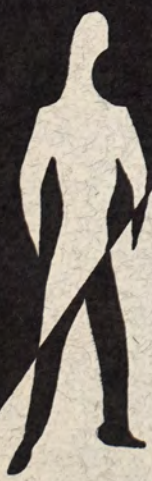
HELICON



Spring, 1963

HELICON

Volume XXIII
Spring, 1963
Rhode Island College
Providence, Rhode Island

THE STAFF

Editor

Robert Goulet

Business Manager

Charles Leclerc

Editorial Staff

Mary Jane McGuinness
Yvette St. Germain
Christine Mooney
Paula Whitehead
Edward Casey
Mary McCullough
Arthur McKenna
Virginia Bilotti
Anne Walsh
Mary Robinson
Daniel Del Vecchio
Philip Hirons
Marilyn Kaye
Sandy Ucola
Clarke Lowery
Jacquelyn Conway

Advisor

Dr. Lillian D. Bloom

CONTENTS

The Accursed 2
by Charles Leclerc

The Artist as an Unknown 3
by Elaine Keefe

Beggars, All of You 4
by Virginia Bilotti

March 1963 4
by Clarke Lowery

Borderlands 5
by Marjorie Anne Keefe

Hymn to John Glenn 6
by Earl Briden

The Thirsty, Searching Heart in Fear 8
by Clarke Lowery

From the Gardens of the Silent Stones 10
by Clarke Lowery

Old Lamp's Pond 11
by William Babner

Sonnet 13
by Clarke Lowery

CONTENTS

O to be in England 14
by Earl Briden

Aunt Martha 16
by Eugene Alexander Brickach

Cry Dust 21
by Clarke Lowery

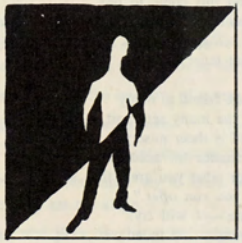
Another "Fabulous Invalid"? 25
by Robert Goulet

The Taste of Music 29
by Michael Brennan

Cynicism in Vanity Fair 32
by Dianne McFarland

Recent Non-Fictional Books 38
by Marjorie Anne Keefe

One-Way: Outbound 41
by Eugene Alexander Brickach



POETRY

The Accursed

VOICE: 'An isolate,' you say?
— That is correct.

VOICE: Why?
— I have no one.

VOICE: Surely there is someone close.
— None.

VOICE: But, how did this come to be?
— By trying too hard to belong.
To want to belong is torture.
It is a violent inner surge
Outward.
Wanting to be friend to many
And seeing the many set apart
From oneself is sheer misery.
Then, one chance for acceptance —
"But, not for what you are," they said,
"For *what you can offer.*"
"I don't care — I will try!"
I tried . . . and . . . I failed . . .
You see, I could not add
To this philosophical
And ideological commune . . .
They shut me out
Like one shuts out memories
Of dreaded illness and pestilence.
I need someone . . . anyone . . .

VOICE: What would you want of me?
— That you take away this torment.

VOICE: How?
— Take me away —
Away from this darkness and misery
Into eternal light.

VOICE: Come, then!
— I . . . can't . . . NO! . . . no . . . I won't go . . .

— *Charles Leclerc*

The Artist as an Unknown

The artist stands on the inside of a giant diamond.

The facets of which act as receptors for the images of life.

Full of hope the artist comes to life within this space,

And every facet of the diamond intensifies the feelings,
sights, and longings of the outside world until the artist can no longer live except he take the visions to his heart.

I cannot emphasize the intensity of a tear,

The anguish of a wounding joke.

All the people cannot accept the cruel acts in life.

The artist, he alone, must say to those who weep and those who laugh, that they are not alone.

The man who jibes, laughs at his neighbors' weaknesses and strife,

Has ruined and maligned the artist in his soul.

I cannot live but to ask of God and man alike,

That my own eyes shall not be blinded

So that I, insensitive to life, grope all alone,

Deserting man, denying God.

How can an artist so exist who lives but on his human, feverish power?

Come! Stand within the diamond with the world without becoming part of us and also

Preserving our identities we call to ask if God be there,

Yet harken not in darkness and despair if He answers not our pleading voices.

For all that lives, looks out from a lulled, remote and quiet place within,

And seeks to fill the quiet from outside.

— *Elaine Keefe*

Beggars, All of You

Beggars, all of you,
This passes your cups like wood,
But I have seen the yardstick walking
By your hours and by your days.
    It is sorrowed
    Meting measure
    To the music borrowed
    From the blindman's thumb.
In some soulful way
You seem to have begotten
A man out of a man without end ,
But I have seen you walking
Hand to foot, and foot to hand again.

— *Virginia Bilotti*

March 1963

Laugh mockingly, Time; so, too, doff your cap
To this fool who endures but a day.
You trickled, like sand, years into my lap;
I've twenty thrown away.
The first ten were lost in beginning to know.
Awakening manhood claimed five
And cast me adrift in the wandering flow
That's spewed me at Twenty's shore, half-alive.
Laugh mockingly, Time; so, too, doff your cap.
A wise fool is passing today.
I sit and watch sand trickle out of my lap.
I've twenty thrown away.

— *Clarke Lowery*

Borderlands

"Over the mountain, over the sea . . . "
The child sang, and walked
with eyes fixed on
The windows.
Counting, one-two-three-four-more
All the windows on the block.
Curtainless, screen-less, letting air,
And bugs, and dirt, and dust, into
The homes.
Twenty three . . . thirty-five . . . forty-seven . . .
"That's where my heart is longing to be . . . "
Finally he came to the end; ninety windows
Bordering the street.
He stopped, and smiled, and ran. The job
Finished.
Then frowned, slowly turned and walked back.
Eyes on the windows
Filled with water
Rain and tears
Hitting the windows, his eyes.
"Over the mountain, over the sea."

— *Marjorie Anne Keefe*

First Award Poem

Hymn to John Glenn
or
A Hell of a Good Universe Next Door?

peppermintmoon
in a crystal sky
rolling in sugarbead stars.
a fly
countsdown
two
one
to
kiss goodbye to
home in a jellybean jar
and TRY to OR -
(bit a bit
of his little ace
in space)
DIE -

only to dash-in
his little ash in
ahitormisshmashincryshtalglash.
Foolishflies can-

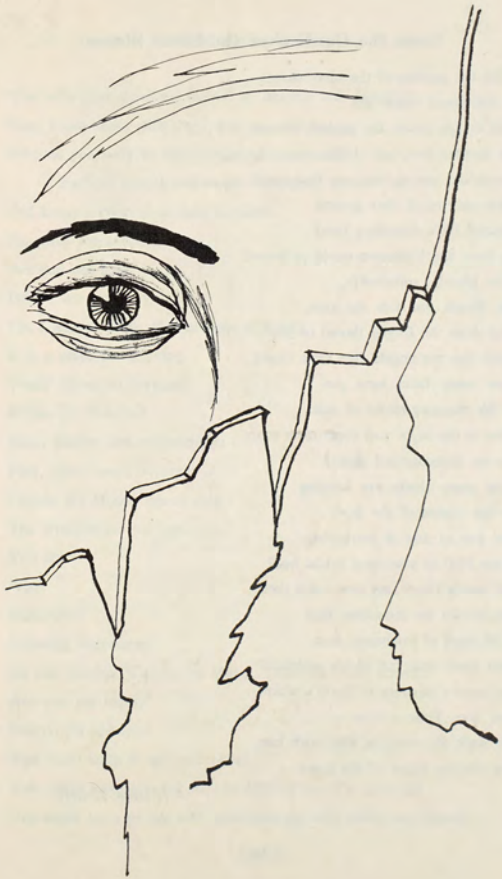
Not understand
the REASON WHY the
Candyman
windows his wares in sugary skies
inside the wishes of little eyes —
Outside the flights
of little flies:
"Your home, little fly, is a jellybeanjar;
Be happy, sir, with what you are.
You cannot have my moon and star!"

— *Earl Briden*

The Thirsty, Searching Heart in Fear

The thirsty, searching heart in fear
Dares drink forbidden, higher air,
For challenging that Clime once hurled
Ten-thousand martyrs from the World
Of Stars; now, daring once but once to dare
Reminds of them too-bold ear
And prays the wanderer stray with care.
To touch, to know, to see unveiled, on
Draws the prisoned heart of man,
And minds afire with discontent
Ask would the soul be not well-spent
To violate Divinest Plan
The upper world to gaze upon,
To curse just once the sacred ban,
To wear the jewelled crown a way,
(How yet that lingering thought is sweet!)
To fold the seas in one bright hand,
To hear the waves admit command,
Transcend the line where two worlds meet
And forfeit Hope for but one day
Of walk with suns beneath your feet.

— *Clarke Lowery*



From the Gardens of the Silent Stones

From the gardens of the silent stones
A sick-sweet vapor lifts
And creeps above the sunken mounds
On muffled feet, and drifts
Unmarked among the trees that stand
Like sentries of that ground,
Erected by a trembling hand
To keep the Unknown-world in bound.
How silently, softsilently,
Oh, Death, you ride the mist,
And draw the fragile thread of life
From lips the angels' lips have kissed..
How many faces have you
In the changing masks of pain,
That in the night you come once more
To me unrecognized again?
How many cloaks are hanging
In the closets of the dead
For you to don in journeying
From Hell to your next bridal bed?
Oh, marry Death, my time-worn shell,
Oh, drown his mouthless face
With tears of fascinated fear,
And greet your fate in his embrace!
No more a mistress to Earth's whim,
Nor unto Time a slave —
Go walk the mists of Hell with him,
Go ride the vapor of the grave.

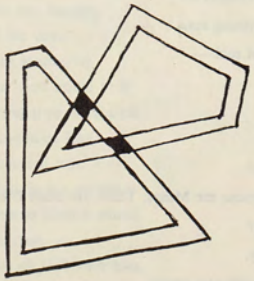
— *Clarke Lowery*

Old Lamp's Pond

You with your shoulders bowed by despair and dejection —
You, young man, with the eye of an old one —
Why do you walk by this oil-slicked receptacle
for beer bottles and empty cardboard cartons?
Old Lamp's Pond is so dark at night.
No place for a young man.
Are you not happy?
Others are unhappy.
Oh, I see you think. You are one of those.
It is a place for thinking.
What? Muses or Nymphs?
Muses or Nymphs?
Stoic, somber and sullen muses —
Pink, light, lovely Nymphs —
Choose the Muses, young man.
The Nymphs are not real —
You stare?
Why?
Indecision?
Gnawing Indecision?
No one watches. Choose the Muses. There are other friends.
Are you not happy?
Others are unhappy.
You could learn to spit and swear.
You could learn to exist for the fornication of a fortnight.
You could learn to live with, and embrace with work-worn hands.

You could learn to shut off the mind that hurts you — torments you.
You could learn.
You could learn.
Shut it off! End it! Go! Go! Join the Flock!
See then if all is well.
See then if you could stand your groveling self.
See then.
There is no golden handle.
Only frigid reality..
Go now.
Come back when you are sure.
I'm always here, with my eight sisters.

— William Babner



Second Award Poem

Sonnet

When April's warmly-, wetly-tendered winds
Came gently urging us with infant hands
To wake from nothingness' cold and drink,
We woke and drank of love as youth demands.
New flowers, newly sprung to life in us,
Grew strong and blossomed in the Summer's sun.
And passion walked the mountaintops of love
While life's maturity ran out its run.
Then, slowly, Spring-Youth's winds of warmth turned cool.
And April's flowers yielded to the cold
Of Autumn's dawn, first-shivered in the arms
Of Winter's kiss, and, huddling, grew old.
Two stems entwined against the frost, their fill
Of love they knew, and, bowed in snow, lay still.

— Clarke Lowery

O To Be in England Now That Bingo's There

O to be in England NOW that Bingo's there!
Why, a year ago in England half the theaters were bare —
The citizens were sitting by the bloody blinking tellies
Stuffing tommyrot between their ears and kippers in their bellies,
Wasting pounds of hard-earned welfare just to see the BBC,
Never leaving of the blooming thing except to take a pee;
Always sitting there and stuffing. And then the papers ask
Why the populace is fat between the ears and in the arse.
Why, they never left the blooming house to get a breath of air!
No damn wonder they were fat, and half the theaters were bare!
Till a public-minded Britisher arrived at a solution —
One little word — five letters — that became an institution,
A way to save the theaters from television's curse
And, by the by, the people from a fate that's even worse:
To save the public's eyes from wasting at the tellies,
To save the public's braces from snapping at the bellies,
To save the housewive's shillings from rotting in the banks,
And save the goodwife's figure from fatting in the flanks;
"The word," he said, "is Bingo, that's B-I-N-G-O —
A chap can pick up spelling and watch his money go
Into hands much more deserving than greedy BBC,
Deserving hands — his gambling friends, the government, and me."
So England found her champion, a new George Washington,
A Richard third, a Quisling, all rolled up into one;
A champion called BINGO to save them from themselves,
Their eyes from frightful newscasts, and kippers from their shelves.
— It's the theaters *now* are fat, and the *people* that are bare!
And, O, to be in England now that Bingo's there!

— *Earl Briden*

PROSE

First Award Prose

Aunt Martha

The Seed

In the cobble-stoned city of Aalborg, Denmark, there is a tiny cellar bar near the shore of the Kattegat named The Wine Cellar. Such liquid elegance as wine, however, has never been subjected to its dismal interior. The liquors consumed there are more of the domestic variety: beer, akvavit, and freshly made potato whiskey — to which the hard drinking folk add a raw egg yolk as an aid for greater consumption.

The Cellar is the pride of a few students, aspiring writers, and a handful of seamen off the vessels harbored nearby. It was originally the cellar of the ancient Gothic structure sitting above it, a former customs house for the area. Earthen and well covered with filmy cobwebs are the walls of The Cellar. The floor is a mixture of cobblestone and seaweed; massive tree slabs form the tables; candles and two harsh light bulbs supply the lighting. The proprietress of this cavernous bar at one time was an obese, cigar-smoking woman known as Aunt Martha, a woman hardly imaginable as an aunt.

For many years Aunt Martha tended bar in the dim, moist atmosphere of her Cellar. She also grew roses, for somewhere she had read that "a rose that blooms is a joy forever." This hardly credible statement took such a hold in her heart that she put her happier moments into growing these beautiful flowers in a tiny plot of earth behind her apartment. When her roses bloomed, she would take them to a box in front of The Cellar and leave them there for those who might wish to have one or two. In time her flowers became known throughout the city for their exceptional beauty. This fact, however, because it made her quite morose, was seldom revealed to her.

. . .

At the beginning of Aunt Martha's rose love a watchman named Peter Halvard had pronounced during a drunken outburst that roses were, in a word, damnable. Halvard, a thin, malevolent man with paralytic hands, was the night watchman for a small brewery. He was not one to be listened to, but his judgment on roses affected Aunt Martha beyond belief. Realizing his initial success, Halvard continued to torment the mind of this simple woman.

The Growth

Aunt Martha was not intelligent. She had never had formal schooling, and she took as fact anything which was forcefully repeated enough times. Once she had lost some of her parents' money and had been whipped constantly for a week while being told over and over that nothing she would ever do would come to any good. She was chastised another time for nearly burning down the family lodging by not watching the cooking fire closely enough. Incidents such as these were rooted in Aunt Martha's mind, and they helped to weaken it.

As Aunt Martha grew, she became increasingly plumper until, at length, she seemed a human ball of fat. Everyone then taunted her about her huge body. Finally her mind could bear no more. She ran away and survived by losing reality in the vermin-infested bars along the Baltic coast. She drank herself into a stupor as often as possible and allowed wretched, ancient seamen to have their pleasure with her. A sickening sight it was to behold a toothless, scarred, scurvy-looking seaman making love to this fleshy, bleary-eyed, sweaty woman in a German drinking stall.

During one of the forgotten nights of the past Aunt Martha began her cigar-smoking and received her name. A barmaid had given her a cigar to smoke. As she coughed her way through it, a seaman had said she reminded him of his aunt who smoked the rolies. From then on she smoked the rolies and called herself Aunt Martha.

. . .

After traveling along the coast for a few years, Aunt Martha arrived in the city of Aalborg. She drifted about the wharfs for some weeks and finally settled in The Wine Cellar to continue her debauched livelihood. There she met Lars Plefflins, the rotund, redheaded skipper of the schooner *Valkerie* and owner of The Wine Cellar. To him Aunt Martha became both a mistress and the mother he had not remembered. To Aunt Martha the captain became security.

Lars and Aunt Martha lived in a tiny apartment next to the Gothic monstrosity above their bar. The apartment had two small rooms and a garden plot in the rear. For five years these two lost souls lived together. Lars would go to sea, his true love, for months at a time and return only for a fortnight to his motherly mistress. Aunt Martha took care of The Cellar and decreased her drinking slightly. One might say that things looked cheery for these two lives.

The *Valkerie* and her captain departed for their Valhalla just as things began to look cheery. They were lost in a storm which swept down from the Arctic regions quite suddenly. Aunt Martha drowned whatever sorrow she had experienced by drinking a little more heavily. The captain's will left her The Cellar and his other earthly possessions. Aunt Martha became independent. She also began to grow roses.

Each morning at dawn Aunt Martha went to the garden behind her room. There she added water and some minerals to the earth. She pulled weeds from their roots with a demonic twist, trimmed thorns lovingly, rearranged vines to more striking positions on the mossy walls, and eagerly awaited the birth of a new bud.

On some days she lost the battle against the ingrained scars that throbbed in her mind. Her pulsating hulk would stagger into the garden and rip sections of vines and roses from their roots. This monstrous woman, clothed in a yellow shift and puffing madly on a cigar, would weave about the bed of roses, slashing, ripping, and pulling apart her efforts. Raw with cuts from the thorns, Aunt Martha finally would return to her bed and drop into a sleep. By noon she would wake and leave for The Cellar to commence her drinking.

The Blossom

After the first contention with Peter Halvard it was noticed that Aunt Martha crept into a shell. She tried to protect herself in more profound drinking; her wild tantrums increased in number. Even the people who knew her best could not induce any note of happiness in her life. She grew wary of humanity. Her inner thoughts forever repeated that these friendly people were attempting to become intimate only to strike a hurt deep into her heart. Everyone left her to her ways. Everyone except Peter Halvard. His inner ego inflated to greater heights each day. He worked at trying to break Aunt Martha. He was succeeding.

Any evening one could go to The Wine Cellar and invariably see Peter Halvard, entering at nine o'clock, stride to the slimy corner bar. Leaning against it he would say, "Hie there, Rosebud, fetch me a mug of

your stale brew." Then the tirade would begin. Aunt Martha would be propped against the wall, one hand on a half filled whiskey glass before her. Her enormous hulk appeared to be held together by surface tension. One would think that she did not hear a single word, but her mind registered all that was said. Everything that Peter Halvard spewed out entered the caverns of her mind and in entering destroyed yet another cell of tissue that helped sanity survive. Throughout the night Aunt Martha rarely spoke.

Aunt Martha's mind could not have survived these nightly scenes indefinitely. One day she had her greatest tantrum in the rose garden. On this day Peter Halvard made his way to see her. His strange visit was due to the events of the previous evening.

On the night before, Halvard had been waylaid by several students who frequented The Wine Cellar. These students wanted Halvard to stop torturing Aunt Martha's mind. There had been threats and arguments. A solution had been formed. Halvard would stop the torture and give Aunt Martha an apology, but the students would have to buy him several drinks during the coming week.

Thus on the following day Halvard went to present his regrets to Aunt Martha. The time was inappropriate, but then Halvard was not one who could foresee the future. The morning hour seemed the most logical to make the apology as Aunt Martha normally would not be in a stupor then.

Peter Halvard knocked on the massive door to the apartment. Aunt Martha was oblivious to the sound. She was wildly slashing her garden efforts with a knife. The knocking on the door continued. Providence might have averted the following scene by letting Halvard think that she was not in, but the sounds from within were quite audible. Quite by chance Aunt Martha stumbled back into the room from the garden. She paused a moment for breath and in that moment Halvard knocked again with his weak hands. The sound was heard, and Aunt Martha, thinking for an instant that something had fallen outside her door, opened it with a fumbling effort. She staggered back a step as the blurred image of her tormentor filled her vision. Halvard saw that Aunt Martha was quite drunk, yet he was determined to present his regrets in a hasty fashion and hurry away.

He took a step forward and muttered that he was sorry to intrude at such an early hour, but that he had an apology to make. Halvard began to ramble about how he did not mean harm. He said he really loved roses. He considered Aunt Martha's roses beautiful. He asked if she would forgive him.

During this monologue Halvard began to perspire freely. He shifted his weight from one foot to another and gazed with fearful eyes about the room. His gaze did not pause on Aunt Martha long enough to notice that during his remarks her whole body had shuddered and her face had gone blank. Her mind had lost the battle.

Through Aunt Martha's mind had drifted many scenes when Halvard first entered. She tried to form a protective shell against what she thought would be a grand assault against her being. As Halvard spoke, she could not grasp the unbelievable thought that this man was saying he was wrong, that she had created beauty. Her mind revolved madly. Her inner scars were torn open by the thought that he was not really telling the truth, that suddenly he would laugh terribly and say that she was a fool. The last of her sanity left her..

As Halvard rambled on, the ember of a short-lived woman appeared to be listening. Finally the two beings stood before each other in a sudden stillness. Halvard stood rooted in fear as Aunt Martha grinned foolishly at him. The cigar she had been mouthing limply fell to the floor. She asked in a high pitched sing-song whether he would like to see her lovely garden. Halvard was in a nightmare. He could not speak nor manage his movements well.

They lumbered through the debris and into the garden. Aunt Martha swung Peter Halvard in front of her, and, before the ravaged remnants of the flowers, asked if it wasn't a pretty sight. Halvard began to turn and speak. His words were never uttered. Aunt Martha, delicately and unconsciously, swung her hand with the knife still in it and plunged the entire blade into his heart.

As the blood flowed from Peter Halvard, so flowed from Aunt Martha's body the last of her energy. She was but an empty shell being wasted away to nothing by Time's deft moments. She dragged the body to the center of the garden and began her last planting. Like a child she cut open the victim and sowed her precious flowers and vines in the cut. She mumbled how pretty they would look when they bloomed. Soon the body was covered with vines, seeds, and blood.

Aunt Martha rose from her planting and staggered into the apartment. She reached for her cigar on the floor and collapsed. Never would she see her last planting blossom.

—Eugene Brickach

Second
Award
Prose

Cry Dust

A Sketch

Hot. Hot in Compton. Hot as . .. .. well, no matter: Hot. Dust, sunned to a fine talcum etched into the sidewalk cracks and lurking windless in the unpaved alleys. Flag. Flag in front of the courthouse: Limp, Soggy, drooping snotrag. Sunday this . . . Sunday. The all-saints-searching, soul-illuminating day of rest. Street deserted . . . Deserted? Ah, yes: Sunday. Corrigan's Grocery closed, singing, praying, sweating, chaw-less Corrigan. Down at Christ's Church . . . Sunday this. Building Monday's business. Respectability, etc.

Christ's Church, a tired, one-story, wooden structure of obscure origin, consisted of an auditorium on the main floor and three Sabbath-School rooms in the basement. As far back as any of Compton's seventy-seven inhabitants could remember, Christ's Church had always existed. Its paint was peeling badly in various places now and not a few of its pews harbored loose boards, but these evoked little concern. It served its purpose faithfully and was neglected in proportion.

The Reverend Charles Dobbs, better known in Compton as "Charlie", was in his twenty-ninth year as pastor of Christ's Church. Now, wiping the beads of perspiration from his forehead with an already saturated hand-

kerchief, he stepped to the pulpit and commenced the reading of the weekly passage from Scripture.

"In the fortieth chapter of the Book of Isaiah, the third verse, we find these words:

> *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God . . . The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field . . . The grass withereth, the flower fadeths but the word of our God shall stand forever."*

The Reverend Charlie Dobbs . . . Charlie. Charlie of the pleading eyes, the prayer-wrung hands. Twenty-nine year veteran of the Wilderness Campaign and holder of the Purple Heart. The sower of a million dormant seeds, the keeper of the sacred Let us. Charlie, the peacemaker with an holy kiss, the comforting, uncomforting presence at a thousand sickbeds. The hero of the Sunday-morning pulpit skirmish with the Devil and his angels, and the victim of sleepless, doubting Sabbath nights. Charlie, the inexorable, the sentry of the keys to the promised Gates of Gold. Charlie of the rimless glasses, shock of snowy hair and wrinkled skin. He kept religion alive in Compton.

"Have you made straight the highway of your heart for the coming of the Saviour? The voice of the prophet cries to you of His coming. Will the pathway to your heart be open? Will He find you ready?" Charlie had been known to bring tears to the eyes of many a sin-burdened soul. He was an eloquent speaker.

——Highway . . . pathway . . . aisle. This aisle. Two years now. Andrew Farrell of Farrell's Feed and Grain let his thoughts wander a little. Two years . . . gone fast. Down this very aisle . . . married right here . .. . two years now. With this ring I thee . . . Bed. Bed: no bed of roses. Wouldn't wait though . . . if I could have just gone to that . . . she wouldn't

. . . Guess I haven't made out too bad though. Never have believed then that the feed and grain . . .

"The times are pressing friends: the signs of His coming on every hand: nation rising up against nation, brother against brother. These are the times to make sure that . . .

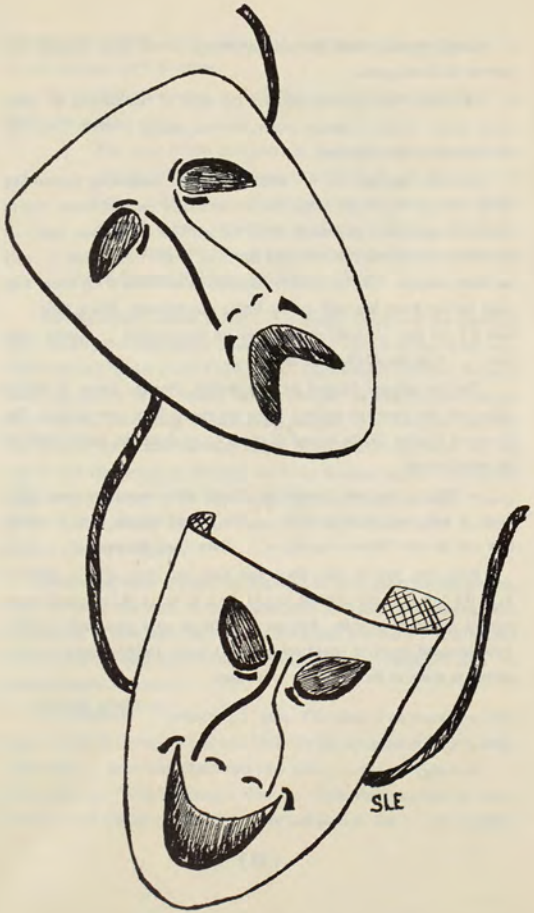
——Fly, Dammed fly . . . damned arrogant, tantalizing fly-crawling speck. The sun shone into Eddie Birckhardt's right eye and forced him to regard his antagonist exclusively from the left side of his face. Sun . . . how many times have I told Martha not to sit in this . . . no use . . . only ten more minutes. The fly perched contentedly on Eddie's left knee, wiggling its two front legs and eyeing Eddie nonchalantly. Black little . . . now if I can just . . . gotta come up on 'im from behind . . . slowly now, then . . . if he just don't move until I . . .

The ten minutes dragged on interminably. Finally: Amen. A host of sighs and the sound of apparel being separated from pew-varnish. The Reverend Charles Dobbs moved to the door to shake the damp hands of his parishioners.

—Well, not too bad, considering. If only there weren't so many questions. A man can't keep up with . . . He looked outside. Hot. A month now and no rain. When's it going to . . . Rain. Dust all over the . . .

Rain, yes, lots of rain. Days and days and days of rain. Rain to wash the dust from the sidewalk cracks. Rain to revive the parched, brown tufts of sun-withered grass. Rain to clear the air so a man could breathe. Two-thousand years of soul-freeing rain. Charlie Dobbs longed for it—almost as much as he longed for retirement.

—Clarke Lowery



Another 'Fabulous Invalid"?

In the early part of this century the American theatre lost a large part of its audience to a new medium called the "movies" and acquired the dubious title of "the fabulous invalid." Ironically, in the last ten years the American film industry itself has become a "fabulous invalid," due to the advances of network television. Movie audiences have been reduced, and large film studios have closed. Fewer films are released each year, and the American cinema has entered a new era. This era is marked by extremes. Films nowadays are either excellent or deplorable. There are few motion pictures which fall between the two extremes. Nevertheless, despite the reduction in production and patronage, the "fabulous" element in American film production is still evident. Huge amounts of money are involved in nearly every film released in this country. Also, there seems present now more than ever before a conscious effort to develop a cinematic art.

This attention to artistic development can best be traced to the influence of the foreign films which have found an exceedingly appreciative audience in this country during the last fifteen years. As a result of the success of Italian, French, and British films, American producers, directors, and screen writers have studied and, to a certain degree, imitated the distinctive styles by European film craftsmen.

In the late forties and early fifties the Italian neo-realistic school was highly praised. A new dimension in reality had been achieved by films like *The Bicycle Thief* and *Shoeshine,* and the names of Federico Fellini and Vittorio DeSica became well known in America. Certain characteristics make the neo-realistic film readily identifiable There is often a great emphasis placed on human values. The neo-realistic film is like life itself, a rambling panorama of humanity. A large number of details is presented —some charming and appealing, others revolting. This type of film is often powerful and capable of evoking the most basic emotions.

A good example of American neo-realistic technique is found in the 1955 film *Marty.* Paddy Chayefsky's quietly beautiful study of a lonely man was a fresh treatment of a familiar theme, and because of its tight

construction, surpassed many foreign films of the same school in emotional effect and general excellence.

In the mid- and late fifties some of the best British films were notable for a certain element of social consciousness and a new type of naturalism. *Room at the Top, Look Back in Anger,* and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* are excellent examples of this new type of naturalistic film. The protagonist in such a film is usually in revolt against established society, and within the tonal structure of the plot a pessimistic atmosphere frequently prevails. Occasionally, an element of hope is introduced. Tony Richardson's treatment of *A Taste of Honey* contained such an element. Shelagh Delaney's story of a Manchester girl who tastes of life might have been a gloomy affair if Richardson had not emphasized the wit and good humor in Miss Delaney's script. Also, the innate optimism of the heroine was presented beautifully in the final scene. The girl, pregnant and saddled with a bossy, vulgar warhorse of a mother, stares at a blazing sparkler whose every speck of shooting light seems to say "There's more life to be lived!"

There have been actually no American films in a strictly naturalistic style, though a few have exhibited certain characteristics associated with this type of film. Robert Rossen's *The Hustler,* for instance, did not concern itself with an attack on "The Establishment," but it did present a protagonist guided by a fairly deterministic philosophy.

After the Italian neo-realism and the British naturalism came the "new wave" ("nouvelle vague") from France, and the American audiences were both beguiled and bewildered by the films produced by this revolutionary school of film artists. It is difficult to describe the type of film which is in the "new wave" style, since a "new wave" film can be many things—a surrealistic nightmare (Alain Resnais' *Last Year at Marienbad*), a cubistic crime melodrama (Jean Godard's *Breathless*), or a symbolic love story (Resnais' *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*). *Breathless*' spontaneity was the key to its appeal. The camera just followed the actors, who "lived" through the plot. The result was uneven but fairly successful.

There is no American "new wave," but there is John Cassavetes. Cassavetes used the *Breathless* technique in *Shadows,* a film he produced

and directed himself. The sights and sounds of New York added to the feeling of reality in the film, but this inclusion of "real" sounds also worked as a handicap in that *Shadows* sometimes seemed almost too "home-made." Time Magazine's cinema reviewer summed up its appeal thus: "Like life, the film has good and bad surprises; like life, it is totally alive."

Though European techniques have found their way into American films, the American cinema has not been engaged only in a simple process of receiving and assimilating. There have been uniquely American developments in two types of films—the comedy and the spectacle, or "big" film. Most American comedy films seem to follow a certain recipe: take a popular topic, satirize to taste, sprinkle with rapid-fire, witty dialogue, and garnish with wild (but not slapstick) situations. This type of comedy is not new. Aristophanes, Plautus, Shakespeare, and Molière all used the basic recipe. However, American film artists have so developed the form that it seems new and rarely fails to entertain.

The most outstanding American practitioner of comic film art is Billy Wilder, who has written and directed some of the best American films in recent years. His films are marked by satiric bite and clever dialogue and situations. *The Apartment,* for example, took a funny and, at the same time, rather frightening look at American big business and its moral structure. Other less accomplished comedy directors include Stanley Donen and Frank Capra. Donen is a specialist in romantic comedies like *Indiscreet* and *Once More, with Feeling.* Capra, who was quite successful in the Thirties, recently made a comeback with the films *A Hole in the Head* and *A Pocketful of Miracles.* Both Donen and Capra fail to reach the high peak achieved by Wilder through a common tendency to render their material in a sentimental fashion.

American film-makers have finally made the spectacle a fairly respectable cinematic art form. After decades of DeMille-style melanges of religion, violence, and orgies, intelligent screen writers, directors, and producers turned to more solid material presented in more agreeable fashion. Two fine examples of the "big" films are *The Bridge on the River Kwai* and *The Longest Day.* In *The Bridge on the River Kwai* characters

were drawn so richly and purposefully that the implausibilities of the plot seemed to constitute only a minor handicap in the presentation. *The Longest Day,* on the other hand, did not rely on characterization but on authenticity in order to fulfill its purpose of combining entertainment and so-called "living history."

In reviewing its accomplishments in the past few years, America's second "fabulous invalid" seems not as moribund as some cinema critics are wont to think. Indeed, film art in America is very much alive. And its continued life seems guaranteed if the present system of producing films is sustained. This system involves loosely organized companies releasing films by independent producers who have gathered the best talent available. Also necessary for the continued growth of American film art is the development of new cinematic techniques and modes of expression. This art form must move forward. Otherwise, it will become a "forgotten art," and man will be cheated of a rewarding experience.

—Robert Goulet

The Taste of Music

The problem with American musical trends in the Sixties is not one of quality but of quantity. So many significant movements are developing simultaneously that one is hard-pressed to keep abreast of them. One need not be a genius to extrapolate from this diversity the fact that generalizations are virtually impossible. Librettist and critic Deems Taylor, however, best captured the spirit and essence of the contemporary musical scene when he wrote, "Modern music is best characterized by a sophisticated and mature approach to musical expression on the part of the composer, the performer and the listener. The key factor in this approach is that an extension or refinement in the attitude of any of the three brings about a similar extension or refinement in the other two." Music today is for anyone willing to meet the composer and performing artist half way.

Of the many dynamic developments in music today perhaps the most influential is atonality. First developed by Arnold Schonberg during the 1920's, atonality is a new system of total organization which is based upon a twelve tone scale (as opposed to the standard eight tone scale: do, re, mi . . .). Atonal music uses all twelve notes of the scale — black and white keys — which are arranged in a basic pattern. This pattern is then inverted, transposed, twisted and turned into a composition. Atonality has affected the composer, performer and listener in different ways. Since the possible permutations and combinations of the twelve tone scale are greater than those of eight tone scale, the composer has at his command a more varied and less standardized mode of expression. The performing artist, in order to cope with the academic demands of atonal music, has had to develop his execution techniques and interpretive insights to a level previously inconceivable. The listener has been forced by atonal muisc to revamp his entire listening framework; he has had to adopt new attitudes towards

harmony, rhythm and climax. The contemporary acceptance of the works of the atonal composers tends to show encouragingly that the composers, performers, and listeners are developing a more sophisticated attitude towards atonality and each other.

Another encouraging development in contemporary muisc is the revived interest in the works of the Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Impressionist schools. Without becoming involved in the technical characteristics of these various schools, a brief review of these periods and the chief composers of these periods may serve as a refresher. The Baroque period of music corresponds roughly with the Seventeenth Century. Most Baroque music follows the example set by Bach and uses the harmonic style based upon major and minor scales. Bach, Handel and Haydn are the Baroque composers who are enjoying renewed interest and study today. Chronologically following and occasionally overlapping the Baroque school is Classicism. Often referred to as the Eighteenth Century School, Classicism built upon the Baroque framework and tended to standardize the compositional *genre* which they employed. Dissatisfied with the standardizations of classical Beethoven and Brahms, the Romantics sought freer forms of expression. Using long and free melodic lines, Romanticists like Wagner, Grieg, and later Sibelius produced works of great power and majesty befitting the overall character of the Romantic soul. At the dawn of the Twentieth Century a new school, Impressionism, evolved in France. Under the leadership of Claude Debussy, Darius Milhaud and Francois Poulenc, Impressionistic music tended to employ very fluid melodic lines and chromatic devices.

The astute listener and critic should not lose sight of one key fact—from the time of Bach to that of Schonberg there were no new musical tones invented. The changes were those of organization, not of substance.

The "notes" are basically the same; only the context changes.

The final aspect of contemporary musical direction which reinforces the theory of a new sophistication and maturity is the cooperation of varied disciplines. The most common example of this cooperation concerns the incorporation of folk themes into serious compositions. Much of the music which we call "modern" is more correctly called national because it is based upon themes and melodies which are indigenous to a specific nation. The compositions of such men as Jan Sibelius in Finland, Grieg in Norway, Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Kachaturian in Russia, Bartok in Hungary, Hindemith and Berg in Germany, Respighi in Italy, Williams and Walton in England, and Grofe and Ives in America, all tend to be based upon native melodic themes. Moreover, because modern music is a cross-discipline, one is not surprised to find the Modern Jazz Quartet playing Bach *fugues* or to hear Eileen Farrell sing "The Coventry Carol" accompanied by the New York Philharmonic, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and the piano of Dave Brubeck.

"The air is alive with the sound of music." The air is also alive with a taste for music, and if anything stated above is true, that taste is good.

—Michael Brennan

Cynicism in Vanity Fair

Because Dickens and Thackeray were contemporary novelists, they were often compared without basis and to the detriment of Thackeray. While Dickens tends to become intimately involved with his characters, Thackeray's mood is one of aloofness. For this reason Victorian critics berated Thackeray for a cynicism that to them was tantamount to immorality. Originally, a cynic was one who embraced a philosophy of unworldliness and who questioned the materialistic values of the rest of society. If one were to accept this definition, one would certainly label Thackeray a cynic, for he realizes that transient, material goods are not worth the struggle that must be fought to obtain and keep them. It is readily apparent that Victorians could become nervous at this undermining of the materialistic values on which their whole society was based. Thackery is also a cynic in the modern sense that he seeks self-motiviation behind every human act. Perhaps what made his critics more indignant was that he *found* it.

His philosophy is not unique when he views life as a ceaseless struggle waged among rapacious men. And it is hardly astonishing that Thackeray, a sensitive, perceptive man should adopt an attitude of aloofness for the purposes of a novel in which he attempts to show the futility of this unending contention. He is under no obligation to enter the senseless war. Sir Pitt Crawley appropriates the motto "Pax in Bello" for his family arms. This is the apex of human inanity. Man can no more have "peace in war" than he can have a "war to end all wars." Thackeray cannot help but "sneer" at this illogic, and perhaps, to extricate himself from the struggle is his only defense. If Napoleon had followed this course, he theorizes sardonically, he could have satisfied his own greed by taking advantage of the greed of others, when the countries of Europe were

> each . . . protesting against the rapacity of the other; and could the Corsican but have waited in his prison until all these parties were by the ears, he might have returned and reigned unmolested.

The existence of incessant slaughter and animalistic greed among men is

irrefutable. Thackeray's attitude is being determined by what he objectively sees.

On a lesser level, other wars are being waged — for instance, the war to obtain the spoils of marital security. The second chapter of *Vanity Fair* is titled the one "In Which Miss Sharp and Miss Sedley Prepare to Open the Campaign." "The Campaign" of life begins with the crucial battle in which it is necessary to conquer a man and have him surrender his name in marriage. Both girls are equipped with the essential artillery — beauty, sweetness, softness — and sundry tactics learned in Miss Pinkerton's training camp on Chiswick Mall. They assault the enemy's weakest flank, the ego, and Joe is "shot" by Becky's glance while George ultimately "surrenders himself up to be loved" by Amelia. Yet none know the true meaning of love and marriage. To Becky, marriage is the holding of an advantageous position from which she can sally forth to make raids on society. To Rawdon, it is unquestioning worship and subservience. To George, it is the gratification of his ego. And to Amelia, it is an opportunity to smother her husband and child with uncontrolled passion. Again, Thackeray has objectively questioned the motives of others and found them lacking in altruism.

War among the classes is observed through Becky as she moves through every stratum of society. Lacking the most essential weapon, money, she adopts defensive tactics as she matches her courage and cleverness against the cruel thrusts that snobbery inflicts in every drawing room. Lord Steyne warns her of her dangerous weakness and she is able to hold her own only as long as Steyne's "power of the purse" is strengthening her force.

Thackeray knows the futility of pitting himself against a materialistic society, and though he is opposed to its hollow values, his sole intent is objective exposition. "Ours is a ready money society," says George, and, Thackeray adds, "it has no reverence except for prosperity, and no eye for anything beyond success." To the reader of the twentieth century, this idea is neither new nor shocking when the materialism of our Victorian ancestors seems to be magnified in our own times, and when it is rapidly becoming a cliché to refer to "our materialistic" society. Though we have learned to be more sophisticated in evaluating this criticism, it is no won-

der that Thackeray was called "immoral" by a society that revered money as a moral standard. To the Victorians, money bestowed morality. One judged others by the amount of stocks, bonds, hard cash, and property they possessed, not by the amount of goodness.

The characters of *Vanity Fair* will go to any extremes to obtain something of such great value, even to the extreme of murder, for money bestows great power on the holder. Thus the sadistic Lord Steyne, secure in his wealth, is free to inflict any cruelty or ruin, and he reduces Lady Gaunt, formerly Lady Bareacres, to tears with the words

> Who are you to give orders here? You have no money. You've got no brains. You were here to have children and you have not had any. Gaunt's tired of you; and George's wife is the only one in the family who doesn't wish you were dead. Gaunt would marry again if you were.

Since Lady Gaunt offered nothing but family as a dowry, she is good only for breeding purposes and Lord Steyne accords her no more dignity than he would his horse or dog. When Thackeray draws this situation, he is not "taking heartless joy in others' misfortunes," only exposing the deadly callousness of a shallow society.

If the inhabitants of Vanity Fair do not possess money, they may serve as useful tools or as the buffoons of the more fortunate classes. The gauche but kindhearted Peggy O'Dowd is fair game for Becky's mimickry and wit. Any inhumanity is approved in Vanity Fair if it satisfies a perverted sense of humor. The ease with which Becky "ruins" Miss Briggs and Raggles as she takes what little money they have while relegating them to subservient positions is apalling. But Becky is not the only culprit in Vanity Fair. There are innumerable others like Miss Crawley, whose habit is "to accept as much service as she could get from her inferiors; and good naturedly to take leave of them when she no longer found them useful." To believe in people when they are motivated only by this selfishness is difficult, especially when one has traveled through Vanity Fair and knows its inhabitants as intimately as Thackeray does. Experience forces him to attribute the worst possible motives to Miss Toady when, having snubbed *poor* Miss Briefless in the past, she turns about suddenly to flatter her with utmost attention.

> What, I asked in my own mind, can cause this obsequiousness on the part of Miss Toady; has Briefless got a county court, or has his wife had a fortune left her?

As it too often turns out in Vanity Fair, Miss Briefless' father is soon to be made a baronet. Thackeray can hardly be condemned for his cynicism when it is constantly reinforced b ysociety's parade of "aggressive-egoists."

So, life is war, and of necessity there are losers and winners. Innocence and virtue, while it *may* exist in a pure state, is a natural target. Amelia is "so utterly gentle and humble as to be made by nature a victim." Perhaps, being too much influenced by Darwin's theory of natural selection, we can feel nothing but exasperation at Amelia's weakness. We see her complete unsuitability for this world embodied in her leave of George.

> Two fair arms closed tenderly about his neck, as he stooped down. 'I am awake, George,' the poor child said with a sob fit to break the little heart that nestled so closely by his own. She was awake, poor soul, and to what? At that moment a bugle from the Place of Arms began sounding clearly, and was taken up through the town; and amidst the drums of the infantry, and the shrill pipes of the Scotch, the whole city awoke.

While Amelia sobs, Becky answers the call to life and no soldier "could be more cool and collected" in the battle than this "indomitable little aide-de-camp's wife." Hence we find that Becky possesses fire, while Amelia is as appealing as a soggy tissue. She has value only as a foil to Becky and her story would rapidly fall apart on its own. If Thackery had written only of Amelia, he would have surely been forgotten.

We know that Becky will not lose her battle with life. She may be deflated but never defeated. She has a love of life that keeps her resilient and she knows how to deploy people. But most of all, she is perceptive enough to see that she must salvage all she can from a world that has little of lasting value to offer. If Thackery intended to show the rewards of virtue, he decided at the end of the very first chapter that they are few, at

least in this world. Since we today live in a world of very real evil, the reader cannot help admiring Becky for accepting this world on its own terms. Amelia, sadly, cannot cope with the viciousness and is lost. In answer to a reproof of Amelia's Becky retorts," "Revenge may be wicked, but it's natural . . . I'm no angel." Neither are Thackeray's readers, and they must either admire Becky for honestly admitting her viciousness, or accuse Thackeray of "immorality" because he exposes what is "disagreeable." Thackeray entertains no romantic notions of man's nature. He writes of the common pettiness, foibles, and evils that make up each day of man's interminable years of battle. "If you admire the great and heroic in life, you had better take warning and go elsewhere," he writes. For though they may not lose, no one wins decisively in this war, not even Becky or Lord Steyne. All are either deflated or defeated, and some, such as the depraved Sir Pitt, are both.

Thackeray does not, then, believe that "virtue is its own reward." He creates Amelia and Dobbin, not because he believes in them, but bcause he wants his serial to "sell." Both characters are disturbingly inconsistent and the reader can see Thackeray fluctuating between his honesty as an artist and his desire to make a living. Though Dobbin's plodding virtue and devotion are ultimately, and meagerly, rewarded, we find it difficult to identify with a character who wears the name of a plow horse.

As an artist, Thackeray is bound to seek objective truth. When he tries to placate his critics by rewarding virtue, he fails; but when he exposes truth — when he creates Becky — he soars. Though his creation is necessarily colored by his experience, he must write the truth insofar as he knows it.

> Vanity Fair is a very vain, wicked, foolish place, full of all sorts of humbug and falseness and pretensions. And while the moralist, who is holding forth on the cover (an accurate portrait of your humble servant) professes to wear neither gown nor bands, but only the very same long eared livery in which his congregation is arrayed; yet, look you, one is bound to speak the truth as far as one knows it, whether one mounts a cap and bells or a shovel-hat; and a deal of disagreeable matter must come out in the course of such an undertaking.

Here Thackeray's tone is didactic. He is moralizing. Yet, being a reasonable man, he admits that he wears the same "livery" as his characters and his reading public. He is as sadly human as anyone else. However, he is also an artist and, as such, it is his prerogative to stand aloof. One cannot see "the whole clearly" when one is a part of that whole. If Thackeray's "undertaking" unveils "a deal of disagreeable matter" that repels those critics who would desire more agreeable matter, one cannot, at least, call Thackeray "dishonest;" and honesty in literature is a criteria today, while dishonesty (or catering to a smug public that demands happy endings) is a term of reproach. Whether Thackeray believes man to be basically good or basically vicious is not the point. No one has ever been able to solve the vast problem of cosmic good and evil. It is ridiculous to demand that Thackeray believe in the triumph of good over evil. One cannot restrict an artist, for art of its very nature is free. We would not have Thackeray degenerate into a Mr. Pitt Crawley who "never advanced any opinion which was not perfectly trite and stale," and who "failed in spite of a mediocrity which ought to have insured any man a success." Perhaps if Thackeray's "matter" is disturbing, it is so only to an immoral society.

— Dianne McFarland

Recent Non-Fictional Books

Perhaps the most controversial non-fictional book of the Sixties is *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson. This work paints a stark picture of the consequences resulting from man's irresponsible use of insecticides. Miss Carson states that chemicals, used indiscriminately, are slowly poisoning the systems of human beings. Ironically, the insects are gaining immunity through adjustment of their constitutions to intake of chemical poisons. The book argues that man should not attempt to control nature by utilizing insecticides and other chemical compounds; instead he should make the more difficult choice of finding ways to understand and work with nature.

Miss Carson's book is an "indictment" of humanity — a book of social, as well as scientific, importance. Many other social documents have found a receptive audience in the general public. Prominent among "social critics" is Vance Packard, who attempts to pull down many of the facades of American life. *The Waste-Makers* and *The Status Seekers* depict many of the realities of contemporary society and outline the shoddy basis upon which our social structure is built. The question of whether Mr. Packard has a truly constructive view toward bettering our society, or is simply exploiting our ills for slick sensationalism, has not been resolved, however; his intention and motivation seem to be under as much fire from critics as is his subject-matter.

Far different from these comments upon American mores and technology is a book by Charles Schultz, called *Happiness is a Warm Puppy*. The author presents the understatements of children in comparisons and definitions which are simple yet appealing. A fanciful, escapist type of book, Mr. Schultz' work sets forth many of the satisfactions of children in an odd but strikingly honest way. "Happiness is three friends in a sandbox . . . with no fighting."

Another rather fanciful book is a product of John Steinbeck. Although assailed by many critics, *Travels with Charlie* is a best-seller. The success of Mr. Steinbeck's book can be partly explained by his winning the Nobel Prize in Literature for 1962. Charlie is the dog who accompanied the author on his cross-country travels to rediscover America. Mr. Steinbeck's comments are at times fascinating, but the book on the whole is of somewhat questionable merit.

The mainstay of non-fictional writing in the past few years has most assuredly been the abundance of biographies which have been published. Leon Edel has written several volumes dealing with the life and works of Henry James. The National Book Award of 1962 in the field of non-fiction was awarded to Mr. Edel for his mammoth study, which attempts to delve into James's influence on the novel form and his involvement with problems of human behavior.

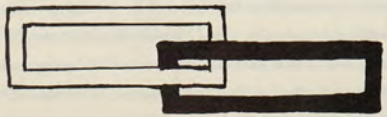
John Adams by Page Smith is an erudite work presenting an absorbing study of a man who devoted his life to his country's service. This is a sensitive portrayal of both the man and the diplomat. A more personal type of character study is *Renoir, My Father* by Jean Renoir. Revealing and believable, Renoir recounts many of his father's idiosyncrasies, while at the same time presenting a dynamic portrait of the artist.

Personal correspondence between well-known figures is once more being published. *Lawrence Durrel and Henry Miller, A Private Correspondence* presents two volatile personalities who spend a great deal of time complimenting each other on their mutual talent. The letters show a genuine affection, coupled with an almost unbelievably egocentric idea of the scope and worth of their talents. Although the correspondence is entertaining, one might find it difficult to agree with the content.

Loss of interest in Civil War books has characterized historical works in the past few years. Bruce Catton's prolific studies are still popular, but the public no longer responds with eagerness to any book which pretends to chronicle Civil War action. Actually, the most popular historical work has been as far removed from the Romanticism of American conflict as is possible. *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* by William Shirer is a voluminous study of Nazi Germany. Based on a firm foundation of fact, Mr. Shirer's text is also a warning to humanity about the dangers of a fanatical leader.

Trends in non-fiction have been diversified. One might conjecture that grim reality has been answered by Romantic escapists. Many social documents have enumerated the grave danger in the havoc man is causing, while other authors have attempted to define such elusive entities as "Happiness." In the field of biography the authors are increasingly concerned with attempts to decipher their subjects' motivation and character. Most important is the stress placed on lively, interesting prose rather than on long, dull chronicles.

— Marjorie Anne Keefe



One-Way: Outbound

Characters:

Mr. Sherburne	Gas Station Attendant
Mr. Charles Kerr	Sean Reilly
Mrs. Kerr	Mary Lennon
Billy Kerr	Police Officer

Act One

Scene One

Scene: It is a clear Sunday afternoon in June. Two cars are being serviced by a young Gas Station Attendant, dressed in coveralls, at a small gas station in Salisbury, Maryland, the gateway to the Delmarva Peninsula. One car is a new sports car driven by Mr. Sherburne, a businessman in his late thirties who is well dressed in summer sports clothes. The other car is a 1919 Maxwell driven by Mr. Charles Kerr, a librarian in his mid-forties who is dressed in a plain summer shirt and pants. Accompanying Mr. Kerr is his wife, same age level and type of dress, and his son Billy, a teenager who appears in a tee-shirt, shorts, but without shoes. Both cars are about to begin a Sunday drive to Cape Charles at the southern end of the peninsula.

GAS STATION ATTENDANT. (Servicing the sports car) Sure is a nice day to take a spin, Mr. Sherburne. Seems like a lot of folks are heading down the Cape today.

MR. SHERBURNE. (Wiping his sunglasses) Yes. It's a good day to put the engine through its paces after creeping around town all week. (Turning to Mr. Kerr. Slight tone of sarcasm.) Say, does that old buggy still hold up on the road?

MR. KERR. (Nodding at Sherburne. Matter-of-fact tone.) It gets us where we want to go. (Smiling.) Just takes us a little longer to get there.

SHER. I imagine you have to stick close to home in case it breaks down.

MR. K. (Patting the steering wheel. Thoughtfully.) Oh, I take good care of it. .(Slight pause.) This old-timer will be running long after I'm gone.

ATT. (Walking around to Sherburne.) That'll be $5.50 Mr. Sherburne.

SHER. (Pays the bill. Starts car. Looks at Kerr with broad grin.) Well, if you're going down the Cape, I'll see you on my way back. (Drives off.)

BILLY. Boy, that sure is a sharp car, Dad.

MRS. KERR. (Disturbed. Quickly.) You just remember you're sitting in a perfectly good automobile right now, William Kerr.

BILLY. Yes, ma.

MRS. K. See us on his way back, indeed. As if getting to the end of the road were a race or the most important part of a drive.

MR. K. (Turns, pats Mrs. Kerr's hand. Quietly.) Now, Mother, don't begrudge the man his way of thinking. (Looks back at Billy.) Both cars use the same road, Billy. How you travel on it is what makes the difference.

BILLY. (Leaning over the front seat. Eagerly.) Like the hare and tortoise, huh Dad?

MR. K. (Thoughtfully. Looking out front window.) It's something like that, son.

ATT. (Having finished servicing the car.) Your all set, sir. $1.90.

MR. K. (Pays the bill. Starts the car.) Well, here we go.

ATT. (As the car starts away.) Hope you have a nice drive, sir.

Scene Two

Scene: The same Sunday afternoon. A young couple is seated on a park bench on the Boston Common. Sean Reilly is a student in his twenties wearing a summer suit and a white shirt without a tie. Mary Lennon is a waitress in her twenties wearing her best summer cotton dress.

MARY. (Combing her hair into place.) Isn't it awful quiet today Sean? (Pause. Looks around.) Look how few people are in the park. (Pause. Lightly, with slight wondering.) And there's not a single car on Boylston Street. (Turns back to Sean.) I guess everyone's out driving by the shore.

SEAN. (Calmly looking out at the street.) There'll be enough cars here tomorrow. There always are.

MARY. (Sitting down. Trying to be serious.) They ought to keep cars out of the city . . . make the streets one-way, outbound for all of them. (Sean smiles. She pokes him in the chest with finger.) It gets so I have to wait an hour to cross every street corner on the way to work.

SEAN. (Playfully begins roles as wise philosopher.) Maybe you wouldn't have to cross the street corners to work if there weren't any cars to wait for.

MARY. What do you mean by that, funny.

SEAN. (Putting his arm around her.) Well, maybe you wouldn't have any work to go to. No cars, no people. And no people, no customers.

MARY. (Speaks obviously.) Oh, ha ha. (Defensively adding to her point.) I mean there'd still be buses and taxis and things like that. And more people would use the subway.

SEAN. (Dramatically.) Ah, but look . . . without cars the city would seem deserted or empty of something. Pretty soon the people would feel funny having all those quiet streets around. (Begins to wonder. Thoughtful.) The cars stimulate activity. Without them the people would stop coming to town. They'd get tired of subways and buses. Eventually everyone would follow the cars outbound to another spot. (Pause.) And then it would start all over again.

MARY. (Disguising voice.) Thank you Doctor Philosopher. The next letter from your readers says . . . (Dropping the game. Lightly.) Let's go for a walk.

SEAN. O. K. reader. Anywhere special?

MARY. (Rising and pulling Sean up.) How about down Beacon Street to the bridge?

SEAN. Fine. (With a flourish.) Fair lady, we will journey forth and try to discover where the automobiles are lurking in the streets of Boston this fine day.

Scene Three.

Scene: Later on the same Sunday afternoon. The Kerrs have arrived at Cape Charles. In a beach parking lot they again meet with Mr. Sherburne who is sitting in his car.

MRS. K. (Looking across to Sherburne. Snide.) Well, look who is here. We thought we had missed you going by on our way down.

MR. K. (Getting out of car.) Decide to stay and enjoy the beach?

SHER. (Ill at ease. Slightly angered.) No. (To Mrs. K.) Did you see anybody going up the road?

MRS. K. (Getting out of car and walking around. Airily.) I was rather enjoying the . . . (Pauses. Begins to become serious, wondering.) no, I can't recall seeing any cars going the other way. That's strange.

BILLY. (Has hopped out of the car. Brightly.) Gee, that's right Dad. All the cars were only going our way.

SHER. (All knowing. Harsh.) That's because you can't go the other way. They made the road and all these city streets one-way so that you can only go south, or wind up on the beach parking lots. (To Mrs. K.) That's why you didn't see me going by.

MR. K. What do you mean all the roads are one-way? Who made them that way?

SHER. I don't know. No one seems to know. I've talked to the police on duty and they don't know, but they certainly are making sure that nobody goes the wrong way.

BILLY. (Seriously. Looking at his father.) But we have to go back sometime. I've got school tomorrow, and . . .

MRS. K. We've got the church social to go to tonight, Charles.

MR. K. (Calmly. Thinking.) Settle down, Mother. We may be stuck here, but we'll make the best of it. I imagine we can miss the social . . . (to Billy.) and maybe school tomorrow. Seems like lots of others will too.

SHER. (Calmed down slightly. Planning.) No, you don't have to go back this way. I've been sitting here thinking. Maybe you can take the ferry across to Norfolk and then circle around. It's worth a try. Better than sitting here for God-knows-how-long.

BILLY. (Looking out at beach.) I wonder what everyone will do when they finish swimming and find they can't go home.

SHER. There'll sure be a mess then. (Starts car.) Well, I'm not going to be here when that happens. I'm going to try the ferry. (Drives off.) (Billy, barefooted, starts walking away.)

MRS. K. What are we going to do Charles? Shall we just sit here?

MR. K. (Holds her hand. Calmly.) No, Mother, we're going to walk on the beach and enjoy ourselves while we can.

MRS. K. (Sees Billy walking away.) William. William, where are you going?

BILLY. (Stopping for a moment and calling back. Seriously.) I'm going to the road and see if anyone can walk back, Ma. (Turns and walks off.)

MRS. K. (Calling louder.) Don't you go to far. William. William, do you hear me? (Billy is out of hearing range. She turns to Mr. K.) Charles?

MR. K. (Puts arms around her. Begins to walk toward beach.) Don't you worry Mother. He can take care of himself. Let's take a walk down the beach.

Scene Four

Scene: The same Sunday afternoon. A boulevard leading to the shore in Brighton, England, a summer resort on the south coast which is an hour's drive from London. A Police Officer is standing by the side of the road directing traffic toward the shore. James Hayes, a retired gentleman in his sixties, dressed in impeccable summer tweeds, approaches the officer.

POLICE OFFICER. (Waving the cars by. Loudly.) Keep movin'. That's it, keep your ruddy clinkers movin'.

JAMES HAYES. (Coming up behind the officer.) I say, Officer . . . Officer.

OFF. (Turns his head.) What is it guv.

HAYES. (With reserve throughout.) Might I ask to where all this traffic is being directed?

OFF. (Facing Hayes.) An' well you might ask, guv. What with the papers saying that six thousand of these blinkin' vehicles is leavin' London every hour. The ruddy lot is here, to my mind. As if this were suddenly turned to a Blackpool.

HAYES. So it seems. But tell me, where are you sending them off to?

OFF. Well, guv . . . it seems there rightly ain't no place to send them, so we've been assigned to direct them to the piers.

HAYES. Humph. To the piers . . . ? But . . .

OFF. You see guv, they come streamin' down and we just point them to the piers like them little animals, them . . . them lemmings. An' one of the constables just waves them off the long end. The whole bloomin' lot.

HAYES. Most ingenious. But can't the drivers turn off on the coast road to Rottingdean?

OFF. Can't guv. The coast road is blocked with traffic coming from the East. They just have to wait their turn to take a dip in the salt they come to see.

HAYES. Most interesting. I think I'll walk down and observe the proceedings. Good weather for it . . .

OFF. (Turning back to traffic.) You may as well, guv. Everyone else is.

CURTAIN

— Eugene Alexander Brickack

PORTRAITS

David . . . HELICON First Award Drawing 49
by Edward O'Donnell

Dame au Parasol 50
by Charles Leclerc

Hay Fever 51
by Edward O'Donnell

Flapper 52
by Robert Goulet

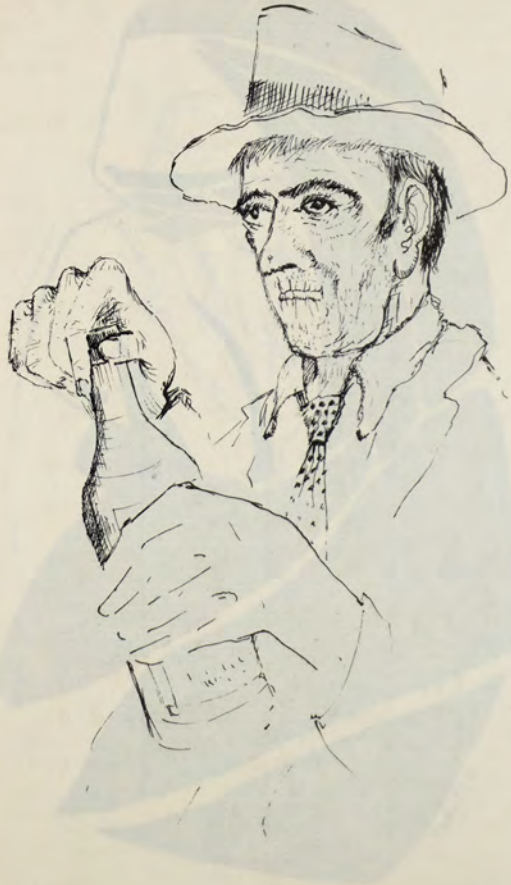
Man with Bottle . . . HELICON Second Award Drawing 53
by Al Johnson

Shylock 54
by Edward O'Donnell

Old Man 55
by Al Johnson


CAL


E.O'Donnell




E. O'Donnell