Full Issue

Cover Page Footnote
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Exsultet jam Anglica turba caelorum: exsultent
divina mysteriora: et pro tantis Regis victoria,
tuba insonet salutaris. Gaudiat et tellus tantis
irradata fulgoribus: et aeterni Regis splendoire
illustrata, totius orbis sentiat amississe
caliginem. Laetetur et mater Ecclesia, tanti lux
minis adornata fulgoribus: et magnis populorum vig

The Angle
Spring 1969
Epilogue to the Rain

I walk along in late September
Where now I rent the autumn
From the clouds who sold us summer

I watch them slowly pass
They in turn watching me
Filling the sky in formation
A pale audience of silent companions

The rain begins to weave its blanket
Dampening the path of my steps
Hurrying the couples to doorways
The women to their windows

I continue walking
Through the puddles like a child
Under the trees where my welcome is wet
Watching the ripples from each drop
Tracing circles in the water
Like my thoughts surrounding your memory

Soon it is over and the couples return
The women open their windows
To the breezes that chase the clouds
Carrying the sounds of a now busy city
Taking my mind to a time
When you’ll take my hand and together
We’ll listen to the whisperings of the trees

Dennis O’Brien

Opaque

The Circus is over, the sport done.
The arena is gray, stillness, dead.
Hushed—the artifacts of a forgotten drawn.
Which linked this void by a single thread,
To breath, beat, life, is here, yet gone:
Into the wall that must be there ahead
Of the murk of night, the gray oblivion.
For the circus is over, the sport done,
I wait alone.

Beyond the cold chill, lifeless walls,
The groan of a single diesel creature
Creeps mournfully to my being, and calls.
Yet a hollow sound cannot reassure,
But mock me in my void, this hell.
Isolated from the soul of this low drone
Which mourns me as a dead man’s knell.
Blackness, the absence of a world,
one creature, alone.

The wind whispers on the slopes of
glazed, bricked, poured canyons of man.
Crisp, vibrant, free to race above!
Who gives me the life which forces death?
A voice echoes, somber is tone.
A voice which is left even by its breath.
Tomorrow they will come with the sun,
together, alone.

Bernard Ballou

look at that forest of legs
surrounding me, each with its own
stainless-steel tip on top
or is it bottom.
what good are they that way,
staring open to a smoke-stained acoustical
ceiling.
people come and people go
but these good old legs remain.
unlike the legs of homo-sapiens,
these legs are all the same shape, size,
and texture, except for an occasional
nick, here and there
dug in by some ungrateful shoe.

Dan Hale
THE THERE STOOD ANTONINUS

Lines written after a visit to the University of Buffalo on March 19, 1969, to hear Brother Antoninus read his poetry and comment.

There stood Antoninus
Brother to holy Dominic
And unwholey brother too
To Alan and Lawrence and Kenneth
And all the famous Frisco friends... This craggy-voiced mystic
Whose written words
Cut like Jeffers' High Tor rocks
Savage wounds in sleepy saintly psyches,
Sincere but sin-seared,
And redder them bloodlessly
With the rich embarrassment
Of lingering last syllables,
Ultimates,
Looked too much like my
Stern and patriarchal grandmother:
The errant strings of hair
Shoulder-long and mottled yellow-white
Mocking the meagre fifty-seven years
That hump his anguished shoulders
With the world-worn weight of ninety-pluw;
His modal horn-rimmed glasses
Scarce serve the nervous orbs
Long since despaired of straining
To enlarge and focus hearts
And blurry super-egos
With ears that hear but sounds
And never words...
His twisted man-mouth snarls
In grim disdain of softened
Saccharine syllables
And all his countenance is agonized
In one Precursor's grimace...
There is no pleasantry in prophets--
One looks in vain for some seraph-sign
Of surety's happiness in him
But fails--
Must learn that happiness
To him is not
A pleasurable commodity
Nor journal joyful;
His Christly optimism, benevolence
Is kept well hid,
Har bargained hard with suffering
And keeps well hid
As if he'd test his verses'
Sinewy crescendo
And subtle magnanimity
With antitheses of Love...Antoninus turns the timid off
The fragile phonied flower fanciers
Who look for loves external trappings:
Magnetic mein and gentle phrase
And easy, smiling, sweet vernaculars
Of virtue not seized
But ceded.

And yet
There is something ajar in a prophet
Who forsweares all compromising truck
With Trade,
Reviles the cult
Of Commerce
Resounds old Ezra's fierce anethema
'Gainst Usura
Then woos the minist'ring of
Electrophonic ancillae...
There is something awry
In the portrait of a towering
Man of cenobic cloth,
In cloth
Arranging the tonal cloth
And microphones and tape recorder wires,
Feeding-tubes to suck his savage gristle
Into polyesther viscera
For will ful spasms of sound reguritated
And unassimilated.

There is something sad
In the aspect of a seer
Of freedom's charismatic voice
Tethered to a ten-foot cord
And forced to pace a measured footage...
How should his awkward feet
Avoid the tangle
With this abstracted pacing
Whose constant threat itself
Distracts the earnest listener?

Yet
There stood Antoninus,
And railed in histrionic wrath
At slamming doors and dropping pens
Made tolerable by late congenial "pardon me's"
Theatrics all acknowledged to enjoin
Upon the unkempt cultured thron
Some half-earnest try
(O Buffalo, Buffalo! Is this the way
You treat your poet!"
At "focused concentration,"
And begging humbling disenchantment
("You know me as a monk;
I am a man")...
He read
And the roseate metaphors
Of his woman, his fleshly flower,
Loved but unbedded
Rose to mystic heights
That left the unaecoutred listeners
Below the line of
Thinning stinging air,
The towering heights of Analog
Unascended,
Uncomprehended...
(There were, I'll warrant,
Psychologists unseasoned there
In mystic lore and spirit fare
Who'd bid the brother see an analyst
Cr'd dare themselves to recommend
His chastely vows annulment
And counsel, "Get a woman!"
Little knowing
His painful plaints revealed
Scarce could he plase
The woman he's already got,
Loved with a passion nonetheless,
His Rose divine...

There stood Antoninus
In the too, too real flesh
Before me,
No longer some angelic voice
A California's length away,
The fleshly Antoninus

Brother,
I don't know what to make of you...
You were right,
We could not comprehend you "fully,"
"Enough," perhaps "at all,"
But I refuse the total fault...
I for one will only read your poems
Henceforth...
Your written voice
Abstracted thus
Comes clearly, unadulterate
From its Source...

Brother,
Trust more the written voice!
Trust more the Source!

Clarence Amann

Paradox

You, who pound the podium impassioned,
With slushy sledgehammers of a veiled whore,
Who Utopias and caged Edens have fashioned
Of a maggots beauty, a leper's sore;
Who court clay and gold, blessed wondrous scrap,
And turn nature upon her tail
To whirl in dizzy despair and-snap!
Her crimson soul bereft of its hue, pale.

You whom I loathe, are myself in rage.
A mind is a labyrinth, beware the whitened sage.

Bernard Ballou

April is Gone

The bus has no voices.

The saddened, empty faces
Have closed their eyes
To dream away
The heavy minutes
Of their quiet journey
And to think of other times

In the raining silence
I remember her
And her loving words
Drift back to me

I can see the letters
Saying not to worry
Because she understands
And there is no need to explain

If I didn't have to be here
I would be with her now
As once we planned
To hold her sleepily close
Always near
With no need of goodbye

The bus stops
The people stir
Each looking at today
While waiting patiently
For tomorrow

Dennis O'Brien
IN WHICH BLACK HUMOR GETS A VIVISECTION

The black humorist wears many hats, but the one that appears to fit him best is that of the caricaturist. Using words as his medium, the black humorist paints society larger than life to make a topical comment. The tragedy of us moderns is that the black humorist must really labor to paint surrealistically, to outstrip real-life phenomena in distortion: today, the grotesques of Bosch pale beside Polaroid snapshots of That Day in Dallas.

Now the political caricaturist distorts according to the rules of a rather benign game: his work smacks of a harmless form of malice, harmless because we know that his creature is a biological impossibility, that it is not real. Were the conventional caricaturist's work to be brought before a court of inquisition determined to root out and destroy pornography, it would be found blissfully innocent. In contrast, the black humorist's work would be condemned by the same court as "malicious" and "pornographic," largely for the very reason of the work's unreality: no inquisitor could bear to be told that the world around him has itself become so obscene, so inured to horror, that art, to be noticed, must dredge pits of offal and parade the findings; but this is exactly the black humorist's rationale.

While one of society's tragic flaws is an exceedingly blase attitude toward violence and disaster, the black humorist himself is not unpossessed of a tragic flaw, or so it seems upon a cursory reading of his work. For if his first main trick as caricaturist is distortion for "force value," his second main trick, it appears, is oversimplification. He leaves out features not relevant to his purpose. Sex and violence, popular as subject matter with black humorists, are often portrayed so starkly that the entire composition is set out of key, the more "wholesome" aspects painted out with harsh "Red Light" tones (Cf. John Rechy's "Miss Destiny: The Fabulous Wedding"), tones dappled blood-red (Cf. Thomas Pynchon's "In Which Esther Gets a Nose Job"); tones which, though red, still, under the imposed optics of conventional morality, fade into the humorist's wonted black.

All of which points up the question of intent. Surely, the black humorist does not color the world absurd, unattainable, and cruelly phantasmagoric, without some purpose, nor without a secret disbelief that man is really so bereft of hope; for what individual could, without hope, turn to writing and wax hortatory in a world gone mad? But speculations withstanding, pigeonholing the black humorist's specific purpose is not an easy task. Broadly viewed, though, his distorting, his stark treating of "taboo'd" material, his erasing the line between fact and fantasy, and his oversimplifying, tend toward a righting of the wrongs he, in exaggeration, "celebrates." To his caricaturist's hat can be affixed the promotive insigniae marked "satirist."

Now satirists hope to stir "righteous indignation" in their readers; the black humorist, however, aware of society's complacency, often must settle for less. Any identifiable reaction is at the nether end of the response meter attuned to black humor; comprehension, leading to a remedy for a particular brand of sociopathy, is at the other end. In between lie for the writer: at worst, ostracism, because of "unseemly" material; at best, "big money" flung his way by a reading public that smiles at charmingly "naughty" intellectuals, that wants to believe that the very literary are very different from you and me. Living on the stipends paid by this public for its "kicks" is, for the shrewd writer, as easy as giving Candy to babies.

Violence and venery, then, are the principle ingredients of a marvelously vile brew (to switch metaphors again) called black humor. The brew comes bottled behind many labels, but it is essentially an emetic: steeped in exaggeration to high potency, it is administered in hopes of eliciting cascades of deeply-rooted prejudices, fetishes, and "hang-ups," for the cure of the societal body.

Tom Bisky

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Extant

To be
a dancer-beam that over water skipped
for just a night
awakening a morning-ray adrift
on gossamer shaft,
or dream of floating once
with unweighted arms delight
to embrace a crystal tone
(the final tone)
of a silver bell,
to be.

—Lenore Ventura
AND NOW A FATHER

and now a father sees his son as himself
and he knows that his son’s grandfather
is himself too.

My father married at 25 and had
mee at 31
I married at 20 and had
Jason at 21
Because values have changed.
I know as much as he knows more
Clearly because I can speak
this knowing. It’s an untruth.
And I know less than I know
is a lie.

But my son shall know all because
my father and I together can
tell him nothing, but can
give him the freedom to find
the joy of knowing all.
Simply:
Morale:
All of necessity
Includes nothing.

A. Einstein

Jim Coleman

PRAYER

for Laurie – on her First Holy Communion –

O Lord –
I will not ask that the
bread-brittle whiteness of
this host or the
breath-flimsy brightness of
her veil that lightens her
spotless soul today persist
unscarred, unmarred by
the sullying soil of painful
living, stains of daily trying
or the sweat spawned
stench of gainful giving,
pains of daily ying
nor all the seemly sins of
humankind
chains of daily plying
...
I do not ask her utter
innocence
prevail—
Only that seasonally...
faithfully
as the dogwood
branch I see
or the albine apple
tree
that droop and die
perennially
she bloom again in
fuller flow’r
for having drooped
and died an hour
with the ever-returning
Springtime
of this Sacrament—
and lastly
die in season
safe and white and smiling.

Old Dad
May 13, 1967

Clarence Amann
A Day in The Life

"Hey MOM! I was at school today and... well you know my phsyed teacher... Mr. KUHNS don’t you?
well hes got this farm out on the lake and
TIME WILL YOU LEAVE AND
kicked
i
i
i
tore
my
AND
my father walked
one
FOR
my mother
AND
WASH
over
WASH
and he invited a bunch of guys to spend the weekend
and isaidigo
can imom
HUH’”

“WAIT TILL YOUR FATHER GETS
HOME, AND WHAT
TIME WILL YOU LEAVE AND COME BACK HOME?”
“were getting picked up at Ralph’s house
the seventeenth...

mean ralph”
i ran into my bedroom/unbuttoned my shirt/
kicked off my shoes/ looked for my knapsack/
i undressed/ dressed in my play clothes/
i had four hours left/ i rushed/ i ran/
i stumbled down the cellar stairs/
i tore apart my toys/ i grabbed my canteen my axe
my sleeping bag my tent/ i sat down/
i heard the sound of the garage door/
my father walked inside/

“SIMON, BRING UP A COUPLE OF
CHAIRS FOR SUPPER
AND WASH UP.”
“hey ma... will you ask dad for me
huh?”

“YES, NOW GO WASH YOUR HANDS
AND SIT DOWN FOR SUPPER.”
“HIDAD mom's got somethings he
want to ask you
don’t you ma?”

“YES BUT NOW WAIT TILL YOUR
FATHER SITS DOWN.”
my father returned to the table/
my mother put the potatoes out/
one of my younger sisters came home/
WHERE'S YOUR SISTER?”
“She’s outside riding her tricycle some-
WHERE
“DOESN’T SHE KNOW IT’S SUPPER-
TIME, YOU’D BETTER
GO OUT AND FIND HER.”
“I'm not going outside again, and look
all
over for that BRAT!”
“WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE YOUNG LADY, OR I’LL
WASH YOUR MOUTH OUT WITH SOAP.”

“illgoma”
i got up from the table/ i didn’t want to go/
i didn’t want any arguments/
“MARY!”
i hate her/ she’s a brat
“Mary...........SUPPER time!”
she’s not supposed to be out this far/
“MARY!...........oh...there you are...
where have you been...
you little...........HUH?”
“Never mind, I’ve been around.”
youre not supposed to be out this far
what are you trying to do...
HUH?
come on mom’s got SUPPER waiting”
“I can’t pedal that fast. WAIT FOR ME!”
“here ill give you apush take your feet-
off the peddles
and hang onto the handlebars HEREWEGO!”
she let go of the handlebars/
the front wheel jacknifed/
the trike turned over on my sister/
MY GLASSES ARE BROKEN! YOU
PUSHED ME ON PURPOSE!!
WAIT I’LL TELL MOMMY!!”
“don’t do that....please dont....
mary!!!!”
she was gone/ i picked up the tricycle/
walked into the house/ i could hardly breath/
i looked at my mother/
“mom?”
“NO!”

Timor

Like A Tree in Winter

As I walked the quiet chilly lanes
I passed trees with limbs covered thick with snow.
At first I thought it must be strange to
Have arms cloaked with cold;
And then I wondered- I guess my own arm
Must have its own icy coat,
For it never seems to warm you when
I circle it around your waist or back.
And often times enough you shrug it off
like so much snow blown into your collar,
Or slip out from under the limb
Lest its chilly fingers come to rest on you.

T. A. Gazatano
ANOTHER COLLEGE UPHEAVAL

Still another raucous demonstration has rocked the academic world. At Woebegone U., activities were in more than their usual state of inertia yesterday, when certain vital facilities were seized and occupied by a howling mob. Striking at a strategic hour when the campus was empty of students—8:30 in the morning—yelping faculty members took over the pool tables, the TV room, and the candy-bar machines. By the time the students were stirring for 12:30 classes, the insurrection was a fait accompli.

Your reporter made his way through a picket-line of old duffers with hair hacked off at the collar and sporting gaudy lengths of cloth down the fronts of their shirts. They were toting such signs as “Learn, Baby, Learn!” and “Better Read, than Dead!” However, I found the Main contingent of the wild ones encamped in the recreation rooms. But those walls had never witnessed such scurrilous scenes of salacious desecration: billiards were being played on the pool tables, a transistor radio was blaring out a frenzied Bach fugue, pizzas were being eaten without a protective covering of peanut butter, the TV was tuned to the Education Channel.

As I moved through the milling mob, I could overhear bits of conversation: “I tell you, the safest place to keep your money is between the pages of your Reserve Shelf books.” And, “I have nothing against students, you understand; it’s just that I wouldn’t want my daughter marrying one of them.” Spotting me, a Prof wagged his finger, “Now, don’t write us up as the New Yippies; we’re just the old Yappies.”

In one corner at a microphone, the President of the Student Board was vainly trying to persuade the leaders to march back to the leccterns. But he was being drowned out by shouts of “23 Skidoo” and chants of “Hell Yes! They Won’t Pass!” One real old geezer—he must have been almost 34—kept waving a copy of demands, typed on the back of an essay that had been handed in for nine years in a row—“And for different courses!”—someone sputtered at my elbow.

Hoping to get the student reaction, I wandered out to a group of earnest scholars sitting under the drees drinking beer. Most were plainly unsympathetic towards the rebels. Thus one mophead muttered, “The fools ought to lose their pensions. I think they must get their brains trimmed with their hair.” Another observed, “In my day, teachers were seen, not heard.” And a third added, “Yeah, and just look at the way they dress—typically bourgeois middle-class—and this is the class that produces rebellion: just think of Robespierre, Washington, Lenin, Tiny Tim.” “Well,” commented another, “what can you expect when certain students give them ideas and encourage them? You know how impressionable these Profs are.”

But a few of the younger students thought they ought to be supported. “After all,” observed a Soc. Major of one month, “pre-emptorily their heretofore eremetical inner-self area has now transmuted itself into a more centrifugal pattern, from whose vibratility gregarious and proletarian aspirations might become escalatorily operable.”

No one could deny that.

Frankly, I don’t know how all this will end, but as I left, I almost had my head bashed in by a sign that read, “Ah Fate! The Pill Is 18 to 21 Years Too Late!”

Rev. Leo Hetzler

The West Wind Blows in Pittsford Town

The Sid-Biafra organization is one of the more worthy projects sponsored on campus this year. It seems a shame in this “Age of Ideals” That in order to insure its success the organization had to promise free beer. Is this modern idealism?

The west wind blows in Pittsford Town
But Shelley lived in Italy
Nor visited the Campus Club
When, for Biafra, beer was free.

The cause was good, and so’s the brew;
Five-hundred modern liberals
Sententiously quaffed...

Expounded on first principles:

“We drink to aid a nation brace
Resist a tyrant’s brutal laws;
Besides, it helps our hangovers
To know we got them in good cause.”

A grand humanitarian drunk!—
It is, I’m told, the only way
Philanthropy in Pittsford Town
Can be successful, made to pay.

“Help feed the children?—Certainly,
But something for my money please;
First pay the brewer, then the band,
Send the remainder overseas.

“Biafra shows us vividly
A cost of independence’s dear;
We lift our cups and thank the Lord
Our land is free and so’s the beer.”

Mary Ann Davis
"May art is profoundly spiritual. Shall we ever give God back his physical dimensions? Really, God has the most beautiful body there is."

—Fellini: *Giulietta Degli Spiriti*

My God my God you are a God of thunder
Lightning cracking smoke neath sheets of rain
A wild wind wilting flowers in your way
Shattering crystal windows of your vault
Cutting eyes that yearn with coloured glass.

Forced up our nostrils with the air we breath
Our lungs burst ugly in a paid lust love
Or else we turn damned away in disgust
Your smiling procurers behind us
Cut off from your antiseptic body

Cursing the storm and forgetting the rainbow.
Still one day in the quiet of my garden
Watching the sun’s shine image in the pool
I’ll look too close and see you sad unsmilng
And softly fall and catch you in my arms.

—John Vorrasi

**MONOLOGUE**

shh!
(shake off love
you need it not
it binds with a
cord too tight
constricted in a narrow mold
your quest
is struck
with blight
you want all
but can have none
if now tied
to that girl)
No!!

shh!
(listen-
the mind is more important
travel to be done
dragons to be slain
knowledge to be felt
one bird flies faster
than two
run this way,
not that)
No!

but yes,

Oh God!

—John Vorrasi

**Septuagesema**

**Lyric for a Lent**

“memento”

Night’s soft corners rock me, rock me, rock me
Warm and dreamless in its arms. And this earth
That cradles soft in crisping autumn
Sings dry of leaves, whispers in the still air,
Heavy with the scent of soil, untilled, waiting.
Oh my pale Christ, dimly lighting this land,
Tracing across the sky every image,
Every rounded corner of this strange rest
Yet never reflecting here my presence
Give answer to my prayer. What is this night
 Burning so within me that my hands, warm,
Should press so eager in these quiet shadows
For secrets, long ago remembered,
And with each breath draw in such troubling love.

—John Vorrasi

Ed A. Wurtz

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There was thunder and lightning, and the gathering of dark clouds. A great wind arose in Heaven, and God spoke.

"I suppose that you're wondering why I called you all together here." The undercurrent of conversation ceased as abruptly as it had started, among the congregation of angels and archangels, thrones and dominations, the militant hosts of Heaven, and assorted holy people. They turned their attention to God's words.

"As you probably all know, Satan's recent offensive has dealt us a serious setback." A murmur of comment swept through the assembly. A peal of thunder signalled for order.

"The enemy's twentieth-century campaign has met with startling and almost irreversible success. A number of Satan's elite, fully indoctrinated, have infiltrated mankind's ranks and caused this havoc." God paused. Silence. Everyone wondered what He was leading up to.

"I want a volunteer," came His voice suddenly, louder than the sound which had toppled the walls of Jericho, "I want a volunteer from among you to carry the message of salvation to man. I want that volunteer to let men know that I am sending My Boy to redeem them once more."

The silence of the catacombs descended. Martyrs, saints, angels and archangels exchanged nervous glances. None of that hole host relished the assignment. Everyone waited for the other fellow to say something first.

"How about you again, John?" God asked.

John the Baptist felt God's inquisitive stare, and the eyes of the assembly focused upon him. It had been quite a few centuries since he had carried the Good News to man, back in Judea over two thousand years ago. He was unsure of himself, and did not quite know if he could do it again. It had been so long ago. However, he accepted. John's acceptance was hailed by the blaring of trumpets, a chorus of angelic voices in song and a round of "Three cheers for John!" The Prophet to Modern Man had been found.

II

John did not know what to make of the streets of this Twentieth-Century city, all so different from the desert wilderness of Judea. So many towers even higher than the one at Babel rose above him! Yet the hurrying throngs looked far different. His own garment of camel's hair, and a leather girdle about his waist, seemed to be out of place. John had been out of contact with mankind for quite some time. Anyway, it warmed his heart to think of how happy these anxious-looking tense crowds of people would be when they learned that the Son of Man was about to return.

"Repent, ye children of the Almighty Father! Repent and hearken unto the Good News, for the hour of thy deliverance from the snares of sin is at hand!"

"Mommy, look at that funny man," said a little girl.

"Hush, Mary, keep away from him!"

"Ah, sighed John, "May God be with thee."

"How dare you swear at my baby, you dirty old man!" said her mother, jerking the child away suspiciously.

John stood in puzzlement as the woman snatched away the little girl, muttering something about his being a degenerate or a nut. So John moved on to a less crowded though shabbier district. On a corner by a broken-down building he saw a young woman turn with an alluring smile. She seemed to draw him to her with her eyes. Perhaps she would listen to the words of salvation. John went over to her. The young woman motioned towards the door and seductively asked if he was willing to pay for her services.

"Ah, my poor misguided child, repent and follow the Lors."

"Shove it, dad!" she snapped. "Haven't you heard? God is dead. You take what you can get in this world and look out for number one." She stalked off to another corner and turned her enticing smile upon another man. John was discouraged.

III

In an attempt to recapture the flavor of the old days, John wandered down to the river. It was not the same peaceful, rolling river as was Jordan. The water was green with slime and full of garbage, with many huge ships anchored in it. He was soon engaged in conversation with a chubby man in a shirt of many colors, who was unloading boxes. He seemed to be very affable. John asked if he were sorry for his sins. "Sure, pop," he said. Would he care to be cleansed with water and the spirit? The chubby man did not seem to understand. He snapped his fingers, and then spoke.

"Oh, I see. Sure pal, I'd love to go swimming, but the damn water is polluted. No swimming allowed."

John walked on. He met a wino who hugged him drunkenly and a queer who tried to kiss him. He was spat upon by a bigot who called him a dirty Jew and was bitten by a dog. When he asked a muscular young man where he could get something to eat, he was escorted as far as an alley and mugged.
IV

Not even the days of the Pharisees seemed so bitter to John. He was thoroughly confused as he regained consciousness in the alley. He staggered on in a daze. Clearly, the work of the devil was widespread. Yet he was still determined to spread the message of peace and love.

"Hey dad!" John gazed with blurred eyes upon a raggedly dressed young man. He wore a sort of toga, beads, and sandals; and he had long hair and a beard. In fact, he looked very much like John.

"You look like you're one of us, dad, even if you are over thirty. That beard and those threads really look sharp. You seem to be ok to me. How would you like to freak out and take a trip with me and some friends? My chick's got the grass, the cubes, and some speed, too. What do you say?"

John thanked the young man for his hospitality. However, he was already on a trip and did not want to speed along any faster. He did not especially care to eat grass like the sheep of the field, even if he was very hungry. He would though, he said, take any locusts and wild honey that the young man might offer. The young man shrugged his shoulders and walked off, saying "Health food nuts aren't my bag." John tried to follow him, but lost his way and ended up in a slum area. He was chased by several dark-skinned men, who called him "whitey," and told him not to come around slumming again, or he would get his honkey head busted. Fortunately, John lost them by hiding behind some garbage cans.

V

After wandering around for awhile, John saw a group of young men who were shouting things like "Peace," "Love," and "End the War." John was pleased. At least there were some idealistic people in the world. He himself was soon shouting along with the rest. They began singing, so John too joined in.

A number of burly men, many of them in blue uniforms, others wearing white helmets and all of them with clubs, approached them. They were probably the local centurions. Someone shouted something at the angry centurions. The men with the clubs ordered the young students to disperse. Several youths pulled out little white cards which they burned.

"Hell no, we won't go! Hell no, we won't go!"

There was a flurry of fists and swinging clubs. Several youths were hustled off with bleeding heads, still singing. John tried to stop the fighting, shouting out that they were all brothers and should be at peace.

"God damn overage hippie!" grunted one of the centurions, battering his skull with a club. John, streaming blood, was arrested.

VI

At least the place of imprisonment was better than Palestine's dungeons. John was confined in a large room with a score of bloodied youngsters. Each of them told the story of where he had been arrested and spoke of the value of their demonstration. They seemed to be proud and unified in their misery. John was taken out of the room. His wound was treated, and then he was questioned.

"What's your name, fella?"

"John the Baptist."

"Name, bud. I don't give a damn about your religion. Nothing to say? Ok, John Doe, back to the cell then."

He sat in bewilderment back in the room, while the young men congratulated him for his defiance. The next day, John was tried. Justice meted out a thirty day jail sentence to him.

VII

John had plenty of time to think and listen in those thirty days. When he was released (with a warning not to be caught in an anti-war demonstration again), he reported directly to the Father. He told Him how man was troubled with war and unrest. Many had too much money while others starved. When young men asked for peace, they were beaten up and jailed. No one would even listen to his Good News. Taxes were worse than under the Romans. Some of the spiritual leaders kept asking their followers for more money to build churches like palaces, while they themselves drove around in expensive cars, never venturing near the poor.

John shook his head as he explained that if he began preaching now, he would be arrested for being a public nuisance, or not having a license. He would be sent to a psychiatrist. It was most discouraging. God asked if He should still send His Son. Again, John shook his head. It was no distinction to become a martyr nowadays, he said. There were throngs of them already. The finest of men were always being shot dead. Every day others died in wars and riots. What chance did His Son have of standing out from the rest? The two of them tried to devise a solution. There had been a situation similar to this one long ago. There was only one thing to do. It had worked well before.

And so it was, on Earth the next day, unnoticed at first, it began to rain.

Robert Sanders
The mist hung on the autumn trees with rusty leaves and yellow.
The night receded endlessly beyond the rolling vapor;
The streetlamp's light had filtered through the mist
and softly settled on the road.
I heard my footsteps echo off the houses locked and curtained
and I watched the woman walking
enveloped now in darkness but emerging into sight
as her silent shadow raced her past the lights.

I imagined that she smiled, that she hesitantly stopped me
to ask for help in finding the hotel where she was staying.
I said I know the way, I'm staying there myself
I'll walk with you if you don't mind.
Nights like this are maddening when alone.
We talked of all the people and the things that were last summer
A deserted beach in Suffolk and a cabin in the Catskills.
We learned and loved and learned from that
and spent the night together in her room.

But my mind had only wandered and I saw her there before me:
As I reached out in the darkness to touch her sweatered shoulder
she recoiled from my hand and faded into the midnite
and I whispered to her asking
why she walked the night
Alone

Victor Russell

The Song of the Nefarious Impure
Knighte (or the wages of debauchary)

A castle rose once bye the Sienne
With towers big and longe
And there with all his merrie menne
Lived Galahad the Strong
Reknowne throughout the countrie he
For gallantrie not smalle
And thought without a doubt to be
The purest Knighte of alle

But being pure became a bore
a little fun he craved
and in a seven month or more
The prince was quite depraved
Wild feasts and orgies all he gave
In short— he had a balle
You'd never think that once he was
The Purest Knighte of alle

But a knock one day came at the door
'Twas his girlfien
'Twas his girlfriend Fanny
She sayed (as tears felle to the floor)
"I'm going to have a babie"
"Marry me you must" sayed she
"The babie's due in Fall"
Poor Galahad then wished he'd stayed
The Purest Knighte of alle

The Knighte, my friends, took all the blame
but punish mente was to be falle
They wed; and Fanny soon became
Alas! Quite frigide after alle
And every nighte thereafter seemed
The Purest Night of alle

The Vagabond Scholar
A clock is nothing more than that which makes man late,
For what is time really but distance traveled?
This few men take time to recognize and lazy
Shower and sleep and wake again to shower and be clean,
The bearded shave while hairy march and love, not the shaven
And only fool themselves, for God their Maker sees
Not hair,
But only soul or self, which sometimes sleeps
But can never hide.

James A. Reo

Something spoke to me yesterday,
It filled my mind and body
with a force as steadily
restless as the autumn wind.
(Cold again, empty once more,
bereft of time's sweet balm,
for now time stands still-frozen.)
The dull, thudding ache that
renders me fog-bound threatens
to consume me, as it did one
endless night when I clung
to life tenaciously, to keep
from slipping off the world.
I reach out - grasping, stretching
my fingers to feel the comforting
touch of - her -
only to find I have tarried
too long inside myself - and
made the chill arctic blast of
indifference - a stuttering,
crushing, brutal, reality
But the voice that spoke
drones on, shredding my thought
frowning my face, dragging my step,
... binding me to a sepulcher
that haunts my eyes
and...

Paul F. Lindsley

He was with us
as we became independent
as streets flowed the red of their coats
as savior leader implementer

He was with us
as we painted redskins red slave skins
black
as we divided our house tearing at
clothes blue and gray
as the banner grew more red with white

He was with us
as world shattered twice in twenty years
as metal shattered breasts its little mouth
and fingers
as rice paddies turned rusty with youth

He was with us
as tablets danced in the acid
as ropes tightened about the napes and
sparks jumped
as steel parted vertebra

Now is is different
He is dead

Dream pills and needles
sugar to sweeten the mind
black against white makes clear the
division
of full bellies and empty
hearts

Intelligence has seen the ignorance
order the disorder
justice the injustice
hope the despair

Yet some still lament
the evidents of His departure
not realizing

Perhaps at last
He has arrived

Bob Cairo
You moved closer to me in the bed
and whispered that your feet were cold.
My hands were warm—So I held you
And warmed your private kingdom.

I watched you that night
sleeping,
smiling,
dreaming
Of someone dancing across your mind
But I knew somehow it wasn’t me.

Maybe I should have left then, or told you
That Love is much more than warming cold feet.
You were too young to realize it though
And at least you smiled while you slept

J. Stotz Jr.

COLLEGE POETRY

It may be affirmed with great truth, that there is hardly any human creature past childhood, but at one time or other has had some Poetical Evacuation, and, no question, was much the better for it in his health.

Alexander Pope
Peri Bathous

I second the emotion: each of us has at least a little bit of poetry penned up inside him, and to spew it forth now and again does the world absolutely no harm. The worst that can be said of one’s effort is that yet another bad poem has been added to the burden of bad poetry already in existence.

I’m probably the last person in the world to be writing a paper on poetry, being possessed more of risibility than of sensibility. I pay court to the sublime, and have very little traffic with the beautiful. And though I might not know a good poem when I see it, I can usually smell a bad one from a distance of three stadia. Not unlike a cancer, a bad poem should be labeled quickly so that it can be done to death before its creator has a chance to fall in love with it. I know, because I’ve doted on many a soggy bit of verse of my very own. And speaking of lousy verse, I hope sincerely that someone with sense gets to the moon first, before some crazy romantic arrives and begins composing sonnets on how beautiful everything looks in the earthlight.

College poets–hmm. Even weeds grow according to the soil supplied. The better the soil, the better the weed; the worse the soil, the worse the weed. If your soil is growing thistle, exclusively, look to it. In other words, even a poet should have talent, and that talent should be assessed realistically: all the wishful thinking in the world will add not a single cubit to one’s store of talent. In the talent department—I’m—decidedly—a featherweight—long ago I assured myself that I would never expire from either a surfeit or dearth of that commodity. If anything kills me, it’ll be my big mouth.

There is a harmless type of insanity with which most college poets are afflicted: hearing bells when none are ringing. That is, the majority have little or not talent, but their savage little egos drive them to the production of ever more drivel. Again, no harm comes from their doing so, and as Pope says in his homely, albeit unpoetic metaphor, they will be the better for the purge. The other type of insanity is suffered mostly by us critics: we fail to hear the bells when an entire carillon is at work directly overhead. That is, we do not recognize a good poet when he is right in our midst. I have yet to find a good college poet, but even by the law of probability there must be a few in existence.

I daresay, however, the critics are not altogether remiss, jaundiced and myopic. There are many ways in which college poets sin against their talent. In their enthusiasm (which is not to be sneered at, by any means)
college poets stampede madly into the garden of verse and paw frantically at the ground, broadcasting their seed in all directions, and simultaneously proclaiming a bountiful harvest. What they usually produce is a great deal of noise: the wind begets the whirlwind. Perhaps what they should have been doing is gently turning over the soil and patiently planting seeds of recognizable lineage in honest rows, watering and manuring the whole with just-right measures of talent and inspiration. After a certain amount of sensible weeding and cultivation, the crop could not fail to appear and to produce some sturdy growth. Even the weeds in such a garden might turn out to be charming wildflowers.

What I am trying to say is that college poets, almost to a man, insist on by-passing their apprenticeship, and the good earth balks at this creative pilo
trooery. The poets want their soil to produce exotic fruits, and try to force the fruitage, whereas poetry wants to be seduced by shy advances and light, familiar caresses: no woman wants to be pawed by a barbarian. The poets want the earth to speak in pure tones of fescue, bents, and Kentucky bluegrass before she can even talk a relaxed slang of crabgrass, thistle and dandelion. The earth was meadow before it was lawn, and the best meadow is a compromise between weeds and grasses. It seems to me that a compromise is the most even a good college poet can reasonably expect.

Our college poets would be better off if they followed Shakespeare’s example: little Latin, and less Greek. People are still reading Shakespeare — some even willingly. Shakespeare produced a pretty fair crop of poetry without going near a college. Our college poets use altogether too much ‘Latin’ and ‘Greek’—their effusions are altogether too obscure. No one can understand their poems, and few care to try; and I don’t blame those who refuse to try. Most of the poems are state secrets written in code: unearthing the secret is not worth the effort of decoding; how much beauty can be seen when the eyes are filled with sweat?

Worse still, college poets are lost in a wilderness of free verse, or what they hope will emerge as free verse. Free verse is tricky for the most accomplished of poets, who know all too well that one false step will destroy the entire effect of the poem. One solution would be for the college poet to pour everything he has into free verse initially, to avoid shackling his ideas and imagery. The, when he has said all he ought to say, he might convert the whole into a recognizable “conventional” form. In most cases a much better and more satisfying poem results. In any event, no one should attempt to palm off free verse before he has mastered the conventional forms, just as no painter should settle into abstractions before he can produce a decent landscape, still life or portrait. There is as much bad painting as there is bad poetry.

Poetry, by definition, is bad poetry, and for the best of reasons—just as college basketball is ordinarily good basketball for the best of reasons. It must be obvious to a dunce why I’ve dragged this analogy in by the heels. College basketball players do not run aimlessly in all directions, making a great deal of noise, working up a lather to no good purpose. They’d be laughed and boo-ed off the court if they did. And the only reason college poets are not roundly hissed is that everyone knows they’re not really college poets—actually they’re kindergarten poets: they do not yet know how to give a polished performance; they’ll never give a decent performance until they’ve had plenty of practice. Well, hell, you have to start somewhere, and if people are going to continue putting off writing poetry until they get to college, then college will continue to be a poetic kindergarten.

College poets do all the wrong things, as beginners can only do. Worse yet, they’re too old to start from scratch and too egotistical to absorb criticism—having just attained mental puberty, they wring their hands, have tantrums, and all but burst into tears when told their verse is what it is: rotten. They think that every ten-line bit of doggerel that they composed in a three-minute frenzy should be praised extravagantly simply because they produced it—see what I mean about kindergarten? The kindest thing to do when a college poet hands you one of his masterpieces is to read it carefully several times and return it to him with a single comment: ‘Burn it!’ Once, a guy brought his first poem to me and I gave him the usual instructions. Since he was a senior he thought it not too intolerable to berate me for a solid two hours before he went away (mad, of course.) He came back twice more because he found some damned fool who didn’t know a poem from a chewing gum wrapper to praise his poem. My patience at last exhausted, I changed the instructions as to what he could do with the poem—he never mentioned it again.

Those who write short poems are bad enough (I used to write short ones in college, and I have a good memory.) But those who write those long, intolerably dull and meaningless things are worse. After having cranked out one of these abortions they parade and posture and set themselves up as intellectual dictators for life—from then on, they know everything, and anyone who demurs is cubic and anti-intellectual. More claptrap is retailed by composers of long college poems than is worth the mention. Naturally, this is a generalization—there are some sensible “long” college poets, and they are beyond praise.

For a newcomer, the lyric is a tricky instrument—it should be admired from a respectable distance long before it is ever touched. Meanwhile, a lot of practice on the single-stringed harp is essential. And the materials the college poet works with should be suitable to his stage of accomplishment.
Causes, no matter how pressing or noble, are ordinarily poison to the poet who wants to advance beyond the folk-song stage. Sadly enough, we find little beauty in college poetry—all is weeping and gnashing of ill-fitting false teeth. College poets are too busy menacing paper tigers with magic wands operating on weak batteries (I say paper tigers because the poets haven’t met the real ones yet.) The ‘dedicated’ poet has no time for beauty, and consistently turns out ugly poetry. Ugly writing should probably be confined to prose. I’d give a lot to read a good, straightforward love lyric, written by a guy with stars in his eyes and some power in his pen.

Should college poets quit writing just because I think they produce rotten poetry? On the contrary—even I believe that rotten poetry is a necessary stage in the development of a competent poet. There’s only one way to get the garbage out of the system, and that’s to flush it out with ever more and better stuff. No one will become a decent poet if he sits around worrying about what I or anyone else will think of his poetry. If (God help us) free verse is here to stay, then we nasty critics will have to come to terms with it. So go ahead, you writers of ugly free verse—write it, polish it, burn it; and keep doing so until one day you find a gem on your hands. And there are more where that came from. But for heaven’s sake, write a comic one now and then—they world is not entirely populated by weeping philosophers.

In the great crises of poetry what matters is not to denounce bad poets, nor worse still to hang the, but to write beautiful verses, to reopen the sacred sources.

Georges Bernanos
“Brother Martin”

Harry A. DePuy

Blinking shades of blue, red, yellow, and white,
The stellar crowds rush through the blackness of night.

without direction
without applause
without affection
without a pause

The stars fly on tittering hymns of conceit to their own light.

Still, among the mass a single sun shines through.
Its quiet glow and constancy of hue

with coolest heat
with no pretention
with steady beat
with kind intention

Win it special place, and in verbose silence turn my thoughts to you.

Terry Ging