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Exile Vol. VI No. 1

Denny Trudell
Denison University

William Bennett
Denison University

Chris Condit
Denison University

Bob Canary
Denison University

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Denison University

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Contributors

Among the contributors to this issue are the poets and prose writers who have been appearing regularly in *Denison* for some time. In fact, the names of these writers will be familiar to the readers of the journal. The names of the contributors to this issue are listed on the inside cover of the journal. The names of the contributors to this issue are listed on the inside cover of the journal. The names of the contributors to this issue are listed on the inside cover of the journal.

The EXILE

Winter 1960

Vol. 6

No. 1

Denison University
Granville, Ohio

Take thought:

I have weathered the storm,

I have beaten out my exile.

—Ezra Pound

Contributors

Among the contributors to this issue are four senior men who have been appearing regularly in *EXILE* for some three or four years now. Since these familiar names will be missing from next year's contents, we decided to ask what they planned to be doing at that time and if there was much likelihood of future appearances in some other publication. The answers were evenly split between military service and graduate school. BOB WEHLING will take his wife and daughter to whatever base the Air Force decides to send him. Bob's immediate plan is to be a pilot, but he will also continue working on his novel. WILLIAM BENNETT, also traveling with a wife and baby daughter, will leave Denison for graduate school, hoping he will find time to do a poem now and then. DENNIS TRUDELL isn't sure which branch of the service he will enter but he is positive about writing more short stories. BOB CANARY is planning to do his graduate work in history and undoubtedly will find the necessary stimulus to continue writing at whichever school he attends. Also this semester we have two more poems by sophomore English major CHRIS CONDIT, who tells us she is presently working on a play. CHRISTINE ONUFROCK will return to Denison after spending this year, her junior year, abroad. JUDY HIGGINS, junior art major, exhibited a painting in "Young America 1959" at Xavier University in New Orleans this fall. PAT WAGENHALS and DAVE BINGHAM, both senior art majors are members of Alpha Rho Tau art honorary.

S T A F F

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Any student of Denison may submit manuscripts of poems, short stories and essays to the editors or deposit them in the EXILE box in Doane.

OF EDITORS AND EDITORIALS

Editorials in college newspapers and magazines invariably play variations on a single theme: the inadequacies of the American college student. This is more obvious with the newspapers, where the piece usually begins by describing some "crucial" world happening—or perhaps some sparsely attended campus cultural event, thus providing all the groundwork seemingly necessary for what always follows, an acid condemnation of the paper's readers for their lack of awareness about what is going on around them. Such criticism is often deserved, but by now the format in which it appears has been overused, if not abused, by enough generations of college students to render it rather ineffective. Unfortunately the style of these editorials is usually smug, implying that due to his bluntness about such things as international diplomacy or visiting lecturers, the average reader is somewhat less of a human being than the average editor. If this doesn't thoroughly alienate readers by about the third sentence, the almost universal collegiate misuse of the editorial "we" usually will. Most people dislike being obviously preached to, or talked "at" outside of church, and college students—younger and often not yet sure of themselves—resent it more than most. This is especially true when criticism that otherwise might have gained an attentive ear is dropped to them like dirty underwear from a small group of their contemporaries who seem to feel that the editorial "we" carries with it mysterious and prophetic powers.

In literary magazines the tone is tempered somewhat and the subject matter differs, but the basic tendency toward a kind of side-of-the-mouth altruism persists. Instead of berating students because they lack either knowledge or interest in "vital" events, these editorials usually glorify the "art" of writing and foresee dark futures for a generation so unwilling to submit more poems and stories. If the editorial pages of the college magazine manage to attain a higher level than those of its sister publication, it is probably due to a careful screening out of the more obvious amateur wiseguy stuff by an alert faculty advisor, rather than because of any disciplined effort on the part of the young student editor.

Contrary to the apparent understanding of most college editors, there is no established tradition that the function of an editorial must necessarily be to criticize. More often it has served the public by organizing and analyzing the material printed on the rest of its

pages, instead of going off on a tangent of its own. Criticism, when it appears in a professional editorial, usually is directed toward specific groups or individuals, seeking to enlighten the public about a situation, not to describe over and over again how unenlightened that public is. Seldom is a professional editorial witty, for wit usually requires an expanse of words and by its very nature an editorial must be short and direct. Obviously the college editorial has a select audience, almost a captive one since most universities do not enjoy the stimulation of having rival publications. Therefore, its purposes must not be strictly compared to that of the professional newspaper or magazine. But this does not say either that it must be concerned with matters of immediate environment, such as: "Do we need a new sewer disposal for girls' dining hall or don't we?" or, "Be sure to do your duty and vote for the Homecoming Queen." It does suggest that the editorial should be slanted toward the student as a member of a specific population group which has certain common characteristics and interests. These must be used only as a point of departure, as a device to capture attention. At present most editorials do this in language only and while they do freely insert such collegiate phrases as "flicks" or "spastic," they never go anywhere with them.

These editorials, both in university newspapers and magazines, are full of truths, aphoristic statements like: "The student who does not show an interest in current events has a mind that is already decaying." These are accepted, though seldom applauded, because they are made to seem so obviously true. Yet, the generations of thought and effort preceding us testify that nothing is "obviously" true, if indeed anything is true at all. The statement above must have facts and logic behind it, else it crumbles under its own weight like any other quick truism. It is the intent, however, not the content of such statements, that is being questioned here. The purpose of so many college editorials seems to be to close up truth, to present the final say on a given subject, be it the nature of students' free time or the nature of art. Rather, the concern of young people should be to open up the world, to present their views not in a way that forces the reader immediately to agree or disagree, but in a manner that will encourage further thought and perhaps action on an individual level. Opinionated an editorial may be, but it must never be altruistic, lest it end up being ridiculous.

So the college editor only wastes his time when he works him-

self into a frenzy for half an hour every week and publishes an angry editorial or what is much worse—a coldly cutting one, bemoaning the fact that only ten students attended a lecture by a visiting professor. His collection of beat phrases full of scorn for his culturally barren fellow students is of little value. He may write them for his own amusement or therapy, but then they should be torn apart while the student editor settles down to some real work. Probably more would be accomplished in most fields if there were less bitching and more productive effort. However, these things take care of themselves; for late at night while the “we” groups of any college are playing with words, either on paper or else in pointless discussions with each other, while this is going on, there are usually on campus a few young people quietly at work. Later, long after the hasty editorials with their hasty truths have been forgotten, it will be learned that they were the ones who wrote our age’s history.—D.T.

Ride Through A Mad November Night

By DENNY TRUDELL

And cold too, it would be cold out there tonight with the wind howling across those open stretches. Or was it the sound of the bus he heard and not the wind? Still it would have to be bitter cold the way the snow was blowing and not melting at all as it hit the ground. The kid would be alone out there with probably not even a winter coat on, probably just a leather jacket and with only the icy hardness of a rifle to press close to. There might not even be trees to crouch behind to escape from the wind, he told himself that there might not even be an occasional tree for miles, only the barren stretches of fields where wheat grew in the early spring and now where the whistling wind swept and the snow gathered. He was glad he wasn't the one out there tonight.

For him, Harold, there was the warmth and the safe feeling of being inside the bus, away from the cold and wildness. He could sit and press his nose and forehead against the cool window and only imagine what it was like outside. He could enjoy the comforting sound of the big motor working somewhere beneath him, he could sit back and read the newspaper or perhaps fall asleep, knowing that if he did sleep the bus would keep on moving across the New England state. And knowing that when he suddenly woke up the bus would still be moving and outside the land would still be changing. Or if it stops, he thought, it will be in a new place, at a station different from the last one and it would only be a few minutes before the bus would be moving again.

The newspaper lay unopened in his lap. It was still slightly damp from when he had run to the bus with the snow blowing in his face at the last stop. The paper had been the same as most of the others displayed on the newstand, the kind that always had headlines in letters an inch high and the headlines were nearly always about sex or some sensational crime. He had picked up the paper and put another nickel on the counter when he bought the cigarettes. Usually he bought magazines to read on the bus, but tonight he had noticed that the newspaper headlines had all been about the same thing and he had read the first few lines of the story and had bought a paper

instead. They didn't have any pictures of the kid yet but he knew that soon, perhaps in a day or so, the papers would all have large pictures to put under their headlines. But meanwhile, Harold thought, there would be at least one night of sirens screaming past lonely wheatfields while the wind howled and the snow began to drift and it became still colder.

It had begun to snow back at the first station, at the college town where he had bought his ticket. The snow had started around ten o'clock, the flakes drifting past the neon lights and melting quickly on the sidewalk. That was when he should have made the long-distance phone call instead of putting it off. Now it was getting pretty late to call. Harold had left his room wearing only a thin jacket that was a little small for him but when it began to snow he hadn't thought it would last very long. The nights had been warm for this late in November, it had been a warm autumn and few of the students had started to wear their heavy coats yet. There was midweek chapel tonight and most of the fellows on his floor had worn the tan wind-breaker coats over their sport coats because no one had expected it to snow this hard tonight. Not that he would have gone back for something warmer even if he had thought about it, not after having made the decision. As it was Harold had only vaguely noticed the snow on his way downtown, and then, standing outside the bus station he had been thinking about too many other things to notice that he had only the thin jacket.

The bus droaned ahead into the darkness. Harold liked being on a bus with no one sitting next to him that he had to talk to. He could stretch out his legs or turn on the reading light if he wanted to without bothering anybody. He could sit and listen to the sound of the motor and know that the bus was moving, and he could think about anything he wanted without having to keep to his own side and talk to some stranger. The glass was refreshing against his forehead as he turned to the window again. Harold saw a light through the snow and the darkness. It was set back pretty far from the highway and probably was from a farmhouse. Then it was gone, and there was only darkness outside. He wondered what time it was. The kid would be looking for lights from a farmhouse, Harold thought, because that would mean warmth and food. But the farmers in Nebraska would have been warned, they would be ready tonight and Harold knew that for the kid there would probably be no warmth or food. The snow raced past the window and he tried again to separate the sound of the bus from the wind. Tired of watching, he turned again to the newspaper.

MANHUNT CONTINUES FOR MAD-DOG KILLER.

The words spread in exciting black type across the page. The story, which he still hadn't read beyond the first few lines, was dated from Nebraska's only large city. It was a national press service release, the same story would appear in papers all across the country. Even in his hometown the story would appear. His father would read it tomorrow at breakfast and his mother or sister might notice the headline and ask what the story was about. And at college—but he told himself that things back there didn't matter any more.

"Excuse me, fella. Are you through with it?"

Someone was speaking to him. A man was looking at him from the seat across the aisle.

"Are you through with the paper?"

Harold folded it in half and handed it across to the man. The man had on a dark overcoat and his mouth was a straight line.

"Sure. You can read it."

Then he felt awkward.

"Could I have it back when you're finished?"

Harold sat back and frowned. He wasn't finished with the paper at all, but then it had always been hard for him to talk to people, especially strangers. He wanted to look adult when he talked to people but his mouth wouldn't remain firm and he found it difficult to meet other people's eyes while keeping his own hard and uncompromising. It had been that way at school. He had even practiced in front of a mirror but Harold knew that when he met people he looked young and unsure of himself. He was tall enough for his age but he was thin, his frame hadn't started to harden yet. The man probably thought he was just a kid who wasn't used to travelling.

Listening to the sound of the motor, he tried to recapture the secure feeling. He pictured the wheels outside rolling over the asphalt. The road would still be bare because the wind was blowing the side where it would begin to pile in drifts soon along the ditches. Perhaps the kid would have to huddle in a ditch tonight to keep warm, although maybe he would be able to keep stealing cars. Harold wished he had read the entire article before giving the paper away. He looked across the aisle. The man was holding the newspaper up under the small reading light.

Harold reached in his jacket pocket for the package of cigarettes. He smiled when he felt the book of matches; he was glad that he had thought of asking for them at the newsstand so he wouldn't have to ask anyone for a light. Opening the pack, Harold took a cigarette and struck a match. It went out. He lit another, took a long drag on the cigarette and looked around the bus. It was the first pack he had ever bought and he had felt awkward asking for them. But then there were a lot of things I never did, he told himself, but that was

over now. He liked the feeling of sitting there with the cigarette in his hand, letting the smoke out slowly through his nostrils. Harold looked across the aisle but the man was still reading the newspaper.

Eight people. The story had said that the kid had killed eight people. They called him a mad-dog killer. Harold remembered that the story had opened by describing the packs of specially-sworn deputies that were searching the state for the nineteen-year old youth who had gone on a killing spree earlier that day. He had started with his parents, shooting them both in the head with a deer rifle. Then he had shot some neighbors who had tried to stop him and had stolen a car, killing the owner and wife and leaving them sprawled in the road. They had found the car later, abandoned on a country road and that was all that Harold had been able to read.

He wondered how late it was, but it really didn't matter. He could call home in the morning, it would be better to do it in the morning. Harold didn't want to think about making the phone call, so he slid the hand without the cigarette down along the side of the seat, feeling for the knob that controlled the seat adjustment. With the seat back he sat for awhile with his eyes half-closed smoking the cigarette. His mouth tasted a little bitter but he didn't care, the secure feeling was coming back. It was just a bit chilly inside the bus. Harold found that by folding his arms across his chest it was quite comfortable. When he shifted in the seat it was cold for a moment, then the warmth came back. Harold relaxed and listened to the sound of the bus. Most of the other people were probably asleep by now. He thought of the driver up front, and how it must feel to have so many people confident enough in you to fall asleep while you carried them along in the night. It was still snowing and he wondered if the driver was having difficulty seeing, the snow must be swirling quickly at him from the darkness above the headlights. Maybe the kid, the one they called a mad-dog, was also driving into the flying snow now. He would be going much faster than the bus, trying to outrun the sirens he knew were racing somewhere behind him.

Maybe he would have the car radio turned on to some all-night record program, turned up loud so he wouldn't have to think about what was behind him and what might be awaiting around each bend in the road. The kid would stay away from the main highways, trying to avoid the roadblocks he would know were blocking all the main roads. Harold looked out the window but it was black outside and he could only see the quick darts of snow that blew against the glass. The kid would probably be leaning forward in the stolen car, his foot pressed hard on the gas pedal. In a car the screaming of the wind would be much louder, maybe the kid could hear it even above the music from the radio. He would probably be looking for farmhouses

with lights, knowing that he would have to get somewhere where he could hide during the daytime. His knuckles would be white from gripping the steering wheel tightly to keep the speeding car on the road while he glanced wildly at the road ahead and at the dashboard, perhaps noting that there wasn't much gas left. The rifle would be next to him on the front seat and he would glance every so often at it too. Harold held his arms tightly across the front of his jacket and thought how it would be to ride in a stolen car through the mad November night while the wind howled and snow leaped toward him out of the darkness. He put out the remainder of the cigarette by pressing it against the metal beside him under the window.

Outside there was only an occasional light. Most of these were probably porch lights that were left on all night, the people who lived in the farmhouses were all asleep by now. Harold's parents would be asleep. The man across the aisle was still awake, he was still reading the newspaper. Harold could hear him turning the pages occasionally and he wondered what the man had thought about the headline story. Soon the bus would make another rest stop, and perhaps take on a few more passengers. Then he could ask to have the paper back. It must be pretty late by now, the fellows on his floor would probably all have gone to bed. The dormitory would be silent with the heavy stillness that comes at night to places so full of sounds in the daytime. He had seen it that way often, all still and quiet. One time the silence of the long hallway had frightened him and he had almost shouted to break it. He had wanted to shout but he had told himself that it wouldn't do any good and he had gone to bed instead.

Harold heard someone shift heavily in the seat ahead of him and he tried to remember who was sitting there. He thought it might be the old woman, the one who had boarded the bus carrying a large stuffed-full paper shopping bag, but he wasn't sure. She was probably asleep and hadn't even been aware of having moved. The old woman would probably wake up in a few hours and think that it was perfectly natural for the bus to have traveled a hundred and fifty miles while she slept. She wouldn't even wonder about what had occurred during those hundred and fifty miles, about how it would be outside tonight where it was lonely and cold. His parents certainly wouldn't think of such things. They were probably sleeping but even if they were awake they would never imagine that their son was sitting inside a big passenger bus going fifty miles an hour in the night. They might think about his sister, sleeping next to them in the bedroom that used to be Harold's. They might think about her because she was right there in the house with them. People are like that, Harold thought, always thinking about the immediate things.

He must have fallen asleep then because the next thing Harold knew he was sitting up in his seat trying to make his awareness catch up with the bus. It was uncomfortable for a moment and he wanted to somehow stop the bus so he could be ready to think ahead and keep up with it when it started moving again. He glanced out of the window and then turned away from it and quickly blinked his eyes open and shut a few times. Harold thought vaguely that it was still dark outside and it was still snowing. Inside the bus it was still quiet and he told himself that he couldn't have slept for very long. The reading light was out across the aisle. He could barely make out the form of the man, who was leaning to one side. The man's face was partly hidden by his coat collar. The newspaper was on the seat beside him. Harold waited a few minutes, then he slid to the aisle and reached across for the paper. He felt a chill when he stretched and he remembered that it must be very cold outside by now.

He switched on the light above the window and settled back. With the reading light on, Harold could only see his own reflection in the window. As he looked at the front page, at the headlines that no longer seemed so large and sudden, he wondered if the kid was beginning to get tired. Probably not, Harold told himself, probably he was still too scared to think about being tired, although that would come. Harold started at the beginning of the story and read it through. It was fairly short, it only ran down a single column. They hadn't had time to find out very much. Someone had told the police that a few days before the kid had said that his folks didn't understand him, didn't care about him. "They don't even know I'm alive" was the sentence that the article had in quotes. The story told how the kid had always skipped school to go hunting and how he had resented his parents and anyone else who tried to help him. Harold wondered if the kid had really made the statement about his folks not knowing he was alive. For some reason it disturbed him that the newspaper story had it in quotes. He wondered how they could be sure that those were the exact words. One thing is certain, he thought, the kid will never get a chance to sue anybody for it.

Harold turned out the light and lit another cigarette. He thought that the darkness seemed a little less thick but he couldn't really tell. The bus would have to stop pretty soon. He told himself that he couldn't have slept through a stop before, although he might have if there hadn't been too much light and noise when the bus stopped. It would have been a small town and he might have slept through the stop without knowing it. Harold wished that he knew what time it was. In a little while, a couple of hours at the most, the bus would pull into a larger station. Then it would be daylight and he could make the phone call. The ringing wouldn't sound so loud at home

then; it wouldn't frighten his parents by waking them up in the middle of the night. Phones ringing at night always had such an electric excitement, like the sirens of ambulances. His parents would be less nervous at the long-distance call and he wouldn't have to explain right away that he was all right and that he hadn't been in an accident. He didn't even like to think about his father in his pajamas and with his hair all mussed picking up the phone and speaking too loud into it the way people do when they have just wakened suddenly and don't have control over their voices. His mother would look like hell and she would be grabbing at the phone while he was trying to explain to his father. They would both be whispering to each other not to get upset. It would be like a zoo, like a comedy routine where nobody knew their part. That was the way it would be if he called late at night. In the morning they would both at least be dressed and wide awake. Harold thought anxiously that he wanted to be sure to call before his father left for work. He knew, though, that the bus would get to the station with plenty of time for him to make the call.

Harold took a long drag of the cigarette. He wasn't enjoying it and he was sorry he had lighted it. He put it out. Harold hated the thought of putting out a cigarette after having only taken a few puffs but it was giving him a bitter taste and besides no one was watching him. He folded the newspaper and placed it next to him on the seat. By this time it was well wrinkled and had the worn commonplace look of all day-old papers that people left in public places. He was getting hungry. There would be a restaurant at the bus station where he could get something to eat. Harold thought that the kid out in Nebraska must also be hungry. Maybe the kid was thinking that he was sorry he had started the whole thing earlier that day.

He would have left the second stolen car by now. They would have found out about it and even if there was enough gas the kid couldn't afford to stay with any one car very long. He probably would have driven it off onto some dirt road, taking it out of sight of the highway. Maybe the kid would be able to find a wooded area where it wouldn't be found for awhile. But he would have to know that they would find it, and probably pretty soon. He might be on foot now, carrying the rifle and making his way through the fields a little way from the highway, walking parallel with it and lying flat every time he hears a car approaching. The snow might be several inches deep by now and even though the kid would have to stop and rub his hands and stomp his feet every few hundred yards he would at least have the snow coming in to cover his tracks. The wind would be bitter, knifelike across those open fields. Maybe the kid also had seen that the darkness couldn't last much longer. Harold thought

that by now the kid must know the other thing too. He must be calmer now and he must know that he doesn't have much chance of getting away. What he hadn't had time to think about before, that there was nowhere he could run to, must surely have come to him by now.

If during the night the kid had been able to get another car, or if he had forced his way into some farmhouse, he might have had to kill again. Harold thought that the kid might have caused a lot of phones to ring madly like fire alarms that night. He looked outside and was certain now that it was getting lighter. He could see the side of the road and the dim outlines of occasional buildings. Every little way there was a telegraph pole. The snow wasn't coming as fast past the window now. It still was dark, though, and there were no lights on in the farm windows. Inside the bus the people seemed to be all still asleep. The man across the aisle was huddled on the seat in the womb position with his head on the armrest.

Harold began to doze again, in intervals at first so that time seemed to skip a little and then be normal again when he opened his eyes. Each time he would be listening to the hum of the motor and then the hum would become mixed up with time and Harold would know that he had been asleep for a few seconds. He was relaxed and comfortable. It was pleasant to sit back and feel time starting and stopping. Harold almost felt that he could control it, that he could be asleep or awake as he wanted. When he tried to think about what the kid might be doing now he found that he was thinking instead about the sound of the bus, so he let it go. Once he found himself suddenly staring at the seat ahead and he couldn't be certain that only a few seconds had passed. He smiled because it didn't matter. He listened and felt sure that the sound outside was only the bus. Either the wind had died or he had been wrong about it in the first place.

The next thing Harold was aware of was that a lot of time must have passed and that he was thinking how it wouldn't be much different phoning in the morning. He sat up, thinking about this. It was lighter inside the bus, he would see clearly the backs of all the seats. Outside was a bright gray and objects like houses and barns appeared stark and somehow indecent in the early morning light. It had stopped snowing. Not enough had fallen during the night to cover all the fields and instead of being a smooth white, the fields in many places were a dirty-looking brown. As he sat watching out the window Harold could still taste the cigarette. His mouth felt dry and his eyes hurt from looking outside. He rubbed them and thought again about what it would be like when he phoned. He had remem-

bered how hurried it always was with his father trying to read the morning paper while his mother kept calling upstairs for his sister to hurry. Harold thought of the coffee smell of the kitchen. His father's breath always smelled strongly of coffee when he left for work in the morning. He had always disliked the thought of his father kissing his mother goodbye with his breath smelling like that.

The man across the aisle was sitting up and looking out the window. There were red lines on the side of his face from the armrest and his hair was mussed. Harold wondered if the man had noticed that the newspaper was no longer on the seat beside him. Probably he didn't even notice it, Harold told himself. Harold glanced at the paper but he didn't feel like looking at it. He didn't feel like doing anything, he just wanted to sit there for awhile longer. Harold's body felt hollow and spent, the sleep had not been at all refreshing. He knew the bus would be coming into the outskirts of the city fairly soon. Before that there would be more buildings and signs along the highway and the telegraph poles would come quicker. The driver up front was probably thinking how good it would feel to pull into the large station where a row of other buses would be lined up. Harold would probably see him in the restaurant during the stop drinking coffee with some other drivers.

He began thinking about the kid again and wondering whether they had caught him yet. He might have been able to get through the night, but it would be much harder for him now in the daylight. Harold knew that the kid was probably exhausted from being on the run since yesterday afternoon. He must have been shivering for hours now. Maybe he had a fever from being out in the open all night, perhaps his head was aching and his wild thoughts were becoming dulled. The kid might even have lost his rifle somewhere out in the darkness. No, Harold thought, he would still have it, he would hold onto that until the end. That was the only thing he'd had from the beginning, the gun, and he couldn't afford to lose it. The kid would know that there would be fresh men after him now, men fresh from a full night's sleep. They would be replacing the tired ones in the cars and at the roadblocks. By now they would know approximately where the kid was. There couldn't be many roads in that flat wheat country and by blocking them off they would know in what area the kid would have to be. It would be on all the radio stations. The farmers would hear it in their warm kitchens as they ate breakfast. If it had stopped snowing out there in Nebraska someone might see his tracks leading across the open fields. He would still have the rifle though and he wouldn't be easy to take. Then Harold thought that maybe by now the kid had already been caught and was in jail

or in a sheriff's car someplace. The kid couldn't hope to go much longer without getting caught.

Thinking about the kid made time go fast, so Harold tried to think about something else. If he called in the morning everybody would talk very fast. His father would think about being late to the office, then he would remember that his son was more important. But he still wouldn't be able to stop thinking about being late to work and perhaps missing an early appointment and so he would talk very fast and look every so often at his watch. His sister would know that something was wrong and wouldn't want to leave for school. His mother would keep telling her to finish her breakfast so she wouldn't be late, as if his sister being late to school was the most important thing in the world. Actually his mother wouldn't know what to do, with two people not leaving the house on time and with the breakfast table not cleared the way it usually was everyday before phone calls started coming. Harold smiled faintly. She would probably be clearing the table while his father talked to him on the phone. Not knowing what she was doing of course, but she would probably be carrying dishes over to the sink while she kept asking his father what the trouble was and glancing anxiously at the kitchen clock. It was easier to think about what it would be like back at the dormitory. Probably it was still quiet there. Only a few would be up this early; there would only be the faint sounds of a few electric razors or alarm clocks. The morning papers would still be waiting outside most of the doors on the floor.

Signs and houses came more frequently past the window. Harold pressed his face against the glass so the shock of the cold would help wake him up so he could think clearer. As he turned he felt the pack of cigarettes in his pocket. The pack was firm, it was nearly full. He didn't want to light a cigarette; what he felt like doing was to run his tongue along the glasses to get rid of the stale bitter taste. There was more traffic on the highway now. Harold saw lights in most of the houses and once in awhile he saw a person opening a garage door or warming up his car. He saw a milkman coming around the side of one house. The milkman wore a hat like the bus driver's, and like the ones policemen wear. Soon the bus would be inside the city limits and there would be sidewalks and stores. The bus would have to go a little slower now, but soon they would reach the city's business district.

There wasn't any use. Harold framed the sentence for himself. If I called and tried to explain they wouldn't understand. He said it over again, moving his lips slowly as he looked straight ahead. He looked across the aisle and at that moment he might have said it out loud but the man was watching out of his window. The man had

straightened his collar and smoothed out his coat, he looked wide awake now.

Harold thought that he would probably have time to get himself a good breakfast. He would buy his ticket as soon as the bus got in and find out how much time he had. It was easier now that he didn't have to think about the phone call. Everything would happen as usual at home and nobody would have to get excited. His father could kiss his mother with the coffee on his breath and his sister would get to school on time. He decided to have one last cigarette and as he looked for the matches, Harold thought again about the kid in Nebraska. He would buy a morning paper and see whether they had him yet. They probably had caught the kid by now. He could read about it on the way back.

Awarded the semi-annual EXILE-Denison Bookstore Writing Prize.

Have You Ever Killed Anyone?

By BILL BENNETT

For every maimed soul there lies
A mutilated trunk somewhere,
Beyond a turn of mind, an image
Really, of a desicated
Frame, detailed even to the
Shark-mouthed wound, warm blood
And white, undefended hands:
Hands that never raised a sword
But which were caught and plied
By some accomplice, some
Particular I, of the Dillinger who
Struck upon this perfect crime.



STATE 4

Pat Wagenhals

Deserts

By CHRIS CONDIT

I was beautiful, long ago.
This hennaed hair was amber,
these eyes
Too fresh to hold a single shadow.
My flesh glowed along my bone.

And I knew greatness: we were of
Lion and lioness heritage,
With our incandescent love
For manes of royal gold.

Then why did mother frenzy always
I was inward-shrivelled? Why think
Time was a jumble of eggshell days
Smashed against the desert of my
shyness?

Amid the wreckage of my youth
I always knew that desert spaces
Could breed desert monarchs—in truth,
Animals as huge as love.

Ode To A Sleeping Beauty

BY BOB CANARY

-1-

Driving the bright knife deep
In the double back of night
Dawn wipes its bloody fingers
On the napkins of the sky
Leaving brandy stains
On the broad blue tablecloth

The sun itself
Shouts in shifting colors
For freedom won
Look, how it lifts itself
Above the foothills
Making light a love-gift
To the dark-dwellers

And you lie sleeping

Now is the time to shut the door on winter
Step out in this garden
Without guilt, without sin
Surrounded cities of fir-trees
Face an army of flowers
The dogwood on the walk
Is a single heady voice
Whispering, Awake!

And you lie sleeping

In the college union I have made
Matchstick pentagons
Wads of paper cups
But now I see you hurry past
Hear the unexpected click
Of your heels on the college walk
Ticking past the tennis shoes

To carry a tiny rebellious sound
Far down the walk.
I watch hip-bounce, leg-strut
Arm-sway walking of you
And lust to chase that wilderness of hair
Down the walk to turn the head
And spread closed lips with mine.

Where have I seen
These thin arms, blue-hooded eyes
Half-wild black hair?
Not in any of my days
It must have been
Night at cross-roads by single moon
The lady of the double-axe
Hymned by lecherous alley-cats
A sister to Proserpine

Twice, then, I have seen
Hecate in a mortal face
Beauty as natural as fear
The power of the goddess
Trembling the mortal limbs.
Shall I stand forever in wonder?

Others have loved you, but I
Seeing their heads on the castle wall
Drew back, afraid, but now
Let me scale the circling stone
Open the wooden doors
Draw back all curtains
And, pausing at your beauty,
Bend and press my lips to yours
Purchasing breath with breath
Where you lie sleeping

-2-

The sun-plum dropping in the east
Still warms the grass behind the chains
Standing by the water fountain
I smoke the days last cigarette

And see you smile
 See you fresh from riding
 Plaid slacks and blue wool sweater
 Round breasts like unshaped poems
 And we talk the evening out in plans
 Must you sleep forever?

A band romances in hesitant light
 Soon tulips will fold their petals
 Fearing spring's end in flag-fall
 Like the world of fearful men
 Still singing winter's songs
 Beneath the blossoms
 That sway in spring's wind

Sing now the rape and lust of nations
 The rape and lust of minds
 Save your lemon rinds
 Is there a coroner on the corner?
 Is there a hearse in the house?
 To carry off these dead men that are crowding
 Out of their graves in khaki trousers
 Slogans pamphlets and diseases
 Left over from old wars
 Singing everyone's battle song
 "God is with us
 God is near."

You're all alone, you fools
 You and your fifty million dead
 Bombed theaters,, empty schools
 Get bac-k in the ground
 Next time no one will be around
 To pronounce the needed elegies
 Proving
 Principles and sovereignties
 More important than living
 God will not come to man again
 He has left to wed with the Devil's daughter
 Leaving his red-bearded prophets to preach
 Destruction by fire, burial by water

But where is the healer, the fortune-teller
 The mad astrologer?
 Where is the leader we can follow
 Out of this witch's night?
 Surely, in the British Museum
 Some mustached Austrian artist
 Is producing a book to put everything right
 Will no one discover
 It is all a plot of someone or other?
 Who will raise the expedition
 Underwrite the cost
 Of bringing back God alive
 Or proving that Hell exists
 Making our condition
 Bearable by its
 Alternative?

Comrades, we have been deceived
 No god, no secular creed
 Can make wrong right or teach us
 To tell one from the other
 No way of life can climb a wall
 No prophet has the magic name
 To open up the gates.
 But cake fall, or castle crumble
 Chaos come upon the land
 Moon rising in shadow of sun,
 Despair is not my country
 I doubt we ever share
 Beauty though we gang about
 Her walls, and when she calls
 She calls not men, but man
 She calls to me

You who lie sleeping past that circling river
 Hold faith in your dreams
 You will not sleep forever

—3—

On the restaurant balcony
 Watching your fingers curl

Around the water-glass
 I sit in silence broken
 By the roll and pitch of ice
 The chatter of others, the ring
 Of your bracelet on the table,
 And search your face across the checkered cloth
 Lips parted, head bent forward
 Listening for the whistle
 Of the train that will return you
 To your proper home in time

Speaking, you betray the school
 That gave you all this grace
 That taught, at great expense
 Always to resist
 The nakedness of experience,
 Betray the ones who sent you there
 Gave you everything out of proportion
 But never love enough.
 But what were they to do?
 It was love that sent you there
 (And snobbery perhaps)
 Embraced you when you came back
 Love with love combined
 To leave you blind with open eyes
 Too innocent for lust
 Too childlike for desire
 You say you love and love and love
 All loves collapse
 At the touch of sharpened innocence
 What kind of love is this?
 Only a word upon your lips
 Never a kiss

Spring lady, these fingers are meant for ribs
 These lips for the red-sweet harvest
 Love will yet circumvent
 The witch's mark of Hecate
 And set its own ripe brand
 On olive brow, on breast
 We shall yet find resolution

As Mozart in this symphony
I see your arms in his patterns of sound
Lightness, but strength as well as beauty
As in the string which bears the weight
Of music on its length
Or that with which the gods
Would bind the wolf that chased the sun

You smile and close your eyes
But there is no pleasure without cost
No bottomless well of innocent joys
The surface of life is soon exhausted
College may bring new savor
But how long till we discover
That all the fine meals are eaten
The cities visited
Pure poetry past pleasing
Then knowledge must be tasted
Rough to the tongue, heavy to the belly
You, in the dogwood spring
Face certain summer
Will you find love when you take a lover?

On the sullen roads of spring
Midnight makes it morning
But each day brings its anger
Summer of cities and slums of sounds
Surfeit to the belly's hunger—
The world's glitter is twinkling stars
We gaze until we cannot tell
The steady from the shimmering

Lean back against the seat
Danger in a tight blue skirt
Unaware, but does
The hurricane hate the pine
Or river or rain the flooded plain
Never river, never rain
Fire wind or hurricane shall care
They bring impersonal destruction to the world.
In power of vulnerability
In anger or helplessness

We who meet the goddess find
 Her blind when just or not alike
 What matter if she suffers
 An immortal pain, killing lovers
 They still lie slain
 The bee may die in stinging
 The hurt remains.

What sort of world is this
 Where love must not exist
 Where happiness is
 Just another heresy?
 But who are we
 To hope for happiness?
 The man-made isotope
 Runs through rice to cows belly
 Mocks calcium, maims the children
 Soon no one will be left to care
 The world is mad, my almost dear
 Some would envy you
 Thinking that possessions
 Make for happiness
 And hate you all the more
 Because you do not recognize
 Riches for riches
 Beauty should never apologize
 But the world is mad
 And full of sons of bitches

Lean back against your seat
 Danger, dreaming
 Love, asleep

-4-

Here by the new-built dorm
 Where ivy reaches for the wall
 Rain has been after us
 Bringing light to the ivy leaves
 Mud to the parking places.
 By the flame-red leaves against the brick
 By the puddle at our feet

By your sleeping whisper, the eyelids signal
 I know all gates are passed
 All fear for self made meaningless

Love! is today's first order
 But how may the mangled heart
 Trust commands of mind
 Pierced by private lust

Private lust and public death
 The rabbit struck down on the highway
 Scuttling to mating

Man lies in ditch, crying,
 For woman, woman, dying
 Grunts abjectly. Is love a plot?

The hungry man will starve himself
 The hungry man will starve himself
 In an empty room
 Starving, will he not hunger?
 Who's to starve or hunger
 In an empty room?

If love were only death, I would not fear
 Though death herself is in the streets
 Will sleep with any man
 That burns with kerosene and flesh
 That drinks the long draught of quarry waters
 That dies of heartbreak

Now that all men are to be made eunuchs
 Invite the women in
 For the necessary spade-work
 See, the sun is split like pumpkin pie
 Crumbles into night
 Sun-crumbs speckle sky
 Stars make a whirling cone
 Black terror in Texas
 White wonder in the dark
 The funnel falls
 The stars are seen to scatter
 Mind separates from matter

And the men in hoods, the men in hoods
 Meet in the woods
 Bind the victim to oak with a twisted rope
 And the hooded priest, the beak-nosed priest
 And the shadowy beast
 Goat-horned, night-cloaked
 For beauty's sake!
 Why no sound, no scream?
 Will no one wake?
 Lips move on a too familiar face—
 In pain or ecstasy
 Does the beast feel no pleasure?
 Do the worshippers share
 Its evident divinity?
 Whose is the sacrifice
 Whose the dream?

When beast in god comes to man
 It may be good or evil
 What is to be done
 When the beast in man is god?
 Is God still Love?

If only my kiss could mold a world
 Where love's command was clear
 Where the chipmunk would not need to care
 What hole in the ground was his
 Or any man farm these wooded hills
 For beauty's infertility
 Or count the deadliness of air,
 If only my kiss could erase the touch
 Of Hecate on your brow, awaken you
 From the troubled dream of childhood
 Or if there was hope

But run to the door, for the hour is late
 And only harm can come of love today
 Why wake you to the world
 That has promised your destruction?

Sleep on and do not search
 For a meaning to the day

The meaning will keep
Spring will have its way
With the dogwood, and I will sit beneath
And mourn the passing of the moon
Foretold in a shrinking puddle at my feet.
Sleep on, for all my thinking
Does no more than slow the pace
These racing symbols run to reality
Can find no better plan
Than lack of action

Make no mistake
You share in our damnation
Your special fate
Is already recorded
Here is one who was taught
That love was the search alone
And not the sought,
Here is one who thought
She loved but loved but once
And that was death

Let me postpone the inevitable doom
Of mortals who bear
The mark of the goddess
Preserve for a while the perfection
Of this troubled hair
These dark-ringed eyes
Let olives mourn the cheeks grave of lips
I will stave off
Necessity today
And pray the fates delay
The final consequence
Of your election

O Let Me Let The Wild Bird Free

By CHRIS CONDIT

O let me let the wild bird free,
the field bird, burning, free.
Set me to this task alone, it will require
six million mosts of time. Like fire
burn feathers, burn feet, burn eyes.
It cries, in me it cries.
Its marrow crackling, its voice a choir
of screams,
it lights my dreams.

O let me let the wild bird free.
(Yet in those obscene darkneses of self,
those deep stript starkneses of self,
I warm me at its fire.)

Undercurrent

By BOB WEHLING

Waves rise and whip the shrinking shore,
While savage winds fling fear from sight;
The distant city's lights are growing dim.
Now, as one, we laugh at squeamish night
And at the distance yet to swim.



AFTERNOON

Judy Higgins '59

Operation Dump

By CHRISTINE ONUFROCK

It was all set. This was the big day. Last night we drove out and found the right spot. It was the place that I remembered from our sophomore picnic last spring. I was right about that place. It couldn't have been better if we'd built it ourselves. You turned off the highway on a little dirt road which led back about a hundred yards to the field. It was the same field where we played baseball on the picnic. That was the time that I played second. Jees, I wish I'd caught that damn fly—I keep thinking about how stupid it was to miss it.

Anyhow the field was just as I'd remembered it—hard and flat and leading right to the edge of the cliff. Stan and I walked over and looked off the cliff. God, but it was a long way down. It was really kind of beautiful at night. The moon was shining bright enough so that you could see the rocks at the bottom—they looked clean and white with the waves lapping over them. I knew that they were really dirty and all marked up with people's initials and stuff and that the water was all grey and you could see the dead fish in the daytime. But the moon made bright shadows and I pretended that the grey water was somewhere else. I guess that Stan thought it was pretty too. He stood there right on the edge and looked down. I could see his eyes shining very white in his dark face. Then he kicked a little stone off the edge and we watched for a second until it disappeared and then in another second we heard a little plop. Stan kept looking down at the rocks. Finally he said, "Ya know, I kinda' hate to mess this place up."

I was surprised when he said that. For a minute I thought maybe he was trying to pull out of our plan. I'd thought about that before myself, but by now it was all set. We couldn't quit now. Then I realized that wasn't what he had in mind at all. He just meant what he said—that it was too nice a place to spoil. I thought of telling him about the initials and the dead fish and that stuff. Then I decided against it. I wished that I didn't know about them myself.

"We've got to. This is the only place that's close enough to town."

"Yeh, I know. I was just kinda' talking to myself. Okay, this is it, boy—we have just chosen the scene of Operation Dump."

I snorted. Operation Dump—that was pretty funny. "Okay, O. D. it is." Then we both turned around and walked back to the car. I felt sort of nervous but I wouldn't have let Stan know for anything. He didn't act nervous at all. In fact he seemed all keyed-up—wanted to talk about it. It was funny, because it had been my idea in the beginning and Stan was the one who didn't want to do it. I guess it was my dad that made him change his mind. Sometimes I guess you can just take so much and then you won't take anymore. Not that Stan has ever said that. In fact just the opposite. I remember just how he said it that day that I was so mad at my dad and we went back in the woods and sat on the ground while I smoked a whole damn pack of cigarettes and told Stan how it was. I told him how Dad always expected me to be so goddam perfect. "Just because he was a big Joe in school, he thinks that his little Chuckie ought to be too. God, doesn't he know that I'm a different person. Maybe I don't want to play football and be a big shot." I told him about how it was before that too. About how he wanted me to be an Eagle Scout—"Hell, I didn't even make first-class." Stan listened to it all—he was a great guy to blow off steam to. He just kind of sat and puffed calmly on his cigarette and nodded. He had this way of drawing the smoke in his nose and then blowing it out smoothly. I practiced doing it that way a little. Then he talked some. I remember just how he said it. He talked some about me and then he said, "After a while you just learn to take it. You get beat down so many times that it just seems kind of silly to fight back. You learn to just take it easy and pretend like you don't give a damn about anything." That's what he told me. But I don't think he really believed that himself. Because when he really gets mad enough he'll fight back. Like now.

Anyway on the way back to town in the car he wanted to talk about the plan. We didn't have much time because it was a short drive. That's one reason why we chose the spot—because it was so close to town. Stan wanted to get the timing all straightened out. It was going to be pretty tight, but we figured we wouldn't have any trouble, unless my folks pulled something—like leaving the show early or something like that.

I let Stan off about a block from his house and drove home. It

was still a nice night out and I was excited and happy. But the thing that made me mad was that when I pulled in the driveway, I couldn't put my car in the garage. My dad's big Lincoln was parked practically right in the middle. It's happened before and it always makes me so mad because there's plenty of room for both of us if he'd just take it in the side like he's supposed to. It's not that I mind leaving my car in the driveway—hell, I know lots of people who never put their cars away. But it's more the principle of the thing. It's because he just forgets that I might want to park my car in the garage too. You know, it's a funny thing about this car. I never thought that they'd want me to have one. I wanted to save my money and fix up an old one if I could. But Mom and Dad didn't like that idea—no, they decided to give me one instead. I can't complain—it's a neat car. But I know damn well that the reason they gave it to me was because they didn't want their kid running around with a crummy car. And I should have figured out that they'd want me to have one because if you don't have a car you're just not in the game at school.

Instead of getting out and going in the house right way, I just sat there in the car for a few minutes. I had flipped the radio on before and there was some good music on—sounded like Glenn Miller. The trouble was that I couldn't get the station too clearly and I kept hearing some woman singing in the background. But I didn't really mind. It sounded sort of sad and lonely behind the other music—a little bit like a Negro spiritual. I thought about Stan while I listened to it. God, it must be awful to be a Negro. It was bad enough to be skinny and to have to wear glasses every damn day of the year. But at least you could eat where you wanted if you were white and not have to live in some grey dirty little house in the slums. Stan didn't live in the slums though. He lived in a fairly nice house not far from mine and I guess he lived in fairly decent houses in the other places where they've lived. That's because his dad went to college, I guess. He is an engineer and works in one of the big power stations. That's what makes me so mad. He's got more education than my old man ever had. It makes me boil every time I think of my dad talking about the ignorant Negroes. The thing that really ticks me off is when he says that it's their own fault. "If they'd just have a little get-up and go like white folks; they wouldn't be living in Nigger-town." Which just goes to show that he doesn't know a damn thing about it. Or care. I don't know why it bothers me so much. I mean it always has. Even before I met Stan. It's just that people are so damn stupid. They

think they know everything when really they don't know anything at all. That's the thing that really drives me crazy about people. They don't even care. They build a little wall around themselves and they can't even see over the edge of it. With a wall like that a guy can walk right through crowds of starving kids or ugly people who don't have any friends, and not even see them. The only time he looks over the edge is when somebody is bashing a hole in his wall or stepping on his toe or something like that. And then he reaches over and grabs whoever it is and gives him a sock for good measure. Even if he is just a little dirty-faced kid who happened to set his foot in the wrong place.

Anyway I sat there for a while and listened to the Negro spiritual thing. Then the lady stopped singing in the background and somebody started in about Alka-Seltzer and that junk, and I flipped the radio off and went in the house.

That was last night. It was really rough to have to go to school today and sit around and try to look like you were interested in the boring stuff that they were feeding you when really all you could think about was what was going to happen tonight. But it was better than staying home. If I'd had to stay home all day, I think I would have gone crazy. They were always asking questions and trying to figure out why I was so odd and all. Like at breakfast today. We were having scrambled eggs. We always have eggs—every single morning. I sometimes wish we could have cereal or just toast or something like that, but we always have to have the damn eggs. Mother read somewhere that eggs were the only really healthy breakfast and she has never forgotten it. Anyway this morning the scrambled eggs were too dry. They were all kind of white and hard and I didn't want to eat them. But that wouldn't have been so bad if Mother hadn't started asking me questions. She started out sort of apologetically. She always does. It drives me crazy. I mean if she would just ask me instead of pretending that she's not really interested. It always turns into a big production.

"Your father and I didn't hear you come in," she said. What she really meant was—"What were you doing last night?"

"Oh, no? I guess you must have been asleep." I didn't feel like being the man with the answers

"We didn't go to bed until 11:30 so you must have been pretty late."

"Um—yeah, I guess so. Well, I better hurry or I'll be late for school." I stood up and wiped my mouth with the paper napkin.

"Finish your eggs, dear," Mother said sort of vaguely. Then—"What were you doing last night?" I knew she'd have to ask sooner or later.

"Oh, I went to a show and then I drove around for a while."

"By yourself?"

"Yes, by myself. Is that all right with you?" Jees, I get so sick of this same damn nagging.

"I don't see why you don't ask somebody to go with you when you go to a show. Isn't there some boy at school—"

"Look, I just happened to feel like going by myself. Can't you understand that?" I left the eggs sitting there and walked out of the kitchen. She's probably start feeling sorry for herself in a minute, but I didn't see what I could do about it. It drives me crazy when they always want to know everything about what you've been doing and why and what you're thinking and all that junk. This time I couldn't have told the truth anyway—even if I'd wanted to. They'd have blown up if they'd known that I'd been with Stan. I'm not allowed to be friends with him or do anything with him or even see him. Of course I do, everyday when we're in school, but they don't know about that. They made me promise not to. I promised all right—to them, but not to myself. It's not that I think it's okay to break promises. I don't. But I figured it would be worse to keep this promise than to break it.

They decided that we shouldn't be friends the first time that they saw Stan. That was about three months ago when he started to school here. I remember walking to school that morning. It's funny the way that you sometimes get the feeling that something is going to happen—just a sort of tightness to the air. It's sort of a summer evening feeling when it's just starting to get dark and there are little kids playing on the sidewalk and maybe you just feel like getting in the car and going for a drive. Anyway that's the way I was feeling on the way to school that morning—I mean it was warm and almost summery for early spring and I just had this feeling that something was going to happen. Then I got to school and there was this new kid in my homeroom. It was Stan. He was the only Negro we had in the school. It's not that there's any law against them or anything like that, but I guess they just don't want to move out here. There used to be another

family—with a girl named Lucy in school here, but she was real quiet and I didn't know her at all.

Anyway Stan was sitting in his desk before the bell rang, looking at his books and stuff. Nobody exactly knew how to act—I mean they weren't being unfriendly or anything, but they weren't being too friendly either. After the bell rang and we got up to go to our classes, nobody was talking to him. I waited for a minute to see if anybody was going to help him or something. I couldn't stand it when nobody did and he was just sort of picking up his books by himself. So I went up and asked him about where his classes were, and could I help him, and all that stuff. It really wasn't too casual, but I was glad I did it. There was something really nice and friendly about him. He was tall and very clean and he dressed well too. Better than most of the kids here. He had on a very good-looking V-necked sweater, sort of grey with flecks of blue in it. The way he was so friendly and all just made me really like him. He was more friendly than most of the kids that go to this school and that I've known all my life. Anyway I saw him again after classes were over and it turned out he lived out my way. So we walked home together.

When I went in the house, my mother was at the window. She had on this lavender dress and I remember she looked sort of cool and silky when she turned around and asked, "Is that a new boy, dear?" I said yes, and I wasn't going to say anymore about it, so she finally had to ask me about him—about where he lived and that stuff. I told her and she didn't say anymore about it.

Stan and I just got in the habit of hanging around together at school. The other kids were nice to him and all, but there wasn't anybody that was really good friends with him. We always walked home together—for about two weeks. I didn't know that Mom and Dad knew anything about it or that there was something big coming up until one day after dinner when they called me down from my room. Right away I could tell that something was bothering them. Ever since I've been little we've had this family council thing—that's what my dad calls it—the family council, where we're supposed to discuss and iron out all our problems and stuff. What it really means is that we're going to discuss what I've done wrong. My dad has a special family council look—he looks very stiff and formal and he always says, "Have a seat, son." That's how I knew we were going to have a discussion—by the way he looked, and when he said, "Have a seat, son," I was sure of it. And my mother looked worried and fluttery—she

likes to have everything go smoothly and I guess she was afraid that I might be difficult or something. Which I was.

What was bothering them was Stan. They were all upset because they had found out that I was being such good friends with him. I guess before Mother just thought I was being nice to him because he was new, but now that he wasn't new anymore, it was a different story. I really blew up when they told me that they didn't want me to see him anymore. It just made me really mad that they were so stupid about something that they didn't know one damn thing about. They didn't have any right to tell me who my friends were going to be. That's what I told them. But it wasn't any use. Dad just said that he understood and he was sure that Stan was a nice boy and all that, but I had to consider our position in the neighborhood and it just wouldn't do to get involved with that kind of people and all that crap. In the end I had to promise that I wouldn't see him anymore.

And then I went up in my room and just lay down on the bed and cried. Honest to God, I did! I haven't done anything like that in years. I mean I wasn't sad or anything—it was just that I was so damn mad. I just couldn't understand how people could be so stupid and all, and so unfair. It seemed like everything I believed was all wrong according to what everybody else believed. I guess maybe I was sad after all. But I was mostly just really mad. That's when I decided I wasn't going to keep my promise.

I had to tell Stan about what my dad said and all. I mean we couldn't keep walking together—not right past my house every day. At first he was sort of cool. He acted like if my dad didn't think he was good enough for me maybe I didn't either. He just stood there and kept cleaning his fingernails with the corner of a crumpled piece of paper and looking at them while I tried to explain how we could still be good friends and all. I guess he finally believed me because he dropped the paper and smiled.

"Don't worry about it, man. Hell, it won't make any difference to me if it doesn't to you. So we'll walk home separate ways! So what?"

So we walked home separate ways. But we still hung around together in school and sometimes we went out together at night. Pretty soon I forgot about being mad at my folks except every once in a while when my dad would make some crack about Negroes or something like that. He met Stan's father somewhere and said he thought there was something sneaky about him—"wouldn't trust him

with anything." Which was about what you could expect! I just kept quiet and didn't let any of that stuff bother me.

Until one morning. It was a Saturday about a month ago. I had just awakened and I was lying in bed on my back watching the little spots of dust dance up and down in the light that was pouring in the window. I guess it must have been pretty late because the sun was so bright outside. I usually sleep late on Saturdays, but I always like to leave the shade open so that when I wake up I can look out the window and see the sun and the trees and all—or the rain if it happens to be raining. I remember when I was about twelve years old and interested in science and all, I used to think that those dust spots were little molecules moving around in the air. Which was sort of stupid.

Anyway I was lying there and not feeling particularly like getting up when I heard my dad out in the hall. My bedroom is downstairs and just off the front hall so I can hear what's going on there. Dad had just come in and he was yelling to Mother, something about the car. I couldn't understand what it was all about, but he really sounded mad about something. I mean he almost sounded violent!

"So, help me, Mary, this is the last straw—young hoodlums! I'm calling the police right away." I heard Mother come into the hall then and they were talking lower so I couldn't exactly tell what they were saying.

And then I heard Dad say, "I heard those voices last night, but I never thought what they might be up to. You know, I remember noticing one of them in particular—a very low quick voice a couple of times and thinking it was some damn nigger. By God, I'll bet it was that damn kid that Chuck knows. I'm going to call the police this very minute." I heard Mother saying something, but I didn't listen. I was too busy jumping up and grabbing a bathrobe.

"What? What did you say?" I guess I was yelling when I ran into the hall, but I couldn't help it. "What are you talking about? What do you mean you're going to call the police?"

"A gang of young hoodlums stripped your father's car last night. They took the rims around the headlights and two tires. What do you think of that?" Mother was looking sort of like—"I told you so" as if she expected me to apologize or something. Dad didn't pay any attention to me; he was dialing the police station. I listened to him report it. "Yes, officers, that's right. Oh, officer, I think I can give you a lead on it: There's a young Negro kid in the neighborhood. I'm sure I recognized his voice down there last night." At that I

couldn't help it. I just grabbed the phone and yelled, "It's not true. Don't believe him." Dad grabbed it back and slapped me hard across the mouth with the back of his hand as he apologized to the policeman.

"Damn you! Damn you to hell! You're crazy—you don't know anything about it." I was yelling and crying at the same time. I couldn't help it—the last thing I wanted to do was to cry in front of him, but I couldn't help it.

"You don't know what you're talking about," he said. Go up to your room and don't come down until you're ready to apologize to your mother and me."

I didn't pay any attention to him. "Damn you! Damn you!" I rubbed my hands across my eyes and nose. I didn't even care now that they knew I was crying. Then I ran out of the house and got in my car and took off. I just drove around getting more and more mad. That's when I first got the idea for our plan. But I didn't really figure anything out then. I guess I didn't think we'd really do it. Not until later anyway.

The police came around and talked to Stan. He told me about it later. They asked him all kinds of questions about what he was doing that night and all, and Stan said they acted like they didn't believe him. "Dammit, Chuck, I'm sick of being treated like a criminal. This isn't the first time something like this has happened. . ." He told me a little bit about his life before and about how awful it was to always be the first one suspected of something. He was pretty bitter about it. I mean for a little while he acted as if maybe I thought he was a criminal too. But I guess he didn't really believe that. But he thought my father was a bastard. He really did. He was pretty bitter about it.

But the funny part was later. It was when the police caught the guys that really stripped the car. A gang of kids that had gotten away with the same thing seven different times. And not one of them was a Negro. That was the funny part—I had to laugh at that. But my father didn't laugh. And he didn't apologize either. To anybody. In fact he didn't say anything more about it.

So I kept thinking about the plan. Sometimes it seemed crazy to me. It still does something. But it's real now. Because it's going to happen. Today. One day I told Stan about it. He thought it was crazy. "It just doesn't make sense, Chuck. You can't go around doing

crazy things just because you're mad at your father. So he's a bastard, but there's nothing we can do about it. Talk sense, man."

He was right. I knew he was. But somehow we just kept talking about it. It was kind of a joke—something we'd just toss into the conversation when we were sick of my dad or something. And pretty soon it seemed like we were always talking about it—trying to figure out how we'd do it if we were going to and all. I don't know how we really started getting serious about it. But when we did, it seemed like Stan was all for the idea. He did most of the thinking for it and he was the one that thought of the part about the cliff. He said he got the idea from some movie he'd seen. And then I remembered the place where we had our picnic last year.

Sometimes when we were talking I got kind of scared thinking about it. I've known all along that it was a crazy thing to do. Crazy, but neat too. Sometimes I felt like it didn't even matter if we got caught or not—just so long as we did it. Just so long as we proved that we could fight back—that we didn't just have to sit and take it all. Jees, it was a great plan. Stan got worried about it sometimes—he asked me about fifty times if I was sure I wanted to go through with it. I guess because it was my father and all. We finally decided for sure about a week ago and neither of us has suggested pulling out since. In fact I don't think we could quit if we had to. It's all set now. It's tonight. In about half an hour I'm going to pick Stan up. It's all for sure now.

II

We did it. Operation Dump has been accomplished. We both beat it home like mad as soon as it was over. I went to bed right away when I got back. I wish I could get to sleep. It would be better if I could be asleep when they get back and then wake up and hear all about it. I mean it'll be easier to pretend to wake up if I'm really asleep. It's quiet as hell in the house right now. Outside it's quiet too. There is just one cricket chirping. You know how it is when there's just the sound of one cricket and when you try and find him, he suddenly stops chirping and then the air sounds loud. Just one cricket . . . and nobody knows that we did it. Nobody'll ever know I guess. Dad will probably want to think it was Stan, but he won't dare. That's the beauty of the whole thing. He won't dare to be wrong again.

Everything went perfectly. I picked Stan up and then we hid my car in a deserted block and walked downtown. We found the other

car in the parking lot behind the show. Stan knows how to start a car with the wires so we didn't need a key at all.—There's really nothing to connect us with it. We both wore gloves too. I drove and we skimmed out to the place without any trouble at all. It was great to drive the Lincoln. It's got power steering and handles like a whiz. I drove all the way with one hand and just hung my left elbow out the window. The rush of air against it felt smooth and cool. I was almost sorry when we got to the spot so soon and turned onto the dirt road. We parked the car and got out to look over the edge again. The moon was even brighter tonight and it was really peaceful and nice. I could make out a L on the rocks below us, but it almost looked like it was part of the rock—a vein of limestone or whatever that white stuff is.

We didn't have much time to mess around though—looking at the rocks and all. We went back to the car and drove it back a long way. Stan fussed around with it for a while. We were both pretty quiet—I know I didn't feel like talking at all. It was all kind of like a dream. You know sometimes when you're doing something and you know it's there and really happening and all, but it feels like you're dreaming it or like you're a long way off watching yourself do it. That's how I felt—a long way off.

“Okay, Chuck, man. I'm gonna' do'er now.” I couldn't seem to believe that this was the moment we had been planning for all this time. It all seemed sort of fragile and unreal. Stan got in the car and started it. He turned toward the cliff and then gunned the engine very fast. The car took off for the edge of the cliff. About half way across the field I saw Stan jump out. He fell on the ground and then bounced up and ran like hell toward the edge. I suddenly remembered that I wanted to see it too. I started to run. The car had slowed down some, but it was still going pretty fast when it reached the cliff. I got there just in time to see it hit the bottom and burst into pieces that flew back up into the air. A couple pieces caught on the cliff and hung there and burned, and the flames jumped way up high and you could even see some plants on the side of the cliff catch on fire and burn red and thin against the black cliff. Some of the pieces fell back into the water and stopped burning right away, but the others were blazing even higher. God, but it was beautiful!

We didn't have any time to waste—watching the fire and all. Somebody was sure to spot it and call the cops. We'd planned to take off for home the second that we'd done it, but somehow we couldn't

tear ourselves away. Finally Stan said, "C'mon man, let's take off before it's too late." I turned around and we both started to run. The highway was almost deserted, but whenever we saw some headlights we jumped in the weeds on the side. We ran all the way back to town—I felt like my chest was going to burst and my legs were falling off, but I couldn't stop running. I just wanted to run—run— and keep running. But it didn't take very long to get back to town and we had to slow down. Stan and I split up on the far side of the tracks just in the town limits. We stopped and I thought I was going to explode I was breathing so hard. Stan held out his hand and I grabbed it—both our hands were cold and sweaty as hell.—"Okay, man—we did it."

"We sure did. No joke, we sure did."

We stood there a minute both breathing in gasps. Then Stan said, "Well, I'll see ya."

"Yeah, I'll see ya." But I knew it wasn't true. So did Stan I guess. We just stood there for a second and then he turned around and walked quickly down the street. I watched him for a minute until he moved into the circle of a street-lamp; then I turned myself and went to get the car.

At home the porch lights were on and everything was quiet. I thought of parking my car in the middle of the garage—that would have been too perfect. But I didn't. I'm not going to give the game away now. Not when it's gone so perfectly. Nobody knows—nobody at all . . . It's so quiet—the last cricket has stopped chirping.



THROUGH THE AGES

D. H. Bingham

Crude Are The Events

By WILLIAM BENNETT

Crude are the events that
Conjugate man's soul; they
Are not prone to force equations
Or smug diagrams on brittle pages;
They are like understanding
Baseball for a boy, instantaneous
And dipped in May, as Easter
In her nightly pleasures
Among mortal men, yet
Bold, pretentious even
In their way:

As Falstaff dies

And one play slips away
Another in the wings is
Panting, knowing that the
Boy become a king, as
King's forget, will hardly
Single out an old man's
Mewlings, nostalgia taking
Too much time.