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Exile Vol. IX No. 1

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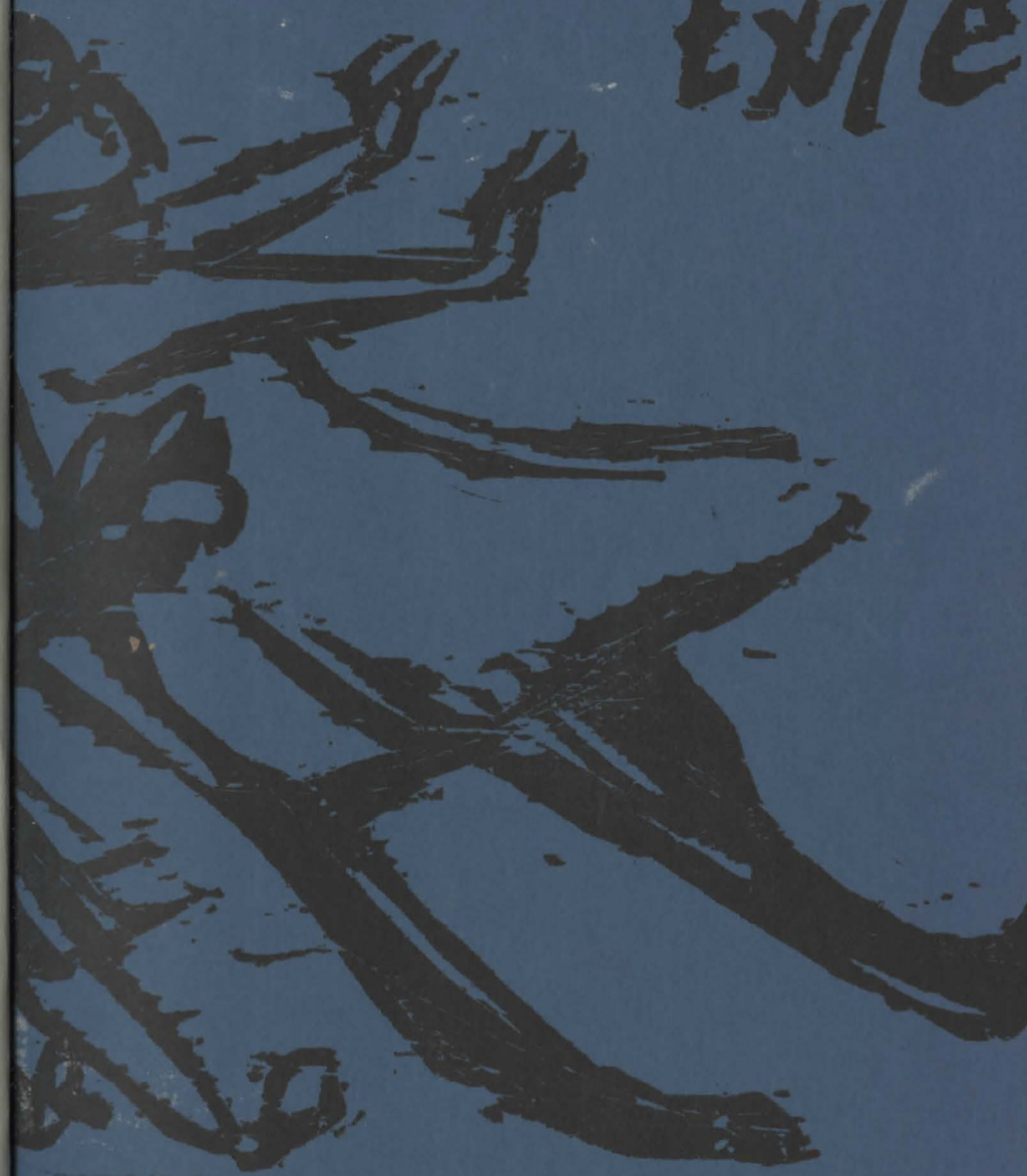
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Exile Vol. IX No. 1

Authors

Patterson Bouic, Les Overlock, Barbara Thiele, Sue Burton, Paul Pottinger, Judith Pistor, Albert Werder, Mary McCarthy, Robert Hoyt, Sarah Conway, Christine Cooper, and Hugh K. Duffield

Exile



The EXILE

WINTER 1964

Vol. 9

No. 1

Denison University
Granville, Ohio

Take thought:
I have weathered the storm
I have beaten out my exile.
—Ezra Pound

Contributors

This issue is unique in that ten of the contributors have never before been published in EXILE. Moreover, the authors represent a much greater variety of major fields than usual. PAUL POTTINGER, who wrote the essay on religion, is a junior psychology major. Two other juniors, also publishing for the first time, are SUE BURTON and LES OVERLOOK. Les recently starred in the University Theater production *Bus-Stop*. PATTY BOUIC, senior art major and Art Editor of this year's EXILE, has shown by her story a proficiency in writing as well as in graphic art. HUGH DUFFIELD spent last year in Paris, which is the scene of his story, "The Breughel." BARB THIELE, a senior English major, has contributed both fiction and poetry to this issue.

JUDY PISTOR, AL WERDER, and MARY McCARTHY are all sophomores who are contributing to EXILE for the first time. Judy is a music major. The verse of junior BOB HOYT and senior SALLY CONWAY was the product of last semester's course in poetry writing. CHRIS COOPER, senior English major, has been a steady contributor to EXILE during her four years at Denison. She plans to teach English upon graduation.

PATTY THOMAS and MONI GIBBS are sophomore art majors; senior art majors are BEV ERBACHER and LIZ SURBECK. Both have done quite a bit of art work for EXILE during their college careers. Liz spent last summer painting portraits on Cape Cod and plans to attend graduate school.

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



THE LOCUST SEASON

by PATTERSON BOUIC

Alice stretched out and propped her head on the window sill to listen. A low mumble came from the television set in the study. Her father would be in there watching some western or family serial. He always stayed up until the eleven o'clock news because by then her mother would probably be asleep.

Alice wondered whether tonight would be quiet or if there would be another one of those mumbling arguments that would give her a nervous stomach. She had even devised an elaborate system of not hearing them. She would wind up tight, bury her head under the pillow, put her fingers in her ears and hum some song or recite the Lord's Prayer or the Preamble or say the alphabet backwards. But it would be awhile before eleven o'clock.

She sat up in bed and looked across the room at her sister. In the light from the window there was a shiny blonde head and two gangly legs. One was almost falling off the bed. From a slurping noise Alice knew that Carol must be sucking her thumb again. Alice wanted to wake her up so they could sneak out the window and creep around the house in the wet grass, feeling scared and at the same time brave. But she couldn't do that. Carol liked to do things most when she thought of them herself. Alice curled up and tucked her hands between her thighs.

Tonight it just had to be quiet. The noises outside were too quiet and solemn to be disturbed, especially the locusts. Her father had said this was the year for the seventeen year locusts. They had already started to come. Yesterday on the way home from school she and Carol had stopped several times to watch pairs of locusts hooked together in a gyrating motion. It had looked funny—the two little bugs almost inside of each other. When they had stopped by Granny's old ginkgo tree, Carol had started to pull a pair of them apart but Alice had hit her arm in time to stop her. It had almost made her sick—to think of pulling them apart—as though some awful genie would have popped out and turned both of them into locusts too.

Now, at night, the locusts were just a hum. She knew the old ginkgo tree must be full of those beautiful, fragile shells that stuck on the bark of all the trees. On Saturday they would have to climb it and see how many they could collect. But tomorrow wasn't Saturday. It was only Thursday and it was the day that the sixth grade got to read aloud. She usually was chosen to read, but you had to give the others a chance, too. She lay and listened to the hum. Her knees relaxed and her hands slipped onto the cool-sheets.

The alarm rang at seven-fifteen but Alice just rolled over and pulled the pillow around her head like an apple tart shell. In a few minutes Daddy would be yelling at them to get into the bathroom and out again so that he could shave. Alice half-dreamt, half-thought about the times when their father used to get them up to the Joe Williams' marching song on the morning show on the radio. He would come marching into the room with Billy, her brother. She and Carol would follow them, giggling and stamping into the bathroom. She couldn't remember when that had stopped. From the other room her father yelled, "Alice, get up and get Carol up. Now."

Her mother slammed the bathroom door. "Why don't you get up yourself. You don't always have to be the last one up."

Alice rolled over and swung her feet to the floor. She looked over at Carol. Her mouth was open. She always slept with her mouth open. Alice walked over and started poking Carol in the ribs until she started poking back. Then they raced to the bathroom. It was important to be first to finish brushing your teeth or you might end up with toothpaste all over your arms.

Alice and Carol got to the breakfast table first. The sun pouring in through the window made the room hot and stuffy even though it was so early. There were only three places. Her mother and father never ate breakfast. They were old enough not to need cereal and juice and a vitamin pill. Billy came in jutting his chin forward to show off where he had nicked himself shaving. As her mother fixed the coffee Carol started an argument with Billy.

"What do you mean I pitch too much? Who pitched yesterday, huh?" argued Carol.

"Aw, you don't even know how to pitch. You can't even see home plate," Billy baited her.

Carol yelled back, "Look who's talking about not seeing. Four eyes. Who do you think you are, Bob Feller or something?"

Billy looked tough and pointed his fork at Carol. "Listen, squirt, I'm the one who decides who plays what, and don't forget it."

Carol took a vicious bite of her toast. "You always think that

just because you're four years older than me, you can always win. Well, I won't even play at..." She choked on her toast.

"See, talk with your big mouth full and..."

"All right. This has got to stop. One more word out of you and it'll be a switching for all three of you."

Alice looked at her mother's back in front of the sink. Then she watched Billy put a big piece of egg in his mouth and give Carol a very eggy smile. "Four eyes," Carol hissed. Billy put a piece of egg on his fork and started to flick it at Carol who ducked under the table.

"What did I tell you. Now sit up and act like civilized people." Her mother left the room carrying two cups of coffee.

Billy finished breakfast first and put his dishes in the sink. "I'm leaving early. Gotta talk to the baseball coach."

"See ya in the drugstore... Four Eyes."

"OK" Billy yelled on his way out the back door. Carol leaned over the table confidentially. "You know, I saw Billy walking some dumb girl down to the baseball diamond yesterday. He really looked silly too. Even carried her books," she said disgustedly.

"Yeah, I saw them too. Mandy knows her. She says she's a real nice girl. All the boys like her."

"Oh yeah, she didn't look very nice to me. I went down there to play a little catch with Billy before the game and you woulda thought I was some monster or something. And you know what she asked me? She asked me why didn't I wear bandaids on my scabby knees. Bandaids..."

"Well, maybe she thought you'd get an infection. You're just jealous anyway."

"Jealous... of my own brother? Not that ugly jerk."

"OK, just calm down. We gotta hurry. I gotta wash the blackboards before class."

School was ten minutes away by the old gravel road behind Granny's. Carol and Alice cut up the hill between their house and Granny's and up under the big ginkgo tree.

"Do you know Jimmy Mitchell?" Alice gave a can a big kick.

"No."

"I think he's going to walk home with us this afternoon."

"A boy?" Carol wrinkled her nose.

"Yeah."

"You gonna have to buy him a soda too?" This time she added a furrowed brow to the wrinkled nose.

"I don't know."

They walked together up the narrow road and under the trees where the ground was still damp. Carol walked a little ahead of Alice, whistling and tossing her head from side to side. Alice thought how pretty Carol would be someday when she stopped tucking her hair behind her ears and got rid of her scabby knees.

But now all Carol was interested in was running a better race and throwing a better fast ball. Alice could throw a passable fast ball but when she got excited she always threw wide to the left. They joined a group waiting for the patrol to give the cross signal. Carol yelled to a tall girl in a plaid jumper that showed a pair of bruised knees similar to her own and ran up to join her. Alice walked slowly behind the two giggling girls. She ran the last few steps through the large double doors and down to Mr. Jameson's room. The room was empty, so she ran and got the rags and water. She washed the boards in long straight strokes. While Alice was putting the rags away, Mr. Jameson came in. He was kind of short and a little fat, but he was the only man teaching at Park Ridge Elementary, and Alice felt lucky to be in his class.

"Well, Alice, I see you've beat me to the boards again. I'll have to start paying you if you keep on doing such a good job." Alice smiled at this and walked over to her desk. She smiled to herself and looked at the wrinkles in her hands as the classroom began to fill up.

After school, Jimmy Mitchell and another boy, Tom, who had dingy looking skin and was very short, followed Alice and Carol to the drugstore, scuffing their shoes. The boys didn't talk to Alice and Carol all the way until they reached the drugstore, when Jimmy hurried to open the door with a sidelong glance at Tom and a mocking "May I?"

The day had gotten much warmer, but inside the drugstore it was dark and cool. They all sat down at a corner table behind the magazine rack. Alice looked at the initials carved into the table and ran her finger over a little jet plane that some artist had carved there. Jimmy looked at Tom, then at Alice. "What do you want?"

"Could I have a chocolate soda?"

"Me too," Carol said.

Jimmy went over to the counter and bought four chocolate sodas and carried them back to the table on a tray. He set the tray down and took his own soda. "Boy, those locusts are sure gettin' thick. You shoulda seen me and Tom throwing them at fat old Mrs. Town today. Huh, Tom?"

"Yeah, she couldn't figure it out. We hid behind that big old

tree by the blacktop. She couldn't figure it out at all." Carol sucked the last drops of her soda, making a loud noise.

"How old is your sister anyways?" asked Jimmy.

"She's ten, a year and twelve days younger than me."

"That so. Well. . ." Jimmy glanced at Carol.

"Yeah, that's so. You want to make something out of it?" Carol snapped.

"No, kid. That's all right. You can be ten if you want to." They all sat in silence for a few minutes until Billy came in. Carol jumped up. "Well, it's about time you got here. You want a soda?"

Billy nodded to the boys and put his hand on Carol's head. "No. Let's play a little ball before dinner. You guys want to play, too?"

"Sure."

They walked in a group down the main street then cut down the back road beside Granny's house. Jimmy had picked up three locusts and held them in one fist. "You like locusts, Alice?"

"Oh, they're O.K., to look at."

Jimmy walked up beside Alice. He grabbed her and slipped a locust down the back of her blouse. Alice screamed and dropped her books. Carol ran over and reached down her back and pulled out the locust. Tom and Jimmy laughed. Alice took the locust from Carol and threw it at Jimmy but she threw wide to the left. They all laughed and ran all the way down the hill into their own yard. Jimmy was pitcher and Billy was up at bat first. Alice felt kind of uncomfortable and missed a fly ball that was straight to her.

When Alice finally went to bed, she couldn't stop thinking about Jimmy and the locust. All through dinner she had thought she could still feel it crawling up her slip and had even excused herself several times to see if it was really gone. From the living room she could hear the voices of the company rising and falling, mostly rising. Later there were the low murmurings of an argument as her parents got ready for bed.

Alice buried her head under the pillow and wanted to crawl into bed with Carol but she knew she would already be asleep. She tucked her ear lobes into her ears. It was pretty effective but tiring. Cautiously she unstopped her ears and listened. There was only the noise of a creaking bed. Alice sat up and pulled her nightgown off over her head. She wrapped up in the sheet and listened until she fell asleep.

After school on Friday Carol always had choir practice with Mr. Jameson. Alice waited for her sitting on the cool floor in the hall. She

was bent intently over a drawing of a beautiful girl in a long gown until she heard someone calling her softly. "Hey, Alice. Come on in here. We got something to show you." It was Jimmy and Tom. Alice put her books down and walked into Mr. Jameson's room. They had written on the board "Mr. Jameson is a mother f---" Alice wondered what it meant but laughed anyway. "You'd better erase that or you'll get in trouble."

"Not unless you tell him who did it." said Jimmy. Tom walked over and closed the door. Alice hoisted herself up on Mr. Jameson's desk. "I think he'll know who did it. He isn't dumb, you know."

"Not unless you tell him who did it." Jimmy moved over beside Alice.

"Oh, I won't tell but you'd better erase it." Alice slipped off the desk and started to leave.

"You can't leave yet." said Tom. Maybe they had another locust to put down her back. Suddenly Tom grabbed her arm and pushed her against the desk. She pulled away and ran around to the other side.

"Hey, this isn't fair. It's two against one. Carol should be here to even it up. Even Billy can't take on the two of us."

Alice smiled and rose to the challenge of the game. Suddenly both boys came around the desk. Tom pushed Alice over Jimmy's extended foot. She fell and knocked the wind out of herself. Jimmy straddled her the way Billy did when he was going to tickle her, but now it wasn't so much fun. She could hardly breathe.

Abruptly a man's voice demanded, "What the hell are you boys trying to do?" It was Mr. Jameson.

Both Jimmy and Tom scrambled to their feet. Alice gasped a little and finally managed to speak. "Oh, we were just playing. But it wasn't fair, two against one."

Jimmy and Tom were standing stiffly. Finally Jimmy said, "We were just foolin' around a little, Mr. Jameson."

"Alice, you go outside. You two boys damn well better not move. I want to talk to both of you." Mr. Jameson walked with Alice into the hall. "Are you all right, Alice? They didn't hurt you did they?" Alice shook her head. Mr. Jameson sounded terribly upset. She had never heard him curse before. She turned away from him and walked up the stairs. He had looked at her so funny. Carol was waiting for her outside. Walking home Alice felt sick to her stomach. Carol rambled on all the way home. Alice didn't even listen.

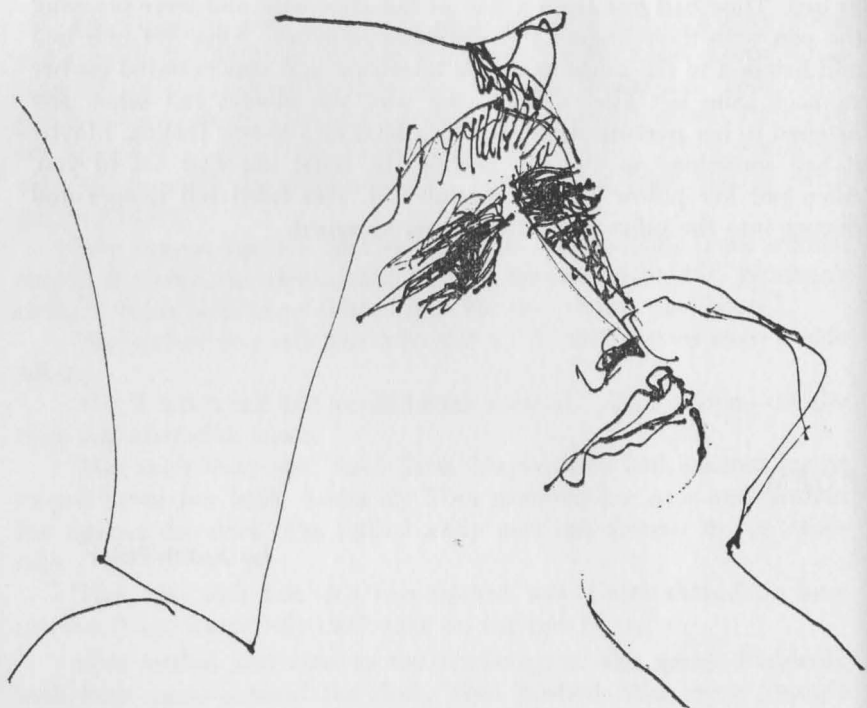
Carol and Billy were still watching television when Alice went

to bed. They had just fixed a pan of hot chocolate and were cleaning the pan with their fingers and watching *Rawhide*. Alice got into bed and listened to the murmur of the television and concentrated on her stomach. She felt kind of sick, the way she always felt when she listened to her parents argue. It was a kind of a knotty feeling. Maybe it had something to do with getting the wind knocked out of you. Alice put her pillow on the window sill. Her head fell deeper and deeper into the pillow and the locusts hummed.

POEM

by Judith Pistor

If you should one day come
And seek for me at our dwelling place,
Remember, love, winter is numb
To all our pleas for an easy grace.
It was the spring that in green leaf
Marched before us with the piper's tune,
And while he gave no cause for grief
He led us on through rings of a hollow moon.
We could not have accepted then
That our love was but the intensity
Of autumn leaf clinging to needle stem
Against reaper winds neither would have the other see.
Look for our dwelling place; it has not gone.
But seek not for me, love — I have moved on.



POEM

by Albert Werder

I

His feet broke blades of grass
And shattered the black balls
Round as the spheres of dew
As he ached on over the hills
With glistening toes.

II

Dawn made linen wrapped holy around him.
Arching and squirming, every pore
Broke with a voice that battled the dew,
And his eyes, half shut,
Saw swords and daggers leap in the flames
About his temple gates.

III

And new fires raged in the sepulcher's stones
About the dying trees,
While emissary rivers rang
With cries of new kings sceptered
On the moon's high thrones

IV

Below him black steeds shuddered and glowed
Bearing the crest of his hollow name,
And into the desert he ran;
To the dunes piled up about the cliffs
And the ridge-rocks
Singing in mountain streams.

V

There he engaged Elysian fields
And mounted his armor on necks and heads
Of blind men stumbling in search of coins.

VI

There he surfaced,
Spent as a reed flute
After the dinner guests leave.
While blind men rattled in ominous chains,
He fell from all color and died.



SALVAGE

by Marty McCarthy

A short time of love, a wave,
Washed over my life, then ebbd,
And now my heart scurries
Like a flurry of twig-legged sandpipers
Over the damp sand,
Picking at the hidden juicy sea-bugs
Left by its passing.

THE BREUGHEL

by Hugh K. Duffield II

By eleven o'clock the sun had soaked into the frozen alleyways and had transformed them into a network of mud. Roulet decided that a cup of coffee would do well and plodded along between the brown-spattered stalls toward one of the main streets. The aging art dealer walked carefully, concentrating on keeping the mud from touching his spats, and avoiding the rush of tourists about him. The tourists. Sunday brought them to the flea market. When the rest of Paris was closed down for the sabbath. They'd wander from stall to stall, pointing at and picking over polished antique pistols, piles of old jewelry, and trays of gold and silver coins. They'd bump into brass urns and knock over valuable paintings. The owners of the stalls would swallow their anger in anticipation of sales, sales that they would never make.

When Roulet reached the street, he walked for a while and stopped at the first café he came to. Leaning against the cold glass of the door, he wiped as much mud from his shoes as he could with his newspaper. Then he walked in and sat down.

"Bonjour, monsieur." The waiter handed Roulet a menu.

"Just coffee."

"Oui, monsieur."

As Roulet drank his coffee, he considered what he should do when he returned to the market. He would go to Corrighal's booth first. In Alley Nine. The gross buffoon could have picked up another valuable painting. Roulet would always remember two years ago, when for two hundred francs, he had bought from Corrighal, a withered canvas of a peasant woman leaning against a tree in a barley field. He knew instantly that it was a Pissarro. After it had been restored, he resold it for 150,000 francs. Of course he never told Corrighal.

Roulet adjusted his hat, paid his check, and started back to the market. He stopped at the edge of the sidewalk, looked down at his shoes, shrugged, then tramped back into the mud.

"What? Should I starve for your sake? On my honor, it is a gift at a thousand francs. I see you admire a painting, I give you a deal I would be hard put to give to my grandmother. And how do you thank me, eh? With a miserable offer of five hundred."

"But the paint is chipped..."

"God? Forgive this misguided soul. Monsieur. The day that I see a three hundred year old painting that had survived the ravages of time and two world wars as well as this one, I will come to you on my hands and knees and kiss your feet."

"Oh very well. Seven hundred and fifty."

"Eight!"

"All right, monsieur, all right! Eight hundred francs!" The disgruntled customer slapped a fistful of notes into Corrighal's hand.

Corrighal looked into the sunlight, hands uplifted. "May God bless my charity." He handed the painting to the man.

"Ha!" The customer spat in the mud and slopped off into the crowds.

Fat Corrighal chuckled to himself, and wetting his thumb, counted out the eight hundred francs before stuffing them in his trousers pocket. Then he walked from his showroom to the back of the stall, returning with a painting he had bought recently. He set it in front of some other paintings stacked up against the wall.

Unlike other stalls in Alley Nine, which were carefully maintained, Corrighal's was grimy and disheveled. Like most of the others, it was a permanent structure. Plaster walls, a tin roof, and an entrance that opened like a garage door. The inside, the "showroom", looked like a forgotten attic. Other than a faded touch of elegance, an oriental rug given to him by an uncle who had been a missionary in Tunis before the First World War, and which Corrighal had hung on the rear wall, there was nothing attractive about the place. A layer of dust covered his paintings which were stacked wherever space was available. He had decided that this helped his business though. After dealing with customers in the flea market for thirty-four years, he had found that people liked to rummage, that if his place was neat, his paintings tastefully displayed, people would feel that they were in the salon of a private home, and that nothing was really for sale. His stall offered the excitement of a treasure hunt—the idea of a million francs quietly waiting to be discovered under an ancient wedding dress in a musty trunk. In thirty-four years, Corrighal had become part of the dust and disorder, a cumbersome antique, unshaven and ill-dressed.

He saw Roulet approach. A sly man, Roulet. A sly man. The man knew too much about art, and Corrighal always had an uneasy feeling when he saw the dapper old gentleman coming. Not today though.

"Ah bonjour, Monsieur Roulet. What brings your careful eye to this humble establishment today? Come. Have a look at my selection

of Renoirs and Cézannes!"

That's a good one. Corrighal, the day I find such a jewel in this dung heap, I'll buy you a barrel of cognac."

"Speaking of cognac, I was just going to have some to warm my soul."

"You need cognac? With all that fat? When was the last time you could touch your toes, eh?"

Roulet poked Corrighal's protruding belly with his cane and both men laughed. Then they walked between the clutter of paintings to the small room in the back where Corrighal ate his lunch and kept his records. The heavy man slumped into his old, overstuffed arm-chair, loosened his long, woollen scarf, and removed the beret from his balding head.

"Roulet, I am glad that you came today. I must talk to you."

"Well?"

"Well last Tuesday, a fellow came to me with a painting."

"And?"

"And he wanted twenty thousand francs for it."

"So?"

"Well, I was first attracted to the frame. It was two hundred years old, I'd guess. Gilt of course, and very fancy. I could probably get about a thousand francs for it on the right day. Then I began to study the painting itself. A peasant carnival scene. Medieval times. Roulet, I would swear to you that it was a Breughel, or I am not Corrighal."

"You are sure?"

"Well, I am not positive. That is why when he comes back this Tuesday—I told him I would give him my decision then—I want you to be here to look at it."

"He is coming back. There is no mistake about that is there?"

"No. He'll be here. I told him that I was very interested and not to sell to anyone else until he saw me again."

"All right, then. I'll come. But if I find that I have wasted my time, I will put an apple in your mouth and roast you alive."

"It is not the season for apples, old friend. Be here at three o'clock . . . oh, there is just one more thing. I need ten thousand francs."

"Ten thousand!"

"Of course I will give you half of the painting."

"Corrighal, you are much too generous. So. If the painting is a Breughel, we have a deal. Now. I must use your phone and call for my car."

Riding back to the Galleries on Rue de Rivoli, Roulet thought about his meeting with Corrighal. It was doubtful that the old clown had really stumbled on a Breughel, but if he had, what must be done? Such a painting could bring perhaps three million francs, not to mention the publicity Roulet Galleries would get. Corrighal. He was no fool. The glorified hawker would watch every expression, hang on every word. Corrighal was almost convinced about the painting. A mere, "no it is not a Breughel", might not do. And what of the stranger? He was sure to be on guard with the introduction of a second party. A discussion of the painting in front of him could be disastrous. Perhaps he could lead Corrighal astray and deal with the stranger later. Perhaps...Roulet's car drew up to the curb in front of the Galleries.

Tuesday afternoon, Roulet drove out to the flea market. He told his chauffeur to pick him up at four o'clock. The flea market, now closed until Friday, was deserted. The wind whipped and whistled all alone, down the alleys and around the silent, closed stalls. It was a pleasant change from Sunday. Roulet arrived at Corrighal's stall, walked around to the back, and entered through a small door. Corrighal was seated in his armchair, eating a sandwich.

"Bonjour, Roulet. You brought the money?"

"Yes, my fat friend, I brought a check with me."

"Good, excellent! Now you may have some of my wine."

"Corrighal, you are much too good to me. Please! I insist that you remain seated. I will get a glass myself. I do not want you to strain your heart."

"I think I will go visit my maiden aunt when we sell the painting."

"You must be wealthy to do that?"

"She lives in Australia. On a sheep ranch. Can you imagine that? An old spinster running a sheep ranch?"

"Yes...well now. What about your fellow with the painting? Is he still coming?"

"Better than that. He called from Clichy not too long ago, and was coming right over...maybe I'll take a trip around the world..."

"Now listen, Corrighal. We must be very careful with this man. With me here he might be suspicious."

"Hoho! With you here, even I, Corrighal, am suspicious. Please go on! Tell me how we must deceive our innocent prey."

"My father always told me that fat people are the most pleasant. Of course I didn't agree with my father all of the time. Now if I do not think that the painting is genuine, I will put on my gloves. If I think it is, I will merely write the check. Do you understand?"

"I have thirty-four years of understanding behind me. Also ten thousand francs."

There was a knock at the door. Corrighal rose from his chair with some difficulty, and opened it.

"Ah, Monsieur Loudan. It is you. I would like you to meet a good friend of mine, Monsieur Roulet."

"Bonjour, Monsieur Roulet. Roulet...Roulet...Aren't you..."

"Well, Monsieur Loudan, ah...ah, where is our little masterpiece? (It is a charming bit of painting, Roulet, charming!)"

"It is outside in my car. I will go and get it."

"Excellent idea, good idea, yes. And then we shall see what we shall see." Corrighal escorted Monsieur Loudan briskly to the door, then rushed back over to Roulet.

"You were right, Roulet! He knows who you are. He's suspicious!"

"You fool! Can't you be calm? The way you are acting, a child would be suspicious! If he does know me, we'll never find out, the way you cut him off. Just tell him that I was interested in seeing the painting; that I am not considering buying it. There is still a chance he was thinking of someone else."

"Yes, yes. Of course. We must discreet. Ah Roulet, you are a master of these things. A true master! I should have taken lessons...ah, here we are Monsieur Loudan. Oh what a gem! Eh, Roulet? All those rich colors. Beautiful. Beautiful. Let's take it into the showroom for a closer look."

The three men filed into the showroom. Corrighal turned on a light and set the painting up against the oriental rug.

"Monsieur Roulet, were you interested in buying the painting, too?"

"Oh no, no, no! Monsieur Roulet was here on a buying tour ah...ah, as I was saying now—I was talking to Mons—"

"Ah, Monsieur Roulet, you are the owner of the Roulet Galleries. Now it comes to me. I knew that I had heard the name before. I remember now. About two years ago, I read—"

"Yes. I own Roulet Galleries. Monsieur Corrighal said that someone had brought him a particularly beautiful painting, and he asked me if I would like to see it, so that is why I am here."

"I see. Well Monsieur Corrighal? What do you think?"

"Monsieur Loudan. It is a gem. But a twenty thousand francs gem? Well I think..."

"The man I bought it from; I bought it in Doorn in 1937, he said it was probably painted by a student of one of the great artists of the Flemish school. I paid a healthy price for it then."

"Ah! But a healthy price is a healthy price. And twenty thousand francs doesn't even have to blow its nose. Corrighal would have to be a sick man, up here, to pay such a healthy price."

Perhaps Corrighal has learned something in thirty-four years at the flea market, Roulet though. He could examine the painting closely now, while Corrighal kept Loudan busy with bargaining.

The more Roulet studied the painting, the more he was convinced that it was a Breughel. All the signs were there. He would take a chance. He'd made twenty-thousand-franc mistakes before. There was Corrighal to consider. "Yes, Monsieur Loudan, it is a beautiful painting." Roulet put on his gloves. "Please, monsieur, come back with me to my Galleries. I would like to show you some of *my* paintings. Perhaps we can have lunch."

"Monsieur Roulet, an excellent idea! It would be an honor..."

"So. I think we have made a deal at ten thousand francs, eh Monsieur Loudan?"

"It is a deal Monsieur Corrighal."

"Good! I will get the money." Corrighal disappeared into the back room.

Roulet hadn't counted on Corrighal buying the painting if he thought it wasn't a Breughel. He must do something quickly, or lose the painting.

"Monsieur Roulet. I shall be with you as soon as Monsieur Corrighal and I have completed our affairs. And I insist on taking you to lunch. Do you know the Taj Mahal restaurant in Rue de la Fédération?"

Corrighal came out of the back carrying a brown envelope.

"Do you know, Monsieur Loudan, I have been thinking about this painting. *I* might be interested in buying it from you. Did you say twenty thousand francs?"

"Here is your money, Monsieur Loudan. I bit more perhaps than the painting is worth, but it is so beautiful!"

"One minute, Monsieur Corrighal. Monsieur Roulet might offer me my original price. Monsiuer Roulet?"

"Monsieur Loudan, you have a deal. Will you take my check?"

"Aha! Roulet! So! You have tried to trick me. You should have been more careful, my darling worm. Monsieur Loudan, you are dealing with a master cheat. No! The master of master cheats!"

"Monsieur Corrighal, I don't understand. Monsieur Roulet...?"

"Then listen and know the ugly truth about Roulet. Oh I confess that I was in league with him. You see, I told him... Roulet, I should spit in your face. I told him that I thought your painting was a

Breughel."

"A Breughel?"

"Yes a Breughel, and he would come today, you see, and check the painting. Did you see that snake put on his gloves?"

"Yes. I remember."

"So you see! That was the signal that he didn't think the painting was genuine. But it really is a Breughel. Oh, Roulet! You are a sly rat. That invitation to the galleries, Loudan?"

"Yes?"

"He was going to buy the painting from you for twenty thousand francs and keep it for himself, but aha! He did not think I would buy the painting anyway, so you see, he was forced to show his black hand. Don't sell your painting to this scum. It's probably worth millions!"

"Well Monsieur Roulet? What do you say?"

"You will have to understand Monsieur Loudan, that Corrigal is a bitter man. He would have sold the painting for thirty. All of these flea market people are scoundrels and the dealers themselves. They think that this creature standing before us, is a fat, babbling liar, the worst of the worst. From what I know, I would agree with them."

"Loudan, don't stand too close to this thief in spats. God may strike him down at anytime."

"Monsieur Loudan, Corrigal is raving mad. That was twenty thousand francs?"

"Loudan, I offer you 40,000 francs. Just to save you from dealing with this pig!"

"Corrigal does not have the money, Monsieur Loudan. . ."

"I can have it in twenty minutes. I am not as poor as Monsieur Mephistophiles thinks!"

"Corrigal forces me to protect my honor, Monsieur Loudan. I am not a poor man. I offer you 60,000 francs. Let us hope that we have shut up our ferocious windbag friend."

"Very well, Monsieur Roulet. I accept your offer. I should have had the painting checked earlier, but now it is too late. I am leaving for the United States this evening."

Roulet wrote out the check instantly and handed it to Loudan. After saying a hasty "Good day" to Roulet and Corrigal, he left the stall and drove away.

"All is not lost, Corrigal. I think that you deserve a reward for bringing this painting to my attention. What would you think of, say, ten thousand francs. And please! Accept my apologies for this

affair. But you know very well, Corrighal, business is business. Perhaps you will be more shrewd next time." Corrighal wanted to keep his contact with Corrighal. There might be another time when a valuable painting would slip through the fat fool's fingers. "Come Corrighal, I will buy you some cognac."

"Oh no. my sweet deception monger. It is I, Corrighal, who will buy *you* some cognac."

"No, no, no, no! I *insist*..."

"Roulet, I won't let you do it. When Corrighal celebrates a victory, he pays for the wine . . . I wonder what Australia is like this time of year...?"



POEM

by Barbara Thiele

As you move slowly on the common road,
Where paddies squeeze the chaos into one lean strip,
You will see the masses pulsing through the dust
Which, sun-quenched, wraps them softly—
Deadening the stench of withered squid.

You may find a mother's eyes, palsied
With endurance, or throbbing
For the child riding on her back.
Or maybe, like the child,
You can lift your eyes:
Where the hills lie verdant in the mist
And the noble chrysanthemum clings to a rock.

TEATIME

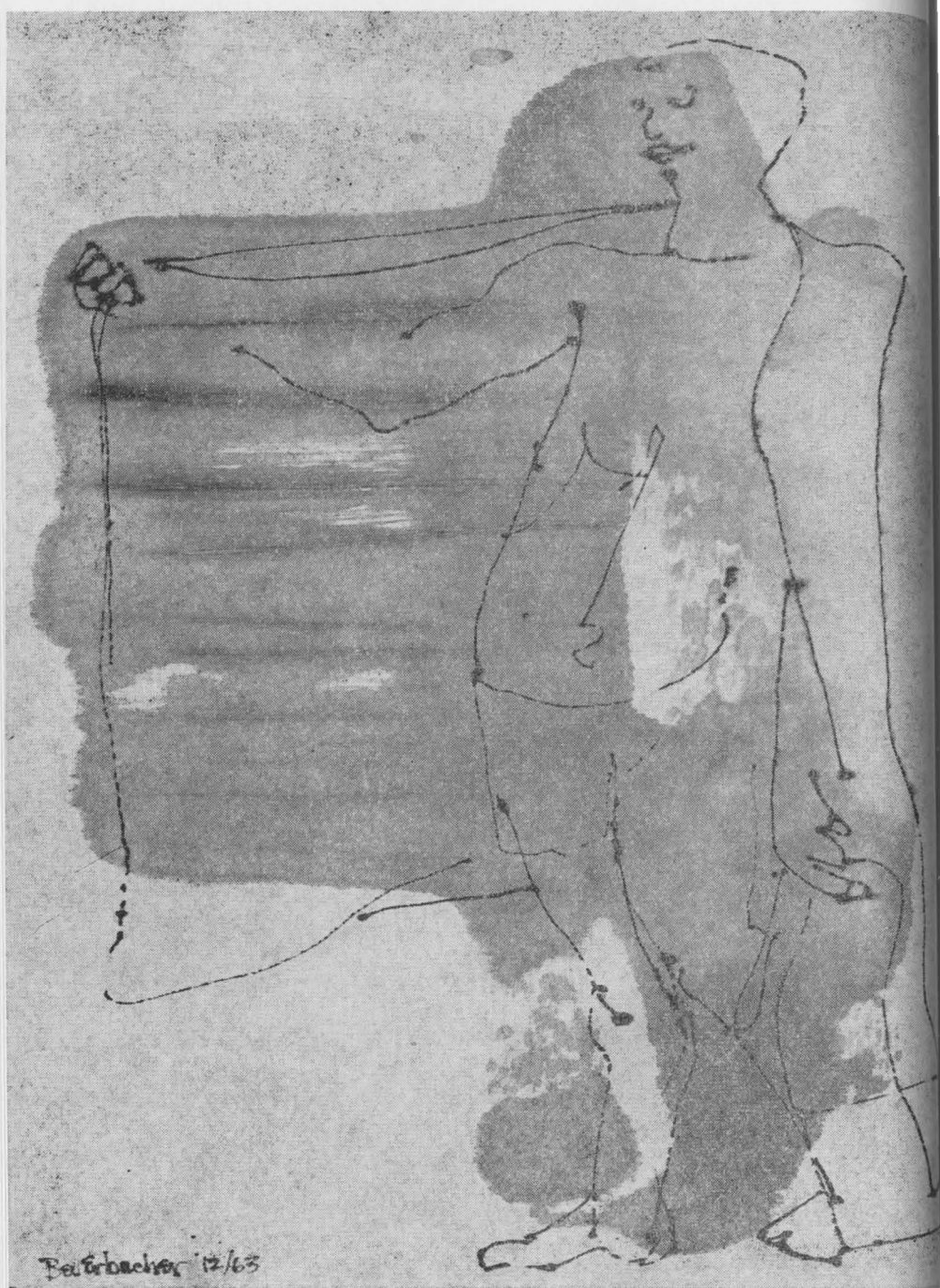
Hugh K. Duffield, II

The sun dies off for another day at last.
It is teatime in the sitting room,
A biscuit cracks in the growing gloom,
And stained glass windows lend their somber cast.

Mother pours tea and holds her napkin fast
She smells of clove and dogwood bloom;
She talks of sin and Jesus' tomb,
Of great Ulysses bound up to the mast.

Mother is a proper soul and chaste
She's made of lace and ostrich plume;
She said she wove me on a loom,
That girls are made of paper, boys of paste.

Teatime, and another afternoon has passed;
I can barely see across the room,
Barely smell the strong perfume
Of apples, rotting slowly in the grass.



THEN I RAISED MY HAND

by LES OVERLOCK

My naked body was propped against the cement wall. My eyes moved from the chair, to the far wall, to the ceiling, and then back to the chair. Dust covered the chair. No one, not even I had sat on it. Again my eyes roamed from wall to wall and finally to the door. The door also waited. My eyes gazed at the iron latch. The latch was scraped upwards. Suddenly, with a flat bang on the door, he blasted in. He hesitated, made a passing glance at me, and then faltered to the chair. The dust scattered as the chair fell. I laughed. His back was facing me after the fall. He was staring at the far wall. I was frozen in my corner.

After an endless silence he yelled, "I's seen you there lookin' like a dead boy. Pulled you outa that tide. Show me no gratitude nor nothin'. Man, if you'd been waitin' for a body as long as me, but least you could of done was to . . . no gratitude nor nothin'. No strength in me so wouldn't do me no good to try now, but after I's saves your . . . Christ man, them waves was movin' right into your guts, movin' right in I's say." He lost his strength, and his head fell into the back part of the chair.

I screamed, "Shut your mouth, blackman, shut your Goddamn mouth." My legs lost their strength. The thought of just standing there weakened my whole body until I finally slid to the floor. He heard me move and twisted his head towards me. Then in one quick motion he spat on me. We eyed each other. His eyes burned into mine. In an awkward moment he managed to kick the overturned chair, but it failed to reach me. He had shown his power. He then rolled his dark body to the far corner. No longer did he have the desire to prey on me. He had retreated. We glanced at each other for a moment and then drifted into ourselves. I put my head on the floor to cool it from the pulsating in my brain. I heard a soft ring from the floor. The sound was more like the surf rushing into the beachhead. The rumble was familiar. The constant beat of the waves came louder.

* * * * *

The sun had not yet come over the horizon. The waves broke into the inlet with great crashes. The naked island was without warmth. I arose slowly from the sand and brushed it from my legs. The air was freezing. Gulls were flying in small groups over the water in search of food. They moved aimlessly in the sky and then broke for the water. One bird close to shore broke for the waves and emerged with its prey. I followed the bird to the sky and then caught the view of the far-off horizon. I approached the waves. I saw nothing. I took a second look, but it was futile. Again I fell to the sand. The waves had just dampened the spot. I buried my head into the coldness.

There was no person. I wanted to just look into some eyes. I lifted my head to span the beach. About twenty yards from me lay the silent parachute. When they had thrown me from the plane they had told me to look for him. "There's a damn nigger down there, boy." The words clouded my thoughts. My legs were aching. I failed to pull away from the creeping water. I turned to my back and gazed at the sky. I kept looking and hoping to see something. The beach was deserted. The ocean surrounded me. My hands pulled at the sand. My tongue was dry. I tried to form the saliva in my mouth. I was alone. With a mad jerk, I spit air into the breeze. Then, I rolled slowly to my stomach and fell into a deep rest.

* * * * *

The echoing subsided. I stared at the ceiling. A fly buzzed from the ceiling to the floor and then circled my head. My eyes were not quick enough to follow it. It landed on my forehead. I shivered and tried to blow through my mouth towards my head so that the fly would move, but my breath was faint. The fly remained. I wrinkled my forehead and finally shook my head in one last futile effort. It stayed. I prayed for it to fly from my head.

He was still lying in the corner. I was directly opposite him. I was relieved that the echoing had ceased. Then he moved and started to come towards me. I stopped him with a high-pitched blast of "stay on your own damn side." I watched him, at the same time conscious of the fly on my forehead. My arms were weak. With a small burst of energy I might have swatted the pest; but before I moved, it flew off my forehead. The loud echoing came back to my ear drums. The beat pounded on. The noise was hard and at the same time distant. Waves were pounding into the surf.

* * * * *

The sun was burning the beach. As I awakened from my rest I realized that my back was scorched. Blisters had formed on my neck and shoulders. I lifted myself to my knees and then weakly stood. At one end of the beach a group of gulls were wandering. I wanted to go to them. They would only fly away. I turned and walked in the opposite direction. My skin burned. My feet dragged through the waves. The waves cooled my legs. Then I spotted a cove where I thought there would be some relief from the sun. I needed water. The ocean taste was a painful taste. My head felt heavy as I approached the cove. As I looked across the beach the gulls' shadow lopped over and my head fell to the sand.

When I awakened the sun was gone from the horizon and there was a coolness in the sand. I tried to get up, but failed. I wanted something to talk to or hold or . . . nothing was there. The wind and sand stretched across my naked back. The island was in complete darkness. Suddenly, my side was hit by a cold object. My heart began to beat in a fast rhythm. I turned to see. The parachute had been blown across the sand. Its cloth was climbing across my back. A coldness ran through me. I felt the water at my feet. The tide was coming in. I had no strength to move. I felt myself choking. I could not struggle.

There was a sudden pressure on my arms. It was the hands of a man. I became frightened. He dragged me from the water and began to push on my back. I was choking and could barely grasp my senses. The water belched forth from my lungs. I was conscious and weak. When I finally quieted he pivoted me to my back. He was black, but his white eyes and teeth shone in the moonlight.

His eyes looked directly into mine. I could not talk or move away from him. He kept staring at me. His body was over me. The expression on his lips made me turn away for a moment. I was weary. He inched closer to me and kept staring. He started to wipe the sweat off my forehead, but his hand retreated for a second. Again he approached and leaned over me. We were eye to eye. I watched the nervous twitch of his lips. He was anxious. I finally yelled out to him with every gush of air my body had to offer, "God man, what do you want?" He wrapped his arms around me. As his body entered me I passed from consciousness.

* * * * *

Still on my back, I stared at the ceiling. The fly had not lit on any object. It circled the room. Then, in one quick dive, it landed on my forehead. I was horrified: it might not leave this time. The sweat formed on my lips. My eye twitched. It flew off. My convulsions ceased.

He began to move. To my amazement he stood against the far wall. I heard a thud and then looked as he rapped against the cement wall. The fly was fleeing from his attempts to break it. His big hand managed to cross its path. It was squashed. The buzzing had stopped. I yelled, "Fly didn't love you . . . black man . . . kill it." He then turned from the wall and spat on me. The dampness had no real effect on my body. I could see him falter and search for the ground. Finally he collapsed.

He looked at me on the floor. We stared at each other. The overturned chair in the middle of the room blocked part of his body from my view. We could not move. The room's coolness was very present now. He then tried to spit again. I heard the "thip" but my desire to do the same was gone now. At this moment he spoke, "We gonna be dead, man. It's jest a lil while before we gonna be gone from this old place. Least you gonna be goin' with me and least I gonna be goin' with you. That's better than havin' nothin' . . . out there on the barren sand with no other person to have . . ."

My body tingled. I was gaining some strength. I inched to my knees and approached him as he settled on his back. I pushed the overturned chair from my path. He did not move. I fell to my elbows. The air was closing in on me. His two big black legs were in front of me. He didn't see me coming. I moved forward. As I inched closer I again pushed myself to my knees and then with every force within me I raised my hand and crushed down between his legs.

AESCHYLUS AND THE TURTLE

by Robert Hoyt

Along a shining beach in Sicily,
Sea-flung from god shouldered Greek islands,
An aged man walks pensively,
The breathing sea breaks, sliding on the sands.
Above, winged chance hunts with sweeping
Hunger life's warm squirm. The shadow comes; the head
Slides shellward. A tight fear shuts against swirling
Water. The rough talons curve, and
The eagle carves domains of fear inside
The shell where a soft life huddles.
A bald skull plate becomes a target.
Two chambered lives collide.
The difference turns on a moment's edge-
The man knew death in life, but never felt it.

TURNING

by Sarah Conway

In the brown soft earth we saw the plough turning.
The grass was wet so we sat on the back fence
And, still as the meadow before the morning
We watched the sun rise.

One day we climbed to the highest rung
Of the pine tree, and swayed with the wind.
In June we rode the horses into the woods among
The aspens to salt the thrush's tail.

When we looked from the top of the stairs I cried
Because the stars were so far apart.
Do you remember when you won my yellow cat's eye
And we were playing for kisses.

A LUCREZIA

Christine Cooper

I suppose these smiles, Dear.
I have wearied away the sun
in ripened books of lust,
while through the hollow years
night has knelt its dust
so slowly on the day.

In the purple humming
I have lain
under ebony shadows
and heard you come
through the cricketed loneliness
to the stairs.

Always the same:
Your breathing thunders
like a dying man
and I must feign
my storming thighs
till languid morning
whitens in the sky.

I suppose these smiles, Dear.
The day above
is at its graying end.
I prepare my crumpled clover hair
and saint-white shoulders
for a friend.
When we hear the whistle,
Oh, brave the faultless painter's words,
"Go, my love."



BERRY STEW

by Barbara Thiele

"No Bixo, bad doggie, bad doggie—spit those out." Sarah reached in Bixo's mouth and pulled out the tiny red berries that were wet with drool. "Oh Bixo, they almost melted and the seeds would have gone down to your stomach. You would have died. Bad bad doggie. You did it last week and the last week and the day before that. Now just stop. Come away from that bad bush. I'll wipe the germs out."

Sarah grabbed Bixo's green leather collar. Using all her seven year old strength, she dragged the black puppy away from the bush. Bixo stiffened his short legs and squealed as she pulled him over the dead leaves. She picked up a leaf and wiped his wet tongue with it.

"Now, maybe that will teach you. It's a bad punishment for a bad dog." Bixo shook his head, snuffled his nose and lay down, nestling in the crackly leaves.

"Come over to the tree, Bixo. Come on." She patted her hand against her leg and the dog trotted over to her. "Let's make us a nest to sit in. Then I'll tell you why you can't eat poison berries. A real big nest."

She took off her jacket, laid it on the ground, and dumped fat handfuls of leaves in it. They were not gold and red and soft any more but stiff and brown—nesting leaves. As she collected them she talked to the dog.

"Poison berries aren't for eating except at one special time. Berries make the world end and ghosts come out and the grass dies. It's the seeds that do it, not the juice. The juice tastes good. That's the part that makes it stew. When the world ends, we'll make a stew. It takes a long time. First you have to pick the berries, then you have to mush them all together and stir them and stir them and stir them. Then you have to dish it up for everybody and eat it. Then the world ends. This is going to be a good nest, Bixo—real big. Big enough for a family."

Handfuls and handfuls—the nest grew. Bixo got up and sniffed at the pile, walked through it and back, then around in a circle matting it, then lay down. He pushed his black nose under the nest until the leaves covered his eyes.

“Oh you’re silly, Bixo, you’re looking for a baby in the nest. We don’t have a baby, Bixo. We have to get married first. When we grow-up we’ll get married. You can be the groom and I’ll be the bride. And we’ll get lots of babies and keep them in a nest. Mommy and Daddy only got me but we’ll get lots. Then we’ll be happy for ever and ever. I know, Bixo, we can use a stick for our baby. There’s a good stick by the ditch.”

Bixo watched Sarah as she ran across the field to the ditch by the road, picked up a gnarled grey stick and ran back, her thin brown hair bouncing as her feet hit the ground.

“Here’s our baby, Bixo—she’s even got a head.” One end of the stick was larger than the other. Bixo’s tail thumped on the leaves and his wet tongue hung out.

“Now move over. There’s got to be room for three of us.” She shoved the puppy over to one edge of the nest, placed the baby by his stomach and sat down.

“This isn’t very soft. When we grow up we have to live in a soft nest. We can use grass and flowers and everything. There baby—Bixo will keep you warm. I think your name is Maude. Dear little Maude. Sarah and Bixo and baby Maude.” Sarah patted Maude and Bixo, reached for a handful of leaves, and sprinkled them over the dog and the stick.

“Now you have a cover. You have to teach Maude about bush berries, Bixo. You’re the father. And spank her too if she tries to eat them.” She lifted the dog’s droopy ear and held it in one hand. She stroked it and sang in a squeaky warble.

“Go to sleep baby.

Go to sleep Bixo.

And do not think of berry stew.

And do not think of berry stew.

‘Cause I am singing and singing and singing

So go to sleep in our warm little nest.”

“You’ve got a burr in your ear, Bixo. You have to keep clearer. We should go down to the ditch and give you a bath right now. But it’s too cold. And we don’t have any boots. You have to teach Maude that too, Bixo. Never never go in the ditch without boots, Maude. It’s a very bad thing to do. And especially when it’s cold. I’ll just wipe you off for now, Maude. You have to be clean for dinner.”

She picked up the stick, spit on it and tried to rub it with a leaf from the nest; the leaf crumbled. She rubbed the stick on her corduroy pants and put it back by the dog's stomach.

"Now you look pretty, Maude. I guess we'll go home for dinner now. I'm cold."

Sarah stood up; she pushed away the hair that had fallen into her eyes and tucked her shirt into the elastic waistband of her overalls.

"Let's see—where shall we keep Maude while I put the nest away? Under the bush. All right, Maude, that's to teach you what berries look like. So you never touch them. And you stay there and watch her, Bixo. And tell me if she needs to be spanked."

Sarah clutched Maude in her hand and walked to the bush. She scraped a few leaves into a pile with her foot, placed Maude in it, and covered her with two of them. Just the top of the stick showed.

"There, Maude, can you see all right? Come on, Bixo, you've got to move so I can put the nest away. Move, Bixo." She knelt down on the nest. Putting her hands on the dog's side, she pushed him off the pile. Bixo stood up and shook the leaves off which stuck to his coat. He started to walk away.

"Stop, Bixo. Now sit down." Sarah grabbed his collar and pushed on his rear end until the dog plopped down. "Where should we put the nest so it will be OK 'til tomorrow?"

She scooped up the jacket which held the leaves and walked over to the trunk of the tree, straining to keep the leaves in the jacket. She dumped them on the ground, squatted by the pile and patted it as if it were a big snowball. Picking up her jacket, she looked at the pile again and walked back to the dog.

"All right, Bixo, let's go. You get to carry Maude because you're the father. You can carry her in your mouth just like a regular stick but you have to be careful. Come on."

Bixo followed Sarah to the bush. He wagged his tail and jumped around as she picked up the stick and put it in his mouth.

"All right, Bixo, you can run. But not too fast or I can't keep up. And jump over the ditch. Don't go in the water." Bixo ran ahead; his head and stick bobbed up and down. Sarah turned, looked at the pile of leaves under the tree near the bush, then ran after the dog, her jacket flapping.

Bixo reached the ditch, slowed down, and popped over. He slipped as he landed on the other side; his front knees buckled and he skidded onto the dirt road. The stick flew out of his mouth. The puppy didn't notice at first. He recovered from his clumsy landing,

got across the road but stopped, looking around for the stick. He turned and started to walk back to it.

Sarah was at the ditch. She examined it for the best place to jump, moved back a few steps to get a running start. She looked up, ready to jump, then stopped.

"Bixo!" she shrieked. "Bixo! BIXO!"

There was a thump. A car stopped with dust rising around it. A man got out and ran back to the dog.

Sarah jumped the ditch and ran up to Bixo. He lay quiet, a soft pile of fur. Sarah knelt down and took his head in her hands.

"Look out, honey, let me see the dog." The man took Sarah by the shoulders and tried to move her away. She didn't look up.

"Go away. Leave my dog alone . . . Bixo, Bixo, don't sleep. Get up, Bixo. Please, Bixo. Bixo."

The man stared at Sarah, puffing on his pipe. He bent over her and shook her shoulders gently.

"Bixo—come on, Bixo. Aren't you hungry? Look, it's getting dark. Don't go to sleep, Maude wants to go home. See? Maude wants you, Bixo." Reaching over the dog's back, she picked up the stick and laid it by his stomach.

"Come on, honey, let me take care of the dog for you. He doesn't want that stick right now. Here, you take the stick and I'll take care of your dog."

Sarah pulled her shoulders out of his grasp and looked at him through the puffs of smoke.

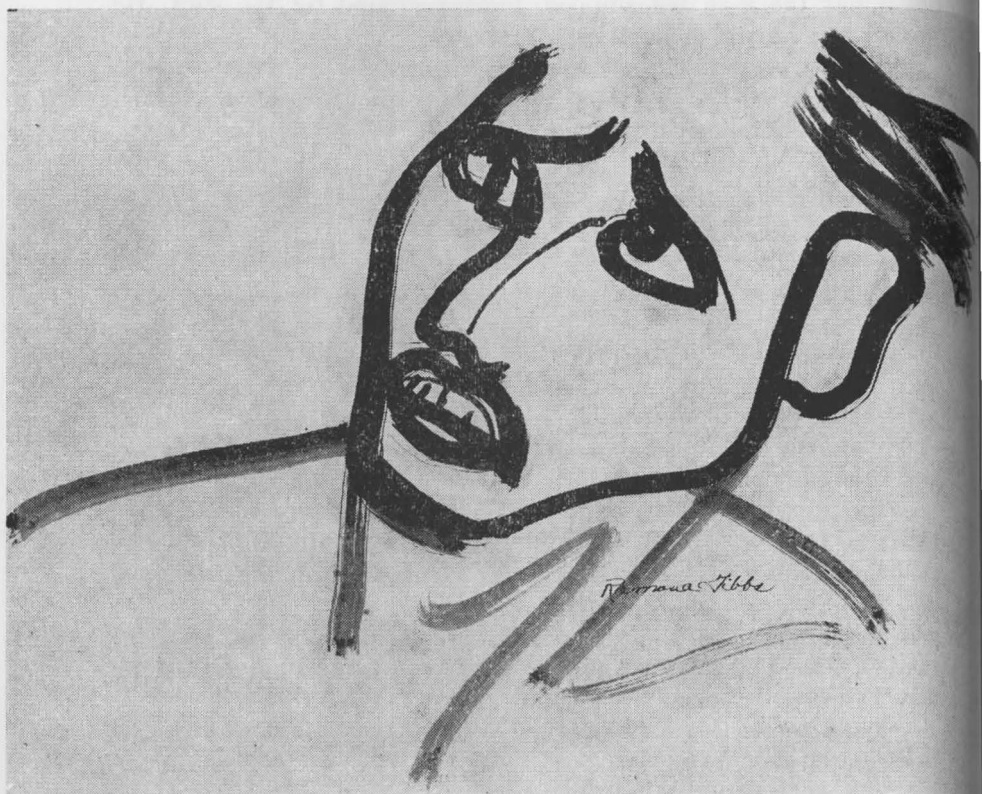
"Please, mister, I'm talking to my dog right now."

"Sure, honey, sure. Everything's going to be OK." He stood up and brushed the dust from the cuffs of his pants.

"What will Maude do if you do this, Bixo? Come on, we can build another nest. Please, Bixo." She stopped talking, put the dog's head down and stroked his ear. He did not move. She pulled her hand away and stared at the dog.

"Would you please watch my dog and my stick for me?" Sarah turned and started for the ditch.

"Sure, honey, I'll take care of everything. Where are you going? . . . Don't go away, little girl. Everything's going to be all right. Where are you going? Come Back." His voice grew louder as Sarah ran farther across the field. He leaned over, picked up the dog's limp body and the stick and carried them to the side of the road. He put them down as they had been before and looked up to find Sarah. She was at the back of the field where the trees and bushes grew. He squinted as if to see her more clearly. She was a strange kid—picking berries when her dog was dead.



THE SPECTATOR

by Sue Burton

I sat on a stiff wooden plank in the circus tent and wished that I could leave. The tinny sound of the hurdy-gurdy taunted me, and the sawdust rose in billows and burned my eyes. My back ached, and the antics of the clowns seemed absurd and senseless.

A tall, green-suited clown with a painted smile ran to the middle ring. Just as he was about to leap on the back of another clown, he tripped over his baggy pants and fell down. The second clown turned and beat the first clown on the nose with a long cane.

A third clown ran to the middle ring. He was dressed in purple and had a crooked red cross on the seat of his pants. The first two clowns ran toward him and began to hit the red cross with the long cane.

Several clowns pulling cages of wild animals came to the middle ring. Walking beside the lion cage was a man in a black silk suit. His face was painted white and his black mouth turned down on one side. He was carrying a heavy book, a whip, and what seemed to be a podium.

The clowns halted, and the man set down the podium and climbed on top of it. From this height, he cracked his whip at the caged lions and waved the heavy book. I felt like releasing the lions and filling their cage with the buffoons with the painted faces.

I looked toward the left exit and started to rise, but leering clowns carrying bags of popcorn got in my way and pushed me down. I looked toward the right exit. Blocking the right aisle was a group of clowns dressed as cannibals. They were carrying spears and the heavy book that belonged to the man in the black silk suit. I had no way to escape.

I felt a hand on my shoulder. I turned and saw a clown kneeling behind me. This clown was neither grinning nor frowning. His mouth was painted straight across from ear to ear. He beckoned for me to follow him. I said, "But where are we going?" He moved his head from side to side, still neither grinning nor frowning. Once more he beckoned, and I rose. I followed his bobbing hat down the narrow plank. In the back aisle he stood and waited for me. As I drew near, I saw there was nothing behind his painted mask.

Suddenly I could not bear to leave the hurdy-gurdy music. I turned and sat again on the stiff wooden plank.

This dialogue, an examination of the church by an individual, grew from discussions in a seminar in psychology and religion, and is reproduced in EXILE with the permission of the author.

DIALOGUE

by PAUL POTTINGER

Me —To begin with where does one get the courage to withstand the loneliness from our present lack of community?

Church—From God, who unconditionally accepts us.

Me —This I feel is not real to me. Maybe I should then ask how one accepts the fact that God accepts him. But more crucial to me is the fact that we all seem to want personal acceptance. Isn't our only knowledge and experience of acceptance from personal acceptance anyway?

Church—Sure! God works *through* humans, not around them.

Me —Then why don't we speak of love in humanity and not talk about "God"?

Church—Yes, but God is Love.

Me —O.K. But how do we know what love is? How do we decide what is good and what is moral, etc.?

Church—Well, you can't say that man does. Man interprets God's message, but man is not capable of defining the Good. If you give this prerogative to man, which one decides what is good, or moral

Me —Well, man decided what the good was when he defined it as God in the first place. You're asking me, "Who defines love?" We can't define love—nor can we define God. *But* we know what love is, what it does, what it feels like to be "in love," to love, to be loved.

Church—O.K. Take this for an example. "Thou shalt not kill." This is a commandment from God. If you deny this concept of God how are you going to decide what is right and wrong?

Me —Well, I don't believe that a man should kill another either, but I didn't arrive at this belief because the Church or any outside authority told me not to. That's why I didn't kill when I was a child, but now I have my own reasons. Now I know that to kill, no matter what, violates or ruins this experience of love. I say that acceptance and love are the

greatest powers on earth. I say "Thou shalt not destroy these powers" simply because we all want them. "God" doesn't demand it. It's just inherent in the nature of these powers that to kill negates these powers and their effects. So, simply and inductively, to have love we cannot kill.

Let me give you an example. A poor neurotic goes to church, and the perfect congregation accepts him with open arms. He becomes a new person because of this love and acceptance. The Church then says our acceptance of you is God's acceptance. It is God working through us.

Why doesn't the Church just say that it accepts the man? Love and acceptance *are* great. The effects can be seen in the man's changed life. But instead, the people (the Church) begin to worship these powers. They begin to worship something that came from within themselves—from human lives.

Why don't these people meet in church to keep fresh in their minds what accepting one another does—accepting one another for whatever they are. The feeling of being accepted and loved is truly wonderful and religious, but to call it God's acceptance seems superfluous and begins to cloud the issue. Pretty soon people begin to listen to others interpret what God is and what God *wants*, and then the next thing you know they are living their lives according to some outside reference, i.e. the Bible, the preachers interpretation of it, their past learning, instead of from their true feelings. They abandon awareness of their feelings, of themselves and of honesty, thus losing their existence. Their existence is lost, not to God (Love), but to some man's words of interpretation, to an institution, to parents, to peer group. Yet, they say God is Love! They don't even live by love. They live instead by these doctrines, dogma, and outside authoritative references, not even allowing themselves the opportunity to really love.

This leads me to another question. If man is the instrument of love then why not focus our attention on the instrument that makes love effective? Why pray to God when it is man's responsibility to put love into action?

Church—When you know you are incapable of loving as much as you should, and when you don't live up to your potential as a Christian, you pray not only for forgiveness, but to ask God to assist you and others in being more loving.

- Me —That is exactly it. You constantly pray for God to help the lonely, or to give us peace, and so forth but love (God) is only effective in as much as man makes himself the instrument of It. God works through man, community, I-Thou. God or Love is "waiting"—the potential power of love is waiting to become kinetic, but if no man makes himself available, then love must be rendered ineffective (or potential). I don't feel that I know a God who exists "out there" with these powers. I only know these powers through people.
- Church—Maybe you don't know God because you won't open yourself to Him.
- Me —Nobody wants to feel unconditionally accepted more than I do.
- Church—Well, there you are! You're trying to reach God. You can't reach Him. You have to *let* Him come to you. You'll never know God by searching for Him in books, Church, or anywhere else. He isn't to be gotten to or found by man. He finds man. Your obligation is not to search but to let Him come.
- Me —All this says to me is that I have to begin trusting myself—to become aware of myself and not strive so hard to find an answer outside of me. So I do this. I quit *seeking God* and I begin to *live and experience*, and I find myself getting answers through these experiences that I never found when I searched alone for this outside source called "God."
- Church—See, I told you if you would forget that search God would come to you. You have found some answers now haven't you?
- Me —Yes. But I never found God. I found people and real relationships and meaning and courage through these people.
- Church—Yes. That is what God is precisely! You have found God.
- Me —But why do you have people seek meaningful relationships with one another (and you don't always do that) and *not* give credit for the good that comes from these relationships to the people who perpetrated this love and good? Instead you say it was God who did this.

People hearing that God is responsible for the Good and that man is nothing but a sinner begin to seek this mysterious thing outside of relationships.

When is man going to realize that he is not only responsible for the bad that he does but also for the good,—and that good as well as bad only exist through his efforts?