



helicon  
1965

## Helicon

awake, aeolean lyre, awake  
and give to the rapture of thy  
trembling strings.

from helicon's harmonious springs  
a thousand rills their mazy  
progress take:

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## To Marie — 1963

Look here the day is growing late  
We sit and talk and know  
Right is where we are.  
Outside the sun is warm, grass is growing.  
We remain with stub-filled paper cups  
And think we are the same. But others come.  
We rise to leave and are alone.  
Out there are the live ones — the movers,  
What are we?  
Who do nothing in the red day but talk of the green season.  
Know the right, and right from left  
And Left is right always — true black and blue.  
We are the living talkers  
Whose words are semen and tongues are phallic  
And progeny is Babel.

— Norma Francis

## Great Big

Great Big  
eyelash-tickling, eye-blurring,  
dustballs of SNOW  
sifting down in SLOW-  
motion.  
& if at a window  
(snow-mountained & finger-smudged by a  
small, out-of-breath "artiste")  
you looked long enough . . .  
the whole House!  
(remember the Wizard of Oz?)  
was really going up & travelling past  
& the snow was standing still.

— Laurette Chasee

## I Am The Watcher

I am the watcher  
I watch, I wait, and I listen  
As I have for centuries.  
In this century I watch the last,  
And in that the one before, and so on;  
Like standing before a mirror  
which is opposite another mirror;  
Or like looking through a telescope  
From the wrong end  
And there is blood in my telescope  
And the sky and the earth and the sea  
Are stained red by it.  
I am the mutilated conscience of humanity  
I am covered with the blood of Abel  
Slain by my brother Cain  
But not once as in the Bible — no!  
Over and over and over and over . . .  
and each time he is killed he leaves a scar —  
One for the Christians who died in the Coliseum  
And one even for the Mighty Caesar  
And a large and ugly one  
Representing the mouldering bodies  
of six million Jews  
And another with names of three young Americans  
Who died in Mississippi  
And perhaps the largest one of all  
in the shape of a cross  
But soon the blood and the scars will erupt  
Like a giant volcano  
And a great red gusher  
enclosed in its birth-giving cloud  
Will swallow the earth  
And the Bearded One will come down  
With a great big "G" on his sweatshirt  
and banish the blood  
and the blood-letters  
And gather the scarred and the bleeding  
who suffered in peace.

— Greg Andreozzi

### It's Raining In My Soul Today

It's raining in my soul today  
great drops beat hard upon my face  
cold torrents stream down my back

It's raining in my soul today  
and I have no umbrella.

— Merle K. Peirce

### Accipite!

Take the chalice  
full and heavy  
drink drink  
til lifemead  
on your chin  
spills and runs  
down down  
your bare chest  
and  
drowns a flea  
in your navel.

— Merle K. Peirce

### Haiku

#### I

A golden glow  
a lonely whistle's shrill blast  
the fast Night Express.

#### II

After the rainfall  
and the brilliant sun orb rose  
the grass wore diamonds.

— Merle K. Peirce

### Dirge For My Dede Bryde

(a lyric poem in Middle English)

Synge, synge for my bryde;  
Sche hass dyde.  
Ih mournen my lost lady dere  
Onne thise Wyntyr dayte.  
My dysease and the molde hiere  
Yn weyling, has the wurd no weyte.  
Ih wyll nott looke on the grave  
Hwere my ded luve ryste.  
Bote sonner dede to ih brave,  
In-feare sall we alwey ryste.  
Synge, synge for my bryde;  
Sche hass dyde.

— Daniel Desaulniers

### in exilio inter homines

a shiny car  
a cocktail bar  
a slinky slut  
a filthy buck  
these are the things  
that matter here.

— Merle K. Peirce

### Far-reaching Statues

Far-reaching statues  
Seek to calm a  
Raged sea.  
And I stand naked  
On the beach  
Afraid to move.

— Bill McQuade

## Paradox

A paradox it is, a wondrous thing  
That time which crept in agonizing pause  
Can suddenly begin to travel at  
A predatory headlong pace which gnaws  
At childhood's dream and young ambition's plan.  
Inexorable, the toll of nature's laws  
Ignored when years stretched limitless, now stings  
Unwary to awareness and gives pause,  
Reflecting that the only one who sings  
Of old-age grace and favor is old man.

— *Arlene Harrower*

## La Mia Canzone d'Amore

Questa e la mia canzone  
Mia canzon d'amore.  
Comincero nel principio  
Cioe nel mio cuore.  
Ci si trova una frase  
Frase ch'e eterna.  
Non e lunga; e molto breve;  
Si legge in questa maniera:  
    Carissimo, senza te io non posso vivere.  
    Tutto il mondo tu fai splendore.  
    La piu bella parola della vita non ti  
    puo descrivere.  
    E per sempre ti daro tutto il mio amore.  
Devo dire le ultime parole, poi la mia canzone  
sara finita.  
Quando si e innamorato, la sensazione e scritta  
In modo che tutti possono leggere di quel che  
si vuol dire.  
E lo stesso sentimento che si ha gli altri  
innamorati devono sentire.

— *Diane Celani*

## Reverie No. 1

The autumn rain had blotted out  
the brilliant summer  
and a chill wind  
whipped the timeless waters  
of the Atlantic.  
A strained laugh —  
and then a tear;  
love reached out —  
groping for survival  
with tender fingers of sadness,  
finding nothing to hang onto  
in the inevitable void.  
But now in unguarded moments  
these hands of mine  
run screaming across a continent  
still finding only  
the same inevitable meaning  
of that awesome word:  
Goodbye.

— *Greg Andreozzi*

## For Mother

Green fatigues . . .  
Green berets . . .  
    Red blood  
And raise high the Stars and Stripes.  
Save Asia  
And shove democracy down their throats.  
What, old woman? You dare cry?  
    Citizen  
    Patriot  
Make the world safe for democracy.  
Do your duty  
    to your mother . . .  
She'll get your Purple Heart.

— *Marcel Duhamel*

To A Doe  
(For H.)

Off the narrow path I wandered  
Careful  
Silent  
Slow,  
I wandered.  
I stopped;  
At a flash of brown, a twitch of white  
And at my silent stop  
You started.  
Tensed to spring,  
You turned your  
Head.  
For a  
Slow  
Second  
Our eyes stared back.

To the cataloguer's caging, THRUSTING eye  
You are poly and di-  
Peptide bonds, amino acids;  
A million multi  
Bumping crowding cells.  
And to the red ape's ranging, RAVAGING eye  
You are steak or pie  
A trophy to boast;  
A triumph when you die

By ball or blast.  
Ah, but to me  
You are tenderness,  
A breathless bounding  
Moment;  
Freedom looking out through large, liquid eyes.

— Anonymous

Written On Perhaps The Last Days Of March

Prod the casual themes of politics,  
no longer ignorant whims;  
The Negro is too muscular, too beautiful.  
Swooning horsemen ride the yellowed flow of gas,  
their sticks and their whips for the child's head.  
Ligaments and tendons are bared and screaming, streaming.  
Evil teeth of lunch counters! Vicious noises of Cain!  
Rape of my sanity!  
Sudden betrayal of the excitement of a hurried apex  
and long, tripping resonances of fear . . .  
Vandalic dome over the lingering plantations —  
George's mahogany chin be delivered to the pamphlets!  
Damnation flag's Doctorate of Legality — reverse its degree!  
A southern drawl in finest gangster spats  
effects its quivering apartheid;  
This slow grey knowledge of a documentary into local  
eternity . . .  
To Charles Mingus who has furious shoulders  
for piano tears . . . crocodile horns;  
To Charles Mingus whose rhythm foot thunders  
across his continent;  
To Charles Mingus who moans Negro Rights,  
one quart of milk in his FINGERS;  
To James Foreman, his hand in a pocket of  
magnificent keys  
The Northern Self is not really so sophisticated.  
I regret the broad editors of my feet,  
yet Peter be calmed, remove not their ear —  
scissors are so final.

— Peter Cook



## Notes After Passing Out

The world is closing in.  
Its empty grip is clawing at my soul  
And the joys of tomorrow  
Seem anciently lost  
Down the forgotten highway  
Of memory —  
Too fast fleeting.  
And wind moves weeds  
That cannot move of themselves —  
They cling to my legs.  
To take the lowest ebbs of society,  
The end of time scales moving —  
And the lost, in pity, cry for shelter  
Which is never there —  
And the fur-lined bed of nails  
Awaits all who dare  
To exploit the wonders of a  
back-yard beer can  
And the flaming soul.  
Lost wonder is born again  
In the joys of forgotten  
Cushions of Splendor.  
I long to nestle my head  
In visions of the Eternal Bosom.  
To scream at the perverts  
Down long alleys.  
To haunt the dreams of those who lie.  
To stand naked in rooms  
Of fur-lined hats and tell the truth  
And be not afraid of society's pyre.  
To care less for the phonies  
Who look through pince-nez glasses  
At evil and smirk at the blackness  
Of their own eyes.  
Knowing they are evil and  
Caring less about the sad.  
I walk with haloed angels  
Of the Rebirth and look to  
The castaways of society  
And weep.  
The lost, the hungry are cared  
For by their own Hope —  
Which they move themselves  
And cannot talk to those  
Who know not of the joys  
Of self and the purity of the soul.

To be lost in the depths  
Of human emotion  
The room spinning blackness  
And oblivion.  
The sorrow of time and calendars  
Haunting the mind-body  
With visions of milk trucks and  
Flaming ash-cans  
And the happiness of the angel-heads  
Who transcend the windows  
And dare to look in and out  
At once.

— Bill McQuade

## Lousy City Walk

Wandering on marshmallow grass in the city cold i dare to scream  
unclean on past streets  
A billboard issues uncle sam's revolutionary hat filled with  
popcorn for my economy  
A political cyclops waddles by a playground, smiles at the  
swings, blows kisses to the slides, out of its pant-cuff  
drip lollipop cancers  
Recording tapes overrun all orbits are strewn across air maps  
and toy worlds  
Searchlights bloat the sky with more folly  
Post offices sit illegitimate on bald lots  
Wandering bus stations always closed  
Spanish ghetto quartets boom their trombone voices  
Jazzy songs cake the sidewalks to be later tripped by elder  
ladies  
Mad garment dramas  
Ties of grabby stripes heap sunburns on each other in monoxide  
gutters  
Proud navels belch paper money

Sad kids hide their dandruff faces, further teenagers suffer  
 pimple deaths O no arthur murray parties  
 A typical mill woman leaves her greedy attic adorned in thermos  
 and jeans for her debut and onward  
 Idiot judges on beer corners rule forgotten vigilantes  
 Red men move about in asbestos suits  
 Infants gnash their sugar teeth and run at horn cars  
 Atrocious orange incidents occur on pumpkin doorsteps  
 Polaroid lenses develop pain in sixty seconds and tick values  
 are higher blip blip therein and without  
 Ice cream luses peddle cut popsicles  
 Questionable barbers sit in steaming lanolin windows  
 I laugh hello to my favorite funny man who in passing is reduced  
 to wisecracks and mild  
 The appalachian clatter of unsprung doors neverends in latent  
 corridors  
 Stickball games between parked cars  
 Skingrafts on cement  
 The chain-reaction litany of fenders kissed What eerie pagan  
 rites! Sweet toppled carriages would certainly relieve  
 my grandfather clocks  
 Odd rains jello down the drainpipes  
 lace restaurant nieter molly kleenex effeminate anthems  
 Dew on the early cafeteria floor  
 carpetsweeper! dust pan! mop! survival of the fittest!  
 wind blown rain slick pool shot and driven mad by moaning  
 snow routes I know the apocalyptic syndrome; during the  
 screaming oildrip bloodlet bends i unpetaled rose through  
 all this horror so quickly My anglo-saxon blimp hanging  
 in wait for van goghs crows monster blimp too hard to  
 paint or carry  
 Uncertain monkeys dive from docks in rubber innertubes while  
 hissing as radiators whole turnpikes of radium watches  
 vomit into the weekend

— Peter Cook

## As Slowly As The 2 O'Clock Freight

As slowly as the 2 o'clock freight  
 Pulls out of the station  
 And as quietly as the fog  
 Envelopes the sleeping city,  
 My mind reflects on  
 Forgotten tomorrows and  
 Half-lived yesterdays.  
 I sit, disillusioned,  
 Gazing at the tinselled world,  
 The speeding world  
 Where joys and sorrows are but  
 Moments apart  
 And memories are found in the bottom  
 Of empty beer glasses.  
 The smoke of a thousand unlit cigarettes  
 Clouds the light  
 And the idle talk of idle hours  
 Hangs heavy on the air.  
 The wink of streetlights  
 Smiles through the mist  
 As the rhythm of the last train  
 Pulsates in the wind.

— Bill McQuade

## An American Nightmare

Sssshh ping! The radiator hissed and the noise permeated the black, soundless bedroom, almost mocking the deep stillness of the night.

She groped toward the street light which outlined the two small windows in their bedroom. Pulling the flimsy curtains aside, she looked out into the dark snow-lined street. She watched intently, poised and ready to focus on the first thing that moved. Nothing stirred, and she slowly let the curtains fall back into place. Her eyes, now accustomed to the blackness of their room, now fell on him, sleeping soundlessly, restfully. People are supposed to move somewhat when they sleep, she thought, but they don't, as if they were never going to wake-up. She wanted to rush to him at his bedside and shake him, and wake him. But what if even then he did not stir.

She looked at him awhile. Funny, she thought, it's almost as if he can see me, feel me staring. But why doesn't he move? The darkness of the room and the whiteness of the sheets began to deceive her steady glance and shortly, he was nothing but a maze of dots, part of the bedpost and blankets. She shut her eyes in an attempt to refocus, then turned to check on Baby.

Even here, in this room where sun fills everywhere, here where pinks and blues play harmoniously, the darkness had gained control. How strange, she thought, the room looked. She felt uneasy and armies of fantastic deathmares of night welled up in her head. She saw the warm blood of her baby split. Run, run to the crib. Save baby. She rushed to the wooden-fenced bed and stopped over Baby. He was sleeping quietly. She fixed her eyes on his tiny chest, her heart pounding as she waited for the rising and falling of his tiny body, breathing-alive. Her head bending with each breath, she did not know how long she stood there, watching. In this entire world tonight, she thought, you are the only thing that is moving. But she knew that was not true; and her hand went instinctively to her full stomach. Kick, she whispered, move me.

—Jean Bergantini

## Jesus' Shoes

The old man and the dog sat quietly in the dark inclosure of their duck blind and anxiously surveyed the small pond before them. It was a cold October morning, and the rising sun was just visible above the wooded shore of the far side of the pond.

The old man looked admiringly down at the dog and said, "Well Sam, your over a year old now and after all the damned larnin' I give you, you better do your stuff!" The dog looked up at the old man, cocked its head to one side and stared.

The pair sat in silence, and the quiet of the dawn was broken only when the old man would pick up his duck call and scratch the air with its discordant notes. Then the man would sit down again and peer through the camouflage of the duck blind in hope that a duck might answer the call. The dog sat calmly staring at the old man, who looked back at the dog and said, "I know it don't sound like no duck, but it's the best we got, so don't just sit there and look at me as if I was crazy." The dog seemed to sigh, then curled up on the floor of the blind and went to sleep. A while later the old man, looking down at the dog, said, "Damn you Sam, wake up! Who in hell ever heard of a huntin dog goin' to sleep on the hunt; wake up!" The dog got up and again just stared.

The sun was up now, and the morning dew was condensing on the leaves of the duck blind. Suddenly the dog stood up, and immediately the old man knew the dog heard something. A ray of light striking upon the dog's jet black coat showed the outline of a young Labrador Retriever smelling the air. Another beam of light reflected from the old man's single-barrel shotgun and dimly showed the expression of anxiety and anticipation on his face. From across the pond there came the distant quack of a duck and immediately both man and dog were at the ready. Six ducks, flying in V-formation, were coming from across the pond and toward the blind. When the ducks were almost directly above him, the man fired, quickly reloaded and fired again. Two ducks fell out of the formation in a flurry of feathers and plummeted into the pond. "Go gitum," shouted the old man, and the dog sprang anxiously from the blind.

It wasn't until these ducks were brought into the blind that it occurred to the old man that he hadn't heard the dog go into the water. After thinking a minute, he looked at the dog and was surprised to see that its thick black coat was perfectly dry. "How'd you do that Sam? I woulda swore I saw them ducks go into the water," the old man said. The old man looked out of the blind and after much thought decided that the wind must have blown the falling ducks to the shore. "I guess they wasn't as



far out as I figgered," he muttered. Meanwhile the dog just sat and quietly stared at the old man.

About a half hour later another group of ducks flew over the pond, and again the old man shot two more out of the air. Once they had splashed into the pond, the old man yelled "Go gitum!" Again the dog sprang from the blind. While the old man watched the rest of the ducks fly out of range, it occurred to him that he still had not heard the dog go into the water. Quickly he turned and looked down toward the shore where the dog had gone. Suddenly a look of complete shock came over his face. "That damned dog ain't in the water—he's ON it! I must be seeing things, but I swear I see that damn dog walkin' on the water! I don't believe it!" The old man was still staring spellbound across the pond when the dog bounded into the blind with the second duck. After dropping it in front of the man, the dog crawled to the far side of the duck blind and sat down. After a while the old man went to the dog and gingerly put out a finger and touched the dog as if he thought it were a ghost. The dog just sat calmly with its head cocked to one side and stared.

Quickly and in a frenzied manner, the old man picked up his gear, dashed out of the blind, and scurried down to the water. After looking first at the water and then at the dog, he rushed off across the adjacent field. The dog, sensing something was wrong, followed behind with its tail between its hind legs and head low as if it had just been punished. After crossing a number of fields, the pair came to a small white farm house, and the old man rushed to it leaving gear, ducks and dog all on the front porch.

In the kitchen an elderly woman of similar age was washing dishes. The old man went straight to a cabinet, took out a bottle and gulped a drink from it. The woman, sensing that something was wrong, asked "What's the matter Paw?" The old man said nothing and quickly disappeared into another room taking the bottle with him. Despite the questioning efforts of the woman, the old man remained silent and only drank faster after each question. "Don't you think that you ought to stay off that stuff for a while, Paw? You know what the doctor told you." The old man, now sitting in a chair, looked up at the woman and said, "After today it is the best thing for me!" Just then the doorbell rang, and the woman went to the door. The old man watched as a familiar face came into the house. At the same time, the dog sneaked in around the door and went slinking into the kitchen. When the old man caught sight of the dog he grabbed the bottle and gulped another drink.

Still staring off into space the old man heard the newcomer's voice. "Sorry to bother you like this, Mr. Wilber, but I simply had to tell you something. I guess you must be pretty mad, but I come to confess. It

looks by them ducks outside I am a bit late though." The newcomer pointed in the direction of the front porch. "Well—you know that there Labrador pup that I sold you last year. Well, I reckon you know it now but—but—I'm afraid that that dog never could learn how to swim."

The old man looked at the visitor with an expression that frightened both the woman and the newcomer, and then grabbed the bottle and proceeded to empty it in one long continuous gulp. Meanwhile, the dog came up to the old man's chair, sat down, cocked its head to one side and stared.

— M. D. Vaughn

## An Essay on the Probability of Entering Selma on Palm Sunday

It was a relatively hot morning in Selma, and the people went about their regular routines. It appeared from the beginning of the day that this would be another lazy Sunday in a sleepy Southern town. Sheriff Jim Clarke made his usual rounds, smiling congenialities at the people who were returning from church.

On the outskirts of town, however, it was far from being a usual day. A few conscientious citizens noticed a group of people where forming around a figure clad in a white robe. With the usual dispatch of placid Southern folk a few called the information into the office of the Dallas County Sheriff. They described a crowd as a militant group of radicals trying to start something.

On his return Clarke was advised concerning the situation. "Must be another one of them goddamn Northern Communist agitators. We'll fix them this time," This was his only comment.

Almost immediately the law enforcement agency in Dallas County was on the alert. The switchboard was jammed with calls from concerned citizens as the marchers started into town. The citizens were advised by the Sheriff to remain indoors and to remain calm.

Clarke immediately began to formulate his plan of attack. He mobilized his troops and prepared to meet the march at the edge of town. It was obvious to him that this was some new tactic by the Communists. He knew that if they began in town, they could be dispersed almost immediately, but if they started in the outskirts, they would have time to



mobilize and unify their forces. Clarke knew this and prepared himself to meet any eventuality which might happen his way.

Clarke stood on the edge of town just in front of the bridge waiting for the marchers to approach. Sheriff Clarke saw the parade from his vantage point, and with the use of a megaphone he told the people to disperse and to go home where they belonged. Unaware of these idle shouts, the marchers kept coming.

Police stationed on the road approaching the bridge radioed that there was something peculiar about this march — no one was singing "We Shall Overcome." Clarke raised his eyebrows in disbelief; here indeed was an entirely new situation. He stood pondering the advisability of calling Governor Wallace. It was too late for that now, however, because the marchers had reached the bridge and were starting across. James Clarke tightened his belt, felt his riot stick, and prepared to meet the man on the donkey.

As he approached, he noticed that the people were strewing palm branches in the man's path. Clarke wondered whether this was some new sign from Moscow and/or Peking, but he strode onward, proud to be enforcing the laws of Dallas County and self-assured that he was right.

Big Jim Clarke walked up to the man who was obviously leading the parade and addressed him as "Suh." He asked what he was doing on a donkey leading a parade. The man's reply was that he was just passing through. Clarke had heard that one before — "must be on his way to Montgomery," he thought.

"Well do you have a license to parade?" Clarke asked the man on the donkey.

"No, do I need one?" was the man's reply.

"Yes, you Northern agitators are all alike. You never know the rules, and by the way do you know that there is a fifty-dollar fine for littering the streets of Selma?"

"No," was the quiet reply.

"Well, you are also gathering in an unlawful assembly for the purpose of sedition and violence. You had better go home to New York or Moscow or wherever you came from, or I'll arrest you all on any of those three laws."

"I haven't broken any laws."

"Wise guy, huh? Well, beat it or I'll get tough."

"What?"

"O. K. men, load your tear gas guns and fire at will."

In the small quiet town of Selma the soft, yellow noxious gas rises. There is no sign of the man, his donkey, or his followers. All that remains are the trampled palm branches and the congenial Southern smiles.

— Bill McQuade

## The Prelude

"Is he in this afternoon now?"

"Yes he is, first door on the right. Wipe your feet."

He heard the voices quite distinctly although he wasn't sure whether they were part of his dream or whether they were coming from the outside hall. He turned over in the bed and was about to fall asleep again, when he heard the loud knock on his door. After the second knock, he fell out of his bed, kicking the empty gin bottle. Tucking in his shirt, he opened the door.

Two men stood in front of him; they knew his name and asked if they might speak to him. He let them come into his room, and watched as the taller of the two men took out a pad and pencil.

"You are the same boy who wrote the poems? You know your last name is quite common here in Dublin," the tall man said.

"Yes, of course, I am he," the boy answered as he nervously sat down on the bed.

"Good, good. Yes, we have your book of poems right here." He found the book in his raincoat pocket, and began to look through the pages.

The other man finally spoke. "We want you to read your poems at McCorley Hall. I suppose you have heard about these readings, every year young Irish poets of rising talent read their poems in front of an audience. Since your poetry book just came out, we thought you might like to read some of them next month."

The boy cleared his throat. "I've known about the readings at McCorley's, but I didn't think you wanted me." He began to finger the woolen blanket, wishing that the two men would leave so that he might be alone. He wanted to be alone, perhaps to look in the mirror at himself, to laugh to yell, or to finally realize that he was to read his poetry to an audience.

"We will write you of the date of course. Six other poets are going to read. Well . . ." The man with the pad and pencil was looking at the empty bottle and the glass on the floor.

"Well?" the boy asked quickly.

"Yes . . . see you next month then, I really did like your poems, especially the one about Kerry, good, very good."

The tall man turned as he reached the hall. "Be sure and be there now. We have seven poets scheduled. Yes, well goodbye."

Once the outside door had closed, the boy threw back his head, and hugged himself. He fell onto the bed laughing, got up, stared at his face in the mirror now laughing hysterically, and finally leaning, sliding down the wall to the floor.

"Oh God. They want me to read . . . I'm a poet, I'm a poet!" He began to yell. "God. I'm a poet . . . I write beautiful poems. Oh God, help the poet."

The following weeks were terrible for him, they dragged on, each day having an immeasurably long morning, afternoon and evening. He read his poems again and again, selecting the four best, arranging them in order — one about solitude, love, Kerry, and dread. He was surprised at his voice when he read them aloud, it was too fast, high, not at all the voice of a poet. He also discovered that while reading from his manuscript, he would skip words often ruining the meaning of the poem. He decided that he would memorize the poems, and set aside the evenings for this purpose.

As the day of the readings at McCorley Hall approached, the boy noticed that his manuscript would shake in his hand, and his voice would become more high-pitched. He thought it best to leave the poems for a few days. One particular evening when he had become rather discouraged after reading one of his poems, he left his room and walked down to a pub.

It was warm in the pub with people coming in and going out, and so he picked out a table near the bar and had some whiskey by himself. It was late when he got back to his room; he remembered that he did have difficulty finding his key, and once in the room, he had fallen on the bed, and gone to sleep still fully clothed. The next night he was again in the warm pub drinking. The men began to notice him after the first week, nobody knew who he was, but he was always one of the last ones to leave.

"My God, today's the day." He had just thrown cold water on his face and was looking into the mirror. There was the letter telling him that he was expected at seven thirty that evening.

"You will be the second last poet to read tonight," the letter read. "Four or five poems will be sufficient since we want to give every poet the same amount of time."

"We want to give every poet the same amount of time," the phrase repeated itself in his mind. He looked at the clock, it was five minutes to four in the afternoon.

There was the new suit he had worn only once, a year ago; his father had given it to him a week before he died, but looking at it now, for some reason he couldn't wear it. He dressed quickly, grabbed the manuscript, and was out on the street.

Got to have a drink he thought, can't go unless I have a drink. He started to walk toward the pub, but broke into a run when he looked down at his manuscript.

Johnny McPhilip, the big, loud playwright-poet was bellowing the final lines of his "Madness Reigns Alone" to the capacity audience in McCorley Hall, when the boy finally stumbled in backstage.

"Your turn is next," he heard someone say, and then he heard his name. People slapped him on the back as he left the wings and walked slowly onto the stage. The manuscript was still in his hand as he reached the podium, and leaning over he took a drink of water from the table before he looked out at his audience.

"I am going to begin with 'The Prelude', one of my . . ." There was laughter as the manuscript fell from the stand. He picked it up.

"The Prelude . . . 'The Prelude'," he heard his voice, but it was thick, not high. "Still south I went and west and south again," he looked up. "Still south I went . . . lived with the sunshine and west again, again."

The murmurs from the audience now became louder.

"This is my favorite poem, influenced by Yeats, you can see it in all my work — William Butler Yeats. I have to tell you I'm a poet. How can I make you see I'm a poet? Oh God, I am a poet! 'The Prelude' — Still south I went and west — Oh God, help the poet."

McPhilip read two more of his poems, and a red-haired boy read "At Night" to complete the hour.

The boy went back to his room alone that night, thankful that he had not worn the suit his father had given to him a week before he died.

— Margaret Henry

## The Fault

My name is Robert Centry. I've been teaching at Anderson High for three years now, or has it been three centuries? God, no one can say I didn't try! English is not only my subject, it's my passion.

Like a poet hidden  
 In the light of thought,  
 Singing hymns unbidden,  
 Till the world is wrought  
 To sympathy with hopes and fears  
 it heeded not.

*Shelley*

Countless times I've entered by class wanting to teach and to teach well. But the animals wouldn't let me. Ignorant rabble. To use their vulgar vernacular, if it doesn't run like a heap, make noise like music, (music?) or walk like a broad, stuff it. I've tried with all my heart and soul, tried to reach out to them and communicate, just a thought; but to them I'm not only a square, I'm a cube. I'm told that that's the ultimate.

Before you misjudge me and place your sympathy with my students, let me tell you that I wasn't always absorbed in literature. Time was when I could play a fair first-baseman and hold my own on a tennis court. As a high-school student I didn't dislike English but I didn't particularly like it either.

. . . I've been thinking night and  
 day about whose fault it was,  
 and every time I think about it,  
 out comes a new fault to eat  
 up the old one;  
 But always there's a fault left!

*Lorca*

I majored in English not through passion, though the passion came later, but because it came easily to me and I didn't have to struggle for good grades. I read the ancients, I read the moderns; I read the neo-classics and especially, I read the romantics. And slowly I become aware of things bigger, of the awesome magnitude of literature; and this is what I have tried time after time to communicate to my students.

Atlas bore Earth on his shoulders. Christ bore the sins of the world on his shoulders. I bear the oppressive burden of failure on mine. Don't condemn me for not going on; I've been trying for three years now. If a man is to survive, he must recognize his limitations and learn to live with them.

Oh, though it seems like so long ago, I can recall my early enthusiasm.

Go, teach Eternal Wisdom how  
 to rule —  
 Then drop into thyself, and  
 be a fool!

*Pope*

Was it presumptuous of me to try to force a little knowledge into the skulls of those . . . those . . . those people before me? Are all those who sat before me destined to be automatons?

In three years not one sensitive soul! Had I been able to reach one, just one among the multitude, I would have tasted glory, achievement, success. But try as I might, I couldn't.

Month after month the gathered  
 rains descend  
 Drenching yon secret Aethiopian  
 dells . . .

*Shelley*

They just sat there, silent, immobile, staring. How I kept my sanity, I'll never know. I'd try. Silence. Try again. More silence. And so on, for the last three years.

Now I can't go on. It's a farce. I acknowledge defeat; I'm beaten; I'm broken. I don't know what I'll do. A man has to eat. I could play the game, pretend, and still collect my paycheck. Who would know? But they haven't done that to me. If I haven't reached them, they at least haven't reached me. I'll survive. It's ironic, thinking back on it. Four years in the making, three years in the breaking. Seven years in a man's life — a vacuum.

. . . choking  
 my flesh with its poisoned weeds,  
 Oh, it isn't my fault —  
 the fault is the earth's —

*Lorca*

— Marcel Duhamel



## Literary Nudism

Envision a world in which there is not, and never has been any form of literary censorship. An author is writing a book in this world; he is free to express any moral issue or truth in any style in which he wishes to write. Suddenly there appears a human form who calls himself "censor" and thus begins a revolution comparable to the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. "Censor" labels the author's book "obscene" — "censored," and suddenly there exists this world's literary "forbidden fruit." As the serpent tempted Eve to partake of the forbidden fruit that she might become all-knowing, so also does "censor" tempt this world's readers to see what secret knowledge lies hidden within the covers of the forbidden book. As Adam and Eve suffered shame in their physical nakedness because of the serpent's temptation, so also does the author's literature suffer the shame of literary nakedness because of the censor's temptation.

Perhaps the above account is a far from accurate explanation of the evolution of shame and protest in literary nudism, but I feel that the theory embodied within it is extremely valid. Literary nudism, I feel, is that state in which literature can exist freely in any form of reality or fiction without restraint of any type of censorship. Why is man ashamed of the reality of literary nakedness? Why must an author clothe his work with substitutions in language, expression, and theme that his work may pass the censors? It is, I feel, because censors have, through their own work, infected society with a sickness that makes their work necessary. When "censor" first began to suggest and tempt obscenity in literary nudism, he stole one of man's greatest gifts — the gift of freedom. He stole man's freedom to choose for himself the books he wanted to read. He stole man's freedom to interpret for himself the worth of both clothed and unclothed literature. At the same time, however, "censor" replaced what he stole with something else; he replaced freedom with a temptation to find obscenity in literature, and from this replacement evolved the *reams* of pure literary trash that man suddenly sought. As long as such trash exists, "censor" has a job.

What, then is the solution? Can man regain his literary freedom in spite of the censors, or must we attempt to regain freedom by regaining a world with no literary restraint? Will the principle that when man has no restraint put on his choices, he will inevitably choose what is best for his work? I feel we must attempt the second solution — a *period of no censorship*, for I believe that as long as there exists some person who introduces a "forbidden fruit" to society, society will be tempted and will fall to literary shame.

— Jean Irza

## I Am An Ambassador

Cast: Five Unnamed Speakers

I

- 1 But I'm an ambassador. I was sent here by the leader of my country to help you.
- 2 What leader? What country?
- 3 Ya, and you gonna help us beat the Russians?
- 1 My father is the leader, but I'm like the leader to . . .
- 3 Where?
- 1 Well, it's hard too describe . . .
- 2 Look, are you some kind of spaceman or something?
- 3 Are you going to wipe out Russia?
- 1 Well, no. I want to help them too.
- 3 You sure you ain't a Russian? Where the hell you from?
- 1 I love the Russians as I love you.
- 4 Is your country big and powerful?
- 1 The power of my father and me could level you and Russia in a single stroke.
- 4 Don't you threaten us, Buddy.
- 1 Unless you follow me, you're doomed.
- 2 Oh, Christ. One of those nuts!
- 3 What's with this ambassador stuff? This man says he knows you were born right near here.
- 5 That's right. He's been makin' trouble ever since he was a kid. As a matter of fact, his father had to marry his old lady.
- 2 What'd you mean, makin' trouble?
- 5 Ah, he's always spoutin' off about how we gotta change our ways, and he tried to close down some vendors, said the building was his, kicked them right out of a public building.
- 1 Those ruffians were desecrating the building.
- 2 You got something against small businessmen?
- 1 That was my father's building.



- 3 He's a Commie!  
 4 He wants to take over the country and change our ways.  
 2 He said he loves the Russians.  
 5 He's a bastard and a trouble-maker.  
 All: Kill him! Kill him! Kill . . .

## II

- 2 Ha! I guess his old man's forgot all about him.  
 3 What a jerk! He said he forgave us.  
 4 I'll flip ya for his overcoat.  
 3 Nah. I don't like red.  
 2 He never did hurt anything.  
 5 I'll bet he don't come back like he said.  
 4 Yeah. He don't look so dangerous on that cross.

—John L. Smith

## CONVERGENCE

(A one act play)

### Characters

Shepherd	Oedipus
Poseidon	Job

The scene: A stage in complete darkness with a black backdrop. The curtains are open. Slowly, a dim light illuminates the left-hand side of the stage revealing a shepherd tending his flock. The light increases in intensity until it gives the impression of daylight. The right-hand side of the stage is still in complete darkness. Instantly, a strong light is turned on revealing Oedipus standing there. This is to give the impression that he has appeared out of thin air. He is straight from Thebes. After a few moments of orientation with his staff, he becomes aware of the shepherd's presence, who has been completely unaware of Oedipus' appearance.

- Oed.: Is this the land of Uz?  
 Shep.: (completely taken aback) It is. Have you traveled far?  
 Oed.: The distance of a troublesome thought.  
 Shep.: With only staff to guide you?  
 Oed.: No.  
 Shep.: How else are blindmen guided?  
 Oed.: In the same manner as those who see.  
 Shep.: (with a puzzled look) Perhaps some water . . .  
 Oed.: (with a knowing smile) Thank you. (he drinks)  
 Shep.: Is your blindness recent?  
 Oedipus releases an audible sigh, as if from spearpoint, but immediately takes command of himself.  
 Oed.: (loudly) No! The Gods have willed that I . . . (painfully) be blind from birth.  
 Shep.: The Gods?  
 Oed.: Forgive me. I'm from a distant shore which rims the Aegean where the Gods are as numerous as the mountain peaks.  
 Shep.: What could have possibly brought you so far?  
 Oed.: There is a man in this land of Uz, his name is Job.  
 Shep.: Our most honored citizen. Do you know him?  
 Oed.: Only by report.  
 Shep.: Shall I summon him for you?  
 Oed.: That will not be necessary.  
 (Job appears as Oedipus did (illuminated by a spotlight, out of nowhere) but this time, in the shepherd's direct line of vision. The shepherd, not sure of what is going on, is at a complete loss to explain Oedipus' appearance. He, hesitantly, starts to leave and finally panics into full flight.)  
 Oed.: Well, he has finally gotten around to it.  
 Job.: It was inevitable though perhaps . . . too soon. I knew the moment he had met us that a time would come . . .  
 Oed.: The doing was mine, not his.  
 Job.: Yours?  
 Oed.: Mine. For twenty-five centuries I have searched for a mind to influence in order to meet you, a mind torn between logic and faith that would not be satisfied with compromise.  
 Job.: How did you manage it?

Oed.: (shouts) Poseidon!  
 (As if the name were a signal, the spotlights, which have been illuminating Oedipus and Job, go out and another lights up on the opposite side of the stage revealing Poseidon sitting on his throne, three-pronged spear and all. The light should be of a blue-greenish tint to give the effect of the underwater world. Oedipus, a tired, dejected Oedipus, slowly walks into the spotlight.)

Pos.: Welcome back, Oedipus. I hope you are in better spirits than your last visit.

Oed.: Spirits? I am completely devoid of them.

Pos.: (alarmed) Do you mean that you have given up your search? Unbelievable! Is this the man that solved the riddle of the Sphinx?

Oed.: Please! I am at the brink of despair. It has only been these visits to your kingdom that have sustained me for so long. Perhaps, if I could rest here for a millennium or so, I could make a last effort.

Pos.: Your presence is always our pleasure. Your chair awaits you. A chair is pushed forth out of the darkness. Oedipus feels for it with his staff, makes contact and seats himself as if he were a defeated man. He sits there, dejectedly, for a few moments and then, as if a storm were starting to brew inside him, he grapples with the arms of the chair, thrusts himself to his feet, raises his arms (spread-eagle), and lifts his head in prayer.

Oed.: O impersonal force which absolutely determines all events, am I never to be given the opportunity to see? Is my destiny eternal darkness? O inflexible alioter, surely, somewhere within your pattern there must lie one moment in which I may equate my heart and soul. You, who have spoken forth immeasurable life, all I am asking you for is one heart, one mind, one man who will be my path to Job. I implore you, send me the understanding which I seek.  
 (His head and arms are lowered and he slumps back into his chair and meditates. A noise distracts him.)

Oed.: What is that infernal whirling?

Pos.: Ha! He's back. I've never seen an earthling like him. Each morning, just before Apollo starts his journey, this man appears with staff, similar to yours but much greater in length with hook and chord attached. He wades into my waters, grasps his staff with feet astride and hurls, with all his might, his hook into my kingdom . . . as if his spirit were attached, seeking the solitude of my depths. I have sympathy for this man. He's trapped between the order and the beauty of the day's return, the clarity of its light — the mystery of my kingdom, the logic of his mind — the empathy within his heart.

Oed.: (as if to himself) Order — beauty. Light? Mystery? (he becomes aroused) Mind?? Heart?? (he rises hopefully) Are his roots Hellenic?

Pos.: Yes! And he knows you quite well.

Oed.: Great Zeus!! Is this the man that I . . . How old is he?

Pos.: Too old for your purpose, I'm afraid but . . . (he strokes his chin in meditation)

Oed.: In the name of Helios, don't torture me this way. Reveal your thoughts!

Pos.: Before the tides complete their cycle, he is to name a child.

Oed.: (raising his head, as if his prayer had been answered) To name a child . . . What possible better way could there be?

Pos.: Surely, Oedipus, you're not thinking of branding the child with a name that cannot be dissociated from patricide and incest? Surely, you have more . . . Unless?

Oed.: Yes!! Yes!! We will name him after the Wise and the Honored One . . . Sophocles!

Pos.: Brilliant, Oedipus!

Oed.: In present-day society, man's search for identification is of the utmost importance. The child, who will become completely frustrated with the meaninglessness of that society, will have but one direction to turn . . . back to the glory that was Greece. In order to compensate for the many inferior aspects of his personality he will attempt to equate himself with his namesake and in doing so, there will be no possible way for him to avoid my total personality, the paradoxes of life.

Pos.: But will Job be there?

Oed.: Job is always there. In early life the child's roots will become firmly entrenched in the Christian faith, and in the following decades, life will provide the necessary conflicts in order for Job to appear. (he starts to back out of the spotlight) The plan is perfect. Is your influence over this man great enough?

Pos.: Leave it to me, Oedipus; Sophocles it is!  
 He rises and hurls his spear toward the shore. The light goes out and, simultaneously, one lights up on the opposite side of the stage revealing Job and Oedipus as they were.

Job.: Don't you think you were a little hard on the child?

Oed.: Poetic justice! Since Sophocles created my predicament, who but another Sophocles should resolve it. Enough on that matter! I haven't searched for two and a half millenniums to quibble over trifles. I wish to get right to the crux of the matter.

- Job.: And exactly what is the crux of the matter, Oedipus?
- Oed.: (Oedipus starts to pace the stage) I wish to know how you, being the man you were, having the mind you had, could have allowed that God to placate you, could have accepted that faith without understanding. You had the mind of a Greek! . . . a compulsion for comprehensibility!
- Job.: Oedipus, where the Greek mind was occupied with an outward investigation into the nature of the universe and of human behavior the Hebraic heart listened within itself to hear the voice of God. Growth in the classic world mean clarifying, organizing, and adding to a storehouse of principals; in the Hebraic world it mean a deeper, purer, finer vision of the Creator and His relationship to man. Surely, Oedipus, you must have learned from your last investigation that the path to truth lies within the heart of the speaker and not in some abstract plane of thought.
- Oed.: Are you implying that the mind of man is incapable of comprehending the universal purpose, if there be one? That is the exact challenge the Greek mind accepted. Why, the most striking new doctrine propounded by your author was the right of man to question the intent of God, a right which was clearly indicated by God's approval of your complaining and self-vindication.
- Job.: I spoke in ignorance . . . without knowledge. God introduced a new dimension by raising the issue at stake from the finite level of man to the infinite level of God. He bowed in order to make me aware of a higher purpose . . . an ultimate good. My denial of God's justice was due to that ignorance.
- Oed.: Maybe you are still ignorant? Has it ever occurred to you that you may have been placated by a God that holds a jealous hostility toward man's progress in civilization? Why must God be just and existence have purpose? Don't you realize that the basic premise of your faith is hope? And what is hope but a product of the human mind to offset the unacceptable? Are you still unaware that it is a characteristic of human nature to regard anything which is disagreeable as untrue? How can you put so much trust in your faith?
- Job.: I know it as I know my heart . . . I have no knowledge why it beats; I only know that it imparts the force that makes a soul complete.  
(Oedipus thinks about this for a moment and is about to reply but Job interrupts him.)  
Even your own author once stated, "Not to meditate herein lies the good life."
- Oed.: (forcibly) It is not the good which I seek, but truth, be it good or bad!

- Job.: Oedipus, you are standing on the shoulders of your pride in order to find your answer.
- Oed.: Am I the only proud one? I noticed that even in the face of God you maintained your own ways before Him. How could you, being the man you were, do otherwise? How can I, being Oedipus, do other than what I am now doing? In your own words you called your God unjust, immoral, a capricious tyrant, a corrupt judge, and yet, after you had condemned the justice of that God, you still expected to receive from Him a verdict of acquittal. This is logic?
- Job.: Was I in a position to be logical? My children claimed, my loved one gone, my body enveloped by excruciation.  
Yet through that anguish evolved a luminosity which showed me . . . showed me that God stands above the wisdom of man, that the wisdom of the race is greater than that of the individual.
- Oed.: Is it? Is it? I noticed that you did not accept the wisdom of those three comforters. Those patient practitioners of pretence offered you, as you are now offering me, the way of submission and humility. An you, in your greatest moment, asserted your mind above the beliefs of a nation whose history was as old as time.
- Job.: I asserted my mind above the hypocrisies of those beliefs, not above the beliefs themselves. Those three believed "religion to be a bargain, humility the best policy, and morality the coin which purchases peace." At that moment "I symbolized the revolt of individual conscience against organized religion, the claim of man against ecclesiasticism — not of man against God." They attempted to undermine my faith, not in God, but in myself. My confidence lay not in my pride but in the honesty of my intellect. (shaking his head from side to side) Pride! Even your own fellow countryman, one of the greatest minds of all time, used you as the classic example of how such a tragic flaw could be a man's undoing.
- Oed.: (in a complete rage) Tragic flaw? What did that over-intellectualized, mercenary Macedonian know about tragedy? He sold his services to a king, built schools for the elite only, and became so engrossed in his philosophical dilemmas that he missed living. And when his moment of trial came he fled . . . fled the city of Athens valuing his life above his ideals. And what did he do to me? He categorized me as if I were a thing apart from all men with his pompous, imbecile definition. Find me a man who is lacking such a flaw! "I was a man of high principles and probing intelligence and I followed the prompting of that intelligence to the final consequence of self-knowledge." Pride? As the hopelessness of my situation darkened, did I allow my self-esteem to interfere with my passion for discovering that terrible truth? It



has been said that my character was my fact but doesn't this also apply to you? (Job seems to consent) Then why should God appear to Job and not to Oedipus? You were shown the beauty and the order of the universe while I was confronted by this.

With a wave of his hand, without looking, he gestures toward the backdrop. A light is turned on revealing the corpse of Jocasta hanging there.

In the name of Nox, Job, you know as well as I that she was a noble woman. She had been criticized for taunting the oracles yet what were those taunts but a plea to avert tragedy. Did that God which appeared to you, who was so busy with His higher purpose, did He appear as though He had the time to judge such utterings . . . and if so, (again gesturing toward the backdrop) is this His idea of a just retribution? If this is justice (loudly) I am hateful of the Gods!

(Job is about to speak when a voice, sounding like an echo from the past, seems to issue forth from the mouth of Jocasta. It is audible only to Job.)

Echo. Curse God and die!

(Job stares at the corpse and back to Oedipus. He takes a step towards Jocasta and hesitates. The light illuminating Jocasta fades out Job regains his composure and speaks to Oedipus.)

Job.: (pleadingly) Oedipus, in order for man to become harmonious with the impulse of the universe, he must be made aware of the inadequacy of the human intellect . . . that there is a power in this universe which humanity cannot control.

Oed.: (resoundingly) Only if it be true!

Job.: (imploringly) Do not seek to be master, Oedipus!

Oed.: Shades of Creon!! Ghost of Tiresius!! Must you fling my past at me? Will those two never leave me in peace?

Job.: Why is it that you are incapable of facing your past? Are you still unable to understand why they have become an eternal segment of your conscience . . . a spot on that white majestic robe of your soul? Those two friends represented a painful truth which you have never been able to accept.

Oed.: Friends? They were my vultures; I was their Prometheus! They never missed an opportunity to gorge that wound, a wound which they had inflicted.

Job.: They merely pointed it out to you, they did not inflict it. You asked me if I had ever considered that I may have been placated by God in my ignorance. Has it ever occurred to you, that since you were never able to judge Creon and Tiresius fairly and objectively, that perhaps you may have misjudged yourself? Are

you still unaware that your character contains both the virtues and the vices for which the fifth-century Athenians were both famous and notorious? At Thebes, were you unaware of your overconfidence, the bold conception and execution of your plans, your unreasoning rage, your duplicity towards the Gods, that every step your intelligence prompted you was one step nearer to disaster, your clear vision blindness?

Oed.: (visibly shaken, trying to avoid the issue) I noticed that when God came speaking out of his whirlwind, He did not utter one word of vindication, and yet, you prostrated yourself in the dust. Degrading!

Job.: I asked for recognition, not for mercy. I saw myself as I was, not as I wanted to be. Please do not try to change the subject, Oedipus. We are at the point of removing a major barrier between our differences. I only ask of you one thing, (emphatically) Know thyself!

(A chorus of voices is heard from offstage. It is the chorus from "Oedipus Rex." As they speak, Oedipus slowly turns his head with mouth agape as if hearing voices from the past. He starts to wander, trying to locate the voices. He is almost staggering. The voices are only audible to Oedipus.)

Chorus: "He seemed like a strong tower against Death and first among the fortunate: He sat upon the ancient throne of Thebes and all men called him great. But, looking for a marriage-bed, he found the bed of his birth, tilled the field his father had tilled, cast seed into the same abounding earth; entered through the door that had sent him wailing forth. Beggetter and begot as one! How could that be hid? What darkness cover up that marriage bed? Time watches, he is eagle-eyed, and all the works of man are known and every soul is tried."

(Oedipus has slowly fallen to his knees; his right hand holds his bowed head. He is facing the audience. After a few moments, Job sits upon the stage (Buddhist fashion) about five feet away from Oedipus. Job is facing Oedipus. The spotlight on Job dims considerably. Oedipus, who has been completely crushed by his self-realization, starts to speak, oblivious of his surroundings.)

Oed.: In early youth I roamed the land of ancient Corinth where temples stood as mountains stand reflected on the blue Aegean.  
Each starlit morn toward sunside rocks  
I'd make my way to woo the fire-orb . . .  
woo it with my expectation . . .  
joined by screaming salutations of gulls to sun.  
That spangled splendor would respond as if we were its Orpheus.  
From those same rocks, on one such day,



the sea appeared in storm's embrace  
and leaped, in all its madness,  
with masochistic ecstasy.  
That fury was my exaltation.  
Till, spun as a drunken coin,  
emerged a boat with dripping prow  
whose port . . . was obliteration.

Job.: A childhood friend?

Oed.: (slowly nods his head in the affirmative)  
The boy, in dislocated, bloodstained pose lay still as any stone.  
From the mountain and the sea I requested explanation, I  
demanded reparation.  
The mountain stood true, the sea rolled true . . . indifferent to  
my consternation.  
As hot tears flew, back through the town I ran for Merope's  
sure embrace.  
On receiving consolation I was told my obligation.  
With weighted words from writhing heart I was told the code of  
kings; since one day I would be the ruler of the land, it would  
no longer be my privilege to reveal any weakness of emotion.  
From that day forward I was to exemplify the strength and  
solidarity of a Grecian temple.  
(his head hangs a little lower)  
A temple . . . a human monument . . . to hypocrisy.  
(As he finishes his story, he raises his head and holds his body  
more erect, as if a tremendous burden had been lifted from his  
shoulders. A calmer, more serene Oedipus speaks.)

Oed.: I'm sure you have a much more significant tale to tell. (Job does  
not answer) Come Job, it is common knowledge, for anyone of  
the "Book of Job" are by the hand of another author. In the  
prologue you were portrayed as a paragon of virtue, a supreme  
model of faith; this is quite incompatible with the man who later  
became a doubter, a blasphemer, a challenger of God.

Job.: I thought it was quite humorous myself. Even moreso, the seg-  
ment which gives the reason for my suffering as a wager between  
God and Satan.

Oed.: The fabrication of the epilogue is even more apparent.

Job.: True, Oedipus. Quite true. My bibliocentric restoration is nothing  
but a product of human craving for self-deception. To think that  
the essence of my faith which had evolved from that suffering  
could be overshadowed by that state of mind which I had just  
transcended is quite ironical.

Oed.: What really happened?  
(Job rises and slowly starts to pace the stage, as if seeking the  
proper words to express himself. The light on Oedipus fades.)

Job.: (echoing Oedipus' words) What really happened . . . (stops and  
turns toward Oedipus)

How does one convey transcendence through the medium of the  
tongue? (starts to pace again)

From immeasurable matter in infinite space evolved my gift of  
consciousness. Did I stand in wonder and awe?

(bows his head, slowly shaking it from side to side)

.....I asked for more.

"His candle shone upon my head and by that light I walked  
through darkness."

Oedipus, man is so mesmerized by his misconceptions of reality  
that only events of the most tragic nature will cause him to re-  
examine his ideals, will make him aware of that darkness. Only  
in my worst moment of anguish, as I sat there in that dust, was  
I made aware of my separation from the ultimate source of  
meaning, the intrinsic worth of life. And in that realization, I  
was reunited. From that reunion came light, and with that light,  
peace.

"If life is a problem its solution is faith. We do not see the answer,  
we trust the answerer. We do not gain the victory, we are united  
with the victor." And yet . . . just as in my darkest moment that  
ray appeared, in my surest moment . . . a shadow.

Oed.: Job!! Not you! Are you implying. . .

Job.: Oedipus Do not make the same mistake as the others. I am only  
a man. Faith, for the earthly, is never entire.

Oed.: Incredible! Uncertainty was the last implication I expected to  
hear from the mouth of the man from Uz. If this be so, what  
possible basis do you have for the essence of your faith? Explain  
it to me. I have waited twenty-five centuries for this moment.  
(Job attempts to speak. He opens his mouth and gestures with  
his hands but no words are issued forth. He appears to be caught  
in a turmoil, as if he were unable to co-ordinate his tongue with  
his emotions. The spotlight, illuminating Job, starts to fade and  
flicker.)

Oed.: (shouting) Job!! What's happening? (Job continues trying to  
express himself, with the same results.) Job!!

Job.: (his light comes back to full brightness) He's incapable of ex-  
pressing it . . . doesn't know its essence.

Oed.: (hit by his realization, he lifts his head toward the heavens,  
raising his arms with clenched fists.) Great Zeus!! I've picked  
the wrong man! We're trapped within the limitations of the mind  
of our author, a mind which does not know that essence.

Job.: Doesn't know but once knew, and you have no-one to blame but  
yourself.

Oed.: Myself?

Job.: Yes! The overpowering influence of the classic Greek mind has so obscured that faith he once knew that he is no longer able to express it. I'm afraid you've done it again, Oedipus.

Oed.: O blind, inexorable Fate, my path upon the infinite is ever unchanging!

Job.: Perhaps there is still hope. Withdraw the influence of your logic from his mind and allow him to re-examine his heart. Intuition is the master teacher. And, upon that re-examination, we shall meet again.

Oed.: So be it!

— *Sophocles Yidiaris*

