Authority, is fond of using words like "hallowed ground" when he talks about the site. But the people who report to him talk about "obligations to leaseholders" and "obligations to bondholders." The Governor certainly wouldn't use such words in an election year, but his tacit approval of the six plans suggests that he is perfectly comfortable letting the Port Authority regard Ground Zero mainly as a real-estate opportunity. In fact, if there was ever a piece of land that should be treated as part of the public domain, it is this one. But buying out Silverstein and the Port Authority, and putting a truly independent agency in charge of the development, wouldn't be cheap, and it isn't likely to happen, although it might become thinkable once insurance payments start to flow. At the very least, however, the Governor should

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL



• •

be pressing the Port Authority to operate with a greater sense of civic responsibility.

Pataki and former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani have also spoken out against putting anything new on the "footprint," or original location of the towers, on the premise that this was the logical way to show respect for the dead while still moving forward. But it is unclear whether protecting the footprint is politically or morally necessary. Two days after the plans were released, polls conducted by the *Post* and CNN showed that the most popular plan by far was the Memorial Promenade—one of the two schemes that proposed building on the footprint.

Some people may have chosen this plan because it features two sixty-three-story towers that look like an homage to the Twin Towers (forty-eight per cent of *Post* respondents said that they wanted to see the towers rebuilt as they were). But it is also clear that building on the footprint allows a much better piece of urban design, since the Memorial Promenade and the Memorial Park, the other plan that builds on that space, are the most inventive of the six schemes, with the most subtle and appealing street patterns. Both were designed primarily by the architects Steven Peterson and Barbara Littenberg. The Memorial Promenade has an oval-shaped memorial park on what is now West Street, which would be submerged in a tunnel. The park would be connected to a new, tree-lined boulevard, with a central pedestrian mall, that would lead from Ground Zero to the southern tip of Manhattan. It would have a direct view of the Statue of Liberty, and so it would tie the site, both spatially and symbolically, to the nation's most important symbol of freedom outside Washington, D.C.

The plan still suffers from the limitations imposed on all the schemes, but it does contain the beginning of an idea. The oval park, for instance, would be an ideal site for one of the more compelling ideas proposed by architects not officially working on the project: a tower that would be not a conventional skyscraper but a kind of Eiffel Tower for the twenty-first century. Such a structure—part broadcast tower, part observation tower—would heal the damaged skyline in a more poetic way than half a dozen blocky office buildings. Cities may grow in bits and pieces, but their outline must be drawn in bold strokes—the Brooklyn Bridge, Grand Central Terminal, Rockefeller Center. These structures are all great works of architecture, but they are even greater ideas. On the land where one of the most assertive constructions of the twentieth century once stood, on the land where the most devastating act of urban destruction in the history of the United States took place, we ought to be able to come up with something more than six variations in an ordinary key.

—Paul Goldberger

MISSOULA POSTCARD
FUNGUS RISING



Though the seventy-one-thousand-acre Moose Fire that visited northwestern Montana last summer may have destroyed millions of board feet of timber, redirected hundreds of family vacations, and displaced a handful of households, it proved to be a thoughtful guest after all. Plenty of snow fell on the mountainsides over the winter, and the blackened trees looked like week-old stubble. In the spring, the snowmelt turned the forest floor into deep ashen muck. Then a few warm days came along, and—voilà!—pay dirt. Multitudes of spongy black morel mushrooms rose from the earth. Area residents, victims last summer of drought and fire, are now beneficiaries of a bumper crop of one of the most precious kinds of fungus in the world of haute cuisine. "I had five different guys in one day come in here trying to sell me morels," said Steve Jordan, the co-owner of the Dinosaur Cafe, in Missoula, more than a hundred miles south of the fire. Jordan has been selling a morel velouté for four bucks a bowl, and morels at the Missoula Farmers' Market are as common as green beans and almost as cheap.

Morels, any of various edible mushrooms of the genus *Morchella*, range across much of North America, but, because they are notoriously finicky about soil conditions and other variables, people who consistently find them are considered shamanistic by those who don't. Morels appear beneath dead elm trees in Illinois, under decaying tulip poplars in Virginia, and among certain aspen stands in Washington. To find a good morel spot takes luck and hours of wandering through forests. If you know about one, you keep it secret. But a forest fire in the right habitat can change that.

Cathy Cripps, a mycologist at Montana State University, said, "We think that the intense heat helps germinate latent mushroom spores or sclerotia on the forest floor, or that the radical change in soil chemistry encourages the existing mycelium"—the mushroom's underground root system—"to suddenly proliferate, or

that both these things happen. Good forest fires make it so you can find morels just by watching the national news."

In other words, this summer just about anyone can go to the Moose Fire (as both the fire and the area it burned are known) and load up on a fungus that is usually a bastard to catch. The burn lies mostly within the boundaries of the Flathead National Forest and Glacier National Park. The Outside North Fork Road, which runs along the North Fork of the Flathead River, is the Moose Fire's Main Street. It begins in Columbia Falls, Montana, and ends about sixty miles north, at the Canadian border.

One recent morning, a dozen or so vehicles were parked at odd angles on both shoulders, doors ajar; the scene brought to mind the termination of a car chase in a movie. A middle-aged man and woman walked from their car into the first line of downed and scorched trees, past people coming out of the woods with grocery sacks and baseball caps full of morels. A soot-covered man who had turned the front of his blue sweatshirt into a sort of mushroom pouch recruited passing motorists. "Morels!" he called out. "They're all over in there."

In the burn, the smell of smoke hung in the air. The trees and the ground were black, but, as you pushed deeper into the forest, it was still able to perform its best trick: the road and the cars disappeared, and then the sound of the road disappeared, too. Birds chirped. A cursory inspection revealed a morel growing at the bottom of a weeks-old moose track. The mushroom was well camouflaged, but once you'd seen it many more popped into view: the forest floor was littered with morels. Off in the distance, a man shouted, "Have you seen a tall, skinny-looking dude wandering around out there like he's lost?" Another man responded that he had not. "Well, are you finding mushrooms over there, too?" the first man said.

"Shitloads."

Back on the road, cars were coming and going. A pickup truck that had left earlier returned with a new set of passengers. A motor home with Michigan plates pulled in behind the pickup, and a family piled out with empty snack-food boxes. The father, whose belly was pinched up against the steering wheel, was the last one out.

"We've heard of morels growing just north of our home, in Big Rapids, Michigan, but we never bothered trying to find them," he said. "But, as long as we're here, we figured, what the hell."

—*Steven Rinella*

MOVING PARTS DEPT.

A GOOD TABLE



Speaking recently on the telephone from an office in the lakeside city of Lugano, in Switzerland, a civil engineer named Paolo Rais described an invention that he hoped would improve human communication, promote world peace, and reduce the fear of being invited to a large dinner party in a slow restaurant. Rais had just been granted U.S. patent No. 6,375,256, for a "table with seats that move en masse around its perimeter."

Mr. Rais, whose first language is Italian, manages engineering projects for Switzerland's national railroad: he builds bridges and tunnels. He is the kind of man who, after dinner, takes the trouble to repair a retractable umbrella. He recalled that a few years ago he was invited to a wedding where there were a hundred guests, seated at tables of eight or ten. Rais found that he and his immediate neighbors could generate an hour or so of easy conversation. "One hour about the family, holidays—it was not so uncomfortable. They were not bad people," he said. "But I sat there for three hours! And when I went home I thought, Well, I was at a party with a hundred people and I met only these few people who I never met before and I'll never speak to again."

Rais thought about the wedding meal, and the way in which you can be pinned to one spot in a room full of other people you are eager to know. He remembered earlier lonely occasions—once, for example, he had been seated among talkative soccer fans (he has no interest in soccer). He also thought about the way fixed table positions underscore office hierarchies. "Then I had a very strange idea," he said. He imagined a kind of executive fairground ride: a long conference table whose chairs moved around it. The people sitting to your left and right would always be there, but you would move in relation to the person opposite, in a continuous flow that would be as imperceptible "as the movement of a minute hand on a watch." As a result, social and business hierarchies would be unsettled. Enemies would reconcile. Over the course of a meal, conversational empires could rise and fall.

Rais worked on drawings in the evenings and on weekends. Two years ago, he persuaded a friend with a small manufacturing business to build a full-scale prototype, to which he gave the oddly undynamic English name Dynamic Meetings. It was a solid-looking conference table, with twelve office chairs on casters attached to horizontal steel plates two inches or so off the ground. These plates disappeared into the wide central pillar that supported the tabletop. Inside, an electric motor drove a chain that pulled the chairs counterclockwise. A tray in front of each chair moved at the same speed over the surface of the table, carrying lunch or memos. The speed of the chairs could be adjusted in a range between about three and ten inches a minute. At the lower speeds, your opposite partner would be replaced by another in about five minutes, but you would not



be subjected to extreme centrifugal forces on reaching either end of the table.

In the past twenty months, Rais has shown this prototype at furniture trade fairs. He lent it first to a hotel near the Lugano airport, and then to a family restaurant called Tivu. So far, interest has been muted. At Tivu, the table did not become the cult object he had hoped it would—it was often empty while tables around it were full. At exhibitions, many

people did not stop long enough to notice movement, and those who did "thought it was a sort of joke, or for panoramic purposes, or for sushi," Rais said. "The idea of eating during movement is contradictory. Many people are afraid that the speed will be too great." But Rais is optimistic, noting that people were unpersuaded by the usefulness of the telephone when it was first invented.

Rais said that the prototype will soon have a permanent place in a factory showroom in Lugano. Here he will host dinners for the table's admirers. He is making a sign for the showroom door, reading "La Fabbrica dell'Amicizia"—the Friendship Factory. "I think the table could help reciprocal comprehension," Rais said. "It could be used for political discussion, maybe between Palestinians and Israelis. At the beginning of the meeting, I could put Sharon and Arafat at opposite ends. But after half an hour or forty minutes they will meet in the center, one in front of the other"—at which point they would start moving apart again. "There is a push button in the center of the table," Rais said. "You can stop it at any time."

—Ian Parker

SMOKE-FILLED ROOMS

BROOKLYN TOBACCO PARTY



CLASH, which stands for Citizens Lobbying Against Smoker Harassment, is the only organization dedicated exclusively to protecting the rights of New York City smokers. It was founded two years ago by Audrey Silk, a thirty-eight-year-old police officer in Brooklyn's Sixty-seventh Precinct, who smokes between one and two packs a day and was, she says, "sick and tired of the government telling me how to live my life." Under Silk's leadership, CLASH has opposed the ban on smoking in restaurants, fought proposals to raise the tax on cigarettes, and worked to discredit scientific studies that link secondhand smoke to lung disease. After September 11th, CLASH called for tobacco companies to donate cigarettes to the rescue workers at Ground Zero.

A few weeks ago, as Mayor Bloomberg prepared to sign a bill to increase the city's cigarette tax from eight cents to a dollar-fifty, a public hearing was held at City Hall, and Silk showed up in a T-shirt with the words "Smoking Section" emblazoned on the front. She told the Mayor, "I know you love to eat chunky peanut butter with bacon and bananas. How about I start a campaign to tax that bacon that's going to cause heart disease, and tax that super-chunky peanut butter that's going to kill you?"

Despite these efforts, the tax increase went into effect the next day, and New York City became the most expensive place in the country to buy a pack of cigarettes. In retaliation, CLASH began distributing flyers urging smokers to boycott the tax increase by purchasing their smokes tax-free from the Indian tribes upstate.

The other day, CLASH held a meeting at the Ashford Arms pub, in Marine Park, Brooklyn. In addition to Silk, three people showed up: sixty-five-year-old Deb Sugar, of Sheepshead Bay; Deb's husband, Irv, age seventy-three; and Irv's sister Marlene Block, age sixty-eight. The group sat at a table in the back, and everybody lit a cigarette, except Irv, who has emphysema and quit smoking thirty years ago. Silk handed out flyers and petition forms.

DEB SUGAR: Smoking offers me a certain sense of peace. It relaxes me. I don't see why I'm being discriminated against.

AUDREY SILK: That's why we need to make sure smokers have information on how to boycott the tax.

MARLENE BLOCK: I think most people who are addicted already know how to avoid it.

AUDREY: Hold on. Be very careful when you use that word. Anti-smoking forces have redefined addiction to mean something evil. Lots of things are addictive. Bloomberg is addicted to money.

MARLENE: I'm addicted to coffee.

IRV SUGAR: I'm addicted to eggs.

MARLENE: Why is it that I'm on Wellbutrin to quit smoking, and I smoke more than ever?

AUDREY: Addiction is all in your head. You have to want to quit.

MARLENE: Yeah, I don't want to.

A few minutes into the meeting, hot wings and chicken fingers arrived. Between bites, conversation turned to Mayor Bloomberg.

AUDREY: Technically, he's my boss, since I'm a cop, but I don't like him. And that voice! It's like nails in my head.

IRV: He sounds a little gay.

AUDREY: He's got too many women to be gay.

DEB: That's what we have to do, go out and get the gay people involved. They smoke a lot.

AUDREY: No, no, the biggest anti-smoking guy in the city is gay. Joseph Cherner.

DEB: Do you know who we ought to contact? Bill Maher. He's got nothing to do since his show was cancelled, and he says he's against the tax.

AUDREY: He's not a libertarian.

DEB: And he hates women.

IRV: I'll drink to that.

A thick cloud of smoke had formed over the CLASH meeting, and Irv started coughing. He stood up and began pacing around the room's perimeter, where the air was cleaner.

IRV: Another thing: if I want to kiss a smoker, it's a terrible taste.

AUDREY: Then don't kiss that smoker. I won't date a non-smoker.

DEB: Irv, you haven't kissed me in ten years.

IRV: That's because you smoke. There comes a time when things get intolerable. I'm not twenty anymore.

AUDREY: This is not helping! This meeting is supposed to be about smokers' rights.

MARLENE: I thought they added chemicals to cigarettes, like ammonia and nicotine.

AUDREY: That's propaganda. They're only putting things back in that were lost in the processing. Have you seen those commercials that say cigarettes contain arsenic? There's arsenic in drinking water, for God's sake. There's nicotine in your tomatoes. Hello?

MARLENE: Tomatoes?

AUDREY: Yeah. Potatoes, too.

As the meeting came to a close, Irv had a suggestion. "If all you people walked into a nice restaurant, lit up, caused a riot, and made the cops come down and arrest you, then people would listen."

Silk sighed, touching a diamond-studded N.Y.P.D. pendant on her neck. "I can't be involved in that right now. I can't flout the law. But I retire from the force in a year and eight months. Then people better watch out. All hell will break loose."

—Herb Allen

THE FINANCIAL PAGE
IN NO ONE WE TRUST

In December of 1995, a young Russian man named Mikhail Khodorkovsky rigged a state auction and bought a controlling stake in the Russian oil company Yukos. As David Hoffman recounts in "The Oligarchs," his superb new history of Russia's first decade of capitalism, Khodorkovsky funnelled profits from Yukos into a series of offshore accounts, shifted the real ownership of the company to offshore firms that he owned, and borrowed hundreds of millions of dollars that he knew he'd never repay. By 2000, he had exclusive control of a multibillion-dollar company and was, by many accounts, the richest man in Russia.

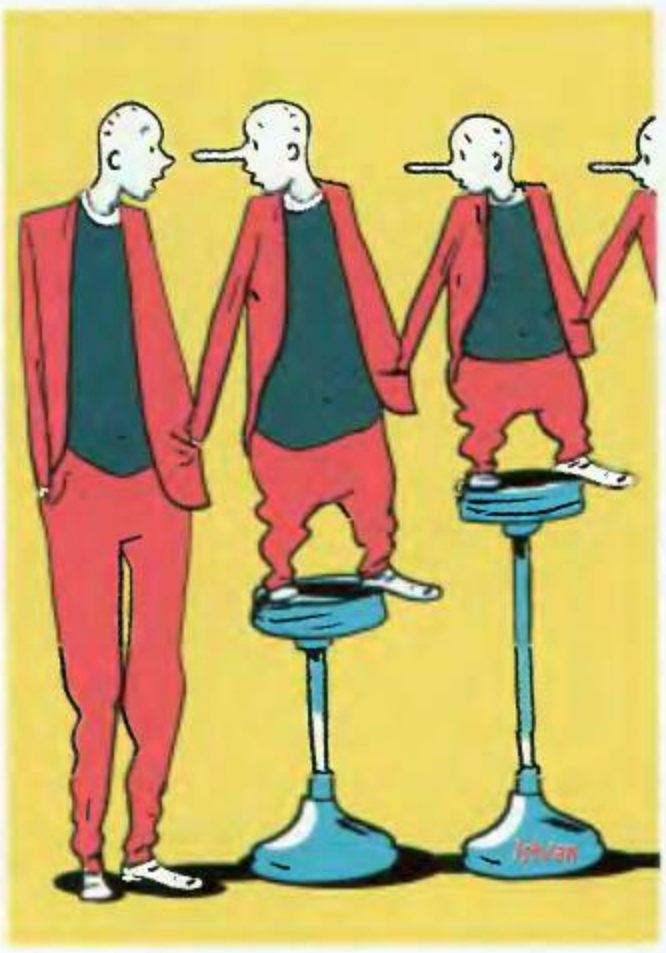
This was how enterprising *biznesmeny* conducted themselves in Russia during the nineteen-nineties. Khodorkovsky and his fellow-oligarchs essentially looted their country's fledgling economy. And who could blame them? Russia had neglected to put in place the rules and institutions that make mature market economies work. The state was too weak to enforce what regulations there were. And the country's capital markets were so underdeveloped that, as Hoffman says, "there was no mechanism to reward the good and punish the bad."

We Americans rolled our eyes at Russia's primitive, lawless brand of capitalism. In America, after all, we have sophisticated regulations, fair and enforceable laws, and highly developed capital markets. The Russians had *mafiya* and *blat*. So how did our oligarchs end up looking so much like theirs?

People have faulted our laws and regulations, which apparently weren't strict enough, and our enforcers, who clearly weren't forceful enough. Congress has voted to increase the S.E.C.'s budget and to lengthen prison sentences for fraud. All this is salutary, but it doesn't really cut to the heart of the matter. Catching and punishing crooks after they've already made off with the swag is not enough. You have to do more than that to restore what a healthy market economy needs most: trust.

In recent years, "trust" has become a buzzword in economics. The stereotypical capitalist has always been the greedy *isolato* who will do anything for a buck—cheat his neighbor, sue his partner, whatever. In fact, any economy made up of such people wouldn't function very well. If every deal were a swindle, buying and selling would cease. If every contract and every bill of sale wound up in court, doing business would be too expensive and too time-consuming. Trust reduces the friction in an economy. Without it, the gears grind to a halt.

To establish trust, you need to be able to identify those who are undeserving of it. You need institutions that serve as what the economist Daniel Klein calls "independent knowers." America is full of them. For consumers, groups like the Underwriters Laboratories and Consumers Union rate product safety and quality. For companies, Equifax and Experian rate creditworthiness. And, for investors, Wall Street firms, bond-rating agencies, stock exchanges, and accounting firms evaluate corporate America; they supposedly filter out the shady operators. When Goldman Sachs underwrites a company's stock offering, or the Nasdaq takes on a new listing, or Merrill Lynch issues a buy rating, or Ernst & Young signs off on an audit, it is saying, "Trust us: you can trust them."



ISTVAN BANYAI

Why trust Ernst & Young? Because its business hangs on its credibility. As Alan Greenspan said of accountants last week, "The market value of their companies rested on the integrity of their operations." Accountants don't have to be saints to do their job. Self-interest alone should compel them to separate the bad from the good.

The problem is, this arrangement works only if the firms that fail to separate bad from good are punished. That did not happen in the late nineties. The Nasdaq listed laughable companies. White-shoe firms like Goldman Sachs underwrote them. The accountants wielded their rubber stamps. (Between 1997 and 2000, seven hundred companies were forced to restate their earnings. In 1981, only three companies did.) But none of these institutions paid a price in the marketplace for their derelictions of duty. They got more business, not less. In the late nineties, Arthur Andersen was the auditor of record in accounting disasters like Waste Management and Sunbeam. Yet investors looked no more skeptically on companies that, like WorldCom and Enron, continued to use Andersen. In effect, investors stopped watching the watchmen, and the watchmen stopped watching, too. So if we seem a little like Russia these days it's because for the past few years we, too, have been operating without the rules and institutions of a healthy market economy. To remedy this, we need greater oversight of accounting standards and corporate audits, not just higher penalties for corporate fraud. Above all, though, investors have to get back in the habit of flogging those who let them down.

Actually, investors seem to be getting the hang of it. These days, they are treating all companies, pristine or not, as potential WorldComs. This may not be economically rational, but it squares with what economists have found in experiments that test the impact of trust. When it comes to doing business, people are habitually trusting at first, without any reason to be, and people who are trusted are likely to respond in kind. (It's called "positive reciprocity.") If someone fails to reciprocate, however, people will go to great lengths to punish him. Even if inflicting punishment costs more than letting the misdeed pass, people will happily accept that cost to teach a lesson. The independent knowers told investors that they could trust corporate America. Corporate America did not reciprocate. And now we're all paying for it.

—James Surowiecki

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MEDICAL DISPATCH

HORMONES FOR MEN

Is male menopause a question of medicine or of marketing?

BY JEROME GROOPMAN

It goes by many names. "Male menopause" is perhaps the most popular, but "andropause" is the term that many doctors favor, and PADAM ("partial androgen deficiency in aging men") has its partisans, too. The condition may afflict millions of Americans, and, if they do not yet recognize the symptoms, a public-awareness campaign has been launched to help them. A two-page ad that ran in *Time* not long ago showed a car's gas gauge pointing to Empty and beside it the words "Fatigued? Depressed mood? Low sex drive? Could be your testosterone is running on empty." The ad explains that "as some men grow older, their testosterone levels decline," and that such men should consult their doctors about testosterone therapy. At the bottom of the page, the gas gauge points to Full.

Physicians have been targeted with similar ads. One that appeared in a recent issue of a primary-care journal calls on them to "identify the men in your practice with low testosterone who may benefit from clinical performance in a packet." The photographs are eye-catching: there's a well-built fellow in his middle years beside the words "improved sexual function"; a smiling man in shorts and a T-shirt who is standing next to a mountain bike ("improved mood"); a policeman directing traffic ("increased bone mineral density"). Doctors are told to "screen for symptoms of low testosterone" and "restore normal testosterone levels."

These ads were paid for by Unimed, a division of the Belgian conglomerate Solvay. Unimed makes AndroGel, a drug that was approved by the F.D.A. two years ago, and is the fastest-growing form of testosterone-replacement therapy for men. Pills, introduced in the sixties, often caused liver damage. Intramuscular injections, particularly favored by bodybuilders and competitive athletes, produce a sharp spike of the hormone, and then a fall, and these fluctuations are often accompanied by swings in mood, libido, and energy. In the late eighties, a transdermal patch was developed, and its use is still widespread. The patch provides safer and steadier dosing, but often causes skin irritation, and sometimes falls off during exercise. AndroGel, by contrast, delivers testosterone in a colorless, drying gel that is simply rubbed on an area of the body—usually the shoulders—once a day. It has thus made testosterone available in a form that almost any man can use conveniently.

If hormone-replacement therapy for andropause becomes as common as such therapies have been for menopause—and this seems to be the ambition of some drug companies—the consequences, both medical and financial, could be dramatic. Given the popular desire to reverse human aging with a simple nostrum and the growing intimacy between commercial and clinical concerns, the trend may prove to be irresistible. The pharmaceutical industry is, of course, in the business of inventing treatments. Some people wonder whether it may help invent diseases, too.

To be treated for andropause, you first need physicians who can confidently make the diagnosis. One of them is Dr. Abraham Morgentaler, the director of Men's Health Boston. He is forty-six years old, with thick black hair and deep-set eyes. Trained as a urologist, he specializes in male sexual dysfunction and infertility. He views testosterone deficiency in older men as a silent epidemic, and worries that, of the perhaps five million American men who suffer from it, ninety-five per cent go undiagnosed. Replacing missing testosterone, he believes, will help restore youthful muscle tone, bone strength, potency, and general vigor. He recently put an ad in

the Boston *Globe* urging men who were experiencing "low sex drive" or "low energy" to have their testosterone level tested at his clinic. The costs of both the ad and the tests were underwritten by a Unimed educational grant.

Men's Health Boston is in a modern brick-and-glass office building at a busy intersection in Brookline. It has a well-appointed waiting room with soft lighting and upholstered chairs; photographs of famous local athletes adorn the walls. The men who came to see Morgentaler on a recent afternoon had all been given a questionnaire provided by Unimed:

1. Do you have a decrease in libido (sex drive)?
2. Do you have a lack of energy?
3. Do you have a decrease in strength and/or endurance?
4. Have you lost height?
5. Have you noticed a decreased "enjoyment of life"?
6. Are you sad and/or grumpy?
7. Are your erections less strong?
8. Have you noticed a recent deterioration in your ability to play sports?
9. Are you falling asleep after dinner?
10. Has there been a recent deterioration in your work performance?

Among the patients was a real-estate broker in his late fifties. He had answered "Yes" to questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, and 10. "I'm just exhausted by the end of the afternoon," he said, after Morgentaler gave him a physical. "And my brain often feels foggy." He likes to shoot pool, and he remarked that his game wasn't what it used to be.

"Have you noticed any change in sexual performance?" Dr. Morgentaler asked.

"Well, I'm not a kid anymore," the patient said, but he had no real complaints.

Morgentaler then showed the man the results from his blood assay. His testosterone levels were "somewhat low," Morgentaler said. "Now, if I had a magic wand and I could do anything for you, what would it be?"

"Fix the energy thing."

"I have good news for you," Dr. Morgentaler said. "There is an excellent chance that giving you testosterone will help to restore your energy. And, in terms of being foggy, I can't promise, but I have several men in my practice who are professors. They take testosterone, and they say it makes their brains much sharper."

Dr. Morgentaler explained that, while testosterone would not cause prostate cancer, if the patient had a hidden tumor the hormone would "act like food, nourishing the cancer." For that reason, his P.S.A. (prostate-specific antigen) level would be checked, and Morgentaler would take six biopsy samples of the prostate gland to make sure that there was no malignancy.

"I'll give you a prescription now, and you can get started once we complete these tests," Dr. Morgentaler said. "When I give men back testosterone, some say 'Whoa!'"

The patient liked the sound of that. "Maybe I'll be a stallion again," he said.

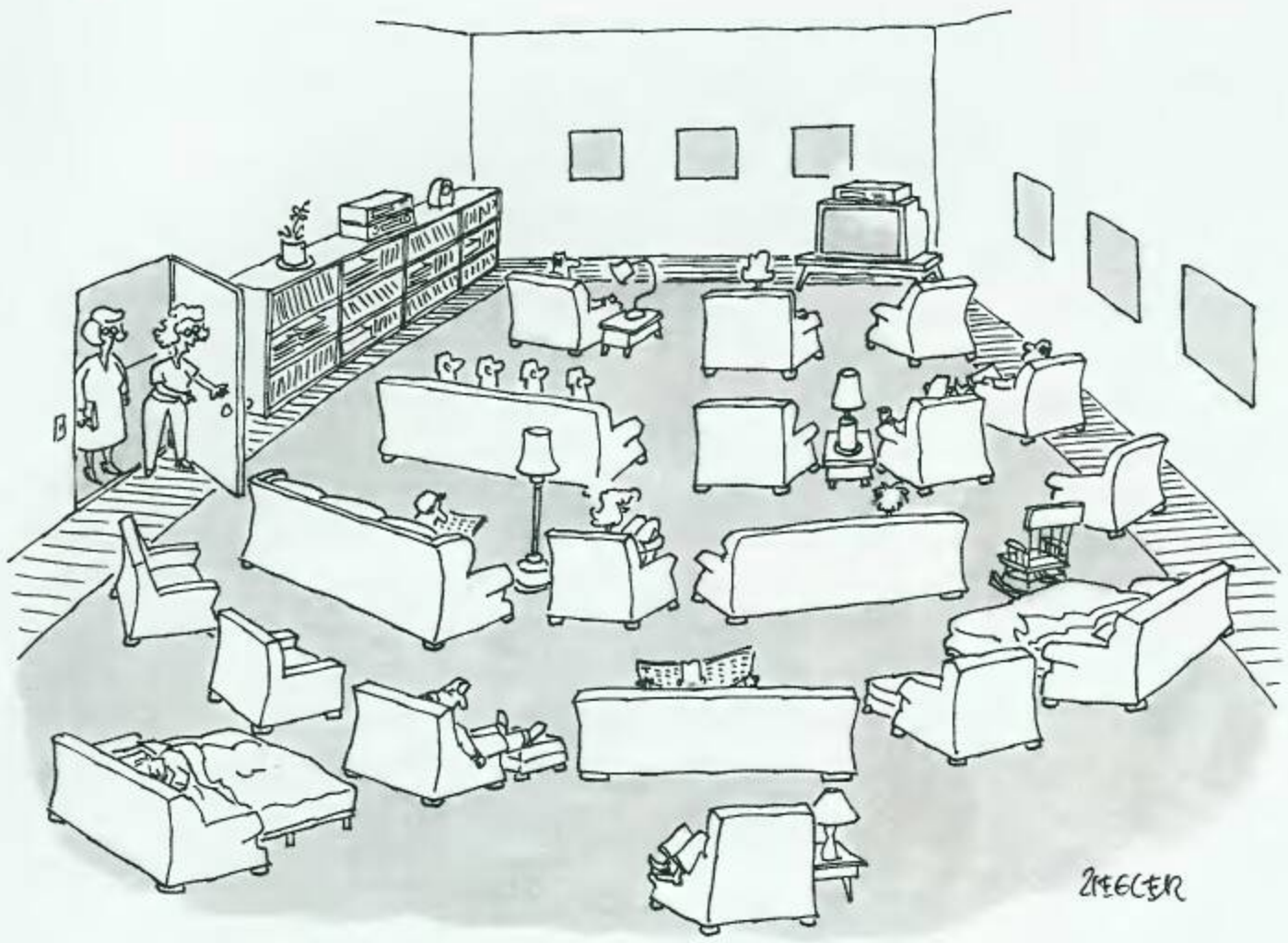
Testosterone, an androgen, is a steroid hormone derived from cholesterol. It is produced primarily by the testes, but the signal to produce it comes from the pituitary gland, in the form of two other hormones, which arrive in pulses at certain times of the day. As men age, the response of the testes becomes more muted; for men over the age of forty, the levels of testosterone in the bloodstream decline, on average, by about 1.2 per cent each year.

Morgentaler's next patient was a construction worker in his forties. The man was on cardiac medication and had an implanted defibrillator, because he was prone to life-threatening arrhythmias, and occasionally he received electric jolts from the device. His wife had died some three years before, but in the previous six months he had been in a stable relationship. He had come to the clinic be-



Should a seventy-year-old have the testosterone levels he had at twenty?

ARNOLD ROTH



"And this is our extended family room."

cause he had difficulty reaching orgasm.

Morgentaler asked about other symptoms.

"I used to be able to play racquetball non-stop, but I'm tired now after four games."

Morgentaler nodded. "We caught it just at the right time."

"But my primary-care doctor checked my testosterone and said it was 800, which is normal. He told me he couldn't do anything about my problem."

Morgentaler looked at the results of the man's blood assay. Total testosterone was in the normal range, at 509 nanograms per decilitre. But his free testosterone, Morgentaler told him, was another matter. At any moment, about two per cent of circulating testosterone is "free"—unbound to any protein—and thus biologically active. The patient's free testosterone was a little under the lower limit of normal. ("Normal" testosterone levels refer to what's normal for men in their twenties.)

"If I had a magic wand and I could do anything for you, what would it be?" Morgentaler asked.

"Get rid of the problem with orgasm."

"Well, I believe we have a very good chance of helping you." Morgentaler wrote out a prescription for AndroGel. "We'll check your P.S.A. today, but we don't need to do biopsies of your prostate gland until after the age of fifty. So you can get started right away."

"I can't thank you enough," the patient said.

When the F.D.A. decides to permit the sale of a new drug, it specifies a list of "indications"—particular medical conditions for which the drug has been approved. "The F.D.A. never approved AndroGel for andropause," says Dr. Dan Shames, the director of the Division of Reproductive and Urological Drug Products at the F.D.A. "We're not sure what 'andropause' is. The intention was that AndroGel would be for people with conditions like Klinefelter's and pituitary dysfunction." Klinefelter's syndrome is a congenital disorder in which men have an extra X chromosome and underdeveloped testes. Other suitable candidates for therapy are men whose testes have been scarred by viral inflammation. Still others have had a tumor that damaged the hypothalamus or the pituitary gland, so the brain no longer sends activating signals to the testes. In such men, muscle strength, libido, and bone density are diminished, and testosterone replacement is an effective treatment.

The trouble is that there aren't very many of these people—they number only in the tens of thousands. But there are some thirty-five million men in the United States over the age of fifty, and, if the andropause movement takes off, annual revenues for the producers of testosterone-replacement drugs could reach billions of dollars. Estrogen-replacement therapy in menopausal women—a comparable market—has generated more than two billion dollars a year in revenue, largely for Wyeth, the maker of Premarin, the most popular estrogen-replacement drug.

This is where marketing and medical science may part ways. Pharmaceutical companies often obtain F.D.A. approval of a new product for a niche population with a relatively rare disease, hoping to expand later to a larger and more profitable market. Once a drug is approved for sale, a physician can legally prescribe it for any clinical condition he thinks would benefit from it. The F.D.A. prohibits drug companies from advertising "off label" uses—those other than the approved indications—but they can pursue alternative strategies. They can run ads that "raise awareness" of a condition without mentioning the proprietary therapy by name. And they can align themselves with so-called "opinion leaders," well-known physicians whose views are thought to have influence among their peers, by financing their research, say, or offering them consulting agreements.

If you're hoping to expand the medical "indications" for a drug regimen, there are few greater boons than the endorsement of a major medical society. Unimed's andropause campaign won a considerable victory when the Endocrine Society—a prestigious organization of hormone specialists—convened its First Annual Andropause Consensus Conference, in April of 2000, just six weeks before AndroGel came on the market. The conference, which was held in Beverly Hills, set out to define andropause and decide how it should be treated. The chair was Dr. Ronald Swerdloff, an endocrinologist at Harbor-U.C.L.A. Medical Center, and he assembled a panel whose task was to come up with recommendations for clinical practice. These recommendations were distributed at this year's annual meeting of the Endocrine Society, in June, and undoubtedly they will have considerable influence in the medical community.

The panel acknowledged that the benefits of testosterone replacement in aging men hadn't been established, but it nonetheless recommended that all men over the age of fifty be screened for testosterone deficiency. Screening should start with a questionnaire, like the one that Unimed had provided for Morgentaler. Patients who had symptoms, whose morning testosterone levels were under the lower limit of normal, specified as 300, and who had no conditions that would rule out testosterone replacement, like prostate cancer, "would likely benefit from treatment," the panel stated. A table accompanying the recommendations suggested that low testosterone levels would be found in more than ten per cent of men over fifty, and nearly thirty per cent of men over seventy—in perhaps as many as seven million Americans.

There's no doubt that the panel reached its conclusions in good faith; the androgen enthusiasts are nothing if not sincere. But it's also the case that a Unimed/Solvay educational grant was the sole source of funding for the Beverly Hills conference. According to Scott Hunt, the Endocrine Society's executive director, Unimed even suggested some of the panel's members. And, of the thirteen panelists in the final group, at least nine, including Swerdloff and his co-chair, had significant financial ties to the drug company, in the form of research grants, consulting arrangements, or speaking fees. The recommendations made reference to the educational grant but not to the panelists' ties to Unimed.

The bid to medicalize middle age may be well supported by the pharmaceutical industry, but it remains poorly supported by scientific research. Is the decline in testosterone levels really responsible for most of the symptoms of aging in men? What levels of testosterone are, in fact, "normal"? Does andropause even exist? The limits of medical knowledge are starkly evident when you visit a research center like the one run by Dr. William Crowley, the chief of the Reproductive Endocrine Unit at Massachusetts General Hospital, and his associate Dr. Frances Hayes. In a laboratory crowded with centrifuges, chemical hoods, and spectrophotometers, they and their team spend hours double-checking sensitive chemical assays for hormones produced by the hypothalamus and the testes, as well as the pituitary and adrenal glands. In an adjoining clinical-research center, volunteer human subjects are hooked up to I.V.s and insulin clamps.

Several years ago, Dr. Crowley realized that, in order to study hypogonadal men, he needed a clear definition of normal testosterone levels. So he inserted catheters into the veins of healthy young subjects in their twenties and drew blood samples every ten minutes in the course of twenty-four hours. He still sounds amazed by what he found.

"We measured the size of their testes, evaluated body hair, erectile function, sperm count, muscle mass, bone density, pituitary function," Crowley recalls. "These men were completely normal from every parameter. And it was incredible: fifteen per cent had testosterone levels during the day that were well below what is set as the lower limit of normal—more than fifty per cent below the cutoff."

Why do testosterone levels among healthy men vary so much? Hayes speculates that some men may have highly efficient testosterone receptors—cellular traps that grab the free hormone in the blood—so that what appears to be an abnormally low testosterone level is all the hormone they need. But even an individual's testosterone levels can be markedly different at different times. One factor may be stress, which seems to reduce levels of sex steroids. Drug interactions, too, might alter testosterone levels in unpredictable ways. And much of the variation simply eludes explanation. Crowley studied several young men whose initial test results showed testosterone levels ranging from 150 to 200—well below the 300 cutoff—over twenty-four hours. "They had a perfectly normal testosterone profile," Crowley says. "There can be a funny disconnect between one measurement and a later one"—which means that testosterone deficiency may be easily overdiagnosed.

"This variability in testosterone levels was really a physiological curiosity until AndroGel was approved," Crowley continues. "Now every time the testosterone level is below 300 the question of prescription is raised." As for the often quoted figure of four or five million "andropausal" men—the figure touted in the Unimed ads—Hayes says, "Frankly, I don't know where that number comes from or how real it is."



What makes things more confusing is that the usual commercial tests that physicians use to measure testosterone levels are notoriously unreliable. The andropause movement has made laboratory assays a lucrative business, and all kinds of patented kits have come on the market. But, as Swerdloff's panel discovered, the results tend to be inconsistent. "It's really a big problem," Swerdloff says. "Practicing doctors have a great belief in the numbers, but in the past few years the assays have deteriorated." If you assayed blood samples from normal men with one proprietary test, you might find values between 300 and 900, while another test would give values between 160 and 700. So men whose tests report low total testosterone levels—like the real-estate broker Morgentaler saw—might actually have normal levels. The tests for free testosterone seem to be even less accurate.

Not every practitioner finds reason for concern. "The tests aren't as reliable as we want them to be, but it doesn't matter," says Morgentaler, who sometimes even prescribes AndroGel "preventatively" for middle-aged men whose testosterone levels are in the lower quarter of the normal range. "It's not credible that we aren't helping these men by giving them testosterone. The truth is, there's a deep emotional issue in some people who oppose hormone-replacement therapy, because it asks the question 'Is there hope of achieving eternal youth?' There are those who don't want to oppose Mother Nature."

And there are those who don't want to wait for scientific validation. Last year, a panel organized by the National Institutes of Health—maybe the closest thing we have to a voice of independent scientific consensus—released a paper concluding that the andropause hypothesis is unproved. The report that Swerdloff's group released at the Endocrine Society meeting in June contains references to sixty-two relevant publications, but omits any reference to the N.I.H. report.

Swerdloff and his colleagues re-

viewed the half-dozen controlled studies available on giving testosterone to healthy aging men, and were evidently impressed by those which found that it increased lean muscle mass, strength, and bone-mineral density in the spine. Unfortunately, most of these studies were small, involving forty or fifty men. The reported improvements were far from dramatic, and different studies have had contradictory findings. In fact, the largest and longest-term study, of a hundred and eight men over three years, showed no improvements in energy level, sexual performance, or strength.

So there's a lot of uncertainty about the effects of the age-related lowering of testosterone. "There appears to be a threshold level of testosterone below which libido and sexual function are impaired," Hayes says. "Boosting above this threshold doesn't seem to enhance sexual performance." The role that testosterone plays in maintaining strong bones in healthy elderly men is highly controversial, too. Dan Shames, of the F.D.A., says, "Just because you are increasing bone density doesn't mean you prevent fractures." Even in studies that found a positive correlation between testosterone levels and bone strength, the hormone accounted for only about five per cent of age- and weight-adjusted differences. Men with severely low testosterone levels showed improvement in the spine, but no change was observed in the hips—and it is mainly hip fractures that debilitate the elderly.

"Each pharmaceutical company wants to get up and say, 'This is the magic bullet for aging,' " Crowley says. "But it's overly simplistic to attribute such a complex process as aging to the change in the level of a single hormone like estrogen or testosterone."

If the benefits of treating "andropause" are in doubt, so, more worrisomely, is the safety. The known side effects of testosterone therapy include gynecomastia (abnormal enlargement of the breasts) and testicular shrinkage (as gonads compensate by making less of the hormone). Testosterone also raises the level of circulating red blood cells; if this level is excessive, the blood becomes viscous, which can lead to congestive heart failure or stroke. And among men who received a 100-milligram daily dose of AndroGel over a year, nearly twenty per cent developed some sort of prostate disorder, such as prostatic hyperplasia.

More troubling is how testosterone accelerates the growth of prostate cancer. The majority of men over the age of sixty-five have clusters of cancer cells in their prostate glands which are both "occult" and "indolent": they're hard to find, and they grow so slowly that they're unlikely to create any trouble by themselves. Here the perils are twofold. On the one hand, unnecessary biopsies can lead to unnecessary surgery, aimed at eradicating cancers that might have remained inactive. On the other hand, biopsies can easily miss cancers that, under a regimen of testosterone replacement, become more aggressive than they otherwise would be. Not surprisingly, Dr. Shames says that the F.D.A. has "issues of concern over the safety" of prescribing testosterone-replacement therapy for men whose hormone levels fall as part of normal aging.

Even Dr. Swerdloff acknowledges these uncertainties. "I agree that currently there are insufficient data on the long-term effects of testosterone-replacement therapy on the heart or on the development of prostate cancer, but the benefits seem considerable," he says. The andropause panel he chaired was aware that the N.I.H. is thinking of doing rigorous, placebo-controlled clinical studies that would span six or more years. "If the answer is yes, that replacement therapy causes heart damage or sparks emergence of prostate cancer, then you will know in six years or so," he says. "But older people in this age group won't wait six to ten years to have solid answers. Clinical practice will move at one rate, and the data will trail."

This is precisely what concerns many scientists. "Pharmaceutical marketing is the driver, not physiology," Crowley complains of the andropause movement. "Maybe we're *meant* to lower our testosterone levels—maybe it's healthy and protects us from developing prostate cancer. Of course, that's pure conjecture, but it's something that needs to be carefully addressed." When you elevate the testosterone levels in a seventy-year-old man to those he had at twenty, are you really returning him to "normal"? Crowley says, "I worry that this widespread prescription of testosterone for aging men is going to precipitate an epidemic of prostate cancer."

Of course, it will not be the first time that hormones have been heavily marketed—in advance of the scientific evidence—as a way to recapture youth. In the late sixties, estrogens were touted to women as their chance to be "feminine forever." And initial data from small or uncontrolled studies were encouraging. Estrogen therapy was believed to help sustain sexual health, and mood, while protecting bones from osteoporosis and the heart from arteriosclerosis. The media were flooded with ads for estrogen therapy, and publishers churned out books celebrating its benefits. Nearly forty per cent of postmenopausal women have been prescribed hormone-replacement therapy.

As we now know, conventional H.R.T. not only increases the risk of breast cancer but can lead to heart attacks, strokes, and blood clots. A nationwide trial of sixteen thousand women—part of the Women's Health Initiative—was recently terminated when the therapy was linked to a twenty-six per cent increase in invasive breast cancer and a significant increase in cardiovascular disease as well. A hormone regimen meant to reverse the effects of aging has proved to accelerate serious disease. As Dr. Swerdloff put it, the data trailed clinical practice.

Meanwhile, testosterone-replacement therapy is becoming increasingly popular. Last year alone, sales of transdermal testosterone doubled. An estimated quarter of a million American men are now taking the hormone. If the current rates continue, that number will rise to nearly a million within two years—and, with the newly conferred imprimatur of the Endocrine Society, the rates could surge.

To date, the best published safety data we have on AndroGel as a treatment for andropause comes from a study of sixty-seven men who took the drug for an average of twenty-nine months. An accurate assessment of its effects on the heart, blood vessels, and prostate would require many years of observing many thousands of men—a male counterpart to the Women's Health Initiative. Until then, the attempt to reverse the gradual decline in testosterone levels in aging men can't be considered the treatment of a disorder: it amounts to a vast, uncontrolled experiment, whose consequences remain uncertain. As Hayes says, "It would be a shame to make the same mistakes again." ♦

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SHOUTS & MURMURS

BUSH, CHENEY BLISTER SHADY BUSINESS ETHICS

BY BRUCE McCALL

Speaking today before members of the Golden Manacle Club, the élite organization of C.E.O.s released on more than ten million dollars' bail, President George W. Bush said that he had once held up a bank, "like thousands of other enterprising Americans and without spending a dime of taxpayer money," and vowed to employ the same can-do attitude in solving the real problems facing American business, such as overcharging employees for lunch in company cafeterias. The President announced the formation of a blue-ribbon panel of corporate food managers, who have been asked to report back to him by the year 2050 if they have any thoughts.

Meanwhile, Vice-President Dick Cheney, addressing the annual convention of the American Association of Incompetent Board Chairmen, firmly backed the President's position on bank robberies and took the opportunity to comment on the press's reaction to his own role in a Southwestern stolen-car ring. He said he viewed criticism of his activities as an example of McCarthyite witch-hunting by a self-appointed gestapo that threatened to undermine private-jet sales for years to come. The ring, he pointed out, had pumped millions into the Swiss economy.

In his speech, President Bush dismissed his involvement in a Texas counterfeiting operation ten years ago as old news. "And anyways," he explained, "I just spent it—I didn't make it. Everybody knows I can't draw a lick." Mr. Bush went on to deplore the shady business ethics that lead executives travelling at company expense to steal shampoo, soap, and sewing kits from hotel bathrooms for personal use. He announced that he will soon recommend to Congress the establishment of a Cabinet-level Department of Homeland Personal Toiletries to monitor compliance with stringent new curbs on such thefts. Vice-President Cheney drew prolonged applause during his speech after pointing out that although Abraham Lincoln had once done legal work in Illinois for the same railway companies that he later patronized as a passenger, nobody had raised an eyebrow. He added that he was "about fed up" with this blatant double standard and called for its replacement by triple and even quadruple standards.

President Bush used the occasion of his address to state that his partnership role in the Texas Switch & Bait Corporation, a discount retail appliance vender, consisted of little more than dropping by the company's headquarters every Saturday to pick up his complimentary home-entertainment equipment, "just like any other American family man doing his Saturday chores." The experience, he continued, had taught him a valuable life lesson: "Even free appliances can weigh a ton, I tell ya."

Mr. Cheney called for an end to innuendo about his activities in a now bankrupt Pitcairn Island firm that sold itself the air rights to a million acres of West Texas flatlands, deducted the transaction from its taxes as an entertainment expense, then borrowed fourteen million dollars interest-free from the Liechtenstein bank it owned, using its assets of company-acquired Callaway golf clubs as collateral, to finance the purchase of gifts for some Bessarabian oil prospectors who were then passing through Dallas.

The President concluded his address by promising to "keep hammering away" at business corruption, targeting corporate limousine drivers who double-park as the real culprits in eroding the public's confidence in major financial institutions. Vice-President Cheney, in his windup, shed new light on his tenure as chairman of the now beleaguered Halliburton company by admitting that he might have been guilty of hiring dumb secretaries who kept typing the wrong figures but always started crying if he corrected them. "And just look what I get for trying to be a good guy," he said. ♦

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ANNALS OF CONSUMPTION

THE VIKING INVASION

How trophy stoves took over the kitchen.

BY MOLLY O'NEILL

A hundred years ago, Greenwood, Mississippi, in the heart of the Delta, was the cotton capital of the world. Now many of the squat brick buildings downtown are vacant, and Greenwood seems stuck in an era when shoe repair, sewing notions, and feed stores were big business. Fewer than twenty thousand people live within the city limits, although when the households of the surrounding county are added, the area has a population of about thirty-seven thousand. It is, as residents say, one of the poorest places in the poorest part of the country.

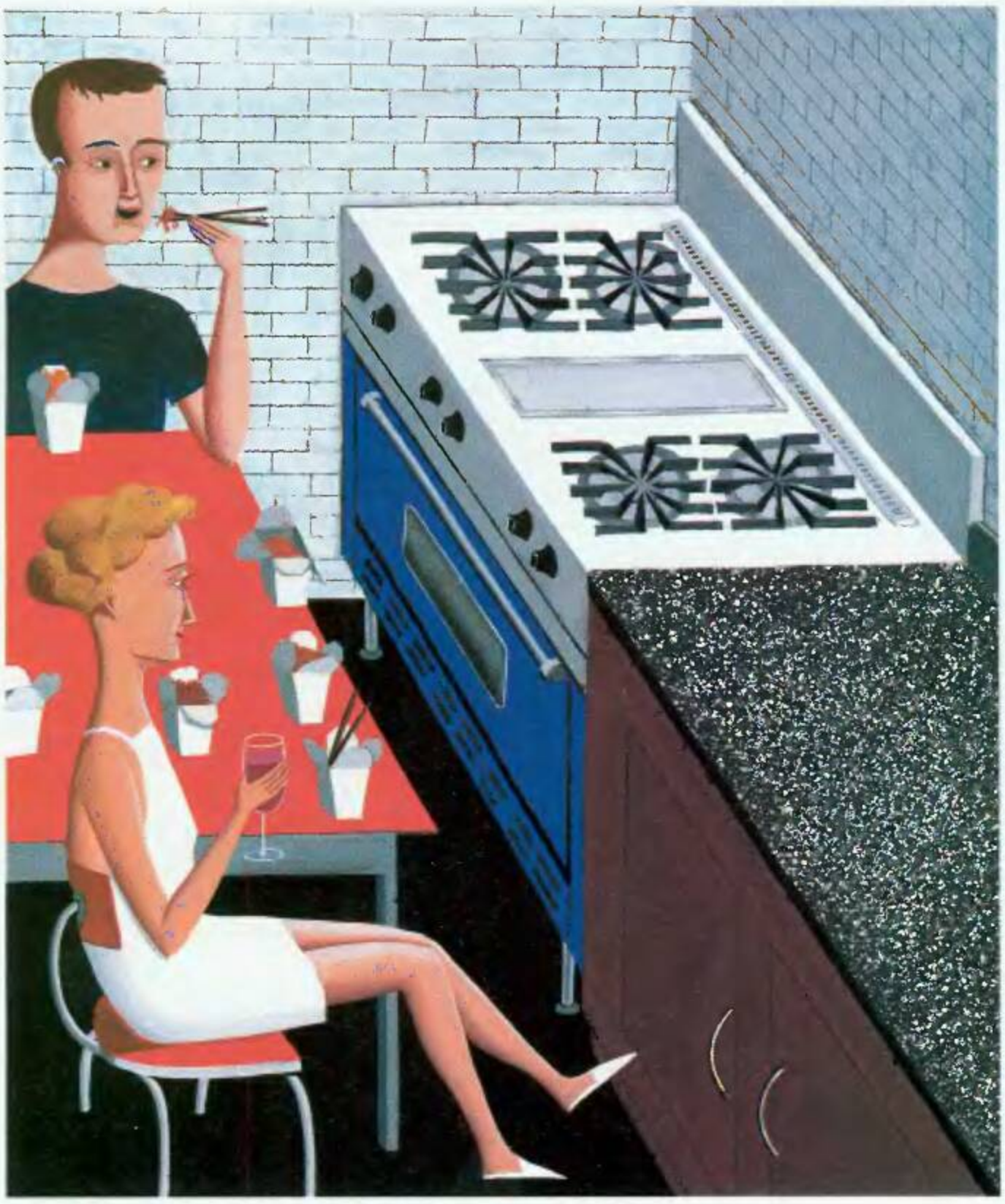
Nevertheless, in some respects, Greenwood recalls a way of life that many Americans feel they have lost. The outskirts of town are fringed by cotton, corn, and soybean fields, and acre after acre of the square, watery pens where catfish are farmed. Blues performances are advertised on hand-painted signs stuck to telephone poles, and people sell their folk art—paintings, bottle-cap constructions, primitive whirligigs—from their homes. In the early morning, the sounds of duck calls and shotguns ring against the hydrangea-blue sky. Hickory smoke hangs in the evening air as hints of pork, cumin, and ketchup mix with the smells of fried chicken, catfish, baked ham, and redeye gravy. Instead of restaurants and takeout places, there are oil drums rigged for barbecue in people's back yards.

Most people drive around Greenwood in pickup trucks with gun racks or small, late-model American cars, but shiny new S.U.V.s, Subarus, and Volvos are usually parked in front of the old opera house on the banks of the Yazoo River, where the Viking Range Corporation installed its headquarters fifteen years ago. Formerly divided into storefronts, the renovated Victorian building is a curious amalgam of past and present: the exterior has retained its New Orleans-style porch and curlicue ironwork, but through the front door one can glimpse a spare white industrial interior that looks like a loft in SoHo. Just to the left of the entrance, one last storefront remains: a tiny establishment with the words "Buford Cotton" on its awning. This enterprise appears to be moribund, but the proprietor, Bubbe Buford—who spends much of his day shooing the cars of Viking visitors out of the single parking space in front of his store—won't sell.

Just inside the Viking headquarters is a 90-C Special Deluxe Model Chambers Range—an Ozzie-and-Harriet-vintage white enamel gas stove with six burners, two ovens, and big chrome knobs. Manufactured in 1948, and weighing in at five hundred and forty-five pounds, the Chambers, which is displayed in an elevated niche, is the honored ancestor of all Viking ranges. Fred Carl, the company's fifty-four-year-old founder, told me that the stove originally belonged to his grandmother-in-law.

"When I could finally afford to build my wife a decent kitchen, she wanted a range just like her grandmama's, but they didn't make them like that anymore," Carl said as we sat in his office on the second floor of the opera house. And so he set out to design one, and ended up creating a new category of—and price range for—kitchen stoves. I was already familiar with this story; it is the standard introduction to the Viking legend, quoted by every person who works for the company and included in most of its publicity materials. But Carl's soft Delta drawl was tinged with wonder, and I scribbled down his words as if I'd never heard them before.

Carl is a short, thick, partly bald man with a neatly trimmed white beard. He wears short-sleeved cotton shirts—plaids or prints, mostly—and khaki trousers. He is perpetually



Owners happily anticipate that someday they will begin to cook seriously.

KATHY OSBORN

flushed and morbidly shy. When he was young, he was kind of a geek; now his physical restlessness and the darting motion of his blue eyes behind his wire-rimmed glasses suggest a man with unlimited physical and creative energy. This quality, coupled with an obsessive persistence, has earned him acceptance in the kitchen-appliance industry—a closed and deeply conservative society that tends to shun newcomers.

Carl's father was a building contractor in Greenwood, as was his grandfather; Carl never questioned that he, too, would be in the building business, but he wanted to be a designer or an architect. When he was a young boy, he tried to design a better dump truck and moved on to make sketches for a gravel-washing plant, a boarding school, and a military academy. Carl even wanted to build a better Disneyland. But his enduring passion was Greenwood. "I'd look at the old, ugly buildings and wonder how I could make it pretty and right," he said. "I wanted to make the perfect Main Street, U.S.A."

After his sophomore year of college, he joined the Navy and served two years in Iceland before returning to Mississippi to finish his business degree, at Delta State University. Carl had hoped to go on to study architecture; then his father, a brilliant builder but a terrible businessman, lost everything. "I'd signed some loans for him," Carl said, "so there I was, twenty-three years old, married, my parents broken and needing my help, and I'm bankrupt, feeling like this little boy, this little piece of dirt."

For ten years, Carl worked in construction and sold Herman Miller office furniture to hospitals to pay off the family's business debts. To escape the tedium of these jobs, he stayed up late, immersed in what he called his "side projects," studying architecture newsletters and books like "Eames Design" and "High Tech." Gradually, he became the leading contractor in Greenwood, specializing in contemporary houses complete with the industrial-style kitchens he'd seen in postmodern design books. To lure customers, Carl set up a showroom where he displayed cabinetry by Rutt, as well as appliances by Thermador, KitchenAid, Sub-Zero, and Jenn-Air. The showroom barely broke even.

In the early eighties, when Carl's wife, Margaret, requested a sturdy, old-fashioned stove, he began to consider designing something that was both more powerful and more stylish than the typical General Electric. Suddenly, cooking and life-style magazines were full of restaurant stoves, and his customers wanted to buy them. "They'd be putting in a fifty-thousand-dollar kitchen, they'd ask me to put in a commercial range, and I'd have to tell them it was too dangerous," said Carl. "It says so right on the label on the back of those ranges: 'Not for Household Use.' " The stoves made exclusively for restaurants can pose a fire hazard in private homes, because they are not well insulated; they depend on the firewalls, insulation, and venting systems that are customary in a restaurant kitchen. But Carl also thought that industrial ranges were energy hogs, and impractical for home cooks because they have no broiler. He began doodling—in his truck while waiting for deliveries at construction sites, at his desk while talking to suppliers on the phone. He worked on specifications for insulation, pilot lights, and broilers. Soon he was thinking about stoves all day long and trying to run his construction business at night. After eighteen months, he'd come up with a design.

For the next two years, Carl met with most of the major commercial stove manufacturers in the United States and tried to persuade them to buy his design; they were not impressed. Failing to sell his idea, he paid the U.S. Range Corporation, in Gardena, California, to manufacture his stove. "I was convinced that if I built something beautiful and powerful and safe, there were people out there who'd buy it," Carl said. He waved

his hand toward the Yazoo River outside his office window, as if to direct my eye past the river to the world beyond the Delta.

In 1986, Patricia King was renovating her kitchen on Waverly Place, in New York City. King, who works with her husband in his mailing-list brokerage business, is an avid cook. She wanted a restaurant stove, and she was dismayed when her architect showed her the ductwork and insulation that local ordinances required. "I would have lost six square feet," she said. King wasn't willing to sacrifice that much of her kitchen.

Then, after months of research, her architect produced a photocopy of a flyer describing the Viking range—one of several thousand flyers that Carl, despairing of finding a national distributor, had mailed to kitchen designers around the country. It was a massive restaurant-stove look-alike, and although Viking later became known for its stainless-steel ranges, the first model was black enamel. It had a big oven and a powerful gas broiler, and it was well insulated—King could use all six burners at once without setting her house on fire. The price of that first Viking was three thousand dollars, approximately three times as much as a conventional range. When King put down a hundred-dollar deposit, she had no idea that the Viking Range Corporation had yet to build a single stove and that it had precisely two (unpaid) employees: Carl and his assistant, Tawana Thompson. Carl framed King's check, but even before he shipped her range—nine months later and six months behind schedule—he was forced to cash it.

King's new range was a disaster. The electric pilots didn't work properly, and gas leaked into the kitchen. The oven doors would not stay open; once, as she was putting a pumpkin pie in the oven the door slammed, burning her hand. As each problem arose, King called Viking headquarters; Carl had recruited several friends, including an engineer, to help him part time, and Viking's entire staff, now numbering four, would get on the line. Sometimes, Viking sent in a local appliance repairman, and Carl talked him through the job over the phone. Once, the company even flew in engineers. "They must have rebuilt that stove about four times," King said. "I began to suspect they'd sold me a prototype, but they were so nice and they cared so much I couldn't get mad." In early 1988, her range was finally working well, and the company sent King a basket shaped like the state of Mississippi filled with gourmet food from the Delta. The card was addressed: "To the director of the Viking Range Corporation New York Test Kitchen."

By then, Carl had gathered a group of ten partners—including his doctor, the local Chevron distributor, an insurance agent, and several farmers, each of whom invested an average of twelve thousand six hundred dollars—and rented a small abandoned factory in Greenwood. In 1989, he began building his own stoves.

For serious cooks, the appeal of the Viking stove lies in its size and power. Its burners, unlike those of most domestic ranges, are powerful enough to sear ingredients, caramelizing their exterior and sealing in the moisture. (Food sautéed on a conventional range often dries out before it browns.) The size of the range also allows an ambitious cook to prepare simultaneously all the components of a fashionably layered dish, such as Chilean sea bass with pan-roasted wild mushrooms, herbed polenta, wilted greens, and a preserved-lemon sauce. The broiler is powerful enough to crisp sugar over a crème brûlée in an instant, and its oven is large enough to bake a Thanksgiving meal for twenty.

Carl couldn't afford to advertise extensively, so he offered to lend his ranges to chefs, food writers, cooking-school teachers, and television cooks. Soon, chefs and food writers were calling the Viking "the Mercedes-Benz of stoves." When I was building a test kitchen for a Web-based food-media company I had co-founded, a public-relations firm representing Viking called me and offered to outfit it. The strategy worked: like thousands of other food professionals, I was impressed by the appliance's look, power, and easy maintenance.

Word of the luxury range—and its growing market—eventually reached Stephens Inc., the investment bank, based in Little Rock, Arkansas, that had taken Wal-Mart public. In 1992, when several of Carl's investors became impatient and threatened to take over his company, Stephens stepped in, assigned the Viking Range Corporation a value of ten million dollars, formed a partnership with management to buy the company, and appointed Carl the C.E.O.

Stephens's investment allowed Carl to attract experienced executives to Greenwood, double the size of the company's factory space, and increase its advertising budget. That year, as the company's annual Christmas party approached, Dale Persons, its vice-president of public affairs, begged Patricia King to find her cancelled hundred-



dollar check, which Carl had always regretted cashing. After several days of rummaging around, she found the check and sent it back to Greenwood. Not long afterward, Carl shipped King a new stainless-steel range.

Doug Martin, who oversees the Stephens partnership with the Viking Range Corporation, knew nothing about stoves, but he knew that the Viking range could appeal to more than a few hundred thousand cooking-obsessed Americans. "We saw this whole demographic of baby boomers moving into the time of their life when they have disposable income, saw them spending on their homes, especially their kitchens. They wanted solid, ultra-premium, they wanted stainless steel. It didn't matter what it was, as long as it was stainless steel."

Months after Stephens invested in the company, its advertising firm, the Ramey Agency, of Jackson, began creating an ambitious print and television campaign that placed the thoroughly modern range alongside potent icons of the past: in one ad, the industrial-looking stove gleamed in an amber-hued kitchen of vintage linens, heirloom silver, and an old farmhouse table. The campaign proved so successful that Viking reportedly had twenty million dollars' worth of orders backlogged for twenty-two weeks. In 1994, Carl instituted the Toyota Production System, making each range to order and shipping it within a month. It takes twenty-three people three hours to turn out a range: to shape the 18-gauge sheet metal, bake on its porcelain coating, and assemble the parts.

Meanwhile, in New York, King received a letter from Fred Carl, telling her that she was now one of many celebrities—including Bill Cosby, Madonna, and Alexander Haig—who owned a Viking. At her dinner parties, the guests were talking less about her cooking and more about her stove. "The Viking had become the darling of the entire swanky de-luxe set in the United States," she said. "It's not just a stove—it's a trophy."

Stoves have always been status symbols in America. In the Colonial era, even fireplaces were signs of conspicuous consumption: built without angling walls to slow the draft or help radiate the heat, they burned fuel swiftly, displaying the owner's access to the rich timber resources of the New World. As the Colonial population grew, however, the wood supply dwindled, and stoves—which burned fuel more efficiently and provided steadier heat—became more popular. By 1820, stoves were outfitted with cooking tops and began to compete with the fireplace in meal preparation as well.

The storage area of the Albany Institute of History and Art, in New York State, contains a collection of about fifty American stoves made between the early nineteenth and the early twentieth century. Tammis Groft, the chief curator at the institute and one of the country's leading cast-iron-stove scholars, recently gave me a tour. "From the beginning," she said, "stoves were a very accurate reflection of aesthetic taste and what people cared about."

The earliest American stoves are small and squat, decorated with Gothic-style bas-reliefs of Biblical scenes. With the birth of the new republic, Moses' tablets and Noah's ark gave way to eagles and stars-and-stripes. By the mid-nineteenth century, when the art of casting iron reached its height, stoves had become pieces of sculpture, advertising their owners' wealth. In the institute's collection, there are stoves cast as miniature Federalist-style houses, stoves with twin columns molded into dolphin shapes, stoves whose walls feature intricate pastoral scenes of flowers and birds.

As the century progressed, however, the hearth became a focal point for a number of social anxieties, from industrialization to immigration and urban growth. "Whenever the culture gets scared, it runs home, and there is no more powerful symbol of home and family than the stove," Priscilla Brewer, a historian and the author of "From Fireplace to Cookstove," said. But the stove's symbolic value cut both ways: some nineteenth-century social critics blamed stoves for the breakdown of the American home, just as twentieth-century observers would mourn the demise of home cooking. In an 1843 essay, "Fire Worship," Nathaniel Hawthorne bemoaned "the invaluable moral influence which we have lost by our desertion of the open fireplace," even as he installed stylish stoves throughout his house.

There were also misgivings about the hygiene and culinary superiority of stoves. Catharine E. Beecher and her sister Harriet Beecher Stowe argued that food had tasted better when it was cooked over the fire or in the chimney. "We cannot but regret, for the sake of the bread, that our old steady brick ovens have been almost universally superseded by those of ranges and cooking stoves," they wrote in their book "The American Woman's Home" (1869). The authors were part of the growing Cult of Domesticity, a nineteenth-century movement that glorified the quotidian, the traditional, the handmade. In response, stove manufacturers published cookbooks and sponsored cooking schools, adroitly positioning themselves as indispensable to the return to a simple life while simultaneously encouraging the notion that everything, including the hearth, could be improved upon.

By the eighteen-seventies, the stove industry had moved from New York to the Midwest, fleeing the violent labor uprisings among the ironworkers in the Albany-Troy area. In Michigan, Illinois, and Ohio, cast-iron cookstoves evolved into ranges constructed of sheet metal. And as wood fuel gave way to coal, and then to oil, gas, and electricity, the art of cooking came to seem more like a science, a by-product of technological innovation. The 1907 Acorn cookstove in the Albany collection—a shapely black cast-iron box with six burners, a single oven, short church-lady legs, and shiny nickel-plated decorations—looks like a grandmother of the modern range. And although many wealthy Americans are still seduced by the promises of industrial-strength stoves like the Viking, others have become more enamored of their predecessors. "At the beginning of the twentieth century, people were nostalgic for fireplaces," Groft said. "Today, everybody's nostalgic for stoves like the Acorn."

Edward Semmelroth, the thirty-four-year-old founder of antique-stoves.com, can't restore old stoves fast enough to satisfy his customers. Semmelroth is tall, lumbering, and bespectacled, and he lives in Tekonsha, Michigan. One of about fifty antique-

stove dealers in the United States, he chose his occupation for sentimental reasons. "I wanted to be born before planned obsolescence," he explained. "You know, when Dad worked and Mom stayed at home, and every town had a diner and chrome was king—the kind of stuff that gives you a warm and fuzzy feeling." For years, he lived a life of quiet tinkering, not unlike that of an appliance repairman in the nineteen-fifties. Then suddenly, in the early nineties, he started getting twenty to thirty calls a day—"the Hollywood types, big corporate types, techie types, the super rich."

Like Fred Carl, Semmelroth reads food magazines, but he isn't looking at the pictures; he's looking for recipes. And the more articles he reads about the demise of home cooking in America the more his telephone rings. Semmelroth calls this "the great compensation." Not surprisingly, stoves like the Magic Chef and the Chambers—the white enamel ranges from the twenties and thirties, the green-and-cream models from the thirties and forties, and the rare bright blue, red, and yellow models of the fifties—are now the most sought-after. "They have that retro chic, the beginnings of an industrial look," he said. "They are big enough to be restaurant stoves and outfitted for much more ambitious cooking."

Semmelroth has about fifty antique stoves in his own collection, and another two hundred or so that are being restored. Behind the nineteenth-century farmhouse where he lives with his mother, there are three barns full of stoves and two additional acres covered with the stoves that he keeps for parts. He won't touch a stove made after 1955. "They're all hunks of junk," he said. "Don't get me wrong, these new industrial ones are almost an exception. They are a step back in the right direction, if you know what I mean. But all that electric gadgetry—the electric pilots, the convection function—isn't going to hold up. I bet you that nobody's going to be cooking on a Viking or a Wolf a hundred years from now."

The choicest pieces in Semmelroth's collection are on display about a half a mile from his home, in his storefront showroom in downtown Tekonsha. Visiting his store is not unlike touring the storage area at the Albany Institute. Semmelroth is particularly proud of his Magic Chef 6300, which was built in 1930. An austere, no-nonsense range, it weighs seven hundred and forty-five pounds and has eight burners. Below the burners is a large, all-purpose oven, and stacked to its right are a bread-warming oven, a baking oven, and two broiling ovens. The range was built in Lorraine, Ohio, and originally cost six hundred dollars. "At that time, you could get a brand-new Chevy for sixteen hundred dollars," Semmelroth said. Like the grand custom-cast stoves of the nineteenth century, the de-luxe models of the early twentieth century were owned by wealthy people who kept household staffs and entertained frequently. Semmelroth, who found this particular stove in a former diplomat's home in Yonkers, spent several hundred hours restoring it and plans to sell it for just over twenty thousand dollars.

It can take weeks of trial and error, Semmelroth says, to learn which burners on a vintage range run hot enough to sauté and which will burn the Teflon off a nonstick skillet. Nevertheless, he cooks regularly on his stoves—for his mother, for the two friends who work part time for him, and for anyone who happens into his shop. He simmers soups from the baby vegetables that a farmer friend sets aside for him, roasts the free-range chickens that another friend delivers, pan-fries fish from Lake Michigan, and makes fresh bread and pastry. "I'm like, you know, retro nerd meets gourmet snob," he says. "I'm almost cool."

Semmelroth knows, however, that forty-nine out of fifty of his customers are merely buying a design element; that's why he's finding it hard to part with his Magic Chef. He has a waiting list of ten potential purchasers, but so far none meet his standards. "I want this baby to go to a cooking home," he said. And that's a problem. The people who can afford to buy vintage stoves cook even less than the average American. In fact, like the people who buy industrial ranges, they hardly cook at all.



Five years ago, Fred Carl gave a Viking range to Tawana Thompson, the employee who has been with him the longest. She never uses it. "I live alone, I get home late, I microwave something to eat," Thompson said. "But I love looking at my Viking. Sometimes, I turn it on just to feel its power." The salespeople who distribute and sell Viking ranges estimate that the vast majority of their customers are "look, don't cook" people, who prepare elaborate meals only on holidays or special occasions. Most Viking owners are happily anticipating a time when they can start cooking seriously—whether or not that time will ever come. Trophy stoves are the culinary equivalent of a retirement plan; as some save for a world tour or a Florida condo, others now invest in a showcase kitchen. The Viking range symbolizes its owner's intention to have, one day, the family life that is supposed to go with it.

The Carls live in a modest Creole-style house in northeast Greenwood, where, at least once a week, a small crowd assembles for dinner. The night that I joined them, there were about a dozen adults gathered around a central island in the kitchen—relatives, friends, and those Carl calls "members of the Viking family"—and several children playing in the adjoining room. But there were no vials of two-hundred-year-old *balsamico* in the kitchen, no imported cheeses warming on the sideboard, and neither Fred nor Margaret did any cooking. The two matriarchs, JoJo Leflore and Lorraine Carl, made dinner. As Lorraine Carl later told me, "You don't need fancy food if you have family to eat with, and Freddy always understood that."

The mothers had put an eggplant casserole in one of the two ovens of the Carls' Viking range before I arrived. They conferred on the seasoning for what they called gravy—a red Bolognese-style sauce made with a shoulder roast, tomato paste, onions, garlic, basil, oregano, sugar, salt, and a heap of black pepper—which was simmering on the

stove. Fred Carl offered drinks; Margaret Carl set the table and chatted. While JoJo Leflore put on the water for pasta shells, we dug into smoked pork ribs.

People served themselves, heaping their plates from the platters that were arranged on the counter. As they moved into the dining room, Fred Carl said, "Most people don't have this. They feel like something's missing—something that works, something that lasts." It is precisely this sense of deprivation that Carl has so adeptly exploited. Analysts estimate that in the year 2000 the Viking Range Corporation generated two hundred million dollars in sales. Carl intends to more than double this figure over the next five years.

Viking's success has spawned many competitors; small companies like Dacor and Wolf and appliance giants like Thermador, Frigidaire, and General Electric began introducing commercial-style ranges for the home. The knock-offs may not all be as durable or as powerful as a Viking, but they usually cost less, and tend to be more widely available and easier to service. Viking's service has not kept up with the company's expansion, and the formerly unimpeachable range has begun to garner occasional criticism.

Viking's luxury status is also being challenged. Upscale shelter magazines have moved on to other stoves, like La Cornue, AGA, and Diva de Provence. An elaborate French-made country-style range, La Cornue costs between eleven thousand and twenty-eight thousand dollars, and is now sold by Williams-Sonoma. In part, the range's chic is based on scarcity. Tiny companies like La Cornue make several hundred stoves a year; Viking produces that many in a week.

In response, Carl is diversifying furiously. He has expanded his line to include wall ovens and cooktops, refrigerators, dishwashers, trash compactors, pots and pans, and cutlery. He has bought Rutt and St. Charles, another cabinet company he admires—"St. Charles cabinets! Fallingwater has St. Charles cabinets!"—and he plans to introduce small electrical appliances, such as mixers, blenders, and microwave ovens, over the next few years. An increasing number of developers are installing complete Viking kitchens in luxury homes and apartments.

Viking is now Greenwood's second-largest employer, after the local medical center, and Carl has been buying up as much real estate in town as he can. He is spending several million dollars on renovating the long-vacant Hotel Irving and reclaiming many other buildings downtown, and his new project is occupying more and more of his workday. "Things are starting to move in this old Delta," he said. Pushing aside the two books on his desk—"Taking Charge" and "The Disney Way"—he drew a map of the area on a yellow legal pad, tracing a triangle that began in Greenwood and spread west toward Cleveland and Clarksdale.

"The blues triangle!" he cried. "We're starting right here with the Hotel Irving and building a blues-tourism industry—restaurants, hotels, folk life. A blues hall of fame! We're pulling together the people and the money. It could save this old state. Anyway, I don't think we've begun to tap the market for super-premium ranges. At least, I hope we haven't," he added, laughing.

"I was reading in a magazine about the Land Rover Company and how they set up these places where people could learn how to drive the car on all sorts of terrain," he went on. "Don't you think people should be able to test-drive a Viking range, too?" To that end, Carl plans to spend more than thirty million dollars to open several dozen Viking Culinary Arts Centers across the country over the next five years. He has already opened two, one in Memphis and the other in Nashville. The centers include retail stores, where steel shelves are stocked with gourmet groceries, copper bowls, and porcelain molds. They have amphitheatres, for cooking demonstrations. And, of course, they have sprawling kitchens, for classes where potential customers can pay to try out every appliance that the Viking Range Corporation makes.

The centers won't sell Viking stoves, however; anyone who feels like ordering one will have to go to a distributor. As Fred Carl knows, the supply of customers willing to pay for trophy stoves just to look at them is finite, so he's resorting to extreme measures: "We're going to teach people how to cook." ♦

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PROFILES

MR. BROWN

On the road with His Bad Self.

BY PHILIP GOUREVITCH

Forty-seven years ago, at a radio station in Macon, Georgia, five young men stood around a microphone and sang a song. One played guitar, another played piano, but the station's recording equipment picked up the instruments so faintly that the tape they made that day is often recalled as an a-cappella performance. The lead singer was shorter than the others. He had to stand on an overturned Coca-Cola crate to get his mouth level with the mike. When the tape started rolling, he cried out the word "Please" with an immensity of feeling that might, more conventionally, have been reserved for a song's climax. Then he cried out again, "Please," and again and again, "Please, please," at heartbeat intervals. With each repetition, he invested the monosyllable with a different emotional accent and stress—prayer and pride, impatience and invitation—and although there was ache in his voice, he did not sound like a man pleading so much as commanding what was rightfully his. After his fourth "Please," the rest of the group filled in softly behind him, crooning, "Please, please don't go," until the lead singer's colossal voice surged back over theirs: "Please, please, please." That was the name of the song, the same word thrice, and, like all truly original things, this song had a past to which it simultaneously paid tribute and bid adieu. Its genesis lay in a rearrangement of the standard "Baby Please Don't Go," so that the rhythmic backup line became the lead, and the melodic lead was relegated to the chorus. A simple gimmick; but, as "Please, Please, Please" progressed, the lead singer's initial passion only intensified, and it became clear that the reversal of foreground and background voices reflected a deliberate emotional attitude that brought a bold new energy and freedom to the spirit of black popular music. Instead of describing feelings in the smooth lyrical surface of a tune you could whistle or at least hum, the singer created the impression of sounds rising untamed from the rawness and obscurity of a soul that refused all masks.

The song was over in less than three minutes, but that time had the sense of compressed eternity which one experiences in the memory of dreams. Transcribed as text, the words suggest a man gnawing at the last frayed ends of his tether, yet the febrile repetitions, elongations, and elisions of the singer's phrasing make of these words not a lament but a rhapsody, even an ecstasy:

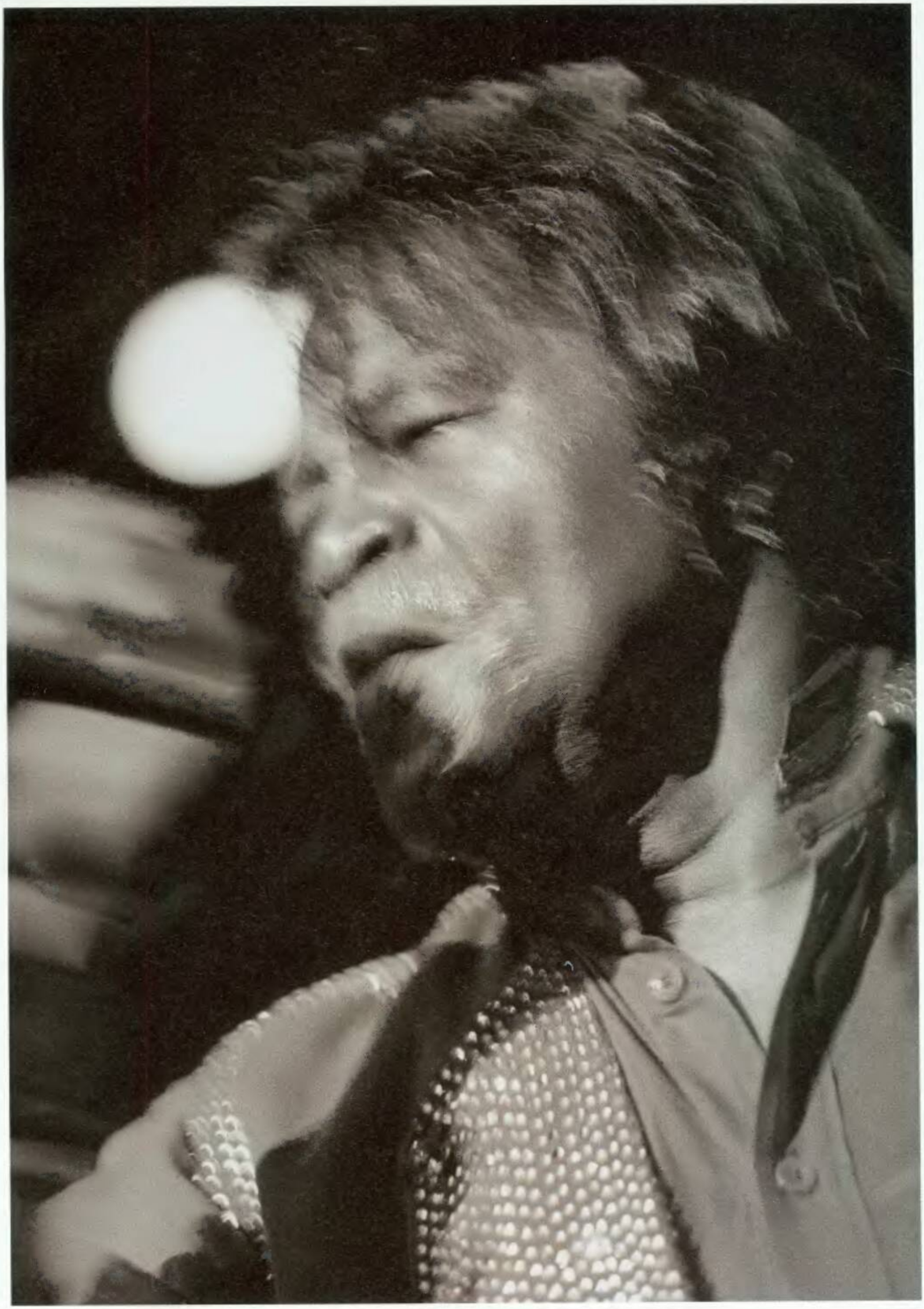
> Please. Please. Please. Please. Please. Please. Please. Honey, please! Don't. Yeah! Oh, yeaah. Oh. I love you so. Baby! You did me wrong. Whoa! Whoa-oh. You done me wrong. You know you done! Done me wrong. Whoa. Oh yeah! You took my love. And now you're gone. Please! Please. Please. Please. Please. Please. Please. Please. Please. Please. Please. Honey, please. Don't! Whoah. Oh, yeah. Lord. I love you so. I just want to hear you say, I . . . I . . . I . . . I . . . I . . . I . . . I . . . I! Honey, please. Don't. Oh! Oh, yeah. Oh. I love you so. Baby! Take my hand. I want to be your lover man. Oh, yes. Good God almighty. Honey, please! Don't. Ohhh. Oh. Yeahh. Lord. I love you so! Pleeeeeeeease. Don't go. Pleeee-ee-eease. Don't go. Honey, please don't go. Oh. I love you so. Please. Please.

The song doesn't tell a story so much as express a condition. The singer might be speaking from the cradle of his lover's arms, or chasing her down a street, or watching the lights of her train diminish in the night; he might be crouched alone in an alleyway, or wandering an empty house, or smiling for all the world to see while his words rattle, unspoken, inside his skull. He could be anyone anywhere. His lover might be dying. He might be dying. He might not even be addressing an actual lover. He could be speaking of someone or something he's never had. He could be talking to God, or to the Devil. It doesn't matter. Despite the implication of a story, a specific predicament, the song is abstract. The words jockey for release and describe the impossibility of release, yet the singing is pure release, defiant, exultant. Speech is inadequate, so the singer makes music, and music is inadequate, so he makes his music speak. Feeling is stripped to its essence, and the feeling is the whole story. And, if that feeling seems inelegant, the singer's immaculately disciplined performance makes his representation of turmoil unmistakably styled and stylish—the brink of frenzy as a style unto itself.

A few months after the Macon recording session, Ralph Bass, a talent scout for King Records, heard a copy of the tape in Atlanta. King was one of the country's leading independent labels, with a particularly strong catalogue of what was then known as "race music"—the music produced by black artists for black audiences which, despite its ghettoized marketing label, was already widely recognized by the mid-fifties as the defining sound of the twentieth century. In the early postwar years especially, King played a big part in bringing rhythm and blues to a national audience, recording and publishing the work of such now largely forgotten acts as Bull Moose Jackson and Eddie (Cleanhead) Vinson, as well as more enduring names: the Five Royales, Little Willie John, and Hank Ballard and the Midnighters. So Ralph Bass knew the repertoire; he'd heard more gravel-voiced shouters, high-pitched keeners, hopped-up rockers, churchy belters, burlesque barkers, doo-wop crooners, and sweet, soft moaners—more lovers, leav-

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GILLES PERESS

James Brown performing in California last summer. "Normally, I just go out there and kill 'em," he said of his audience.





"She could really shop."

• •

ers, losers, loners, lady-killers, lambasters, lounge lizards, lemme-show-you men, and lawdy-be boys—than any dozen jukeboxes could contain. But he had never heard a voice that possessed the essence of all these styles while moving beyond them toward a sound at once more feral and more self-assured, until he heard "Please, Please, Please."

The tape identified the singers collectively as the Famous Flames. That was it: nothing more about them, or where they might be found. The Flames, however, had been performing nearly constantly around Georgia, where they were known as "house-wrecking" showmen who danced as they sang, in paroxysms of astounding acrobatic agility. Bass, a white man who always stayed in black hotels along with the musicians, promoters, and disk jockeys who best knew his terrain, soon tracked down the group's manager at a barbershop in Macon. He brought two hundred dollars in cash and a contract, and declared, "I want them now." The Flames were summoned, they signed, and left for a gig. "I still didn't know who the lead singer was," Bass later told the writer Geoff Brown, but he figured it out that night when he stopped in at the club where the Flames were billed to play at ten o'clock. Right on time, Bass said, "out comes this guy, crawling on his stomach, going from table to table, wherever a pretty girl was sitting, singing, 'Please, Please, Please.' "

This guy was James Brown. He was twenty-two years old, a lithe, rippling sinew of a man, on parole after three years in the state-penitentiary system. He had been locked up at the age of fifteen for stealing from parked cars in Augusta, where he was raised in a whorehouse run by his Aunt Honey. He was a middle-school dropout, with no formal musical training (he could not read a chart, much less write one), yet from early childhood he had realized in himself an intuitive capacity not only to remember and reproduce any tune or riff he heard but also to hear the underlying structures of music, and to make them his own. He had started singing in church, not long after he began walking, and the hand-clapping, stomp-and-shout, get-all-the-way-down-on-your-knees spirit of the Baptist gospel pulpit formed the bedrock of his musical impulse. But his attunement to the sacred never inhibited his appetite for the profane. He claims to have mastered the harmonica at the age of five, blowing "Lost John," "Oh, Susannah," and "John Henry," and one afternoon, when he was seven, he taught himself to play the organ by working out the fingering of "Coonshine Baby." Before long, he was picking up guitar licks to such songs as "(Honey) It's Tight Like That" from the great bluesman Tampa Red, who was dating one of Aunt Honey's girls. By the time he was twelve, the young prodigy was fronting his own group, the Cremona Trio, and winning talent shows with a romping rendition of Louis Jordan's "Caldonia (What Makes Your Big Head So Hard?)." In reform school in the tiny north Georgia town of Toccoa, his nickname was Music Box, and he returned to singing for the Lord, forming a gospel quartet that made its own instruments: a paper-and-comb harmonica, a drum set of old lard tins, a broomstick-and-washtub bass. The warden was impressed, as was a young gospel singer in Toccoa named Bobby Byrd, who'd heard him sing at the prison gate, and offered to give him a home and find him a job if he could win his release. "I want to get out and sing for the Lord," James Brown wrote to the parole board, and although these words suggest an act of a rather different order than the one he and Byrd eventually put together with the Flames, nobody could deny, as he slithered among the ladies on night-club floors, that he sang as if he'd burn in Hell if he stopped.

In February of 1956, the Famous Flames crossed the Mason-Dixon Line for the first time, and drove into Cincinnati, where King Records had its headquarters in an old ice factory. When they were shown into the studio, King's founder and president, Syd Nathan, was seated in the sound booth—a fat little man with a big cigar, a shouter and a bully, who reminded James Brown of Edward G. Robinson in "Little Caesar." Nathan's first impression of his new talent was equally unflattering: the Flames were barely a minute into "Please, Please, Please" when he exploded from his chair, hollering, "What in hell are they doing? Stop the tape," and "Nobody wants to hear that noise," and "It's a stupid song," and so on, until he stalked out. In his autobiography, the singer recalled protesting to King's music director, "Mr. Nathan

doesn't understand it. Everybody's music can't be alike."

The tape got made, and Nathan still hated it. When Ralph Bass heard of the debacle, he was in St. Louis. "I get Syd on the phone," he told Geoff Brown. "He's yelling . . . 'That's the worst piece of shit I've ever heard! He's just singing one word. It sounds like he's stuttering.' . . . Before I could say anything, Syd says, 'You're fired!' But I knew what I had. I had been playing the dub from town to town, in every hotel I stayed. And the women would go crazy. I told Syd, 'Don't fire me. Put it out in Atlanta, test it. You'll see.' He says, 'Fuck it, I'm putting it out cross-country, just to prove what a piece of shit it is.'"

Within a year, the song had climbed to sixth place on the R. & B. charts, and was on its way to selling more than a million records; the band had a new manager, Ben Bart, of Universal Attractions in New York, who began booking the act—and its recording and publishing credits—as James Brown and the Famous Flames. The rest of the group, embittered at being upstaged, quit, leaving James Brown feeling both bereft and liberated. "I was sorry," he wrote. "I was heartbroken. . . . They couldn't see that we were really just getting started. There's not much more I can say about it except that they went home, and when they went home I kept going."

I'M BACK!

Mr. Brown, as he insists on being addressed, has described himself as "the Napoleon of the stage," and, like the French emperor, he has a compact body, with a big head and big hands, and a taste for loud, tightly fitted costumes. One evening not long ago, in a dressing room at the great Art Deco pile of the Paramount Theatre in Oakland, California, as his valet Roosevelt Johnson ironed a gold lamé suit with heavily fringed epaulettes for the night's performance, Mr. Brown sat before a mirror contemplating his reflection. His totemic hair—an inky, blue-black processed pompadour, "fried, dyed, and laid to the side"—was bunched up in curlers, awaiting release. A black silk shirt hung open from his shoulders, baring a boyishly smooth and muscular torso for a man who says he's sixty-nine and is alleged by various old spoilers down South to be as much as five years older. He had just finished refurbishing the thick greasepaint of his eyebrows and, wielding a wedge-shaped sponge, was lightening the upper edges of his high, flat cheekbones with some latte-colored paste. He studied his smile, a wide, gleaming streak of dental implants whose electrifying whiteness might have made Melville blink. In show business, he has said, "Hair is the first thing, and teeth are the second. Hair and teeth. A man got those two things, he's got it all." Still, he looked tired and lonely and even smaller than he is, as old men tend to look when applying their makeup.

In performance, however, he makes the stage look small, and wears his years with a survivor's defiant pride. James Brown is, after all, pretty universally recognized as the dominant song-and-dance man of the past half century in black-American music, perhaps in American popular music as a whole: he is the source of more hits than anyone of any color after Elvis Presley. He stands virtually unrivalled as the preëminent pioneer and practitioner of the essential black musical styles of the sixties and early seventies—soul and funk—and the progenitor of rap and hip-hop. Since 1968, however, he has had only one Top Ten hit, "Living in America," from the 1985 soundtrack to Sylvester Stallone's "Rocky IV," which was followed by a period of seeming ruin, marked by serial scrapes with the law on charges of spousal abuse (later dropped) and drug possession, and a return to jail, from 1988 to 1991, after he led a fleet of police cars on a high-speed chase back and forth across the Georgia-South Carolina border. Yet his iconic stature as an entertainer has steadily increased in the decade since his release, and his return to the stage.

He still performs about fifty concerts a year, and, while his sound and style are always unmistakably his own, he manages in the course of each evening to present a sweeping retrospective not only of his own vast repertoire but of all the musical genres to which his originality pays homage: from the field hollers of slavery, the call-and-response, organ-surging exultation of gospel, the tragicomic clowning of minstrel shows, and the boastful reckonings and imploring incantations of the blues, to the sugary seductions of country balladeers and cosmopolitan crooners, the horns of jazz, the guitars of rock and roll, and the percussive insinuations of a thousand local beats from across America, Africa, and the Caribbean. He has repeatedly revolutionized these traditions, discovering in them previously unexpressed possibilities. In turn, his music and dance moves have been so widely studied, reinterpreted, ripped off, and sampled by so many artists of so many different musical dispositions throughout the world that it has become nearly impossible to say, "This is where James Brown's influence ends and the rest of music begins."



By the time he appears onstage, the show is well under way. If there is a curtain, it has risen (and, if there is none, the lights have done the rising) on his band, the Soul Generals—at last count, fourteen men, ten black, four white—four guitarists, two bassists, two full drum sets, a percussionist, a trumpeter, three saxophonists, and an organist. The players wear uniforms with thigh-length blazers and matching trousers (the color varies from night to night: cherry red or pool-chalk blue), and white shirts with Chippendale collars folded over bow ties, a look that places them about midway on the sartorial trajectory between zoot-suiters and riverboat gamblers. They come on full tilt, cranking a sassy medley of funk hooks for several minutes before a deep, commanding voice with the drawling singsong excitement and syllable-parsing precision of a carnival barker rises over the music: "Ladies and gentlemen, James Brown Enterprises is proud to present the James Brown Show!"

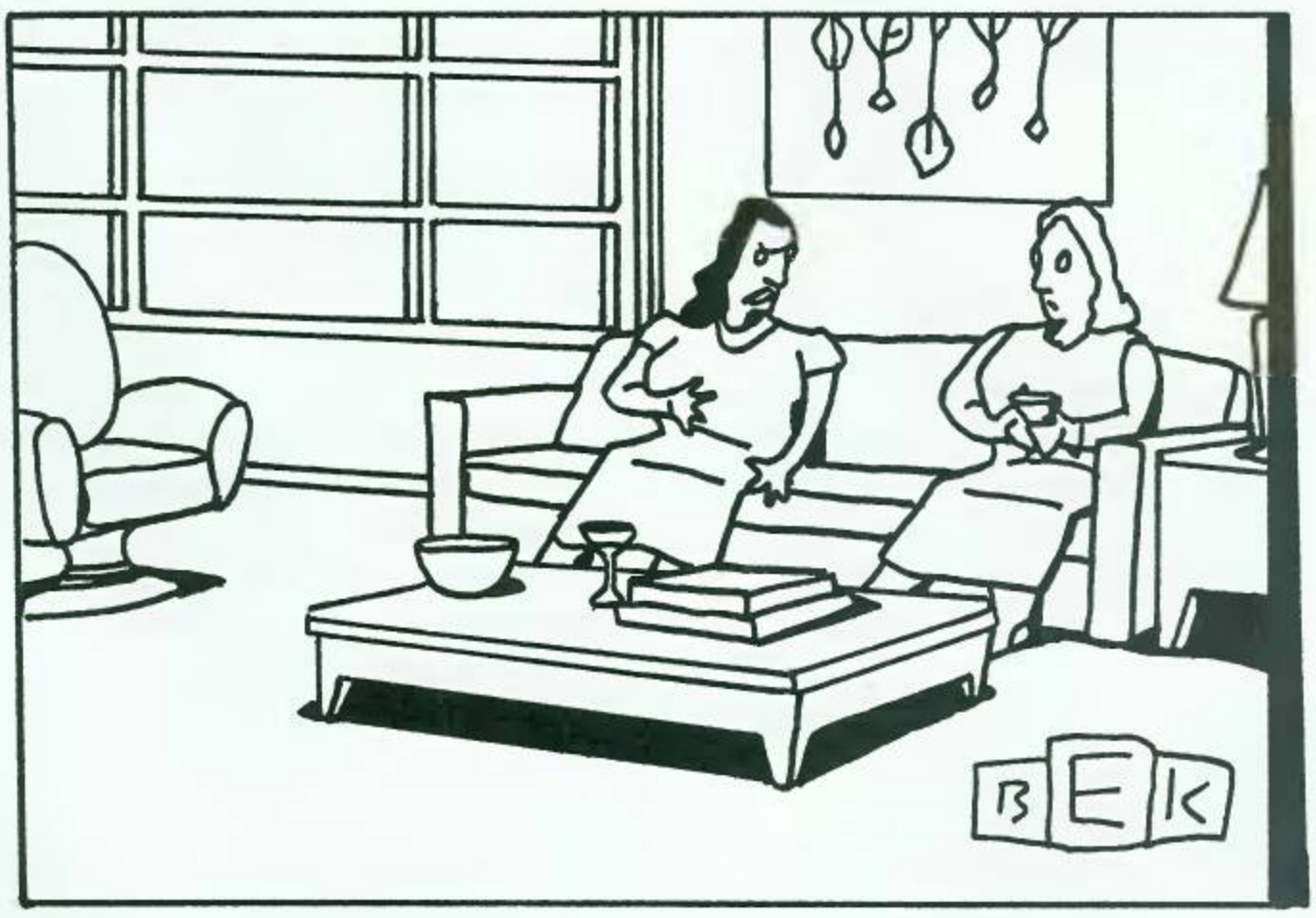
The voice belongs to a diminutive man who stands backstage with a cordless microphone, clad in tails, a high-buttoned vest, a bunched silk cravat, and, on some nights, a cocked fedora. This is Danny Ray, who has been Mr. Brown's master of ceremonies for thirty-eight years. As the band ratchets up to a crescendo, he steps jauntily into view—an astounding apparition, natty as Cab Cal-

loway, with a face as hard-lived and angular as Keith Richards's. "And now," he proclaims, "the Bittersweets." A quartet of lady backup singers saunter onstage, identically and snugly sheathed in black, ankle-length gowns, banded in overlapping, wedding-cake tiers of fringe that ripple to their every twitch and undulation. Two are white (a willowy, porcelain-skinned brunette and a glowing redhead); and two are black (a bouncy, radiant woman with cornrow braids and a massive, heavyset dame hooded in a processed, pumpkin-colored mane). They assemble downstage left, cock their hips, extend their arms with pointed fingers, and coo, "Ooooh, ahhh, gimme some more."

Danny Ray rocks and grins. "And now," he says, holding the "now" for a full second, "let me tell you this." A beat elapses in silence, and Danny Ray continues, "I want to ask you one thing. Are you ready for some su-per, dy-no-mite soul?" The house answers with a deafening "Yes!" "Thank you," he says. "Because right about now it is star time." The band kicks back in, playing canonical riffs from James Brown crowd-pleasers, as each of the Bittersweets takes a turn naming the songs in a lilting arpeggio: "I Feel Good" . . . "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag" . . . "Try Me" . . . "Doin' It to Death." Danny Ray picks up where they leave off—" 'Please, Please, Please' . . . 'Sex Machine' . . . 'I Got the Feelin' ' . . . 'Living in America' "—and with that he starts chanting, "James Brown! James Brown!" The house chants back, full-bore, hands clapping, bodies swinging, and, lest anybody out there still be seated, the Bittersweets start a cheer of their own: "James Brown, git up, git up. James Brown, git up."

Mr. Brown has always regarded his public with an attitude akin to that of a politician on the campaign trail: by their adulation, he says, "the people" made him, and to keep them he must serve them. At the same time, he has the peculiar idiomatic habit of describing himself as a slayer of audiences. "Normally, I just go out there and kill 'em," he declared in the Oakland dressing room. What he means by such remarks is that, for as long as the price of a ticket brings you to him, he will transport you so totally into the grip of his groove that you will forget your mortal coil in eager surrender, and, if he does his job well, he will literally control your breathing as precisely as if he had his hand clenched around your trachea. So the relationship is symbiotic: he gives his all, and asks for nothing less in return. He was in particularly high swagger in Oakland, after leading his band through an afternoon rehearsal of the overture to his entrance. "You gotta hear the new opening," he said. "When I get up there—the audience, they already dead. I just stand there and look around."

This is precisely what he does, and the ebullient commotion of singers and musicians onstage is such that it's easy not to notice him strolling on from the wings until, all at once, there he is: arms out from his sides as if to welcome an embrace, dentistry blazing in a beatific grin, head turning slowly from side to side, eyes goggle-wide—looking downright blown away to find himself the focus of such a rite of overwhelming acclamation. He lingers thus for several seconds, then, throwing his head back, he lets out a happy scream and rips into the song "Make It Funky." Within seconds, he has sent his microphone stand toppling toward the first row of orchestra seats, only to snatch the cord and yank it back, while spinning on the ball of one foot in a perfect pirouette, so that his mouth returns to the mike and the mike to his mouth in the same instant. He howls. The crowd howls back. The music is irresistibly danceable; the whole house is churning, and the Bittersweets are setting the pace, pelvises swivelling, arms cycling, chanting, "Make it funky," while Mr. Brown, whose microphone is lashed to its stand with a fat snarl of electrical tape, drags the whole assembly with him like a mannequin dance partner, as he stalks the edge of the stage, barking, "Tell me. Uh! So it is. Ha! Got to do it now. . . . Oh, yes. Take me home. To the bridge. To the bridge." He screams, he spins, he does the mashed potato—gliding several yards on one foot. He starts the second song with his back to the crowd, then wheels to face it, and cries, "I'm back, I'm back, I'm back, I'm back . . . ," and screams again.



"He doesn't understand that I have certain needs
I have to talk about all day long."

James Brown screams in nearly every song he has ever recorded or performed. He also grunts, honks, yowls, and hoots, and there are long stretches in many of his songs where he does little else. When he chooses to, of course, he can also sing melody and enunciate lyrics with a piercing clarity. In the space of a sixteenth note, his voice can shift from a honeyed falsetto to anguished lamentation or bellowing bombast. There is very little, if anything, in the range of vocal emotion that he cannot express, and the same can be said of his almost perpetual motion on a stage: although his dance routines are briefer than they once were, and he no longer does splits, or falls to his knees so hard or so often as to draw blood, as he

used to, his energy still seems radically at odds with the conventional limitations of human biology. He is a showman of the old school, equal parts high artist and stuntman, and his boldest moments leave art and stunt indistinguishable.

This is never more evident than at the point in his show—during "Please, Please, Please"—when he cuts from the peak of a feverish vocal and instrumental crescendo and collapses to his knees in stunned silence. His band simultaneously fades to a worried murmur of pulsing rhythms, while the audience, as he puts it, falls "so quiet you can hear a rat peelin' cotton," and in a high, pleading quaver, he announces, "I feel like I'm gonna scream." The crowd goes silent as he sinks even lower to the floor and lets the beats pass. "You make me feel so good I wanna scre-e-eam," he wails. The crowd roars, he falls still, and when the crowd settles down he wails again, "Can I screeeeam?" And again: "Is it all right if I screeeeeeeeeeeam?" The crowd appears fit to riot. He appears fit to be tied. Then he screams. The scream has a sound of such overwhelming feeling that you cannot believe the man controls it. The impression, to the contrary, is that he is controlled by it, as if out of all the throats in the cosmos it had found his, and rendered him wild: the sound in the wild man's throat from beyond the wild man's consciousness that is the wild man's being.

As he screams, Mr. Brown uncoils and staggers upright, dripping sweat. The band cranks up behind him, he resumes singing, and Danny Ray, who drifted offstage during "Make It Funky," reappears. Under his arm he now carries a bundle, which he unfurls with a swooping snap of both wrists into a wide, floor-length cape of sequinned velvet. The cape's design varies from show to show, and on occasion in the same show from scream to scream; sometimes it is red, sometimes green, sometimes black, sometimes gold, and sometimes the sequins spell out the words "Godfather of Soul" or the acronym "G.O.S." Mr. Brown pays no attention as Danny Ray stalks him with the cape, but when it is flung over his shoulders he bows deeply, soaking up the applause, before taking heavy, tentative, stiff-legged steps. As he starts moving he shrugs the cape off, finally flinging it aside and prancing free.



"I'd rather be a huge part of the problem than a tiny part of the solution."

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On some nights, Danny Ray will come back at him with the cape, and Mr. Brown will shrug it off once more, or he may drop back to his knees, and work himself up to scream again.

Take this spectacle as you will—as death or birth; conquest or surrender; hellfire or apotheosis; sexual climax or heartbreak's abjection; vaudeville hamming or sublime authenticity—you won't be wrong. James Brown is a master of the simultaneous suggestion of opposing possibilities. He is a shaman as much as a showman; but, while his uncanny melding of church and carnival is akin to the convulsive "speaking in tongues" of gospel congregationists, the impression James Brown creates of a man flying off the handle is just that: an impression.

His performances are, and have always been, orchestrated according to the most rigorous discipline. Although no two nights with him are the same, and much of what you see and hear when he's onstage is truly spontaneous, the dazzle of these unpredictable moments is grounded in his ensemble's equally dazzling tightness. He proceeds without song lists, conducting fiercely drilled sidemen and sidewomen through each split-second transition with an elaborate vocabulary of hand signals. "It's like a quarterback—I call the songs as we go," he says, and players whose attention wanders, who miss a beat, or trip into the wrong key, or who merely show up onstage in rumpled uniforms or scuffed shoes, may be fined on the spot, a punishment that is also communicated with hand signals: five fingers suddenly flashed five times, for instance, means twenty-five dollars' docked pay. "I gotta keep order," he explains. "They don't spank children no more, that's why there's no order."

Even in his earliest, wildest days, when his determination to kill an audience was such that he would swing from the rafters, cut flying splits from atop a grand piano, and even leap from a theatre balcony into the orchestra pit, his outrageousness was carefully calculated to convey that, while he cannot be contained, he is always in control. In contrast to the appearance of effortlessness that so many performers strive for in their quest to exhibit mastery, James Brown makes the display of effort one of the most striking features of his art.

In the greatest of his dance performances to be preserved on film—the made-for-television "T.A.M.I." show, of 1964 (in which he stole the thunder from the headline act, an up-and-coming British band called the Rolling Stones,



James Brown screams in nearly every song he has ever recorded or performed. He also grunts, honks, yowls, and hoots, and there are long



MAGNUM

stretches in many of his songs when he does little else. Onstage, he cried, "I'm back, I'm back, I'm back . . . ," and screamed again.



"And then one day I decided no more razor burn for me."

• •

leaving Mick Jagger to complain that it was his greatest mistake ever to follow James Brown)—he hurls himself about, a frenetic dynamo, feet blurring, sweat flying, arms pumping, hairdo collapsing. He is the image of abandon, yet his precision remains absolute, his equilibrium is never shaken, there is no abandon. Even at his most unleashed, he moves like a captive of his body, frantic to shake free, and coming closer than one might have imagined possible.

"Time made me the Godfather, continuous and continuous doing it," Mr. Brown said one afternoon last summer, as he rode in a chauffeur-driven white stretch limousine through the slums of Augusta, where he spent his boyhood—a neighborhood known as the Terry, short for Negro Territory. Beyond the limo's one-way windows, the season's first tropical storm, Allison, was blowing sea-green clouds and rain across a wide street lined with blighted-looking shops and slum dwellings. The street sign said James Brown Boulevard, and James Brown said, "But what made me want to do it? My daddy couldn't do it, his daddy couldn't do it, and his daddy better not tried it."

JAMES BROWN BOULEVARD

We have this idea in America that pedigree doesn't matter. Never mind your ma and pa, set your own sights, and you are what you make of what God made you—that's the idea. The ancestors held its truth to be self-evident, but we have come to call it our dream, and it follows that our inclination to be entertained by success, to be inspired by excellence and enterprise, and to heroize genius increases in direct proportion to the inauspiciousness of an achiever's origins. So it should probably come as no surprise that the man who is very likely better known to more of the world by more fabulous titles than any other American—His Bad Self, Mr. Dynamite, Soul Brother No. 1, the Sex Machine, the Hardest-Working Man in Show Business, Mr. Excitement, the Ruler of R. & B., the Godfather of Soul, King of the One-Nighters, the Minister of the New New Super-Heavy Funk, the Forefather of Hip-Hop, Mr. Please Please Please, James (Butane) Brown—was not only born dirt-poor and black (with a heavy dose of American Indian blood) at the height of the Great Depression, in the depths of the Jim Crow South, but also claims to have been born dead.

"I wasn't supposed to be alive," he declares in the first lines of his autobiography. "You see, I was a stillborn kid." One can't start out any worse off than that. In fact, one can't start out that way, period; stillborn means you're finished. ("Compare live-born," Webster's suggests.) Never mind: in dealing with James Brown, we are not operating in the conventional show-business realm of legend but in that zone of mystical, folkloric, and allegorical interpretations of life's molding forces which can only be called myth. So the story goes that he emerged lifeless from the womb, and remained that way, unresponsive to the paddlings and proddings of his mother and a pair of aunts, who had attended at his birth (in his parents' one-room shack, without windows, plumbing, or electricity, in the pinewoods outside Barnwell, South Carolina), until they gave up on him. One aunt told his father, "He never drew a breath, Joe," while his mother wept. But the other aunt, Minnie, was moved to keep at him, lifting him up and blowing into his mouth. In this way he was resurrected, and promptly issued his first scream.

One of his earliest memories is of his mother leaving his father for another man: his mother in the doorway saying goodbye, his father telling her, "Take your child," his mother saying, "You keep him." He was four years old, and he didn't see her again for twenty years. His father was a second-grade dropout who subsisted by tapping the surrounding pines for pitch to sell to turpentine mills, and by brewing moonshine. He was rarely at home, and although as an adult James Brown cannot stand to be without company, in his autobiography he credits the solitude of his earliest years—"Being alone in the woods like that, spending nights in a cabin with nobody else there"—as an enduring source of inner strength. "It gave me my own mind," he says. "No matter what came my way after that—prison, personal problems, gov-

ernment harassment—I had the ability to fall back on myself." Still, he was relieved, in his sixth year, when his father decided to move across the Savannah River to Augusta in search of steadier employment, and deposited him in the care of Aunt Honey.

Thereafter, his father kept in touch, but they never again lived at the same address. Mr. Brown remembers him as an inspiringly tireless worker, but also as a depressingly angry man, particularly when it came to race. "Where white people were concerned, I would say my father threw a rock and hit his hand," he says in his autobiography. "He'd call white people 'crackers,' curse 'em and everything when they weren't around, but when he was in front of them, he'd say, 'Yessir, nawsir.' That's when I lost respect for my father." A frightened man, in his view, is a cowed man, and a cowed man is a frightening man. For his own part, he comes across, offstage and on, as fundamentally fearless. "I fear God," he told me. "I fear a man with a gun. I fear a man with a knife. I fear a fool behind the wheel. That's what I fear. I fear death." Then he remembered that he feared something else even more. "Death may come to me," he said. "I may not run from it like a lot of people if my rights is there. I put my rights first, 'cause if I can't live then I'm already dead . . . If I'm already dead, how can I live? I mean, my daddy was a dead man. He walked around, he gone into the service, he did everything he could. He was the bible of the dead man. He come back, he never said a voice. Dead man."

Race, poverty, and exclusion were the defining features of James Brown's childhood world, and he might easily have seen himself as cursed. Instead, he seems to have understood himself to be a free agent—denied the comforts of a conventional home, but also spared its constraints—with no choice but to fight for emancipation however he could. If anything, he can sound nostalgic for the harsh but tight-knit community of his childhood in the Terry. "Age mellowed me. Yeah, success mellowed me," he said as we rode around. " 'Cause now I look and see people that ain't got nothing, and I got *everything* and a sense of what they got. I say, You know what? You know why I say everything? 'Cause I got bein' poor as well as bein' wealthy. A man who's been always richer than I, he's in worse shape than a cat who never had nothin'. Cat never had nothin' got a dream. Cat richer than you'll say, What can I do now?"

After a while, he said again, "I got everything I could ever have wanted. Well, I thought it was everything I could want. What I wanted was peace and happiness, and a little success. I don't want hell and happiness. I got a hell of a lot of happiness, but I got hell with it, too."

The limousine tour of his childhood turf was Mr. Brown's idea. We set out from his office, from which he also ran a radio station, in a former H. L. Green department store on Augusta's Broad Street, downtown. He was dressed for the occasion in a throbbingly purple training suit, and at first he seemed quite happy to point out landmarks and reminisce. Here was the corner where he used to work a shoeshine box outside a parlor known as the Shoeshine King: "There was a man used to give us fifty cent and one used to give us a dollar. And we used to almost disjoint that man's arm when we see him coming, trying to hold him till he get to our stand. Oh, a dollar was unbelievable. . . . My daddy didn't make but seven dollars a week." Here was the liquor store where he first outearned his father, delivering whiskey ("Can't do that no more, they don't allow it") for nine dollars and ninety cents a week, "and you keep the bicycle—almost like you give me a home." Here was the fairground where he used to sneak into the circus, here was the railroad siding where he learned to roller-skate, and "On this corner was a warehouse, I used to eat food out of there. . . . The can would be old, it would be popped up, broken, I mean, like just about to blow up. We put a hole in it, let the pressure off it, and then take it home and cook it. We ate that. Lord." Here was 944 Twiggs Street, where he lived with Aunt Honey—now abandoned and bristling with weeds. Here, by these train tracks, he buck-danced for the soldiers passing through town at the start of the Second World War; they'd throw him coins, which he took home to Aunt Honey: "Men made thirty cents an hour, twenty cents a hour, fifteen cents a hour. . . . I brought her back five dollars to pay the rent for a month." Here was the narrow canal where he once took refuge from the law: "Police were running me, and I saw 'em coming, and I made a few turns, jumped in the water, and breathed through a cane. I saw it in a movie." He mimicked the police, "Where'd he go? Where he at? Where he at? I know I saw him. I swear I saw that boy—Gawd damn." Then he recalled telling himself, " 'Now listen up, it's either jail, either reform school, or you stay in the water,' so I stayed in the water." And here was an oil company that he used to burglarize when he was nine: "That was wrong, but it was survival."



Taken together, these memory vignettes composed a portrait of an artist as a young entrepreneur. The image pleased him. Alongside his career as a performer, James Brown has consistently promoted himself as an exemplary figure of black capitalist self-empowerment, touting a doctrine of enterprise as emancipation; ownership and tycoondom as the ultimate social justice. In Jim Crow days, he says, whites didn't keep blacks down because they disliked them (some of his most enthusiastic, best-paying audiences, in his early days with the Famous Flames, were at the fraternity houses of all-white Southern colleges); rather, whites kept blacks disempowered in order to exploit them in a system of "economic slavery."

He claims that he never stole from blacks, preferring to operate as a sort of freelance Robin Hood, redistributing white wealth, much as he sought to do when he began to command power in the music business. In 1962, when he wanted to make a live record of his act at the Apollo Theatre, Syd Nathan of King Records opposed the idea on the ground that such a disk would get no radio play. Mr. Brown put up the money himself, and the full record went on to become a fixture on the playlist of many stations; it was also a crossover success, substantially bolstering his burgeoning white audience. It has never stopped selling, and remains to this day one of the freshest, most charged, and most satisfying concert recordings available. Soon after its release, Mr. Brown began waging a dogged and ultimately successful cam-



"Not so loud, sweetie. We're in Europe."

paign to wrest ownership of the royalty-generating master tapes of most of his recordings from the King archives. This was a measure of creative and commercial control that no popular musician, black or white, had quite achieved, and for years afterward he kept the tapes in a bag that was with him at all times. In 1966, he bought his own Learjet, and before long he had established a restaurant franchise and acquired several radio stations. As he flew from gig to gig on a relentless touring schedule, he spoke of himself as a trailblazing "model man"—self-made and self-owned—in whose wake black Americans could no longer be held back.

At the peak of the civil-rights struggle, Mr. Brown's idiosyncratic rhetoric of business as revolution simultaneously appealed to and appalled ideologues on both the left and the right of the political spectrum, who could never decide whether the man who sang, "You got to live for yourself, yourself and nobody else," was with them or against them. In 1966, the Black Power activist Stokely Carmichael (who became Kwame Ture) called him the man most dangerous to the movement, and two years later, at a Black Power conference, the poet LeRoi Jones (later Amiri Baraka) described him as "our No. 1 black poet." But nobody could question that James Brown's greatest public triumph of the era was a direct consequence of his hard-charging capitalism. On the night following Martin Luther King's assassination, in April of 1968, he was booked to play the fourteen-thousand-seat Boston Garden. Elsewhere, major cities were already aflame. Boston was on the brink, and Mayor Kevin White was under heavy pressure to cancel the concert. Mr. Brown, however, was not prepared to forgo the night's pay. Instead, he persuaded the city to guarantee the money—a staggering sixty thousand dollars—and the show would be televised live, then immediately rebroadcast to keep the city's young blacks in front of their TV screens and out of trouble. Toward the end of the concert, some young fans leaped onto the stage, and cops rushed from the wings to push them off. "Wait a minute," Mr. Brown told the police, his hand raised. The music stopped. "Move on back," he said. "I'll be all right. I'll be fine." The cops shrugged and withdrew, but the fans kept

coming, mobbing the singer as he said, "You make me look very bad, 'cause I asked the po-lice to step back and you wouldn't go down. No, that's wrong. You not bein' fair to yourself and me and all your race." When he was alone again in the spotlight, he said, "Now, are we together or are we ain't?" Then he told the drummer, "Hit that thing, man," and he resumed singing: "Can't stand it. Can't stand your love."

The concert worked. The streets of Boston remained mostly quiet, and Mr. Brown was soon summoned to the smoking ruins of Washington, D.C., to spread his message: "Build something, don't burn something." In that same year, 1968, one of his hit songs, "Say It Loud (I'm Black and I'm Proud)," was embraced as an anthem by the Black Power crowd, and decried as incendiary by white conservatives, while another of his hits, "America Is My Home," was denounced by black militants as a jingoist sellout and acclaimed as a message of interracial healing by their opponents. To James Brown, there was no contradiction. He wasn't just unapologetically black; he was the darkest-skinned American performer to achieve such stardom, and his pride in that fact was to him a fulfillment of the American Dream. (Prior to September 11th of last year, a James Brown concert was the rare place where you could count on seeing someone publicly wrapped in the flag.) Unfazed by his critics on the left, he also went to Vietnam that summer to entertain the troops—one of the few times he has performed for free—then returned home and endorsed the Democratic Presidential candidate, Hubert Humphrey, who had befriended him two years earlier after hearing his hit song "Don't Be a Drop Out," which became the theme of a White House-sponsored stay-in-school campaign. When Richard Nixon won, however, Mr. Brown accepted an invitation to play at his Inauguration, where he made his mark by performing "I'm Black and I'm Proud." (In 1972, he endorsed Nixon's successful bid for reëlection, believing that the President would promote minority-enterprise initiatives, but he skipped the Inaugural festivities, because the Nixon people declined to pay for his act.)

"Is he the most important black man in America?" asked the cover line for a profile of James Brown in *Look*, in February of 1969. The article celebrated Mr. Brown's business empire (eighty-five employees; gross annual income, four and a half million dollars) and his populism (travelling a hundred thousand miles a year to reach three million fans where they lived; capping ticket prices at five dollars for adults and ninety-nine cents for children under twelve), and it said, "James Brown is a new important leader. His constituency dwarfs Stokely Carmichael's and the late Dr. Martin Luther King's. . . . He is the black Horatio Alger." Never mind that all of Mr. Brown's early businesses, save for his performing and recording career, failed, or that the Internal Revenue Service discovered by the early seventies that he had never got around to paying more than four million dollars in income tax. (In his autobiography, he proffers the extraordinary argument that the government was to blame for his tax troubles, "because they didn't allow me to go to school." As a result, he says, "they have no legal boundaries over me. . . . You pay tax when you exercise all of your rights. I didn't exercise rights. I didn't have a chance to. I lived with the word can't, so I can't pay taxes.")

As we turned off Twiggs Street onto a narrow and particularly abject strip called Hopkins Street, Mr. Brown's mood turned sombre. The façade of a brick house on the corner was spray-painted with the words "Fuck the world," and farther along the real estate grew more dismal: tottering clapboard bungalows, half of them burned out, and the rest, he said, "probably crack houses now—you come from that, you use crack." In this setting, the limo looked like a spaceship, but none of the street's ragtag residents expressed any surprise. They waved from sidewalks and porches, and although they couldn't see through the rain-streaked one-way glass, they called out, "Hello, Mr. Brown," and "God bless, Mr. Brown." The vehicle could belong to nobody else: every Thanksgiving, he comes through passing out turkeys, and at Christmas he brings toys. Now he said, "They want me to help build this place back. What can I do? Get on my knees and pray, and ask, 'Mr. President, come—Mr. Bush, come in here and clean it out and put decent homes in here'?"

He told his driver to stop outside a broken-down shack, where an emaciated woman and two young men sat on a porch surrounded by household debris. One of the young men stepped forward in the rain, and Mr. Brown lowered his window and held out a fifty-dollar bill. The man bowed, and withdrew. "Wait a minute," Mr. Brown called after him. "Y'all split that. Give that lady some, too." When he rolled his window up, he told me, "I'm not doin' this because you here. I wasn't gonna do it today. I didn't want you to see me handin' no money out there. I wasn't gonna do it. That's the honest-to-God truth." He sounded embarrassed. "You look at this, it kinda take your breath," he said.

At the end of the block, we reached James Brown Boulevard, and he said, "Out here on these same streets, you may see my daughter, and she has no business out here. She don't have to be there. I give her a home, she got a new Mercedes, and her Mercedes just sitting there. I can't give it to her, 'cause I can't—'cause she shrug off everything I do."

Family life has never been Mr. Brown's strong suit; he has been married four times, divorced twice, and made a widower in 1996 when his third wife died from complications following plastic surgery; he had three children with his first wife, two with his second, none with his third, and on the day before my visit to Augusta his current wife (then still his fiancée), Tomi Rae Hynie, a thirty-three-year-old singer of Norwegian descent, who has performed and lived with him on and off for the past four years, gave birth to a son, James Joseph Brown II. In addition to these relationships, throughout much of his career he maintained a succession of girlfriends and mistresses, with a couple of whom he sired children, including the daughter he was keeping an eye out for on the street named after him. "She's got worse than a habit," he said. "When a person is just spooked, we say she got a monkey on her back. She got a gorilla on her back." He fell silent for a beat, then said it again, "She got a gorilla on her back."

So our journey into his past had brought him hard up against the present, and he did not seem to feel so at home anymore. As he spoke of his helplessness before his daughter's destitution, his earlier discomfort at being seen giving handouts suddenly made sense: he wasn't embarrassed for himself, but for the people who accepted his charity. After all, this was the man whose ultimate civil-rights-

era message song was "I Don't Want Nobody to Give Me Nothing (Open Up the Door, I'll Get It Myself)." He had wanted to show me the "nothingness" he'd come from, but that nothingness, which had been created by a sense of exclusion, had been a full and vibrant world to him. Now it was gone—the door had been opened, and those who found a way had moved on through it—and he was at a loss to account for the new nothingness of oblivion that had taken its place, a genuine wasteland without the blatant boot-heel of Jim Crow to blame.

"I don't know whether this freedom is as good as segregation," he said at one point. "I'll let you figure that out." And he said, "I got a street named after me, and I'm still riding around—I can't say not one thing."

BACK TO THE CROSSROAD

Mr. Brown has plenty to say, of course, and he does not hesitate to say much of it. He talked non-stop for more than three hours in Augusta, and once we'd put James Brown Boulevard behind us his mood grew easy again, and his words flowed more freely, in long, looping monologues. In his speech, as in his music and dance, he is at once fiercely controlling and wildly spontaneous, unpredictable even to himself. But, unlike his songs, his conversation can be nearly impossible to follow. The patchwork of his syntax and the guttural slipstream of his diction—a gravelly, half-swallowed slur whose viscosity has increased through the decades, in lockstep with his pursuit of perfect dentistry—are only part of the challenge. After deciphering what he's saying, it frequently remains necessary to determine what he's talking about. And much of the time he appears to be wondering the same thing, because his speech is a form of improvisation. So Mr. Brown speaks with an attentive ear, stringing words and ideas along in contrapuntal themes and variations, at times falling back on reliable old formulations to give the jam shape, until he hears some new riff emerging, at which point he works and worries the key elements, juggling their sequence and refining their emphasis, until they converge in a sudden burst of determined lucidity, or fade out and are forgotten.

In one characteristic outburst, he began by pointing to a block of abandoned buildings that were slated by the city for rehabilitation, and said the only way to go was to tear them down and start over from scratch. "What you see now is a shell of a building," he said. "At least if there was nothing there you could build good. You could imagine. But now you can't imagine—you got to think of how to salvage it and save it." He worked this vein for a while, and it soon broadened out: "America needs an overhaul. Overhaul. Go back. I made a song called 'A Man Has to Go Back to the Crossroad.' So America now needs overhauls. She gotta go back to the crossroad. She gotta go back to the drawing board. 'Cause what is happening to it?" He went on, "I mean, you got to go back to the beginning and rewind yourself. You got to do like a tape deck, you got to rewind and start all over again." He said, "I don't want to tear nothing up, I want to be able to—I want to own part of it. I don't want to tear it up, I want to build it up, and then own part of it. Or I want an opportunity to build one just like it."

He said, "Free enterprise is as good as it can be, but when you start going with one is educated and the other's not, it's not free enterprise no more. When one is educated, and the other don't know A from B, it's not free enterprise no more." He said, "The same intent they showed to keep us separated years ago, they should show that same intent to put us together." He said, "America has committed a lot more crimes on civilization than we committed trying to get into civilization. We was out of civilization. What we was livin' was not civilization, it was uncivil. Our whole thing was uncivil. It wasn't even civilized! The people know that. You gonna let people come in your house and cook for you—Look here, you gonna let people come in your house and cook food and plan for the whole family, little babies come and there'd be a nanny and let the baby suck the titty, and then tell 'em, 'Lady, you can't be eatin' with them'? Come on. It's crazy."

And he went on, "I ask you, let up a little bit. Let's give the small man a little more chance to be human. Let's not dehumanize the man and put him in jail for



"They let me keep my cubicle."

bein' a criminal. Dehumanize! I mean, you won't put a dog in jail for tryin' to eat out your garbage can or eat out your yard. So why you gonna do that to a poor man that has no guides. More schools. The people in jail need to go to school. Anybody with any less than a ten-year sentence should stay in school all the time. 'Cause you know that's a dumping ground. Even the toilet dumps into a refinery and goes round and back to you as clean. Even a *toilet*. O.K.? It goes to the reservoir and everything before it come back to the people as drinkin' water. But you take a man out of prison, who don't know nothing but killin' and doin' anything wrong, and put him out and expect him to function with people, like he can live with them. He cannot *live* with them. He can't live with nobody. I think of all this stuff, and I see it's a cause that's called L-O-S-T, lost—unless you put music back in it. Music right now, whether it's gospel, jazz, you need music. You need to have a music revolution to get these people's mind right."



"Good God. My wife and my best friend."

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Once James Brown gets talking, it is not easy to steer him. You may ask a question, you may get an answer—there may or may not be any correlation. I asked if he knew that he was not like other people; that he had a much higher level of energy. "Mmm-hmm," he said. After a moment, he added, "I'm not going to endorse marijuana for sale, but for health I will." He said, "A man should never confess, but I think that anything that's good for people—gotta do." Besides, if the alternative is hard drugs and a person needs something gentler, "you better bring marijuana back so you have some place to get off. You can't jump one-four. You know, one-two. One *and* two. Get 'em on the 'and.' Then we can bring 'em back home."

In the late eighties, Mr. Brown and his third wife were widely reported to have a habit of getting high on angel dust, or PCP, an animal tranquillizer that tends to induce paranoid and often violent psychosis in humans. On September 24, 1988, the singer, dishevelled, enraged, and carrying a shotgun, burst into an office next to his own in Augusta and accused its occupants—forty men and women attending an insurance-licensing seminar—of using his bathroom without permission. After a brief standoff, he retreated. "God said, 'Boy, go home,' " he later told a local reporter. He drove off in his pickup truck, and soon found himself pursued by a police car with flashing lights. He pulled the truck over and stopped, and when the cruiser stopped behind him he peeled back onto the road. The police stayed on his tail for four miles, until he pulled over once more. By now he was heading east on Interstate 20, and this time he waited for the officer to get out of his car before taking off again. He entered South Carolina at eighty miles an hour, shot off the interstate, and almost immediately found himself facing the flashing blue lights of a police car blocking the road, with the lights of another behind him. When he stopped, an officer approached and began questioning him through his window. According to Mr. Brown, another officer appeared at the passenger door and started smashing the window in with his pistol. The singer threw the truck into gear and floored it. By then, there were at least four policemen standing in his dust and they opened fire, striking the truck eighteen times, puncturing the gas tank and all four of the tires. "They act like I done rob ten banks," Mr. Brown said later. "I left to protect my life."

Driving full throttle on his wheel rims, he trundled back to Augusta at thirty miles an hour, and meandered through downtown, trailed by a posse of fourteen cruisers. When he finally lost control of the truck, and ground to a halt in a ditch, he was about a mile from the scene of his first arrest (for larceny), thirty-nine years earlier. This time, he was brought back to South Carolina, where he was convicted of aggravated assault and "failure to stop for a blue light," and sentenced to six years. Once again, he served three.

Mr. Brown keeps the crippled hulk of his truck in a shed at his home, a several-hundred-acre estate in Beech Island, South Carolina. There, behind a wrought-iron replica of the gate at Buckingham Palace, guarded by a bloodhound and a white security guard who addresses him with "Yessir" and "Nawsir," a winding two-lane road leads through a forest of pine and live oak, dipping past a large man-made pond (soon to be banked with "six foot of concrete, so people can stand back off and fish"), to his residence. He has been expanding the building according to his own design in recent years to become "just a monstrosity, it's unbelievable, a pleasure monstrosity—one that's gonna be good for you to show your kids to—and it's gonna be quite a monument, so you'll say, 'You know what, that James Brown got somethin' on his mind.' " He wouldn't allow me inside

the house, but he made a point of showing me the truck. He claimed he'd turned down offers of as much as a million dollars for it. "That was the truck that started all my success," he said mysteriously.

"Goin' to jail in the nineties was really a great awakening," he added, "because I didn't know people were still that ignorant." I took him to mean his fellow-inmates, but it turned out he was speaking of the police, who had refused to just let him go home, as God told him to. "I stayed away from the ghetto too long," he said. "You living all this and you think musicians got a umbrella, till they come pick you up. You don't have no rights." He scoffed at allegations that he was high on PCP at the time of his arrest—"Not in my life," he said of hard drugs in general—but then he added, "Well, I wouldn't say as I did buy PCP. It might've been in the marijuana. And, if it was, I sure wish I had some more."

I started to say something, and he cut me off. "I'm'a say that again. Whatever I had, I need some more, 'cause everybody else is insane with them drugs they're using. Now, what was you goin' to ask me?" I no longer remembered, so I said, "How do you account for an insane generation?" He couldn't. He could only describe its insanity. "Black kids shootin' every one of each other, they got a quick temper. . . . But then the white kids, after they go in the service and all this stuff, come back—they shootin' and nobody cutting 'em, they shootin' at a whole room of people, shootin' at the teacher, they doin' everything. You know, whites are extremists, they go all the way with it." And he prescribed a solution: "We need a substance now to make us afraid. A-F-R-A-I-D. That's what we need. We need something—the kids need a pessimistic drug to slow them down, to make them, you know, 'I ain't gonna do that.' Ain't nothin' these kids wanna do today. Ain't nothin' you wanna do. They in a different bag. They need somethin' to make them pessimistic, and make them come out of this craziness so we can go to work and save this country."

There are no computers in the offices of James Brown Enterprises. "He's got this strange notion that they can see back at you," Maria Moon, one of his staffers, explained. "I guess he watched too many Russian-spy movies when he was young or something, but he thinks that they can see you and that they can track everything that you do." Mr. Brown put it slightly differently: "I don't want computers coming feeding direct off of me, 'cause I know what I got to tell a computer that it ain't got in there, and I don't want to. If the government would want me to be heading up the computer people, I would give 'em a basic idea what we should put in a computer—not just basic things, you know, but things that will be helpful in the future. We don't have that, but I could tell 'em a lot of things." He didn't elaborate, but he told me that on several occasions, while watching television news, he had foreseen the deaths of people on the screen. President Anwar Sadat, of Egypt, was one. "I looked at him when he got off the plane. I said, 'Oh, Lord.' I looked at the man's eyes. 'Oh, Lord!' I said. 'He's a dead man.' And he was dead." On an earlier occasion, during the Attica prison riots in 1971, he foresaw that the inmates who had taken over the prison would be slaughtered. "I was getting my hair fixed, and I looked up at the television," he said, and again his reaction was "Oh, Lord." His hairdresser asked, "What'd you see?" Mr. Brown told him, "All those dead men. They didn't even have no face no more, far as I was concerned. I looked at 'em, I didn't want 'em to be there no more."

EARTH

The sun is so clear and torchlike
on this cool October morning,
all I am aware of is the sensation
of its steady heat on my upturned face.

I am not thinking of how late the train is
that I am here to meet,
here with nothing to read, not even
the morning paper or a story by O. Henry.

The unfiltered burn of the autumn sun
on my skin is all I know,
that and a small bubble of curiosity
about whether you could re-create this feeling in hell
if you managed to position yourself
just the right distance from the roaring
bank of furnaces where the sounds
of shovelling and howling are coming from.

But no, the damned world would always be jostling
and pushing us closer to some fiery maw,
and in heaven the light would be
too hallowed, too theatrical to warm our faces.

And there would be no place for the train station
or the little café across the street,
no place in hell for the sunny table,
the bitter coffee, and the woman walking her dog.

Only the glare—I am imagining
with my eyes closed behind my favorite sunglasses—
the glare, some low chanting,
and the milling of some vast, incorporeal gang.

—Billy Collins

James Brown is rarely unaccompanied; he employs a large court of attendants, whom he summons at all hours to listen as he speaks, and he told me, "I got all the friends in the world. My friends—that's all that matter to me." But he has the air of a man who is eternally alone. Even those who have spent a great deal of private time with him hesitate to describe themselves as knowing him. The Reverend Al Sharpton says, "I probably would have been as close to him as anybody for the last twenty-some years." But he is quick to add, "Close as he lets people get close. There's a zone nobody goes in. He draws a crowd, but then he's also centered, lonely, in the crowd." At his core—"deep down inside his solitude"—Sharpton believes, Mr. Brown is a mystical man who "probably has more faith than most preachers," and he said, "In the middle of the night, when there's no crowd, no nothing, that's all he talks about."

James Brown was living in New York, in a Victorian mansion in Queens, surrounded by a moat and decorated each Christmas with black Santa Claus lawn sculptures, when he was introduced to Sharpton, in the late sixties. (He liked New York, he said, except for one thing. "No wholesome people," he said, although in those days New York was a better place for interracial romance than the South, where if you met "a brunette, a blonde, a redhead, you can't even write to her—they'd hang the letter when it gets there.") Sharpton was nineteen when they met again, an unknown, aspiring black activist, and Mr. Brown, whose firstborn son, Teddy, had just died in a car crash, took him under his wing. Sharpton, who came from a broken home, and whose strongest memories of his father were "that we used to stand in front of the Apollo and he'd bribe the guys so we could get up on line to see James Brown," said, "I became in effect, over the next decade, his surrogate son, and he was my surrogate father." Sharpton, who eventually married one of Mr. Brown's singers (Kathy Jordan, who was a backup on a recording of "Tennessee Waltz"), in turn introduced the Godfather to his third wife, and for many years the Reverend was a regular member of their entourage.

Politically, James Brown and Al Sharpton make something of an odd couple. Mr. Brown has always defended his support for Richard Nixon, and a few years ago, when *Rolling Stone* asked him to name a hero from the twentieth century, he chose the reactionary senator from his home state, Strom Thurmond. He also performed at Thurmond's daughter's wedding, and sang "God Bless America" at a ceremony marking the ninety-eight-year-old senator's plan to retire. "But his style, his soul force, was very much an influence on me—and his whole thing of defiance and standing up against great odds if he believed in something," Sharpton said. "He's the only man I've ever met that doesn't need the acceptance and certification of the external world. He goes by his beliefs. He could care less about everybody else's."

By way of an example, Sharpton recalled accompanying his friend when he received a Grammy Award for lifetime achievement shortly after he got out of jail. Mr. Brown got a standing ovation, returned to his seat, said, "Let's go. I have my award, I'm not sitting here watching everybody," and they walked out. "And where do we have to go?" Sharpton said. "The Stage Deli, and eat Hungarian goulash." Similarly, in 1974 James Brown went to Zaire to play at the black-music festival that President Mobutu Sese Seko sponsored to coincide with the world heavyweight championship fight between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman, and the day after the concert he went home. Sharpton couldn't imagine skipping the fight, but his mentor told him, "Reverend, I'm going to be over here making my next dollar while Ali's making his."

Sharpton doesn't see much of his mentor these days, and when I asked Mr. Brown whether he would ever endorse Sharpton for elected office he said, "I would endorse his intent." But he said he no longer meddles with political endorsements, and he reminded me that, "being an ex-offender," he has never voted. At this point, he said, black people don't need leaders—"We need jobs"—and he'd told Sharpton as much. " 'You don't lead us, we know how to lead.' I said, 'We don't need that no more. That was all right when we didn't have the nerve and the ambition, but now you can be anything you want to be, so you your own leader.' " Besides, he said, "leaders become dictators."



TIME AFTER TIME

In late May of last year, the mayor of Cincinnati, Charlie Luken, asked James Brown for help. Seven weeks earlier, on April 7th, a city policeman had shot and killed an unarmed nineteen-year-old black man named Timothy Thomas, after a foot chase in the ghetto neighborhood of Over-the-Rhine. Thomas was the fifteenth black man to lose his life in a confrontation with Cincinnati police since 1995. His death was followed by several days of protests and rioting. Motorists were dragged from their cars and beaten; stores along a wide swath of the city center were looted; fires were set; a citywide dusk-to-dawn curfew was imposed; and although calm was restored within a week, the city remained deeply riven and on edge. Prominent black churchmen continued to lead protests, and were threatening to disrupt the city's annual Memorial Day outdoor food-and-music festival, Taste of Cincinnati. Mayor Luken wanted the festival to mark a return to normal for the city, and he wanted a musical act to set the tone. That meant he wanted a black act. The rhythm-and-blues band Midnight Star and the Isley Brothers were booked, but local black leaders persuaded them to withdraw. Now, with two days to go, the Mayor asked James Brown to come to town.

As it happened, Mr. Brown had just finished recording a new song, addressed to America's youths, called "Killing Is Out, School Is In," and he thought the message was perfectly suited to Cincinnati's plight. He said he would not get mixed up in local politics, but for fifteen thousand dollars, to cover expenses, he agreed to give a midday press conference and to sing his new song. The news of his intended appearance was not well received at the New Prospect Baptist Church in Over-the-Rhine, the hub of

the peaceful-protest movement that had coalesced since the riots. On the morning the Taste was to open, the pews were filled with several hundred men and women (about a quarter of them white) who sang gospel hymns and listened to the pastor, Reverend Damon Lynch III, rally them to stage a boycott of the food fair. In the atrium, a middle-aged black-enterprise activist named Jim Clingman explained the prevailing attitude. "James Brown is being used. He's just window dressing," he said, adding, "I lived by James Brown for a long time. I don't want to hurt the brother, I want to help him."

Pastor Lynch's rhetoric from the pulpit was more high-flown. He spoke of Cincinnati's "economic apartheid," and said, "Every once in a while we got to rise up. . . . What we got now is a Rosa Parks moment in our lives." He spoke the name James Brown, and said the attitude of the city fathers was "If we can just get 'em dancin'—bring in Negro dancers and just get the Negro dancin', he'll forget about his anger, he'll forget about his pain." He explained that he was going to meet the singer before the press conference, and persuade him to join the boycott, because "he is and has been our brother," and "for him now to be drawn into this—we just gotta tap him on the shoulder."

It didn't happen that way. James Brown rode straight from the airport to the press conference, at a downtown hotel. He wore a gunmetal-blue suit and turtleneck, silver-toed black cowboy boots, and, until the Mayor was done introducing him, heavy dark sunglasses. Then he took the podium, with half a dozen of his loyal retainers arrayed behind him, and for the next twenty minutes he held forth in a characteristically kaleidoscopic manner, full of oblique personal references. He called Cincinnati his second home, on account of King Records ("I wouldn't have a career if it wasn't for God, America, and especially Cincinnati"); and he said he was born dead, but didn't elaborate. He said, "I was out there with Dr. King, I was out there with Malcolm, I was out there with Mr. Abernathy, and I knew a lot of people—trying to make it better." And he said, "I didn't come for the Mayor, I didn't come for the police, I didn't come for the people out in the street. I come for the kids." This was his key point: that children were in peril. He criticized TV violence ("You

LEADING ECONOMIC INDICATORS



"We're pleased to announce that your company has shrewdly traded a cow for some magic beans."



"This is sloth—greed is on the top floor."





"Yes, I am a C.E.O., but not, I trust, in the pejorative sense."



"At least you know where you'll be in twenty-five years."



"Just reclaiming my Latino roots."

• •

see a show on television today, they done killed twenty people already, and you ain't even got to the show yet"), put in a plug for school prayer, and said we shouldn't be hiring teachers from overseas. He talked briefly about volunteering to entertain the troops in Indochina, and how hot it was there, and about flying around Russia in an old bomber plane, and about going to jail as a teen-ager. He said he'd never met a person he didn't like, and he said that, whatever Cincinnati's current trouble was, "it's going to end in the courthouse, whether you like it or not, it's never going to end in the outhouse." He invoked Rwanda and Bosnia, and asked, "What are we doing killing each other in our community?" He said, "Ants can work together, why can't people work together?" He cited Scripture—John 3:17 ("For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved")—and said, "God don't want me to quit it, because Papa got a brand new bag."

Jim Clingman, the activist, ventured a question from the floor: "Brother Brown, one of your records that you made had the words 'Let's get together and get some land, raise our food like the man, save our money like the Mob, put up the factory on the job.' Speak on economic empowerment."

"All we got to do is get black Americans to put in one dollar, and from everybody build a company," Mr. Brown said.

"That's what I'm talking about," Clingman agreed.

"All we got to do is build our own stuff," Mr. Brown said.

"That's right."

"Not whether you're black or white."

"Thank you."

"Just have your own. And it's bad, see, if ballplayers, athletes, can't give one dollar apiece a year . . ."

"Thank you."

"It would be that much. They don't give no money."

"Speak."

He went on for a while longer—"We're all in it together, the Italian, the Jew, the German, nobody but all of us. Who am I? I'm 259-32-3801, not black or white, just that Social Security card"—then he rode the elevator down to his limo, and was driven to the festival stage. A thousand people had gathered in the midday sun to see him, most of them white, and around the periphery marched several hundred protesters, chanting, "James Brown sold out." Suddenly, a very loud, thumping beat blared from the sound system, and Mr. Brown appeared onstage, rapping out a karaoke version of his new song, "Killing Is Out, School Is In," with a vocal accompanist, who barked back, "I don't think they heard you, brother. Say it again." Despite the volume, their voices were barely audible over the chants of the protesters. From here and there in the crowd, people began hurling pennies at the stage. Two young black men looked on, discussing James Brown's presence in tones of disgust: "He's done. . . . He's finished. . . . Out the window with all them records—like Frisbees."

All at once, with the song still playing, Mr. Brown spun around and walked offstage. He did not wait for applause, or return for it. One second he was there, and the next he was gone. Protesters surged toward him as he climbed into his limo. Mounted policemen moved to hold them back. An old man screamed, "Bring Elvis back—they both dead now." James Brown got back out of the car to hug a well-wisher. A few protesters rushed forward, and he ducked back inside. With the police cavalry as an escort, the car finally began to move off. A new chant began: "Say it loud, we got him out now."

A few weeks later, in Augusta, Mr. Brown told me that he had just received an invitation to the White House to present President Bush with a CD of his new song. "He called me," he said. "I knew it had to lead to that, because when they saw us stop the riots in Cincinnati—that was a good thing." His manager, Charles Bobbit, sustained this fantasy: "It was a repeat of 1968—Boston, Massachusetts—and both cities, both mayors, called for help 'cause they couldn't do it." Mr. Brown chuckled. "You right," he said. "That was a repeat. I didn't think about that." He was moved to declare that the new song, with its heavy rap beat, and its obvious reproach to the mayhem-boosting lyrics of so much hip-hop, would be "the biggest thing ever happened in history." He said, "You know, the President didn't call for us to be talkin' jive. He gonna tie it in. And I don't blame him."

Before America was drawn into war last September 11th, James Brown and his handlers had been talking up the release of the new song in the fall, as a sort of back-to-school special. It was an

article of faith among the inner circle at James Brown Enterprises that it would be a hit as big as his best civil-rights-era numbers. Members of his band thought otherwise: the words were too blunt, even mildly scolding, lacking the buoyant bravura of his enduring message songs; the arrangement was a bit ham-fisted, and audiences weren't taking to it. The consensus among his sidemen seemed to be that Mr. Brown was wasting his time trying to reach today's kids, and should go back to his roots by recording an album of the music he loves to sing best when he's alone with a few friends: his greatest hits, a little gospel, even some ballads—songs of pure feeling. Mr. Brown himself never seemed quite satisfied with the recorded version of "Killing Is Out," and his producer was constantly reworking the mix, with overdubbed vocals and patched-in instrumentals—a process totally alien to the way the singer has worked for most of his life. "He must've mixed that thing fifty times, trying to come up with something else. I mean, he not really understanding that when it come from me, it's the real thing," he said. "It's God. When I first go in and cut, it's God. If I go back to cut, it's me. You see, God is always right. All the records, I used to always use my first cuts. Bam! Cat say, 'You want to cut it again?' I say, 'For what?' "

I wondered what Syd Nathan, who had so often recoiled from Mr. Brown's best innovations, would think. For all their struggles over the years, it was at King Records that Mr. Brown had done his best work. But Nathan has been dead for more than thirty years, so I went to see Ahmet Ertegun, the Turkish-born éminence grise of record producers, who started Atlantic Records around the time that Nathan started King, and whose backlist of R. & B. and soul classics includes the best of Ray Charles, Otis Redding, Wilson Pickett, and Aretha Franklin. Ertegun never recorded James Brown, but he has known the singer on and off for fifty years, and admires him as "one of the great geniuses of this most important kind of music." Rappers, he said, "are all James Brown freaks." (Indeed, James Brown earns millions each year on royalties from rap samplings.) "He's got hooks that will outlive most people's compositions," Ertegun said. "Just his little hooks."

Still, the moment Ertegun heard the title "Killing Is Out, School Is In," he shook his head. "Sad thing is those songs are sure to flop," he said. "The public is not looking to take lessons." (After many delays, the song is set to be released in August on Mr. Brown's new album, "The Next Step.") In Ertegun's experience, the black public is especially tough. "A black artist cannot keep a black audience," he said. "I mean, black audiences live this music. I mean, black audiences are the ones that create what black artists do, whereas white people imitate that, and they love it forever. We have white kids imitating Tampa Red, and they're playing Big Bill Broonzy, and they're students, they're scholars, who go back and listen to the old 78-r.p.m. records and get heavily into that, like all the English rock and rollers did in the sixties. They went back to that music. But black people, they don't study that music. That's the music they invented, and they don't give a shit about it, and they don't like what their mothers like. Their mothers like Billy Eckstine; well, they laugh at Billy Eckstine."

It's true that James Brown's audiences are now predominantly white, and that he gets his most avid response in Europe and Japan. "I'm ten times bigger over there than I am over here," he told me. Of course, Ertegun said, "they're the opposite of black audiences, they're just finding out about all of this." But, here in America, "there's the real expression of black people through, you know, all the rappers," he said. "It's dirty, but it's reality. It's reality for those people who live in the condition that we have more or less put them in. They can't write songs like Cole Porter, because they don't come from a Cole Porter background. They come from a rat-infested basement place somewhere in Compton, and you know that's a different life than putting on your white tie and dancing at the Savoy."



It wasn't the Savoy, but late one night in San Francisco, after playing a show, Mr. Brown returned to the Ritz-Carlton on Nob Hill, where he was staying, and stood stock-still in the center of the lobby. By the angle of his head, you could see that he was listening, and, sure enough, in the nearly vacant bar, a trio was playing: a gray-haired man hunched over a string bass, a young goateed fellow at the grand piano, and, on a stool, in a black evening gown, a woman singing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow." "Let's get a juice or something," Mr. Brown said to his entourage, which numbered about ten that night. He led the way, attired in a dusky-maroon three-piece suit, a purple shirt, and a necktie of golden silk with a pattern of blue slashes. The musicians beamed at the sight of him, and the dozen or so remaining patrons, scattered on banquettes around the edge of the room, sat up and began poking one another and pointing. When the singer, blushing, finished her song, Mr. Brown had one of his men give each of the trio a hundred-dollar bill. The singer asked for requests, and Mr. Brown said, "Anybody here mind if I do one?"

There was no objection. He conferred briefly with the musicians, grinning and joking, looking out at the room, where the audience of twenty had now grown to twenty-five, with an additional contingent of bellhops and valet parkers standing against the back wall. "Up-tempo or slow?" he said. "Oh, I'll give it to you on the up." He started snapping his fingers, his body swayed with them, the piano and bass came in softly, and he sang, "Time after time, when we're together . . ." There was sweetness in his voice, and grit, and as always, an ache, but, most of all, pure pleasure. He clipped the phrases, and juggled some words, making the song his: "Time after time, you hear me say that I feel alone tonight . . ."

After a verse, he sidled up behind the pianist and, gently nudging him to keep playing at the low end of the keyboard, reached in to pick out a liltingly funky right-handed solo. Back at the edge of the tiny stage, he crouched into the words until, making an abrupt signal to the musicians to cut, he finished, with a soft whispered "Aowh." Then, equally softly, he spoke the word "Scream."♦

FICTION

THE OBSCURE OBJECT

BY JEFFREY EUGENIDES

When this story goes out into the world, I may become the most famous hermaphrodite in history. There have been others before me. Alexina Barbin attended a girls' boarding school in France before becoming Abel. She left behind a journal, which Michel Foucault discovered in the archives of the French Department of Public Hygiene. (The diary, which ends shortly before her suicide, makes unsatisfactory reading, and it was after finishing it, years ago, that I first got the idea to write my own.) Gottlieb Göttlich, born in 1798, lived as Marie Rosine until the age of thirty-three. One day abdominal pain sent Marie to the doctor. The physician checked for a hernia and found testicles instead. From then on, Marie donned men's clothes, took the name of Gottlieb, and made a fortune travelling around Europe, exhibiting himself to medical men.

As far as doctors are concerned, I'm even better than Gottlieb. If you were going to devise an experiment to measure the relative influences of nature and nurture, you couldn't come up with anything better than my life. To the extent that fetal hormones affect brain chemistry and histology, I've got a male brain. But I was raised as a girl, Calliope Stephanides, in Grosse Pointe, Michigan. And it's time for me to tell the truth about my first love. She was, after all, the way I discovered who I was. With every girl or woman who came after her, there has been this knowledge to deal with: the great fact of my condition. The Obscure Object and I met unawares, however, in blissful ignorance.

Spring semester of eighth grade brought me into Mr. da Silva's Advanced English class. A group of only five students, we met in the tiny greenhouse on the second floor of the Baker & Inglis School for Girls. Mr. da Silva treated us with complete seriousness, as if we eighth graders, during fifth period, might settle something scholars had been arguing about for centuries. When he spoke it was in complete paragraphs. If you listened closely it was possible to hear the dashes and commas in his speech, even the semicolons.

"Miss Stephanides, thou Hellene," he said, calling on me one day. "You who hail from Homer's own land, I beseech you; would you be so kind as to start us off today?" He cleared his throat. "Page eighty-nine."

That semester, our less academically inclined sisters were reading "The Light in the Forest." But in the greenhouse we were making our way through the Iliad. It was a paperback prose translation, abridged, set loose from its numbers, but still a terrific read. God, I loved that book! From the pouting of Achilles in his tent (which reminded me of President Nixon's refusal to hand over the tapes) to Hector's being dragged around the city by his feet (which made me cry), I was riveted. While my classmates found the Iliad too bloody for their taste—an endless catalogue of men butchering one another after formally introducing themselves—I thrilled to the stabbings and beheadings, the gouging out of eyes, the juicy eviscerations.

I opened my paperback and lowered my head. My long hair fell forward, cutting off everything—Mr. da Silva, the greenhouse's geraniums—except the book: "Aphrodite put off her famous belt, in which all the charms of love are woven, potency, desire, lovely whispers, and the force of seduction, which takes away foresight and judgment even from the most reasonable people." It was one o'clock. An after-lunch lethargy lay over the room. Outside, rain threatened. There was a knock at the door.

"Excuse me, Callie. Could you stop for a moment, please?"

I looked up. Standing in the doorway was a redheaded girl. Two clouds bumped up above, skidding past each other, and let down a beam of light. This beam struck the glass roof of the greenhouse. Passing through the hanging geraniums, it picked up the rosy light that now, in a kind of membrane, enveloped the girl.

"We're in the middle of class, dear."

"I'm supposed to be in this class," said the girl, unhappily. She held out a slip of paper.

Mr. da Silva examined it. "Take a seat. You'll have to share with someone. Miss Stephanides has been reading from Book Fourteen of the Iliad for us."

I started reading again. That is, my eyes kept tracing over the sentences and my mouth kept forming the words. But my mind had stopped paying attention. When I finished, I didn't toss my hair back. I let it stay hanging over my face. Through a keyhole in it, I peeked out.

The girl had taken a seat across from me. She was leaning toward Reetika as though to look on with her, but her eyes were taking in the plants. Her nose wrinkled up at the mulchy smell. Part of my interest was scientific, zoological. I'd never seen a creature with so many freckles before. A Big Bang had occurred, originating at the bridge of her nose, and the force of this explosion had sent galaxies of freckles hurtling and drifting to every end of her curved, warm-blooded universe. There were clusters of freckles on her forearms and wrists, an entire Milky Way spreading across her forehead, even a few sputtering quasars flung into the wormholes of her ears.

She slumped sideways in her desk, and sleepily opened and closed her eyes. At one point, she yawned and, halfway through, cut the yawn off, as though it hadn't gone right. She swallowed something back and pounded a fist against her breastbone. She burped quietly and whispered to herself, "Ay, caramba." As soon as class was over she was gone.

Who was she? Where had she come



from? Why had I never noticed her in school before? She was obviously not new at Baker & Inglis. Her oxfords were stamped down at the heels so she could slip into them like clogs. Her lips were thin, austere, Protestant. Her nose was not really a nose at all. It was only a beginning.

Every day, she came to class wearing the same distant, bored expression. She shuffled in her oxfords, with a gliding or skating motion, her knees bent and her weight thrust forward. The way she dragged her feet made clear how she felt about the weird, old, dead poem we were reading. She wasn't interested. She never did the homework. She tried to bluff her way through class.

I watched her in class and I watched her outside it, too. Her brief appearances knocked me out. I was like somebody in a cartoon, with stars vibrating around the head. Sometimes she looked at me but showed no recognition. A nictitating membrane lowered itself over her eyes.

Allow me an anachronism. Luis Buñuel's "That Obscure Object of Desire" didn't come out until 1977. By that time the redheaded girl and I were no longer in touch. I doubt she ever saw the movie. Nevertheless, "That Obscure Object of Desire" is what I think about when I think about her. I saw it on television, in a Spanish bar. I didn't catch most of the dialogue. The plot was clear enough, though. An older gentleman, played by Fernando Rey, is smitten with a young and beautiful girl, played sometimes by Carole Bouquet and at other times by Angela Molina. I didn't care about any of that. It was another surrealist touch that got me. In many scenes Fernando Rey is shown holding a heavy sack over his shoulder. The reason for this sack is never mentioned. (Or, if it is, I have forgotten.) He just goes around lugging this sack, into restaurants, and through city parks. That was exactly how I felt, following my own Obscure Object. As though I were carrying around a mysterious, unexplained weight.

One day, in class, Mr. da Silva asked the Object to read aloud.

She was lounging in her desk as usual. At a girls' school you didn't have to be so vigilant about keeping your knees together or your skirt tugged down. The Object's knees were spread apart and her legs, which were somewhat heavy in the thigh, were bare high up. Without moving, she said, "I forgot my book."

Mr. da Silva compressed his lips. "You can look on with Callie."

The only sign of agreement she gave was to sweep her hair off her face. I scooted over. I slid my book onto the crack between our desks. The Object leaned over it.

"From where?"

"Top of page one hundred and twelve. The description of the shield of Achilles."

I'd never been this close to the Obscure Object before. My nervous system launched into "Flight of the Bumblebee." The violins were sawing away in my

ANDREA STERN, "SHELTER" (2001), COURTESY RICCO/MARESCA

spine. The timpani were banging in my chest. At the same time, trying to conceal all this, I didn't move a muscle. I hardly breathed: catatonia without; frenzy within. I could smell her cinnamon gum.

I expected a nasal monotone, riddled with mispronunciations. But the Obscure Object had a good reading voice. It was clear, strong, supple in its rhythms. Her head rose on a proud neck. Her chin was lifted. She sounded twenty-four instead of fourteen.

When she was finished, there was silence. "Thank you," said Mr. da Silva, as surprised as the rest of us. "That was very nicely done."

The bell rang. Immediately, the Object leaned away from me. She ran a hand through her hair again, as though rinsing it in the shower. She slipped out of the desk and left the room.

On certain days, when the greenhouse was lit just so and the Obscure Object's blouse unbuttoned two buttons, when the light illuminated the scapulars dangling between the cups of her brassiere, did Calliope feel any inkling of her true biological nature? Did she ever, while the Obscure Object passed in the hall, think that what she was feeling was wrong? Yes and no. Let me remind you where all this was happening.

It was perfectly acceptable at Baker & Inglis to get a crush on a classmate. Girls walked arm in arm. They competed for affection. Jealousies arose. Betrayals occurred. Girls cried because So-and-So wouldn't sit by them at lunch. Nevertheless, the ethos of the school remained militantly heterosexual. My classmates might act cozy during the day, but boys were the No. 1 after-school activity. Any girl suspected of being attracted to girls was victimized and shunned. I was aware of all this. It scared me. I didn't know if the way I felt about the Obscure Object was normal or not. It felt physical, my crush. It wasn't a judgment but a tumult in my veins. For that reason I kept quiet about it. Every day, whenever I could, I took the back stairs down to a deserted basement washroom and shut myself up for at least half an hour to think the matter through.

The stalls were seven feet high, the walls made of marble. The faucets dripped with the slow, inexorable movement of time and I was alone down there, and safe. Safe from my confused feelings about the Obscure Object; and safe, too, from the bits of conversation I'd been overhearing from my parents' bedroom. Just the night before, my father's exasperated voice had reached my ears: "You still got a headache? Christ, take some aspirin." "I took some already," my mother replied. "Nothing helps. I'm worried about Callie, too. She still hasn't gotten her period." "Hell, she's only thirteen." "She's fourteen. And look how tall she is. I think something's wrong." Silence a moment, after which my father asked, "What does Dr. Phil say?" "Dr. Phil! He doesn't say anything. I want to take her to someone else."

The basement bathroom was covered with graffiti. Sketched in blue ink were little men with gigantic sexual parts. And women with enormous breasts. Also various permutations: men with dinky penises; and women with penises, too. It was an education in both what was and what might be. In one spot: "I love sex." In another, "Patty C. is a slut." Where else would a girl like me, hiding a knowledge she didn't quite understand herself, feel more comfortable than in this subterranean realm where people wrote down what they couldn't say and gave voice to their most shameful longings?

For that spring, while the crocuses bloomed, while the headmistress checked on the daffodil bulbs in the flower beds, Calliope, too, felt something budding. An obscure object all her own. A kind of crocus itself, just before flowering. A pink stem pushing up through dark new moss. But a strange kind of flower indeed, because it seemed to go through a number of seasons in a single day. It had its dormant winter, when it slept underground. Five minutes later, it stirred in a private springtime. Sitting in class with a book in my lap, or riding home in car pool, I'd feel a thaw between my legs, the soil growing moist, a rich, peaty aroma rising, and then—while I pretended to memorize Latin verbs—the sudden, squirming life in the warm earth beneath my skirt. The crocus sometimes felt soft and slippery, like the flesh of a worm. At other times it was as hard as a root.



How did Calliope feel about her crocus? On the one hand, she liked it. If she pressed the corner of a textbook against it, the sensation was pleasurable.

But there were times when I felt that something was different about the way I was made. At Camp Ponshewaing, I'd learned, on certain humid bunkhouse nights, of the bicycle seats and fence posts that had seduced my campmates at tender ages. I added my own sense data to these clinical histories (that was the year I fell in love with gym ropes), but there remained a vague, indefinable gap between the stirrings my friends reported and the clutching ecstasy of my own dry spasms. Sometimes, hanging down from my top bunk into the beam of someone's flashlight, I would finish my little self-revelation with "You know?" And in the dimness three or four stringy-haired girls would nod, once, and bite the corner of their lips, and shift their eyes away. They didn't know.

I worried that my crocus was too elaborate a bloom, not a common perennial but a hothouse flower, a hybrid named by its originator like a rose. Iridescent Hellene. Pale Olympus. Greek Fire. But no—that wasn't right. My crocus wasn't for show. It was in a state of becoming and might turn out fine if I waited patiently. Maybe it happened like this to everybody.

Gradually, as the semester passed, the Obscure Object began to acknowledge my existence. She sometimes chose a seat next to me, or asked to borrow a pen. I tried to get up the courage to say something to her, but rarely did. Finally, in May, when exams were approaching, she asked me out of the blue, "Hey, Stephalitis, do you want to study together for this test?" The following Wednesday evening, with a fluttering heart, I arrived at the Object's house.

She was sitting on a green velvet sofa when I was shown into the library. Her oxfords were off, but she still had her uniform on. Her long red hair was tied back, the better to do what she was doing, which was lighting her cigarette. Sitting



"I remember when there was no damn environment."

Indian style, the Object leaned forward, holding the cigarette in her mouth over a green ceramic lighter shaped like an artichoke. The lighter was low on fluid. She shook it and flicked the button with her thumb until at last a small flame shot out.

"Your parents let you smoke?" I said.

She looked up, surprised. "They smoke," she said. "They'd be pretty big hypocrites if they didn't let me smoke."

"But they're adults."

"Mummy and Daddy know I'm going to smoke if I want to. If they don't let me do it, I'll just sneak it."

The dispensation had been in effect for some time: the Object was not new to smoking; she was already a professional. As she sized me up, her eyes narrowing, the cigarette hung aslant from her mouth. Smoke drifted close to her face. It was a strange opposition: this hard-bitten private-eye expression on the face of a girl wearing a uniform for private school.

"I doubt a kid like you smokes," she said.

"That would be a good guess."

"You interested in starting?" She held out her pack of Tareytons.

"I don't want to get cancer."

She tossed the pack down, shrugging. "I figure they'll be able to cure it by the time I get it."

"I hope so."

She inhaled again, more deeply. She held the smoke in and then turned in cinematic profile and let it out. "You don't have any bad habits, I bet," she said.

"I've got tons of bad habits."

"Like what?"

"Like I chew my hair."

"I bite my nails," she said competitively. She lifted one hand to show me. "Mummy got me this stuff to put on them. It tastes like shit. It's supposed to help you quit."

"Does it work?"

"At first it did. But now I sort of like the taste." She smiled. I smiled. Then, briefly, trying it out, we laughed together.

"That's not as bad as chewing your hair," I resumed.

"Why not?"

"Because when you chew your hair it starts smelling like what you had for lunch."

She made a face and said, "Bogue."

At school we would have felt funny talking together, but here no one could see us. In the bigger scheme of things, we were more alike than different. We were both teen-agers. We were both from the suburbs. I set down my bag and came over to the sofa. The Object put her Tareyton in her mouth. Planting her palms on either side of her crossed legs, she lifted herself up, like a yogi levitating, and scooted over to make room for me.

"Besides English, I've got a history exam this week," she said.

"Who do you have for history?"

"Miss Schuyler."

"Miss Schuyler has a vibrator in her desk."

"A what?"

"A vibrator. Liz Clark saw it. It's in the bottom drawer."

"I can't believe it!" The Object was shocked. But then she squinted. In a confidential voice, she asked, "What are those for, anyway?"

"Vibrators?"

"Yeah." She knew she was supposed to know. But she trusted I wouldn't make fun of her. This was the form of the pact we made that day: I would handle the deep intellectual matters, like vibrators; she would handle the social sphere.

"A lot of women have trouble having orgasms," I said, quoting from the copy of "Our Bodies, Ourselves" my liberated aunt had given me. "They need clitoral stimulation."

Behind her freckles, a blush rose to the Object's face. She was, of course, transfixed by such information. "I can't believe you know about this stuff."

"I'll tell you who knows about it. Miss Schuyler, that's who."

The laugh, the hoot, shot out of her mouth like a geyser, and then the Object was falling back on the couch. She screamed, with delight, with revulsion. She kicked her legs, knocking her cigarettes off the table. She was fourteen again, instead of twenty-four, and against all odds we were becoming friends.

School ended. Summer began. I was worried that I wouldn't see the Object over vacation, but on the last day of exams she invited me to go swimming at the Little Club. Swimming? In bathing

suits? The idea alarmed me, but I couldn't miss my chance.

The next morning, a little after ten o'clock, I rode my bicycle out along the lake. The usual June scum of fish flies trimmed the water, rippling with the action of the waves. There was also a new guardrail, which gave me a sombre feeling as I pedalled past. Carol Henkel, a junior, had died in a car accident at this very spot. One Saturday night her drunken boyfriend, a guy named Rex Reese, had plunged his parents' car into the lake. Rex had survived, swimming back to shore. But Carol had been trapped inside the car.

Though the club was on the lake, there were no docks or boats in sight, only a mansion-like clubhouse, two paddle-tennis courts, and a swimming pool. It was beside this pool that we lay every day that June and July.

The Obscure Object favored bikinis. She looked good but by no means perfect. Like her thighs, her hips were on the large side. She claimed to envy my thin, long legs, but she was only being nice. Calliope appeared poolside in an old-fashioned one-piece with a skirt. The stated intent was to look funky, but I was grateful for the full coverage. The bodice of the bathing suit was a plus, too. The cups were rubberized, pointy, and gave me the suggestion of a bust I didn't have.

Beyond us, pelican-bellied ladies in swim caps followed kickboards back and forth across the pool. Their bathing suits were a lot like mine. Little kids waded and splashed in the shallow end. There is a small window of opportunity for freckled girls to tan. The Object was in it. As we revolved on our towels that summer, self-basting, the Object's freckles darkened, going from butterscotch to brown. The skin between them darkened, too, knitting her freckles together into a speckled harlequin mask. Only the tip of her nose remained pink. The part in her hair flamed with sunburn.

Club sandwiches, on wave-rimmed plates, sailed out to us. If we were feeling sophisticated, we ordered the French dip. We had milkshakes, too, ice cream, French fries. For everything, the Object signed her father's name. She talked about Petoskey, where her family had a summer house. "We're going up in August. Maybe you could come up."

My heart soared. "Really?"

"I'll ask my parents. It'll be a blast."

Suddenly the sun went in. A drop of water hit my arm. But this was nothing compared to the cascade that was being shaken onto the Obscure Object. An older boy was leaning over sideways, twirling his wet mop of hair.

"God damn you," she said. "Cut it out!"

"What's the matter? I'm cooling you off."

"Quit it!"

He straightened up. His bathing suit had fallen down over his skinny hipbones. This exposed an ant trail of hair running down from his navel. The ant trail was red. But on his head the hair was jet black.

"Who's the latest victim of your hospitality?" the boy asked.

"This is Callie," said the Object. Then, to me: "This is my brother. Jerome."

The resemblance was clear. The same palette had gone into Jerome's face (oranges and pale blues, primarily) but there was a crudeness to the over-all sketch, something bulbous about the nose, the eyes on the squinty side. What threw me at first was the dark, sheenless hair, which I soon realized was dyed.

"My brother has a lot of problems," the Object said.

"Hey, maybe you gals want to be in my next film." He looked at me. "I'm making a vampire movie. You'd make a great vampire."

"I would?"

"Jerome is into monster movies," the Object said.

"Horror films," he corrected, still directing his words to me. "Not monster movies. My sister, as usual, belittles my chosen medium. Want to know the title?"

"No," said the Object.

" 'Vampires in Prep School.' It's about this vampire, played by *moi*, who gets sent off to prep school because his affluent but terribly unhappy parents are going through a divorce. Anyway, he doesn't get on too well at boarding school. He doesn't wear the right clothes. He doesn't have the right haircut. But then one day after this kegger he takes a walk across campus and is attacked by a vampire. And—here's the kicker—the vampire is smoking a pipe. He's wearing a Harris tweed. It's the fucking headmaster, man! So the next morning, our hero wakes up and goes right out and buys a blue blazer and some Top-Siders and—presto—he's a total prep!"

"Will you move? You're blocking my sun."

"It's a metaphor for the whole boarding-school experience," Jerome said.



AN AMICABLE DIVORCE

"Jerome has been kicked out of two boarding schools."

"And I shall have my revenge upon them!" Jerome proclaimed, shaking his fist in the air. Then without another word he ran to the pool and jumped. As he did, he spun around so he was facing us. There Jerome hung, skinny, sunken-chested, as white as a saltine, his face scrunched up and one hand clutching his nuts. He held that pose all the way down.

I was too young to ask myself what was behind our sudden intimacy. In the days and weeks that followed, I didn't consider the Object's own motivations, her love vacuum. Her mother had engagements all day long. Her father left for the office at six-forty-five. Jerome was a brother and therefore useless. The Object didn't like being alone. She had never learned to amuse herself. And so, one evening at her house, as I was about to get on my bike and ride home, she suggested that I sleep over.

"I don't have my toothbrush."

"You can use mine."

"That's gross."

"I'll get you a new toothbrush. We've got a box of them. God, you're such a priss."

I was only feigning squeamishness. In actuality I wouldn't have minded sharing the Object's toothbrush. I wouldn't have minded being the Object's toothbrush.

Mrs. Object called my mother to see if it was all right for me to sleep over and, by eleven o'clock, my friend and I went up to bed together. She gave me a T-shirt to wear. It said "Fessenden" on the front. I put it on, and the Object snickered.

"What?"

"That's Jerome's T-shirt. Does it reek?"

"Why'd you give me his shirt?" I said, going stiff, shrinking from the cotton's touch while still wearing it.

"Mine are too small. You want one of Daddy's? They smell like cologne."

"Your dad wears cologne?"

"He lived in Paris after the war. He's got all kinds of fruity habits." She was climbing up onto the big bed now. "Plus he slept with about a million French prostitutes."

"He told you that?"

"Not exactly. But whenever Daddy talks about France he acts all horny. He was in the Army there. And Mummy gets really pissed when he talks about it." She imitated her mother now. "'That's enough Francophilia for one evening, dear.'" Then she flopped onto her stomach.

"Back rub," the Object called out cheerily. "I'll do you if you do me."

"Deal." I sat astride her, on the saddle of her hips, and started with her shoulders. Her hair was in the way, so I moved it. Her apricot-colored back tapered at the waist in a way mine didn't. There were white spots here and there, anti-freckles. Wherever I rubbed, her skin flushed. I was aware of the blood underneath, coursing and draining. Her underarms were rough like a cat's tongue. Below them the sides of her breasts swelled out, flattened against the mattress.

"O.K.," I said, after a long while, "my turn."

But she was asleep.

We spent every day together until the Object left for her summer house. For three weeks we were apart, though we talked every day on the telephone. Finally, the Object told me that her visiting relatives had left and that it was O.K. for me to come up, if I wanted. "You can drive up with Daddy on Friday. He'll pick you up after work."

It was a five-hour ride up to Petoskey. By the time we pulled into the unpaved road that led to the house, it was after ten. The summer house, a grand Victorian, sat on a rise above Little Traverse Bay, all its windows blazing. In moonlight, we carried our bags up to the back porch.

We found Jerome sitting at the kitchen table, reading the *Weekly World News*. The pallor of his face suggested that he had been there pretty much all month. His lustreless black hair looked particularly inert. He had on a Frankenstein T-shirt, seersucker shorts, white canvas Top-Siders without socks.

"I present to you Miss Stephanides," Mr. Object said.

"Welcome to the hinterland," Jerome said to me. He stood up and shook his father's hand. They attempted a hug.

"Where's your mother?"

"She's upstairs getting dressed for the party you're incredibly late for. Her mood reflects that."

"Why don't you take Callie up to her room? Show her around."

"Check," said Jerome.

We went up the back stairs off the kitchen. "The guest room's being painted," Jerome told me. "So you're staying in my sister's room."

"Where is she?"

"She's out on the porch with Rex."

My blood stopped. "Rex Reese?"

"His 'rents have a place up here, too."

Jerome then showed me the essentials—guest towels, bathroom location, how to work the lights. But his manners were lost on me. I was thinking about Rex Reese, our local Ted Kennedy, who had driven Carol Henkel to her watery death. I was wondering why the Object hadn't mentioned anything about him on the phone.

We went into her bedroom. Her rumpled clothes lay on the unmade bed. There was a dirty ashtray on one pillow.

"My little sister is a creature of slovenly habits," Jerome said, looking around. "Are you neat?"

I nodded.

"Me, too. Only way to be. Hey." He turned round to face me. "Now you can be in my film. Are you up for that?"

"I thought it took place in a boarding school."

"I decided to make it a boarding school in the boonies." Jerome was standing somewhat close to me. His hands flopped around in his pockets as he squinted at me and rocked on his heels.

"Should we go downstairs?" I finally asked.

"What? Oh, right. Yeah. Let's go." Jerome turned and bolted. I followed him back down and through the kitchen. As we were crossing the living room I heard voices out on the porch.

"So Selfridge, that lightweight, pukes," Rex Reese was saying. "Doesn't even make it to the bathroom. Pukes right on the bar."

"I can't believe it! Selfridge!" It was the Object now, crying out with amusement.

"He blew chunks. Right into his Stinger. It was like the Niagara Falls of puke. Selfridge woofs on the bar and everybody jumps off their stools, right? Selfridge is face down in his own puke. For a minute there's total silence. Then this one girl starts gagging . . . and it's like a chain reaction. The whole place starts gagging, puke's dripping everywhere,

and the bartender is—pissed. He's huge, too. He's fucking huge. He comes over and looks down at Selfridge. I'm going, like, I don't know this guy. Never saw him before. And then, guess what?"

"What?"

"The bartender reaches out and grabs hold of Selfridge. He's got him by the collar and the belt, right? And he lifts Selfridge, like, a foot up in the air—and Zambonis the bar with him!"

"No way!"

I stepped out onto the porch. The Object and Rex Reese were sitting together on a white wicker couch. It was dark out, coolish, but the Object was still in her swimsuit, a shamrock-print bikini. She had a beach towel wrapped around her legs.

"Hi," I called out.

The Object turned. She looked at me blankly. "Hey," she said.

"O.K. She's here," said Rex. "So let's party."

"Where should we go?" the Object said.

"Hey, Je-roman, didn't you say there was some old hunting lodge out in the woods?"

"Yeah. It's about half a mile in."

"Think you could find it in the dark?"

"With a flashlight, maybe."

"Let's go." Rex stood up. "Let's take some beers and hike on in there."

The Object got up, too. "Let me put on some pants." She crossed the porch in her swimsuit. Rex watched. "Come on, Callie," she said.

I followed the Object inside. She went quickly, almost running, and didn't look back at me. As she climbed the stairs ahead of me, I whacked her from behind.

"I hate you," I said.

"What?"

"You're so tan!"

She flashed a smile over her shoulder.

As the Object dressed, I snooped around the bedroom. There were amateur sailing prints on the walls and on the shelves Petoskey stones, pine cones, musty paperbacks.

"What are we going to do in the woods?" I said, with a note of complaint.

"We're going for a walk," she said.

"You just want Rex to molest you."

"You have such a dirty mind, Callie."

"Don't deny it."

She turned around and smiled. "I know who wants to molest you," she said.

For a second, an irrepressible happiness flooded me.

"Jerome," she finished.

"I don't want to go out in the woods," I said. "There's bugs and stuff."

"Don't be a such a wuss," the Object said. I had never heard her say "wuss" before. It was a word boys used; boys like Rex. The Object was standing before the mirror, picking at some dry skin on her cheek. She ran a brush through her hair and put on lip gloss. Then she came over to me. She came up very close. She opened her mouth and blew her breath into my face.

"It's fine," I said, and moved away.

"Don't you want me to check yours?"

"No biggie," I said.

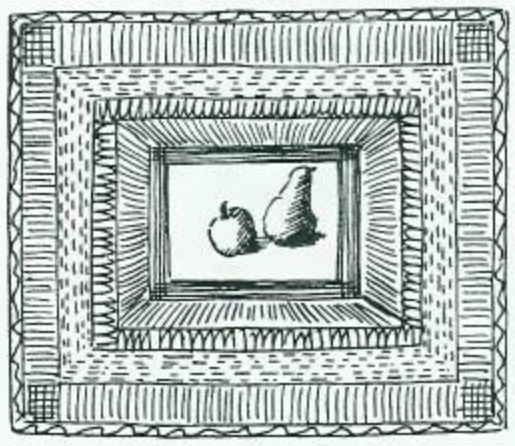
I decided that if the Object was going to ignore me and flirt with Rex, I would ignore her and flirt with Jerome. After she left, I combed my hair. I went into the bathroom and undid the straps of my overalls. Lifting my shirt, I stuffed a few tissues in my brassiere. Then I shook my hair back, hitched up my overalls, and hurried outside.

They were waiting for me under a yellow bug light on the porch. Jerome held a silver flashlight. Slung over Rex's shoulder was an Army-surplus backpack, filled with Stroh's. We came down the steps onto the lawn. The ground was uneven, treacherous with roots, but the pine needles were soft underfoot.

At the edge of the woods the Object stopped. "Is it going to be wet?" she said. "I only have my Tretorns on."

"Come on," said Rex Reese, pulling her by the hand. "Get wet."

She screamed, theatrically. Leaning back like someone on a rope tow, she was pulled unsteadily into the trees. I paused, too, peering in. Jerome stepped straight into the swamp and then slowly melted below the knees. "Quicksand!" he cried. "Help me! I'm sinking! Please somebody help . . . glub glub glub glub glub." Up ahead, already invisible, Rex and the Object were laughing.



The cedar swamp was an ancient place. No logging had ever been done here. The ground wasn't suitable for houses. The trees had been alive for hundreds of years, and when they fell over they fell over for good. There was a graveyard feeling: everywhere, the gray skeletons of trees. The moonlight filtering in lit up silver puddles and sprays of cobweb. It glanced off the Object's red hair as she darted ahead of me.

After twenty minutes, we found it: a one-room shack made of unpainted boards. The roof wasn't much taller than I was. The flashlight beam showed tar paper covering a narrow door.

"It's locked. Fuck," said Rex.

"Let's try the window," Jerome suggested. They disappeared, leaving the Object and me alone. I looked at her. For the first time since I'd arrived, she really looked at me. There was just enough moonlight to accomplish this silent exchange between our eyes.

"It's dark out here," I said.

"I know it," said the Object.

There was a crash behind the shack, followed by laughter. The Object took a step closer to me. "What are they doing in there?"

"I don't know."

Suddenly the small window of the shack lit up. The boys had found a Coleman lantern inside. Then the front door opened and Rex stepped out. He was smiling like a salesman. "Got a guy here wants to meet you." At which point he held up a mousetrap dangling a jellied mouse.

The Object screamed. "Rex!" She jumped back and held on to me. "Take it away!"

Rex dangled it some more, laughing, and then tossed it into the woods. "O.K., O.K. Don't have a shit fit." He went back inside.

The Object was still clinging to me.

"Maybe we should go back," I ventured.

"Do you think you know the way? I'm totally lost." She turned and looked into the black woods. But then Rex reappeared in the doorway. "Come on in," he said. "Check it out."

And now it was too late.

Inside were two cots with Hudson's Bay blankets. They stood at either end of



"First, can we agree that it's a big back yard?"

• •

the small space, separated by a crude kitchen with a camp stove. Empty bourbon bottles lined the windowsill. There was a stuffed pike, jaws agape, on the wall. Low on kerosene, the lantern sputtered. The light was butter-colored, an opium-den light, which was appropriate, because already Rex had plucked a joint from his pocket and was lighting it with a safety match.

Rex was on one cot, Jerome on the other. Casually, the Object sat down next to Rex. I stood in the middle of the floor, hunching. I could feel Jerome watching me. I pretended to examine the shack but then turned, expecting to meet his gaze. This didn't happen, however. Jerome's eyes were focussed on my chest. On my falsies.

Maybe I should have been pleased by the trance he was in. But my revenge fantasy had already gone bust. My heart wasn't in it. Still, having no alternative, I went ahead and sat beside Jerome.

Rex was wearing shorts and a monogrammed shirt, ripped at the shoulder, showing tanned skin. There was a red mark on his flamenco-dancer's neck: a bug bite, a fading hickey. He closed his eyes to inhale deeply on the joint. The hair on his head was as thick and oiled as an otter's pelt. Finally, he opened his eyes and passed the joint to the Object.

To my surprise, she took it. As though it were one of her beloved Tareytons, she put it between her lips and inhaled.

"Won't that make you paranoid?" I said.

"No."

"I thought you told me pot always makes you paranoid."

"Not when I'm out in nature," said the Object. She gave me a hard look. Then she took another toke.

"Don't bogart it," said Jerome. He got up to take the joint from her. He smoked half-standing, and then turned and held it out to me. I looked at the joint. One end burned; the other was mashed and wet. I had an idea that this was all part of the boys' plan, the woods, the shack, the cots, the drugs, the sharing of saliva. Here's a question I still can't answer: Did I see through the male tricks because I was destined to scheme that way myself? Or do girls see through the tricks, too, and just pretend not to notice?

"Hold it in," Rex coached me.

"You have to let the THC build up in your bloodstream," said Jerome.

There was a sound out in the woods, twigs snapping. The Object grabbed Rex's arm.

"What was that?"

"Maybe a bear," Jerome said.

"Neither of you girls is on the rag, I hope," said Rex.

"Rex!" the Object protested.

"Hey, I'm serious. Bears can smell it. I was in Yellowstone one time and this woman got killed. Grizzly could smell the blood."

"That is not true!"

"I swear. This guy I know told me. He was an Outward Bound guide."

"Well, I don't know about Callie, but I'm not," said the Object.

They all looked at me.

"I'm not, either," I said.

"I guess we're safe, then, Roman," said Rex, and laughed.

The Object was still holding on to him for protection.

"You want to do a shotgun?" he asked her.

"What's that?"

"Here." He turned to face her. "What you do is one person opens their mouth and the other person blows the smoke into it. You get totally fucked up. It's excellent."

Rex put the lit end of the joint in his mouth. He leaned toward the Object. She leaned forward, too. She opened her mouth. And Rex began to blow. The Obscure Object's lips were a perfect ripe oval. I could see the column rush into the Object's mouth. It disappeared down her throat like whitewater over falls. Eventually she coughed and he stopped.

"Good hit. Now do me."

When they were finished, Jerome took the joint from his sister. The next thing I knew, his face was close to

mine. So I did it, too. Leaned forward, closed my eyes, parted my lips, and let Jerome shotgun into my mouth a long, dirty plume of smoke.

Smoke filled my lungs, which began to burn. I coughed and let it out. When I opened my eyes again, Rex had his arm around the Object's shoulder. She was trying to act casual about it. Rex finished his beer. He opened two more, one for him and one for her. He turned toward the Object. He smiled. He said something I couldn't hear. And then, while I was still blinking, he covered the Object's lips with his sour, handsome, pot-smoking mouth.

Across the flickering shack, Jerome and I were left pretending not to notice. The joint was ours now to bogart as we wished. We passed it back and forth in silence and sipped our beers.

"I'm having this weird thing where my feet look extremely far away," Jerome said after a while. "Do your feet look extremely far away to you?"

"I can't see my feet," I said. "It's dark."

He passed me the joint again, and I inhaled and held the smoke in. I let it keep burning my lungs, because I wanted to distract myself from the pain in my heart. Rex and the Object were still kissing. I looked away, out the dark, grimy window.

"Everything looks really blue," I said. "Did you notice that?"

"Oh, yeah," said Jerome. "All kinds of strange epiphenomena."

The Oracle of Delphi had been a girl about my age. All day long, she sat over a hole in the ground, the omphalos, the navel of the earth, breathing petrochemical fumes escaping from underneath. A teen-age virgin, the Oracle told the future, speaking the first metered verse in history. Why do I bring this up? Because Calliope was also a virgin (for a little while longer at least). And she, too, had been inhaling hallucinogens. Ethylene was escaping from the cedar swamp outside the shack. Dressed not in a diaphanous robe but in a pair of overalls, Calliope began to feel very funny indeed.

"Want another beer?" Jerome asked.

"O.K."

He handed me a golden can of Stroh's. I put the sweating can to my lips and drank. Then I drank some more. Jerome and I both felt the weight of the obligation. We smiled at each other nervously. I looked down and rubbed my knee through my overalls. And when I looked up again Jerome's face was close. His eyes were shut, like the eyes of a boy jumping feet first off the high dive. Before I knew what was happening, he was kissing me. I didn't stop him. I remained completely still while he did his thing. Despite my lightheadedness, I could feel everything. The shocking wetness of his mouth. The whiskery feel of his lips. His barging tongue. Certain flavors, too, the beer, the dope, a lingering breath mint, and beneath all that the actual, animal taste of a boy's mouth. I could taste the gamy tang of Jerome's hormones and the metal of his fillings. I opened one eye. Here was the fine hair I'd spent so much time admiring on another head. Here were the freckles on the forehead, on the bridge of the nose, along the ears. But it wasn't the right face; they weren't the right freckles, and the hair was dyed black. Behind my impassive face my soul curled up into a ball, waiting until the unpleasantness was over.

Jerome and I were still sitting up. He was pressing his face against mine. By maneuvering a little, I could see across the room to where Rex and the Object were. They were lying down. The tails of Rex's blue shirt seemed to flap in the wavering light. Beneath him one of the Object's legs dangled off the bed, the cuff of her pants muddy. I heard them whispering and laughing, then silence again. I watched the Object's mud-stained leg dancing. I concentrated on that leg, so that I hardly noticed when Jerome began to pull me down on our cot. I let him; I gave in to our slow collapse, all the while watching Rex Reese and the Object out of one eye. Rex's hands were moving over the Object's body now. They were pulling up her shirt, moving under it. Meanwhile Jerome's hands were moving over me. He was stroking my overalls, but I was no longer in them exactly. My focus on the Object was too intense.

Ecstasy. From the Greek "*ekstasis*." Meaning not what you think. Meaning not euphoria or sexual climax or even happiness. Meaning, literally, a state of displacement, of being driven out of one's senses. Three thousand years ago in Delphi, the Oracle became ecstatic every single working hour. That night in a hunting cabin in northern Michigan, so did Calliope. High for the first time, drunk for the first time, I felt myself dissolving. Like the incense at church, my soul rose toward the dome of my skull—and then broke through. I drifted over the plank floor. I floated above the little camp stove. Passing

SLEEPING CURE

Where will you go if—?
The major arteries
and avenues are closed.
We are too cumbersome
to tunnel out—yes, fat
—besides, there's been an accident.
And—why am I always the last to know?
You're dead.

Sleep, little lamb.
Give up the honey and junk,
at least for the duration.
I will tell the story
of your afterlife.
It takes place in a lit tent
in a blackening room.
It begins with a consummation scene.

—Dana Goodyear

by the bourbon bottles, I hovered over the other cot, looking down at the Object. And then, because I suddenly knew that I could, I slipped into the body of Rex Reese. I entered him like a god so that it was me, and not Rex, who kissed her.

An owl hooted in a tree somewhere. Bugs assailed the windows, attracted by the light. In my Delphic state I was simultaneously aware of both make-out sessions. By way of Rex's body I was hugging the Obscure Object, nuzzling her ear . . . while at the same time I was also aware of Jerome's hands ranging over my body, the one I'd left on the other cot. He was on top of me, crushing one of my legs, so I moved it, spread my legs apart, and he fell between them. He made little sounds. I put my arms around him, appalled and moved by his thinness. He was even skinnier than I was. Now Jerome was kissing my neck. Now, advised by some magazine column, he was paying attention to my earlobe. His hands moved up. They were heading for my chest. "Don't," I said, scared he'd find my tissues. And Jerome obeyed.

While on the other cot Rex was meeting with no such resistance. With consummate skill, he had undone the Object's brassiere with one hand. Because he was more experienced than me I let him deal with the shirt buttons, but it was my hands that took hold of her bra and, as if snapping up a windowshade, let into the room the pale light of the Object's breasts. I saw them; I touched them; and, since it wasn't I who did this but Rex Reese, I didn't have to ask myself if I was having unnatural desires. How could I be when I was on the other cot, fooling around with Jerome? And so, just to be safe, I returned my attention to him. He was now in some kind of agony. He was rubbing against me and then he stopped and reached down to adjust himself. There was the sound of a zipper.

While I'd been off inhabiting Rex's body, Jerome had taken the opportunity to undo my shoulder straps. He had flicked open the silver buttons at my waist. Now he was pulling down my overalls and I was trying to wake up. Now he was tugging on my underpants, and I was realizing how drunk I was. Now he was inside my underpants and now he was . . . inside me! And then: pain. Pain like a knife, pain like fire. It ripped into me. It spread up my belly all the way to my nipples. I gasped; I opened my eyes; I looked up and saw Jerome looking down at me. We gaped at each other and I knew he knew. Jerome knew what I was, as suddenly I did, too; for the first time I clearly understood that I wasn't a girl but something in between. I knew this from how natural it had felt to enter Rex Reese's body, how right it felt, and I knew this from the shocked expression on Jerome's face. All this was conveyed in an instant. Then I pushed Jerome away. He pulled back, pulled out, and slid off the bed onto the floor.

Silence. Only the two of us, catching our breath. I lay on my back on the camp bed. Beneath the newspaper clippings. With only a mounted pike as witness.

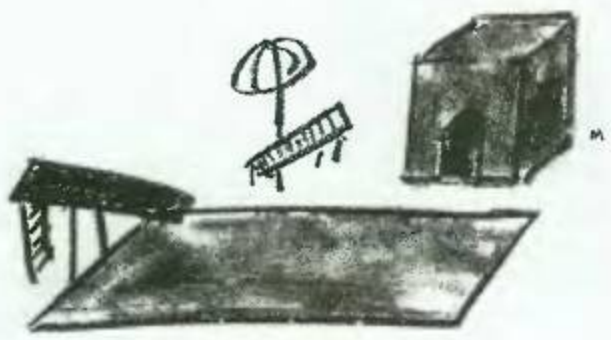
It was all over now. There was nothing I could do. Jerome would tell Rex. Rex would tell the Object. She would stop being my friend. By the time school started, everyone at Baker & Inglis would know that Calliope Stephanides was a freak. I was waiting for Jerome to jump up and run. I felt panicked and, at the same time, strangely calm. I was putting things together in my head. A crocus blooming; blood and breasts that didn't come; and a crush on the Object that looked as if it was here to stay.

A few moments of clarity and then panic again whined in my ears. I wanted to run, myself. I could leave tonight. I could steal the Object's parents' car. I could drive north, following the draft dodgers through the Upper Peninsula to Canada. As I contemplated my life on the run, I peeked over the edge of the cot to see what Jerome was doing.

He was flat on his back, eyes closed. And he was smiling to himself.

Smiling? Smiling how? In ridicule? No. In shock? Wrong again. How then? In contentment. Jerome had the smile of a boy who, on a summer night, had gone all the way. He had the smile of a guy who couldn't wait to tell his friends.

Reader, believe this if you can: he hadn't noticed a thing.



I woke up back at the house. I had a vague memory of how I got there, of trudging back through the bog. My overalls were still on. My crotch felt hot and spongy. The Object was already out of bed or had slept somewhere else. I reached down and unstuck my underpants from my skin. Something about this act, the little puff of air, the pungent smell, reiterated the brand-new fact about myself. But it wasn't a fact exactly. It was nothing as solid as a fact right then. It was just an intuition, and morning brought no clarity. It was just an idea that was already beginning to fade, part of the drunkenness in the woods of the night before.

When the Oracle awoke after one of her wild, prophesying nights, she probably had no memory of the things she'd said. Whatever truths she'd hit on were secondary to the immediate sensations: the headache, the singed throat. It was the same for Calliope. I had a sense of having been dirtied and initiated. I felt sick and didn't want to think about it.

In the shower I tried to rinse the experience away, scrubbing methodically, lifting my face to the slanting water. I got dressed and came down the stairs quietly. As I crossed the living room I noticed an old hunting rifle over the mantel. I tiptoed by it. In the kitchen, the Object was eating cereal and reading a magazine. She didn't look up. I got a bowl myself and sat gingerly down.

"What's the matter?" sneered the Object. "Sore?" She didn't look so hot herself. She was puffy under the eyes. There were times when her freckles were not sunny but like corrosion or rust.

"You're the one that should be sore," I replied.

"I'm not sore at all," said the Object, "if you want to know."

"I forgot," I said. "You're used to it."

Suddenly her face was full of anger. Cords stretched and pulled beneath her skin, making lines. "You were a total slut last night," she charged.

"Me? What about you? You were throwing yourself at Rex."

"I was not. We didn't even do that much."

"You could have fooled me."

"At least he's not your brother." She

got to her feet, glaring. She looked like she might cry. She hadn't wiped her mouth. There was jam on it, crumbs. I was struck dumb by the sight of this beloved face working itself up into what looked like hatred. "Jerome's upstairs. Why don't you go climb in bed with him?" And she stormed off.

A low moment followed. Regret, already sogging me down, burst its dam. It seeped into my legs, it pooled in my heart. On top of panic over losing my friend, I was suddenly beset by worries. Was I really a slut? I hadn't even liked it. But I had let him do it, hadn't I? Fear of retribution came next: What if I got pregnant? My face at the breakfast table was the face of all mathematical girls, counting days, measuring liquids. It was at least a minute before I remembered that I couldn't be pregnant. That was one good thing about being a late bloomer. Still, I was upset. I was certain that the Object would never talk to me again.

I climbed the stairs and got back into bed, pulling a pillow over my face to block out the summer light. No more than five minutes later, the bedsprings sagged under new weight. Peeking out, I saw that Jerome had come to visit.

He was lying on his back, looking comfortable, already installed. Instead of a robe, he had on a duck-hunting coat. The ends of his frayed boxer shorts were visible below. He had a mug of coffee and his fingernails were painted black. The morning light showed stubble on his chin and above his upper lip. Against the flat, wasted, dyed hair these orange shoots were like life returning to a scorched landscape.

"Good morning, dahling," he said.

"Hi."

"Feeling a little under the weather, are we?"

"Yeah," I said. "I was pretty drunk last night."

"You didn't seem that drunk to me, dahling."

"Well, I was."

Jerome flopped back into the pillows and sipped his coffee and sighed. With one finger he tapped his forehead for a while. Then he spoke. "Just in case you were having any of the hackneyed worries, you should know that I still respect you and all that shit."

I didn't respond. Responding would only confirm the facts of what had happened. After a while, Jerome set the coffee mug down and turned onto his side. He wriggled over toward me and rested his head against my shoulder. He lay there, breathing. Then, with closed eyes, he moved his head and tunnelled under the pillow with me. He started to nuzzle me. He brought his hair across the skin of my neck and after that came the sensitive organs. His eyelashes made butterfly kisses on my chin. His nose snuffled in the hollow of my throat. And then his lips arrived, avid, clumsy. I wanted him off me. At the same time I asked myself if I had brushed my teeth. Jerome was sliding and climbing on top of me, and it felt the way it had the night before, like a crushing weight. So do boys and men announce their intentions. They cover you like a sarcophagus lid. And call it love.

For a minute it was tolerable. But soon the duck coat rode up and Jerome's urgency was pressing itself upon me. He was trying to reach up under my shirt again. I didn't have a bra on. After my shower I had gone without it, flushing away the Kleenexes. I was done with them. Jerome's hands moved higher. I didn't care. I let him feel me up. For what it was worth. But if I was hoping to disappoint him, it didn't work. He stroked and squeezed while his lower half swished like a crocodile's tail. And then he said an unironic thing. Fervently, he whispered, "I'm really into you."

His lips closed, seeking mine. His tongue entered. The first penetration that augured the next. But not now, not this time.

"Stop," I said.

"What?"

"Stop."

"Why stop?"

"Because."

"Because why?"

"Because I don't like you like that."

He sat up. Like the guy in the old vaudeville skit, the guy in the folding cot that won't stay folded, Jerome flipped straight up, wide awake. Then he jumped off the bed.

"Don't be mad at me," I said.

"Who says I'm mad?" said Jerome, and left.

The rest of the day went slowly. I stayed in my room until I saw Jerome leave the house, carrying his movie camera. I guessed that I was no longer in the cast. After a few minutes I came down the back stairs and went out the kitchen door. I walked down to the bay, feeling melancholy.

The cedar swamp lay on one side of the house. On the other was a dirt-and-gravel road that led through an open field, treeless, with high yellow grass. It was almost noon by now. The bay was bright blue. The grass got marshy near the water. I climbed up on the breakwater and walked back and forth, keeping my balance. I held my arms out and pranced, Olga Korbut style. But my heart wasn't in it. And I was way too tall to be Olga Korbut. Sometime later the whir of an outboard engine reached me. I shaded my eyes with my hand. A speedboat was shooting past. At the wheel was Rex Reese. Bare-chested, drinking a beer and wearing sunglasses, he gunned the throttle, towing a water-skier. It was the Object, of course, in her shamrock bikini. She looked almost naked against the expanse of water, only those two little strips, one above, one below, separating her from Eden. Her red hair flapped like a gale warning.

A terrible thing happens when you water-ski. After you release the rope, you keep skimming over the water for a while, free. But there comes an inevitable moment when your speed fails to sustain your forward progress. The surface of the water breaks like glass. The depths open up to claim you. That was how I felt on land, watching the Object ski past. That same plunging, hopeless feeling, that emotional physics.

When I got back, at dinnertime, the Object was still not there. Jerome, too, was out with friends. So I ate dinner with the Object's parents.

When finally I said good night and went upstairs, I got into bed and immediately started crying. I cried for a long time, trying not to make any noise until I heard the screen door bang shut downstairs. I wiped my nose on the sheets. Footsteps climbed the stairs. The Object entered the bedroom and stood there in darkness. The floorboards creaked as she came over to my side of the bed. I felt her standing over me, looking down. She took off her shoes and shorts, put on a T-shirt, and got in.

The Object slept on her back. She told me once that back-sleepers were the leaders in life, born performers or

exhibitionists. Stomach-sleepers like me were in retreat from reality, given to dark perception and the meditative arts. This theory applied in our case. I lay prone, my nose and eyes sore from crying. The Object, supine, yawned and (like a born performer, perhaps) soon fell asleep.

I waited ten minutes or so, just to be safe. Then, as though tossing in my sleep, I rolled over so that I was looking at the Object. In the moonlight, the top of her Groton T-shirt was visible. It was an old one of her father's, with a few holes. She had one arm crossed over her face. Over the pillow, her hair was spread out. Her lips were parted. Something glinted inside her ear, grains of sand from the beach maybe. The fat duvet rolled up at our feet was leaking feathers. The Egyptian sheets smelled like hedges, the pillows like waterfowl. Thirteen inches away the Object was part of all this. Her colors seemed to agree with the American landscape, her pumpkin hair, her apple-cider skin. She made a sound and went still again.

Gently, I pulled the covers off her. In the dimness, her outline appeared, the rise of her breasts beneath the T-shirt, the soft hill of her belly, and then the brightness of her underpants, converging in their V shape. She didn't stir. Her chest rose and fell with her breath. Slowly, trying not to make a sound, I moved closer. Tiny muscles in my flank, muscles I hadn't known I possessed, suddenly made themselves available. They propelled me millimetre by millimetre across the sheets.

After ten minutes, I felt the heat of her body. We were still not touching, only radiating against each other. She was breathing deeply. So was I. We breathed together. Gathering courage, I flung my arm across her waist.

Then nothing more for a long while. Having achieved this much, I was scared to go further. So I remained frozen, half hugging her. My arm grew stiff. It began to throb and finally went numb. The Object might have been drugged or comatose. Still, I sensed an alertness in her skin, in her muscles. After another long while, I plunged ahead. I took hold of her T-shirt and lifted it up. I gazed at her naked belly and, finally, with a kind of woefulness, bowed my head. I kissed the Object's belly and then, gathering

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confidence, worked my way up. I felt my crocus expanding, swelling until with a kind of pop it slid free of the pouch it was in.

I didn't vacate my body, as I had with Jerome. Now I was aware of what was happening. I was thinking about it.

I was thinking that this was what I'd always wanted. I was realizing that I wasn't the only faker around. I was wondering what would happen if someone discovered what we were doing. I was thinking that it was all very complicated and would only get more so.

I reached down and touched her hips. I hooked my fingers in the waistband of her underpants. I began to slip them off. Just then, the Object lifted her hips, very slightly, to make it easier for me. This was her only contribution.

The next day we didn't mention it. When I got up, the Object was already out of bed. She was in the kitchen, observing her father's preparation of scrapple. Making scrapple was Mr. Object's Sunday-morning ritual. He presided over the bubbling fat and grease while the Object periodically looked into the frying pan and said, "That is so disgusting." Soon she had her own plate of it, and made me have one, too. "I'm going to have the worst heartburn," she said.

I understood the unspoken message. The Object wanted no dramatics, no guilt. No show of romance, either. She was a good actress, and at times I wondered if maybe she really had been sleeping through the whole thing.

It was one of those humid days when the atmosphere gets confused. You could feel it: the air wishing it was water. After breakfast, we were on the porch swing, drinking lemonade and gliding back and forth to create a breeze. I had my feet up on the railing, pushing off from it. The Object was lying sideways, her legs spread over my lap, her head resting against the arm of the swing. She had on cutoffs, short enough to reveal the white lining of the pockets, and her bikini top. I was wearing khaki shorts and a white alligator shirt.

Out in front of us, the bay flashed silver. The bay had scales, like the fish beneath it.



"Sometimes I get really sick of having a body," the Object said.

"Me, too."

"Especially when it's hot like this. It's like torture just moving around. Plus I hate sweating."

"I can't stand to sweat," I said. "I'd rather pant like a dog."

The Object laughed. She was smiling at me, marvelling. "You understand everything I say," she said. She shook her head. "Why can't you be a guy?"

I shrugged, indicating that I had no answer. I was aware of no irony in this. Neither was the Object.

She was looking at me, low-lidded. Her eyes in the brightness of day with heat currents rising over the baking grass looked very green, even if they were only slits, crescents. Her head was bent forward against the arm of the swing; she had to look up to see me. Without taking her eyes off mine, she adjusted her legs, spreading them slightly.

"You have the most amazing eyes," she said.

"Your eyes are really green. They almost look fake," I said.

"They are fake."

"You've got glass eyes?"

"Yeah, I'm blind."

This was a new way to do it. We'd just discovered it. Staring into each other's eyes was another way of keeping them closed, or off the details at hand, anyway. We locked onto each other. Meanwhile the Object was very subtly flexing her legs. I was aware of the mound beneath her cutoffs rising toward me, just a little, rising and suggesting itself. I put my hand on the Object's thigh, palm down. And as we continued to swing, looking at each other while crickets played their fiddles in the grass, I slid my hand sideways up toward the place where the Object's legs joined. My thumb went under her cutoffs. Her face showed no reaction. Her green eyes under the heavy lids remained fastened on mine. I felt the fluffiness of her underpants and pressed down, sliding under the elastic. And then, with our eyes wide open but confined in that way, my thumb slipped inside her. She blinked, her eyes closed, her hips rose higher, and I did it again. And again after that. The boats in the bay were part of it, and the string sec-

tion of crickets in the baking grass, and the ice melting in our lemonade glasses. The swing moved back and forth, creaking on its rusted chain. After the first roll of her eyes the Object resettled her gaze on mine, and then what she was feeling showed only there, in the green depths her eyes revealed. Otherwise she was motionless. Only my hand moved, and my feet on the rail, pushing the swing—for three minutes, or five, or fifteen. I have no idea. Time disappeared. Somehow we were still not quite conscious of what we were doing.

When the floor of the porch creaked behind us, I jumped. I withdrew my thumb from the Object's shorts and sat up straight. I saw something from the corner of my eye and turned. Perched on the railing to our right was Jerome. He was in a vampire costume, despite the heat. He was gazing down on us with his best haunted expression. His eyes fixed on us—on the Object's bare legs lying in my lap—while his face remained embalmed.

Then the apparition spoke: "Carpet munchers."

"Just ignore him," the Object said.

"Carrrrpet muncherrrrs," Jerome repeated. It came out in a croak.

"Shut up!"

Jerome remained still and ghoul-like on the rail. "Carpet muncher," he said again. Singular now. This was between him and his sister.

"I said quit it, Jerome." The Object now tried to rise. She swung her legs off my lap and started to roll out of the swing. But Jerome moved first. He spread his jacket like bat wings and jumped off the railing. He swooped down on the Object. His face was completely impassive. No muscles moved except those of his mouth. Into the Object's ear he kept hissing and croaking. "Carpet muncher, carpet muncher, carpet muncher."

"Stop it!"

She tried to hit him but he caught her arms. He held both of her wrists in one hand. With his other hand Jerome made a V with his fingers. He pressed this V to his mouth and between this suggestive triangle flicked his tongue back and forth. At the crudity of this gesture, the Object's calm began to crack. A sob rose in her. Jerome sensed its arrival. He had been reducing his sister to tears for over a decade; he knew how to do it; he was like a kid burning an ant with a magnifying glass, focussing the beam in hotter and hotter.

And then it happened. The Object broke down. She began to bawl like a little girl. Her face turned red and she swung her fists wildly before finally running away into the house.

At that point Jerome's fierce activity ceased. He adjusted his jacket. He smoothed his hair and, leaning against the porch rail, stared peacefully out at the water.

"Don't worry," he said to me. "I won't tell anyone."

"Tell anyone what?"

"You're lucky I'm such a liberal and freethinking type of guy," he continued. "Most guys wouldn't be so happy to find out that they'd been two-timed by a lesbian with their own sister. It's sort of embarrassing, don't you think? But I'm such a freethinker that I'm willing to overlook your proclivities."

"Why don't you shut up, Jerome?"

"I'll shut up when I want to," he said. Then he turned his head and looked at me. "You know where you are now? Splitsville, Stephanides. Get out of here and don't come back. And keep your hands off my sister."

I was already jumping up. My blood rocketed. It shot up my spine and rang a bell in my head, and I charged Jerome in a blaze of fury. He was bigger than me but unprepared. I hit him in the face. He tried to move away but I crashed into him, my momentum knocking him to the floor. I climbed on his chest, pinning his arms with my legs. Finally Jerome stopped resisting. He lay on his back and tried to look amused.

"Any time you're finished," he said.

It was an exhilarating feeling to be on top of him. My long hair was falling into Jerome's face. I swept it back and forth, tormenting him. Then I thought of something else.

"No," Jerome cried. "Come on. Don't!"

I let it fall. Like a raindrop. Like a tear. But neither of those things. The spit plopped right between Jerome's eyes. And then the earth opened up beneath us. With a roar Jerome rose up, sending me backward. My supremacy

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"Obviously, they're evolving much faster than we are."

• •

had been brief. Now it was time to run.

I took off across the porch. I jumped down the steps and tore across the back lawn, barefoot. Jerome came after me, but he stopped to fling off the coat and I increased the distance between us. I reached the open field beyond and fled into it. When I looked back Jerome was gaining on me.

Through the high, yellow grass along the bayshore we flew. On the other side of the field was the road that led back to the house. If I could get over the rise, I could double back without Jerome seeing me. The Object and I could barricade ourselves in our room. I reached the hill and started up. Jerome came after me, scowling, still gaining.

We were like runners in a frieze. In profile, with pumping thighs and knifing arms, we cut through the shin-whipping grass. By the time I reached the bottom of the hill, Jerome seemed to be slowing down. He was waving his hand in defeat. He was waving it and shouting something I couldn't hear.

The tractor had just made a turn onto the road. High in his seat, the farmer didn't see me. I was looking back to check on Jerome. When I did turn forward it was too late. Right in front of me was the tractor tire. I hit it dead on. In the terra-cotta dust, I was spun upward into the air. At the apex of my arc I saw the raised plow blades behind, the corkscrewing metal covered with mud, and then the race was over.

I awoke later, in the back seat of a unknown automobile. A rattletrap, with blankets covering the seats. A decal of a hooked, flapping trout was pasted to the rear window. The driver wore a red cap. The little space above the cap's adjustable headband showed the buzzed hairline of his seamed neck.

My head felt soft, as if covered in gauze. I was wrapped in an old blanket, stiff and spoked with hay. I turned my head and looked up and saw a beautiful sight. I saw the Object's face from below. My head was in her lap. My right cheek was flush against the warm upholstery of her tummy. She was still in her bikini top and cutoffs. Her knees were spread and her red hair fell over me, darkening things. She was chewing one cuticle. It was going to bleed if she kept it up. "Hurry," she was saying, from the other side of the falling hair. "Hurry up, Mr. Burt."

It was the farmer who was driving. The farmer whose tractor I'd run into. I hoped he wasn't listening. I didn't want him to hurry. I wanted this ride to go on for as long as possible. The Object was stroking my head.

"I beat up your brother," I said out of the blue.

With one hand the Object swept her hair away. The light knifed in.

"Callie! Are you O.K.?"

I smiled up at her. "I got him good."

"Oh, God," she said. "I was so scared. I thought you were dead. You were just ly—ly"—her voice broke—"lying there in the road!"

The tears came on, tears of gratitude now, not anger as before. The Object sobbed. With awe I beheld the storm of emotion racking her. She dipped her head. She pressed her wet face against mine and, for the first and last time, we kissed. We were hidden by the back seat, by the wall of hair, and who was the farmer going to tell anyway? The Object's anguished lips met mine, and there was a sweet taste and a taste of salt.

"I'm all snotty," she said, lifting her face up again. She managed to laugh. But already the car was stopping. The farmer was jumping out, shouting things. He swung open the back door. Two orderlies appeared and lifted me onto a stretcher. They wheeled me across the sidewalk, into the hospital doors. The Object remained at my side. She took my hand. For a moment she seemed to register her near nakedness. She looked down at herself when her bare feet hit the cold linoleum. But she shrugged this off. All the way down the hall, she held on to my hand. As though it were a string of yarn. "You can't come in, miss," the orderlies finally said. "You have to wait here." And so she did. But still she didn't let go of my hand. Not for a while longer yet. The stretcher was wheeled down the corridor and my arm stretched out toward the Object. I had already left on my voyage. I was sailing across the sea to another country. Now my arm was twenty feet long, thirty, forty, fifty. I lifted my head from the stretcher to gaze at the Object. To gaze at the Obscure Object. For, once more, she was becoming a mystery to me. What ever happened to her? Where is she now? She stood at the end of the hall, holding my unravelling arm. She looked cold, skinny, out of place, lost. It was almost as if she knew we would never see each other again. The stretcher was picking up speed. My arm was a thin ribbon now, curling through the air. Finally the inevitable moment came. The Object let go. My hand flew up, free, empty.

The doctor who smiled down at me was young and sandy-haired. He had a country accent.

"I'm going to ask you a few questions, O.K.?"

"O.K."

"Start off with your name."

"Callie."

"How old are you, Callie?"

"Fourteen."

"How many fingers am I holding out?"

"Two."

"I want you to count backward for me. Start from ten."

"Ten, nine, eight . . ."

And all the while, he was pressing me, feeling for breaks. "Does this hurt?"

"No."

"This?"

"Uh-uh."

"How about here?"

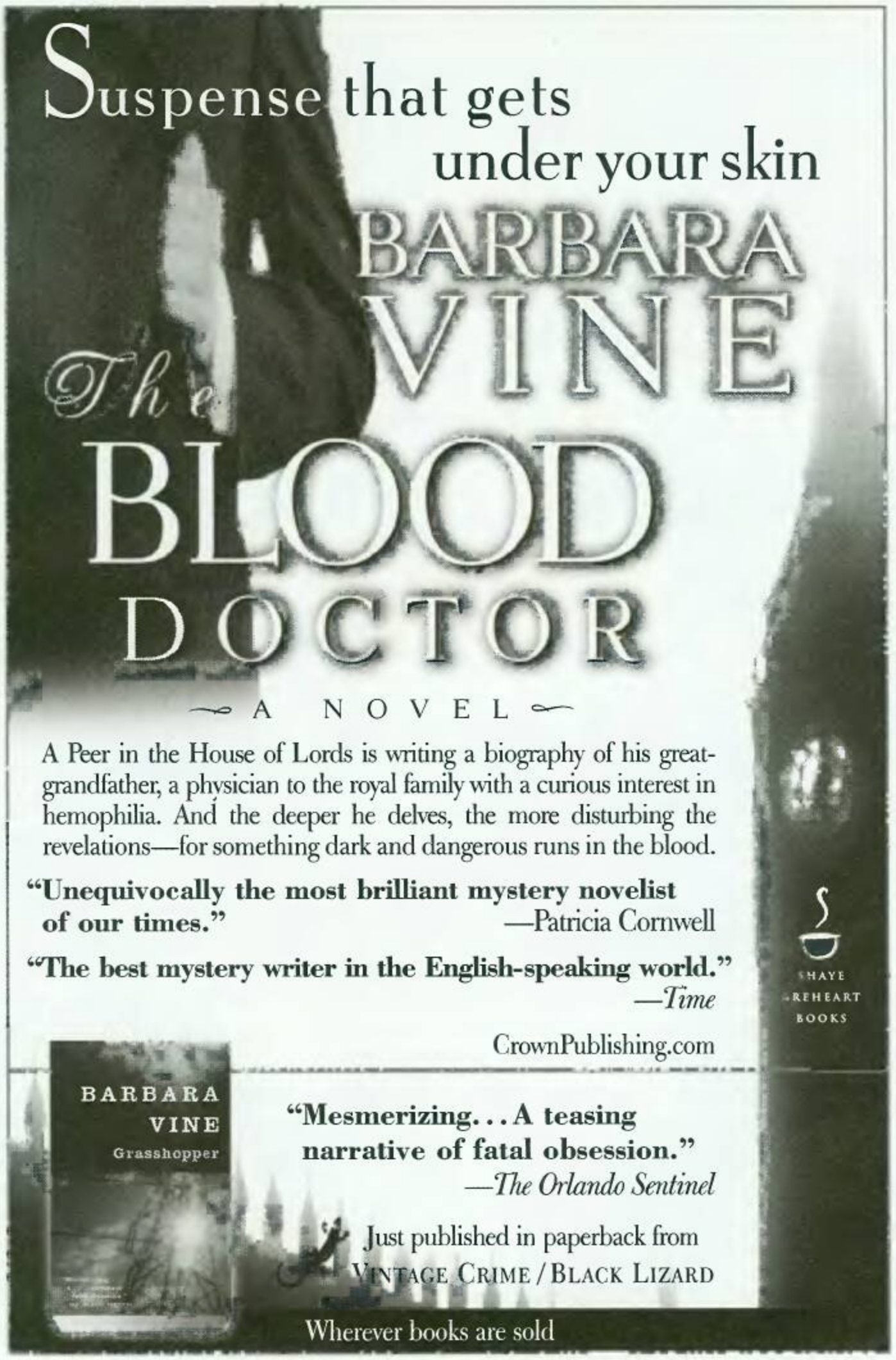
Suddenly it did hurt. A bolt, a cobra bite, beneath my navel. The cry I let out was answer enough.

"O.K., O.K., we're going to go easy here. I just need to take a look. Lie still now." The doctor signalled the intern with his eyes. From either side they began to undress me. The intern pulled my shirt over my head. There was my chest, green and bleak. They paid no attention. Neither did I. Meanwhile the doctor had unfastened my belt. He was undoing the clasp of my khakis: I let him. Down came the pants. I watched as if from far away. I was thinking about something else. I was remembering how the Object had lifted her hips to help me get her underpants off. That little signal of compliance, of desire. I was thinking of how much I had loved it when she did that. Now the intern was reaching under me. And so I lifted my hips.

They took hold of my underpants. They tugged them down. The elastic caught on my skin, then gave.

The doctor bent closer, mumbling to himself. The intern, rather unprofessionally, raised one hand to her throat and then pretended to fix her collar.

Chekhov was right. If there's a gun on the wall, it's got to go off. In real life, however, you never know where the gun is hanging. In the emergency room, there was no smoke, no gunpowder smell, absolutely no sound at all. Only the way the doctor and nurse reacted made it clear that my body had finally lived up to the narrative requirements. ♦





THE CRITICS



THE ART WORLD

FRENCH POSTCARDS

The wiles of Gauguin.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

A year before Paul Gauguin died, in 1903, from complications of syphilis in the Marquesas Islands, he wrote that he had a "fondness for running away." As a nine-year-old in Orléans, he recalled, he decided one day to light out for the forest after seeing a picture of a vagabond carrying a packed handkerchief on a stick. The boy filled his own handkerchief with sand, and set forth. "Watch out for pictures," Gauguin said at the end of the tale, giving it a moral that seems double-edged: beware the power of romantic images to banish common sense; but attend to it, too, and relish the sorcery. For Gauguin, running away was a theatrical act: his celebrated solitude in the South Seas played beautifully, making him a figure of scandal and envy among the bourgeois collectors who bought his sensual visions of escape. In a letter that he wrote to a friend from Tahiti in 1897, he made a shrewd prophecy: "A time will come when people will think I am a myth, or rather something the newspapers have made up." Gauguin anticipated a culture that would be less avid for art than for sensational artistic personas. His legatees in this vein include Salvador Dali, Andy Warhol, Julian Schnabel, and Jeff Koons. Viewed with the right squint, the art world of recent decades can appear to teem with little Gauguins.

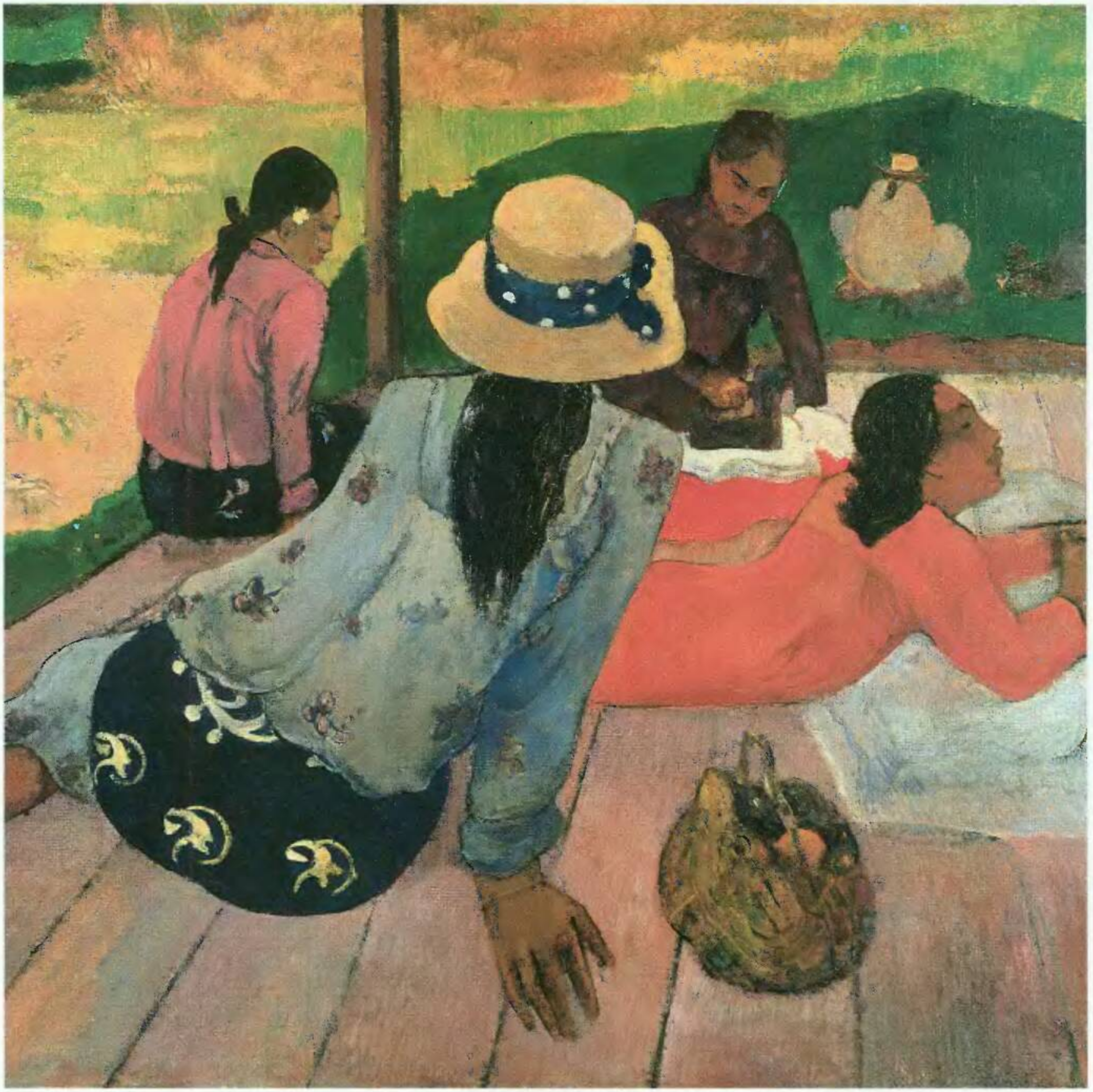
A scrappy but rewarding show at the Metropolitan, "The Lure of the Exotic: Gauguin in New York Collections," is the painter's first extensive exhibition in New York since the last Met show of Gauguin, in 1959. The title perpetuates an old colonial-era myth about the distant Arcadia in which Gauguin created his pictures of seductive, savage innocence. The notion of a South Seas paradise was bunk already a century ago, by which time Polynesia had become ruinously civilized. The native population of the Marquesas had fallen from an estimated high of eighty thousand to three thousand when Gauguin arrived there from Tahiti, in 1901. Encouraged by customs that lightened paternal obligations, he fathered at least four children with island women—adding to the five he had abandoned, along with his much abused Danish wife, in the mid-eighteen-eighties—but his life in the Tropics was scarcely idyllic. He had the kind of petty runins with local authorities that dog arrogant misfits in resort towns everywhere. But no disappointment prevented him from baiting the wishful imaginations of Europeans.

Gauguin entered the world of advanced art as a collector. One-eighth Peruvian—one of his mother's ancestors had been a colonial viceroy—he spent his early childhood in Lima. At the age of seventeen, he began six years of seafaring in the French merchant marine and Navy. In Paris, he took comfortable jobs in finance and set up as a conventional paterfamilias. A passionate hobbyist in drawing and carving, he bought paintings—starting with three by Pissarro and proceeding to works by other Impressionists and by Cézanne. His tangy personality got him welcomed in studios. Degas and Manet both urged him to take his own art seriously, and for several years he was a protégé of the fatherly Pissarro. Not long after the stock market crashed in 1882, he cast his lot as a painter. Academically unschooled, he belonged to the first generation of artists who built their styles on the airy notions of the avant-garde. Throughout his career, whenever his inventiveness flagged, the influence of Degas and Cézanne visibly took charge.

Gauguin was not nice. He was a liar and a braggart, a competitive manipulator of weaker men, and a self-pitying wife beater who lusted after pubescent girls. Eventually, he alienated most of his allies. The drama of his relationship with van Gogh is complex. It's hard to say whether Gauguin's cruelties or the Dutch artist's deluded infatuation with his friend played a greater role in van Gogh's razoring of his ear, in 1888, but even Gauguin's later fond remembrance of the superior painter reeks of self-centeredness. "I owe something to Vincent, and that is, in the consciousness of having been useful to him, the confirmation of my own original ideas about painting," he wrote in his memoir, "Before and After."

The Met's exhibition demonstrates how hard collectors in New York fell for Gauguin—and without a great deal of discrimination—starting with the 1913 Armory Show. Significantly, the Tahitian works on the Met's walls far outnumber the paintings that Gauguin did in Paris, Brittany, and Arles. Among the Tahitian masterpieces are "Manao Tupapau (Spirit of the Dead Watching)," from the Albright-Knox Museum, in Buffalo, and the Met's own "Ia Orana Maria (Hail Mary)"—pictures whose transparently bogus religious content strangely enhances their intensity as art. But the show's crowded hanging is dominated by lesser paintings, drawings, sculpture, reliefs, woodcuts, and such oddities as a walking stick decorated with images of a snake, a nude, and a shoe, which are not so much examples as souvenirs of Gauguin's creativity. More uneven, perhaps, than any other artist of his rank, Gauguin cheer-

"THE SIESTA" (DETAIL), METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, ANNENBERG COLLECTION



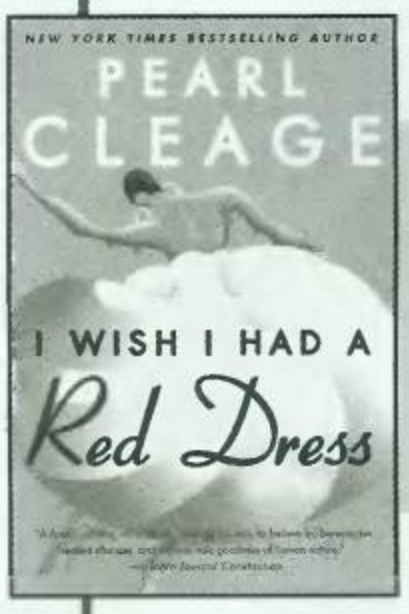
"The Siesta" (probably 1891–92) shows Gauguin's mastery of secondary colors while revelling in conventional exoticism.

fully confessed his limitations, notably in drawing from life. He plainly trusted the cachet of his legend to enhance anything he produced; and in the United States, as elsewhere, he won that bet. The show is, among other things, an exercise in hagiography.

Still, Gauguin's contributions to painting were tremendous. His use of emotionally fraught secondary colors—aromatic strains of green, orange, and purple—was innovative, as was his way of making paint and line practically independent of each other. In "Spirit of the Dead Watching," for example, the summary, piquant cartoon of a frightened nude prone on a bed, with a grotesque shaman figure behind her, occupies a surface that sings with unusual, sonorous color and intricate, excited brushwork. The linear design and the painterly execution register differently, though with equal force. Each can indulge in extreme decorative artifice without weakening, because the tension between them is constant and eventful, full of jangling and caressing surprises. Our eyes revel in contradictory effects that baffle our rational minds. The formal dissonance in Gauguin's paintings was the engine of his seductiveness, and it blazed a trail for modern art.

Four years after Gauguin's death, something like it became transcendent in "Demoiselles d'Avignon," in which Picasso, while also employing exotic imagery, set the twentieth-century standard for art that transposes all sensation, thought, and feeling into purely and aggressively visual terms. A comparison with Picasso exposes the conventionality of Gauguin's compositions, which are conservative in relation to those of Manet and Degas. For all his fiery inspiration in color and technique,

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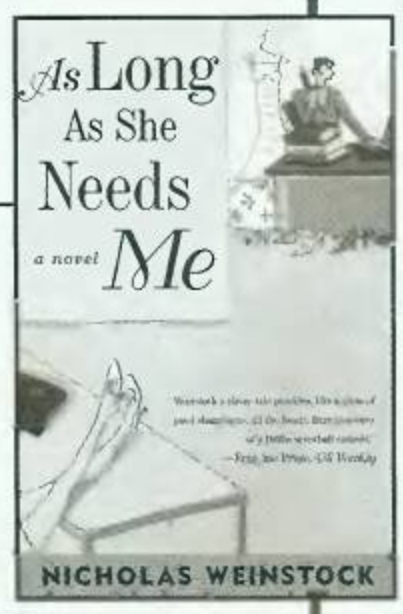


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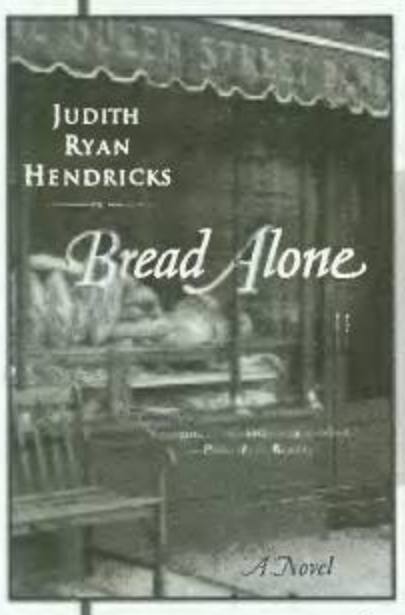
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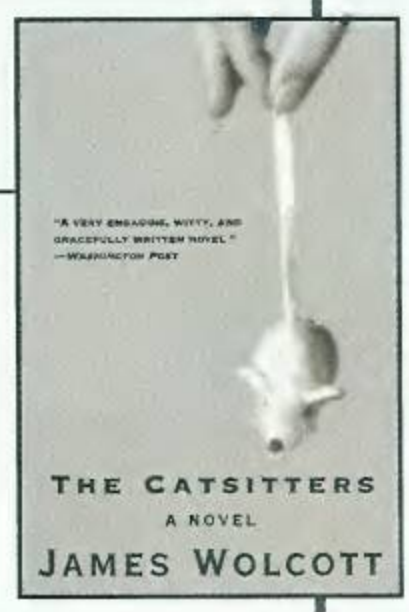
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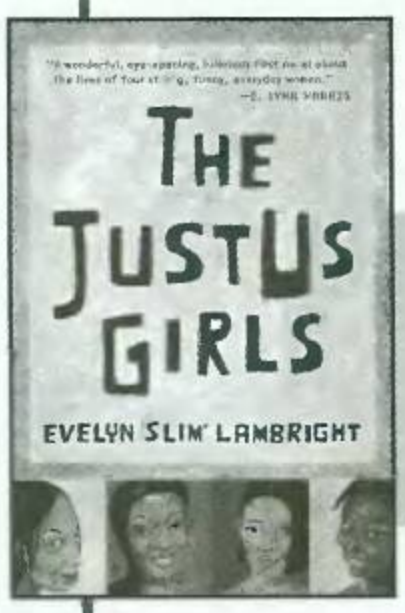
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Gauguin never ceased to be a painter of regular French pictures, which unsettle traditional taste without really challenging it.

Gauguin was a transitional figure between van Gogh, the last great painter of a whole world, and Picasso, who embraced the fracturing of modern sensibility. In other words, Gauguin is neither here nor there. For him, art was more a means of disguise than an exercise in self-expression. His paintings are advertisements for himself, especially for his libertine sexuality. He didn't subsume himself in a sensuous transformation of reality, as van Gogh did, and, unlike Picasso, he was never straightforward about the nature of his erotic drives. In a vigorous recent biography, "Gauguin: An Erotic Life," Nancy Mowll Mathews argues that the artist was strangely androgynous, and that if he was not actively homosexual, he was most stimulated by other men. Certainly, his paintings of women seem profoundly indifferent to their subjects as people—even to whatever he may have felt about his relationship with them.

Gauguin's art dazzles, but it cannot be trusted. Relentlessly directed toward the art world in Paris, his immersion in the South Seas produced no reliable knowledge of island life but only a spicy romantic flavor. It was as if Melville, having written the early adventure books "Typee" and "Omoo," had never proceeded to "Moby-Dick." And yet Gauguin's very incompleteness both as an artist and as a man gives him a peculiar immortality in the popular imagination. It is inconceivable that van Gogh or Picasso could ever be the model for a convincing fictional character, as Gauguin was in Somerset Maugham's "The Moon and Sixpence," which became an international best-seller when it was published, sixteen years after the artist's death, in 1919. Standing somewhere between history and myth, Gauguin persists as an evergreen contemporary: the artist as narcissist and provocateur, whose genius is inextricable from his posturing. ♦

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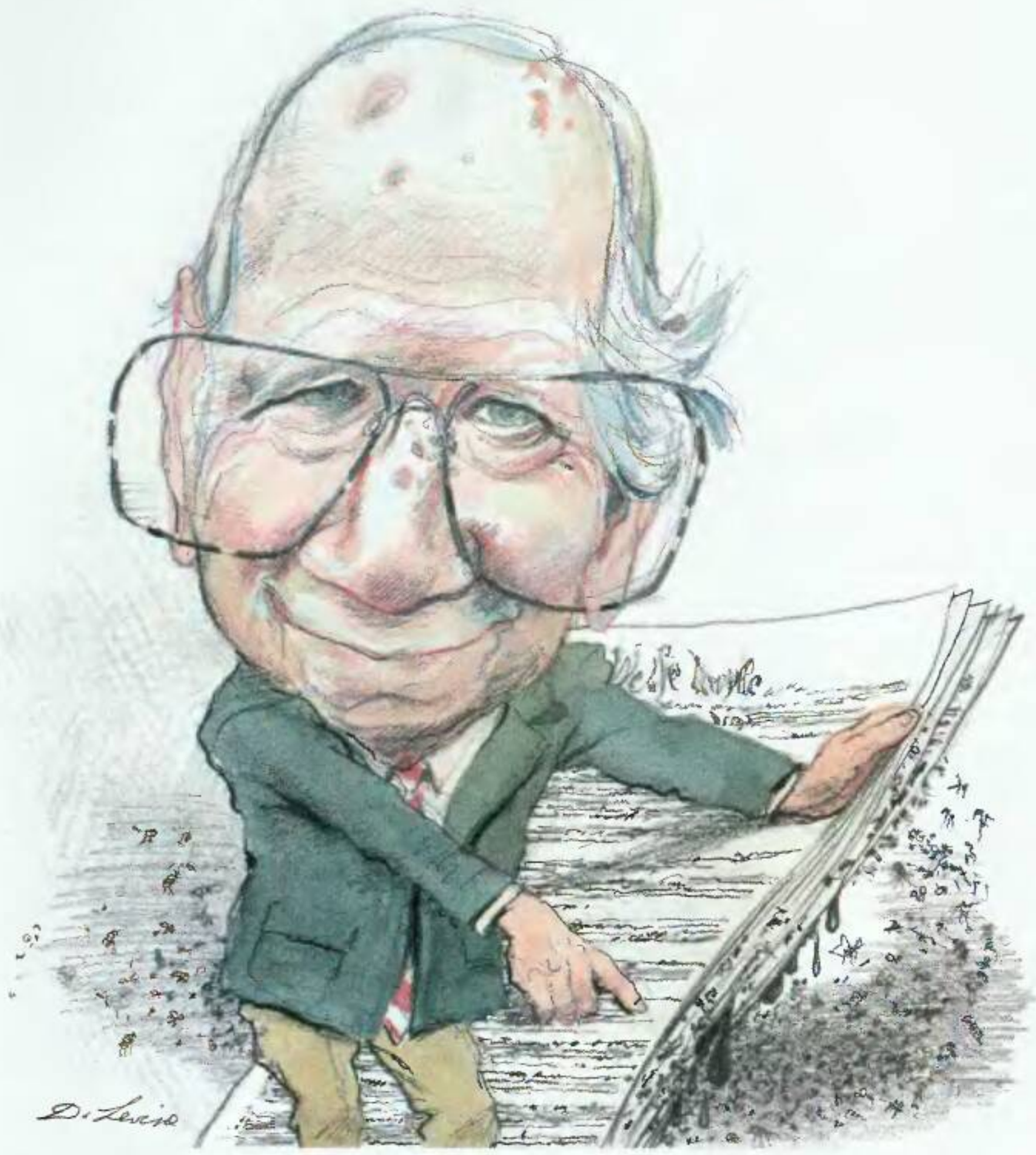
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BOOKS

FRAMED UP

What the Constitution gets wrong.

BY HENDRIK HERTZBERG



The sacred document could use a rewrite, Professor Dahl argues.

DAVID LEVINE

Robert A. Dahl, whose new book's title asks the question "How Democratic Is the American Constitution?" (Yale; $19.95), is not a crank. He is the Sterling Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Yale, and he is about as covered with honors as a scholar can be. He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences, the American Philosophical Society, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; a corresponding fellow of the British Academy; a recipient of the Talcott Parsons Prize, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation Award, and the James Madison Award of the American Political Science Association, of which he is a past president. He is the author of twenty-three books and textbooks, several of which are considered definitive landmarks in the field. His peers revere him. He has been called "the premier democratic theorist of our time" by Fred I. Greenstein, of Princeton; "the premier analyst of democratic theory and democratic institutions writing today" by James S. Fishkin, of the University of Texas; and "the foremost political theorist of this generation" by Theodore J. Lowi, of Cornell. Robert Dahl is eighty-six years old. He knows what he is talking about. And he thinks that the Constitution has got something the matter with it.

Treating the Constitution as imperfect is not new. The angrier abolitionists saw it, in William Lloyd Garrison's words, as "a covenant with death and an agreement with hell." Walter Bagehot (and a prominent American admirer of his, Professor Woodrow Wilson) thought it deeply flawed. Charles A. Beard considered it mainly an instrument for the protection of property rights, an analysis that he did not intend as a compliment. Academic paint balls have splattered the parchment with some regularity. But in the public square the Constitution is beyond criticism. The American civic religion affords it Biblical or Koranic status, even to the point of seeing it as divinely inspired. It's the flag in prose. It's something to be venerated. It's something to be preserved, protected, and defended, as the President swears by God to do. In the proper place (a marble temple in Washington), at the proper times (the first Monday in October, *et seq.*), and by the proper people (nine men and women in priestly robes), it is to be interpreted, like the entrails of a goat. But the Constitution of the United States is emphatically not something to be debunked, especially in the afterglow of sole-superpower triumphalism. The few critics to have spoken up in recent years—Daniel Lazare, the author of a pathbreaking 1996 book, "The Frozen Republic: How the Constitution Is Paralyzing Democracy," is one—have tended to be isolated and uncredentialled. Against this background, Dahl's apostasy merits attention.

"How Democratic Is the American Constitution?" falls somewhere between a little book and a big pamphlet—a hundred and sixty airy pages of text, with large type and wide margins. It has been adapted from a lecture series that Dahl gave shortly before the most recent Presidential election. Perhaps because it was written to be spoken, it is conversational, informal, and relaxed. Dahl's premise is that the Constitution ought to be judged by "democratic standards"—that is, by whether it is "the best that we can design for enabling politically equal citizens to govern themselves under laws and government policies that have been adopted and are maintained with their rational consent." And his purpose "is not so much to suggest changes in the existing constitution as to encourage us to change the way we *think* about

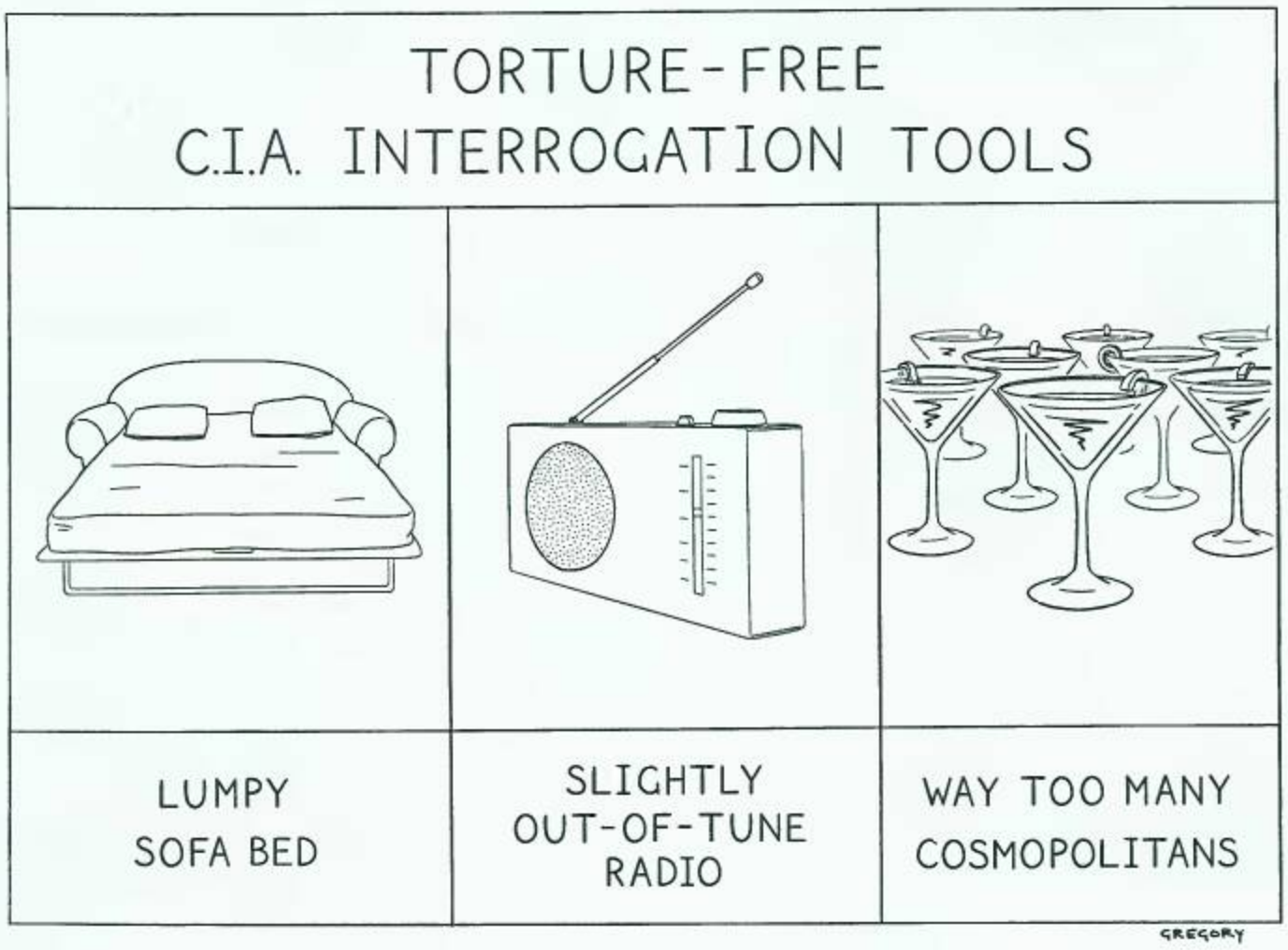
it." That premise is more controversial, and that purpose less modest, than either of them may sound.

Dahl's main points form an argument that goes roughly like this. Wise and great though the framers were, their vision was circumscribed by what they knew, what they mistakenly thought they knew, and what they lived too soon to have any way of knowing. Even within those limits, they were hobbled by the political necessities of a particular moment, which forced them to swallow provisions to which the most eminent among them were strongly (and rightly) opposed. Later, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, an explosion of democratic theory, experience, and practice yielded up an abundance of new democratic norms and mechanisms. A few of these (such as the direct popular election of senators) were incorporated into the formal Constitution, and a few more (such as the idea of competing political parties and the practice of allowing citizens to vote for Presidential electors) were jury-rigged into the informal constitutional structure. But many others were not, and, despite American power, the American system has not been a model for other democracies. Although it's difficult to separate constitutional systems from other factors affecting national well-being, there is no reason to believe that the American system does a better job than the democratic alternatives, and quite a few reasons to believe that it does a worse one.

The most blatantly undemocratic feature of the document that the framers adopted in Philadelphia in 1787 was its acceptance—indeed, its enshrinement—of slavery, which in its American form was as vicious and repugnant as any institution ever devised by man. Article I, Section 9 forbade Congress to forbid the slave trade (or, as the framers shamefacedly put it, "the Migration or Importation of such Persons as any of the States now existing shall think proper to admit") until 1808—twenty long years! Article IV, Section 2 made the citizens of the "free" states complicit in the crime by obliging them to return any runaway "Person held to Service or Labour in one State" to "the Party to whom such Service or Labour may be due," even if slavery itself was unlawful within the state to which the brave wretch had managed to escape. Most notoriously, under Article I, Section 2, a state's allotment of seats in the House of Representatives (and, by extension, its Presidential electors) was determined by counting not only "free Persons" but also "three fifths of all other Persons." This was simply diabolical, because to the insult of defining a person held in bondage as three-fifths of a human being it added the injury of using that definition to augment the political power of that person's oppressors.

It took the deaths of seven hundred thousand soldiers to cleanse the Constitution of these obscenities. Though Dahl does not emphasize the point, the Civil War—the bloodiest war in recorded history up to that period—represented a catastrophic failure of the Constitution itself. The political institutions it created had proved incapable of solving the nation's greatest problem. In the war, North and South both claimed to be the true inheritors of the founding generation. The South probably had the better of the argument, but the North won the fight and, with it, the point. The victors saw no great need to overhaul the document in whose name they had triumphed. So the Reconstruction amendments were substantive, not structural. The Thirteenth Amendment abolishes slavery (and, for the first time in the Constitution's text, drops the "such Persons" circumlocutions and finally uses the brutal word). The Fourteenth extends to all "the equal protection of the laws." And the Fifteenth guarantees the right to vote regardless of "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." But nothing was done to alter the political institutions that in 1860 had held four million people—one American in eight—in bondage and that, for the next century and, arguably, more, denied millions of their "free" descendants both equal protection and the franchise.

Even so grotesque and obvious an injustice as apartheid in the public schools was beyond the ability of the national government to correct. And when, after ninety years, formal, official school segregation was outlawed the deed was not done by the elected representatives of the people. It was done through the exercise of unelected, unaccountable, unchecked, quasi-legislative judicial power—one of the numerous features of the American constitutional system that the framers had no idea they were creating. The framers wanted an independent judiciary, for sure. They seem to have wanted some sort of judicial review, especially of state laws or actions that might impinge on the authority of the national government. And the language of the Bill of Rights—"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion," and so on—suggests that, even though the framers did not explicitly authorize the Supreme



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Court to overturn acts of Congress or Presidential edicts that infringed upon guaranteed civil liberties, they would not have been scandalized by the Court's doing just that. But no one anticipated that the Court would gather unto itself what Dahl calls "the power to make policy decisions that affect the lives and welfare of millions of Americans." The framers did not create that power; the Court itself seized it, gradually and over time. What the framers did create, by establishing a government profoundly at odds with itself and often helpless against the veto power of determined minorities, was the power vacuum into which the Court was drawn. Somebody had to do something about school segregation, after all; it was a patent injustice and an international embarrassment, most Americans opposed it, and sooner or later it would have led to serious civil disorder. But at least the substance of Brown v. Board of Education (as opposed to the power behind it) was democratic. Could one say the same of Dred Scott v. Sandford, Buckley v. Valeo, or Bush v. Gore?

Once slavery was removed, the most undemocratic remaining provision of the Constitution was, and is, the composition of the Senate—its so-called equality of representation, whereby each state gets two senators regardless of population. This is often referred to as a "concession" to the small states, but in truth it was more like surrender to blackmail. The small states saw it as a deal-breaker, and they would brook no compromise. Dahl notes that Gunning Bedford, Jr., of Delaware, told his fellow-delegates to the Constitutional Convention that, unless the big states yielded, "the small ones will find some foreign ally of more honor and good faith, who will take them by the hand and do them justice." The Senate was formed less by rational argument than by threats of treason and war.

You've probably never heard of Gunning Bedford, Jr. (I hadn't, until Dahl introduced me to him.) When it came to the composition of the Senate, though, the Gunning Bedford types exerted far more influence than James Madison or Alexander Hamilton, who were then left holding the bag. It was Madison and Hamilton, along with John Jay, who got the assignment of defending every last detail of the various Philadelphia compromises in the series of long op-ed pieces later collected as "The Federalist" and treasured to this day by columnists and speechwriters composing encomiums to the providential perfection of the framers' handiwork. Dahl points out, amiably but sharply, that the Federalist Papers were an exercise in spin. "If we employ a dictionary definition of propaganda as 'information or ideas methodically spread to promote or injure a cause, nation, etc.,' then the Federalist Papers were surely propaganda," he writes. Madison and Hamilton had a job to do. It was a perfectly honorable job, but it obliged them to defend things they did not believe in. Madison had been the Constitutional Convention's most passionate advocate of giving the big states more senators than the small ones. Hamilton had been almost as adamant. "As states are a collection of individual men," he harangued his fellow-delegates, "which ought we to respect most, the rights of the people composing them, or of the artificial beings resulting from the composition? Nothing could be more preposterous or absurd than to sacrifice the former to the latter. It has been said that if the smaller states renounce their *equality*, they renounce at the same time their *liberty*. The truth is it is a contest for power, not for liberty. Will the men composing the small states be less free than those composing the larger?"

Even if it were true that the condition of being a citizen of a state with a small population entails such grievous disadvantages that, to correct for them, the very votes of such citizens must be assigned a greater weight than the votes of other Americans, how much is enough? Are the special needs of people who live in small states—people who can, after all, escape their condition by moving somewhere else—greater than the special needs of people who are short, or people who are disabled, or (more to the point of American history) people who are black? Here's a little thought experiment, inspired by Dahl's reflections. Imagine, if you can, that African-Americans were represented "fairly" in the Senate. They would then have twelve senators instead of, at present, zero, since black folk make up twelve per cent of the population. Now imagine that the descendants of slaves were afforded the compensatory treatment to which the Constitution entitles the residents of small states. Suppose, in other words, that African-Americans had as many senators to represent them as the Constitution allots to the twelve per cent of Americans who live in the least populous states. There would be forty-four black senators. How's *that* for affirmative action?



Dahl is content, in this little book, to point out the grotesqueness of the Senate in the light of elementary democratic principles. There have been large historical consequences, too. At the moment, admittedly, the Senate is not a particularly unpopular institution. In contrast to the House, the Senate has many members who are widely known, so it has a human face. Liberals like the way the Senate derailed President Bush's plan to turn the Alaska wilderness into an oil patch. Conservatives like the way it thwarted President Clinton's health-care proposal. But, as these examples suggest, the Senate is essentially a graveyard. Its record, especially over the past century and a half, makes disheartening reading. A partial list of the measures that—despite being favored by the sitting President, an apparent majority of the people, and, in most cases, the House of Representatives to boot—have been done to death in the Senate would include bills to authorize federal action against the disenfranchisement of blacks, to ban violence against strikers by private police forces, to punish lynching, to lower tariffs, to extend relief to the unemployed, to outlaw the poll tax, to provide aid to education, and (under Presidents Truman, Nixon, and Carter as well as Clinton) to provide something like the kind of health coverage that is standard in the rest of the developed world. The rejection of the Versailles treaty and the League of Nations after the First World War and then of preparedness on the eve of the Second are only the best known of the Senate's many acts of foreign-policy sabotage, which have continued down to the present, with its

refusal to ratify international instruments on genocide, nuclear testing, and human rights.

Some will take all this as proof that the system has worked exactly as the framers planned. But, to believe that, one must believe that the framers were heartless, brainless reactionaries. They were not. They were practical, public-spirited men who preferred the lessons of experience to the dictates of theory. Unfortunately, since no one had ever before tried making a republic like the American one, there was very little experimental information to guide the designers. A generation later, Dahl thinks, they might have come to different decisions.

Much has been made of Madison's fear of majorities and abhorrence of parties ("factions"), which he expressed in Federalist No. 10. Madison was thirty-six when he wrote his Federalist essays. Dahl points to some fascinating material that shows how Madison's thinking evolved as he and the republic matured. At forty, Madison writes (in "Parties," an essay for Philip Freneau's *National Gazette*) that "parties are unavoidable" and that their dangers can be overcome "by establishing a political equality among all," by pursuing policies that discourage extremes of wealth and poverty, and "by making one party a check on the other." At seventy, while preparing for publication his notes on the debates at the Constitutional Convention, he writes that observations he himself made at the convention "do not convey the speaker's more full & matured view." He goes on to affirm, ungrudgingly, the importance of political parties as "a natural offspring of Freedom"; and he defends "an equal & universal right of suffrage" without property qualifications. At seventy-four, he writes that while no form of government "can be a perfect guard against the abuse of power," the republican form—"where the people govern themselves, and where, of course, the majority govern"—is less subject to abuse than any other. Finally, in 1833, with Andrew Jackson in the White House, Madison, now in his eighties, tells a correspondent that "a republican Government in which the majority rule the minority" is the "least imperfect" of all governments and that (just to drive the point home) "the vital principle of republican government is the *lex majoris parties*, the will of the majority." The republican had become a democrat.



"It's not as if I'm asking you to acknowledge our common humanity."

• •

An obscure provision of Article V of the Constitution, which outlines the amending process, provides that "no State, without its Consent, shall be deprived of its equal Suffrage in the Senate." On its face, this appears to mean that an amendment changing the composition of the Senate would have to be ratified by every single state. Dahl writes, "In effect, those fifteen words end all possibility of amending the Constitution in order to reduce the unequal representation of citizens in the Senate." I'm not so sure. In theory, one can imagine a Senate with, say, one senator from each state, plus fifty more elected at large. That would preserve the "equal Suffrage" of the states, while providing, for a change, a bit of equal suffrage for actual people. Anyway, what if those fifteen words were themselves amended out of the Constitution? The idea that a constitutional amendment might itself be unconstitutional is probably too audacious even for the Supreme Court.

It will never come to that, alas. The amending process alone is enough to insure that the two-senators-per-state rule is forever safe. That process (which was designed, at least in part, to protect slavery) requires the assent of three-fourths of the states. The politicians of the smaller states (and to a much lesser but discernible extent the citizens thereof) would have much to lose from a democratized Senate. So what if the thirty-seven largest states—representing ninety-five per cent of the nation's population—ratify an amendment? To kill it, all the thirteen smallest have to do is nothing.

The Presidency is another aspect of the constitutional system that has turned out to be quite unlike what the framers envisioned. Parliamentary democracy was not even considered, because it hadn't been invented yet. (The British system of an executive beholden to a legislative majority, rather than to a monarch, did not fully take shape until the early eighteen-thirties.) Still, as Dahl notes, the framers

came close to devising something akin to it: not once but three times, the Constitutional Convention voted to have the Chief Magistrate chosen by Congress outright. In the end, the delegates, remembering their Montesquieu, drew back—but only partly. The electoral college, they thought, would be a kind of nominating convention. If no candidate had an outright majority—and the framers assumed that this would be normal once George Washington had passed from the scene—the House would choose among the top five, later reduced to the top three, with each state delegation casting one vote. So the President would owe his job to Congress, even if Congress, having installed him, could remove him only with the greatest difficulty.

The convention gave the job of picking electors to the state legislatures—or, more precisely, to "each State," which would do the appointing "in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct." This, Dahl writes, opened a huge democratic opportunity in the following century, as one state legislature after another, under public pressure, yielded the power to choose electors to the voters. But this power is on loan only, as we learned in 2000, when the Florida legislature made clear its intention to name its own slate of electors if the recount went forth and came out the wrong way.

Just as the Fourth of July orators say, America has been an inspiration to peoples struggling for democracy. But, when it comes to actually designing the machinery, the American model has had no takers—not among successful democracies, at any rate. (The Philippines, Liberia, and some Latin-American countries, which have copied us, are not good advertisements.) Dahl surveys the twenty-two countries that have governed themselves democratically without interruption since 1950. Only six, including the United States, are federal, and in every case "federalism was not so much a free choice as a self-evident necessity imposed by history." Only four, all of them federal, have strong bicameralism. Only the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and France do not use one of the many variants of proportional representation, a nineteenth-century invention. We get bad marks in "democratic fairness" and "encouraging consensus." In "accountability," we're flunking. "Where are we to place responsibility for the conduct of our government?" Dahl asks. He goes on:

> When we go to the polls, whom can we hold accountable for the successes and failures of national policies? The president? The House? The Senate? The unelected Supreme Court? Or, given our federal system, the states, where governments are, in their complexity, a microcosm of the national government? . . . I, for one, am inclined to think that compared with the political systems of the other advanced democratic countries, ours is among the most opaque, complex, confusing, and difficult to understand.

In short, if our system "fails to ensure the fairness promised by the proportional vision, it also fails to provide the clear accountability promised by the majoritarian vision." Nor is that all. In so-called consensual democracies, polls show, voters who are on the losing side of an election are almost as satisfied with the political system as the winners—and both are more satisfied than citizens of majoritarian regimes like ours. Also: "When the United States is ranked with other established democracies on such matters as the rate of incarceration, the ratio of poor to rich, economic growth, social expenditures, energy efficiency, foreign aid and the like, its performance is something less than impressive." On the other hand, we do as well as anyone in maintaining civil liberties—thanks mainly to the Bill of Rights, one part of the Constitution with which Dahl doesn't have a beef. And, although Dahl doesn't mention this, we seem to be getting straight A's in world domination.

As a practical matter, we probably won't be able to change our constitutional system in any truly significant way. But we can, as Dahl suggests, change the way we think about it. If we worshipped the framers a little less, we might respect ourselves a little more. If we kept in mind the ways in which our constitutional arrangements distort our democracy and hobble our politics, we might gain a deeper, more useful understanding of the sources of our various national discontents. If we didn't assume that the system was perfect, we wouldn't assume that everything we don't like is the fault of bad people. We'd judge our politicians more shrewdly, and more charitably, if we reminded ourselves regularly of the constraints that the system imposes on them. We'd be less tempted by lazy moralism.

Our constitutional system is loaded with perverse incentives. To take a current example of how this plays out, many liberals feel exasperation, or even contempt, for what they regard as the timidity of the Democratic opposition to President Bush. Why, they wonder, isn't the Democratic congressional leadership full-throatedly demanding stronger environmental regulation, meaningful gun control, and tax policies that don't simply bloat the rich? It's not as if these positions were politically unpopular—all of them, polls show, are supported by solid majorities of the American public. But solid majorities of the American public don't have much to do with who wins American congressional elections. This fall, control of the House and the Senate will be decided in a dozen districts and a half-dozen states, and in those districts and states the issues don't necessarily cut the way they do in the country at large. So Democrats stick to Social Security and Medicare, Republicans stick to terrorism and "compassionate conservatism," and the general public wonders why "the issues" aren't being "addressed."

"My reflections lead me to a measured pessimism about the prospects for greater democratization of the American Constitution," Dahl writes. He sees little or no chance for the kinds of changes to which his analysis logically points. He does see some unspecified hope in "a gradually expanding discussion that begins in scholarly circles, moves outward to the media and intellectuals more generally, and after some years begins to engage a wider public"—specifically, a discussion of how our system stacks up against the performance of constitutional systems in other advanced democracies and against democratic principles. Our understanding of those principles will evolve indefinitely. "So, too," he writes in his final sentence, "will the implications of those principles for our democratic political system, and its Constitution, under which we Americans freely choose to live."

Dahl can be forgiven this one little flourish of sentimentality. As he knows very well—and has written a book to prove—our system is a lot less democratic than it should be. We didn't choose it; it was here when we arrived. We just have to live with it. Better we should do so with our eyes open. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

Under Radar, *by Michael Tolkin (Atlantic Monthly; $23).* In Tolkin's latest black comedy, Tom Levy, a successful lawyer, isn't enjoying the Jamaica vacation he has taken with his wife and their two daughters. The other guests at the hotel seem hopelessly bourgeois, and Tom—who has made a small fortune from secret financial improprieties—fancies himself a more dangerous character. After an incident at a reggae performance in which another man encourages Tom's four-year-old daughter to dance in a manner that Tom feels is inappropriate, he proves just how dangerous he is by committing a brutal murder. This apparently senseless act lands him in a Jamaican prison, where he begins a strange, difficult transformation. Before the murder, Tom imagines that he will "never be a better father than on this walk, witness to his own awesome criminal and loving nature," but his introspection evolves from profoundly poisonous self-delusion to a conditional wisdom.

The Pirate Hunter, *by Richard Zacks (Hyperion; $25.95).* William Kidd is remembered as one of history's greatest pirates, and thousands of people have searched in vain for the treasure he supposedly left buried on a desert island. In this fascinating work of historical revisionism, Zacks argues that in fact Kidd was a privateer, commissioned by the British Crown to hunt down pirates. But his mutinous crew was dissatisfied with the slim pickings of buccaneer-hunting, and Kidd himself inadvertently fell afoul of the powerful East India Company, which tarred him as a criminal. Instead of being acclaimed a national hero, he died on the gallows, in 1701. Zacks's detective work here is thoroughly convincing. In addition, he sets the suspenseful tale of Kidd's downfall within its larger historical context, in a manner reminiscent, at times, of Defoe, vividly illustrating the brutalities of life on a seagoing vessel and the chaos of urban society at the end of the seventeenth century.



Reflections and Shadows, *by Saul Steinberg, with Aldo Buzzi, translated from the Italian by John Shepley (Random House; $24.95).* It seems fitting that this most sphinx-like of artists should have his memoirs written by someone else. Buzzi, a friend since the two men were students together in prewar Milan, compiled these impressions from conversations recorded in the nineteen-seventies, and the result beautifully conveys Steinberg's aphoristic panache. "Art," says the man who made cartoons into serious art and perhaps philosophy, "precedes technique, just as the smell precedes the cake." Whether describing his childhood in Bucharest, flight from Fascist Italy, or life in America, Steinberg is full of superb anecdotes and quizzical observations, but there remains an evasiveness that reflects unease about the past. Tellingly, he says that he prefers not to revisit old haunts, instead asking friends to go and photograph them for him. On one occasion, he broke his own rule: "I was afraid of spoiling the memory, and I wanted to spoil it. And I succeeded."

Swan Electric, *by April Bernard (Norton; $22).* At the heart of Bernard's latest collection is a series of poems about living in the East Village in the nineteen-eighties. The series, named for a Kurt Weill song, forms a sort of loose-leaf memoir, and includes just the personalities we might expect—poets, musicians, and art critics, most of them thin and poorly dressed. In "Dial-an-Edict," the speaker and her cohort live like gentry in a dull provincial town; dispatching wisdom via telephone, they "pretended to know the (one or two) things we did not." Bernard misses none of the irony intrinsic to her youthful ideals, yet she also manages to distill the pain of a hopeful, uncertain time. Her characters struggle to remake the world, even if, in the end, it is only "the world of our friends and their friends."

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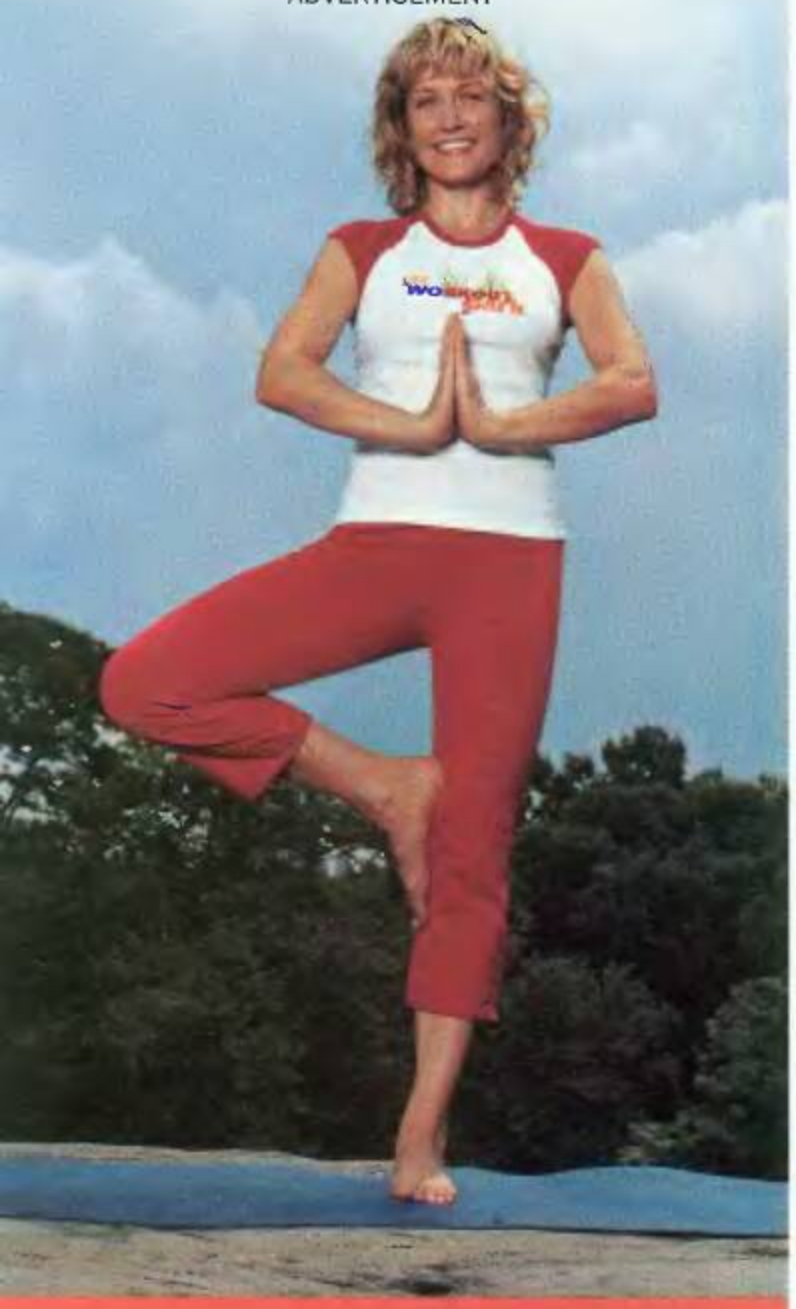
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THE CURRENT CINEMA

UNDER PRESSURE

"K-19" and "Tadpole."

BY ANTHONY LANE

There is a breed of film in which terribly important things fail to happen, preferably by less than an inch. In "The Day of the Jackal," General de Gaulle doesn't get shot; in "Thirteen Days," the world doesn't end; and in "Pillow Talk," Doris Day and Rock Hudson don't go to bed. Or, at least, not in the same bed. Now we have "K-19: The Widowmaker," in which a submarine doesn't explode. This film is not to be confused with "K-9," the moving tale of a police dog, although it is to be confused with almost every other submarine movie. We get the same impression of jammed corridors, of large egos clanging together like saucepans in a tight space, and of cooks spilling their fare in the galley when trouble looms. What we don't get is a decent *ping;* if I go to a submarine flick, I expect to hear a nice bright *ping* echoing outward as the vessel descends into the depths, but this one just creaks and groans like a very old man getting out of a car.

K-19 was a real Russian nuclear submarine, launched in 1961. In Kathryn Bigelow's movie, it is launched too soon, under political pressure, which means that tiny details like drips, fuses, and nuclear reactors have yet to be ironed out. In case of radiation leaks, the sub's physician carries a helpful supply of aspirin. On the other hand, we do see one man dipping crackers into a small pot of jelly, and an entire crate of fresh oranges being lowered into the hold; plainly, the Soviets were super-equipped, and America had much to fear. K-19 is skippered by Captain Alexei Vostrikov (Harrison Ford), whose iron will is a fashionable match for his hair. He takes over from Captain Mikhail Polenin (Liam Neeson), who remains on board as executive officer, thus setting up the crunchy, man-to-man clash—think Gene Hackman and Denzel Washington in "Crimson Tide"—without which no submarine picture is complete.

The contest, in this case, is a close thing. Neeson gives much the better performance; he brims with loyal good humor, turning Polenin into a kind of lovable Robert Mitchum, if you can get your head around such a novel idea. The men adore him, and when one of them is injured Polenin merrily pitches in, manhandling a torpedo as if it were a large cigar. The problem for Neeson is that he is a giant in a tin can, bending so far to avoid whacking his brow on the bulkheads that the poor fellow spends half the movie staring at the floor. Against him is Vostrikov, a Party animal handpicked by the grim and balding heavies back in Moscow. Vostrikov's challenge to K-19, during sea trials, is to plunge it down to what is known as crush depth, then lift its nose and race for the surface, smashing through layers of ice with an aplomb that suggests that, when his Navy days are over, he could get a retirement job making frozen margaritas.

Kathryn Bigelow is more of a Vostrikov than a Polenin. She is efficient and unfunny, and she slings her camera around more to show what it can do—to try it out at crush depth, so to speak—than to push the story along. She has a particular fondness for objects that veer hurriedly toward the lens; we are thrown back in our seats by the kick of a soccer ball, the nose cone of a rising missile, and the fast-approaching chin of Harrison Ford. As

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befits a big summer release, "K-19" resounds with special effects, none more complex than the spectacle of Ford attempting to speak English with a Russian accent. When Sean Connery played a Soviet submarine captain, in "The Hunt for Red October," he made a policy decision to deliver his lines like Sean Connery, and the gamble paid off. Ford opted to dispatch his voice on a mission to uncharted territory, and the result is the same sound that your lawnmower makes when it runs over a rubber ball.

The climax of "K-19" arrives when the onboard reactor springs a leak. The consequence is drastically heroic, as members of the crew don useless suits and wade into the wet hellhole of the radioactive area to repair the damage; after ten-minute shifts, they come out scalded, vomiting, and doomed, like victims of an instant plague, and you can hear the otherwise restless audience freeze and gasp. Movies have become so adept at simulations of universal horror—the flash of whiteout, the mushroom cloud—that it is salutary, and far more effective, to be reminded of the damage that can be done to a single body, delivering the whimpers without a bang.

In the event, K-19 was evacuated, and its core never melted to a critical point. The credits tell us that seven men died soon afterward, and twenty more in the following year: a dire ordeal, and one that was kept hidden by the Soviets until the fall of Communism, although it didn't stop them from refitting K-19 and sending it back to sea. Whether this is enough to carry a movie, or whether the secrecy of the saga lent it a weight it doesn't altogether deserve, is hard to decide. Certainly, if you're going to make a film without villains, and without a whiff of battle, then you must stay light on your feet, and Bigelow has lost her poise. The woman who gave us "Point Break" knew that our emotional needs could be met by a combination of surfing, skydiving, and Keanu Reeves in low-slung trunks, whereas "K-19" is a long, lumbering brute of a movie, no easier to maneuver than the vessel itself. What nimbleness there is resides in the bright, quick faces of the Russian men, and in the alacrity with which they volunteer for certain death. Despite the historical hauteur of the picture, it basically informs us that the safety of nations was assured by a few brave souls with a length of pipe and a welding tool. Sadly, where movies are concerned, the weld is not enough.

A long short story, coming in at seventy-seven minutes, "Tadpole" tells of Oscar (Aaron Stanford), a sweet, sensitive, and literate fifteen-year-old—or, to you and me, a jerk—who has a thing for older women. He not only loves his stepmother, Eve (Sigourney Weaver), earning a kiss over the dinner dishes, but, more or less by accident, sleeps with her best friend, Diane (Bebe Neuwirth). What either of them sees in Oscar, given that he freely uses the word "verbalizable" and addresses waiters in French, is a mystery beyond reckoning, but there you go.



Harrison Ford plays the captain of a Soviet nuclear submarine.

The picture was directed by Gary Winick and shot on digital video, the advantage of which is that nobody knows, or at least cares, that you're making a movie, and the disadvantage of which is that the end product appears to have been filmed through a triple layer of bubble wrap. The kindest interpretation would be that the hairy fuzz of the focussing is an ironic gesture toward the cashmere in which half the characters prefer to be clad. This is Upper East Side love, punctuated by onscreen quotations from Voltaire; together with the use of locations such as Payard and Café Boulud, these are intended to lend the enterprise a tint of glamour, both sociable and bookish. What gets lost is the fact that here is a horny story posing as a refined one; Tadpole is the nickname of the hero, who dreams of being a frog, leaping perhaps to princehood, while refusing to admit that the real issue is spawn. Winick's neat, unexceptional American fable wants so badly to be French that you can hear it moaning with the effort; hence the burst of Charles Trenet in the opening sequence and a shot of a red balloon.

The only people who get the measure of the movie, and who find something hard and brittle below the blur of charm, are John Ritter, who plays Oscar's academic dad, and, as ever, the great Bebe Neuwirth, who should apply for a patent on her slow and dirty smile. The scene in which she introduces her new conquest to her girlfriends over tea, and pretty well pimps him to any takers, is worth the price of a ticket. The true scandal of "Tadpole" comes in the closing moments, as a relieved Oscar seems to settle back into girls his own age. The implication is that when Neuwirth, wearing a leather skirt and a fur coat, guides you back to her apartment, gives you a massage, and spirits you into her bed, the whole thing is just a *phase*, something you have to go through and grow out of, when it is, of course, as good as Oscar's life will ever get. Honestly, kids today: no respect. ♦

MICHAEL WELDON

THE BACK PAGE BY JILL WRIGHT

God, Why Do We Live in This City???

You Work till nine. Live on deli ~~food~~. And a basement apartment on the LOWer East Side, ~~for~~ Chrissake, can Set you back $2,200 per month. Not ~~to~~ mention the broker's fee.

Yeah. But you don't need a car.



It's Smelly. It's Sooty. It's already rude again. And have you noticed how house wine is Slowly inching to ten bucks a glass? Plus tip.

Yeah. But you don't need a car.



The air's unbreathable. The noise is Unbearable. And I Swear my quarterly taxes are higher than my annual income.

Yeah. But you don't need a car.



LOok, maybe you just need to get out of town for a while.

I Would, but I don't have a car.



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