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## Whence Comes This Rearing Elephant?

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## Whence Comes This Rearing Elephant?

### Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"A face, a phrase, a scattered maze of color-as one searches back into the idle haunts of memory, these are the things he recalls. But lo, a rare moment sees a lingering thought, an impression indelibly wrought, pursue us with such vividness that one tastes the past once more. Such an image pursues me now but I know not whence it comes."

### Cover Page Footnote

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## Whence Comes This Rearing Elephant?

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A man sits, his eyes staring into a carpet of dust in a dim and dingy garret, his hands carelessly lying upon a rusty typewriter. The man is middle aged, bald at the temples and mustached. A thin piece of paper lazily leans over the back of the typewriter; ashes from a smouldering cigarette flutter to the floor at regular intervals.

Glancing about him, my memory sees a copy of Wordsworth, a tattered dictionary and a small Bible stacked near his feet. With so much vigor and clarity do these impressions strike me that my present surroundings seem more distant. Foiling my mustached memory are four paint besmeared walls and an assortment of indifferently placed articles that lend the appearance of a wanderluster's repertory. A lion's skin embraces a trunk filled with gayly colored silks, articles of clothing and glistening mantleware. On the trunk's side are a score of multi-colored stickers, calling cards of the world's great nations. Next to this is a mysterious teapot of Oriental origin, by its appearance, anyway, that is colored in mixed hues of orange and yellow.

Presently our eyes gaze on a flat wine cask with strips of black leather tied around it, giving it solid structure and rustic appearance. These colors are so clear to me now as if they were once a part of my life. Yet, I cannot now associate these colors, the mustached man, this room with any of my past experience and the vision still persists.

An oblong picture of a soldier is delicately balanced against a twice cracked and often chipped mirror. Lying immediately to the right of this is a tainted military sword with two boondoggles falling from the handle. A leather jacket, a wrinkled tie and an orange kerchief cover a hook extending from the wall.

Across the small room is a desk with a dusty and unused oil lamp upon one of its leaves. Not unlike the cluttered appearance of the rest of the room, the desk holds a pile of typing paper, trinkets and assorted articles. Here we see a rearing china elephant; there—a silver lighter, a pair of field glasses, a revolver, a small mirror, strings, pencils, bottles, pins and orange peels. Then to the smoke encircled lamp and back to the mustached man wanders my piercing memory.

The man turns to his typewriter; my vision returns to its fleeting companions. Who was this man, this room, this rearing china elephant? My memory stopped neither to ask or answer this. Whence comes this picture—a movie, novel or play? The answer lies within me now, in the secluded limits of my mind. Whence comes the answer? Perhaps at some time yet to come I shall sit and ask myself, "Have I been here before?"

RICHARD OSTERMAN '59



The laugh, the laugh  
The nervous laugh  
That betrays the press  
Of a kicked stomach  
To hide  
An anxious cry.

The lust, the lust  
The lust  
That must be discussed  
That kicks  
From the womb  
Of both man and woman  
A nervous laugh.

R. MOORE '57