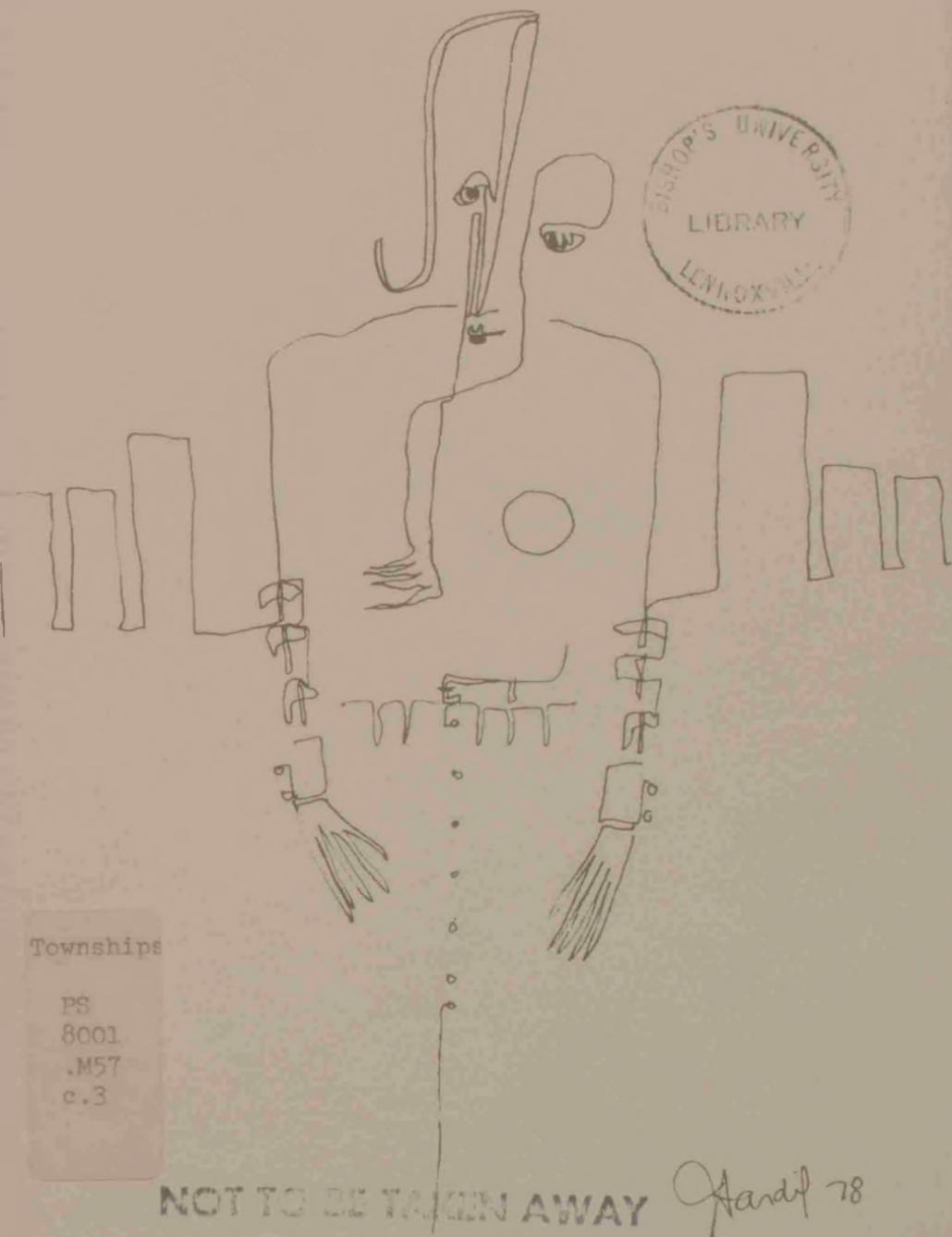


# mitre '79



Townships

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c.3

NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY

*Hardy 78*

# MITRE

ESTABLISHED IN 1893

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO  
*DR. GARRY RETZLEFF AND*  
*DR. CECIL ABRAHAMS*



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SPRING '79

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## COMMENTS

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Thank you Ron, Carolyn and Kirk. Without your help the entire journal would have received a "o" for excessive absenteeism - eh Carolyn? Finally, I would like to thank Ralph Gustafson for his contribution to "The Mitre". Each year Professor Gustafson's contribution adds immeasurably to the quality and delight of the publication.

Thank you,  
Paddy



## PERSIAN POEMS

*RALPH GUSTAFSON*

---

### THE INSIDE OF HISTORY

All morning walking the streets of Rey,  
Hoary capital of Persia put to the torch  
By Genghis Khan, stopover for Alexander,  
Where Harun al-Rashid set up shop,  
Seeing the parade of females I kept repeating,  
"Twelve Moslem women in white muslin gowns",  
That line of Browning, the worst in the language,  
Why I don't know except the dread  
I'd top it, I suppose, they weren't the same those girls  
Of Browning and the swish and swerve of the local gals  
If offputting chador black, nose to heel.  
There was nothing to come to Rey about, to Iran  
For that matter: activists as normal  
Blew up active roses and nightingales,  
Alexander moved with Thais south  
And burned a town, Harun the worthy yawned  
While Scheherazade to save her pretty neck  
Wove a thousand usual gilded lies.

DANCE

hear the sun  
blonde and crackling among  
dark hills  
and through black  
wet spruce.

the sun.  
stern.  
pulling the winds along  
the ice and  
red pine needles  
forcing grass to rise  
new green against stone walls.

in dark holes, mussel on paw  
dry grasses and old fur.  
in your small twitchy dreams of  
twigs and seeds  
hear the sun call to  
dance you in woodchuck madness  
scrawny and alive.

The tender form of her  
buttocks  
appealed to my  
alter-ego  
(brave hunter on safari)

I winked...

An internal sneer  
surfaced  
as a hungry grin,  
lips of slavery,  
a bleak confirmation of  
her defeated struggle.

She winked...

I blinked  
and was gone.

FURTHER OF DUST

1.

ISTAKHER

The gates of!  
The oldest city in the world.  
A goattrack among the fallen marble,  
Goatdroppings where the single  
Column is sentinel to nothing.  
The cliffs stand bare and dry,  
Indifferent as the blowing poppy  
Red among the fluted slabs.

2.

THE TOMB OF CYRUS

Seven tiers,  
At Pasargad, the broken entrance,  
The level plain of Morghab  
Stretching miles away.  
Empty the room  
Of jewels, the air  
Smart with the closure of sun and sage;  
Up above, intrusive dust,  
The vacant slabs,  
*I am Cyrus,*  
*King of kings.*

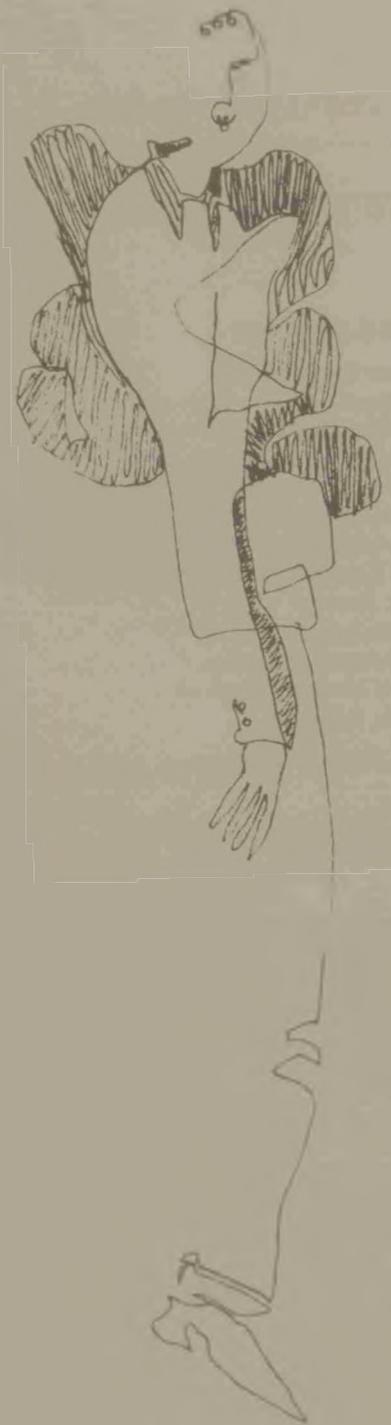
3.

NAQSH-E-RUSTAM

Rough as the rock was,  
They smoothed it  
For the king, Artaxerxes  
Dying as all men are  
But not yet dead — the cliffs cut,  
Pilasters, resembled  
Throne, obeisance, entrance  
To that final coolness,  
Death's. Done,  
They climbed down, rid  
Of the hammering sun,  
The rush kitchen, tomb or  
No tomb, better.  
Carved, the tall cliffs  
Stood.

Three entrances, four,  
For Cyrus' sons.

Below,  
The temple's vacant walls,  
The sacred flame, Ahura-Mazda.  
Master of kings,  
A blackened wick.  
Across the world,  
The beholder come.



*MICHELE PAULIN*

Some long lost tribe whose name we (at least I)  
wont mention;

or

## TINTIN AU TIBET

And in the not-so-natural parking lot lights,  
There appeared two inhabited  
Peruvian little-llama-shepherd chapeaux-s:  
(they say little llamas are rare but so are  
these marvelously whimsical chapeaux-s)  
Giggling and dipping coquettes, I suppose.  
The males of this species don't talk much  
don't giggle at all but do wear  
Matching leather apparel (so they  
wont skid?)

And somewhere in between float  
code words, of a sacreligious nature:  
Lots of sss's and  
Kuh's, a denial of their worship:

sssss

kuh

sssss

The brightly festooned chapeaux-s  
dipp bold red and white, flaps and all  
And the blue denim springs down  
from black leather.

Vive la révolution.

Vive le pays.

Viva Rimouski!

Paulin 78

SWEET VIRGINIA BEING A SONG

Seven dark shades of men  
Silhouetted a black black sky.

Sweet Virginia reveals a perverse  
nature of two young men.

Stuart boarded a taxi,  
was it five or six in the morning?  
And what about ol' Bert?  
he's gone far away, too.

The two young men did meet  
a few weeks ago  
(or was it yesterday)  
Some brewing company made money.

Ways and ways again  
I'll meet you in Estevan  
Seven dark shades of men  
Silhouetted a smokey bar-light.

(Oh Sweet Virginia  
how I do love you  
Two friends will meet  
again and again and again)

Two friends will meet.

THE SINGING

Swamp, full of voice.  
voice, full  
of night  
thrilled and cool.  
Nesting birds waken, sing  
in moonbright trees.

Child in a small bed  
shakes and weeps  
white eyes watching the  
dark as voice  
crawls in his open  
window and  
junebugs bang  
and whirl against the screens.



RON SMITH

## THE PARADE

(from *The Night Side of Windows*)

Wait a second...cock your head. Hear them? The drums beating, trickling like dripping roof water? Hear them, cool and rippling? Smell the rich rotting mulch of November?

You do up your sweater as you turn your head and follow the sound, down the street, and past the grand pines. Look around the corner. There! Marching drummers. Two of them leading a long procession of soldiers...it goes on as far as your eye can see. Marching in the nippy ridge air, moving like a centipede through the streets. Fresh and rippling in the wind of sound.

\*

Marching, now, under the grey November sky, its transparent child purging, cleansing away the stench of summer.

Marching, now, up the little hill to where you stand, then around the corner and down the other side.

\*

Three straight silhouettes stand behind the old pines on the lawn of a big brick house. They also hear the military beat of the drums. And, in a rare moment when the drums are silent, they hear the muffled footsteps of the soldiers.

Their eyes are peeled in your direction, as first the drummers and then the flag bearers break the crest of the little hill where you stand, turn the corner and head back down again, followed by their incessant tail of woe.

\*

Three silhouettes behind the trees. Arms raised in fertile gesture against the darkening sky, their black outlines seem to suck life from the charged atmosphere. Their words are thin and cunning, but their overflowing thoughts trickle into a stream. And before long, a raging torrent of energy binds them with its spun silver harvest bonds.

\*

Slowly, step by step, as the soldiers advance, a unit forms, like a river of ice, sharp, cold, godlike. It flows down the little hill and gathers in a pool, beyond your field of vision. As the last of the procession sails by, you join the wake of excited bicycling children, and race down the little hill to the pool.

\*

As you coast, you see from across the street three straight silhouettes moving at first like branches in the wind. Strangely, a strong gust seemingly tears the branches from their sockets.

And then you see them, like prowlers of the universe, grimacing with sharp white teeth. "There is a special magic that surrounds them," you think, and your spine shivers under the big sweater. You turn your head and get swallowed up by the crowd.

\*

It is Armistice Day, and the marching is for the dead. Some say the whole procession honours the victims of war, that war is the guardian of your freedom.

Some say, "They gave their lives that others would be free."

You shrug and think, "Who did they give them to?"

\*

Now the wreaths and crosses are placed.

Now the old people trickle away.

Only you have seen the silhouettes move. Remember.

It is dark now. You ride back up the hill, past the grand pines, from whence you came.

## KIRK LAWRENCE

---

Beating  
          down  
falling ever  
falling  
with forced  
pretension  
disguising a  
whisper  
          rasping  
cleanse me  
cure me



Dear Lear: Impressions

Dear Lear, my friend in myth.  
Dip into the puddle of insanity.  
Destined to happen, happenings  
at fault of the structure  
of the universe.

Walk forth out of the pages of the text.  
Feel my Cordelia feelings for you.  
Touch the tears on my cheeks,  
the puddle of my eyes,  
your buttons and your robes.

Walk forth out of the performed death.  
The players of elevated stage  
fail to feel the Cordelia feeling  
of love and devotion:  
Those abstract notions.

Dear Lear, my friend in text,  
come out. If not, open your arms  
to the bastard printed words,  
tell them it is true,  
you die for you.





Handel  
78





RON SMITH

## THE STRENGTH OF NATIONS

(from *The Night Side of Windows*)

All of them have plunged through the gates of reality into the caped and winged world of superheroes. Into a new unpeopled space. Into a virgin land. Dee immediately grasps the significance of the new land, "like in a chess game," she explains. The idea fills her with excitement. "The whole thing's like a giant chess game..." She hops about the room examining territory, seeking out choice cuts. She formulates strategy in the dark corner of her eye. "After all," she continues, "this *is* the new world... and there *are* only three of us in it." Her face becomes flushed and animated. Her manner conniving. "These four walls hold the sum of our existences." She turns her head to sharp profile and smiles oddly. "In bright lamplight... where everyone can see."

Bud nervously catches her, pulling him into the game. "Let's explore..." he begins slowly. "Let's look around us, and bury ourselves in the grey folds of our dreams. Let's forget our bodies and leap into calm icy fantasies." His thought stream floods into a cold peaceful river.

But he is snapped back by Dee's voice.

"There are four walls," she looks about her solemnly, "and you *can't* escape the light." Her words have the simple finality of gut wisdom, her eyes the glint of the blade.

\*\*\*

Dee winks cat lashes at Cabin Boy - draws him like rough filings with the promise of a magnet. She touches and teases him incessantly, at once coy and innocent. Her eyes hypnotize. Her scent excites.

Cabin Boy surrenders easily to her whim. He abandons all defences. Lapped into the cobra world of the subterranean Queen.

"Ssssssss!" Cabin Boy experiences the chilly thrill of her whirlwind. He is caught up in a passing eddy and carried off. The increased power gains momentum in a frenzy of activity. A celebration of life and freedom. Dee dancing, arms flapping



BRENDA HARTWELL

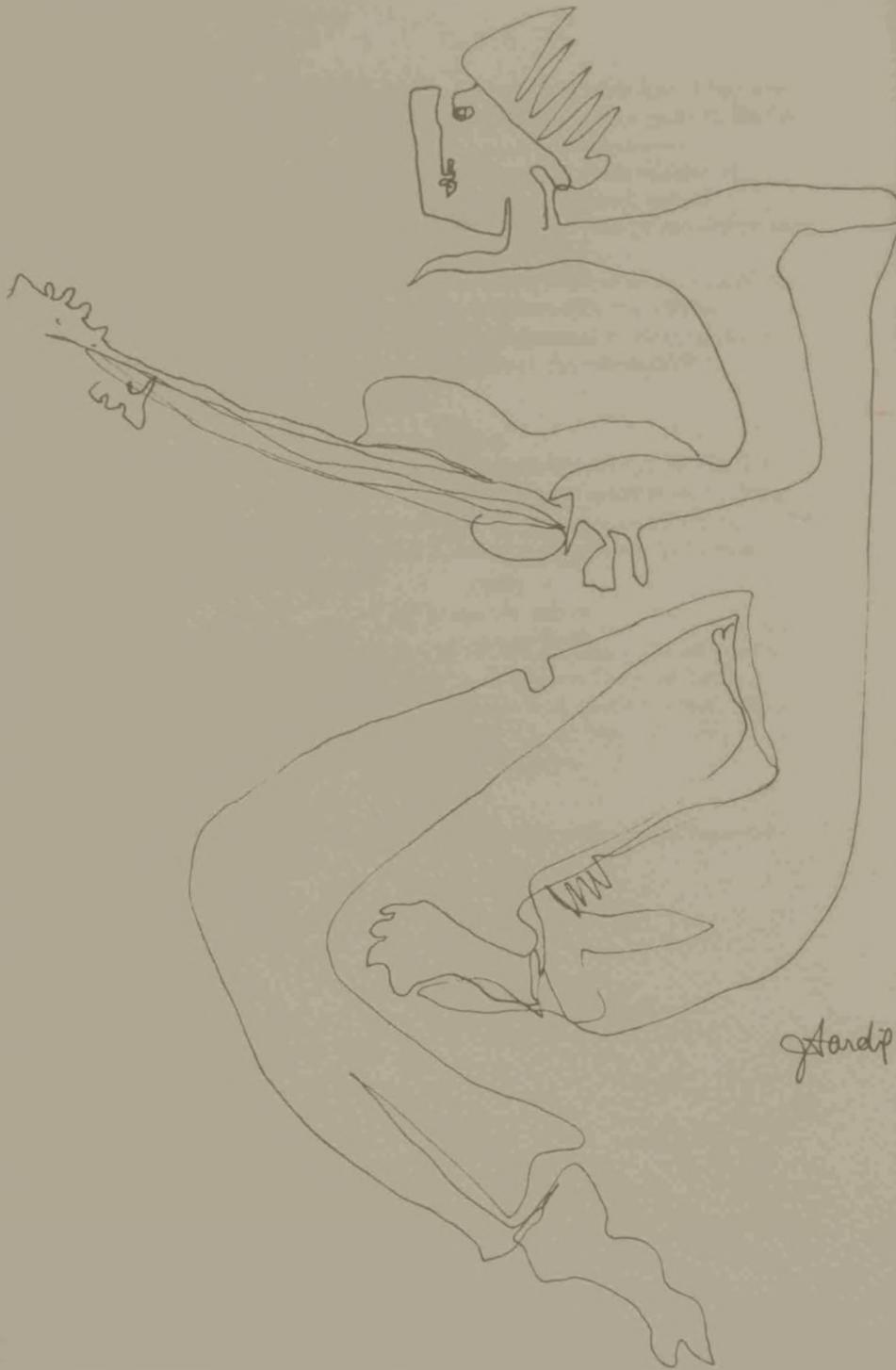
BY SELF

A goddess bore three daughters  
fair of hand and mind and face.  
The last born became a muse  
and the middle child, a grace.  
The eldest thought to inspire  
was to stoop to a disgrace.

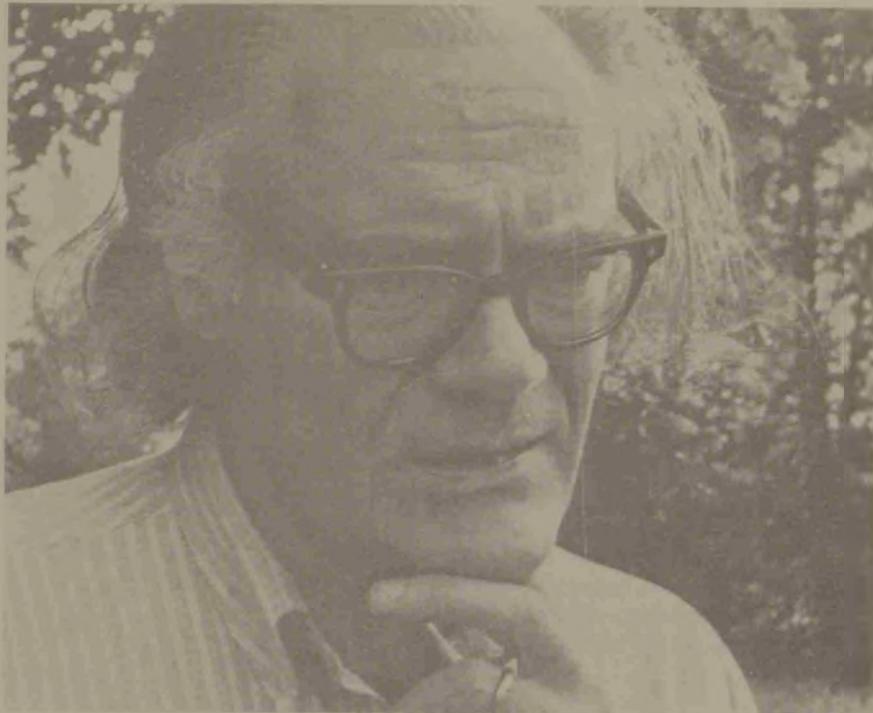
Diamond proud, sea cold,  
rimy fingers clutched an exotic seed.  
She couldn't plant the seed in another man's earth.  
She wouldn't accept water from a celestial host.

And one man loved the dancer  
and he wrote for her a tune.  
A couple saw the singer  
and they spoke for her the moon.  
So a couple danced the air  
while a threesome sang the moon.

The seed in her brittle January grip  
moulds and spews mucous.  
She stretches out a disease-gloved hand  
only to watch you wither.  
Witch, war-maiden, harpie, whore.  
She was barren  
by self, by choice,  
therefore she would destroy.



2  
1



DAMIEN PETTIGREW

Reprinted from *The New Yorker*

*Lowell, was it You I Heard?*

It might be quite clever to prepare things —  
to transfer the weapon from box to pocket —  
so as to be ready to take advantage of the  
spell of insanity when it does come.

H. Humbert, *Lolita*

The poet should concern himself with things  
That prick to the point of madness. Magpie sings  
And poet is bothered. Nothing lost on extended wings.  
But madness? Desperate melody on overnight loan.  
Its coda winds the clock. Remote poet, frail,  
In your sleeping arms our love is sown  
Inside the sleeve stripped up like gewgaw sails.  
My sails plow thru night. Think of a dancer on stage  
Whose curling twists in body mime will not fail  
And where the backdrop's brushed with pigment shades.  
The almond eyes are china jars, the movement  
In step, simple and sure. Lights remain offstage  
To flood the floor in single brilliance sent  
For the mind's ease. Disease and mental sores  
Can never be reassuring notions lent  
Like the larboard stars. Let ideas be my whores.  
They are as startling as spots of red dye  
On a white shirt. Christopher's Cat Jeffrey snores,  
I lay awake. Reflections in the glass fly  
Up but this amber cannot catch the light.  
I lay awake for sounds and unacquainted cries  
Since every hollow husk of darkness forms  
Familiar night. Inside, my rural doctor tells  
The pulse is quick, the spark to the brain, it swells.  
Suffice. Magpie's chord overheard in the harness of storms.

FLOWERS AT PERSEPOLIS

We picked wild poppies, scarlet vivid as  
Sleep knows of, slender pale green  
The stem, a crowd of stamens, black,  
Inside. Nearby, the purple thistle,  
Protected; in front, hollyhocks, a row.  
Magnolia was about to come out, as sweet  
On the evening air as anything in sleep.  
And pansies, the despised flower as simple  
Here as any in Canada. Roses.  
Roses everywhere; over and the white  
Just coming, the red too in broken bud.

Flowers. One hesitates to make a list,  
When was a list as passionate as a single bloom?  
Yet there they stood where conquerors had  
Their throne and Xerxes sat in ceremony,  
Forty-six perfumed princes bearing gifts.

One makes lists, history to the side,  
Of these flowers she loves.

PELLA

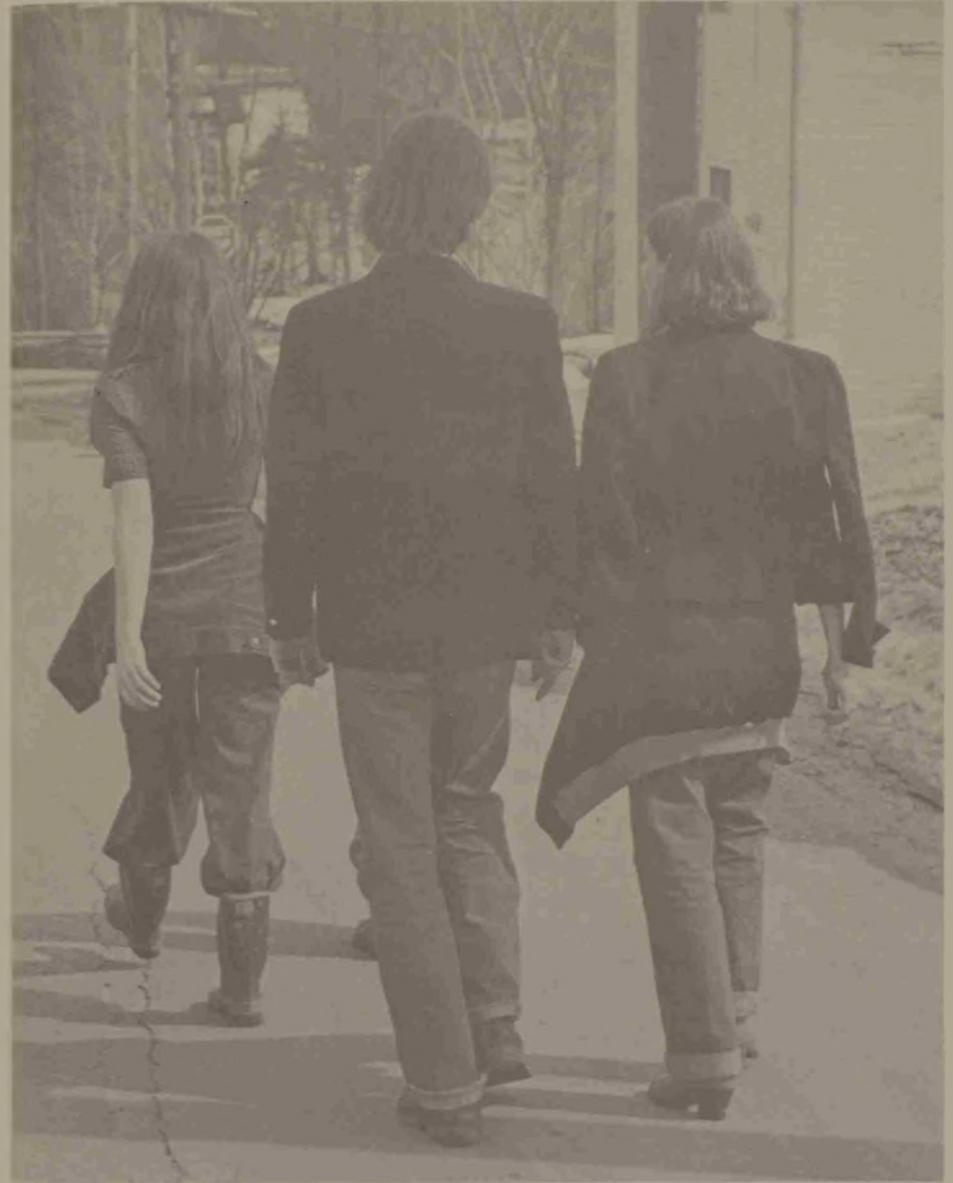
After the short rain clouds built up  
Over Macedon, piled white  
Dropped to the grazing landscape, the shepherd with  
His shoulder-coat and sheep. The flock  
Last seen was at Pasargad, a round of goats  
Where Alexander came. There, the halls  
Of Persepolis, here, the gates of Pella.  
Nine posts remain, four  
Mosaics, pebbles for a footfall.  
The power and the glory! Admonitions!  
Conquer the world to die at Babylon.  
So, what's against that?

RALPH GUSTAFSON

ON THE AEGEAN LATER

The fierce white star to the side of the same moon  
Swung— once white gold it had stood  
Over roses and cedar at Persepolis—  
Now at Lemnos where Hephaestus fell  
Hurlled by the quarreling Hera and Zeus—  
Where Agamemnon burned a hill getting  
The news to Argos of fallen Troy— the same  
White moon swung its star. Along the deck  
The smell of panthers, Dionysus' beast.  
It burned over Lemnos, the fierce star.

She spoke of the sameness unaware  
Of Agamemnon and his crafty fire  
Or lynx or sulphurous forge— only the moment  
Where love with briefest joy  
Stays to be had.





DAMIEN PETTIGREW

---

Translation of Baudelaire's *Preface to Les Fleurs du Mal*

TO THE READER

Fatuousness, blunder, sin, avarice,  
Inhabit our souls and flog our corpse;  
We glut on our lovable remorse  
Like street trulls suckling their body lice.

Our sins are bullish, our confessions base;  
We overpay for penitence  
Then pursue the aniconic sentence  
That states pernicious tears enrich our sins, our waste.

It's the Devil (prestidigitator dirtying a silken pillow)  
Who numbs and rocks our sibilant souls.  
The lapidary metal of our will he holds  
To sublimate it hellward by methods only he can know.

It's the Devil who twists and pulls the strings.  
We love sickening things — they make us think  
How close we are to Hell, how egregious bodies stink  
When, fearless, we bludgeon night for what she brings.

Like a senescent whoremaster who'll kiss and beat  
The dry tits of some niggling bitch,  
We need that surreptitious itch,  
We want to gash the gravid orange and its fleshy meat.

An inky hoard of excrescent helminths  
Is the demon image of our clotted brains,  
And when we breathe, Death, in our lungs, rains  
Down and washes us (Invisible river!) with mute complaints.

If rape, poison, stilettos, arson,  
Have not yet stitched scandalous designs  
On the rough canvas of our nescient lives,  
It's because our souls belong to satan's parson.

But there's something worse than squatting grimalkins,  
Bald monkeys, scorpions, fetid serpents —  
The collection of beasts that only flatulence  
And coprology would endearingly gush and spin

Onto paper for the obsessed few  
Who share the common need — this something  
Has no hoary shape although it's trap can sing  
And yawn and swallow a world and its Wandering Jew.  
It's BOREDOM! The eyes shine with tears that smother  
Whatever dreams cocaine will conjure up.  
and dear Reader, you know the color of its broken cup,  
— Hypocrite reader, — my shadow, — my brother!



---

ANONYMOUS

---

MISFIT

Another child produced of  
bourgeoise stock,  
raised to be  
BEST.  
Ah, yet such a passion for  
cheap booze and dancing girls.

---

ANONYMOUS

---

In trouble again  
she boards the train  
Betrayed  
(she sings for her sanity)  
another chorus girl  
lost  
in his fantastic rhapsody.

*ANONYMOUS*

---

throwing coins in the river is  
important to certain  
beneficial rites lost in  
the dawn of the new  
age, blessed and burning  
a great wake in  
the annals of history.  
Lennoxville might, to some, be significant.

*RALPH GUSTAFSON*

---

ISFAHAN

Here is where the roses fade soon  
And indifference takes precedence of the  
Nightingale — sullen Isfahan,  
“Half the world” — if paid for. The soul of it  
Bits of mirrors, gilt. How good  
Far snows, a country without  
Eleven times beginnings!  
Seven bridges cross the Zayandeh,  
Each its imposition,  
The calling minarets reflected  
In their sapphire pools of trash.  
One glory — where Byron stood  
And feel in love with mosque Lutfullah's  
Shy and fathful emerald dome.

PATRICK DUSSAULT

EDITOR

KIRK LAWRENCE, RON SMITH,  
CAROLYN ROWELL

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NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY



