Full Issue

No Author
Full Issue

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Prologue
or . . . The second cremation of Shelley

The members, five in number, (one stated beforehand that he would be late), remarked that the muse was their inspiration and that all apple-judging must begin with an invocation. A picture hanging on the wall portrayed the muse as a cross-legged dwarf, sitting on a cloud with four arms. I asked one of the judges what the four arms were for. "Why", said he, "One is to enable the muse to cover his eyes while judging, the other to hold the apple while his mouth was engaged in mastication, the next to pick the seeds from his teeth and the last to sit on". He had to sit on it, lest he pull the other from his eyes. Another judge remarked that there lay the greatest difficulty in judging: the portrait was too distracting.

Once the members sat down, the prize was set out; one solitary apple. Being the only person present without a blindfold, I noticed the apple had a strange tag on it which simply said, Shelley. As all were required to present evidence of capability in judging, they each in turn came forth with a degree from the Higher School of Apple-Judging, a newly founded institution which in its short-lived existence had grown in an enormous number of graduates. This was verified in part because its constitution read that the cornerstone of apple-judging was that everyone could learn it.

The first critic reached out, took the apple and plucked its stem.

"Give me a ruler", he said. With eminent disdain he pro-
ceed to measure length and width. Having achieved pro-
fuse distinction on apple stems, he remarked that it was not up to standards. "Undoubtedly, this one is a poor speci-
men. Due to the fact that an apple is only judged in re-
lation to its stem, this one lacks the necessary qualities which I feel are a part of a good apple." With this, everyone immediately agreed.

The next judge took the apple in his hands, felt its
texture, tossed it in the air, caught it, and tossed it again, saying, "Since it has good texture and I can catch it without seeing it, there must be something missing in its quality". Everyone agreed, while he continued tossing, further re-
marking that he thought it violated some law of physics.

Two judges fell fast asleep while the others proceeded
and presupposing this, they had written their decisions be-
forehand on little slips of paper. These two were not only graduates in apple-judging, but were also professors of the subject. Hence the singular honor of being allowed to sleep.

The last one was a very heavy-set man, huge in bulk, bearing the constitution of a well contented yet underfed bull. You could not help but perceive that inside his huge head, something was pulsing.

He grasped the apple, opened his huge mouth, bit, and
into the very caverns of hell went Shelley. Slowly his huge jaws began to move, the sinews strained like the piston of some giant locomotive. Each time they met, it seemed as if a great punch press were stamping out parts of metal. Slowly, his grotesque mouth gained speed, until it rose to an amaz-
ing rapidity. The juice oozed from the edges of his mouth as if he were in a rare, seldom witnessed fit of ecstasy. Here was a true judge and critic! In the midst of it all was a low grumbling. You would have sworn that the same titan was screaming while chained in the cave of rebirth!

He bit again, until only a small piece of Shelley was left. He groped amidst throes of short windedness, spit the seed
on the table, and remarked that these were the best part.

The others watched acutely as the mighty pistons spent
their force. Amongst a well-reserved expectoration of gaseous matter from his mouth the utterance, "too juicy" was heard.

The final sentence once passed, the great one complained of indigestion, only he could not remember whether he had contracted it before or after he bit into Shelley. The only thing I remembered, was that in addition to eating the entire apple, he had also eaten the very card on which the poet's name was written.

Lawrence C. Fleckenstein

The Heady Reds and Golds

The morning held a beauty
Too deep for me to speak!
It had the poignant grief
A dying leaf will show,
When red and copper come
To crash with shrinking green.
Such brilliancy of beauty
Has estranged eternity

I

Does body clasp soul within
or keep this thing without?
And art cram beauty in
or art press beauty out?

II

The moment apart brings no grief,
nor yields glimmers of ecstasy;
but like the hollow after rage,
it settles with an empty weight.

Gordon Judd, C.S.B.
Sonnets to Pyrrus

I
A million years ago,
In a land that always was,
Dedalus gazed forever,
At sulking grey clouds,
With gulls floating by,
Caught on a slope of wind.

He built a bird with stolen wings,
Heated wax, attaching them,
To a splintered wooden carcass,
Ran across a crisp sea of burnished leaves,
Flew to the sun,
And fell melted,
Oozing blood and wax.

II
The wind whistles through wires;
that once carried voices of Wall Street,
Held upon the outstretched arms,
of pock-marked telephone poles;
Which carry them to the cities,
where they submerge beneath a sheet of concrete.

Upon the rim of a rusted can of refuse,
hangs a plaster-faced doll,
A cast-off plaything, its spine of broken cotton,
This remnant of some forgotten Christmas Eve,
looks with one unopened eye, the other staring,
At a popcorn box which stands upturned and empty.

III
The bleary-eyed drunkard stares at signs,
which plead the cause of moments,
In the midst of a jungle of broken crystal goblets,
while the traffic light,
swings in its rusting squeaking cradle,
High above the street in safety,
It winks a bloodshot eye,
Thirsting for its power to move men.

The bleached bones of trees,
crackled in an exoskeleton of winter ice,
While the wind scratched its throat,
upon each silvered carbuncle,
Watched by the smiling face of concrete looking down,
At the asphalt labyrinth that lies like black lichen,
The monarch of a last ambition,
Of some lonesome city-planner.

L. C. Fleckenstein
And the bright lights flashed
    glaring red, white, green, blue
and the whistles blew
    belching steam into the air
and the bells rang
    scattering the clouds with their clamor
and children lunged and tugged
    dragging drowsy parents
and the sound of iron wheels
    screeching, and rattling iron rails
and apostles shouting of grandeur for a pittance
    waving and scratching themselves
and crowds careening crazily
    knowing no destination
and sands ruptured and torn by iron pylons
    towering upward to hold teetering trains
and confection crawling from corrupted corners
    littering the once sterile strand

and it sent me home crying
    to dream of white sand
and cleansing green water
    for swimming
and clean air
    for breathing
and of running down uncluttered beaches
    in bare feet
and watching birds dip to question the waves
    and seeing the spray answer their queries
and watching the clouds
    and watching them paint the Madonna-blue sky
and the sky-blue sky
    and the sea-green sea
and the beach-white beaches
    and no lights to glare
and no people to shout . . .

    . . . and no money to make

Donald Dorschel
Puritanism and Graham Greene

Frank Salamone

The introduction to the recent Time edition of *The Power and the Glory* by Graham Greene makes a familiar charge against the author. The editor, however, does not lend the repeated generalization its usual venomous tenor; indeed, he praises Greene for the wrong reason. The charge is that Greene is a master of the material, that he despises man's "body" and loves the spiritual in man, that he has a neo-Augustine loathing of sexual union. This observation may be true of Greene's other works. It certainly is not true of *The Power and the Glory*. In matters of sexuality, it is the abuse of this gift that Greene regrets. (And Greene would be the first to say that there are far worse sins than those of pride and greed, for example.)

Recall the scene in prison in which an illicit sex act is being performed before the worthy pious lady and the whisky priest. The sounds in the dungeon-like cells are unbelievably horrid. It is hard to sympathize with most of the people locked into the jail. Yet Greene writes one of his most lyrical moving scenes from this material. Greene uses the whisky priest to show that God's grace can be received by the lowest sinner—even a whisky priest—if he is humble enough to accept it. The wealthy pious lady has been put in jail for possessing a crucifix—a terrible crime against the state. The priest answers her objections to the fitness of the world in these two passages.

Saints talk about the beauty of suffering. Well, we are not saints, you and I. Suffering to us is just ugly. Rub our curdling and pain. That is beautiful in that corner—

To that dripped with sandy gritted seaweed.

The boiling white foam clamored up

The smooth skinned waves grasped themselves,

In the way of drowning men,

They breathed deep, drinking . . .

Until their translucent insides filled with little pebbles,

To be spat forth in a breath and howl of wind.

The bubbles of egg-white foam clamored up

And clawed the cracked piers of concrete,

That dripped with sandy gritted seaweed.

The cold green weed clung to a skeleton,

Of rusting icy steel,

The wound lay exposed,

It screamed at the drowning sea,

That salted the concrete seam,

Wincing in pain, yet anaesthetized,

By the frozen fist of water,

Its throat polished in the slaked thirst

Of marble skeined moaics.

L. C. Fleckenstein
PURPLE KITES

Tom McKague

I often recall my kite-days. Whenever the city streets seem to fill up suddenly with wintry people, whenever my business takes me through bustling, friendless sections of town, I let my mind wander back. Whenever I begin to look into every face, I see with suspicion. Whenever I find myself categorizing everybody into neat pigeon-holes, labelling this one a competitor, that one a sucker, the other an out-and-out enemy, then I know it is time to go back to the deserted playground with Runner (we called him Runner then because his nose was always running), time to pretend that both of us are just now running through the high dried grass, looking up at our purple kites trailing behind us.

I like to think that my kite-days took place the whole of one quiet spring about twelve years ago. Were I to be truthful to myself, I would have to admit that my "kite-days" consisted of probably one Saturday afternoon in the middle of some muddy-sunny April, a single ambiguous event that clutters a whole mental attic of insignificant memories. But I'd rather apotheosize the day and spread out its glory for a whole season. Everyone has a right to something mystical.

And there was something mystical about watching those purple, crystal-shaped kites soar up into the washed-out blue sky. Both of us felt it then, I'm sure, even with the vague way of feeling of a twelve-year-old heart. The kites would go higher and higher, fly freer and freer, and yet always be under the power of our mighty grip. And as we watched the free purple birds grow smaller and smaller in the soft blue sky, as we lay in the weeds looking up at our other selves tossing about on the wind, we felt free and flying in our souls, happy with the pale spring sunshine and warm April winds.

One Saturday afternoon I thought I'd visit Runner. I hadn't seen him for four years. At that time I had happened to take the subway to work, since my car was at the garage (busted radiator), and I met him as he was rushing through the crowd toward the street. He said he was in a hurry, but he stopped long enough to tell me that he had quit college recently and was working at the art gallery. In a moment he had disappeared into the human stream flowing toward the street. He never did tell me what he did at the art gallery. But I thought that he was probably happy there, around beauty. He had always had an aesthetic craving. Recently I heard that he was now living in an apartment building on Narrow Street. I was told that I wouldn't believe the change in him.

I walked along the streets toward Narrow Street feeling anxious and yet strangely hesitant. There were still dirty patches of snow and ice on the ground. It had rained the night before and the gurgling, slushing sound of running water was all around as the remaining rainwater and melting snow ran along the roof gutters, down drains, along the curbs and through the sunken sewer grates. But it was sunny now, that kind of glistening, moist sunny day that can only be in April after a night shower. As I walked I saw a lot of little kids "running" their kites, but the streets were too confined and the spoked, budding branches of the maples were in the way, so they were having trouble getting them airborne. Suddenly one purple kite escaped through a clearing between the trees and telephone wires; for a second it began to shoot upwards into the bleached blue sky. But then a drift of warm wind sent it crashing down into the clutches of the deadly branches. It ripped as its boy tried to pull it out of the tree, and fell to the street like a bird blown apart by a bullet.

I felt sorry for the little kid as he started to run home with his ripped kite on his back, so I stopped him and gave him a quarter, telling him to buy himself another one. He didn't seem at all impressed with my offer. Instead he just looked at his crushed kite and whimpered. I patted his head and left him with his big tears and runny nose. I didn't know what else I could do.

Soon I came to the shabby brownstone apartment on Narrow Street. The closer I got to Runner, the more I felt a part of spring once again. When I knocked at the door of his third floor apartment, I heard someone stumbling around inside, then the metallic clicking of the turning doorknob. Wearing my heartiest smile, I lifted my eyes up to meet his as the door slowly opened.

"Runner, I was in . . ." (I stumbled in my words for a second as a pair of familiar and yet strange watery eyes looked vacantly down at me.) " . . . the neighborhood, so I thought I'd stop in and see my old friend." Was this old Runner? I thought. Was this tall, thin, curly-brown haired man the Runner who lay with me in the weeds watching our purple kites so many years ago? Was this sallow-faced, stubby-bearded, sloppily-dressed man the aesthetic rebel who
quit college to work in an art gallery just to be near beauty? "On in, Skits," he said with a lazy motion of his head directing me toward an over-stuffed, mud-colored chair near the door. Right away I felt hurt by his unenthusiastic welcome. I saw no need for my warm-hearted smile anymore, so I just sat down and looked around the room, waiting for him to say something.

The apartment was as shabby as I expected from the outside appearance of the building. He probably doesn't pay more than fifty a month for this place I thought. The walls were a sort of coffee brown, the rug, chair, and sagging couch all of a lighter, mud shade.

He sprawled himself out on the couch with his feet dangling over one arm. "Anythin' in particular you wanna see me about?" he asked as he grabbed a cigar from the end table. I was shocked. I wasn't sure what to say.

"Why Runner, I... just thought that..." "You thought you'd stop by and see how your ol' buddy was doin', since you probably heard all sorts'a crazy rumors 'bout him." He yawned.

"No, I haven't heard anything. What's there to hear?" "Nuthin' much." He was quiet for a second, almost as if he didn't know what line to use next. "How you doin'? I suppose that's what I'm supposed to say next, isn't it?"

I watched him spew smoke at the ceiling. I saw his languid eyes follow the gray spiral. Something in me hurt sharply.

"Runner, since when do you have to be careful with what you say to me? After all, we've known each other all of our lives."

"The childhood buddy come back to talk about the time when," he said drily, smoothly, adding after a second, "when we walked the railroad trestle, or tossed rocks at windows, or flew kites together."

At this I felt sick. I started for the door. "Look Runner," I said as strongly as I could (although to my ears it sounded shaky), "I came here with the best intentions, but..."

"Sit down, will ya!" he said with sudden vigor. "I don't mean anythin' personal. I sat down. "Well, what have you been doin' with yourself?" From his lounging position and bored expression I was sure he couldn't care less about my recent history.

"I'm working uptown now, at the main office."

"Oh God! Insurance or somethin', wasn't it?"

"Yes," and I couldn't resist adding with a glance around the dirty apartment, "I'm doing quite well."

"Oh you are. The ambitious young executive personified! Tell me, do you wear tweeds daily, and carry a folded black umbrella with you every morning on the way to the office?"

Again I started to get up, more hurt than mad.

"Sit down! Christ sake, you're jumpy. Would you like some coffee or somethin', 'to go' (isn't that how it's put?)?"

"No thanks," I answered, and plumped into the chair again, not really knowing quite how to handle this situation.

Runner turned his head on the arm of the couch lazily toward me. He was still handsome, I thought, however unclean he looked. And under his nose there was a hint of dampness. This made me smile in my heart.

"You're gettin' kinda fat in the butt, aren't ya? 'Not enough kite-flying', I spect." Before I had a chance to answer anything, a girl suddenly entered the room from the bedroom. She was chubby, brown-eyed, blonde, rough-featured, and wearing a red cotton dress. I recall thinking at the time that were I asked to describe her, this was about all I could ever think of saying.

Runner glanced up at her. She sat by him on the couch, running her hands up and down his chest and at the same time giving me a looking over. "Who's he?" she said in a deep voice, still staring at me.

"That's Skits, an old friend," Runner told her.

For a moment all I was aware of were those two pair of limpid brown eyes peering at me through a whirlpool of brown walls and furniture. Then "Skits, this is Gloria, the love of my life." The childlike creature giggled and looked at him. I, for embarrassment, tried to introduce a new subject.

"Are you still working at the art gallery, Runner?"

"Gave that up a long time ago. 'Sort'a lost interest.' " While he spoke he and Gloria made love to each other with their eyes.

I wondered what he was doing for a living now, but I thought I'd better not ask. Probably the rumors he had made reference to earlier had something to do with it. Perhaps this blonde he was living with was supporting him. I didn't really care now.

"In fact," he continued, I sort'a lost interest in everythin', 'sept her." He ran his hands over her back while she looked at me and giggled. Yes, I thought, you have lost interest in everything, Runner. You've slowed down. In fact, you've stopped. You've stopped yearning for beauty, for knowledge, for the freedom of the kites. You've let the kites escape you. All that was left of that aesthetic boy I once knew was his runny nose.

I glanced out the window in back of me. The sky had clouded up. The street below was well-shadowed and wintry-looking, even though the tiny green buds were just opening on the brown maple branches. A few strangers flitted by down on the sidewalk.

I got up and said, "I'd better leave now, Runner. Don't bother getting up yourself (I knew he wouldn't). It was nice meeting you, Gloria." I nodded to her. She nodded back at
me with a motion that seemed to me to be identical to the one I had just made; immediately after she lay down next to Runner. As I opened the door I heard him mumble something like ‘Nice seein’ ya again,” and I distinctly heard her whisper, “Let’s go to bed honey, huh?”

Outside the air had become chilly. I walked along thinking about all the forms I had to fill out Monday, all the stops I had to make the rest of the week. Thoughts of Runner tried to break through my business-thoughts, thoughts coupled with vague feelings of sadness. But I wouldn’t let them enter.

I intended to keep the memory of my kite-days just the way it had been before that afternoon, so that when routine got just a little bit too stifling, when I felt like a lonely figure on a winter landscape, it would be there in some corner of my dusty mental attic, waiting to be called forth and enjoyed like an April breeze in the middle of December.

The slutty character I had just seen was not the boy who lay with me in the weeds of the muddy playground twelve years ago and watched those purple kites, those vital purple kites, fly about wild and free in the soft blue sky of a new spring. He couldn’t have been. I wouldn’t allow it.

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A GREYHOUNDISH POMBE

Once when I was young, I went
Bare-eyed out into the world.
Once before I wrote, I went
Fearless with my flag unfurled.
Once when I could love, I went
Joying out to face the cold.
Once when I was strong, I went
Fierce out and I was bold.
Once I knew the world,
Once I shrieked at dreams—

Then I grew old and hid my eyes.
Then I did write and furled my flag.
Then I lost love and learned of sighs.
Then I got weak and let spirit sag.
Learn this of the world,
It has not the promise it seems.

Pete Hrubec
ANNOUNCING:
NEW LETTERS OF SHAKESPEARE

Rev. L. Hetzler, C.S.B.

It is with great excitement we announce the discovery of a part of the correspondence of William Shakespeare, hitherto unpublished. Thus it is our small literary publications play a role in great literary discoveries that shake the world of criticism. These letters actually have been on display in the British Museum for the past two centuries, but as part of Sir William Davenport's Postal Service collection; the reverse side with the postal seal was all the public had seen. Some thanks is due to Bertin Southgate, K. G., whose theft of the collection and its subsequent recovery, led to the full discovery.

Let us hasten to the letters themselves. This rare treasure will be a rich mine indeed for all future Shakespeare scholars, unlocking the secrets of an artist's mind and making null all critical works written hitherto. Without critical comment we print in full the collection, these first letters of Shakespeare, a precious heritage.

Gray's Inn, 1595

Master Timothy Wight, Pub.

Sir: Rec'vd mss. Come of Errors and bill for 10s. Cannot understand the price. Suggest paper and binding, blue, Holland style, mentioned to you last fortnight. Insist you spell my name right—"Shakespeare."

Yours,

Wm. Shackspir

THE DYNAMICS OF POETRY

The poet does not, cannot, waste words. He is, for the most part, devoid of depression, those interludes so common, and so enjoyable to the writers of prose. Thus, his use of language is direct, intense, evocative—a sort of magic within the constraints of the English language. How does the poet triumph over Language? Language is the keynote.

It may seem at first that one ignores the other elements essential to poetry. But, them, substance, imagery, mood, tone, and the rest are also components of prose. Who can deny that Hemingway or O'Hara have "substance" in their writing, or that they could read James Joyce without realizing the complexities of imagery within? And no writing is without mood, whether it be Poe or Henry Crone; Henry James, where does Flaubert, the value of tone. Those elements—the very stuff of writing—are omnipresent. But the language of poetry is unique. (One must, at this point, qualify the point to the extent that the dramatist, too, must make the greatest use of every word, every action; but the playwright is not as limited as the poet.)

Mter, in relation to poetry, is inimical to the background music of a good prose. It is not only present, it is necessary; it conveys the moods or rhythms which the poet may desire. And what is the nature of poetry? Is it "the rhythmic creation of beauty." For another it is the evocation of the ineffable by association; it is also the electrician language. It may be that poetry cannot be defined prosaically—just as of Divine origin. Coleridge said that the power of poetry is to "transfix the human mind so as to control the imaginative power of the imagination to produce the picture" and whose vital power "conveys, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create." The poet's gift, also according to Coleridge, "is to produce muscular delight." His words echo one's own feelings: the elation of energized language and fluid, enveloping mists. Archibald MacLeish summarizes this thesis perfectly:

"The poem must not merely say, 'But be'—"

Robert Rosci

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Dear Guy,

It has been raining for some days now. I have a cold again and feel rather loggy in the head. How is the family? The twins are doing well, but they need new shoes again. Kempe dropped in today—told the old joke about the second best bed again. Hope to see you soon. Anne gives her regards.

Yours,

Will Shakespeare

Gaylord Inn, 1596

Jonathan Winthrop, Dr. of Law

Sir:

Re. transcripts purchases of mead, corn and malt, write Thompson Drafters, Stratford-on-Avon. Inquire property South Lane and Warwick—offer 200 pounds.

Yours,

Wille Shekspere

Woolf’s Inn, 1597

Greystoke Publishers

Sir:

Please rush 1 copy of Twenden’s Quickie Master Plots and 2 copies of Thomas Kyd’s Hamlet: Prince of Denmark. Note of payment enclosed.

Anxiously,

Wm. Shakesper

Eagle Inn, 1598

Dear Kempe,

Have a cold again and my head feels loggy. Hope the road show of that Denmark thing is going well. When it gets to London, I’ve been toying with the idea of playing the Ghost. In going over the script, I see now that some 400 lines should be added to the role. And I still think, “To exist or not to exist, that is a matter to question” is better than Burbage’s weak line.

Still laughing that no one suspects that old play of mine—you know the one—was passed off as having been written by you know whom.

Saw the Queen yesterday. Perfectly wretched.

Yours,

Wm. Shakespeare

Eagle Inn, 1598

Dear Ben,

Saw Every Man in His Humour yesterday. Glad to see your writing is improving. This is the old play Chris Marlowe left you, isn’t it?

Be sure to come and see my Love’s Labour’s Lost when yours closes.

Wul

Eagle Inn, 1598

Wm. Shukspir, Esq.

Sir:

Your bill is entered:

<table>
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<th>Cost</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lodging</td>
<td>12s.</td>
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<td>A capon</td>
<td>2s., 4 d.</td>
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<td>And sauce</td>
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<td>Bread</td>
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<td>8d.</td>
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<td>Sack</td>
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Graciously,

Mistress Sweetly

Kensington Palace, 1599

Master Clarence Chaykspur

Sir:

As Chamberlain to the Countess of Huntington, an invitation is extended to you to perform at the Palace Spring Revels. The Countess wished me to inform you she is looking forward to seeing you do your bird-call imitations. Or are you the one with the dog act?

With due regards,

Oswald Fitzgibbert, Chamberlain

Ps. The Duke of Norfolk will be in attendance—advise you leave your imitation of him out.

12 Sparrow Lane

Wm. Sheekspar, Esq.

My very dear Sir:

I have long been an admirer of your poems, though I must confess I find your plays rather a bore. If a little fatherly advice would not offend—pray sir, desist from this waste of talents and give yourself to something serious and worthwhile. I am sure a series of Georgics on domestic animals would be a test of your skill and win you some recognition.

But to the point: I prize myself as one who knows your style. Why fool the public any longer? Those essays of yours should meet with your acknowledgement, and I urge you to stop this ridiculous “Bacon” pseudonym. Truth will out!

Your humble servant,

Iago M. Jones, Esq.
Dear Shake baby,

All doubts of you are over. Macbeth is packing them in. Must admit that after that last turkey you wrote, I felt you were through. And when I heard you were working on a Scottish dialect play—But with James come to the throne, your instinct was right again baby.

Urge you strike now while the iron is hot. For a Son of Macbeth, can get you Hugh O'Donnel. He's a hot property because of the latest with the Duchess of Hereford. Suggest you fit into the plot a visit from an Indian Prince—we still have costumes left over from Dekker's Winsome Nymphs of Persia. Have to hussle now baby.

Burbage, Mgr.

King's Inn, 1604

Dear Guy,

Have another cold and head feels rather loggy. Judith's young crowd downstairs making a lot of noise. Dinner last night at Sir Adam Foxe's. Served only 3 courses — stuffed venison, roasted hog, and mutton shoulders. Good thing I ate home first.

Saw the Queen yesterday. Perfectly wretched.

Anne sends her regards.

Yours,
Welles Shakespear

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A BORROWED
OPULENT FLUORESCENCE

In this gray dimness of an overslung world,
At exorbitant cost reality pushers monger
Their goods on dark street corners.
The Anti-Reality Squad keystones around cities
In factory Ferraris, four wheels drifting
Into the fray to arrest the exit
And scrimmage the hordes of eager images
Thirsting for promised death from death.

Pete Hraber

---

The Spectator's Path

shuffling along a multi-colored floor,
a hunched yet defiant shadow crept,
etched in crimson, black and orange
he strolled wary yet determined
watching the bits of china
roll before his orbleess skull,
as a mighty ocean blue;
he paused now and then
to tap his cane upon the mall
and with his trek complete
he glanced back and smiling
observed the now all calm and opaque.

Dave Fisher
The Attempt

He walked down streets of neon light and pavement black, streets of infinite length whose dimension was limited only by weaving cracks and arresting curbs. Signs of metal and signs of glass were all about him, shrieking their pointed messages into his vacuum of dark and disorder. Everywhere and everything was a cacophony of noise and light, presented as a whirling, sound-filled kaleidoscope to which he clung with desperate tenacity. Night-light, car-light, sign-light, street-light; night-noise, street-noise, car-noise, man-noise. He read one sign that said bar and ladies invited and he walked in.

Hush! The beer clock wheeled above his head, each revolution a minute, each minute sweep of the second hand another lost moment. He passed by seats of red and silver, along the time smoothed rail, past silent backs of others that would bend and sway but never turn around, through the miasmic air that seemed to envelop him in an aura of white smoke and cushioned sound. A vacancy, a break in the line of backs appeared and he sat down upon a seat of red and silver and ordered his manna.

A glass of beer was set before him. An exchange of faith took place: fifteen cents for a glass of hope. He sat and drank his glass of hope and saw nothing but icy dribs trickling down his warming glass, making a patina pattern on the cool and condensing surface. And the wheeling clock turned above his head and the sweeping hand rushed majestically on its way towards the next hidden minute. Hum and a minute, hum and a minute; always a hum and a minute. Another glass replaced his empty one to fill the next minute and to forget the last.

He felt the icy cool of this goblet of peace numb his fingers, tingle and sting his lips, quench the awful arid dryness deep within him. He thought himself a giant desert, a great expanse of stretching, rolling, light-filled, thirsty void that began at the bottom of his red and silver chair and extended to the end of the world — no beyond — into the starry tumbling space he had seen on quiet lonely nights. And all of him, all of this desert was poised on the whirling humming clock above him, in the perfect unique balance of time.

Dark ringlets of forgotten and remembered dreams remained long after their creators had been removed, washed, and re-filled. He stared at the tattered battlefield before him and tried to forget the remembered. Slowly the sun went down on the desert and the shadows of the dunes lengthened and cooled the burning, tormented surface. Soon only a glimmer of light remained to parch the spongy sand, and then there was no-light and no-noise.

The clock no longer wheeled, the hum had finally stopped it, and the desert turned on its throne of red and silver and, in a poem of movement, stepped quietly out of heaven.