

# DEJA VU



ERIC MAYER

# DEJA VU 4

Eric and Kathy Mayer, 279 Collingwood Drive, Rochester NY 14621  
Sample copies, if available, are \$1. Thereafter available by editorial whim which is most readily stimulated by letters.

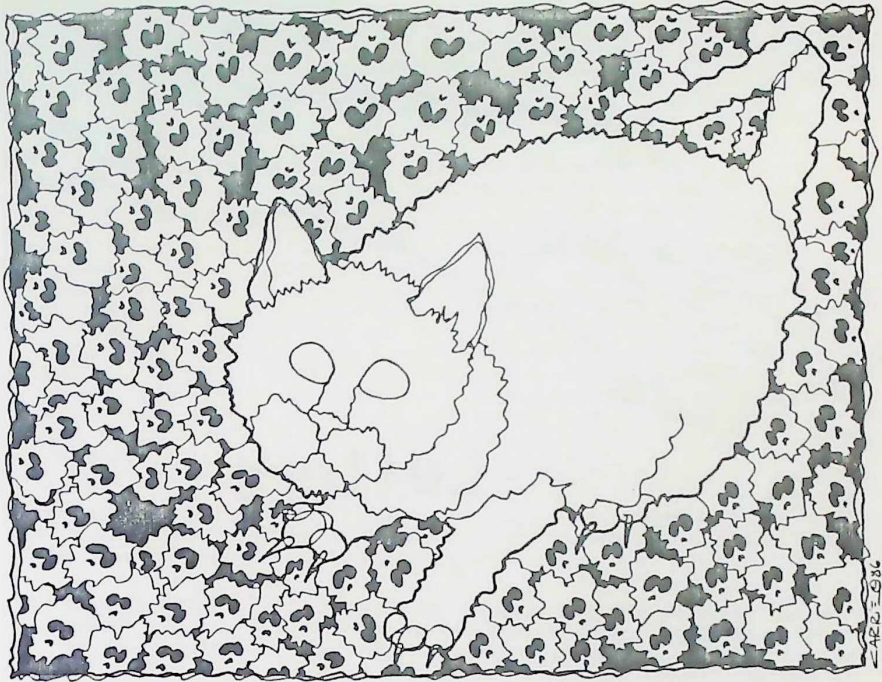
A couple of months ago I would've told you DEJA VU was dead. I did tell some of you. Never mind the reasons behind the premature burial and unprophesied rebirth. There are few travails less entertaining than those connected with the duplication of amateur magazines -- and fewer still I've read less about in the amateur press. Suffice it to say that this issue, and the possibility of future ones, depends on my reducing the number of sheets I have to copy and mail. In other words -- shorter issues and a smaller mailing list.

This time I have had to pare down the letters column (eviscerated might be a more apt term) and hold over until next time articles by Edd Vick, Richard Brandt and Matt Levin. Because I can't guarantee when or if DEJA VU will appear, and because of the reduction in size and a circulation limit of between 60 and 70 readers, I can't very well continue to put out a potpourri of contributions from various small press realms. Probably, I'll be moving in the direction of an all-editor written/drawn zine with, I hope, a meaty letters section. I'll have a better idea by next issue.

## AT THE ZOO

You're probably wondering "What's with those monkeys on the front cover"? They are hanging there because Kathy has become a docent at the Seneca Park Zoo just down the street from our house. A docent is a volunteer educator. What that means, in practical terms, is that she spends afternoons and weekends being bitten by large parrots and trying to keep small sand boas from slithering down her kelly green docent sweatshirt. I'm not a docent but I did volunteer to edit the docent newsletter. When TRUNKLINES regular cover artist begged off due to moving I ended up drawing January's "Animal of the Month" - the black handed spider monkey.

Editing a newsletter for docents isn't all that much different from editing any other small publication. The January issue includes a book review, a trip report, a cartoon and even a poem. But, since the docents are an official part of the zoo, some restrictions are placed on what the newsletter can say. Docents, after all, get a behind the scenes look at zoo life and they know things the Zoological Society figures the public shouldn't know. For instance, that the polar bears eat chipmunks and that the camels idle away the hours stomping on guinea fowl that wander into their enclosure. Then there is the odd behavior of the elephants who spend the night across from the seal lion pool. Sea lions are noisy. During the day the elephants put up with the commotion but when the zoo is closed, apparently desiring a little after work peace and quiet, the elephants toss their own dung over into the noisy neighbors' pool.



Being a docent gives you a privileged vantage point on the zoo but its a lot of work too. In addition to her live animal presentations and handling the zoo mobil's parrots, Kathy, as Docent Council Social Coordinator, has been arranging for speakers and planning field trips. Still upcoming are slideshows at local schools. Though not as busy as Kathy I'm involved in a few non-newsletter projects- the preparation of "mini-booklet" handouts for Animal of the Month and writing a monthly zoo column the Zoological Society Director is trying to get into the local newspapers.

One pleasing aspect to this is that it is all for a good cause - conservation. Most zoos depend upon the donated time and talents of their docents and though an individual's contributions may be small they are, nevertheless, contributions. It is nice to think one's abilities can be used to do some good rather than to simply make more money for the bosses. A disturbing aspect, though, is how I seem eternally doomed to become embroiled in one amateur obsession after another. No sooner do I manage to bring sf fandom or small press under control than something else pops up!



## Letters

### HARRY WARNER

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It's hard to choose favorites among the many items in this issue but Tim Corrigan's page sticks in my memory exceptionally well. I don't have kindergarten memories because I flunked out through inability to pass Modern Sandpile. However, I did experience the

deaths of three children when I was small. One was a boy in my class at school, and the other two were youngsters who lived about a block from my house. I didn't react traumatically. I attended the funeral of the classmate but fortunately I didn't see any of them in their coffins. My one experience with late realization of what had actually happened long ago involved my oboe. When I was just gaining some mastery over it, I was asked to sit in on some rehearsals of the municipal band on nights when its oboist couldn't be present. The first time I did this the conductor signaled me to give the prolonged note on the oboe to which musical organizations tune. I did, everyone turned to stare at me, the conductor frowned, I heard "that's awful" mutterings, and the first clarinet was asked to substitute for me. This was an awful blow to my self-confidence. The oboe tunes musical groups because its pitch is less affected than other instruments by humidity or temperature conditions or the sobriety of the musician and somehow I'd messed up. I tried to put that awful moment out of my mind and gradually succeeded in not thinking of my sinking feeling oftener than a few times a year. Thirty or thirty-five years later, I was reading a book about a concert band. In it I ran across a mention of the fact that bands tune to B flat. I'd never played in a band until that awful night, nobody had ever told me that bands don't tune to the A used by symphony orchestras, and no wonder I'd shaken up the municipal band, playing a half-step flatter than the one they were expecting. And the worst of it was, I couldn't find anyone at that late date to listen to my alibi. The conductor, the first clarinet, and virtually everyone who was in the band that awful night had died or moved out of town or I'd lost track of.

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Dear Eric.

Siel on recipes struck a chord in my heart. This is one area where women get their own back for the way men flaunt superiority (in general) over things mechanical. Confront me with a recipe book, and my mind goes blank and brain switches to hold. Even a simple task assumes Herculean proportions thanks to the jargon. A 'simple' (hollow laugh) recipe starts off with a list of ingredients unobtainable outside a giant store combining Harrods, Tesco, Sainsburys and a couple of ethnic shops -- as for cost, a small meal for two will set you back £50 if you go by the list. However Val takes one look, says "You can do without that and that, you can use apples instead of Slobbovokian Passion Fruit, and neither of us likes Curacao". Thus does the list get reduced to manageable size and price. Easy now? No way, step one, "Make a roux". What the hell is a 'roux'? Churn through recipe book and find making a roux is even more involved than the dish I'm supposed to be making. I fire up a distress rocket, Val waves her magic wand and I move on. "Put in over at 2345 degrees C! Whatever happened to Fahrenheit? Oh well, double it and hope for the best. Resulting dish resembles a heart-broken pancake, but Val grits her teeth, lies like a trouper and says 'Lovely'. I hate cooking.

BUCK COULSON  
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Speaking of houses, our property may become listed on the Indiana State Register of Bat Colonies; it seems appropriate. This is for the barn, not the house; a friend counted 13 bats in the group the other day. The weird part is they're all tucked up in this half inch crack between a couple of 2 X 8's that help support the barn loft. I hadn't been aware that bats can get in that small a space. The barn also houses barn swallows, sparrows and pigeons. I could do without the last two, but a friendly hawk seems to be keeping the pigeon population in check. I've seen him (or her) gliding over the barn and there has been a sudden drop in pigeon population.



JUNE 28, 1988  
W. HONATH  
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Eric -  
So, you folks are in your house... welcome to the world of hardware. As a relatively new homeowner (2 years) I'm duty bound to tell you about the 425 law: Any time you go to the hardware store for some household repair/project, you'll spend 425. If you spend less, you'll have to make a second trip. I'm not fooling.  
Since you didn't buy a brand new house (who does?) you will have repairs... fixing everything that was screwed up by THE PREVIOUS OWNER !!!

MARY LONG  
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The mention of the culinary plans of Skel's friend reminded me of a 19th century Oxford don, a geologist, called Frank Buckland, whose boast it was he had eaten just about any animal you would care to name. In this wonderful and favorite book of mine (OXFORD by Jan Morris, highly recommended) Morris mentions that Buckland reckoned that the worst thing he had tasted was mole and the next worst a bluebottle (although he observes that this was said before Buckland ate part of the heart of a French king -- presumably a mummified one). There are some other anecdotes about Buckland in the book, but I think the funniest, albeit sad one, was the visitor to his home who asked about the munching noises coming from under the sofa, which his host informed him were caused by the jackal eating some of the resident guinea pigs.

Have children changed a lot, I wonder? Or are our views colored by our own adulthood, and also by experiencing parenthood ourselves. To me, American children seem much more confident (one would say brash) and seem to be adult in many ways. (A pity, children should be children as long as they can as we're a long time grown up). They have more confidence, I think, than English children, but on the other hand, less innocence.

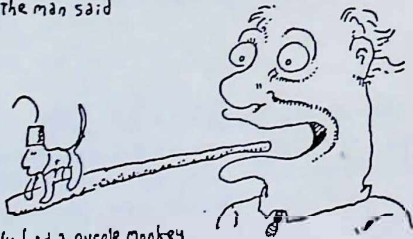
Mention of feeling alien interesting...as an actual alien ((transplanted from England)) it is never quite the same feeling as being "odd one out". For me, it was less difficult in that, provided I don't speak, I blend in OK with the background, despite my height and taste in what are considered rather dull colors here: I am reminded of a time when a friend and I were walking to the grocery store, when we lived in Florida. A woman on a bike, whom neither of us knew, stopped and observed to us, "You're walking, you must be foreigners." And she was right as my friend was German. Probably it was the fact we were walking gave us away though. But returning to what I was saying, no matter how long somebody lives here, I think (going by my own experience) there will always be the slight sense of standing apart, more an eyewitness so to speak. A bystander, if you will. I have met, on odd occasion, an unconscious sort of hesitation in considering myself as being on an equal footing with natives -- betrayed by the odd little thing. How much worse it must be for people from unpopular countries or of different colors.

They are burying a time capsule for the Springfield Bicentennial. The contents don't seem very imaginative. (Photos of the state administrators? Talk about ego!) What would DeJa Vu readers put into a time capsule? Music? Beatles or Bach? Art -- what about Warhol, but again, why not Doonesbury? Literature -- well, name your own fist fight here would be the rule....

## NAUGAOMICS #388

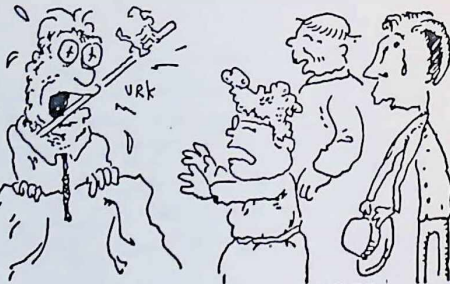
APRIL 29  
NINE TEENS,  
MATED! FORE!

As the man said



Willy had a purple monkey climbing on a yellow stick; and when he sucked the paint all off it made him deathly sick "

His priest and family stood about and sobbed and wept and cried, but he sucked the purple monkey till the moment that he died.



AL ACKERMAN  
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Particularly enjoyed the letters. For me, letters do it like nothing else, and not just because I'm a mailhead either, but letters are always a good way to get a scan on what's going down in other sectors, they provide a healthy cross section of opinion, as distinguished from what you get too often in the media, which is relentless formatting generally aimed at convincing you to throw away evidence of your own senses and sit by, look on, and like it, whatever "it" happens to be (usually some clown ranting against the evils of weed which makes a handy smokescreen when your hand is in the public till, sure does). In any event, I say "healthy cross section" always, of course, excepting those letters written to the HYPOCHONDRIACS MONTHLY...ever seen that one? It's devoted to people writing in to brag about their illnesses. Well, no end to specialized, narrow focus mags you can find out there...

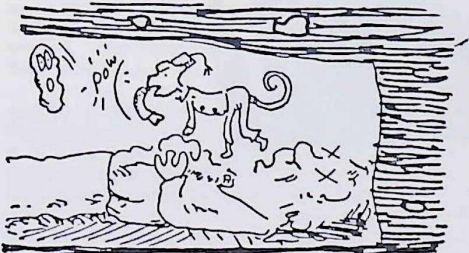
Children of today eat and coping with the parent-problem as best they can. One thing I do know, most of the kids are awfully tired of hearing about how great things USED TO BE -- how great the music was back in the 60s etc. Their attitude is, well if it was so great back then how come it turned out this way? Most of them are pretty sharply aware that they're living in a time of dwindling resources and curtailed possibilities, that the society spends most of its time saying one thing while it does the exact opposite, that things are rigged etc. In the 60s we had nam, today they got the plague, various plagues (medical, economic, political, you name it), so they're dealing with this in their own fashion, generally on a day to day basis, making do with what they have and I don't know but I hear a lot of merriment still taking place between them or the phone etc. So expect it's as Ellis Farker Butler said, "Kids is kids." No, wait a minute. No, Ellis Parker Butler was the one who said "Pigs is pigs." Hm, well, you know what I mean.

CAROL SCHINECK

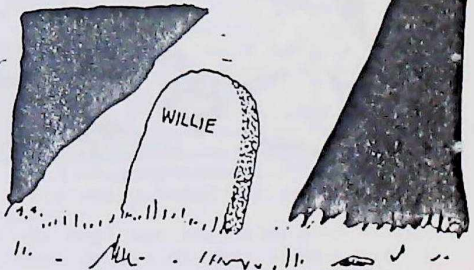
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It was cool, all the letters about people's grandparents. My dad's mother's family came from Prussia--my great grandfather was a blacksmith with a huge barrel chest (according to photos--even my grandparents were dead long before I was born) Every so often he would drink a glass of hot kersene oil -- saying "the body is a machine, it has to be oiled once in awhile." Late in his life he got pneumonia and the doctors gave him up for dead. He asked his wife to heat him a glass of kerosene oil. He put on his overcoat and went out and sat on a bench in the snow and drank it. When he came back in he was better. He lived to his middle nineties.

Willie and the monkey  
were buried in a day.  
The monkey did its very best  
to keep the worms away.



Willie and the monkey  
were happy in the sod.  
Their bodies turned to earth  
But their souls returned to God.



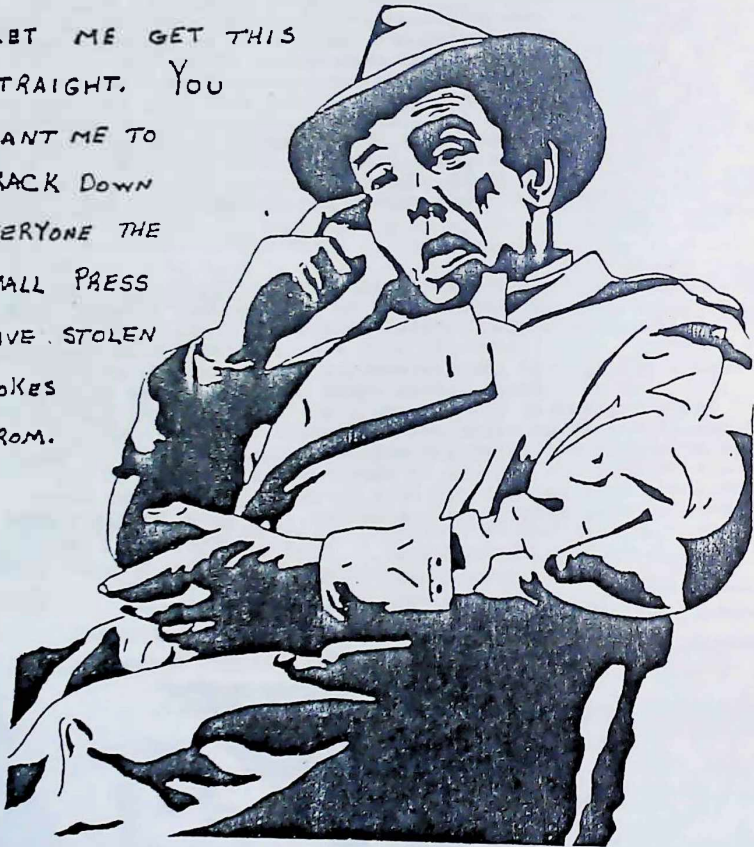
ANDREW KYLE

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In Kindergarten there was this kid who, once a week would throw up at lunch. This caused a big ruckus and once my best friend Eddie and I hid behind some stacked tables (the Kindergarten was originally a small gymnasium and they always stored extra stuff there) during the confusion.

We thought we could make a break for it! Our laughs when the teacher started to get frantic about finding us gave us away. Going to a Catholic school, I was bombarded with propaganda -- Heaven, hell, what sins were (I remember vividly a filmstrip about the Ten Commandments that added, after "thou shalt not kill", "Unless you're in the army fighting for your country". Scary.) I was also yelled at for actually reading a picture book. (You're not supposed to learn to read until first grade. You'll read wrong!!) In the first grade I got to go back to the old gym for a school play in which I got to kiss a girl for the first time. She got hit and killed by a coal truck in the 4th grade, but I don't think that was my fault.

LET ME GET THIS  
STRAIGHT. YOU  
WANT ME TO  
TRACK DOWN  
EVERYONE THE  
SMALL PRESS  
HAVE STOLEN  
JOKES  
FROM.





# Bushcraft

JOHN BERRY

Martin and I organised the musical evening...the 56th occasion in a dozen years that we had dabbled in the subtle art of the entrepreneur. Fortunately, we did not have the worry of financial loss, because the Constabulary for whom we worked as fingerprint experts allotted us the princely sum of one thousand pounds per annum. During the twelve years we had hired solo artistes, duos, string quartets, various woodwind ensembles, a 'woman' who made extraordinary sounds with a watering can, even a full symphony orchestra. We rarely made a profit but our terms of reference were to bring culture to Police Headquarters, with the proviso that we didn't re-engage 'that watering can person'.

When small ensembles were performing, we served a wine buffet at the conclusion of the concert, where patrons could mingle with the artistes...it was always extremely convivial, and senior police officers were proud that our Force was the only one in Great Britain to hold classical evenings.

We gradually formed a nucleus of around thirty people upon whom we could rely for an audience; we circulated posters to each police station so that everyone was aware of date, time, place and performers.

On Tuesday 1st March 1988 we felt we had planned our most prestigious classical evening...a lecture by the doyen of English composers, Alan Bush, born in 1900...our posters, which I designed and drew, proudly proclaimed AN EVENING WITH DR. ALAN BUSH. Martin, a so-called 'Sunday' composer, had taken composition lessons with Bush for several years, and he had made all the arrangements for this exciting musical occasion.

My wife prepared the buffet in the Senior Officer's Lounge, and Martin and I drove to Radlett, in south Hertfordshire, to collect Dr. Bush at his large and imposing residence. We pondered on the fact that although he was England's senior composer, he had not received any form of recognition from The Establishment. Ordinarily, with his status, he would have been known as Sir Alan Bush, or even Lord Bush of Radlett. The reason was actually quite obvious. Although born into a rich London family, and given a classical education, in his twenties he became a fully committed Marxist. He had served in the British Army for a short time in 1918, and he served in the army for four years during WW II. For many years he had been Professor of Music at London University but the BBC rarely performed any of his compositions, a situation only remedied of late. When I saw his house for the first time, I felt a certain anachronism in the scenario...Dr. Bush, a Marxist, lived in a large house north of London...myself, a Conservative, well on the right of political thought, live in a small pensioner's bungalow in Hatfield!

He answered Martin's knock...he was overcoated and ready, wearing thick-lensed spectacles, the legacy of a recent eye operation for his failing eyesight. Dr. Bush asked me to carry a large case to Martin's car...he asked me to be careful not to drop it, as it contained some of his original scores. Martin helped him to the car, a matter of a few yards. I opened the front nearside door to enable Bush to get into the passenger's seat. He asked me if I still had the case, and I confirmed it was on the back seat, and that I would clutch it-for the whole of the eight-mile drive to Welwyn Garden City.

On arrival at the Senior Officer's Lounge, I went ahead with the suitcase, and placed it behind Bush's chair, facing a semi-circle of chairs for the audience. My wife was wide-eyed when she saw me, confirming the bitter truth I had already noted...five minutes to go, and no one had turned up. We three constituted the entire audience, and we were the administrators.

Martin assisted the tall but aged composer to the empty lounge, and Dr. Bush, with his back to the chairs, opened his precious suitcase, removed valuables from it, and laid them in orderly

progression on a long table over which portraits of the Queen, the Queen Mother and Prince Charles surveyed this microcosm of their realm.

One moment to go, and three musical associates of Martin turned up...magnificent...our audience had doubled.

Martin assisted Dr. Bush to his chair, and gave an inspiring introduction. Martin said his tape-recorder was ready to play seven of Bush's compositions, and "Please, Dr. Bush, carry on."

At that precise second, before he could open his mouth, four more of our friends arrived, and I carefully placed them in the second row of chairs so that, as Bush gazed at us through his spectacles, his limited range of vision would be filled with faces.

For a man of his age, his memory of incidents which occurred in his early life was truly amazing. He told us that when he was a small boy, he had an audition, as a pianist playing his own compositions, with Sir Edward Elgar, who told him, in explosive phrases which Bush parodied, that 'it is a hard life being a professional musician.' Elgar, Bush told us, and the memory still rankled, then hastily strode out of the room without another word or glance.

Bush suddenly stopped blankly in the middle of a sentence whilst recounting a conversation he had with Serge ((Rackmaninov I)) and Martin tactfully suggested he should play the first musical item, the last movement of Bush's NOTTINGHAM SYMPHONY.

The music was superbly English, rich in thematic evolution; Bush's eyes were closed, his head moving slightly, his gnarled fingers clutching the arms of his chair. A couple of the more intrepid spectators, Martin's friends, made valient attempts the follow the score.

Between shorter bouts of his memoirs, more beautiful music...difficult, intellectual, requiring ones full attention. One song from his opera JOE HILL...the basic theme, as with his other three operas, concerns attempts by the under-privileged to escape from the oppressive yolk of their oppressors. One must state quite frankly that his observations are based soley on research, definitely not from personal experience.

The final work was the last movement of his recently-composed LASCAUX SYMPHONY.

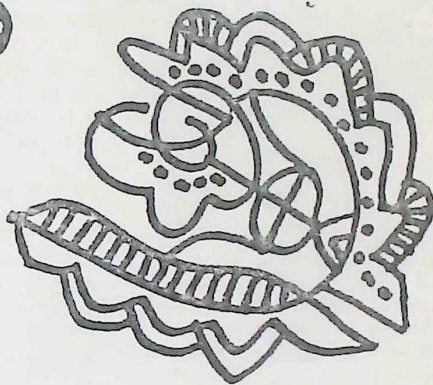
Martin asked Bush to introduce the composition, and he suddenly became alive and alert and deftly painted a word-picture of the wonders of the cave-paintings in southern France, now hidden from the public gaze because the carbon dioxide from visitor's breathes caused the paintings to deteriorate. I recorded the LASCAUX when it was on BBC radio recently, so I knew the last movement, melodic, certainly not immediately understandable; this gave me a distinct advantage over most of the audience, who were dry-mouthed in their avid concentration. Bush opened his eyes and shouted loudly 'the piano represents homo sapiens' and then resumed his meditative pose. At the conclusion, Bush smiled benignly at the audience, and there was no doubt that we were all tremendously impressed with his genius. Martin asked me to say a few words to close the meeting. I stood close to Bush and looked at him directly. I told him I had designed and drawn the poster which had been circulated in the Welwyn Garden City area, and I had referred to him as 'the doyen of English composers' and I wanted him to know that I felt this title to be entirely justified. I explained that I thought his music was not easy to listen to, certainly not on first hearing, but that concentration repaid dividends. I concluded that I felt privileged to listen to him talking about his life and times, and I thanked him for one of the most fascinating evenings of my life.

Martin took his suitcase and I guided Dr. Bush to Martin's car. Martin gave my wife and I a lift to Hatfield, en route to Radlett. As I got out of the car I shouted 'goodnight' to Alan Bush, and Martin handed me an envelope 'as promised' he said.

When I got home, a few moments later, I opened the envelope...inside were three pieces of paper with Bush's understandably spidery writing, notes he had prepared for the lecture...collector's items. I tucked them for safety into one of the cardboard record covers I possessed, 'DIALECTIC'. I was delighted. As I pushed the last paper into the cover, I noted printing on the rear of it; Bush had

torn a sheet into half on which to jot his notes. It was the bottom half concerning a well-known British company, exhorting shareholders to support the Board 'to make this fine company even better in the interests of all shareholders, old and new.'

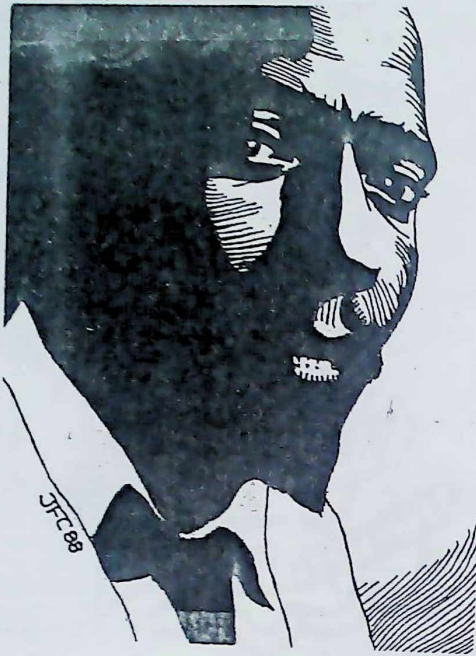
I frowned in perplexity as I pushed the paper fully home...was it compatible for Marxists to be capitalists?



# AUTUMN

SEAN HILL

She spent forty-five minutes sitting in the backyard under the mulberry tree by the garden. The fervid sun was dimming to the west and the sloping light made her grassy carpet even greener. I watched her through the kitchen window. She sat with her pudgy knees folded, little hands resting on her round thighs. She sat so long, still--- looking and listening---, that the backyard animals didn't hesitate to come near. In a calm late afternoon inquisitiveness, she didn't get up girlishly to chase the animals. She just watched, with her bright blue eyes wide and her lips puckered. Three starlings were grappling hastily for the few last of the mulberries in the branches. They chased away the sparrows. Then a large grey squirrel zig-zagged into the grey and chased away the starlings. The little girl sat and watched, not looking to the house, no moving, not seeming to think all this activity was much to get excited about. As the animals danced around her, she turned to the laundry basket and reached out a pair of little yellow socks. She tried patiently to pull the socks on but were tiny muscles weren't quite following their orders. She continued with the socks, letting the unfolding evening slowly engulf her. In a flash, she abandoned her sock-pulling and, noticing that the sun was now gone, climbed carefully to her feet and hop-skipped to the house. Picking her up into my arms, she pushed ~~me~~ her face toward mine, her almond eyes wide and proceeded to tell me about her day in the Backyard. She excitedly spouted one monosyllable after another. Then quiet. I looked over and saw her head slumped onto my shoulder. Her pretty eyes were closed in a deep calm, solid sleep.



# MONK AND ME

by

John MacLeod

During my last year of high school I was just developing an interest in jazz. Mainly pianists, at first. My big brothers were shocked when I brought home my first jazz LP, Dave Brubeck's Time Further Out : they thought it was garbage. I dug it as an enlightening change from rock.

I read jazz books for recommendations. One weird but cool name that kept coming up was Thelonious Sphere Monk (Yes, that's his real name) The Monk's Greatest Hits LP on Columbia was cheaper than Art Tatum or Bud Powell, so I checked it out. Got it home, slapped it on, and nearly fell over in shock! It was like this guy couldn't play! Every other note was a clunker! Some of the songs sounded like one long mistake. This was supposed to be good!!! My big brothers thought Monk was really garbage. But I kinda liked the saxophone player on that album, Charlie Rouse, so sometimes I'd listen to it for his solos.

Later, I bought a collection of various piano tracks, including one Monk: his 1952 trio version of "Little Rootie Tootie". After a few conventional sounding cuts, Monk opened his piece with three keyboard blasts of the sourest discord I ever heard! I barely regained my composure when the blasts came again. Finally it sank in : that exact same discord occurred regularly within the song. It was deliberate. Monk wanted it to sound that way, no mistake. I listened to that anthology a lot, and gradually found myself putting on "Little Rootie Tootie" more often than any other cut.

A return to the Greatest Hits LP confirmed that Monk wasn't making mistakes. He wanted those discords in there -- all of them. He knew what he was doing: breaking the "rules" of music to achieve the sounds and feelings he had inside. Accepting those sounds led me to appreciate their breathtaking variety. Monk's discords could be funny, or mysterious, or pensive, or serene -- but always fresh and colorful. His music was like his name: "weird" at first, but cool. It took me almost a year, but finally I dug Thelonious Monk.

More Monk albums found their way into my collection, with more of his rich, fascinating songs. So much to choose from! Relatively accessible, bluesy tunes like "Straight, No Chaser", "Blue Monk", and "Misterioso". Lush, gorgeous ballads like "Round Midnight", "Ugly Beauty", "Crepuscule With Nellie" and "Pannonica". Fun, "up" numbers like "Bye-Ya", "We See", and "Nuttty". And more abstract, groundbreaking pieces that many professionals couldn't play, like "Criss Cross", "Work", "Trinkle, Tinkle", and "Four in One" (that last one proves what a fool I was to think that Monk couldn't play). Monk also had the gift of revitalizing old standards and making them sound like he owned them. This music wove itself integrally into the fabric of my life, becoming the kind of stuff you find yourself singing unexpectedly. It's sometimes hard for me to keep in mind that Monk's songs are not as familiar to the world at large as, say, Beatles hits are.

Monk has colored my life in interesting ways. My little brother Mich ("Little"?!! He's half-a-foot taller than I am!) grew to dig Monk along with me. And he still does, even though in the last number of years he has become a devout metalhead. Intriguing: face it, headbanging to jazz is something you don't see every day. Monk's music has also served as a surprisingly accurate gauge of character. When I meet people who can get into Monk, they almost invariably turn out to be kindred spirits and lasting friends. Mind you, there are folk who don't like his stuff yet I love them dearly, but still...I have been engaged twice in my life. The first time was to a girl who didn't like Monk. That dissolved in a long, unpleasant mess. The second time was to Nell (hi, Nell!) who loves Monk. We've been together over ten years and are very happily married. There's a lesson in there somewhere....

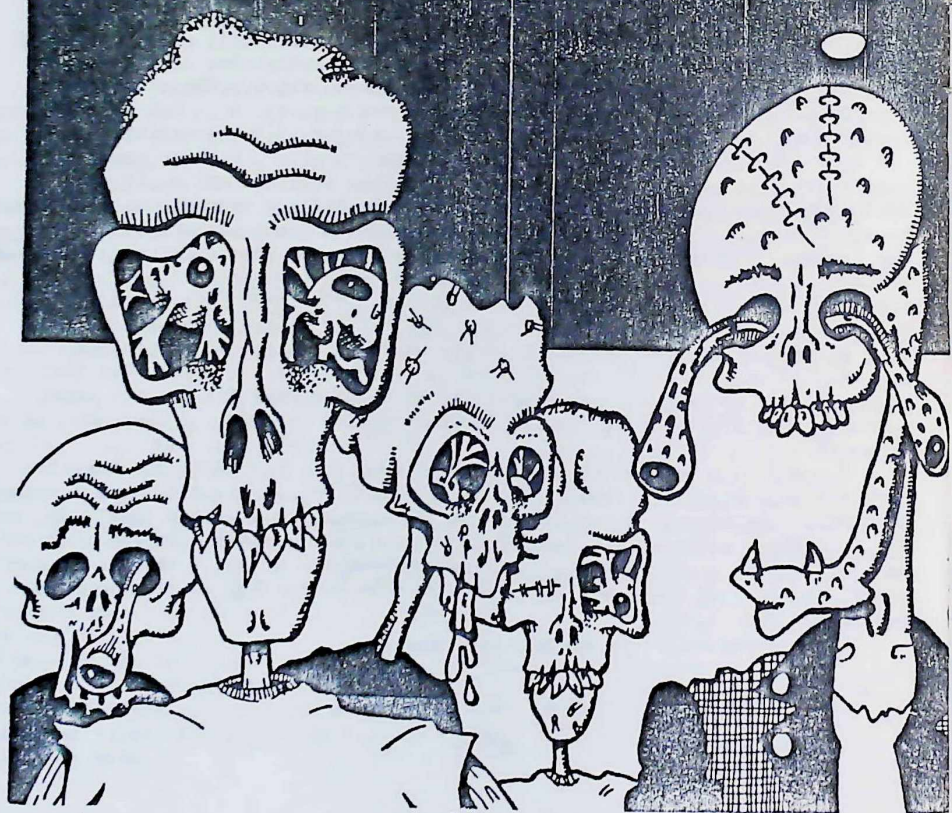
And it was Monk more than anyone else who taught me to listen to music for what it is, not judge it by what I expect it to be. This opened me up, allowed me to appreciate other adventurous musics: early Talking Heads and Pere Ubu, Schoenberg and Partch, Cecil Taylor and the Art Ensemble of Chicago. Basically, Monk's music has given me a broader, better world.

If any of this sounds checking out, what would I recommend? Nearly everything for different reasons. Any jazz record store will offer a variety of choices: there's a lot of Monk out there. (My collection of Thelonious Monk LPs --- incomplete --- is around seven inches thick) The stuff on Blue Note features his wildest compositions and a young, hot, but fully-formed musician. The Prestige and Riverside records (also available on OJC and Milestone) show Monk at a peak of improvisation, with an impressive variety of jazz giants sitting in. The Columbia sessions are a little less adventuresome. Monk settled a bit once he had a permanent band line-up; he wrote less, trimmed his repertoire, and began to treat his songs like old friends, revisiting them, loving them, wanting to hear everything they had to say. There's a peaceful warmth to the Columbia LPs, they're good solid Monk, and often cheaper than the other labels. I'm a bit iffy about Monk's Blues, a Columbia big band date arranged by Oliver Nelson. The charts don't seem to capture the unique spirit of the music --- it sounds a bit like the made-for-TV version of Thelonious Monk, if you know what I mean. But there's great soloing on that record, especially by the Man himself, and it's worth owning. Just don't get it first. The bottom line, though, is that you can't go wrong.

Those of you with money (ha ha) might want to investigate the terrific Monk box sets available from Mosaic Records, 197 Strawberry Hill Ave, Stamford, CT 06902. And A&M has a really interesting anthology LP called That's The Way I Feel Now released not long after Monk's death in 1982. It features a wide variety of musicians, many of whom everyone knows, doing Monk covers. A really fun record, worth the price just for the wonderful, electric-guitar version of "Work".

Class dismissed. Go out and have fun.

UOLY BUT PROUD



# OLD PEOPLE FALLING DOWN

by LUKE MCCUFF

Old people falling down freak me out. I saw a woman dressed like she knew she looked like a witch; she tripped on the lane divider as she ran across Hennepin at 8th Street, trying to catch a #4. "That's my bus, that's my bus," she said, getting up so quickly the blood flowed from her nose in a bright red arc, spattering the street in front of her.

She sank into herself like an old balloon somebody slowly let the air out of. She sat right up when the ambulance arrived, but when the next #4 came, she walked through the paramedics and got on her bus, in too much shock to feel the pain from her purpling nose.

My mother had a little party on her backporch. Her brother, a second cousin maiden aunt, my oldest sister. Standing up to get the coffee from the kitchen she fell down in front of everybody. Unhurt but so dizzy with vertigo my uncle and sister had to help her to bed, where she lay clutching the sheets. "That put a damper on the festivities, Will -- Luke," she said when she told me about it later.

I see my mother once or twice a year and every time she looks smaller. Her hair is thinner, she speaks more slowly, gets my name wrong consistently instead of occasionally. Her skin is more wrinkled and transparent, her eyes look bigger and more owlish behind her glasses. Here's the tearjerker: she taught in the west side ghetto of Chicago in the 60's, went to work during riots and was a front-line rank and file union member, picketing in January windchills.

Now she isn't dying but in some long slow fade-out. Whenever part of her body fails the doctors replace it with electronics, plastic or chemicals. Hearing aids, ileostomy, Valiums. She's 74 years old, her birthday comes in early January and every year I think, this might be it. Will this be it?

The other night I waited for the bus in LaSalle Court. It was 11:30, a long stomping 20 below. The security guards let people wait for the bus inside. You can wait in the building where it's warm, or you can wait in the vestibule area, where you're out of the wind and can see the bus coming. About five of us, all men, waited silently. A guy in his 60s came in, carrying a couple large, plastic bags. I was numb from cold, bitter from work.

The old man grunted, I didn't look away from the window. There was a thunk, and a soft crash as he fell down. He had just been standing up, it must have been a stroke or a heart attack, he just fell down. His eyes were open, his lips were blue, and I went over and said, "You all right?" he didn't respond. A man waiting inside the building strolled away to find the security guard. Nobody panicked or started screaming, "call the ambulance, my god!" like they do in movies or tv. Nobody tried to straighten the man out or touch him.

The old man grunted again and started waving his right arm like he was treading water. His left hand still clutched the bags. The security guard came up and stood over him. The bus came and we all got on it. None of us who had been there talked about it. I read a magazine, another guy read a book, everyone else stared out the window. I was thinking, maybe we all were thinking, shit, I hope that doesn't happen to me; and I was thinking, maybe we all were thinking, it was pretty goddam likely.

# BART

TIM  
CORRIGAN

When Carol and I first met we were living in a small apartment on Electric Avenue, only a few blocks from Pullman Ave. Pullman was a narrow 1-way street that ran between Lake Avenue and Dewey Avenue. It was filled with odd little shops, restaurants and two taverns that depended on the lunch hour trade from Eastman Kodak Company - a massive industrial complex on the other side of Lake Avenue. Carol and I frequented one of these taverns quite often - Muldoons. They had an "open mike nite" on thursdays, and we'd go and play a few tunes. It was there that we met Bart.

Bart proudly referred to himself as a "shop-dweller". He lived in an obscure crack-in-the-wall shop further down pullman Ave. He played blues guitar, collected old records and toys, had a keen appreciation for what other people would call "junk", and generally saw the world through the eyes of an artist. He will always burstin' with tall tales, jokes, a few well-worn magic tricks, and a zest for living that is all too rare.

We struck up a conversation with him one evening and almost immediately recognized him as a kindred spirit. We promised, at the end of the evening, to get together soon to talk music and perhaps work out a few tunes together for next week's open-mike nite.

And so a few days later I knocked on the door of Bart's "shop", guitar in hand. He opened the door and it was like stepping into the twilight zone. Interior decorating which can only be described as "classic Bart!" Old rugs and tapestries hung from the walls, odd wire sculptures hung from the ceiling, there was a glass showcase filled with old toys, cars, cloths pins, thimbles, 45's and oddities. It didn't look like a home, nor did it look exactly like a shop. It was akin to an organized studio/junkyard. Amidst all this was a massive collection of old 78 RPM records and a Juke Box that looked like a spaceship. Little did I suspect at the time that there was little or no difference between Bart's inner and outer worlds. I had stepped right into his mind.

We sat on the floor and played all day long. He was thrilled to have company and I soon realized that Bart was more than a little lonely. Of course! How could a character like Bart not be lonely. He showed me his collections with great pride, explained his philosophy on junk, ran through hundreds of old 78's. It was a grand time for both of us. We were to be fast friends for several years after that meeting.

Bart had us over for dinner one evening. Generic Macaronni and cheese and hot dogs. Bart was poor. What little income he had at the time came from "junking". This is, picking up scrap metal, old tires, copper wire and taking them to the junkyard in his beat-up old panel truck. He worked when he needed to and was always able to pay his rent and put a few modest meals on the table. We were not doing all that well at the time ourselves. We had him to our apartment for dinner on a few occasions. Spaghetti and meatballs, hamburgers. Bart thought this was pretty elegant fare and couldn't thank us enough.

One day Bart was telling me about the fence he had built to keep the kids from breaking windows in the alley on the side of his building, asking me if I'd like to see it. I said sure, having learned that Bart took pride in the strangest things. We walk down the back alley to the rear of the building, and there, extending between his building and the next was the most incredible fence I'd ever seen. He has spent months painstaking making this fence from old wire, bits of wood, parts of cars, and whatever else he could get his hands on. The result was a 4-foot wide, 11-foot tall piece of art that took my breath away. All the elements were intricately woven together by hand, colors and textures were balanced to create a collage of forms and shapes. Anyone else would have just gone out and bought a piece of fencing or nailed up some boards - but not Bart. He was an artist. The most remarkable thing was that Bart didn't seem to KNOW it was art. He didn't think what he had done was odd or unusual. He was just being Bart.

I explained to Bart that his fence belonged in an art gallery. He just laughed and dismissed the notion with a wave of his hand.

Winter came and Carol and I visited our families on Christmas day. By the time we got back to our apartment we were pretty well loaded down with gifts and loaded



up with ham, turkey and goodies.

We thought of Bart. We couldn't recall him mentioning any plans for Christmas and we wondered if he were spending the holidays alone. There was a dreadful storm howling outside, what we in the northeast call a "whiteout" which means you can barely see your hand in front of your face. We bundled up good and warm and headed for Pullman Avenue.

The Avenue was deserted. All the bars and shops were closed, and the wind howled down the street like a canyon. Great white drifts were piled high against doors and walls, cars were burried up to the windshield, it was a picture of desolation. But amidst the desolation there was one light on - Bart's shop.

We knocked and Bart greeted us with hugs and hurray's. It was warm and light inside. It was art. The moment was art. The street and the storm and the holiday were all a conspiracy, elements brought together to create this picture of Bart standing in the doorway of his lonely, obscure shop, a wide grin across his face, brimming with good cheer. Suddenly it FELT like Christmas. All the family visiting and gift giving has been so much rhetoric, but THIS...THIS was Christmas!

Bart had scraped together enough for a cheap bottle of wine, and he shared it with us. He showed us his Christmas tree - a bedraggled old thing he'd gotten the night before for one dollar. It was decorated with tin soldiers, old toys, and atop it was a Barbie Doll. There was one string of lights wrapped around it, half of which didn't work. It was the saddest looking Christmas tree I'd ever seen. Yet...it was art.

Bart told us he had a gift for us. We were immediately embarrassed and ashamed because we hadn't brought him anything. He brought out a wooden crate filled with "junk". Inside were various bronze bowlers taken from trophies Bart had found over the years. Assorted miniature bottles and old snuff boxes. It was a strange assortment and one of the finest gifts we ever received.

Yes, Bart was one of a kind. Marching to a drummer all his own. He didn't have the slightest interest in what was trendy, fashionable or current. He lived his life his own way, in his own good time, and was one of the happiest people I ever knew.

A few years would pass. Bart was eventually evicted from his shop. The "junking" hadn't been good that month and he couldn't make his rent. We were without a car at that time and he moved in with his brother on the other side of the city. We saw him a few times after that, but things had changed. He was unhappy. His "shop" was in boxes in his brother's basement. The magic that had come together to produce the memories on Pullman Avenue had dissipated without Bart's odd shop.

Eventually I heard that Bart had moved to New Orleans. We haven't heard from him or of him in a few years now, but the memories still bring a smile to our faces.

Bart was a loner and I think we learned how to be loners from him. There is nothing wrong with being a loner. No dishonor is standing apart from the mass of humanity. To be alone, and secure in the reason why, can be a rich and wonderful thing.



## A TALE OF TWO CHICKENS by Eric Mayer

Reading Luke's article I found myself reliving my own humiliation at the claws of the Chinatown chicken. So I decided to scratch up a little dirt on the fowl. As I should have recalled, the Chinatown "Museum" features two chickens - Frank, the tic-tac-toe expert and Perdue, a dancer. They've been plying their trades for 7 years and bring in \$500 a week each. At 50¢ a shot that adds up to 1000 rubes a week with egg on their faces. Multiplying by 7 years one comes to the disheartening conclusion that there are in this country 364,000 people who have matched wits with a chicken and lost. (These calculations might be off because I refuse to contemplate the possibility that there exist people who'd let themselves be taken to the cleaners by a chicken more than once.)

The Chinatown Museum is owned by a fellow with the distinctly non-Oriental monicker of Charles Fletcher. Mr Fletcher, 26, may not be the first person to attempt to launch a singing career with trained chickens but he's the first I've heard about. PM Magazine allowed him to sing a song on TV in order to feature his chickens and Mr Fletcher is reportedly cutting a record.

Frank and Perdue were both trained at The Animal Behavior Center in Hot Springs Arkansas. The center was founded during the forties by Marian and Keller Breland who got into animal training during WW II when they designed a workable pigeon-guided missile system. (The Germans had embarked upon a secret bird-guided missile system as early as 1939 and the world might be a different place today had they chosen to use pigeons rather than rock cornish game hens). The Center has trained over 8000 animals of 220 species from whales to cockroaches, by a method which involves strengthening an animal's natural behavior pattern - for instance a chicken's pecking behavior - by means of immediate, positive, reinforcement. The method has been approved by the ASPCA. (Which, incidentally, has found no evidence of cruelty at the Chinatown Museum) As spokesman Bob Baily says, "People expect duck manacles and chicken whips but we don't use them." He adds, "with 2 billion chickens going down every year for drumsticks, birds trained at the Center have a chance of living to a ripe old age in a very positive environment, for a chicken." One of the environments available to chickens and other Center trainees is the Center's own I.Q. Zoo which tours the country, appearing at State Fairs and the like.

But there is still the mystery of exactly how the chicken wins. "When people ask," says Baily, referring to the I.Q. Zoo's tic-tac-toe champion, "I tell them he peeks around the corner to where the cat is writing the moves on a blackboard." According to Fletcher, Frank was trained to peck at a flashing light which makes him "appear to be manning the controls." He also claims the chicken has lost only once - during a blackout. Baily, however, has stated that training the I.Q. Zoo's chickens poses a special challenge since "the chicken must be taught to win." Nor does Baily claim for his protegee the infallibility of a machine. The I.Q. Zoo chicken wins only 80%-90% of the time.

The conclusion is obvious. The famous Chinatown chicken is a con, a three card monte artist in feathers, manipulated by a fame hungry interloper. The real poultry prodigies labor in the obscurity of the hinterlands, far from the footlights. So the next time you've got a yen to play tic-tac-toe stay away from Chinatown. Head for the Indiana State Fair where the chickens will still give you an even break.

# ART

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BACK COVER: Larry Oberc

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