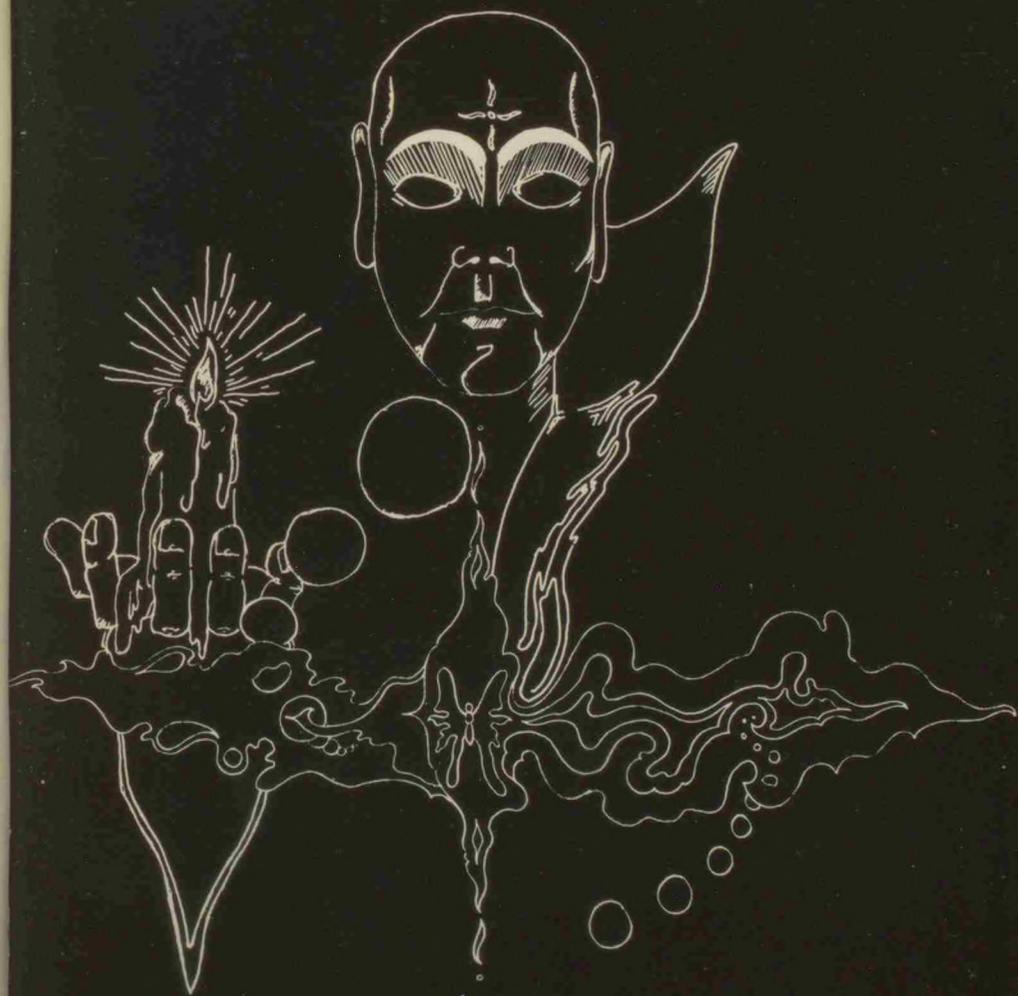


BISHOP'S UNIVERSITY'S
LITERARY MAGAZINE 1975

The New Mitre



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The New Mitre

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THE NEW MITRE 1975

**Bishop's University's
Literary Magazine**

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The New Mitre extends its appreciation to the Committee on Cultural Affairs and to those members of the faculty of Bishop's University (especially Dr. K. Harper) who contributed financially and otherwise towards this publication.



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WANDERING FAR IN CHAINS

imprisoned, you look
out small square windows
your creation marches
slowly in front, torn,
stolen prince
priest, begging

cigars from wealthy young men

the sea cleans, heals
throw your gods to the waves
white, sucking sand, clothes
down far into the salt
water burning their wounds

bring them
fighting, fighting into
the blue, the deep, twisting
in the flow
dust and weeds

eyes look up
you walk in the swell
covers shoulders, head, sinking
sight flung out, away
from the sand, from the sea
turning lost on cliffs

leaving a broken shell

silent

silent

spread

slowly on foam

— Alan Atkinson

LUNCH WITH A
PROVEN PATRIOT

I can remember
swallowing brown bread
(without butter)
in a park with war veterans
and dusty grass
scorched blond in hot zeniths
and the morning's wine
already oozing
into sweat globules
on my forehead
(If only turf could perspire
like flesh)

Declared himself a nationalist
Formerly an asset
to the Chaudière Regiment
and rolled up
his right trouser leg
to emblazon
his wooden credential
in the blanching sun

Ted Dupuis belched out abstractions
through a dark dungeon
in his cancerous throat
Wheezing words
that caught and cradled my devotion
just beyond noseshot
of his halitosis

To have contended
and survived
only to limp intrepidly
with a forgotten squeak
from boardinghouse to hospital
a disabled
and pensioned mercenary

I had characterized
myself a nationalist
before sharing lunch
in a park
with the word's epitome

I still do
but lack any ultimate proof

— Nelson Gonyer



PHOTO BY S. RANDY MORRIS

LONG DISTANCE

How far have you to go
watcher of the sheaf?
as you slide on moon-lit foot
down row on row of dark and gold
saluting the men you've reaped.

This summered night that slumbers
with warm crackled wind
sweeping over the yellow brake
—a path it cannot rescind

The watchman of unmade park
will toll his bell at day's wake
and you my faithful vigilant
can amble homeward, counting
with lunar steps how far
we have to go.

— Malcolm Curtis

EXILE

The idle white fence
Forbodes the present sense
And ends self-same smiling
While eyes go towards light
White with science's meddle
White is white and tripe, tripe,
Soul me not ignoble poems,
Sing us not real songs,
Beg your knees to dust
To blow with sexual gusts,
Sell your thoughts for poor pennies
Tin, rebuffed with ease
Shines in twinkling prose
notes burnt greedily today
Are ash for tomorrow's dreams,
Yet, try for god, friend.

— John Hanson

tree-roots,
covered in snow
sleep alone.

branches,
touching the sky
reach out together
against the wind.
they rise above
our littered clothesline —
brushing the clouds.

— Eva Baldwin

someone should catch this
somehow
in a painting or a poem or a photograph
this snow frozen
in an eclipse of the season.

something should be sacrificed
on a day like this.

a birth in pain or a hot death
to preserve the day.

a painting would be too bright
a poem too long
a photograph too on time.

something should fall out of love today
and regret it tomorrow.

— Leah Bradshaw

HOT VW'S OR SMUT

I watch for Volkswagen Beetles
in the city traffic
as it pours into and out of
cobblestone potholes
and pray that such avenues will mellow
before my bugger even yawns
upon the timbered blocks of hibernation.

Across the street
the diminutive man
sporting a **Gazette** apron
with pockets
markets the good/bad news of **Le Devoir**
only his real harvest
comes from sub-counter publications
dribbling with openly posed action photos
of ugly breasted women
in wish-bone positions
where only the crotch counts.

Lodging the winter issue
of **Volkswagen Greats** under my quilted arm
I curse the freshly seasoned snow
for chalking my leathered feet
but resolve
better my boots
than the fenders of my car.

— Nelson Gonyer

Each Friday I'd drive out to the wharf in Gaspé and watch the fishing boats returning, each boat usually filled with fishbellies ready to be sliced, frozen and shipped west to Toronto or Montreal by train. I'd do a little smelt fishing as the different fishes were lifted in nets from the hold and dumped in a heap on the wharf. There were all types of fish with all types of names, colours and creeds. But mostly the fish were either Cod or Haddock. These were the fish with the most commercial worth. Yet it was the Coal fish, the Angel fish, the Boar fish, the Bull fish, the Smelt, the Scald fish or the Dog fish that were most popular in the village. The Cod and Haddock were staples. Yet all the villagers knew the tastier fish weren't the ones sold in the cities.

Some of the fish were feeling the air with long gold whiskers, others panted furiously, eyes almost commanding obedience, full of indignation, others were more content, lying on long purple fins with red lips mouthing and unknown language, mute sayings from the under world, no doubt. Some were painted in shades of orange and yellow, blue scales shimmering in the sun. Others were less beautiful, swearing, spitting and squirming. The Cod and Haddock were neither colourful nor ugly. They were grey, big and usually beyond consciousness by the time the boats got to the wharf. If they did move they usually just bumped the air like a heart, eyes staring, full of nothing, just nothing. The sun crossed the world, shining into their eyes, draining their strength.

The fishermen sat crosslegged, slicing easily with long sharp knives, others smoothly smacking with short wooden clubs, most of the fish resigned to the inevitable, possibly consoling themselves with thoughts of reincarnation; "Perhaps, in another world, I'll be a wolf running with fire in my eyes as I chase my prey. I'll tear the heads off the merchants before they can rent their handmade bamboo poles. I'll ravage well, before the madames can string each line, bless each hook, before the worms are kidnapped from underground voyages and skewered into bait dancing in the sea".

Behind the boats the sun sulks into the sea. Soon it will be dark. An east wind blows bringing pink and purple clouds over the coast. The fishermen separate the bodies, dropping the heads on the wharf, the bodies into plastic buckets which are quickly taken as soon as they are filled and stored in the ice house.

I do a little worm baiting and sometimes I pull up the hooks with smelt mouths through each one. I speculate to myself about a fish, underwater, struggling with the hook through its mouth while its friends swim by. Most of them not noticing, opening their mouths to a tasty morsel and finding only pain. It was a trick, a funny trick. Humans are funny that way. Like lovers with green teeth.

One by one I smacked their heads and ripped the hooks from their gristly lips. I hit them twice yet often they would still be dancing as I tore off their heads, dropped them into my pocket. I leave the bodies scattered on the wharf. I don't need them. The seagulls will no doubt pick and choose, searching for the delicious eyes, the golden eyes, soft and gold in my pocket.

I tie up my line and head down the wharf, past the fishermen, stepping over a crowd of carcasses, rabbles of mute cadavers, scattered guts and heads. I have to return the pole to 'le propriétaire'. It's starting to rain. I pull up my collar and put my hand in my pocket. Tiny heads, eyes like jade crumbs sewn on a mushy bruise. Behind me I hear waves of laughter rising and falling, fading in the dark. The boats rub the side of the wharf, screaming curses to the water and the wind.

As I trudge along the road towards 'le shop' I notice two red spots hang for a second in the shadows then disappear. A dog turns into the yard barking excitedly. Leaving the pole on the porch I hurry towards my car. A silver crack snaps at the wall of night. I think I heard an animal wail but perhaps it was the wind. I don't think so. I'm late. The heads in my pocket are warm and wet. My fingers explore the throat, my thumb pokes the eyes, digging them loose from their sockets. I'm late and it's raining hard. I get in the car and slam the door.

'Le propriétaire' is abandoned in the yard. The wolf ravages, pulling meat from his throat. It claws at the sockets hungry for those tarnished pearls floating on shallow trays of blood. At last this wolf had found them. Others were still hunting.

Through the wet sandy soil the worms sense a feast, the cyclical journey of parasites continues. With the dawn will come the gulls to pick and choose from the corpse.

I turn my key in the ignition. The engine sneezes and sputters in the rain. One light vaguely functions the other is dead. I must hurry. There are friends down the road waiting for me.

Steamy breaths panted in the cold black night. Wolves running after a one-eyed machine pause to catch their breaths while others continue the chase. The road is slippery. A car is moving fast. The driver should be careful, anything could happen on a slippery road, in the night, in the black wet night.

— Ian Stephens



PHOTO BY BRUCE WILLETT

THE SPIDER IN THE COMMUNION-CUP

It wouldn't take much to feed it,
Eight legs hitched to
A slit of a speck of cinnamon
Stick. One smudge
Of your index finger, it
Would be more than gone, mashed
Magnificence of joint and sex
And backward fabrication
That can hang such subtly
Intricate threads in purest
Air that flies with wings
Of iridescent blue
Wander in and never
Know it, a splat on the flat
Of your finger mashed on the brink
Of the sink. Touched with the end
Of a towel, studied, the spider
Will shrink him, his legs round his belly,
He looks like the dot of an i,
He looks dead. That
Won't get him anywhere,
A man can try it, down
Steps Destiny: sorry,
An insignificance — appeal
Or not to inherent dignity.
The clutched-in spider surely,
If logical, expects less.
So then: studied, a stretch
Of nothing doing, later,
The clutch uncurls, is spider.
Man in God's image
Tried it in his latest mess.
Joker is, once known
Alive, legs adjust,
Back-end solved from front,
Set out, threat remains,
Frantic blue, shaking
Cablings cornered in gemmy
Morning line on line
Signaling messages
Of love and provender
Won't cure it, feeding on buzz

Or bug in shadowed verdancy
 A half-day mock-up, a fare
 Thee well, down the drain
 With a blast of broom! Here
 Was this thing, a spider
 On the zinc sink kitchen
 Shelf after a cavil
 Of crumb, pin-head of water,
 Out of place, extra,
 Eight legs groping, sensors,
 Master of meekness, magnificence
 Unsquirted in its tail,
 Because incongruence, man
 And galaxy, propinquity
 And sink, lab and luck;
 For the fun of it, hypothesis
 And try it out, guess
 And God, this spinner out
 For food, gets it. Now.

— Ralph Gustafson

SIDEWALK CHARITY

As a youth
 the corner man with eyeshades
 would inhabit my heart
 for an entire visit of Montreal intersections

While still a boy
 and/or a man
 that finely balanced median
 I observed his hollow sockets
 in a parasitic stare
 as they pursued a gentle duo
 of twitching buttocks

 He still gets my dime
 but has vacated
 a chest cavity
 that I now reserve
 for a spastic
 across the street

— Nelson Gonyer

WORKING MAN

Dirt under your fingernails
 declares your position;
 and my clean ones label mine.
 You go on telling your trivialities
 to the bus driver,
 who pays closer attention to the road,
 I've never seen you before,
 and yet my visions of you
 are as decrepid as your hunting jacket.
 but you don't condemn me for what I am.
 Then again, maybe you would
 if you knew me.

— Bill Walker

FALLING

Falling into a sea of life
 You tumble
 A modern day Alice
 No insane gardens are there to greet us
 Jagged rocks rip your flesh
 Blood flows in tune with the heart
 Eyes roll back to see your mind
 Only darkness
 The end grows farther away
 Falling to an apex in your body
 Speed throws you faster
 There it is!
 You hit like a fist hitting a pillow
 Distorted and crumpled
 You are dead
 "It wasn't the fall that hurt you
 It was the sudden stop." *

— Aird Barwick

* from Ville Emard Blues Band



PHOTO BY LARRY TIBBITTS

AVENUE AGENDUM

Of all the times
 I've policed Montreal corners
 I have never
 chanced upon a pro hockey-player.

I weary of individuals
 who offer a sawbuck flight
 on some pastel pill
 swaddled in tin foil.

They usually bounce away
 like a mallard
 in a La Ronde shooting gallery
 And only do that
 to stress upon the tourist
 the length of their hair
 as it snarls in the Peel St. breeze.

But as is the instinct
 and convention of buoyant birds
 they will migrate south
 with the coming of winter
 and Hockey Night in Canada.

— Nelson Gonyer

It was all over
 another

Tuesday or Wednesday
 High School crowds
 of kids
 enjoying witches
 blood
 Macbeth's head

drip drip
 hash oil
 outside the
 Bishop's place
 in Quebec

Spinach
 Popeye Hamburgers
 Another Theatre Performance
 Over
 by 4:00
 and we're stoned
 on

Golden Dog Beer
 High
 sail
 ale

No heavy hangups today.

— Ian Stephens

VIEW FROM A WINDOW, SOMEWHERE IN THE EAST END

FOR T.S. ELIOT

Another afternoon
Cigarettes that fill a room
A haze of unconcern
Trailing smoke to steepled bells
Beyond a dirty window
And tattered frills of curtains
That once swung coloured
To a busy street.

Evening lets his shadows fall
On pipes and talks in doorways
And empty market stalls
 Then those who miss the days
 Miss the hours
 That fall too quickly from their lips
 Behind broken basement windows
 Know the damp dull walls
 Of faces
 Lost in distant places
 Cold kisses
 Beside a black dead stove.

And the days, the years
Behind those ragged sashes
Away from smiles or tears
Crumble into ashes
Swiftly, like dying leaves in fall
Grow worn
Like a too familiar picture
Of a changeless rainy street.

Smoke from cigarettes and pipes
Wreathes hazy traps
About the tea sets
And stale pantry cakes.

When finally streetside tales
Have worn the steps and rails
Of a stooping house
Those within sag sadly
In routine
Not allowed to make a scene
Or reach the bells
With smoke
Pleasant kitchen smells
 Only left to vacant closets
 Faded curtains
 Winding through their lives
 Like webs for catching flies.

Dead grey eyes
Sound the peals of retreat
For struggle,
The beginnings of defeat
 Passing years the only force
 That wrinkles the deep silent pond
 Of sinking regret.

— Alan Atkinson

He won't stop coming to me in the night
lying heavy on me
squashing my breasts
down between my ribs.
His pain crawling over me
forming a cage of sweat.

No use brave man.
I hear you crying

It hurts me more than his stalking the night.
The pounds of silence that feed this my love.

— Leah Bradshaw



PHOTO BY S. RANDY MORRIS

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE
VAN HORNE MANSION, MONTREAL

Even at the corner of Sherbrooke
and Drummond,
even a whole week later
you could smell broken plaster,
splintered wood.

Later, bindweed blew bravely
on the patch of earth and broken stones
where it had been;
and passers-by who had no green
said: "Isn't it lovely!"

Old man,
poking about in the rubble,
did you really expect to find
a leftover
crystal chandelier?

— Lynn Pageau

Yours eyes melt,
Yours tears silver
fall
over skin

and silk scarves.

Curses; you whisper beautiful curses
scar me
scar me please

scar please.

I take such trust in your face
to

melt,
fall into my hands
Pearls, I feel mercury
pearls,

Gold ribbons around
your thighs.

— Ian Stephens

A rough field of snow
all anthills and gorges
blinds with morning brilliance.

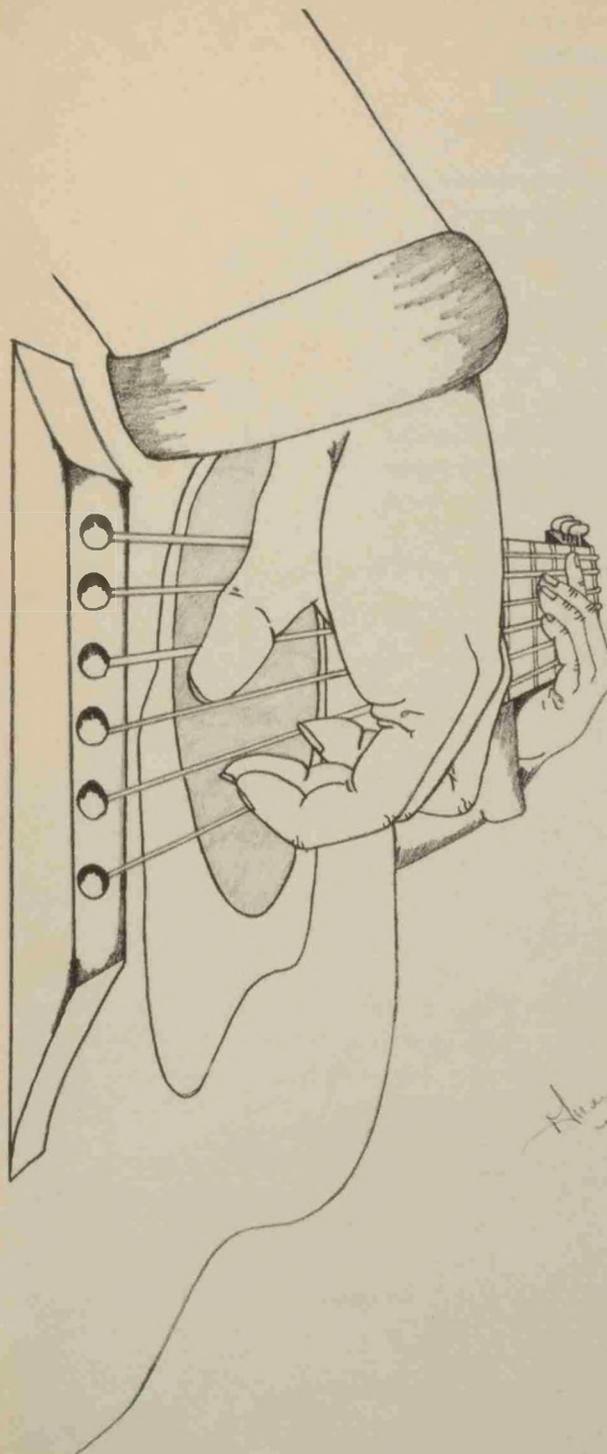
Winking sun rays in silence
a speckle flickers
its short lived existence
and melts
into the sugary stillness
resting,
muted in sleep.

— Herbert Bailey

I paced the beach
pretended those were your footprints,
pressed into cold wet sand —
they filled with water when you left.

I look for you
between the waves.

— Joan Hanson



"free form"

The ending afternoon
fed the sea
its staring
egg-yolk sun.

Sinking slowly
on cold sands
a boy breathed
tired
and wept
a salty drop.

Waves
murmuring thunder
long white tongues
lashed a sour wind
calling the soul
asleep on the shore.

The poisoned night
bled on stars.

— Herbert Bailey



Were you looking at me
from the corner of your eye?
I'm sure I caught your gaze
in my throat
though a moment later
I was breathing again
and your presence was cool
your smile remote.

I didn't have time
to write it down
but watch your moves
in the next few days.
The next time we meet
you won't be as safe;
I'm making a mould
of your cavalier gaze.

— Leah Bradshaw

WINDSOR STATION 1973

Vanished
are the ice-cream vendors of Windsor Station
whose warm and soured drippings
could be found on soles of feet
and in corners of mouths.

Withdrawn
and replaced with the caffeine breath
of fleecing machines
that discharge cadaver-cool coffee
in a variety of prodded flavors.

Only the art exhibition endures
featuring the barbed oils of still-life.

— Nelson Gonyer



PHOTO BY BRUCE WILLETT

This book is turning into little black spots
jet pendants on a stiff Victorian breast
pale and wintry
Pickled for the next century's groping intellectuals.

And say oh my, my they knew,
knew what?
To number pages closed to further critics
and say we have done
all that we could say
with the time we had
this testament we leave to you
in the hopes that you have good interpreters.

— Leah Bradshaw

AN ESSENCE

It's early in the day
the sky an endless blue
the wind taking a nation's name back
a thousand thousand years
in the wildest colours.

And I can hardly wait to see you
tell you that I love you more
than a good book
or a great movie
or a new idea
and at least as much as laughing.

— Leah Bradshaw

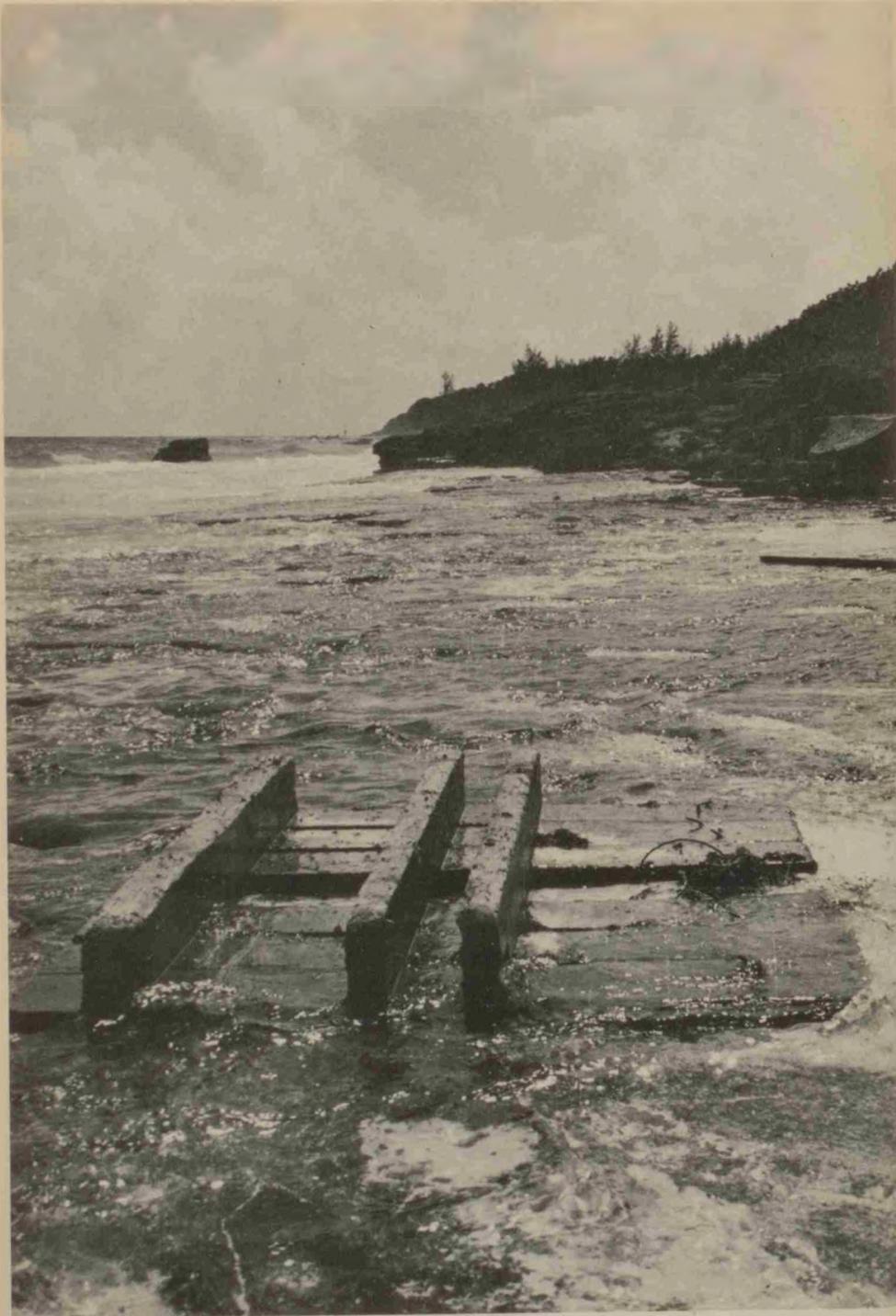


PHOTO BY S. RANDY MORRIS

The cats did not want to play. U, the black male, lay over the crack between the mattresses and stared at the dying plants that had been placed long ago, pot by pot under the window. 'E Sa, an ugly cat with black and grey markings over her face, sat by the bricked fireplace and stamped on spiders. Occasionally she would whine and stretch and look suspiciously at the old man as if he might be spider or cat. E Sa was a hunter and many spiders regretted crossing her path. U was contemplative and occupied time staring at the plants and shadows.

The old man poked at spider with his cane. His movement disturbed U; the shaft of the cane had trespassed into his areas. He rotated his head, easing out his claws, and looked at the funny man with the red face.

"I kill spiders" the old man said.

"I don't kill cats".

U was paranoid and easily insulted. If his food wasn't served first U would not eat for days. He would stretch over the crack between the mattresses and pout. When the old man wanted to lie down he would close his eyes and pretend to be asleep forcing the old man to screw his body into an awful ball or wake U and ask him to "kindly move a wee bit" to which U would groan hoping to sting the old man's conscience, usually succeeding. One way or the other he caused the old man to lose sleep. After two missed meals U usually became friendly and playful, satisfied that the old man had suffered enough, ready to accept the food offered by the chastised and weary.

E' Sa was not offended by the order of service and concerned herself with spiders which she found tastier than the cat food. She didn't worry about U. E' Sa knew that he could last for nearly a week without food, sulking on the bed, staring blankly, struggling to the litter box like a Christ; righteous, suffering and certainly near death, one paw over the cardboard edge and then another. He would almost fall into the box and would slowly take the pose of a priest, opening and closing his mouth as if insane or talking to God. The form of excretion left in the litter box caused the old man to grieve and plead with U to eat. U had the capacity to leave a soft silver pellet about the size of a sparrow's egg coated with blood if he wasn't fed after four meals. U had purposefully left it uncovered for the old man to discover. E' Sa didn't pretend to be impressed; she wasn't interested in anything U did.

It bothered U that the old man stayed in the room so much. He used to be out all the time leaving E' Sa and U alone in the room. U would climb over the plants and look out the window, waiting for the old man to manage the stairs and shuffle down the hallway towards a heavy, heavy door. E' Sa and U could hear the old man's grunts and breaths bounce down the dark hallway echoing up the stairs under the door and into the colourless room, a silent room with thick walls.

[Cont'd]

The old man would shuffle towards the sidewalk and twist his stubborn neck in an attempt to focus on a black friendly shape behind the window where he imagined U was watching. A puff of pleasure caught on a ledge in his mind and a boyish grin erased a few of the lines on his chin. U watched the funny man with the red face slowly lean on his cane. The cane had arrived anonymous. It was sent by a sympathetic neighbour who wanted to save the old man the embarrassment and outrageous expense of buying one at a store. The old man found it one morning hanging from his doorhandle and pretended that it came from God. He told E' Sa that he was not willing to argue with God the Father at this stage of his life so he tried it out in the room, walking back and forth in front of the sink. He poked the air like an old grouch. He pretended he was rich and an ugly peasant had stolen some of his apples. He gave the peasant a thrashing with the cane and poked him in the eyes. It was a scene from a movie long ago. Eventually he came to depend on the cane and would lean on it when he cooked or went to the bathroom.

Once U saw that the old man was gone he would inspect the room, jumping to the shelf, counting the cans of cat food and looking for evidence of any other food-stuffs, knowing that there might be something hidden in the refrigerator. Once U started inspecting the room E' Sa would leave her post by the fireplace and prepare to visit the litter box. It was an important part of her day and E' Sa never rushed. U didn't want to be reminded that he shared anything so he pretended not to notice, continuing his inspection. Now that he hadn't been out for nearly a week, U had begun to sneak around at night while E' Sa cleaned herself. Since the old man was too tired to mop the floors, balls of dirt hung from her tail, Her tongue became dry and grey where she licked.

The old man's room smelt foul. In a corner the garbage can held empty tins of cat food and green crusts of bread. He was finding it hard to manage and kept falling asleep. He was always tired even after just waking up. He often believed there was no reason to get up, no reason at all. Then he would remember the cats. Finding it harder and harder to get up from the mattresses, the old man wondered what he could do about the cats. He was so tired he didn't want to eat. He didn't mind really, the pain in his stomach was no worse than in his neck, his legs, back and head. It was a harmless, pleasant sensation and memories of playing hockey before breakfast reached his consciousness causing another puff of pleasure to float through his mind; endless scenes of his family, school dances and snap-shots of old friends clouded his mind filling it with clouds and wet pillows pressed against the back of his eyes. Quietly he stopped snoring.

The cats saw death standing naked and black outside the window.

The old man relaxed into a womb-like pose, his eyes open yet not wide, just enough so that he looked, in the next instant, as if he would wake up like a little boy from an afternoon nap.

Death dragged the soul from under a skin of bones, deserting the cats among the plants, the bones and the green crusts of bread held in the garbage can in a dusty corner of a colourless room.



PHOTO BY H. BAILEY

— Ian Stephens

EQUIVALENCE

An overplus of stars!
More than I need.

— Ralph Gustafson

YES

This,
and hour that beckons
like whispers once heard
in bazaars of Damascus
lends its mystery
to eager ears.

Two dreamers
groping to meet
in the eternity
of a moment
shiver in silence
awaiting their turn.

Then,
a thought ventures,
risks rebuttal,
fears to split the moment
but ends
the longest wait.

— Anônimo



PHOTO BY S. RANDY MORRIS

DEATH OF ANNA CARRABA

I came to see Anna Carraba
before they began saying;
"Why go? She wouldn't recognize you."

The garden has been
unattended for a week now;
doctor says Anna's getting too old.
We've placed her in the spare room,
to watch cracked flowered walls,
aged photographs, forgotten dresses.

She was afraid of death
I backed away when she talked
about it,
death and weekends did
not relate; my friends
were waiting.

The garden has been
unattended for a month now.
Former President Eisenhower is
dying Anna Carraba is dying,
the priests miss her cusadeel.

I was a pall-bearer for Anna Carraba,
very respectable, an honour, the family
said but they couldn't feel her
weight, shifting as we climbed stairs,
they didn't wear tight white gloves
or experience the emptiness of
her open grave.

Former President Eisenhower is dead.
The spare room is empty; aged photographs
and forgotten dresses burn close
to someones unremembered garden.

for my great grandmother
Feb./75

— Bill Walker

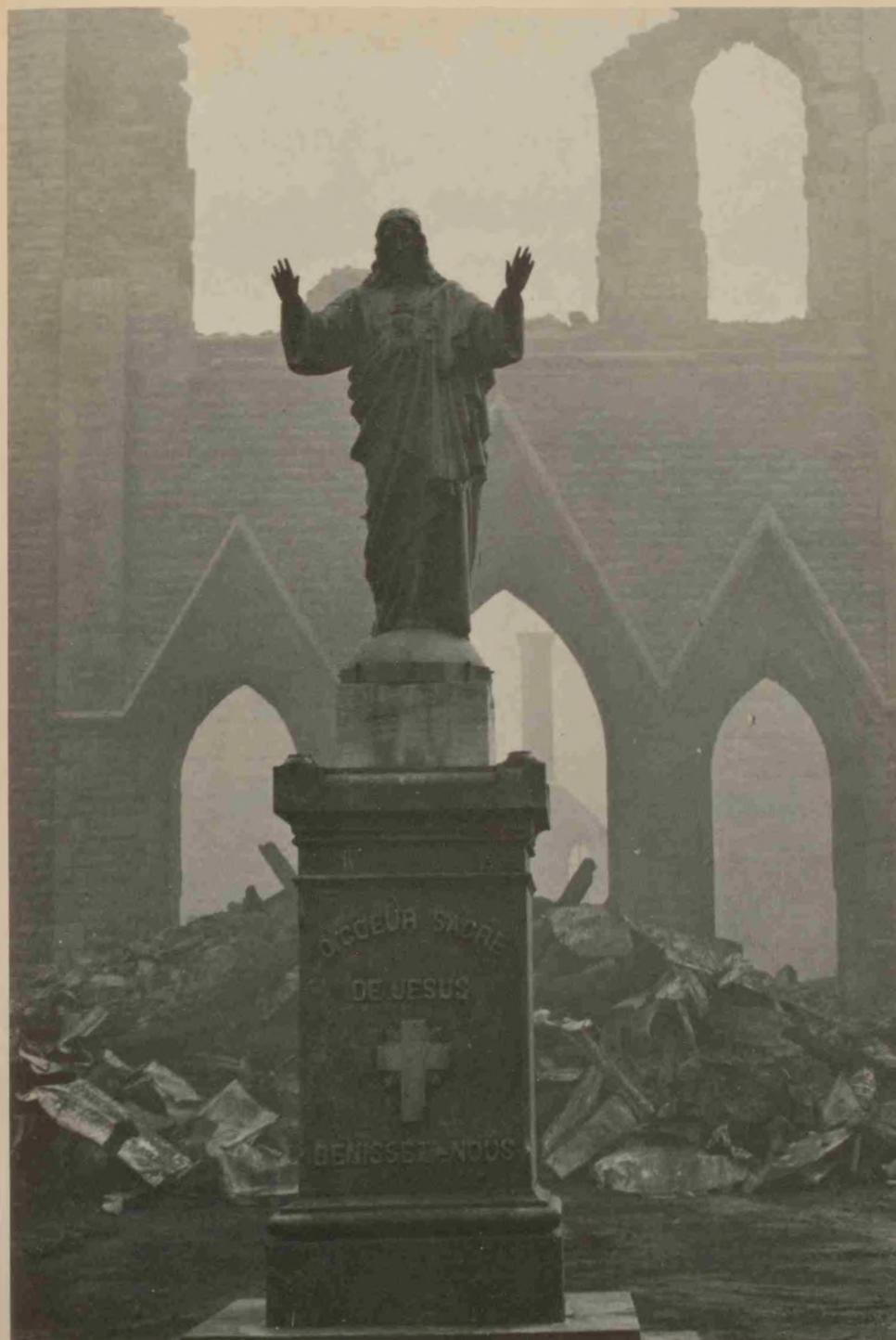


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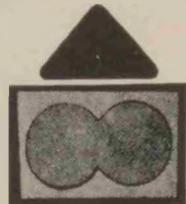


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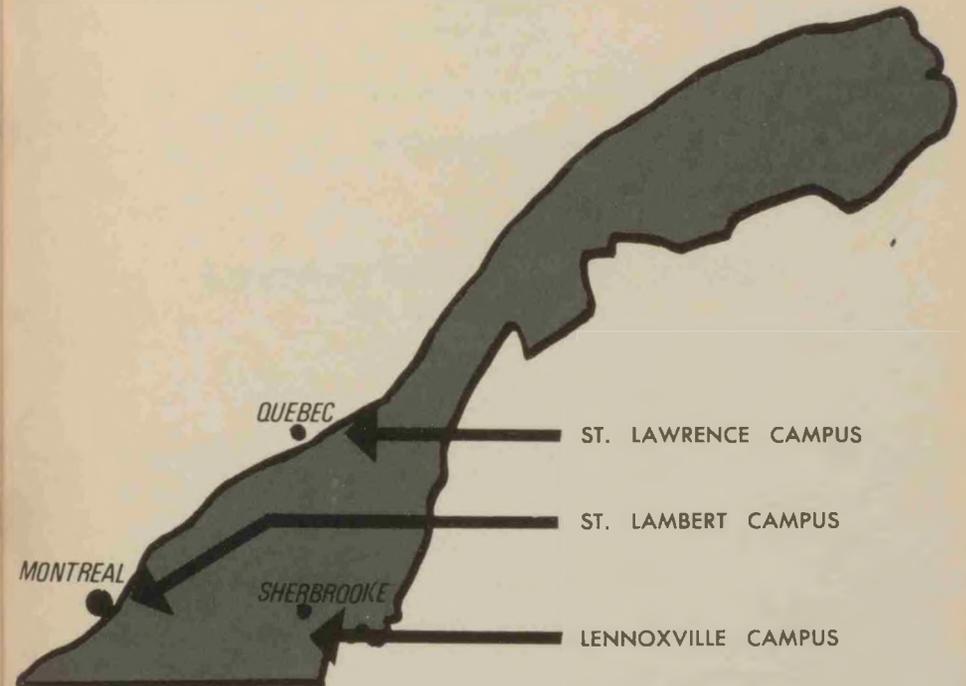
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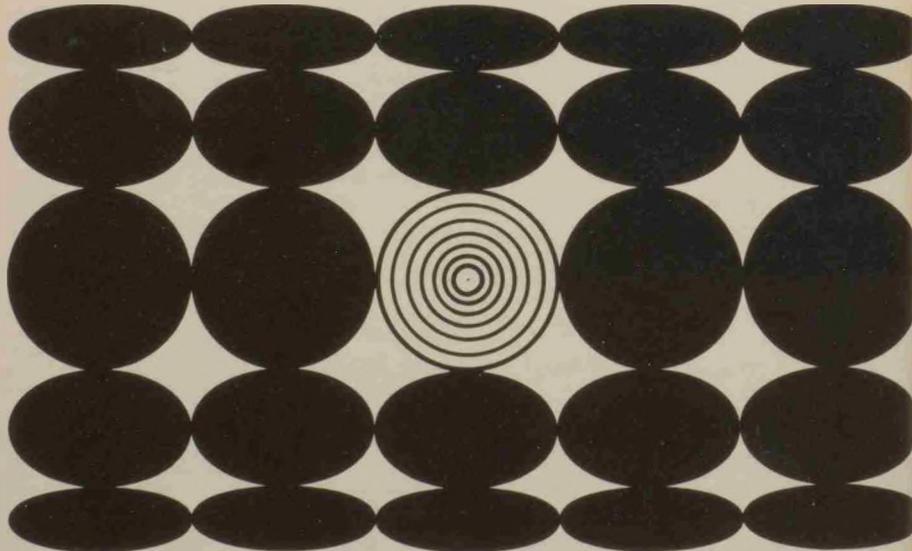


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