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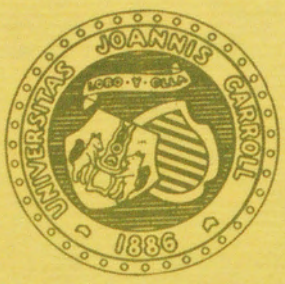
UNIVERSITAS JOANNIS CARROLL
1886

Carroll Quarterly, a literary magazine produced by an undergraduate staff and written by the students, alumni, and faculty of John Carroll University, University Heights, Ohio.

Volume 20 Summer, 1967 Number 4

Contents

With great pride we dedicate
this twentieth anniversary edition of the *Carroll Quarterly*
which focuses on the poetic efforts of the John Carroll community
to DR. RICHARD J. SPATH,
whose career and service at John Carroll
have been almost as long as the publication of the *Quarterly* itself.
This summer Dr. Spath will assume his new duties as
President of St. Francis College in Biddeford, Maine.
At John Carroll Dr. Spath has served as
professor of philosophy,
chairman of the classical languages department,
co-ordinator of university research, and
dean of the graduate school.
To the students Dr. Spath has been best known as
faculty advisor of the *Carroll News* and of the *Carroll Quarterly*
and presently as advisor for the *Carillon.*
A past moderator of the Carroll Student Union,
Dr. Spath has fascinated his *Horace Odes* classes with lectures varying
from art to academic freedom.
As a former president of the faculty association,
alumni association vice-president, and
recurring Cleveland area television personality,
Dr. Spath has shone in the entire spectrum
of university and community life.
We know him as student and scholar,
critic and author,
educator and administrator.
With the dedication of this anniversary issue
we wish him even greater success and fulfillment in Maine.

— The Editors

Here & There: the View from No. 11, D.S.

We are pleased to announce that Mark Yungbluth and Ray Holan will receive the awards as best authors of the year published in the *Quarterly*. This is the second consecutive year that Mr. Yungbluth has won the award. Mr. Holan is a freshman who has shown great promise. Congratulations to both of them.

•

As we celebrate our twentieth anniversary, in this period of unending development, to recall the past accomplishments of the *Carroll Quarterly* would only retard our present development and the pursuit of future goals. What we are now, and what we will be to the University are matters much more important. Simply put, the *Carroll Quarterly's* importance is sure to grow and be more fully understood.

This is a time of extreme educational differentiation — a period in which the university provides a narrowing of academic pursuits in order to mold each man to perfectly fit his special hole in the pegboard of secular society.

The college student, having cast his lot, frequently finds himself in the situation where his differentiation appears to legislate against literary endeavors. This should not be the case and, in fact, is not. The *Quarterly's* policy is to provide the greatest opportunity possible for the development of talent and the publication of one's efforts. And the *Quarterly* stands or falls on this policy. And if it falls, it will do so because it failed to cope with this differentiation which life demands of contemporary students.

Hence, now and in the future, the *Carroll Quarterly* will encourage each man to step outside that pegboard before he's unconsciously "pegged" and express himself for the benefit and pleasure of his community and for the betterment of himself.

•

The perils of a road show! The Little Theatre Society's Touring Company braved the elements last December to present *Animal Farm* to the culture-hungry youth in the hinterland of Ohio. Our journey took us to the thriving communities of Cadiz and New Philadelphia on the fringe of Appalachia.

We lodged at the picturesque Reeve's Motor Inn (formerly Reeve's Hotel, built c. 1900) whose name was changed when they blacktopped the parking area behind the building. A quick trip around the town square is highlighted by two noted landmarks: the Tuscarawas County Courthouse and some snazzy public restrooms constructed of sandstone brick by the WPA in 1936.

Our accommodations at the Reeve's were entirely adequate; however, its pseudo-modern facade and jazzy new name belie an ancient elevator and a labyrinthine series of halls.

We, as actors, were more concerned with where we were going to perform. In Cadiz ("Birthplace of Clark Gable" — a favorable indication), we gave our presentation at Cadiz High School, which was such a typical high school that one almost expected that old busybody Mr. Novak to come bouncing down its halls.

When the real test came, though, the trip was a success. The warm response and enthusiastic applause of our audience caused us momentarily to forget the glamor of Cleveland.

Meeting of the Elect

The Hebrew Woman was there
Without the jar on her head this time
Or the sandals on her feet
But with proud high heels attacking the street
And teased red hair blowing in the air
And American clothes and United States jewelry
Who didn't suppose there was any foolery
About her right to be there
With Amos and Cecil and Josie
Her right consisted in the fact that her husband Isi
While having an affair
Saw God in the woman
And he, overcome, though he didn't really believe in God at all,
Loved the woman more thencefrom
Along came Oppenheimer climber

And he was all right
For he once threw a fight
To a young up-and-comer
A second-place runner
A chum of a chap vying for the cup.
Just dropped it in his lap.

Mr. B-Boy-Business-Brown-Suit-Bluster
Walked in bold
For so he was told
He had a right to come
Because he was one of those few
Who still could be moved
By the preacher on the square
Didn't take him for granted
As part of the scenery
Or the local machinery of
A national organization.

Then there were the earth-mothers
Soft pewter women with baby-faces and a feel for the ground
A link with the breeze
And a glint in their eyes
Who had a right to be there besides
Because they had fulfilled their destinies.

— ANN C. BRINK

Reflections

A silver punchbowl lies – now – almost empty.
Sloshing back and forth has made small, curved rings
Upon faces glowering at me from inside.
My friends departed –
Crumpled napkins, cigarettes broken, and half-eaten canapes
Heap the tea table.
Earlier I had thought:
The sea lies in this silver bowl
Touching brilliant edges on the sand.
Bubbling and frothing
Sloshing back and forth as if some great hand dipped in a cup.
The sea that pours forth fertilization from its dregs,
And often leads travelers safely –
Weak adventurers in a sick child's room –
Where small as toy sailors on a quilted sea of covers
They are lead the short way 'cross the world.
The sea, that seething malcontent, whose humor manifested
At times is dangerous to behold –
The sea funerals, the families bereft of home,
Or friends parted in a storm –
The agony had never knowing what had made the end.
And how I should like to be sunk in the salty sea
Mixing my tears with the cold waters.
But now:
The lights are blinking out all over the city.
I turn mine out to be cooperative
And sit on the couch.
The red eye of my cigarette glares in the black.

— ALICE KEATING

A Man for All Seasons: Renaissance Masterpiece

The Renaissance was the age of the well-rounded man. The Renaissance ideal was a man equally knowledgeable in the arts, in business, in politics, and in religion. Unfortunately, most men of this period developed themselves aesthetically, commercially, and politically at the expense of their spiritual life. Of the few men who did achieve the Renaissance ideal of balance, the foremost among them was Thomas More of England. In committing Thomas More to film in *A Man for All Seasons*, Producer-Director Fred Zinneman creates a magnificent motion picture by preserving this Renaissance sense of balance. No one facet of the film so predominates as to obscure the others, and all combine to bring the greatest of Renaissance men to the twentieth century.

Although the character of Thomas More is obviously the main concern of this drama, it by no means stands alone. Thomas More was a product of time, place, and events. It is his heroically different reaction to these circumstances that gives him an enduring significance and makes him a "man for all seasons." As a Renaissance man of sixteenth-century England, More was a scholar, wit, statesman, and humanist. But in a secular age when nearly every man had his price, More clung to a set of principles which he would under no circumstances compromise. Thomas More knew his self must be inviolable.

More's critical self was tested by the greatest scandal in English history, Henry VIII's break with Rome. As *A Man for All Seasons* opens, Henry's chancellor, Cardinal Wolsey, is faced with the task of securing a papal annulment of the King's twenty-five-year marriage to Catherine of Aragon. But Wolsey fails, and dies in the Tower of London. Henry then bestows the chancellory upon his dearest friend, Thomas More, confident that More will succeed where his predecessor had failed. But to the King's surprise Thomas will have nothing to do with the issue. Henry comes to More's house at Chelsea to win him over.

Thomas will not commit himself, despite the pleas and threats of his friend the King. When the Act of Succession is passed, More resigns the chancellorship and Henry appoints Thomas Cromwell to that post and divorces Catherine, denying the authority of the pope in England. At Henry's request, Cromwell sets out to obtain More's approval of the divorce and subsequent marriage to Anne Boleyn or destroy the King's former friend if he refuses.

Editor's note: *A Man for All Seasons* is currently playing at the Heights and Westwood Art Theatres.

Despite tremendous pressure, More makes no statement on the issue to anyone, not even to his wife or his daughter. His loyalty to his self forbids approval of the divorce, but his love of life and shrewd legal mind lead him to construct an airtight case to avoid the martyrdom which would surely follow any open denunciation. His exemplary life and absolute silence on the issue make prosecution out of the question.

Henry refuses to leave More alone; and Thomas's refusal to yield costs him position, property, and friendship. All that remains is his self. Finally, when he refuses to sign the Act of Succession legitimizing Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn, Thomas is charged with treason, imprisoned, convicted by false testimony, and sentenced to death. Only then does he speak out in condemnation of the marriage. He dies peaceful and confident, true to his self. The movie ends with the fall of the headsman's axe.

With the help of Robert Bolt's fine script, Fred Zinneman shapes this plot into a suitable vehicle for his actors. Wolsey's role serves as an introduction, presenting the background for the story. Each step of More's material demise and spiritual exaltation is underscored by a corresponding material rise and spiritual collapse in Richard Rich, an erstwhile friend of More. This process is dramatically climaxed when Rich's false testimony damning More is rewarded with the attorney-generalship of Wales. As Rich leaves the courtroom after the perjury, More confronts him. More stands in rough, faded prison garb and Rich in the elegant robes of his new office. More admonishes him, "It profits a man nothing to lose his soul for the whole world . . . but for Wales!" *A Man for All Seasons* is a tragedy, but not in the classic sense; More's death does not result from a tragic flaw but rather from his greatest strength, loyalty to self.

The setting of the film assumes a justly subordinate role, complementing the plot to form a framework for the characters. All settings are realistic — English countryside, Tudor manor, dungeon, and Parliament. Recognizing that Tudor England had only the beginnings of affluence, Zinneman uses simple but elegant scenery. *A Man for All Seasons* has no lavish staging, overwhelming scenery, or awesome pomp to upstage the message of More's life. Each scene, although beautifully adorned and photographed, serves only as a backdrop for the developing story.

Within these places and events Zinneman inserts characters as a catalyst for his carefully balanced formula. Around a single central character Zinneman assembles a collection of supporting roles combining function and depth. All the characters are essential to the action, joining together to create a forceful whole. All are genuine, devoid of stereotype, hollow actions, and scene stealing. The story is always centered around More, and the supporting cast provide depth and realism to reinforce More's character.

The main character is, of course, Thomas More, played to perfection by Paul Scofield. Scofield captures the moderation and multi-faceted excellence which made More so remarkable. He is learned without being pedantic, rational without being cunning, and religious without being pharisaical. Scofield's More is no overpowering superhero but rather an intense and sincere humanist, the Renaissance ideal. In every scene Scofield projects the loyalty to self and love of others which characterized More. He comforts his

wife with, "This is not the stuff of which martyrs are made" while realizing that he has no choice but martyrdom. His answers to the King's tribunal questioning him are shrewd and evasive, but at the same time truthful and sympathetic. Not once does he lose his composure, his reason, or his faith. His total command of his self and his situation is marvelously evident when he comforts his executioner, "Be not afraid of your office; you send me to God . . . He would not refuse one who is so blithe to go to Him."

There are two types of supporting roles — More's friends and his adversaries. In the beginning, all are More's friends; but as Henry grows more threatening all in some way defect. More's enemies defect for personal gains; his friends urge his surrender out of misguided love. All the cast, friends and adversaries alike, strengthen Scofield's portrayal by their excellent performances.

Among More's friends are Alice, his wife; Margaret, his daughter; and Will Roper, Margaret's suitor. Wendy Hiller capably portrays Alice, loving, headstrong, somewhat self-conscious at being an unequal match for her remarkable husband. Susannah York is Margaret, More's beautiful and scholarly daughter, with the emphasis on beautiful. As Will Roper, Margaret's impetuous suitor, Corin Redgrave projects the necessary fire and enthusiasm which makes him a foil for Paul Scofield's calculating and reserved More.

Among More's adversaries Robert Shaw's Henry VIII stands out. Shaw captures the young Henry, a learned, forceful, vibrant monarch trapped by desire, impetuosity, and the necessity of producing a male heir. Henry comes to Chelsea every bit More's equal. He tries to convince his friend using first logic, then friendship, then anger, and finally raging threats. More uses only logic and restraint, unable to explain his position knowing what it will mean. But when forced to choose between friendship and principles, he chooses principles, and becomes heroic in his earthly defeat. Henry on the other hand surrenders his principles to the temporal situation and becomes one of history's most infamous characters. This confrontation of two strong personalities is the high point of the picture. As Henry storms away from Chelsea he all but storms out of the film; this is his only significant appearance. But as Shaw's Henry diminishes More grows in stature.

More's other enemies are also tellingly portrayed. Orson Welles plays Wolsey a little too diabolically but otherwise quite effectively; the brevity of his role makes his excess almost unnoticeable. Leo McKern makes Thomas Cromwell the epitome of the Machiavellian politician of that era. John Hurt skillfully portrays Richard Rich, his conscience numbing as he rises in station. Nigel Davenport is a convincing Duke of Norfolk, a vigorous nobleman torn between friendship for Thomas and loyalty to the King. All More's opponents, while primarily functionaries in the story of his crisis, assert their own individuality. Their success in leaving a definite impression puts More's role in balance and proper perspective, and prevents *A Man for All Seasons* from becoming a one-man show.

Noticeably absent from the screenplay of *A Man for All Seasons* is the Common Man. In Bolt's original stage version, the Common Man began the play and assumed several minor roles. His part emphasized the universality of human nature and created a link with the audience. In all his roles he

served as a foil for More, repeating the theme of surrendering one's principles to avoid "making waves" as More was heading to his death to uphold his self-integrity. The absence of a live audience would hamper the effectiveness of the Common Man in the film version, so the Common Man yields to reality. His several roles are played by different actors in the movie, and the theme he represents all but vanishes. Whereas in the stage version the Common Man as headsman makes the audience feel accessory to More's execution, the picture produces no such effect.

The plot of *A Man for All Seasons* is engaging but not spellbinding. The setting is beautiful but not distracting. The characterizations are convincing but not overpowering. Considered individually, the parts of *A Man for All Seasons* are impressive but subdued. But when combined in the right proportion by Fred Zinneman, they create a movie of rare depth and grace. *Rear Window* is remembered for its gripping suspense, *Spartacus* for its spectacle, and *The Ten Commandments* for the power of Charlton Heston. But *A Man for All Seasons* is a more remarkable feat. It will be remembered as a movie. It captures the balance which made the Renaissance the zenith of artistic achievement in telling the story of one of its greatest figures. The result is an impressive work of film art.

— GREGORY SIEK

•

The Day After-Today

The cheering has stopped
I am alone
in time
and space
and spirit.
Victory has not been mine
and the masses have once again become still
and again have become the same.
I am alone
no longer do I pound the podium
the masses are not mine to rile.
I am alone
but yesterday must not weigh heavy
for today and tomorrow call to me.
I will be.

— T.

The Crickets of Shaker Lakes

Not an unusual early morning
As I went to the chapel to pray:
The new dawn was just beginning to chase the night
And the green blades on which I sat were slightly moist
but soft.
The stone of dedication to the garden club of old
Was, as always, free with its support.
And the lake's water was reflecting the beacons of the night
As it silently rippled toward the deep spillway.
But then, I suddenly noticed that I was not alone,
As I heard a choir of chirping thousands
All in secret harmony (somewhere)
In a loft singing praise unto His name
From a liturgy of ancestral heritage;
A choir so sublime that the Seraphim must have peeked in envy —
I selfishly sharpened my ear so as not to miss a sacred note
When a spry elder with his four-legged messenger of bad tidings
Strung to his hand, took it upon himself to flood part of the choir —
The rude act — a discord — encouraged a silence
Well, as I reclined, I was taken to private amusement by the
dampened spirits
But I considered myself honored to have heard
A brief concerto for a crowd of one.

— V. ACRI FRANCIA

•

Spring in Cleveland (March 21, 1967)

Well no one was really surprised,
The mistake on the lake had
Always succeeded in going contrary to the season,
And this year was no exception.
We had all waited anxiously
For the star to return to warm our land
But as the gods would have it
Tears intermingled with flakes of old
Came tumbling down unmercifully.

— V. ACRI FRANCIA

Two for the Pirates

one (1) Allegheny and Monongaheala are tricky
words to spell.
Pittsburgh's not.
Pittsburgh's easy enough . . . . . hills aren't.

two (2) Remember I reread Pittsburgh in the winter
of '66.
how the winds ran. like a chill up and
down her spine.
how her frozen fingers burrowed into
the hillsides. groping for a warm stone.

Seen her built like a mosaic puzzle
hung upon a tunnel wall.
pieces with worn edges and bent corners.
funny curves.
some fell right into place. but others
I set aside for later without thinking.

'Cross Pittsburgh the trolleys are dropping
in their tracks.
but the only sound I hear is the drone of
a bus engine . . . . . .
seems the day the world shrivels up and
freezes over. it'll be the last sound to die.

When the cleaning lady from the bank
offers you a wrinkled hand.
hold on tight. for her hand can carve
great truths in the ice.
salty things that will eventually appear
no matter how hard it snows.

Why lift the bricks of Pittsburgh streets.
why the wrinkled woman's hand.
if it's small enough. there's nothing in the world
that can't be hidden in a corner.
HEY PITTSBURGH. why ask the reason I've come
to search the corner of your eye.

But how can the tips of tongues manage
to trip so much.
how can faces tumble on the trolley tracks and
words freeze in the Pittsburgh air.
leaving me surrounded by feelings that
I still remember.
but can't recall.

— ERIC ANDERS

The Friend

Frank Auslander got up from his sofa, stretched, ran his long fingers through the shaggy hair on the back of his head, and walked to the single window of his apartment. Instead of looking out, he turned, scratched his stomach through his loose-fitting T-shirt, yawned at the humble yet comfy accoutrements of his one-room efficiency, and smiled at a female figure seated on the sofa. His smile was a warm grin that moved his cheeks upward to wrinkle at the corners of his tired-looking eyes. Standing by the window, his body was silhouetted against the hazy sky of pre-sunset. Frank hitched up his beltless, faded corduroy trousers, and gazed out the window. The sun was rapidly setting, and moving his eyes across the railroad tracks and piers of the city's industrial docks, he saw the sun hang momentarily above the waters of Lake Michigan before it slipped, like a huge orange disk, out of his view.

He turned and faced the petite form seated on the sofa. "I'm going to call her, Grace," he said.

He plopped himself down in a wicker chair in the corner of the room, put his feet up on an empty bookcase, and began to dial on a telephone which sat in its customary position, on the floor.

"Hi, this is Frank Auslander, how are you? . . . yes . . . it is? . . . well thank you . . . " Frank glanced at his watch, adjusted it, and returned to the conversation. "Yes, that's what mine says too . . . you know — . . . eh . . excuse me . . yes I hear the tone very well, yes . . . ah . . M'am? . . . mmm . . Miss . . . please, can you . . . it is O.K. if you . . . well, ya'know . . . I . . I'd like to . . . please can't you stop for just a minute? . . . ya can't huh . . . well it just moves right along doesn't it? . . . yea . . boy I guess if you did stop a lot of people would get fouled up, huh? . . . ahh, yea . . . the sun just set . . . it was very pretty, did'ja know that? . . . yes, eh . . I'm sure you're right again . . . well, listen . . . if you ever get off work . . . can you call me? . . . did you hear that? . . . could you call me? . . . my name's Frank Auslander and my phone number's 422-1721 . . . how 'bout it? I'd like to talk to you, O.K.? . . . yea . . well . . I'll call again tomorrow . . . I know . . bye."

Frank returned the receiver to its proper place, sighed, got up from the shaky chair, and began to pace around the room, talking to his seated girl-friend as he did so.

"Boy, she's amazing, you know that, Grace? . . . That Time Lady, she's really something . . . every time I call the time, she's always on the job . . . jeez, I wonder if she ever gets tired of answering the phone all day long . . . what a job . . . I hope the telephone people give her a coffee break every once and a while . . . of course, there may be times when nobody calls when she can relax . . . most people do have watches, I guess. What do you think of the Time Lady, Grace?"

Grace was visibly unmoved. Frank looked at her for a moment, casually lit a filter cigarette, and continued with his musings.

"I'd really like to meet her sometime, you know that, Grace? . . I bet she's a real nice person. I think she'd like to talk, too . . . she must get tired of answering the phone, giving the time and ringing that gong all day long. What a trooper, I bet there's not too many people who'd like to do that for a living, watching a clock, answering a telephone, giving the – . . . " He stopped for a moment, taking a final drag on his cigarette. He glanced at Grace, put his cigarette out in an ashtray on the windowsill, and continued. "Of course, she does say something different every ten seconds, I guess. But still, that's not much variety. You know Grace, she's one of the few people I can really depend on, the good ol' Time Lady . . . she's always there, on the job, waiting for anyone to call . . . goddam . . . she's really a nice, dependable person, you know that, Grace?"

Grace remained quiet. Frank smiled at her, then his face lit up. "You know Grace, you and the Time Lady are the only two people I can really depend on . . . really. You're always ready to listen to me chat and the Time Lady's got the time for me, any time I want to give her a call . . . jeez, just you and the Time Lady, just you two . . . that makes me feel good, Grace, I've got two friends who are real nice, dependable people. Thanks a lot, Grace. I'm going to call the Tim Lady to thank her, too."

Frank raced to the telephone and began to dial. Grace sat quietly, saying nothing. She looked sad, her black button eyes reflecting the weak twilight drifting in the window, her jagged smile sewn red on her cotton face.

—JAMES I. O'CONNOR

•

Country Colors, for G.J.

The smiling sun wears on
The old barn by the way
In country silence shining
Undisturbed by puffs of standstill
White the quiet day
Enmeshed in meadow's greenness
Sparsely speckled with daisy yellow
The butterflies flutter by
Winding in the warm air
While dandelions mellow

—MARK YUNGBLUTH

Gifts (to a son not yet born)

To you, my son, they all shall go,
I give them all to you.
That day I traced the drop of rain,
That clung like tear to a window-pane,
Then slipped a crooked path on down
To where it hovered near the ground,
Then inched its way in cautious mirth
Toward other tears of bigger birth –
And leaped into a part of them –
And bulged with pride, increased its stride,
And then was gone:
This bigger drop, though gone, my son, is yours.

The violet by the mossy stone,
That like the poet I was shown,
When once alone I lay atop the earth
And pointed fingers to the sky,
And wondered if the cloud up there
Saw this flower – or did he care –
That it and me were surely free
To talk and see the sky, all blue,
To understand each other too? –
This violet and this mossy stone
(Half hidden were we all alone),
Are yours, dear son, from me.

This God of love Whom you did see
When she and me created thee
(Our own intentioned trinity) –
This God of light in might and right,
Envisioned you another son
To bear the Cross (Thy will be done)
Of life and sin and all that Satan's wiles can win;
This God of mine and thine, my friend,
Is yours again and will be when
You break from out your sleeper's den,
That womb, your room,
In which you lay, and play, and wait for day.

This night of age, when I in fear
Upon this page think a poem
Of you and she and me bound each to each;

When in the charm of soft-lit home,
I sit at peace and not alone,
And feel the gloom and test the doom of fate and faith;
This night, so right, in sheer delight,
I sing the song of birth and death and God and love and you,
and am afraid –
This night to you, my Self.

To you, the drop, its crooked path,
That stood upon the windowpane;
To you the violet by the stone,
To you the cloud and all its rain;
To you the God of love and doom,
That made us all in nature's womb;
To you this night of age and fear,
The soft-lit home – in peace, in cheer;
To you my son, they all shall go,
I give them all to you.

— DAVID M. LaGUARDIA

•

Coronach

How many times I've walked that place!
Rembrandt-light filling the street,
cracks in the sidewalk the faces of
those who have passed before me,
and how I have feared that my face too
will someday become encrusted in that
cold, hard, cement.
Afraid that when the spring comes,
nobody will call my dreamer brother to school.

— M. A. PELLEGRINI

The Glass Wall

That fingerful of eternity
Yeats' or Keats' kind
you gave me yesterday
that root to fasten —
wistaria root
peasants
fastened water gourds to girdle with —
that toggle to purse, tobacco pouch, case for pipe —
distinctly Japanese
useful ornamental
minute humorous grotesque —
that walrus ivory
not lacquered wood colored
or bamboo, boar's tusk, horn of deer
or walnut or other shell
sea pine, metal, porcelain
amber, onyx, coral, crystal
or jade —
with its two holes
always
for the cord
(here, where pockets ought to be).
Renowned netsuke-carvers of old
famed ones in modern Japan
lucid designers of history, folklore
daily life
carving the Play in comic
gods and goddesses, demons
animals fabulous
never one the same.
Hidetado centuries ago
cutting down the Christians
cultivated these Buddhist forms
but the universal use of tobacco
demand for pouches and cases for pipes
really made netsukes flourish.
Then how should I fail
to think of you?
So through

the glass wall
you
may see him lying there
expressionless
breaking the furies of complexity
image
fresh images
begetting

— MARGARET BERRY

•

On Some Quite Sudden Day

In a sun entangled garden
On some quite sudden day,
Rough stone walls leap up;
Blossoms turn to rigid stone,
And you walk cold halls, alone.

Or in some merry bar with
Jim and Bart, singing
Songs and raising mugs,
Suddenly the beer goes stale
And dancing lights go pale –

The room becomes an anteroom
To dungeons infinite, and
Each face smiling waits
The emergence of a skull,
With sockets dark and dull.

Or listening to the radio
You sip a glass of beer;
And suddenly you hear,
Upon your face and hands,
The melodic light of secret lands.

You quickly turned to look
Upon the mystery there,
Which you mistook
For something you could see.
Then, tearfully, you looked at me.

— MARTIN CROES

Giles Goat-Boy: A Review

John Barth's *Giles Goat-Boy or The Revised New Syllabus* is a novel which requires the faith of an apostle to read attentively. In the present state of our culture, I'm afraid, saying this may scare people away; so I quickly add that the book is funny, bawdy, exciting, entertaining, and rewarding. As a metaphor for our age it provocatively demands (and commands) our literary respect because it not merely distracts or amuses us, but because it has the power to refresh and sustain us by giving a shape to the messy symptoms of human imperfection. As Robert Scholes says, "if we can measure literary achievement at all we can measure the value of a novel by the extent to which it succeeds in the impossible task of getting the sloppy richness of life into the satisfying neatness of artistic shape."

By such a standard as this, *Giles Goat-Boy* is an outstanding novel. Its greatness is most readily apparent in its striking originality of structure and language, an originality that depends upon a superb command of literary and linguistic tradition rather than an eccentric manipulation of the "modern." In this novel, John Barth is not offering us mere newness. This is not an experiment but a solution — an achievement which, according to Scholes, together with his brilliant third novel, *The Sot-Weed Factor,* "stamps Barth as one of the best writers of fiction we have at present."

Such opinions cannot be proved — in fact they can hardly be defended — so I must refer the reader to the book itself if he wishes to taste its greatness or debate its claim to such high praises.

Giles Goat-Boy, a kind of modern *Pilgrim's Progress,* has a rather unusual pilgrim, a young man who spent his boyhood with a herd of goats. After thirty pages of wild prefaces, disclaimers, postscripts, and footnotes, he begins his narrative:

> George is my name; my deeds have been heard of in the Tower Hall, and my childhood has been chronicled in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology.* I am he that was called in those days Billy Bocksfuss — cruel misnomer. For had I indeed a cloven foot I'd not now hobble upon a stick or need ride pick-a-back to class in humid weather. Aye, it was just for want of proper hoof that in my fourteenth year, I was the kicked instead of the kicker; that I lay crippled on the reeking peat and saw my first love tupped by a brute Angora. Mercy on that buck who butted me from one world to another; whose fell horns turned my sweetheart's fancy, drove me from the pasture, and set me

> limping down the road I travel yet. This bare brow, shame of my kidship, he crowned with the shame of men: I bade farewell to my hornless goathood and struck out, a horned human student for Commencement Gate.

George's keeper was "Maximillian Spielman, the great mathematical Psycho-Proctologist and former Minority Leader in College Senate." In political disgrace, Max became senior goatherder and acquired not only a fondness for goats but also a high regard: "Der goat is humaner than der men, and der men is goatisher than der goats."

After the unfortunate incident with the Angora brute, George's pilgrimage begins, and this makes it necessary for Barth to establish his allegorical framework. The world is a university, with several divisions, of which the West Campus and the East Campus are the most powerful. New Tammany College, to which George is bound, is the most important part of West Campus, while Nikolay College controls East Campus. The University has experienced two Campus Riots and is now in the midst of a Quiet Riot. In the Second Campus Riot the Bonifacists of Siegfrieder College slaughtered millions of Moishians. The riot ended when New Tammany College used its giant ruling computer WESCAC to destroy many Amaterus. Max, one of the scientists who created WESCAC, is still full of guilt.

To this chaotic, nihilistic world comes the messiah in the improbable form of a goat creature, who aspires to be a human being, for which end Max gives him instructions. George learns his lessons well and before long he wants not only to be a human being, but a hero. Indeed — he declares himself a candidate for Grand Tutor — other Grand Tutors having been Moishe (Moses), Enos Enoch (Jesus Christ), Maios (Socrates), Sakhyan (Budda), and T'ang (Confucius). As a candidate for Grand Tutor, George — now calling himself Giles — has to pass a series of tests, with his chief rival for the Tutorship — Harold Bray. The question of whether or not Giles is indeed a true Grand Tutor is one of the mainsprings of the novel's plot. The plot takes him from his awakening to the fact of his humanity through his quest to discover the mystery of his birth and to establish himself as the proper bearer of the New Syllabus.

The structure of the book involves a double quest: the traditional heroic journey of the awkward knight who combats evil, rescuing a damsel and slaying a dragon in pursuit of a divine object; and the modern search for identity of the existential anti-hero.

This creation teems with new possibilities for situation and characterization. The Quixotic hero's damsel in distress displays symptoms of nymphomania, as well as certain qualities of divine love. And the "dragon" this hero must slay to complete his quest is a plausible organization man named Harold Bray, who is finally revealed as in truth the eternal adversary — a kind of devil. The "dragon" of the hero's personal quest, on the other hand, is within himself — a demon of the absolute, which drives him toward either/or solutions in a world which is not amendable to them.

On its heroic level, the novel involves Giles in Herculean physical trials and ordeals. He must survive descent into the belly of the mighty computer,

WESCAC, which may destroy his brain with its EAT (Electroencephalic Amplification and Transmission) rays which drive people nuts. This descent is complicated by the fact that the computer may have actually fathered Giles, during an experiment in planned genetics which got out of control. The computer is like the gods of mythology who beget children mysteriously upon mortal women and later seek to destroy or immortalize their progeny.

On its personal level, the narrative requires Giles to work out a viable ethical position for himself and his potential students. He first tries the two extremes of ethical absolutism, maintaining on one tour of the campus that good and evil are totally separate, and on the other that they are indistinguishable. When both of these doctrines have disastrous results, he is forced to a third position, in which he sees the problem as too subtle for formulation; and he lapses into a wise passivity of thought and a tolerance of multiple possibilities for action — which prepares him for his ultimate role as scapegoat.

From the goat-boy to scapegoat is a progression which combines most of the motifs of pagan and Christian myth. Barth employs the traditional patterns of myth, epic and romance to generate a narrative of extraordinary vigor and drive. At the same time, he freights this narrative with ideas and attitudes in combinations so varied and striking that the reader is torn between stopping to explore the book's philosophical riches and abandoning himself to the pleasure of immersion in a story — a pleasure strangely infrequent in serious modern fiction.

The crude summary I have given here does no justice to Barth's ability to make his allegorical puppets seem more alive and interesting than the "realistic" creations of lesser writers. Nor does it begin to convey the splendid exuberance of invention in the novel — which includes a nearly full-length parody of Sophocles's "Oedipus the Tyrant" (in rhymed couplets), as well as a Dantesque descent into the underworld of the Power Plant and Main Detention.

Barth makes few concessions to the dull or uneducated — to the "plain reader." He demands a fancy reader, in fact. To those with the right intellectual and emotional equipment, he is prepared to deliver more in the way of both plain and fancy literary refreshment than any novelist writing today. His audiences must be that same audience whose capacities have been extended and prepared by Joyce, Proust, Mann and Faulkner.

— ROBERT DeMOTT

Nine Ballads to Loneliness

BALLAD ONE

(To Some Friend)

you are a fetus in a womb
of faith
free from freedom
you float in an amnion sac
protected and alone.
you frustrate frustration —
defy all scorn
your self cannot be born

* * *

BALLADS TWO THROUGH SIX

(Foolers)

Four cheat-hearted men turned their
Backs on her and laughed,
"I fooled you — I really took you
For a ride."

One woman walked away
Laughing inside
"I fooled you" she said
"You are all alike to me."

Somewhere in the city
Five people laugh
In a comical element of pathos
And no one listens, no one weeps . . .

BALLADS SEVEN AND EIGHT

(Successfully Married Ten Years Or So)

If we are condemned together
Then it might as well be love.
No sense in spending time
Wasted like burnt coffee at
An empty breakfast table –
And us looking but not seeing
It might as well be love
If we are to share a like bed
In pleasure and in slumber –
Comforting ourselves from the other.
No sense in dwelling on the notion
That we both sleep alone

* * *

BALLAD NINE

Rising tower in the sky
Closer much to God than I
Midnight windsongs make you moan
Perfection leaves you quite alone

— MARK YUNGBLUTH

A Shotgun, You Might Say

"Play in the field, c'mon," Franny said. "Pete ain't going to get you."

"Nope. You're not supposed to play in that field," he said. "He shot at me with that shotgun of his."

"You're crazy. That's no shotgun — it's a BB gun, and it can't do nothing to you."

"Well, I don't know about that. I was just standing there, one time, and all of a sudden the grass started jumping and quivering real funny. Just was taking a drink and he started shooting at me," he said, shivering.

He was a gardener — Pete that is. Nobody really knew him. Just a crooked old man with a back like a bent twig who, with a hoe and water kept the rows of green, young trees neat and alive.

"It was your imagination," Franny insisted. "He wouldn't kill us. Just kills rabbits with that little BB gun of his."

"But you're not supposed to be in that field!"

"He kills rabbits with that gun. Not people."

"That's what you say."

"I'm going over. If you want to come, then come over. I want to roll logs over the hill."

Franny ran across the asphalt road which separated their houses from the nursery. It was a temptation that was too hard to resist. The green, manicured grass and the trees and the piles of sweet-smelling logs made it an oasis in the hot, burning city.

Pete or no Pete, I'm going over, Terry thought.

Franny's plump, short legs carried him across the field. He didn't run. He hopped across the field — the speed generated by his forward motion and enthusiasm being too much for the stubby legs. Terry, smaller, but constructed thinner, loped behind, trying to close the gap between himself and the exuberant Franny.

Franny slowed, holding his side. Shouldn't go so fast, he thought. Makes your side hurt; by this time Terry came running, panting and shouting.

"We'll probably get zapped with that hunting rifle of his," Terry said as he came, looking from side to side nervously.

"It's not a hunting rifle. *It's a BB gun.* He kills gophers with it. Besides, stay away from the horse manure."

"What does that have to do with Pete?" Terry screamed. "What does that

have to do with us getting killed? What does some smelly ol' horse manure have to do with us getting killed?"

"Just don't go near it, that's all," replied Franny calmly. "You threw me in it last time, and it was still fresh. I got in trouble for that, you know. Just stay away from the manure. And anyway, we're not going to get killed."

The grass was ending. Replacing its smooth continuity was the broken, overturned earth in which the saplings grew. Their feet sunk into the tender earth, breaking the fragile clods of sooty earth – the dust trickling into the loose sides of their canvas shoes.

"I'm going to get killed for being over here," Terry said. "The police don't like us over here. My mother doesn't even like me over here. I'm going to get killed."

"Be quiet, huh," urged Franny. "I'm trying to find Pete."

They began to run, the dust rising slowly, pervading everything. The leaves began to stir with the breeze of the valley. For years now the practice had been common to the boys of the neighborhood. The names of the most gifted log-rollers were immortalized in the memories of all the boys. The most infamous was Carl Palumbo who not only rolled the logs down the hill right under Pete's nose, but aimed them at the Police Station, and was fortunate enough to punch a hole in the side of their beautiful ranch-type building. There was Fat Roland who rolled them at the marching band that practiced in the field below the cliff. He almost killed Sylvester Clark, the tuba player, with one of them. Then there was Darius Sansosti who demolished a car, and Dante Persichetti and Ritchie Petrossi, who rolled over a sewer pipe and knocked down the county refuse shed.

"Let's head for the logs," panted Franny.

The sun was burning overhead, but the sky in the horizon was dark. Their walk was rhythmical, having the bounce of purpose and the look of determination. They were walking towards the logs the way axemen walk to the block.

In the bushes stood Pete, watching the boys. He watched them smile and heard them talk of him, and as they went off Pete, in his stooped walk followed behind, "to see what they're up to" near the logs, near the hill.

He didn't hate people, but they bothered him, and seemed so insignificant besides. The boys were especially irritating because of their running and screaming. He did carry a gun, and it wasn't a BB gun. It was a rabbit gun. He didn't kill people. He only killed rats, the ones that ate around the young trees, eating the bark, destroying them.

But as he walked, following them, he carried his gun.

From the clear sky came a whisper. A laborious sigh that made the air heavy and depressing. The wind was exceptionally warm, it was like a too stuffy flannel blanket, and it made them breathe deeply.

The whole land encompassing them seemed strangely artificial. The product of some cataclysmic even, perhaps, the land swelling and rolling – the rock orange and bright in the sun – cut from the land as if with a knife. And around the hills grew many trees, irregularly spaced, but when surveyed from

the cliff the sum of their interactions had an opaque symmetry. The entire forest swayed and flailed, giving vent to the emotions of the wind.

"It's getting dark," Terry said.

They were at the brink. The drop was irregular, with many juttings and rocky overhangs. The logs were opposite them. Without a word Franny grabbed the topmost log.

"Heave," Terry grunted.

Together they succeeded in removing the log from the pile. Then they began to move it into position for launching.

"This one's good and round," Terry said — enthused now. "It ought to go real good."

"Let's push it over fast," Franny said. "It's getting dark, and Pete's probably prowling around."

They both stood behind the log.

"Geronimo!" they screamed.

The log began to roll. Slowly at first, but picking up speed. By the time it reached the first outgrowth of rock it was blazing down the hill.

It took off in a long, slow trajectory. The log fell toward the leafy sea below, growing smaller, disappearing into the shadows with a resounding crash.

They were laughing. Laughing at their own wickedness, and laughing gleefully for the fun gravity had given them.

"Let's roll another," Terry said excitedly.

So they climbed to the top of the pile again, picking out a suitable victim. When they finally found one, they tossed it to the ground.

By this time Pete stood but a few yards away, behind the pile in the shadows. A more cautious Terry would have seen him lurking there, but by now the power of folly had pervaded him thoroughly. Pete stood there, gun in hand, still fascinated by the ritual of boys.

The sun was extinguishing itself. Not thoroughly and completely yet, but what was left was no more than a dimming orange haze. Pete began to move forward, but hesitated and stopped. He turned, the boys still not realizing his presence, and began walking in the opposite direction. Does it matter? he thought. What does it matter if I allow them to have a little fun? Am I to judge?

His small head revolved around on the gnarled shoulders. He saw the boys laughing and playing, and he walked on, extremely tired. His efforts, he felt all of a sudden, to subdue this land were meaningless. That soon the constricted earth would break its bounds, and in the ensuing flurry of activity, he would be smothered by the passion of the day.

Am I to judge? he thought, walking on.

It was dark. The boys hurried over the field, toward their homes, excited by the day's events. Franny felt smug, proud of the prowess which had outwitted Pete.

"I told you nothing would happen," he said, grinning.

Terry continued walking, his head rising and receding. "You were right,"

he said slowly.

Then the sky opened up and it began to rain. It began to rain hard, ferociously, the water soupy and tepid, the drops big and heavy. The grass was very wet, and their shoes threw sprays of water as they ran. They reached the fence, gasping, and began to climb.

They jumped, their ankles hurting from the fall, and ran across the asphalt road to their homes. They ran down the flagstone walks, heading for the dry protection of their porches. They bade each other farewell, and disappeared into their homes, happy to be in out of the rain.

— M. A. PELLEGRINI

Black Metropolis

on the streets of metropolis
where superman died
drinking a kryptonite martini
swarm the thirsty bums
weak like Achilles
in just one place
who treasure Lethe-bottles
like the pious prize fatima drops;
drops the bum on his knees and says:
I wish I was dead.

and there he stays in limbo,
the bum afraid to die or live
awaiting like a new-born jew
the comic book messiah,
faster than a speeding bullet
more powerful than a steaming locomotive
able to leap tall buildings at a single bound
reads his bible from the past
authored by the dead superman
whom we — you and I — killed
for looking ridiculous.

but the bums still believe the myth
we vaporized in anger and adulthood,
not reading the Daily Planet's *brief*
obituary because they couldn't spare a dime
and we not having the time
nor the guts to tell them:
Clark Kent was crucified
that black day in metropolis.

— RICHARD TOMC

Rusted Treasure

She had said, "no! no!" and
her innocence was preserved —
precious innocence . . .
And in the end
it was innocence persevered.
(For time passes, and even diamonds
in the sweating hands of the masses can
corrode into a more transparent glass
and quickly fade away.
Dreams of contentment can
lose their ground in the twinkling
lost communions in a day.)
She says, "no! no!" for
it seems from in her rocker
the four walls smile and mock her
as alone she nears the dying season.
And she knows with better reason
that love lost is life lost
and today's idyll idea of ideal
may be tomorrow's sorrow, and perhaps —
perhaps there was a better way . . .

— MARK YUNGBLUTH

The Blues Singer

Dark Fairy Queen in smoky cellar
Spins me indigo fantasy of sad,
Sings fat through broken teeth
Life's fomorian wails
Screaming down cluttered alleys of
Slime-drip existing on-rush.
Sartre's and Soren's have writ
Have penned empirical on being one, alone.
Ask her if she cares.
She feels in tears and swing-rhythms
What all your existential clap-trap logoria
Cannot say.
You type treatises prolific to tell us; me, the world,
That you must stand alone and cannot make us hear.
She sings for herself alone.
Spin me no lies, scholars,
I'll await my Godot
With the blues singer.

— ANONYMOUS

What I Did on My Summer Vacation

Up by the lake there is a cluster of houses called North Adams Township. If you ask anybody from around here if they ever heard of North Adams they'll probably tell you yes because the place has quite a nice beach and a few pretty wild bars. A lot of college guys go there on weekends.

All along the lake end of the town are private beaches that belong to the people who have these pretty nice summer houses with frontage on the lake. I think there's maybe a hundred-yard stretch that's open to the public if you want to pay. All the rest of the town is pretty poor except for the people who own the bars.

So last summer I got a job selling mazagines door to door in North Adams. When I stop and think about it, it was a pretty lousy job because all I made all summer was thirty-eight bucks. I thought it was a pretty good job then, though, because you could meet all kinds of people. There was some guy I used to know who was an intellectual painter. He said that the people of North Adams reflected unblemished lower-class Americana. I can tell you that *Home and Garden* and *High Society* certainly weren't big sellers.

I wasn't a real good salesman anyway. I clowned around quite a bit. One day, for instance, it was pretty hot, so I said to hell with canvassing and went swimming. It cost me half-a-buck to rent a bathing suit and thirty-five cents to get into the beach. It was worth it though. North Adams is crawling with girls, especially the beaches.

I was just lying on the beach half sleeping when somebody goes by kicking cold slime all over me. "Hey!" I said with my eyes still closed. "Hey, watch where the hell you're kicking cold slime!" When I looked up, there was the most beautiful girl I ever met laughing her head off. She had all the qualities everybody always tells you about all the time.

Her name was Sharon or Sue Ann or Suzanne or something, I don't exactly remember. All I remember was she certainly was good looking. Anyway, it turned out that her family owned one of those pretty nice summer homes by the lake and had a pass to the public beach. She invited me over to her house and since I wasn't too hot about my job, I went over there with her.

She had a real nice summer house. The thing must have cost her father at least thirty thousand but I can't be sure because I've got a lousy mind when it comes to money. We were just sitting around in her living room listening to some folk song records she thought were pretty good when her father walked

in. Boy, was he an ugly guy. He was big, too, and I think he must have been pretty drunk. When he shook my hand he said I must have pretty strong hands. I told him my hands were about as strong as the next guy's. Then he wanted to arm wrestle with me, but Sharon or Suzanne or whatever her name was, said, "Oh, *really*, Daddy!" and he just went and sat down in an armchair.

Then he started looking at the ceiling and scratching the backs of his hands. Finally he said, "Tell me, son, do you go to school?" I told him yes sir, I was just selling magazines as a summer job. He really seemed to like that. "Fine experience, a real fine experience . . . What are you, son, about twenty? . . . I was twenty-one . . . no, by God, I was just twenty when I started selling radio sets . . . radio sets! would you believe it? Radio sets, by God! Did well, too, real well. But then it was always easier in those days to do well. Now, hell, now the goddam taxes take away everything, everything, for Chrissake. It's all the fault of that bastard F.D.R.!"

He was drunker than I thought. I decided it was a good time to get out of there, so I made a date with Sharon or whatever her name was and got the hell out. She was pretty embarrassed about her father.

When I went over there that night her mother answered the door. Sharon's mother looked a lot like her but I'll be damned if I could tell you how old she was. Anyplace between thirty-five and fifty. Actually I wasn't real concerned with how old she was because I was keeping an eye out for Sharon's father just in case he wanted to box with me or something. But all I saw of him was a case of golf clubs leaning against the wall.

Sharon didn't come downstairs right away. I was starting to get nervous too, because her mother kept on looking at me, just looking at me.

"Real nice house you have here, ma'am," I told her.

"Yes, very nice."

"I mean, if there's anything somebody should spend money on, it should be on having a real nice house, you know?"

"Yes."

"Everybody should have a nice house for their kids to grow up in. Kids should always grow up in a real nice house."

"Yes, they should." I couldn't think of anything else to say. I got up and started looking at some carved wood statue of Venus or somebody in the bannister. I could feel Sharon's mother looking at the back of me. I was pretty nervous.

Finally Sharon came downstairs. Jesus, was I glad. We left pretty quick because I couldn't take much more of her mother staring at me.

We drove to some country club Sharon's family belonged to near North Adams. It was quite a classy place. We had some dinner and danced around a little bit and finally sat at a table with a blue candle lamp on it. She certainly was good looking.

"You certainly are good looking," I told her.

"Why thank you, sweet." She had a nice voice too, nice and low. "You know what my mother will probably say you looked like? She'll probably say you looked like daddy before they were married. She says that about all the boys that come over. She even said that about the gasman once. Mommy's very romantic."

"Your mother is very nice."

"You're very nice too," and tapped my nose with her forefinger, "very nice." I was beginning to hate myself. Every time somebody says to me something like "You're very nice," I begin to hate myself. I always say something pretty stupid after that.

"Yeah, but I'm a lousy salesman."

"No, you're not, you're a marvelous salesman," she said.

"I'm a crummy one."

"No, you're not." She patted my hand. "You'll graduate summa cum laude and be hired by a big corporation and make thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars, and then, . . . and then, you'll marry me." She really had an imagination. Hell, it looked pretty doubtful that I'd even graduate, let alone summa cum laude.

"You're probably right," I said.

It was pretty late when we got back to her house. I was worried her parents might be mad because of the time.

"Your parents might be mad because of the time," I said.

"Don't worry about them," she said. She reached up and kissed me on the cheek. "Goodnight, sweet."

"Yeah, goodnight." She really surprised me. I must have stood there looking at the door for five minutes. Through the window I saw her father practicing putting with yellow plastic golf balls.

I don't know why but I never called her up again or took her out or even saw her. I guess part of the reason was because I didn't ever want her mother staring at me any more. Or maybe because I was afraid her father would beat me at Indian wrestling or something. I don't know.

Once in awhile I start thinking about her. It drives me crazy because I can't remember exactly what she looks like. She certainly was good looking though.

One thing I found out for sure that summer was what a crumby salesman I was. I made thirty-eight lousy bucks that whole summer. I got fired a couple of weeks before school started because I wasn't selling so hot. My father was kind of peeved about that. He says I'm a rotten businessman.

— RICHARD TOMC

Gather the Grapes

Gather the grapes, gable the halls;
Tether the kine, bedeck their stalls!
Stamp the grapes and taste the wine;
Taste it again, then walk a line!

Dance you Greeks; sing, make love!
Dance in the streets, for the moon is above;
Argue you Greeks! Argue and talk;
Talk you Greeks! Gesture and balk;
Sing you folk! oh sing and cry,
Your time for glory has long gone by.

So laugh you Greeks, and argue and talk,
While weeds grow taller 'round column and block.
Ignore this senseless rock, these dreary things,
And glory in the sunlight that freedom brings!

— MARTIN CROES

Now and Forever

I got problems – lots and lots
I got problems big and small
But the biggest problem I got
The biggest one of all –
Is how to live and how to die
How to figure the reason why
Why the good are always gone
Why the work is never done
And how in God's name we're supposed
To pin our hopes to a little host

I got headaches – lots and lots
I got headaches big and small
But the biggest headache I got
The biggest one of all –
Is how to earn and eat the bread
And how to figure out the dead
How to know just who they are
Whether to bend or go for the star
And just how to live this crummy life
And choose a whore or a wife

And I got heartaches – lots and lots
I got heartaches big and small
But the biggest heartache I got
The biggest one of all –
Is how to live or rather love
How to figure what it's of
How to know why we're here
How to avoid the only mirror
And how to know just what I am
And to know what I'll be then.

— ROBERT ISABELLA

The Song Garden

Down mountainsides and asphalt paths
A dirge was pulsing,
Deadened by the sleeping sun
For no such mourning lives by daylight hours.
Sadness may not interrupt sun's booming canticle.
I placed my foot on the edge of the grave,
A ground that soldiers and bereaved had walked upon;
As as my toe pressed the melting snow,
I glimpsed the finality of the death of this marine,
My love's dead brother.
Our time for being children now was through.
My love and I would never play in tall, smooth grass,
Never find each other's toys in the rosebush fields.
But there were other happinesses we might share.
I spoke to him in a sort of limerick voice,
My eyes piercing the underground
Demanding answers to the riddles of him.
"I seek to be as close to you in death as is my love,
If only for his good.
Do you deny us this?"
Hearing nothing,
I took the flowers from my arms
And laid them on his chest.
I left the cemetery's sullen spirit far behind,
And realized the dead had deigned to give a gift to me.
No one else could be as right as I
In only acting true to my beliefs.
No judges curse the soul deep in the grave.
Free from censor, free from hot sands of criticism,
Free from past regrets.
The soul lives,
And the tall pines laugh,
And shake their cool, green boughs —
The joy of the wind psalm and the wild snow.

PART TWO

The iron gate trickled drizzling rain.
White pidgeons settled near the pools formed in the grass.
My kitchen was warm.
I sat playing with my coffee and smiling
At the dearness of you and this peaceful time.
Don't watch the chocolate cake: I won't burn it.
This rain which kept you indoors has made it share
Our family song.
And I remember when the score was written first.
We watched December snows caught in the lamplight,
And from our darkened room looked up.
The demon, whirling clouds above sped by.
Seeing them I thought:
Our love is bound to storm, but first
An interlude.
Now you know
If someday you should love another,
I will say that a star may vary its course.
I will say that a small child may run from home,
But a man never.
I will say the goodness of your love walks with me
Everywhere.
I will say all these things,
And mean more than you can see of my sadness.
I will pray they mean more
To you.
And I will say that I await your return
Singing.

— ALICE KEATING

All the Old Things

I spent an evening with her
With you
Yes
And we talked like once when
Warm motor-chug, headlight-beam, radio-gone
And hours un-really-cared what time they were
Since school or no school could suffer the drooping eye without a wink - for talk - girl talk
And that's how it was long distance over a turquoise telephone line
I hardly knew how it stretched so far without a hitch
All the old things fish-grovelling up the state
Like beached waves into my front room as the sun went down
The old things and the old people, not crystallized like metaphors or memories
But taking shape anew like protozoans, unicells
Investigating the terrain
And surely
They will take it over soon.

— ANN C. BRINK

Old Italians

They are like dark, wrinkled cigars sitting on a coffee table. Their house has an odor, ancient and Mediterranean. Their lives taste like red wine, chilled in a low cellar, clear and bittersweet. Their attitude towards this world is whimsical, and because of this, they moan about the past and cry about the future.

They grunt-out the fabled stories, leaving more to the imagination than the force of words. Their limbs have grown old, but their arms and hands are still expressive, and moving, moving. For them, cruelty is a simple shrug, carnal love a smile, anger a pulsating vein and spittle on the floor. Their flailings and thrashings whisper the intensity of their loves and hates.

"How bad the air is," they say. Or, "the machines are no good, they are bastards, no good, look how fast . . . " They eat white cheese with coarse bread, and sip wine from old barrels for their meal. They all love John Wayne, westerns, and Mussolini. They don't like dogs, other old Italians, or young Jewish people. For crimes, they prefer murder, or armed robbery rather than rape. They think the Masons are plotting to take over the world (again). Priests are corrupt (unless they are Franciscans). Mass is for old people. Their children are ungrateful, and Italy is still a fine place, but finished, and too poor, too poor.

When death arrives like a winter storm, they exclaim. Birth is a silent hush. For death, their cries signal the end of the battle and its disputations with God. Their silence at birth is a final respite before observing the life a child shall wage. And when they die, they laugh at the unfair game, and know they have been cheated.

— M. A. PELLEGRINI

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The Robin

As I awoke this morning
A bright new day was born,
A robin perched upon my sill
To signal the coming morn.
The bird was graceful, young and gay
And sweetly did it sing,
The thought of joy and happiness
Within my heart did ring.
I smiled at his cheerful song
Then it paused, a moment's lull.
Then I gently closed the window
And crushed his god-damn skull.

— ANONYMOUS

Summerset

Lost in the warm euphoria
Of your arms —
Your naked breast on mine —
I was asleep.
Your sweet breath filled me
With drifting images
As were the magic of Morpheus
In your exhalations

* * *

Secure in the secret solitude
Of the place
And one white sheet to
Cover and contain the dream —
Who would have predicted
The coming of winter?

— MARK YUNGBLUTH