"The New Hat"



"Yin and Yang"

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THE NEW MITRE MAGAZINE 1980

THE NEW MITRE

A BISHOP'S UNIVERSITY CREATIVE ARTS MAGAZINE

SINC 1893





And presently, like a circling typhoon, the sounds of battle began to return

EVELYN WAUGH VILE BODIES 1930

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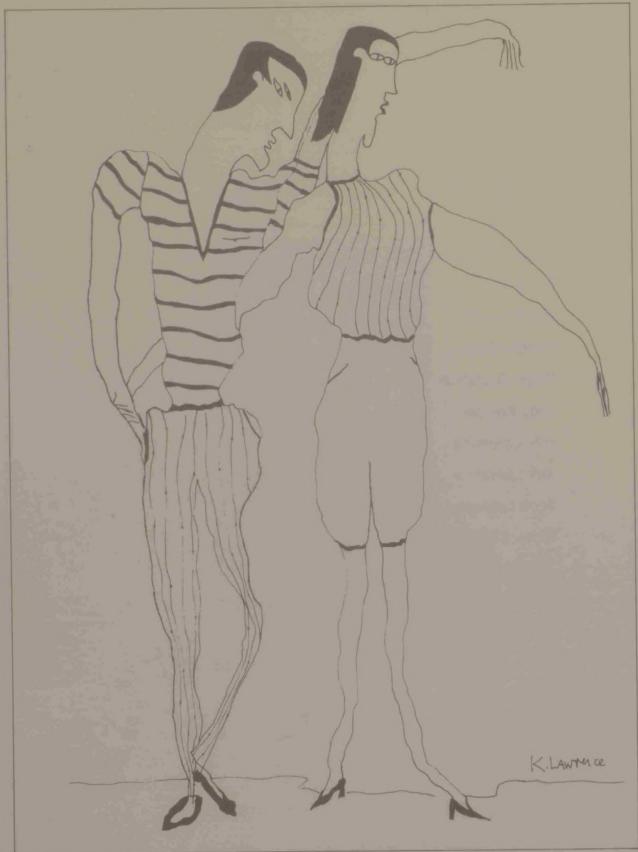
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"Rirds with Shoes"

Chapter one: Between the Walls

by Ronald Smith

Mitchell Park is not pretty today. The season is early winter, and a chill wind whips up the piles of leaves and garbage which summer has left behind. A stone fountain, which squats at the west end of the park, is filled with water waiting to freeze, and the nymphs who support its large stone cup look clammy and sheepish in their half-nude attitudes.

The streets which bind the park are stained black with damp. Brick and stone mansions stand gaunt and old and not entirely welcoming. They whisper secrets of inbreeding and infertility, of fear and lack of life in the cold. You see, the neighbourhood is sagging a bit, and what isn't run down has run in and hid

On Moore Street, just a stone's throw north from Mitchell Park, an old Cadillac hearse, massive and ornate, crawls away from the curb, followed by a flower car and several loads of quiet mourners. The Brothers of the Precious Blood begin a slow rhythm of passing bells, followed by Our Lady of the Seven Pains, the Weeping Virgins, and the Divine Body of Christ. These various peals sail and echo against the dark bank of cloud overhead

Above the rooftops, a stone mason, who has spent all morning patching up a crumbling chimney, is at rest on his scaffolding, watching the procession and nibbling on his lunch like silent bird. He sees it round the corner onto Prospect Street, then on down to the fork in the road where Prospect sprouts the Brompton Road.

An old blue house clings to the cliff, there by the stone look-out, teasing the river below with its grip. In one of the smaller rooms, a room in the back facing the river, sits Odd Rumsby, sorting out life like a deck of cards.

"... nine, ten, jack, queen, king," he mumbles. His body is wrapped within many layers of cotton and wool, and he stares out the window, catching the first hints of rain with his eye Soon a cold grey sheet fills the void between Odd and the world

"... rain, rainer, rainest..." he mumbles

There are dark circles under his eyes, and the whole skin of his face is drawn so tightly as to emphasize its skeletal frame. He has been losing fat for some time, of course, a bit here, a bit there, and now skin and bone kiss in unhappiness

Worst of all, though, he has lost the fat of his soul. Day and night it shivers constantly like some cold bitter thing. One day, in the recent past, his soul snapped; and since that day, not window has been opened in the old blue house.

.

Insulation is a major social and political topic in Mitchell Park. On warm days, the conservatives wander through the streets shouting "insulatel", while the liberals are busy with an organization which they call "Save the loicles". Mr. Calvin Ludens, one of Mitchell Park's leading citizens, holds that insulation is merely a modern manifestation of man's instinct for shelter, and that, romantically, this instinct should not be denied. Odd Rumsby has read all of the circulated pamphlets, both Insular and Non-Insular, and is swept away by the logic of Mr. Luden's argument, firmly placing himself within the conservative camp Mr Rumsby also holds, it must be said, that a row of long icicles hanging from the edge of a gothic roof-line often resembles a set of organ pipes, and is very pretty, indeed. However, he can only endure a certain amount of organ music before retiring with ears buzzing and slight nausea. It is therefore that he casts his ballot and henceforth decrees that he will re-insulate the old blue house at the rate of two bags a day.

Since Odd Rumsby rarely if ever goes out of doors (he has ventured only once since the day of the Dreaded Breakdown), it is to his wife, Cilla-Lachapelle, that he delegates the task of purchasing the insulation. It is only with much prodding that she can be persuaded to undertake the daily trek, which takes her across town to Ludens Limited, the insulation place. To arrive at her destination, Mrs. Rumsby, always on foot, chooses a particularly circuitous route, one snaking through lanes and crescents and meandering like a lazy river. It is a choice made as an alternative to the few bold strokes of the modern thoroughfares which, by the way, have sprung up of late and which delineate with strict inflexibility the boundaries of Mitchell Park, redefining Mitchell Park as a means to an end rather than as an end in itself. On these thoroughfares, cars race down the hills of the North Ward like bobsleds vying for position, and generally extract the most from their engines.

Cilla-Lachapelle does not drive. Therefore, she has never perceived any beauty in observing the thoroughfare. Car fumes make her noxious, and crossing a busy speedway can easily make her 'almost vomit'. The old shady lanes are much more to her liking, where she can pause to talk to cats or sing old songs in her mind. That she increases the distance between two points never enters into the discussion.

On this particular day, Cilla-Lachapelle plops along the dimpled sidewalk in the freezing drizzle huddled under a large black umbrella. She is an artist, a painter, and as she walks, little muddy drops of water fling up from her heels and make lovely designs on the back of her legs.

"Oh shit!" she says, "I always hate that."

When she finally arrives at Ludens Limited, her cheeks are flushed with cold and irritation.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Rumsby." says Miss Hives from behind the dark wood counter.
"May I get you your regular order?"

Cilla-Lachapelle nods. Since the trip is a daily ritual, the order is usually prepared in advance. Mis. Hives reaches down behind the counter and pulls out two large bags of fibre-plass insulation.

"See you tomorrow!" says Miss Hives cheerily

. . . .

Back at the Brompton Road. Odd Rumsby has succeeded in creating a membrane of fat between himself and the world. It is quite an accomplishment, and the skin of his face draws tighter in semblance of contentment.

Cilla-Lachapelle slowly approaches the fat globule, huffing and puffing under the weight of insulation. Just then, a car races past and splashes her legs with mud and oil. She runs up the steps in a rage and opens the door, bursting in on her husband's fatty meditation.

"Now I have to wash those socks, oh hell!" she mutters, reaching up under her skirt and pulling down her hose in an awkward motion.

Odd is astonished. The membrane has been punctured and he feels the cold damp air invade the house. Anger and resentment swell to the surface. He picks up a lead crystal ashtray and hurls it at her.

"You absolute bitch!" he screams. The ashtray hits Cilla-Lachapelle on the thigh, and she looks up incredulously for a moment. She begins to cry, her face distorted like a small cabbage. And with the sobs, even Odd's rage disappears, leaving nothing but pity and guilt to take its place. He puts his arms around her body and kisses her gently on the neck.

"There, there..." he whispers quietly "You're just shaking off all the world you picked up outside"

Out the window and beyond the cliff, the rain tumbles down

the remarkable heavens

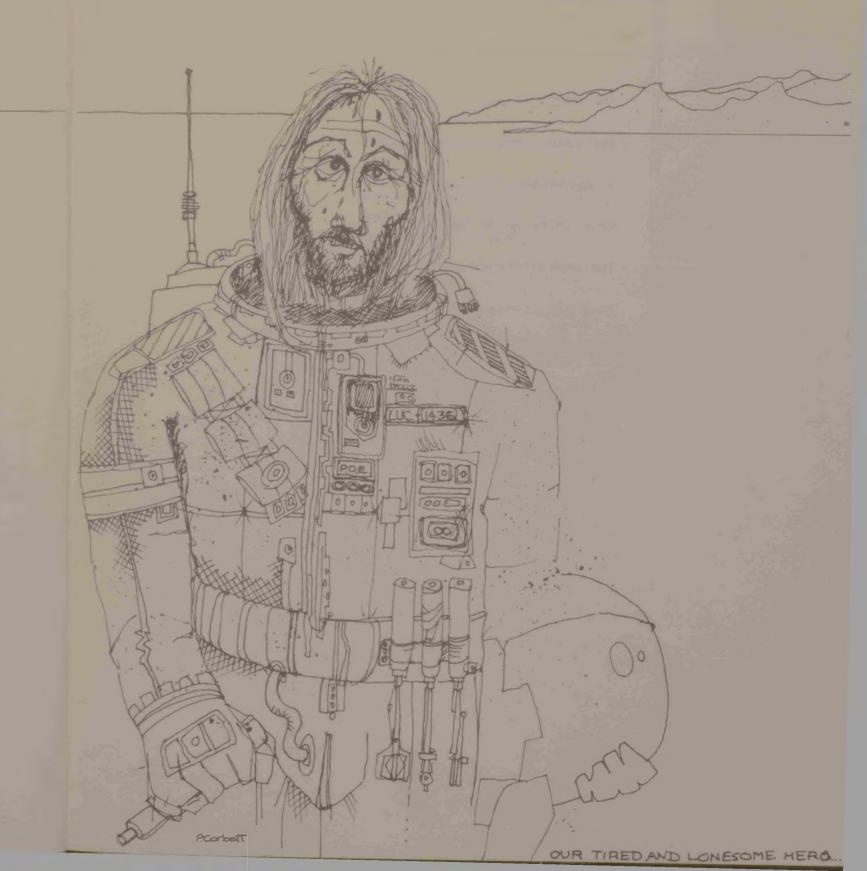
by Ralph Gustafson

We are all sailing in a circle,
The globe leans toward the seasons.
We are a part of heavenly declensions
Doing what we have to do, ice
And icy icebergs or, inclined
The other way, steamy swamps,
The damp crocodile in them,
O tears What shall we do
Taken for a ride around the sky?
Stars blink in the passage, the sun
Goes up and down while the hermit prays.
Yesterday we passed through Leo,
The zodiac a ninth month gone and
No parturition. Last
Monday fortnight I observed
The moon at the lake-edge with my love.
It was only half there, Tomorrow
I master astronomy and play like Liszt.
I can remember sirens I cranked
Going round corners, fires dreamed;
Cabooses rode. Now I take up
Heaven. Orion went out just now
Quenched by a horizon and the pole star
Just swung around and stayed there.

bereldender

by John C. Olsthoorr

I met him in glass, Ice in frost winter, One day, yesterday. It seems so long ago. I met him in glass, The shiver of a puddle. I met him in glass.



THE LECTURE

by Erik Sande

The unseen cars, painted with rain.

Slide splashing through the slicking film of water

As their splatter and hollow presence

Echo quiet through the disjointed oaks

They linger with the pale light of the languid class

Chalk dust, unsettled, mingles in the neon bath

And like the unheard fan.

The Julling speech blends unassuming.

Hidden in the lifeless walls

I learn nothing

Urban (ases

by lan Stephen:

She though

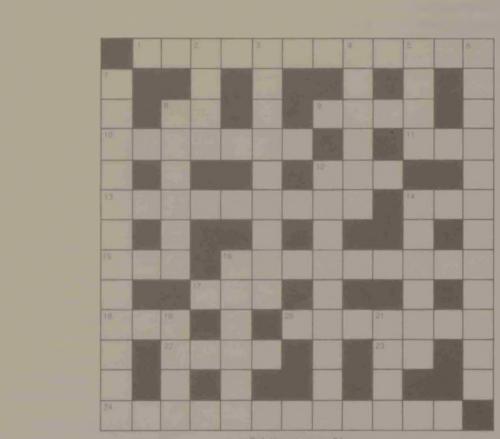
She grew old
uglier and more grotesque
each and every moment
hearing the sound of boilin
mud in the brain

She though

as she crawled onto the motorway on her knees and was hit several times by the passing vehicles No one knew why she did it in the afternoon



CHRUCERIAN CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- 1 Did he write Troilus & Criseyde? (4,8)

- 2. " — —, smert, drede, fury, and ek siknesse" (4)
- 3 Thopas convulsed again? (6,3)
 4 Win emu? It's probably moulting! (2,4)
- 5. Glee mixed and fowl! (4)

- 6 A wet Christmas? (7,5)
 7 "How greet a lord is he!" (3,3,2.4)
 8 "A" was the first one in Chaucer's day (6)

- 19 Such thoughts are caused by "defaute of slep" (4)



CODUPPOPDCP

Boott Lawrence

The sun burns high overhead, the noonday silence is broken only by the regular grating chant of cicadas.

Anna leaves her desk and walks to the windows. She places her pencil into the sharpener.

(Again)

Walking just along the periphery of the children's playground below — Snell. He sits down upon his bench and brushes something from his chest. Anna cannot make out what it is. She squints at him through eyes faded a chalky blue. His movements are quick and abrubt (a rooster, a rooster preening his bib).

She twists the handle of the sharpener. At her back the students are poised, anticipating the noon bel

Snell still wears the new black overcoat, the only decent piece of clothing she has ever seen on his thin body. Below the hem of his coat, only the bottoms of his shrunken beige pants are visible (there is something).

She has watched his body growing smaller with each passing day. Three weeks before the black coat had fit him perfectly, but now he could easily force an extra set of arms into the shoulders and sleeves.

She had been unable to understand why he appeared to be shrivelling away inside of his garment; but today she sees. There is a V shaped patch of whitebound within his lapels — he is bare chested beneath the coat. He must have removed layer upon layer of shirts and sweaters from under it as the Spring steadily progressed (still he keeps it on why, why can't he get rid of the coat, why is he acting as if he fully expects to have to wear it somewhere, somewhere that he'll never go, not in clothes like that, he is always and only in the park, watching. watching).

Anna turns around suddenly and the students are gone. When she turns back to the window they are filling the corner of the playground below. Her legs numb as she feels the park shuddering under their ceaseless assault.

A few of the children sit quietly on the grass, eating from buckets and bags; others grope along the exercise bars, their pink mouths pulled wide open, baring glistening white teeth.

There are boys chasing girls and girls chasing boys. A group runs up to the duck pond and suspends one of their number over the protective wire mesh fence. The victim hangs only for an instant — as he struggles his friends shrug helplessly at one another and drop him face first into the thick green water.

Another of her students, Tim Foisy, controls the see-saw and dangles a girl on the seat opposite him in the air. The louder she yells, the harder he bounces his side of the balance onto the ground. Each time his end hits the dirt she is flicked a few inches closer to the sky. His friends sit on the grass beneath her, hooting louder with each of the girl's screams.

Anna turns from the window (stupid stupid little runts)

She sits at her desk and eats

Her attention is drawn back to Snell. He shifts his weight on the bench and pulls out a pint box of ice cream. Legions of pigeons congregate at his feet, clucking, eyes fixed on his meal. He dips his fingers into the

Snell came to the park with the Spring. And during the last few weeks, as the sun slowly warmed and the winter snows pulled back into the earth, Anna has waited for him. Ignoring him was impossible, his rituals became her own. He had even begun to invade her dreams

She tried to stop him from coming to the park. After complaining to the school's principal, who patiently explained he was powerless in matters that fell outside of his jurisdiction, Anna wrote a letter to the police department. She delivered it personally:

To Whom It Should Concern

Lam a member of the educational staff at Lorne Elementary School I am Anna Baker

I fear my children are in danger. This danger takes the form of an elderly man who spends all of his time in our park. Just sitting. Sitting and staring.

I have informed Mr. Thomas Marshall, the school principal, of the situation. He is unable to do anything.

As far as I know, the man in the park has not as yet actually done anything unlawful. But I think he might. I worry about what he might say or do to the children. Please think of this. You may not see anything to fear but I do and in this I think I am not mistaken.

Anna Baker

The police department replied within a week. She met with Captain Lambert on a Friday. He politely assured her that there was no cause for worry, the man she referred to was Mr. Snell. Snell owned a small farm on the edge of town on which he had raised prize chickens. The man who was boarding with him sold most of them off. Snell was well known to the department but, if only to put her mind at ease, the Captain would have someone check on Snell daily.

Snell continued to come. Two officers visit him every afternoon, just as school is getting out. And, as the Captain had said, Snell never speaks to or bothers anyone (but he will I know he will he is just waiting).

By this time she had begun having the dream

. . .

All that remains of the children's Christmas decorations is a yellow sliver of Scotch tape stuck to one of the classroom windows. As Anna picks at it with her thumbnail a bell rings and signals the end of the noon hour.

She looks up For a moment both time and the students freeze at the sound. Then the familiar commotion as the students file back into the school Anna glances up at the sky and notes the beginning of the sun's descent. She hears the cluttered noise of approaching footsteps and walks back to her desk

The boy that had been dumped into the duck pond is pushed into the room ahead of everyone else. He is soaked and spotted with yellow down. He grins widely, his lips drawn back sharply from his teeth (proud. just so proud).

Anna hesitates. Then she rushes to the boy and spins him around so he faces the door. She clamps her hand tightly to his head.

- Get home, she orders him Her voice is low and deliberate. Her fingers close more tightly around his
 hair, and she pulls slowly at it before pushing him from the room. There is giggling and jostling all around.
 - The rest of you... sit down, Now.

The boy walks slowly down the hallway, escorted by whistles and cheers (so I have created a hero).

She turns around Tim Foisy is in the far corner of the room, trying to grab underneath the dress of the girl he had trapped on the see-saw. Anna screams his name, and pulls him by the nape of the neck to the front of the class. She purses her lips to stop her mouth from shaking, and hits Foisy across the palms with the flat side of her steel-edged ruler. When completely out of strength and breath she stops. Her eyes are brimming with water and her face is pale. She grabs Foisy again and demands that he see her at the end of the day

His face is flushed a deep red. As he walks back to his desk, the heads of the others turn to meet his (wanting to touch him, wanting him to open his hands and lift his eyes so they can touch him, so they can touch his wounds).

She stands at the front of the room, trembling. All eyes are carefully averted from her own. She feels ar ache in the bottom of her stomach and places her hand there. Someone giggles softly

She glances at the window when she feels Snell is watching.

9 0 0 1

Anna gives the class an assignment they can complete on their own, and tries to correct a test she had given them the day before (enough, enough of all of them). From time to time she glances up from the papers and surveys the fidgetting bodies in the room. She pays special attention to Foisy. He is not doing a very good job of pretending to work (no different from the others, tomorrow or tomorrow after that it will be someone else, then again someone else I don't want any of it).

. . . .

The afternoon fades slowly. Anna watches the clock more closely than do any of the children For every minute, the clock ticks twice. She counts the one hundred and twenty ticks in an hour.

Still Snell sits upon his bench. The birds are gathered around him like tiny pink-eyed sentinels. He is eating something again, feasting, occasionally stopping to wipe his fingers on the neck of a bird. They move frantically, pecking Snell's food and sweat off of one another's backs (with a bit of colour they would look like hens, Snell's hens).

The birds stop feeding only to strut towards anyone approaching Snell's bench, warning them to stay clear. Anna has never seen him up close

She gets up from her desk and begins to write a homework assignment on the blackboard. Halfway through a line, the chalk cracks and breaks. She erases everything she has written and begins again. Twice the chalk splinters in her hand, twice she begins anew. She turns quickly away from the board

Snell looks up from his birds. Anna watches him watching her.

. . . .

The dreams, (the dream)... each time supplied with additional details, each new detail crisper than the last... Time of day late afternoon—the shadows of the swings, the trees, the benches, people (do they see me), stretching away from the final sun—creeping... a deepening green in the grass (does he know my name)

Snell sitting, she moving towards him (why can't I walk away)... the birds, his birds, try to stop her, she tries to stop herself... Snell picks up one of the pigeons, twists its neck until it snaps, puts it into his pocket—the others do not fly away, but stand absolutely still—Anna screams and Snell does not seem to hear—she is looking at him and gagging soundlessly—she is enveloped by his coat and feels the stretching of the muscles in his shoulders, feels how they hang from his frame... for one moment she can see from outside of it all...

the children filing towards her in a line, eyes blank, faces expressionless, configurations of tissue and bone... she can taste Snell—she can taste herself—burnt hair... sour meat—she screams but again there is no sound and her mouth gapes and she tries again and again and again to produce some, any, sound... her hand

reaches inside the pocket of Snell's coat, her coat, and she feels the dead animal lying wet and cold ... and she grasps its neck, and her fingers probe the slick flesh, her nails penetrating the folds in the meal—and she pulls the animal from her pocket... still trying to scream, to warn others, to warn herself—she watches with terror her own terror... her mouth wide open, the body she dreams and the body she is both thinking (STOP) thinking (IAMDYING) thinking (NO)—

When she wakes up, kicking at something

2 5 5

Anna does not hear the bell that ends the day. She looks up from her work, the last of the students straggle out of the room, meeting her gaze with mute stares. Tim Foisy remains in his chair. Looking at him now Anna cares nothing. She knows he feels the same towards her and it doesn't matter at all.

Snell is tying on the bench, his coat buttoned to the neck and neatly tucked about him (all dressed up going nowhere why doesn't he leave why doesn't he go away). It is the first time she has seen him lying on the bench. His face is turned towards her window.

Anna orders Foisy to stay in his desk. She leaves the room

The corridors of the school are empty. She paces up and down, breathing deeply, locusing only on the echo of her own footsteps. Her body feels elastic. She leans against a row of lockers, shutting her eyes. From the blackness emerges the pink grinning mouths of the children.

When she returns to the classroom Foisy is staring out of the window. She feels his attention shift to her, feels his eyes upon her studying her, and she pulls her arms in tightly to her hips. Anna points to the black-boards and begins to leaf through the children's assignments. She stops for a moment and notices the perspiration on the back of Foisy's neck.

The blackboards cover two walls of the room. Foisy cleans and washes the first one thoroughly, but works more quickly on the second, missing spots that leave thin grey streaks. His face is damp

Walking up the path towards Snell are two policemen. The birds do not move as they approach. The policemen stand with Snell a moment, touch him, and one of them walks back along the path. The other sits down at Snell's feet.

Foisy finishes washing the blackboards and stands in front of one of them waiting to be dismissed Anna collects the felt erasers from the trough than runs beneath the boards. Without speaking, she hands them to Foisy. He cradles them in his arm and leaves the room.

When he gets outside Foisy looks up to the classroom window to see if she is watching. A few children play on the swings, but he does not speak to them. There are seven erasers, and he begins clapping them together in pairs

The other policeman returns to Snell carrying a large green bag. Shadows of late afternoon envelop them, but sharpen the outlines of their bodies. The landscape stands out in relief.

Foisy cleans the last eraser by slapping it against his free hand. The chalk dust clouds about his head. His motion slows as he looks towards Snell and the policemen.

The policemen surround Snell. His head slips from the bench and his mouth snaps open. Anna raises her hand to her mouth and sucks in her breath (it is happening).

Foisy turns and looks up to her. His eyes are black holes, his jaw hangs slackly. Anna tries to shout to him. He stares at her arms at his side, frozen. She cannot make a sound.

His face is white with chalk





J Blevins

Again, so many colours have sunk beneath the sky — Her hair forms a wreath of crushed violets

Jagged under the suburban light

The alchemist of dawn leads a chorus of mist

From temples of cinder and onyx.

Walls draw back and melt into reeds. Alongside the road

Cold fields tremble and collapse.

--- this age knows only madness and stone

The black asylum which is winter.

The dark ages are finally at rest
 in a chamber of the Louvre —

By the hearth there is a battle

Of admirals

And the mind of a child in the waxen flames

Someone placing flowers on the dead musiciar

Enters the royal court of silence —

After the plague only the shore remains

Where condemned men feed on the Marrow of your name,

-11

Overhead, kites like sails of stained glass
Echo the lantern she
Fashioned from snow of constellations.
Snow slides still
Through exhausted skies

Where her eyes ignite the silence of the long polar night Gazing past this season of slow poison.

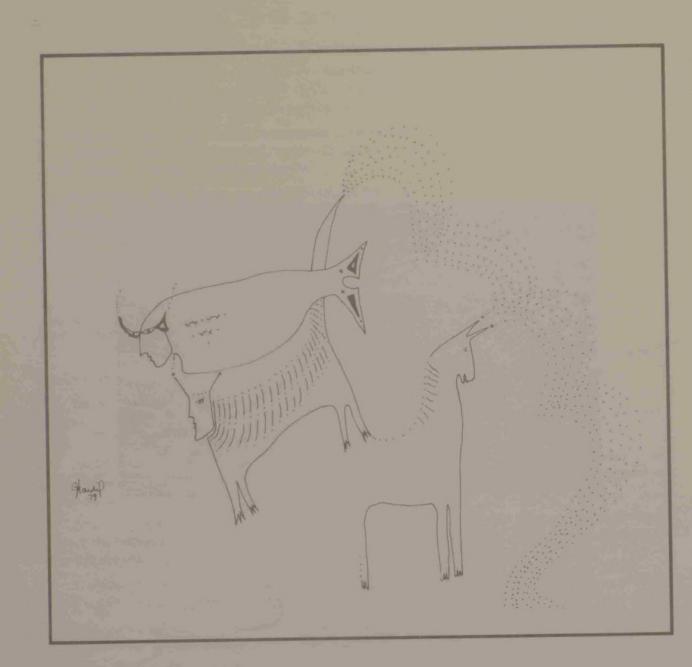
And the bare invocation of dead branch.

To druid pillars ablaze in the fall,

Old fountains of absinthe and lakes of jade.

Weeping anthems for sunsets

The thick colour of blood.



m

Night formed an altar —

Away from the noise of cutlery: and crowds

Posed for a still life

Portrait. In the hall, a dry

Gloom mounts shuttered blinds

As it arches against the evening

Tonight in

Even the faintest music,

The dim glint of tearing flesh

Flares above the wreckage

Angled lamplight spilling over the porch

Sprays bramble mounds, and

Drains below horizons, peaked

By rows of leaning pines: From darkness

Stream prismatic

Pyres.

IV

All morning

her breath was the scent of delicate luxury from throbbing palaces of decay.

Yet

the wake of her absence calls tropical gales and waves of blank swans against porcelain shoals.

V

To the liquid dreams and ivory
Thoms of a day's debris.
Above the city, silken
Strands of a webbed haze
Burst into seeds of the sun's floral lust.
Still.
Ours is a kingdom of ending days,
Of coiling streets,
And cellars.
In the end, there is only the search
For a scorched
Image, in the powdered shade reaching
Limply across boarded doorways and empty lanes.
— An image to

Of Indelible Water-barrels

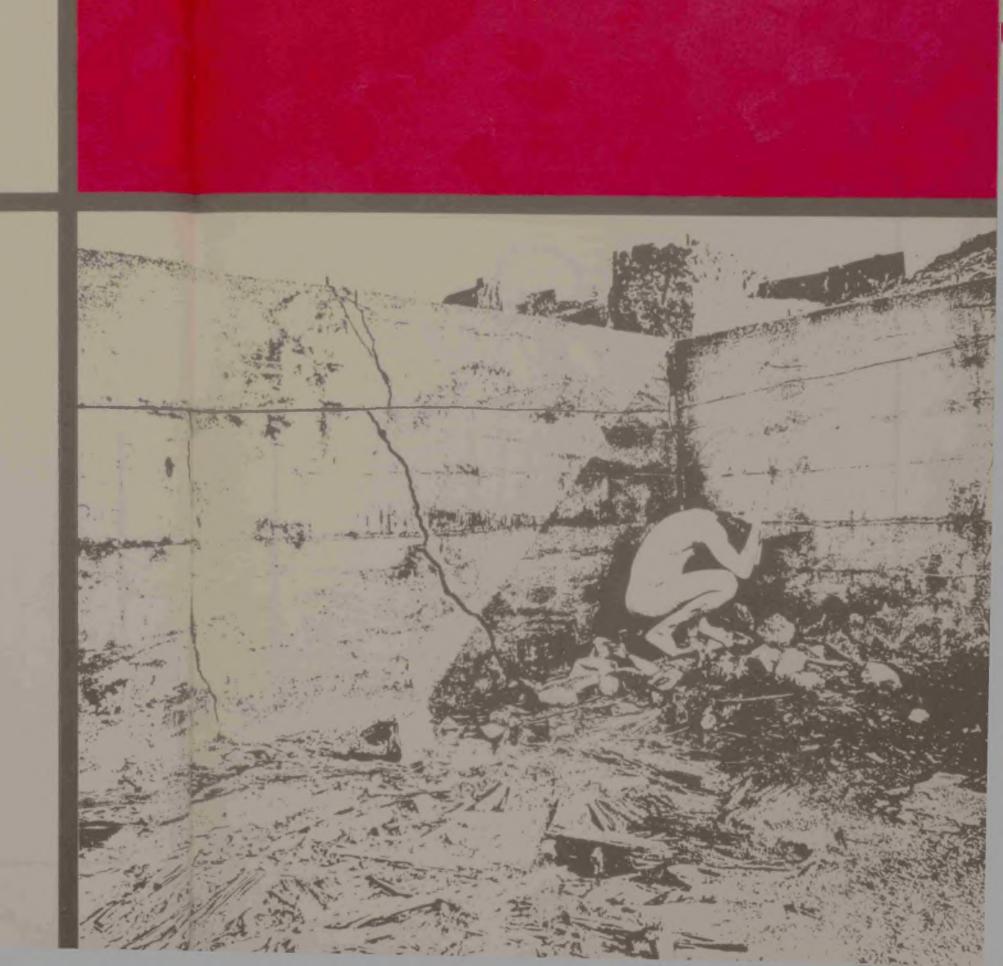
by Ralph Gustafsor

Is what I was born to, hardwood slats And iron hoops. It stood outside Daintily walking mesh above The damp ground and where the chicken Flew up with a squawk into the boy's Face - that water-barrel. Cut off I breathe. The hills were serenity Touched with March, sap in maples Filled pails. Accidents of weather. I still follow the casket of my grandmother And distance of the church. She pinned Of wide relevance Born to them, A swept-up love, of course, whether You are born to it or in Lime Ridge. Art's a promiscuous birthright. And native to igloo, velvet parlour, Year-old Tiryns a heap of rocks. Tug of what you knew, is fatal.



Bichard McCallum

marvin puts his head
through the wall
every second day
and the attendant complains
because she has to stop spraying
lysol into the toilet bowl
because
all
his
fucking
retarded
fucking
blood
is
dripping
on
the
floor
but marvin doesn't give a damn
anyway, he's too busy beating
the shit out of allan.
when
is
hee
haw
on?
("we have to get a helmet for marvin")
("O.K.")



Fiction

by T.C. Fodor

Let us pretend that you're sprawled comfortably in your favourite chair (your posture something out of a chiropractor's nightmares) and you're nibbling at the obscure text you've picked up at the book-store in the shopping centre some weeks ago (quite by chance you liked the sound of the author's name, the fairly large, clean type, the colour of the spine) Because you're quite tired — you worked hard at comparing long columns of numbers all day under the glaring fluorescents in your office (you think of having them changed, and for a moment you seriously consider the extravagant dream of having a skylight installed) and now the whiteness between the lines (horizontal columns that form the after-image of a grid on your retina) causes your eyes to run the words together on the page, but you don't close the book, you don't toss it disinterestedly on the laundry hamper or on the clock-radio whose dial numbers always creak at precisely twenty-three minutes past the hour, because your eyes are leading you on down the page, now pausing at some significant word (significant!) now (unfocussed) finding some intensely personal information in the character's mind which the author had (in a manner of speaking) deduced about you in comparing the secrets of his imaginary selves, but you go on because the rambling, so attuned to the natural buoyancy of your own mind, somehow makes you forget your work, the time, your posture

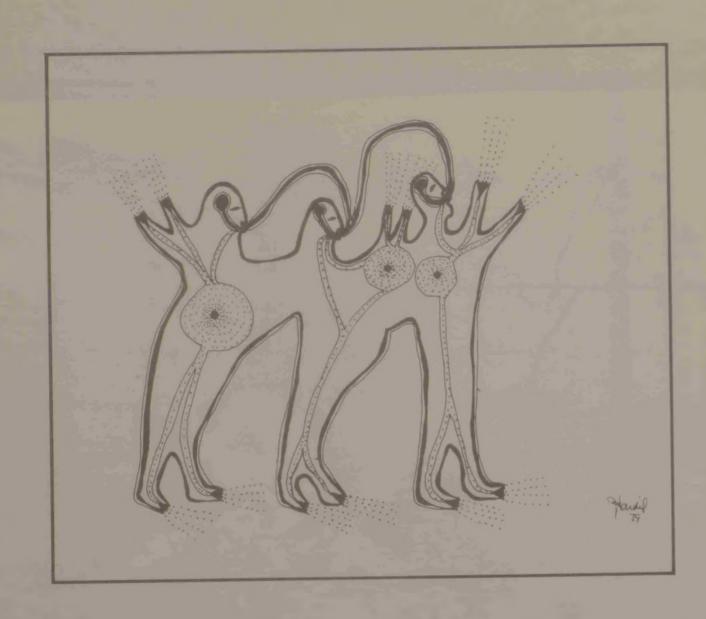
The words take you into a world that is at once familiar and yet somehow not right. You discover that this world is perfect in every detail, from the loose thread at the toe of your socks to the defective, infuriating traffic light around the corner from your house. They are all there, the kids from the other end of the block shouting insults at each other, the delicious smells from your neighbour's kitchen, the metallic TV voice (drifting in from the other room) of the girl reporter interviewing the man (you've seen him before: he wears a soiled green sweater under the oversize tweed coat and one tip of his rumpled shirtcollar is hopelessly caught inside the crew-neck, the other is waving about under his five o'clock shadow like a distant flag; he looks defiantly into the camera, eyes bulging, and leans closer, his distorted face now all out of proportion as it presses against the other side of the glass in the set) screaming that he refuses to put his garbage into green plastic bags or some vague philosophical pretext you either scoff at or don't understand. But the words always draw you on you want to forget all this, all you want is to relax, weightless, and you follow the morsels on and on until you see, there, on the page, the sudden, unexpected line, dangling before you.

What is it?

You narrow your eyes, wrinkle your brow, and then you bite. And there, before your eye is a spectacle that you may once have dreamt (and forgotten) long ago. You may even remember the vision and the accompanying compulsion to keep it, but you remind yourself that you never could find the time or the inspiration (behind those steel and glass walls, between those columns of figures, the architecture of your age), to set it down, to carress its fine silt between the fingers, to bounce the rays of the sun off its coloured crystals at different angles, to chase its effervescence for the pure joy of the chase. But you know it. It is your dream.

You recognize it with the same ambivalent mixture of anticipated dread and eagerness you feel when at a corner table in your favourite Chinese restaurant you discover a noisy group in whose midst is a long-forgotten classmate who was once as much a part of your life as all that surreptitious smoking in the boys bathroom.

You light a cigarette now, your eyes still wide, aware of the drumming pulse in your jugulars (like a doo opening and closing and opening and closing) and the cigarette smoke drifts upward, serpentine, silently malevolent.



you can't quite remember his name, and you know that if you stop to chat (remember what's-his-name? what have you been doing all these years? who was the guy who set a flaming bag of dogshit on the teacher's stairs?) someone — perhaps you — will eventually remark that yes, it is a small world, and you will not know if this is a curse or a blessing.

You recognize the scene: everything settles into stillness, even the eddies of your extraneous thoughts are easily borne along until you suddenly find, between two harmless phrases, a vortex that suddenly sucks you in and makes you dizzy because you can't look at the words and at yourself at the same time, and so the vortex thrusts you out on the other side. You see that you can't go back through it, and you see that nothing seems different, out of place, the long, tree-lined boulevards, the swaying, high office buildings, the murky, swirling sky, the shadows flitting beneath the streetlights. But something has changed, shifted, slowly; the air feels liquid now. The stars. You see them move, now to the east, now to the west, as though they were lights on some enormous, black pendulum. Its movement is light (and lightness) and it draws you to itself. Should the book fall from your lap (you muse), you might float off toward those stars, belly up, just as you're sprawled on your chair. But you are not so sure that this idea pleases you.

You are disturbed, like the currents above you, the colours rushing to your eyes. You try to quit, to move off the distracting page, but the successive words, like knots on a string, are now irreversibly swallowed, forever a part of you. In trying to break away, you think of your childhood, of your first day at school perhaps, when your sister pretended she didn't know you, your fifth grade geography book (you wrote your name — in pen — on the maps), the secret code you devised with your friend (on a carefully torn piece of yellow foolscap, tucked behind the radiator by your cot), the aquarium you got for your thirteenth birthday, the goldfish floating upside down (quite still, its golden spine a dark memory there in the translucent flesh as you desperately waved a flashlight in its cold, veiled eyes) in time.

But it doesn't help. The knots slip past you, and before you can stop yourself, you've finished, gulped down the words sprinkled in front of you. You don't even notice that your mouth is open, that for a tiny moment you believed that you are a fish in a huge aquarium, and that with just a small effort you could have drifted up through the element you breathe (and take for granted) freely touch those points where the stars (are they stars?) break the surface

You smile knowingly. You tell yourself that you've been pleasantly deceived; you've allowed yourself this luxury (to be deceived) only because you know the real facts. You stare out your window, preparing to close the book, and still (despite your poor posture) you are unaware of the weight of your body. But then, you hear someone calling your name, and you know it's time to leave the house, to go to your favourite Chinese restaurant, where

You stop yourself. This is foolish daydreaming, you say, and toss the book onto the laundry hamper And then you swim out of the room.

. . . .



Seven Maidens on a Beach

A Dime as Astonishment

by Ralph Gustafsor

The imagination done with it, this window is the balustrade at Delphi.

The valley of olives to Corinth dusty Green below. The world is ours.

Two trees and a bird on a wire Vanish if I move to my eastward Window where the lake is golden.

Sunshatter or shade, Pythia As ever still chews betel nuts,

Sits on her tripod and prophesies.

Trees are trees and block the view No matter what. Facts stand.

Invest love — they re what we are.

Brahms or Webern is a music

Either way, the meaning what We say we are Coming on sunstruck Snow, we walk in windowed Chartres.

Water falling is its farther

Stillness A boy at Orchard Beach,

I spent a solitary dime once

To look through lens, the telescope aimed At Saturn's inexhaustible rings.

Centennial for Einstein

by Ralph Gustafsor

Uncertainty took over The quantum theory
Takes possession only statistical means
Determines where the iridescent atom
Sets momentum down, exactly lands,
Everything's at tangents 'Now I will
A little tink," said Einstein. Einstein thought.
Probability implies its own consent.
The crystal's coruscations clock the stars,
The mountain streams have amity Beethoven writes.
"God does not play dice," Einstein said
God nods His beard, mumbles, "The orderly
Harmony of all that exists," and goes to bed.

The World Something Worth

by Ralph Gustafsor

Heavenly rip-off! Cataclysms
Of sound shot through with light
Sucked in, density so great,
Nothing is.

Sometimes

The far scent of a downward wind

Dvertops graveyards, fingers

Build structures of outlasting music



THE COMSTRATION

by Maria Gould

In her gymsuit, the child's armpits were exposed. Was she aware that hair was growing there'

They had skipped fifty times forward, and fifty times backward, and the child had looked at her as if she were about to complain again, but had changed her mind and begun to skip. Each turn of the rope was as violent as a whiplash, and she had flung her legs over it one by one, raising them high in the air with a goose-stepping motion, and flopping them down on the ground.

Every time the child had lifted her arms, a nest of fine, black hair could be seen beneath them. Although she was trying to watch other children, her eyes could not help travelling to the corner of the room, and focussing on the armpits of the child as she skipped

That night, she took her time preparing herself for bed. She plucked her eyebrows, and gave herself a facial masque. She removed the polish from her nails, trimmed them, and prepared them for a new coat.

Before she took the pins from her hair, and picked up the brush, she rearranged all the bottles on the top of her dresser

Then she glanced at the clock, 12:30. She turned off the light, took off her dressing gown, and got into bed

And it was exactly as she expected. As soon as she lay down, it returned to her mind's eye.

The long corridor in front of the principal's office shook slightly with each of her determined steps

She freed her body of the stupor that had pathered, and settled herself in the bed again

But it returned the hall, with the polished stone floor, trembling inside her head as her heels struck it, and the honey-coloured tiles becoming clearer and clearer, until she could see minute details twenty feet in front of her. But she never got any nearer to the sign which jutted out from the wall.

Indeed, the hand was soon there. The grip on her upper arm made her start and turn around. The face was struck by flat light, the eyes magnified by thick glasses. And that idiot's mouth, the lolling tongue, the lips, chapped, thick, and always slightly parted over the jutting teeth.

- "Go go back to the classroom
- "Don't tell on me
- "What do you mean? Go back
- "I won't do it again. O K?"
- "You haven't done anything wrong. Go back to the class."
- "I'm sorry, O.K?
- "Let me go. I told you you haven't done anything.

She looked down at the weak, grubby hand with the bitten nails, and began to walk away, but her feet were rooted there. She jerked her head back to look at her sleeve, where the hand, too, had taken root. She felt the slight tickling as it penetrated her skin. Deeper, deeper, and it was now part of the bone.



"Three-Step

On June 16, 1976, several thousand black high school children in Johannesburg, South Africa, protested against the injustices of the notorious Apartheid system of South Africa. Their peaceful demonstration was, however, soon turned into a massacre when hundreds of white policemen and soldiers indiscriminately mowed them down. In one week alone over 1,000 children and women were killed. The poems below represent my feelings about that tragic happening.

POLMS FOR THE SOWETO MARTYR

by Cecil Abraham

I saw that picture
in a newspaper 12,000 miles away
my people's blood
flowing again at
the hands of hate

A courageous boy he was barely eight years old defying the inevitable terrifying bullets of death

He was first to go though last to begin His only crime was to protest the crime of hate

Where does one
so far removed from
the heinous scene of crime
hide or defy or identify
How does one tell
one's worldly neighbour
who has never felt
the heavy brutal hand
of the terror
the pain
the frustation
that lurks deep
down in the revolutionary he

POLMS FOR THE SOWETO MARTYR

You mirror our pain and purpose
The blood you shed
Is the flow of life.
We must bleed
Because there is no liberation
Without blood.
If they call us lunatics
Let them
If they say we
Are false prophets
Let them
If they say
Dimbaza, Soweto, Langa never happened
Let them
Words will not kill us
Their riot sticks
Fascist guns
Their police dogs
Their cruel prisons
Will not kill us.
Our actions will be the liberating force
The blood we now shed
Molded by our pain and purpose
Will overcome hate
And create freedom for our deat land

SOWETO 1976

Scenes of carnage terror blood haunt my exiled nightmare hundreds of black brown tender bodies uglily gaping wounds torrents of blood mingling with the red-brown sand

The headlines say
"one thousand killed,
many injured"
what happened to
the hopeful dream
of the morning
or the evening
when hope was counted
on dry fingers?

They came before the dawn of the morning black and brown masks in the night Faces they were invisible in the morning day whispering defiantly in the wintry dark

Loud voices locked in deliberation
Voices becoming more
powerful more menacing
with home-brewed anger
that has been under timeless fermentation
in a land oblivious
of the hatred
and hopelessness which abound

They say they wanted only to show discontent not to be martyrs. But the choice was not theirs to make. The noise and rattle of the humanless gur met screams in the dark bouncing like rubber balls. Hot molten lead pins flaming with fire to puncture the black and brown skins the bull's eye the bull is black-brown the bull bellows in a big black-brown voice.

The wintry wind does not howl any longer the morning dark has receded the merciless bodies can now be counted

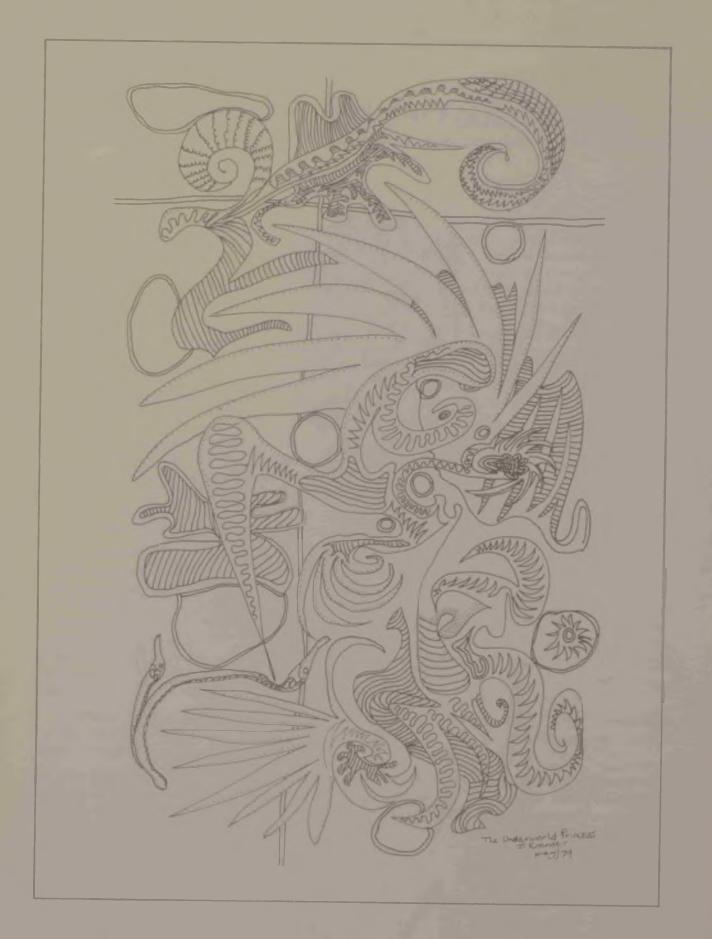
But the sound of the gun can still be heard

Echoes from the cracked skulls and broken bones reverberate here in my nightmare as we parade headlines in front of our tormentors and their friends

The query merely is Again? Again? Sharpeville? But the fascist gun can not be stilled

The black voice of the black-brown bull is for the moment silent while discontent gathers as enveloping flames

But the black voice is not dead Its echo is still there from Soweto, Guguleto, Sharpeville, Langa, District Six



40



Marc Courvois and the Football Men

by lan Stephens

He lay on the uneven mattress watching the November sky turn blue silhouetting an open tin of canned meat, a plastic milk container and a bundle of bread on the window-sill. He was wrapped in blankets he had borrowed and lay for several minutes, not sleeping, just thinking, like a tick on the edge of a reed waiting for a certain warm body. He still felt the sharp pain behind his bruised eyes and on the ends of his fingers where blood had coagulated around the nails he didn't remember gnawing and tearing hours ago.

He had a goal this thursday night, a point in time and space to identify himself with, a point of destiny when the rehearsals would turn into performance on the university campus across the river, a new drama in rehearsal and he had cast himself a major role. He would be this play with his name safely printed on the program (probably misspelt — they always misspelt Courvois) for the audience to identify and then he would be recognized, materialize into reality, unbecome the ghost. The papers would be full of him, sketching facts, not understanding much.

Below his window Marc heard the fat mutt in his chains munching his cereal and then the landlady, with the jaw of a horse who didn't give her boarder kitchen privileges, cooing and whispering words that Marc Courvois didn't understand yet words so unexpectantly soft that tears almost wet his eyes. Marc was sure she had a heart somewhere, almost certain that the horse-jawed woman would regret every hard glance and word she wrung from her tight little brain to spit at him. Yet even after he was taken away, even if she spat in disgust, it didn't make any difference; in ten years these types would all be in Ontario.

His bruised eyes were killing him, currents of pain running up and down his veins behind his swollen face making his brain throb; the headaches wouldn't go away but he must get a good grip on himself for rehearsal He prepared a sandwich and gulped a slug of milk. His fingers over his eyelids, with his right hand he switched on the light for only a second to let the woman know he was there, the light spilling into the garden illuminating the trunk of a worn maple. But he turned it off quickly — he didn't want to see the black bruises in the reflection on the window. The woman was supposed to think he was asleep and certainly not spreading crumbs or mischief. She had threatened eviction before, she thought she owned him, One day she'd take all his blankets and then we'd know who's boss she said. She was a woman of threats but soon it wouldn't matter. Marchistened to the dog and waited for her to get back to her kitchen.

Marc pulled on his jeans. Over his smelly t-shirt he put on three collarless dress shirts of his father's. He tied his father's shoes and put a beret over his unbrushed hair. A last touch — he flung a black scarf around his neck. Although it was night he gingerly put on sunglasses, any light causing severe pain.

Downstairs he heard the landlady speaking to her man in the living-room. It was 5:59. Marc waited for the blue box to be turned on. When it was, their talking continued louder than before over the nightly news. God Marc was sick of their leathery faces and grunts. He crept to the window and slowly opened it. He removed the screen and climbed onto the gallery roof and closed it behind him. He was only one floor above the garder and knew that the fat mutt was asleep after his supper and wouldn't bark. He knew they couldn't hear him clump into the garden as they were on the other side of the house so he leapt into the circle of shadow and waited till the roaring blood in his ears ceased and the pain diminished. He crept along the line of pine onto the dirt road and made his well-practised escape.

The bridge he had to cross was ugly, the pavement scarred, the river stench rising above the swirling spume from the pulp mill at East Angus. The St. François offered a track for the cold autumn wind but instead of feeling cold and clutching himself and hurrying along like the other students who had to cross back and forth, he undid his shirts leaving only the blue and white t-shirt above his chest. He walked slowly with his arms out from his sides, his head high and dark pupils looking through the purple bruises, the dress shirts fluttering in the wind, his father's old shoes clicking on the cement

Already white cones of ice swirled in the currents mirroring the odd grey cloud in the black sky. The sky and the river were all the same to him. Looking down and up it became all the same to Marc Courvois — the bastards had punched him in the eyes, he was angry and in pain. He leaned over the bridge and threw the pork sandwich at the ice and watched it swirl and disappear with the foam, hoping it would clot the turbines in town and send this little world into darkness

It was 6:15. Right on time, off in the distance behind the fingered branches of November, he heard the grunting platoon of men limping and jogging along from town. It was the university football squad coming back from practice in the civic park under the lights. Marc ran across the bridge, jumped over a low guard-rail and crouched in the same ditch that he found every night. It was in a circle of shadow and they couldn't see him there. He waited till they passed by, watching intently the exaggerated forms with their long shadows, the men yukking and slapping each other on the ass. The good old boys passed over the old field towards the athletic complex. These were the heroes of the university, they were the men worthwhile.

After they passed Marc crossed their path and spat at their footsteps in the mud. Last week during an impulsive foray to the university pub, where he had never been before, he had been beaten up because he wore the Canadian flag as a cloak, really just a smokey joke but several football men had taken offence and punched Marc in the face and left him bleeding on the dance-floor. Ah yes, these were the guardians of the Canadian nation, the heroes, and he spat again, alone on the old field, the actor in blue and white, illuminated by the cafeteria lights, waiting to have his name misspelt.

Marc was hungry but that was alright; hunger made him more alive. He had a knife in his pocket; he had a plan and one day the last straggler from practice would pay for what they had done. One day they'd know who he was then maybe they'd spell his name right. The papers would be full of Marc Courvois.



at Least he perceives himself

by Ralph Gustafsor

There's no hope for it. We are done for,
The least jag of a bitten hangnail.
The slow-curving rise of a parabola
Of thought. He's Adam having had Eve,
All desire knocked from him,
Looking around, the round apples
Hanging on the branch like globes of happy
Permanence, the leopard, chin on paws,
Asleep. And he's no more.

Нарру

Birds, without a prick of perception

He shifts sitting bare-assed on the sod Adjusting his balls to comfort, Alas.

But the bee sucks He watches the tendril.

Above him falls syrupy melody.

He thinks a thought. Perception is perceived.

He sees himself sitting there, hearing birds



"Knight with Daggers

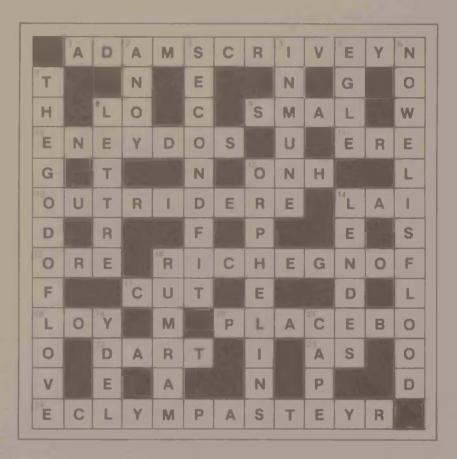
IN BARRY'S BAR

by lan Stephens





"On the Boardwalk at Dufferin Street





"On King Street

HOT TO BE TAKEN AND TO BE TAKE







COVER DESIGN BY JOHANNE TARDIF SMITH