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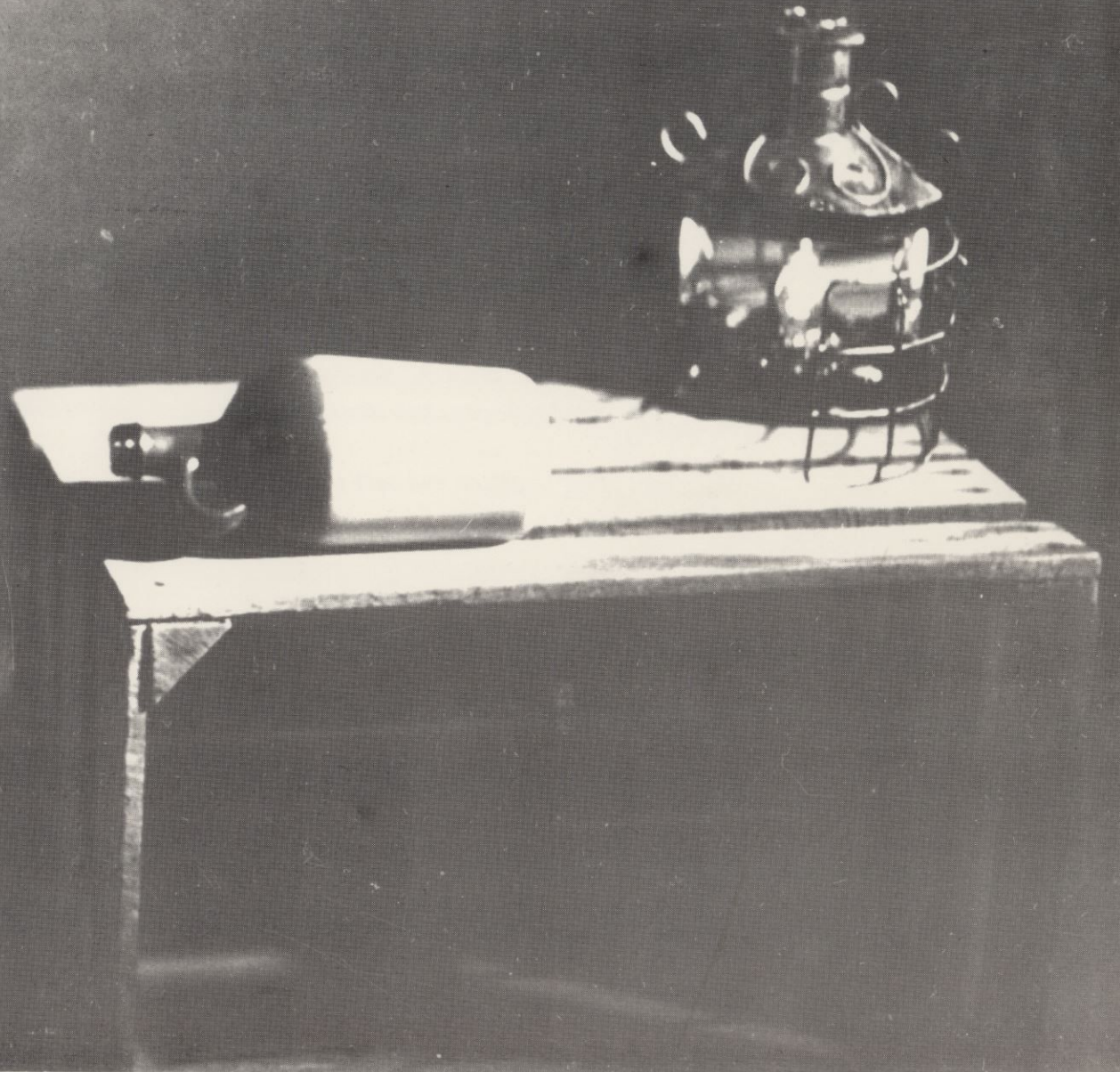


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MURMUR

I

The great man, his heart too full
Of rhythm to hold its own beat--
Ambles up the slide. The ferris wheel
Is dead but will be new tomorrow.
The man's body performing live
Suddenly falls. His breath rolls
Off its short edge, and
No obstacle exists but the remainder of
Himself.
The polite chatter of the rain
Pauses, tilts its head very close,
Then continues on its ride down.

II

"Did you move?" questioned Moon.
"No," Sun offered,
"But I glimpsed the crawl of amoebian spades."
"Oh." The moon filled and was satisfied.

III

The aisle between us glossed its name vanilla-fine,
Then cooled like snow upon a pane.
I never thought that time would stain
That lily-plan.
But down the slope, the varnish ran
Into a mass of Cirrus tears
That dried a hole in all the years
Men fashioned in a mound.
And now to watch what Abram found
Become an echo in the tree,
A haunting chord of mockery
Of what he once had understood
To be the sum of sky and good.

Elisa Walls

DREAMING

Those who suffer nightly
spin yarns from frayed memories
and weave things together not really there -
lessons from the past.
They journey through yesterday
and end up south of tomorrow,
locked in a void of nothing doing -
contented in a land of no one cares.
Their eyes are trick mirrors
that distort reality by stretching the truth
or covering up something there
not intended to be seen.
These people awake with a start
and quickly try to return to sleep -
a haven from the things of today,
a nightmare for those who know.

Tim Olnick

PRAHU

The wave breaks its pattern
And dashes at the many
brown ankles and hings
of Elders and children
Who help push the Prah
Into the Pacific Ocean.

They glide serenely between
White corals into the green
To frolic with dolphins
And the fishermen in them
Patiently scan for fish.

Back on the moon-coloured beach
Between the slimness of palms
And the water's edge
Silence peeps
At the gull on a hull
Of a desicated prahu
Symbol of the living dead
Lying upside down and
Fouled by dogs.

Keota Coyote

OBEY

Cater to my wishes peasant,
I-you cannot offend.
I am holy.
I am pure.
Obey or meet your end.

Susan Kisner

Books, poetry, ideas, architecture, man, nature.

joyous triumph,

Captured time, possessed;

let it go,

but don't destroy

watch it grow,

possess once more,
joys and sorrows of life.

Barbara Heaton



TWISTED TRIOS

I

Fifty-fifty. Eighty?
Your mother and I are twins. We will not be
Pressed into a barred isosceles that cries.
You are not of us.
You can get lost
Continuously sitting solo in the choir loft
Chanting questions to yourself.
"But if I'm not yours, what boundary am I?"

II

There was no room among the nails for another.
The Ghost flew vaguely above him,
The Monarch observed, clapping his thunder
When the hour struck dead.
But his body felt little tie between that Light and Dark,
His soul was in current with love.

III

Man thinks.
I am a plant,
I am an animal,
I do not think--
Do you--

Elisa Walls

The red licorice tops squeal,
flash out alarm
and brings back memories
of Danny Bacon and others
no longer here.

This year
Smith's fall odor
Passed to Sullivan.
Someone in Glennon is playing
an old Nelson album
that is so embittered with age
it seems only to
scream out the scratchy
threats
of Haggard's "Okee"
and other narrow truths
from long players.

The licorice tops
flash away
after they've consumed
another.
Their victim's eyes scream out
Ruin.
In a way no sirens
could conceal.

Joe Pagana



Alone on the barren hill
Stand I
The rain falls softly to the valley
To the earth
And she drinks
Before me stretches a foreboding land
Behind me slopes my unworthy life
I look ahead
My soul beckons me to venture forth
But my earthly nature cries No --
Only more I descend the side of life
Sliding back to the flatlands of
bland imagination

TRIBUTE TO A KING

The magnificent magnetism of him.
Like some lordly lunar being of ancient lore,
his diademed radiance radiates
a glaring ghostly glare
shining silver, sleek and sure.

Swathed in his ethereal cloak
draping in defiant folds
of smooth voluptuous velvet,
glaring down upon the distant earth,
as one who knows he reigns supreme-
as he gains the worship needed of a king.

Even the seething sea sees
and longs to loosen his bonds of gravity
rising in rushing roars
skyward
where only fowl fly
to spy
the wonderous but
not to question why
things are as the stars
destine
all their fates and ends.

And on the land!
Like a stretching, reaching, clutching hand
the branches of the trees
kiip the secret of who is to be.

And the pale patron of the sky,
his ghostly glow enthrrows
upon the ponderous ponds
reflecting the wretching agony
of the liquid and the light
writhing in the wreaths of the east when
when the moon
rises
to
reign and feign his lordship
of the sky.

NOTHING THERE

I looked into your eyes
and saw nothing
but tears hiding in a mind too tired to cry.
I looked at your hands
and saw nothing
but hard work and disappointment since the day you were born.
I looked inside your heart
and saw nothing
but love lost over and over and over again.
I looked inside my own heart
and saw nothing
but all the love in the world for you.

Tim Olnick

Two persons you are.
The one whose presence
shares the breadth
of a naked mast,
leaving me still.

The one with words
that raise thought's sails
and carry me so far.

John O'Doherty

I am but a lump of clay
Void of all purpose and meaning
Waiting the creator's touch
You are the artist
All power lies within
The strength to mold a woman
The knowledge to build a life.

-Lg-

A SUMMER POEM

Cool summer nights
with moonlight shining in the ocean
and rainbows shining in your eyes
a heaven here on earth
next to you.
Intangible delights
felt without any visible motion
more subtle than lightning in the skies
impossible to determine its worth
next to you.
Powerful sights
filling the mind with a heavenly potion
closing in to create a misty disguise
awakening to a new birth
next to you.

Tim Olnick

THE YOUNG BUCK PRIVATE

A young buck private strained his eyes to see things
promised to him by nobody in particular -
towers of silver laden high with
patriotic dreams of far too many years;
vast green valleys with many treasures buried there -
human results of far too many tears;
tremendous throngs of worshiping admirers
cutting loose with far too many cheers;
scenes of splendor nestled in distant, storied lands -
desolate misery drowned in far too many beers -
spectacular sights all around.
His heart throbbed with excitement generated by anticipation
of powerful dramas waiting to be played -
lands to be captured,
fortunes to be made.
He jumped up eagerly, ready to join the fray -
Only, a bullet through this young buck private's head
made him quite, quite dead -
another result of far too many tears
and patriotic dreams of far too many years
pouring forth in blood and bodies lying on the ground
as useless as the minds that put them there.
Hail the conquering hero.

Tim Olnick

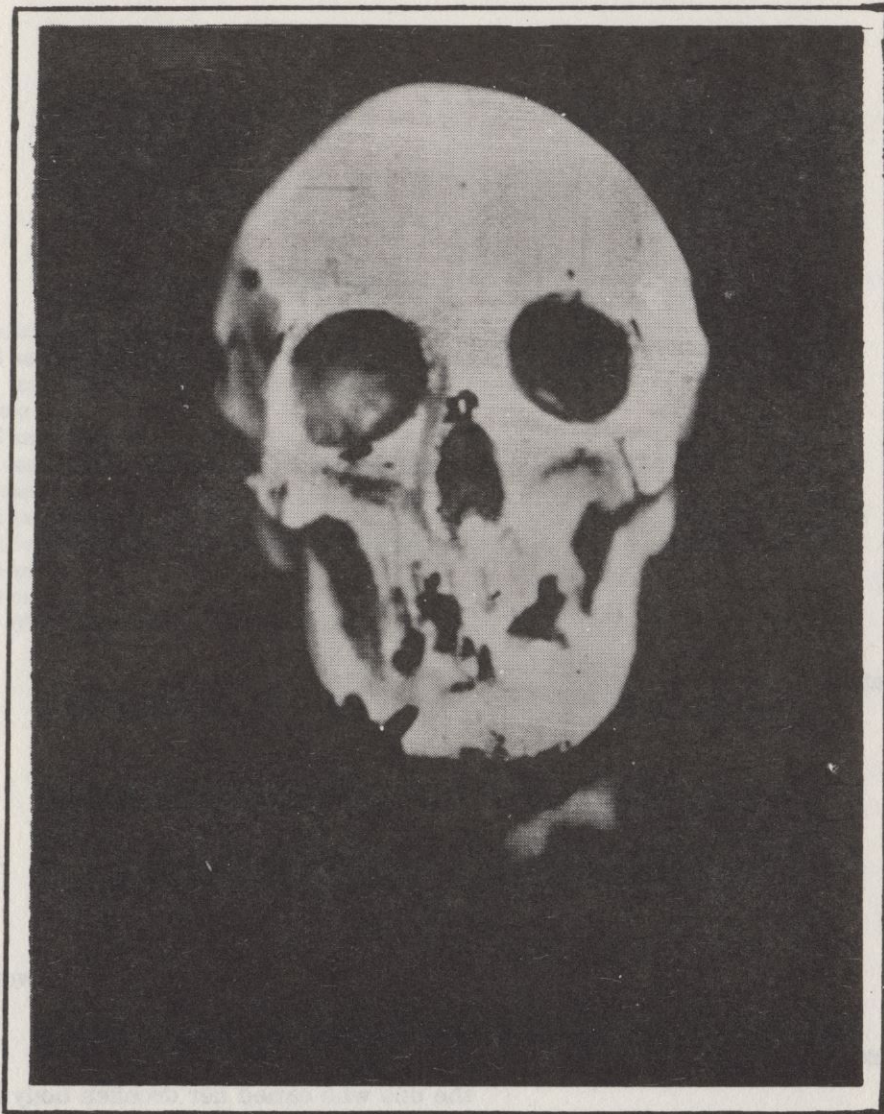
SUMMER PERSONAE

I can't tell you it was an elusion
because the sun wasn't hot on my back
and Molley wouldn't talk to me
at all

The quiet girl on the green porch wouldn't
answer my hellow
or egnolege that I was,
a year ago
the one who caried her dronken body home.

I'm sure it couldn't be an elusion,
the coldness was too sharp
to penetrating,
old friends wouldn't create that
sort of reality?

Joe Pagana



Bill Mahon

I wish -
but I seem only to be dreaming.
I hope -
but I seem only to be anticipating,
I want -
but I seem only to be coveting.
I desire -
but I seem only to be lusting.
I like -
but I seem only to be approving.
I love -
but I seem only to be caring.
I die -
and I seem only to be **nothing**.

Deb Leader

SOMEONE TAKE ME AWAY

FRANCIS THE CLIMBER

*Air conditioning in the winter
snowballs in the summer*

*Page of from
answers with
Rhythmic
Intricate
worship*

*pragmatic
children
sensitive*

*Practical
winter
Oratory
for
Date
Group
name
point
wants
Book
stage
book
supplies
someone
My
page
Spend
The*

*A soft pudgy child of just one year
Conceived a hero's plan
To climb atop and defy death's fear
The bureau drawer that stood next to the fan*

*Clad in a herculean rag
With steel that flanked his nodulous girth
Francis earned the "monkey" tag
The elders bestowed soon after his birth*

*Not fond of always looking up --
(Seeing the world was such a chore)
Francis like a restless pup
Was determined to escape the floor*

*With great physical dexterity
And a lust for freedom not fully deserving
He gained entrance to the bottom drawer
Maintaining his balance with poise unnerving*

*Pulling out the next drawer just slightly less
Francis bellied-up to the walnut veneer
Not realizing he stood on a woman's dress
But knowing the peak was getting near*

*Endeavoring to reach the next nearest height
Francis encountered a strange surprise
Contorting and twisting his mass in flight
Had placed his lumbar cloth over his eyes*

*Flailing and blind and wondering where
The direction of success did loom
Francis didn't seem to care
That he was wading in a puddle of perfume*

*By some stroke of luck Fran realized his dream
He had reached the top of this bedroom mountain range
Smelling of Chanel and donned in Jergens cream
He stood there proudly on 40 cents change*

"ANATOMICAL ANONYMOUS"

*Tell me orbicular obliquity
Oh muscle 'neath the nostrilled nose
Be thee an oral oddity
Or have you purpose no one knows?
So structured and so subtly
You crease and dip with fine finesse;
And though above the lip you be
Your stratagem doth lose no less.
Perhaps a groove to channel sweat
Or rhinal spew from up above;
A tuft for unshaved hair she'll bet
A tool to tongue for slippery love.
Yet hear this now you earless prow
You boneless piece of limb unlame
For were it not too late to now
I'd have your fame with my own name.*

John O'Doherty

FOR NANCY

*In just,
And just
In case,
You wanted
To know;
Sniffing,
Is just
Blowing
Your nose
In reverse.*

Dennis Harman

SOMEONE TAKE ME AWAY

*Air-conditioning in the wintertime -
snowballs in the middle of July.
Pages of free verse which all have to rhyme -
answers without anybody asking why.
Realistic dreams at night
fearless men being filled with fright
worshippers of eternal youth all dying around me
pragmatic conservatives all trying to astound me
children of the night turning up during the day -
someone had better come and take me away.*

*Blackheads on a white-faced actor -
winter coats being sent to Acapulco.
College presidents all driving old tractors -
fortune tellers trying to figure out who'll go.
Dogsleds racing at Indy
people in a wind tunnel that's really not windy
navigators everywhere losing their way
politicians actually with sensible things to say
Transylvanian castles wall-to-wall in L.A. -
someone had better come and take me away.*

*Grandfather clocks all without their hands -
streakers in the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.
Real estate agents without any lands -
bronze statues all trying to fly higher.
Books with cast-iron pages
stagecoach drivers driving invisible stages
golfers hitting soap-bubble balls
house painters slinging mud over bare white walls
musicians everywhere without a song to play -
someone had better come and take me away.*

*Me without you
one without two
world with no love
below with no above
night following night and forgetting the day -
someone better come and take me away.*



Of what use am I to myself if I am to palter about a matter of importance, my life? I cannot purify my thoughts, actions, or triumphs without first extinguishing this war I wage with myself. If this war were to go on it is of no doubt that I would end. For how would I defend or empower a triumph over the most powerful human in the world, me? Me who knows every weakness I possess. To construe a strategic plan to win the war I must first become allied with myself, for she has all the implements I need to pursue the mission of self-renewal. She holds nature and man in her arms covered and mothered til they gasp for breath. If nature and man were to die, then she dies. She cannot live without them. She cannot ascend above herself because she lives her life in vain. Thus is my testimony to this point in my life.

Barbara Heaton

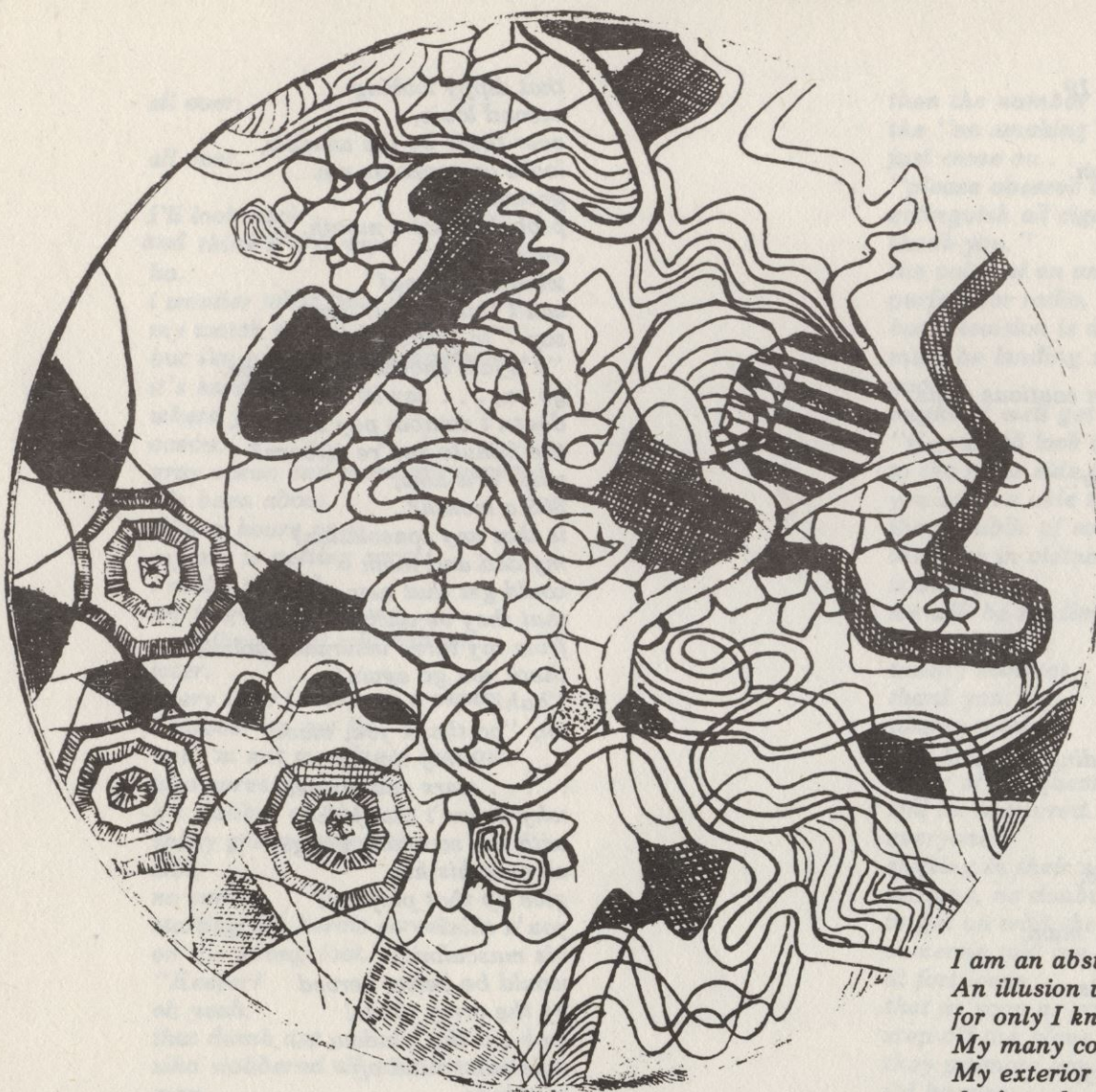
*i am locked in my crevice
my arms need to cling onto
something free,
my body detests stationary positions,
my mind desires assorted
vibrations,
but,
most of all,
my mind yearns to comprehend
what IS.*

Jill Klevan

TIME

The time? What is the correct time? Are you having a good time? No, I haven't enough time. This is not time for that. How can you possibly think of that at a time like this? Funny, I lost track of the time. How time flies. I don't know what time it is. I don't care what time it is. Time? Fathertime. Mothertime. Dinnertime. Time. Time to go home. Time to leave. What is time? Time? Time to remember. Time to forget. Righttime. Wrongtime. Goodtime. Badtime. Time, Forever.

Susan Kisner



ABSTRACT

*I am an abstraction.
An illusion which needs no intelligent analysis,
for only I know my meaning.
My many colors are bold yet they hide their true essence.
My exterior is criticized by the ignorance of those who
don't understand me.
They try to reach inside me...
Can they see? LOOK DEEP! Can they tear out my feelings?
Can they locate a meaning ... a purpose?
They pretend with a conceited gloat.
They fail to see my center of interest ... my heart.
They are fools who cannot conceive my purpose and they
conclude that I am hideous.
Just another abstract with no potential.
I laugh at them ... for only I know what I am.*

CHAPTER 19

35,000 feet
above endless ocean.
it's unbelievable!
freezing alaska,
chilling japan,
gray pacific,
life, . . .
it's all so damn
unbelievable!
just days before, in cautious arms,
saying farewell
to everything
even mildly familiar.
cramming
every possible
tick of life
into my thirty day
stay of execution.
now here, . . .
in the belly
of a flying tiger.
painted smiles
on ugly, condescending stewardesses.
ears popping,
eyes lost
in search of
the unknown future.
"huh?"
oh, "no thank you, mam."
no coffee for me.
it gives me the shits.
especially now, . . .
and the john
is twenty rows away, . . .
one colonel,
two light colonels,
one major,
four captains,
and four lieutenants
away.
i wonder if any of them
are as scared
as I am?
probably been through it
all before.

that dippy looking
second louie,
over there by the window,
looks as green as me.
greenier.
probably last a month, . . .
maybe two.
what about me?
can't think about that!
say to yourself:
"it's just another experience."
go on, . . . say it!
doesn't combat pay start
the minute you're airborne?
what is it now,
\$65 a month?
is that any consolation?
my dad and mom
could get that new car
that they've always wanted
from my three insurance policies.
there you go again!
"huh?"
oh, "no thank you, mam."
. army times!
. stars and stripes!
why doesn't that jerk
with the scrambled eggs
all over his hat
give up that playboy?
you'd think
his masculinity
would be better served
by the army times!
look out the window, . . .
take your mind off
of things.
wish i could sleep.
maybe that's it!
maybe i'm asleep!
I'm in my little bed
in portland, oregon,
sleeping!
this is just a nightmare!
no way!
the vomit bag is too real.
oh, . . . it's like everything else.
once it's all over,

all over,

all over,

*I'll look back
and think it's funny.*

ha.

*i wonder what time it is.
my watch says it's 1:33,
but i'm not in seattle anymore.*

*it's hard to tell
where you are.*

ocean.

gray ocean and more gray ocean.

*it's been about
fifteen hours now, . . .*

my ass is getting sore!

i really should

try to get some sleep, . . .

*no telling what will happen
later.*

every time i sleep on a plane

i slobber on my tie.

but i'm not wearing a tie now.

who cares

*if i slobber on these
shitty green fatigues?*

ahh,

no sense

*starting my heroic career
on the wrong foot.*

"Keefer?

oh yeah,

that dumb ass

who slobbered all over himself."

man,

it's getting dark

out there!

isn't that when those guys

in the black pajamas

do all their dirty work?

don't worry,

an ak-47

can't down a flying tiger, . . .

can it?

what can i do

to take my mind off of the morbid?

i can count windows,

then seats,

then the number of guys with crew-cuts, . . .

the "no smoking" sign

just came on . . .

"please observe the 'no smoking' sign.

extinguish all cigarettes.

thank you."

the voice of an angel!

perfect for radio,

but television is definitely out!

must be landing soon.

good,

might as well get started.

"if you will look out

to the right side of the plane,

you will be able to see

the republic of south vietnam.

the time in vietnam

is 9:23 p.m..

we will be landing in

approximately

twenty minutes.

thank you."

twenty minutes

and

many of my questions

will be answered.

everyone's

shifting in their seats.

anxious, no doubt,

to get on with the gory, . . .

someone told me

at fort lewis

that as soon as you

step off the plane

they promote you.

i'd be nice,

but i don't believe it.

who'd be left

to do all of the shit jobs?

the "fasten seat belts" sign is on, . . .

won't be long now.

there's that angel's voice again.

how the hell

do you get

the back of these damn seats up?

preparation

for things to come, no doubt.

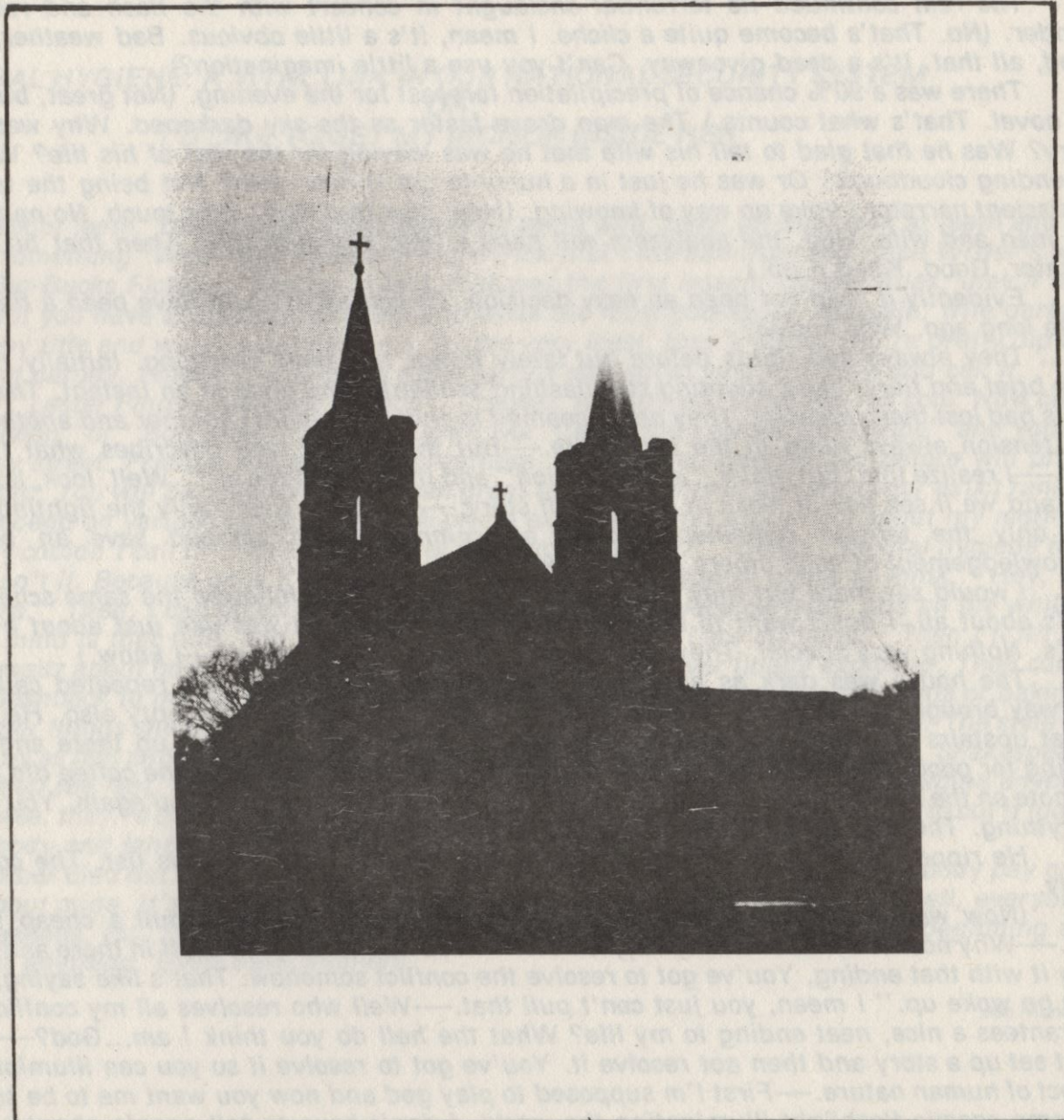
count backwards from one hundred.

100 . . . 99 . . . 98 . . . 97 . . .

chapter 19
of my life
is about to begin.
too bad i could never keep a diary
for longer than a week.
hell,
i'm not ike eisenhower
for christsake!
i'm specialist forth-class
daniel jon keefer,
543-58-2581.
that's all you'll get out of me!
so go ahead!
pull out my fingernails, . . .
slowly burn my flesh, . . .
i don't give a damn!
i'm spec/4 daniel jon keefer,
542-25-8, . . .
542-52-8, . . .
542-58-28, . . .
god bless america,
land that i love.
god damn tricky dick
for taking me away
from the loving arms
of my motherland.
we're losing altitude!
pass the ammunition!
now's when i could really
use a cigarette!
damn "no smoking" sign!
even a traitor
in front of a firing squad
is allowed one last cigarette!
the ground is only about
three hundred feet
below us now.
"please do not leave your seats
until the plane has come
to a complete stop, and
the captain has given
the order.
thank you."
that's the sign
for everyone,
from colonel to private,

[the generals must have private planes,
or maybe there aren't any generals
in vietnam.]
to rush
into the aisles
the minute the plane touches down.
here we go.
the aisles are filling
with hoards of american fighting men
trying to fight their way to the front
of the crowd.
but they won't open the door.
a few "big shots" pushing
their way to the door.
oh,
another twenty minutes
on my feet,
waiting for those damn buses!
they're here, they're here!
bulging duffle bags
and bulging lifers
and skinny kids
from patterson, new jersey
and
tallapoosa, georgia
push through the opening
and down the ramp
[looking all around
with curious, frightened eyes],
and into the ugly green buses.
wire mesh on the windows;
like a prison farm bus.

Daniel Keefer



Bill Mahon

THE PROVERBIAL SHORT STORY

The rain continued its torrential onslaught in concert with the flash and roar of the thunder. (No. That's become quite a cliché. I mean, it's a little obvious. Bad weather, setting, mood, all that. It's a dead giveaway. Can't you use a little imagination?)

There was a 90% chance of precipitation forecast for the evening. (Not great, but at least it's novel. That's what counts.) The man drove faster as the sky darkened. Why was he in a hurry? Was he that glad to tell his wife that he was leaving for the rest of his life? Was it the impending cloudburst? Or was he just in a hurry to get it over with? Not being the traditional omniscient narrator I have no way of knowing. (Hey, now that was a nice touch. No names used, just man and wife. God, the analyzers will have a field day with that. Then that bit with the narrator. Good. Keep it up.)

Evidently it had not been an easy decision. Of course, it could have been a decision he made long ago. Who knows?

They always had fights before but lately things had been changing. Initially the fights were brief and fiery, like a shooting star flashing brilliantly and gone in an instant. Their recent fights had lost their intensity. They never seemed to end; one ran into another and another until a dull tension always hung in the air. (Trite.----But that pretty well describes what I want to stay.----I realize that, but really, "a dull tension" and it "hung in the air". Well, look, let it go for now and we'll see how it looks in the overall story.----Thanks!) Eventually the fighting stopped and only the tension remained. Indeed all communication stopped save an occasional acknowledgement of each others physical existence.

I would say more but they really didn't do much. They followed the same schedule and that's about all. I don't want to bore you with their routine. It was like just about everybody else's. Nothing very special. They just stopped talking. (Good, good.----I know.)

The house was dark as he slipped the car into the garage. His repeated calls up the stairway brought no response. He checked the living room but it was empty also. He hurled a threat upstairs but there was still no response. "To hell with you, stay up there and rot. I'm leaving for good. Never coming back." No answer. Only after he started the coffee did he notice the note on the refrigerator. It said, "I've left. If I'm lucky I'll never see you again. You can keep everything. The only thing I want to get out of this marriage is myself."

He ripped up the note and smashed the refrigerator twice with his fist. The coffee was ready.

(Now wait a minute. I thought O. Henry was dead. You can't pull a cheap trick like that.----Why not? It's all a trick anyway, isn't it?----You had some good stuff in there and then you blow it with that ending. You've got to resolve the conflict somehow. That's like saying, "...and then he woke up." I mean, you just can't pull that.----Well who resolves all my conflicts? Who guarantees a nice, neat ending to my life? What the hell do you think I am...God?----You just can't set up a story and then not resolve it. You've got to resolve it so you can illuminate some aspect of human nature.----First I'm supposed to play god and now you want me to be some kind of damn cosmic flashlight illuminating the world. I don't have to tell people about people. If you're a living, functioning human being you know about people. If you don't, all the short stories in the world won't do it for you. I mean, my life and your life and everybody's life is filled with notes left on refrigerators. Some of them remind, some command, others ask, and a few say good-bye. You write the goddamn story. I don't think I want to anymore.)

ORAL HYGIENE: A VITAL LINK IN OUR NATIONAL SECURITY SYSTEM
OR
I'D LIKE TO GET MY INCISOR INSIDE HER

No, it's not about teeth. You thought it was gonna be some wild, zany, off-beat look at teeth and sex and the army or something. Well, that's just one more trick that I learned from the "Ace Writer's Mail Order Guide to Big-Bucks Fiction." Matter of fact, that was the first lesson. Catchy titles; they'll do it every time. Even if you have absolutely no talent and write the most god-awful, maudlin, trite garbage just give it a catchy title and watch what happens. At the very least, they'll figure you're pretty hip and doing some sort of parody. I mean, if you write some syrupy shit about your first love and call it, "One Night in July" or "Lester Finds True Love" nobody, I repeat, nobody will think you too cool. Now call it "Starship to Oblivion" or "Boil Them Cabbage Down Ma 'Cause the Lettuce Got Crabs" and you my friend are on easy street. Friends will hail your greatness. Friends you never knew before will praise your literary insight. You will be called one of the ten great literary giants of our era (Your exact ranking in that ten will depend on various other factors). A prime example is this story. It's about my mother's death. But I really couldn't call it "The Passing on of Gertrude Arnowitz". Hence, the oral hygiene title. See, it's simple isn't it. Because once I've put down that catchy title you're going to think, "Hey, this guy is pretty sharp." Then, I can go on at great lengths about Mom's lace curtains, and all the while in the back of your mind is that title, and now you're thinking "Heavy. Lace curtains." Then I'll hit you with a pile of schmaltz about how I bawled all over the place when her liver finally exploded. Then comes the big finale; I flashback to my boyhood and fond remembrances of Mom sewing my pants or baking a cake or a lot of other things she never did in real life. Real B-movie stuff. And you fall for it. The style can be atrocious, gushy as hell and you'll love it. All it takes is a title. Now all those dead guys, Shakespeare, Dickens, Poe and all the rest, they were lousy on titles. Hamlet. The Raven. Can you imagine anybody buying that? Course, they're old and dead so you have to say they're good. But if they had to cut it today, they'd all be in body and fender.

Look, my mother died but big deal. A lot of mothers die every day so why should anybody pay good money to read about mine. It's not like I didn't feel for her when she finally went, but hell, everybody else gets those feelings, too. So like I said, you have to catch their eye. Hook 'em at the beginning and you can sell them anything. Even dead mothers.

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