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H P U: An Editorial

This magazine is the product of many, many hands - some at typers, others armed with pens and imagination, all extremely selfless and generous with their time. All they had to go on was an unknown publisher whose mimeographed fanzines only a few of them had seen. Looming ahead, less than six months from when most were told about the project, was a promised tribute to H. P. Lovecraft, a limited edition magazine of at least 64 pages originally scheduled for release on Derleth's birthdate, later changed to coincide with the month 35 years after Lovecraft's death.

These contributors (see the extensive biographical section at the rear) included people who had never had their art or writings published before and people whose livelihood derived from such activities, but all share a common interest in the subject of this publication: H. P. Lovecraft, the man, the writer and his writings.

In such a project an over-all purpose is frequently stated at this point, but the editors had in mind multiple purposes in this instance. One was to present a portfolio of contemporary artists and their interpretations of Lovecraft subjects. As a bridge, for the sake of continuity, two of the names long associated with the illustration of Lovecraft's work, Lee Brown Coye and Virgil Finlay, are represented herein. Another aim was to present a short anthology of some Lovecraft-inspired fiction and poetry, and it gives us great pleasure to present these pieces from people associated with the Cthulhu Mythos through earlier publication of their works by Arkham House and from people who are likely to find increasing markets for their work in the future. Another purpose was to preserve for the future (and, we hope, for the enjoyment of Lovecraft fans of the present) recollections and reminiscences from friends and correspondents of Lovecraft. Also we felt it appropriate to include some samples of Lovecraft research and interpretation from earlier periods of "fan" writing and from today's fans.

In all this *pot pourri* we hope each reader of HPL, whether he be a scholar, book collector, graphics oriented or story reader, whether he discovered H.P.L. in the 40's or 70's or in any intervening decade, will find something of interest and something of value. We would appreciate hearing from you, not alone for our own interest in your reactions but in order to present the comments you may have to the contributors by means of a mimeographed newsletter of such to be collected and mailed to each of them some months after the distribution date.

Interest in Lovecraft will doubtless continue to flourish despite the following exhortation but for what it is worth: support the fan enterprises you will find listed at the end of the magazine and any others you may hear about; support ARKHAM HOUSE, with which this publication has no affiliation but to which it and every Lovecraft fan owes much for the perpetuation of the breed, and Ballantine, Beagle and the paperback publishers who bring forth such material; support WITCHCRAFT & SORCERY and other magazines which seek to keep the traditions of WEIRD TALES in our midst; and finally, clamor for more material by any of the contributors who have particularly pleased you. It would also be appropriate to obtain recognition of our interest on convention programs, TV, comics, and, to attone, movies.

Thank you for your interest.

MEADE & PENNY FRIERSON, P.O. BOX 9032, CRESTLINE HTS., BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA 35213

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POEME EN PROSE: I

SWAN POINT CEMETERY -
Providence, Rhode Island,
March 15, 1970

Why does thou weep, the periwigged and bespectacled man asked. It is for a gentleman, I replied, who long-ago died here. We never knew him, but he was a man worthy of grief. All of his friends did mourn his loss, and now that they have joined him, we too are saddened, for he was creative of mind and a scholar; an individual the likes of which we shan't again see. The unique are deserving of encomium.

Do not mourn, my friend, for he is now content - he has sipped his nepenthe, the lethean quaff. The mundane and qualmish touch him not. He rides his night-winds, and the eons are his. With his Gods, his friends, he now ceaselessly converses; an outsider, as they once claimed, no longer. I know that he is well, said the thin-lipped gentleman, smiling slightly.

R. Alain Everts

THE TELLER OF TALES

From midnight dreams, oft credulous,
Of indifferent Fates he speaks to us;
Real terrors may spell our ultimate end -
He makes us shudder with his pen.
Prime mover of the Cthulhu cult,
Lore of the cosmic to the occult
On hints and glimpses he has brought,
Veering only to peer into a vault.
Eerie illusions he frequently weaves:
Crypts must yawn as spirits leave,
Rats beckon down from limitless heights,
And things unnamable haunt the nights.
From dead lines of this one so great
Tales, like maggots, proliferate!



THE SEEKER - I

Hapless I wandered through shadowy wood
Ever seeking that place where I could
Revel once more with arcane witches,
Beseech the secret of soul switches,
And escape this form into which I was cast.
Relentlessly, the years slither on past,
Not freeing me by death's bite from my fate,
Only mocking my quest for the ultimate
Lore to loose spells spun long before.
Despair tells me there are witches no more!



THE SEEKER - II

So far above the peaks, he strains
To see the night-gaunts fly
Until the demon-vision wanes
And blackness rules the sky.
Rulers of the arctic eons
To view he has gone far;
So too dark dreams of hell's minions
Come to him from the stars.
He haunts the dank tombs' openings
In case he'll get a look.
From whence come these imaginings?
From an Arkham House book!

- by Meade Frierson III



THE LOVECRAFT MYTHOS

BY

Robert Bloch

Sometimes it's sad, the way they die. Herman Melville, an obscure government clerk, passed from this earth with the bitter knowledge that his magnum opus, *MOBY DICK*, was out of print and - because of the neglect accorded him in his latter years - likely to remain so. Oscar Wilde, who had once tasted fame, died without a crumb of consolation; his work, like himself, was consigned to limbo. Scott Fitzgerald's heart-failure was probably less a tragedy to him than his career-failure. Few mourned Kafka or remembered his books.

And Lovecraft? Surely his departure was the most ignominious of all, for he lacked even the cold comfort of past glories. Not only was his writing out of print - it had never achieved temporary recognition in book form, for no "commercial" publisher had ever issued a single Lovecraft title during the whole of his lifetime.

Oh, he had his friends, of course; acolytes, disciples even, the scant score or so of us who formed the so-called "Lovecraft circle" of correspondents. And there were the fans, the faithful readers who relished or revered the occasional offerings which appeared in *WEIRD TALES* all too infrequently during the final years. But there had been little or no genuine critical recognition from the literary establishment, and even in the pulp-paper pages of the obscure, unsuccessful fantasy magazine with the lurid covers, he never rated the readership response accorded a Seabury Quinn or a Robert E. Howard.

When a struggling young writer in an obscure village joined forces with an equally impecunious compatriot in a plan to place Lovecraft's stories in print before an indifferent public, the effort seemed foredoomed. And when a book - in an edition of a mere 1,200 copies, almost a "vanity publication" - finally did appear, it was met with a half-hearted reception and its sale, even in this miniscule edition, languished. A second volume fared no better, critically or commercially.

And then the miracle happened. Not overnight, but gradually, Lovecraft emerged from obscurity. In books, in anthologies, in memoirs, essays, paperback reprint; in radio, television, and - with grotesque distortions, to be sure - in motion pictures. Even to the alien world of the hip, Lovecraft became an "in" figure, the cult of HPL was established. Today the name and work of H. P. Lovecraft has attained a worldwide fame; minor, alas, but magnified a thousandfold over anything accorded him during his lifetime.

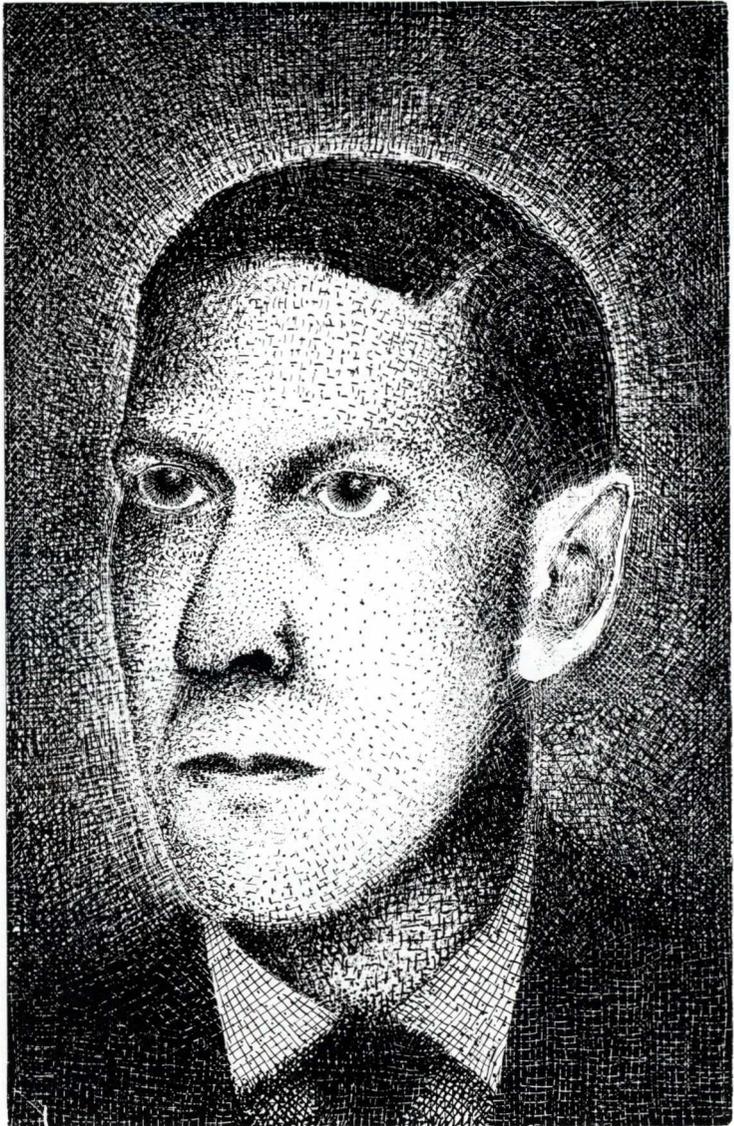
Hard to explain?

Not when one thinks in terms of "miracles" and "cults". For Lovecraft, of course, was a god. A god who, in his own ineluctable wisdom, created his own cosmos, his own Mythos.

The Lovecraft Mythos, the pantheon of Elder Gods and the Great Old Ones they spawned and fought, has a life of its own. And within its annals one can seek, and find, the clue to the resurrection of HPL.

Lovecraft tells us the legend of Cthulhu, who sought to conquer earth and failed, and was consigned to the oblivion of a watery grave deep beneath the sea; not in death, but in eternal exile, a silent slumberer forgotten by all.

All, that is, except a faithful few - outcasts, pariahs, miserable nonentities who nonetheless held his image in veneration, worshipped his memory, formed an obscure cult of true believers who prayed for him to rise once more and raven forth to claim dominion over the earth and the minds of men.



And in the depths Great Cthulhu stirred, and his stirring caused strange dreams in all the lands, and in time he did indeed come forth. Cthulhu's renaissance was brief, if Lovecraft's own account of it is to be believed, but though he sank again beneath the sea, it was only in a second slumber from which he may yet awaken, even as HPL himself awakened to summon his followers, to influence the dreams of man, to rule their fantasies.

Let us also remember the parable of Yog-Sothoth who came from beyond the stars to beget a spawn compounded of elements alien and human; his creations in part resembled men but both Wilbur Whateley and his monstrous brother betrayed, in varying degrees, their godlike heritage.

Think on that. Think on Lovecraft as Great Cthulhu, who slumbered, and who rose, because a few despised and neglected followers kept the faith through the years. Think on Lovecraft as Yog-Sothoth, who perpetuated his own image in the identities of others who carried on his "works" in their various ways.

We - the faithful followers, the cultists, the imitators - know the true meaning of the Lovecraft Mythos. And we rejoice in the rise and the revelation of the one we worshipped as a mentor, a literary god.

Iaa Shub-Niggurath!!

A HAUNTER OF THE NIGHT
BY
Joseph Payne Brennan

As I write, nearly 35 years after Lovecraft's death, interest in his work continues to grow.

The death of August Derleth, who, almost single-handedly, was largely responsible for bringing Lovecraft's work to the attention of the general reading public, marks, in a sense, the end of an epoch. Perhaps this is indeed a propitious time for new tributes to "the night-prowler of Providence."

I doubt that anyone will dispute the fact that Lovecraft's popularity and appeal remain undiminished. Anything written by him, or about him, is quickly bought up. Small printings go out of circulation in weeks or months. Stocks of higher priced hardbound books last longer but, inevitably, they too fall in the all-to-familiar "o.p." bracket.

Why does Lovecraft's work, nearly all of which appeared originally in "little", amateur-press or pulp magazines, continue to hold such fascination for readers? One obvious reply would be that much of his work is probably the best available in its own particular genre - even though that genre, by its very nature, is a somewhat circumscribed one.

Space (and time in this instance) will not permit a detailed discussion of Lovecraft's fiction, verse and letters. But there is one rather neglected facet of the Lovecraft diamond which might do with a bit of polishing.

More and more I come to feel that, entirely apart from the merit of his work one strong additional reason for Lovecraft's enduring and growing appeal is the fact that to the average reader he appears to be a character right out of one of his own stories! Readers identify him with his own stories to an unparalleled degree. This identity adds immeasurably to the magnetism of much of his work.

He was, to quote August Derleth, "a haunter of the night." He prowled the back streets of Providence at midnight and quite literally he "lingered in graveyards."

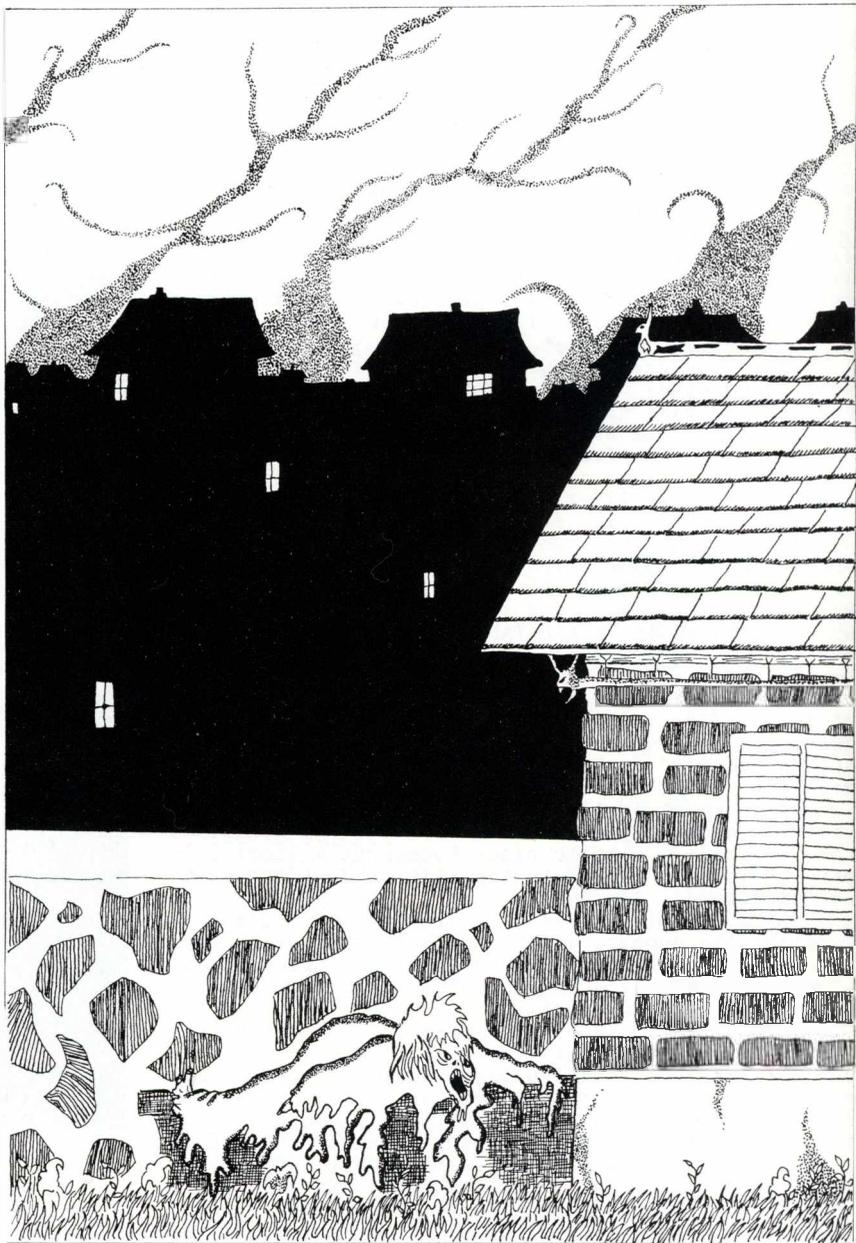
If he wrote during the day, he preferred a room in which all shades were drawn and his desk was illuminated by an electric bulb. He was attracted, by his own nature, as well as by vocation, to night, to darkness and to death. Years ago Vincent Starrett summed it up very aptly: "...he was his own most fantastic creation...born a century too late. He fancied himself as a cadaverous, mysterious figure of the night...and cultivated a natural resemblance until he was almost the real thing..."

Lovecraft's obsession with time, also, is well known. He revered the eighteenth century. In verse at least he imitated its style of writing. He admired its archaic mannerisms. I think he might have bargained life itself if, in exchange, he could have gone backwards and flourished for even a brief period as an old English gentleman during the 1700s!

Not many authors specializing in the domain of the macabre have filled the role so admirably. Poe comes immediately to mind, and certainly there were times when he wandered the shadowy, night-time streets of East Coast cities in delirium and despair. But for much of his short life Poe was a very busy magazine editor and/or contributor. For long periods his nose was kept uncomfortably close to the grind-stone of literary drudgery. After the sooty wings of the Raven enfolded him in fame, he lectured not infrequently. He ground away at book review, literary criticism, newspaper fillers, verse (as well as poetry) and hack work which he must have hated.

Lovecraft also drudged - especially at revisions of other authors' second-rate work - but, of the two, I believe he was a far more persistent "haunter of the night" than was Poe. Perhaps Poe haunted the wild, uncharted night of the imagination as much as Lovecraft. But I doubt that he haunted the earthly night as much in the flesh. He was too busy grubbing out a grim existence with a goosequill pen or the equivalent. In any case I can think of no other author in the macabre field who surpasses Lovecraft in the degree to which he identifies with his own fictions. And this identity was by no means artificial and contrived. Exploring deserted streets at night, loitering in lonely cemeteries, writing by artificial light with the shades down, and other habits, simply fulfilled Lovecraft's inward nature. These habits, so bizarre perhaps to others, were "normal" from his own perspective.

The psychiatrist, the psychoanalyst and the near-sighted academic snobs may probe, dissect and pass judgment till Doomsday. THE ENTHRALLED READER WILL CONTINUE TO APPLAUD!



MIME SCOTT



AN INTERVIEW WITH FRANK BELKNAP LONG

Our intrepid Associate Editor, Stuart D. Schiff, one chilling October eve braved the antedeluvian evils of Manhattan by-ways and sought out the famed Belknapius of Lovecraft's letters. Mr. Long consented to pose for our artist, Herb Arnold, with his protege and bodyguard, Chaugnar Faugn, and graciously granted the following interview.

SCHIFF: What was your first knowledge of Lovecraft?

LONG: That's quite a long and interesting story. When I was about 16 or 17, I entered a prize contest held by a boys' magazine. I think it was called BOYS WORLD. I won first prize and there was an amateur journalist out West, Paul Campbell, who saw the story and wrote me, inviting me to join the United Amateur Press Association, which I did. Then I wrote a story somewhat like Poe's Shadow, imitative, you see, running to about 2,000 words, for the UNITED AMATEUR, the official journal of the U.A.P.A. Lovecraft saw it and wrote me, telling me he thought it was splendid; he praised it very highly. Of course I was flattered and wrote back, and so we "met."

SCHIFF: Did you know of him at the time?

LONG: I knew of him only as a member of the United Amateur Press Association, one of about 250 members.

SCHIFF: When did you first meet Lovecraft in person?

LONG: I corresponded with him for about three years, and then he came to New York City on a short visit just before he married Sonia Greene. They were planning to marry and his first visit occurred about 3 months before his marriage, as I recall it. He phoned me and asked me to come over. He said he would very much like to meet me in person after having corresponded with me for so long. That was the first time we met, in Brooklyn.

SCHIFF: What was your impression of him when you met him?

LONG: Well, he was sitting on the stoop outside Sonia's apartment. He was very stout at that time. He became stout briefly for about 2 or 3 years. He looked much older than he was - he was only about 32 at that time, but he looked 40 or more. Somehow I

knew it was Lovecraft as I approached and he was very glad to see me and we went inside and I met Sonia for the first time. As I recall, we spent a very pleasant afternoon. And then about three or four months after that he married Sonia and came to New York again. Then he invited all of us to their Brooklyn home--Samuel Loveman, who was staying in New York at that time; Rhinehart Kleiner; and James F. Morton, the curator of the Paterson Museum, who was one of the older members of the Lovecraft circle...

SCHIFF: What was your most memorable moment with Lovecraft?

LONG: I don't think there's any one memorable moment. Of course, I was very flattered, since I was so much younger than Lovecraft, to have him praise my early stories so highly. As soon as he began to correspond with me at length, I realized that he was a man of great intellectual and imaginative stature. I felt I was very fortunate to be privileged to exchange letters with him.

SCHIFF: Do you remember any humorous story about him?

LONG: Howard was very serious-minded. He did have a keen sense of humor but he didn't display it often. He displayed it more in his letters than in his conversation. When you met him, you got the impression of a man who was very serious-minded and was interested in everything that mattered in literature and art. The little boyishly exuberant, slightly immature quirks you associate with most writers seemed largely absent in Howard. Oh, he was very eccentric in a few somewhat amusing respects and the impression most people got of him -- a correct one -- was that he was basically a warmly human personality. But he was not much given to relaxing, and being casually human or jolly. Back-thumping and a bone-crushing handclasp were alien to his nature, and that, of course, was entirely to his credit.

SCHIFF: In your correspondence with Lovecraft you were addressed as "Sonny" or "Grandson"; how did this originate?

LONG: Howard always thought of himself as the old gentleman of Providence Plantations so all of his young correspondents became his grandsons -- Alfred Galpin, Donald Wandrei, even Clark Ashton Smith, although Smith was older. He thought of himself as a man of about 70, and everyone else was very young. His aunt, Mrs. Gamwell, he spoke of as "my daughter" and James Morton, who was almost twice his age, as "my son." So he addressed me as "Sonny", which I didn't like -- it seemed kind of a foolish thing but I didn't want to offend him by mentioning that, so he continued to call me "Sonny" for about ten years after that.

SCHIFF: Was that also your name in the Circle?

LONG: No. I was always addressed as either Frank or Belknap, my middle name. My paternal grandmother's family were Belknaps and my parents used that name to distinguish me from my father, since I was a "Jr.". Howard and I think Morton called me "Belknap" - the others, "Frank", but all my boyhood friends from a quite early age called me Frank. "Belknap" is such a far out kind of first name it would have caused bewilderment if I'd used it at school.

SCHIFF: In other words, Lovecraft never gave you a name like "Klarkash-Ton"?

LONG: Oh yes, "Belknapius" -- he Latinized it, you see. In correspondence mainly -- Norton was "Mortonius", Galpin was "Galpinus" and so forth.

SCHIFF: A lot of writers feel they were influenced greatly by Lovecraft. How would you say Lovecraft influenced your writing?

LONG: Not very much. I read all of his stories and I think they influenced me, naturally, in some of their stylistic qualities, but from an early age I think my writing followed a different pattern from his. I was just as interested in supernatural horror and fantasy, but, to the best of my recollection, Howard never made any revisions in my stories, or suggested changes.

SCHIFF: You were the first person to read many of his stories, weren't you?

LONG: Sometimes when he visited us in person, he would read the stories. I think he did that more often than sending them through the mails, because he was our guest quite often and he would bring a new story down from Providence and read it. So I was the first to hear The Shunned House and At The Mountains of Madness and two or three others.

SCHIFF: How did he read the stories - did he act them out?

LONG: No, he would just sit in a chair and read them in a very straightforward fashion, in an almost conversational voice.

SCHIFF: Do you think that took away from the horror of the stories?

LONG: No, he had a very good voice for reading supernatural horror stories. You see, a horror story could hardly be read by a Babbitt or a guy who's a Rotarian. His voice was that of a cultivated New Englander and it went very well with the stories. But a more rustic-sounding "Down East" voice, with a pronounced nasal twang, would have been impressive, too.

SCHIFF: What is your favorite of Lovecraft's stories?

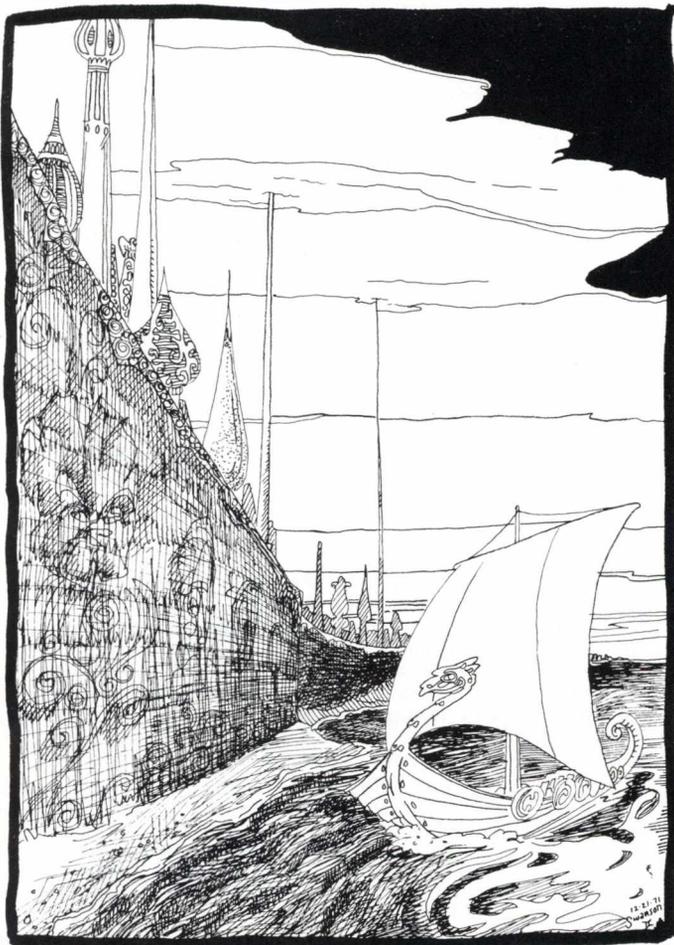
LONG: I think The Dunwich Horror is perhaps his masterpiece, with The Shunned House following close after that. At the Mountains of Madness is a very powerful novel. The Case of Charles Dexter Ward is almost as powerful, though in an entirely different vein. Also The Shadow Over Innsmouth. In college days I'd read his Dunsanian fantasies over and over - The Nameless City, The Doom That Came to Sarnath, etcetera.

SCHIFF: What impressed you most about The Dunwich Horror?

LONG: I think the slow build-up, the accumulation of brooding atmospheric details. It becomes more powerful as it goes along until finally it reaches this tremendous climax.

SCHIFF: Of the stories you've written two of the most powerful are The Hounds of Tindalos and The Space Eaters. These seemed to have been influenced by Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos.

LONG: Yes, they were. It's amazing how the fans and the fan groups remember these stories across the years. They were my earliest stories, those in WEIRD TALES, and they have been reprinted by Ace, Avon and THE MAGAZINE OF HORROR and anthologized, which may have helped to keep them remembered. I don't feel they're comparable to some I've done since then, particularly in recent years. I think that they were overwritten and too melodramatic, but they seem to have left an impression on the early readers of WEIRD TALES and those who have read them since. I don't know -- I don't want to be too critical of myself in that respect. I've had several writers and quite dis-



cerning, apparently intelligent fans tell me that they think they're the best things I've ever turned out. So maybe I'm wrong about it, but I think that some of my recent things stand head and shoulders over them.

SCHIFF: Why don't you tell us what you think are some of the best stories you've turned out recently?

LONG: In the first place, I wrote some 15 or 20 stories for Campbell's *ASTOUNDING SF* and *UNKNOWN WORLDS* between 1940 and 1950 or so. I think some of those are my very best short stories and novelettes, far superior to my *WEIRD TALES* stories, with 3 or 4 exceptions. They were in the "new wave" tradition, really, of science fiction even though they were written twenty or twenty-five years ago. They were literary in flavor and they conform to the pattern ascribed to so-called "new wave" writing today, although they are not nearly as subjective - not really "stream of consciousness" writing at all. But they are "new-wavish" in other ways. At that time it was called the "new science fiction". But there's been an awful lot of drivel written since then in the entire field, a lot of pulp writing - science fiction regressed and came back again. But I think about a dozen of the Campbell-period yarns are my best short stories. I haven't written any short stories for about ten years now. I've just been writing novel-length books.

SCHIFF: What are some titles?

LONG: I wrote one called *LEST EARTH BE CONQUERED* which was published by Belmont, which I think is one of my very best things. It's about a small boy

in a midwestern town who is the forerunner of a new race of men. There's one called *JOURNEY INTO DARKNESS* (1967), also published by Belmont. They didn't get the distribution my *Pyramid* and *Lancer* and *Popular Library* books did, but I think they're among my very best work.

I also wrote a science fiction novel for *Pyramid* about eight years ago called *MARS IS MY DESTINATION*, and a just-published *Lancer* novel, *SURVIVAL WORLD*, I'd put in this category - also *MONSTER FROM OUT OF TIME* (*Popular Library* 1969). But I'm comparing some of my science fiction stories with my early *WEIRD TALES* stories and they're in a different realm entirely. But some of my recent novels have aspects of horror writing in them which, I feel, far surpass anything I did when I wrote for *WEIRD TALES*. For instance, in those books I just mentioned there are passages in the genre that contain much more mature writing. I wrote also a Gothic novel for *Lancer* about five years ago under my own name that I think is one of my more powerful supernatural horror things. I'm writing now much more prolifically than I ever did in the past. I think my writing over the last fifteen years is much better than my earlier work but a great many fans don't agree. However, a lot of them haven't read these paperback books. There's a great deal more social satire in my recent things than was present in my earlier stories, more irony and that sort of thing which makes them stronger stories. But one thing about the older stories which makes me think they can't be too bad is that they've been anthologized so frequently. I've had about 35 stories in hardcover anthologies; most of them containing the best writers of the 19th century in the supernatural horror genre, Poe, Henry James, Bierce, etc., and in all those anthologies about one-third of the FBL inclusions are early stories.

Among my early *WEIRD TALES* stories I like *The Black Druid* (July, 1930); *Second Night Out* (1933); *A Visitor from Egypt* (September, 1930); *Two Face* (published in *WEIRD TALES* years later and anthologized by Bleiler & Dikty) and three or four others better than *The Space Eaters* or *The Hounds of Tindalos*. But these two seem to be the best remembered.

SCHIFF: Perhaps this is because they were the lead stories in your first book.

LONG: Well, it may be also because Lovecraft figured as one of the central characters of *The Space Eaters*.

But I'll tell you an interesting thing about *The Hounds of Tindalos*. Just by accident I seem to have stumbled on the whole psychedelic idea and anticipated Timothy Leary by about twenty years. If you read that story carefully, you'll find it deals with consciousness-expanding drugs and the sense of unity that they give people, that everything is a part of some great whole. And incidentally some of the hippies who are embracing these concepts now take that story very seriously. From a literary point of view I feel that some of the early stories are over-written and melodramatic but they may just possibly contain elements which are as interesting as anything in my later work.

One more thing, I seem to have spread the horror on a little too thick. I didn't use enough subtlety and suggestion. I'm a great admirer of the horror stories of Montague R. James. I think he achieved as much by suggestion -- perhaps more than HPL did by piling up adjectives. In my early stories I used the Lovecraftian method, the Poe method, really, of piling up adjectives. It's a greater art to be able to convey this in a more suggestive and subtle way. You'll find that in both the stories of Montague James and a story like *Turn of the Screw* by Henry James. It's a more subtle psychological approach.

SCHIFF: What writer do you think has influenced you the most?

LONG: There are so many writers who influenced me that it's hard to say. My reading has been in so many different fields. For the last ten years I've been very interested in contemporary American writing in the "new freedom" - no punches drawn - tradition, but this hasn't been mirrored to any extent in my work. But we'll see. I'm hoping to write a more realistic novel than anything I've ever turned out, with more character and subtlety. I'm probably more interested in character than Lovecraft was; I'm interested in unusual characters as well as atmosphere and background, but I've written in so many different styles, all kinds of stories, that it's hard to identify the influences.

SCHIFF: Of all the things you remember about Lovecraft what stands out most in your mind?

LONG: He was extraordinary. He was unlike most people. Some say that his like will never be seen again, and I agree. He could just sit in a chair and talk continuously. He had a very high level of intellectual discernment. It was just like a book talking. But you remember him also as a very kindly person, which so many men of creative genius are not. He was very kindly disposed toward everyone; he had very few enemies. There was no young writer who appealed to him for help who didn't find him ready to do his best to assist.

SCHIFF: With the recent publication of volumes of Lovecraft's letters we're getting to see a little more of Lovecraft the man and in fact the letters are becoming as well known as some of his stories.

LONG: The thing is that the real Lovecraft was more in his letters than in his stories. He had this tremendous ability to bring the 18th century to life. He lived in the 18th century himself to a great extent and all of this was revealed in his letters - his love of the old houses of Providence. He was an antiquarian but a very lively kind, not the dry-as-dust kind. You could call this a pose but with him it wasn't a pose, it was really an extension of his identity - he could become an 18th century gentleman - not just pretend to be but you got the impression that he was very much what an 18th century gentleman might have been, a cultivated 18th century gentleman with Howard's gift of imagination.

SCHIFF: Some people feel that in taking so much time to write his letters Lovecraft lost a lot of time from writing fiction.

LONG: Yes, it was a tragedy in some respects.

SCHIFF: He would have been better able to develop his qualities as a writer if he hadn't taken so much time with those letters.

LONG: Yes, but Lovecraft was never an opportunist. He never went after literary recognition. He was writing primarily to satisfy these deep urges within himself. If he had set out to be a professional writer, he could have probably gone very far from both a literary and a monetary point of view, but that's it -- he didn't care for that sort of thing. But it's tragic because he did waste a lot of time on people who had no artistic talent whatever. Others, however, achieved no small measure of literary recognition. All these young fans he wrote to were so delighted to receive his letters and it extends across the years to today, fans are still receiving his letters for the first time. It's really contributed to the Lovecraft legend. To think that he could evoke such enthusiasm long after he had passed on!

SCHIFF: Why do you feel that Lovecraft has been able to develop such a fanatical following among his readers of today?

LONG: There are certain writers who appeal to youth. Youth has this sense of dawning wonder and there are certain writers who appeal to this so-called imaginative awakening which occurs in young people. H.G. Wells was a writer of that sort. Although Lovecraft was completely different from Wells in personality and so forth, he had that same capacity. The irony of it is that he always thought of himself as a very old man and yet there is something about his stories which appeal to youth; they touch on far realms out of space and time, the imperishable dream that you find in all the great poets, Shelley and Keats and so forth. Some of that is in Lovecraft and you get the tremendous impact of that when you read his stories and all of his letters to these young correspondents. It brings him back to life. You read those three volumes of letters and a young guy would think that he's receiving a letter personally.

SCHIFF: As a member of the Kalem Klub, do you recall any really memorable gatherings?

LONG: I remember when Donald Wandrei came to N.Y. for the first time. He was about 19 and had never seen New York before. Then he went up to Providence and my mother and father and I drove up in a car after James Morton had also joined Howard. We were there three or four days. I remember we went on a trip to Newport and Howard showed us all over the town, all the old houses. That was the first time he had ever explored Providence in the presence of three or four of his friends. That was the first time I realized what a wonderful guide Howard was, touring these ancient by-ways.

Howard, as you know, spent about three years in New York, then went back to Providence. He came down afterwards about eight or ten times. He was our guest four or five times; we got a room for him in our apartment house, I remember. And of course I saw him steadily for about three years when he was in Brooklyn. That was also the time when Loveman was here and Talman, who lived in Flatbush. We had a lot of meetings during those years. I didn't attend as often as some of the others - they would take long walks and stay out all night. I was at the time in college and didn't have time for that. They'd walk the streets of Brooklyn and lower Manhattan until dawn, just looking at 18th century houses, often in the Village.

SCHIFF: I recall hearing or reading that Lovecraft drank a lot.

LONG: No, he never touched a drop. That's the most ridiculous legend I could imagine. It would have been interesting to see how Howard might have expanded under the influence of liquor; he might have become even more talkative. I think Loveman told me just once at a party without telling Howard he had sneaked something a little stronger in one of his drinks and Howard wasn't aware of it at all but he did become more talkative - more exuberantly expansive.

SCHIFF: When members of the Circle, Loveman, Lovecraft, Kleiner, Arthur Leeds, James Morton, yourself, got together what went on? What did you talk about?

LONG: Mostly writing, books, art ... we all had similar interests. Loveman was a great book collector; he loved books as books. I never cared much for books apart from their contents. Lovecraft had quite a large library; all walls were lined with books.

SCHIFF: Of all the writers in the circle who do you think had the most influence on Lovecraft?

LONG: I don't think there was very much back-and-forth influence by members of the Lovecraft circle. There were all of these models for all of us to follow: Poe, Bierce, Dunsany, Blackwood, Machen. I don't think Howard influenced Clark Ashton Smith to any extent or Smith influenced Howard.

SCHIFF: How did you get your first sale to WEIRD TALES? Was it The Desert Lich in December, 1924 issue?

LONG: Yes, it was. Henneburger was the original owner of the magazine and Howard had corresponded with him. When he came East Howard brought him to our home and I talked with him and told him I'd like to submit a story, too. Edwin Baird was the editor then and I submitted a story after they had published three or four of Lovecraft's. Then Farnsworth Wright became editor and he raved over my two or three early stories, wrote me long letters about them. From that time on for ten years I'd sell stories to WEIRD TALES three or four times a year.

SCHIFF: What did WEIRD TALES pay?

LONG: There was no money in it. A cent a word. Sometimes you'd have to wait for the check, which was on publication.

SCHIFF: Did you like any artist in particular who illustrated your stories?

LONG: Well, I didn't care too much for most of the WEIRD TALES illustrators. Virgil Finlay, of course, was an illustrator of great imaginative brilliance and Bok was too. But for the others I didn't care so much. The interior illustrations for The Space Eaters were magnificent.

SCHIFF: What did you think of Clark Ashton Smith as a writer?

LONG: That's a long story in itself. Briefly, I think that Smith was much greater as a poet than as a story writer. The Book Club of San Francisco published a collection called ODES AND SONNETS in 1920 and that I think contains the very best of Smith's poetry. Later he became too imitative (too much influenced by Baudelaire and the English decadents of Yellow Book fame -- Dawson and others) and his poems underwent a decline. But at that time he wrote some magnificent poems. They're traditional poems; they preceded the 1915 poetic revival when a new kind of poetry came in and rhetorical eloquence of that type went out, although it survived in England much longer than here. If Smith had written those poems about 1890 in England, I think he would have been among the greatest of minor English poets. By that I mean -- with strains of lyrical splendor, here and there, worthy of a major poet. (Mr. Long then quoted from an early Smith poem). I think that his stories, except in about ten instances, don't compare with his poems. The City of the Singing Flame and the sequel were magnificent, however.

SCHIFF: You wrote poetry at one time, "The Goblin Tower" and "Man from Genoa."

LONG: I sent the "Man from Genoa" around to about ten poets, John Masefield, Arthur Machen, George Sterling, George Santayana, Robinson Jeffers and others, and I got some very encouraging, very flattering letters from all of them. But I haven't written any poetry recently.



SCHIFF: If you were to meet someone who didn't know Lovecraft, how would you describe HPL to him?

LONG: That would be very difficult. Every individual has qualities that are lost forever when he dies. You can't bring them back by just describing them. I don't think I'd attempt to -- I'd simply say you get to know him best by reading his letters and his stories. He had the qualities that you usually associate with a man of genius. Probably if you had talked to H.G. Wells or Henry James or Joseph Conrad or anyone else of genius, you'd have gotten this overwhelming impression of a very extraordinary personality but you can't recapture that when they're gone; you can't convey that essence, so to speak, of the person.

* * *

HPL: An Astrological Analysis

by E Hoffman Price

By adopting the system explained in *THE KEY TO YOUR OWN NATIVITY* by the noted English astrologer, Alan Leo, I am presenting an analysis of H. P. Lovecraft, in which I do not introduce any bias or opinions of my own - EXCEPT where, in italics, comment by me may be helpful in applying the impersonal judgments of the late Alan Leo to HPL. Such comments will be clearly identified. There may also be statements of ascertainable facts - not opinions! - regarding HPL, which either are in accord with Alan Leo's generalizations or are significantly at variance. Such interpolations will also be clearly identified.

My intention is to present a judgment based solely upon the practice of astrology in the Western tradition, and to exclude whatever knowledge, actual or fancied, objective or subjective, I had or have, from my personal acquaintance and my correspondence with HPL.

A competent astrologer - and I am such, and my status is professional - can do an analysis and synthesis which is more complete, and more specific, than is possible with or by Alan Leo's method, as set forth in the book which I use. That he has written six major volumes in addition to the one at hand, indicates that he considers the present work is primarily for the beginner, or, for the more advanced worker who finds it necessary to assure a sceptical client that the astrologer's personal knowledge, bias and opinion are excluded.

That the astrologer's intuition and skill, long experience, are also excluded, is of necessity accepted when one is required to demonstrate utmost objectivity, and become as mechanized as this age of science is making us! HPL always was, and in recent years, has more than ever become a controversial character. I have composed, for another non-commercial publisher, an analysis in which mechanized objectivity is not required. Accordingly, the present analysis is an offset, a counter-poise. Each presentation is potentially useful - or useless, according to your views on astrology.

To check memories, stories, notions about HPL against this analysis or against "the other", presented by another publisher, is not intended to demonstrate the validity of astrology, nor to demonstrate the contrary. My subject is HPL; astrology, as such, is merely one of the many modes in which HPL may be regarded.

The first edition of Alan Leo's book appeared in 1912; the seventh edition, 1956. The author refers to English customs and background, "Americanese" at times is different from English diction. I do not propose to give a verbatim transcript. However, I will neither cut nor restate or paraphrase in any way which will warp or misrepresent, or fail to present, Alan Leo's words. I give the paragraph numbers of the seventh (1956) edition for those who may desire to read Alan Leo's original words.

The birth data, 9:00 A.M., August 20, 1890, Providence, R.I. came from one of HPL's letters. In his day, and into the 20th century, time of day has been given in "round figures" instead of going to the actual minute. We cannot know, for instance, whether Venus is actually in the XII House, or whether Mars is in the II or in the III. Until someone "rectifies" HPL's chart (page opposite), by calculations based on the critical events of his life, these uncertainties will remain.

(7) "Libra was rising at your birth; a sign belonging to the element air, and to the cardinal or movable quality. This gives you a courteous, gentle, affable and kind disposition. Your feelings and affections are strongly developed and are likely to play an important part in your life. You are able to make many friends; you associate easily with other people; the social side of your nature is active and your growth will best be served by cultivating it wisely. You will be less fortunate if you live alone or dissociate yourself from others. You have a refined mind, are fond of beauty and orderliness, with a taste for music or painting. Your surroundings influence you very much and you are not happy unless they are neat, elegant and harmonious. Your mind is susceptible of considerable cultivation especially in connection with the more imaginative and idealistic subjects; but you have more intuition than reason, and emotion and affection are more to you than cold intellect. You are rather fickle and changeable, your likes and dislikes vary a great deal, and your ideas change with your moods. You are not quite constant either to persons or to ideas, and you are likely to experience many changes in your life. Companionship, friendship, partnership, association and marriage are the keynotes of your nature, and you will not attain to your fullest possibilities without them. Venus is the planet ruling Libra."

(16) Venus is the planet of love and beauty. You are warm-hearted and companionable, fond of the society of friends and relatives, and favoring all that is harmonious and refined. Venus generally gives those born under it good taste and love of beauty. You have the ability to develop the aesthetic side of your nature in the direction of singing, music, art, poetry, etc.; if you care to do so. The influence of the planet can also be adapted to a business life as it gives some financial ability and good luck. Venus is the chief significator of love and marriage.

NOTE BY EHP: While Venus rules the entire sign of Libra, there is a sub-ruler influencing each of the three "decans" - 10 degree portions - of every sign. Since HPL has 14° Libra rising, the ruler of the second Decan, Saturn, is influential. I give you Saturn - -

(19) Saturn gives you a disposition that is sober, serious, thoughtful. Saturn rules old age. It gives you self control, reserve, restraint, as well as inclination to frugality, prudence, cautiousness, and you may at times be lacking in buoyancy and cheerfulness, and you do not unbend socially so easily as some can, or produce so much mirth, fun, and jollity, although you can appreciate these. You have practical ability and can manage things and persons ably. You are ambitious and can form far reaching plans, and spend a long time in carrying them out. Saturn is considered as an unfortunate planet owing to its power to limit and restrict; it has a binding, restraining influence.

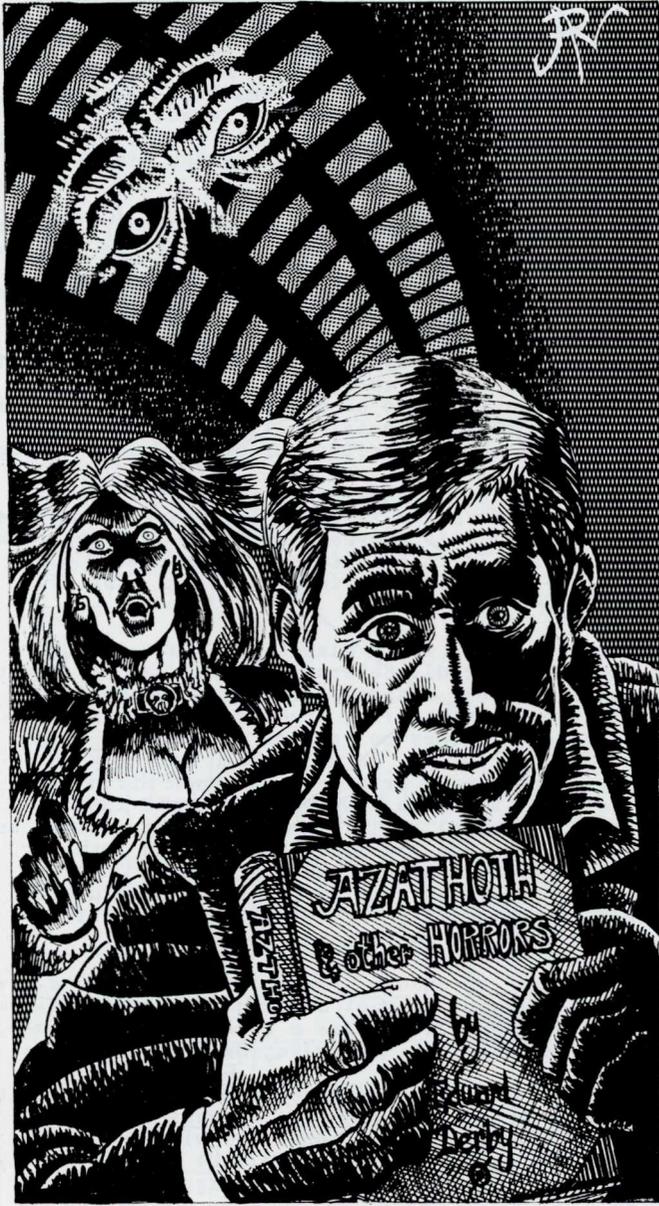
NOTE BY EHP: Because of the ambiguity of the House position of Venus, I must abstain from giving either Par. 22 or Par. 33. I have a strong bias. However, there is no ambiguity regarding Saturn (19) above.

(32) Saturn, ruler of the Second Decan of Libra, is in the VI House: Alan Leo says of this position, "...you will have many friends and will be popular in your own sphere of life. You make friends easily among people who are of the type signified by your

ruling planet. Friends are likely to influence you. You are likely to rise in life and fulfill your ambitions.

NOTE BY EHP: Although Saturn rules the second decan, Venus rules the entire sign, and hence, second decan is Venusian essentially, though "flavored" by Saturn. The writers, poets, hobby-publishers, and other aesthetes in HPL's circle are consistent with the above.

(76) Venus, ruler of Ascendant, is in Libra. Alan Leo says, "Favorable for marriage and all kinds of association with others. Contributes to the refinement of the mind, and gives some taste for music, poetry, singing; develops the mind in the direction of imagination, ideality, sense of beauty and good taste. Ugliness and coarseness offend you. Love and affection are blended with thought rather than with desire. You could earn money by an occupation of the nature of Venus, especially if in partnership, or as manager or agent for someone. Possibly gain money through marriage."



NOTE BY EHP: Revisory collaborations certainly were "partnership" work, and he "managed" the sale of the product. Had he been willing to quit Providence, Sonia's excellent income would for him have been "money gained through marriage." He had it made! Since Saturn is ruler of rising decan, I give you that planet again:

(111) Saturn in Virgo gives an orderly, critical and analytical mind, of serious cast, tending to make you original and able to deal with profound subjects; this might not show to advantage during early life. You may at times be far too diffident and reserved. Possibility of disappointment or reverses in your occupation. Ambition may be thwarted because of unpopular occupation, ill health, or some cause coming from your elders. (*NOTE BY EHP: That's a micro-biography*).

(146) Sun in Leo: You are generous, warm hearted, affectionate. Deep emotions and firm will, but when uncontrolled, the desires will be impulsive, the feelings easily affected. You are generous, sincere, earnest, persevering and inclined to self-perfection; unselfishness, ambition, pride, love of power. The dangers of Leo are potentially for cowardice, prevarication, love of pomp.

(160) Moon in Libra: You love ease and pleasure, the arts, and social gatherings. You are kindly, genial affable and courteous. You love approval; life will be sweet when you are appreciated, but not when you remain unnoticed. You have artistic tastes.

(540) Blending the influences of Sun in Leo and Moon in Libra, it would appear that you could easily adapt yourself to literary and educational pursuits. Be careful in choice of friends and acquaintances, and also, and especially so, in marriage.

(183) Mercury in Virgo; your mind is active and comprehensive; you have a good memory; all your mental efforts can be turned to good use. You would be practical in any capacity, but you are apt to have too many things going at once. Not so good for public success. Teaching, literary work, bookkeeping (accounting), would be good pursuits.

(201) Mercury in XII House tends to keep you back in life by not allowing you to make the most of your mind. You may suffer from secret animosity or slander whether deserved or not. Do not let yourself be drawn into any unwise scheme, especially where writings are concerned. (*NOTE BY EHP: writings in this context means legal documents such as contracts, or informal statements which could be legally binding or actionable, i.e., libelous - rather than writings in a literary or artistic sense.*)

(203) Sun and Moon in benefic aspect: success - the attainment of many of your desires; your efforts will prosper. You will have success in all affairs that relate to the heart.

(221) Sun, benefic aspect with Uranus, bestows inventive genius, much originality. You have an independent spirit and love to carry out your own plans. You have magnetic power and can exercise over others a fascination which will make it easy for you to influence them.

(266) Venus in benefic aspect with Mars is fortunate for emotional affairs, and in all events connected with feeling. You are free and liberal with money. Social matters have much attraction for you. You will be fortunate financially. It favors love affairs and is generally beneficial in marriage or partnerships.

NOTE BY EHP: What the author is saying is almost always correct. HPL is one of the few exceptions. But if you take into account all the other details of the chart, you will be able to reconcile this sharp divergence from history.

(285) Mars and Saturn in adverse aspect: a tendency at times to render harsh or bitter judgments, and utter words in accord. You have much courage, and are reckless in the face of danger.

(291) Mars in adverse aspect to Neptune: intemperate enthusiasms. You should avoid excesses, mental, emotional, or physical. Avoid all narcotic drugs.

NOTE BY EHP. HPL's almost fanatical aversion to tobacco and alcohol could have been intuitive avoidance of things which were potentially harmful to him, and in a measure exceeding that which is the case with "ordinary" people. Neptune rules alcohol, alkaloids, narcotics, poisons, petroleum and other oils and - the SEA, the products of which he loathed.



(299) Benefic aspect of Jupiter to Neptune: "... there is a tendency to extravagance. You should correct this by disciplining yourself in other lines of thought, such as science or mathematics in order that the sensuous and emotional nature may not assume too great a sway. Financial schemes are likely to bulk largely in your life, directly or indirectly. You should practice the sterner virtues, also, simplicity and frugality.

NOTE BY EHP: It is true, yet pointless, to say that the Lovecraft family fortunes made it needless for HPL to develop frugality and simplicity! Frugality, I mean, was compulsory. Regardless of immediate causes, or ancestral causes, he went with his stars. One might say that, as in (291) above his Puritanism was an unconscious "overcorrection" of tendencies and urges which he was, must have been, aware. Again, this is not a defense of Alan Leo - it is an attempted insight into HPL when his stars suggest or declare what was very conspicuously NOT manifested, not even revealed by speech or in his writings.

(306) Adverse aspect between Saturn and Neptune: this is an uncommon and strange position that is likely to bring you into remarkable situations. It is a very lofty vibration, to the true nature of which present day humanity cannot fully respond. It is not altogether favorable, and appears to indicate that there is some "kink", as it were, in the inner nature, which may manifest or perhaps remain dormant in this life, entirely unsuspected. Guard against the subtler forms of selfishness, which are likely to beset you. The cultivation of psychic faculties would not be good for you. There is a melancholy tendency associated with this position. (Note by EHP: This invites, as do several earlier paragraphs a receptive reading of SELECTED LETTERS.)

(313) You will gain through others, by will, legacy, inheritance, also through partners and co-workers. Expect losses, either through your own or another's extravagance. Never lend money without security. You can be practical where money is concerned, except where your feelings are concerned. You should prosper on the whole, for you have the ability to make money quickly.

(328) Travel, especially upon what are considered short journeys in our time, will be helpful, beneficial. This division of heaven also rules the "brain mind" and with [sic] brethren (i.e., kinfolk, relatives, not necessarily brothers and sisters--note by E.H.P.) Your kindred will be well disposed, your mind religious, and your mental condition harmonious. You may practice meditation to advantage.

(340) Jupiter in IV House promises good environment at the close of life; the end of your life is the best, and a good termination is indicated. It will be much better for you to remain in or near your native home, than to reside away from your home to gain success. This influence indicates inheritance from your parents. Every year of your life will be more and more prosperous and comfort secure at the end. (Note by EHP: Jupiter is "retrograde", which restricts, restrains and somewhat offsets the full benefits of that planet. Despite financial shortages, the final five years of HPL's life were very good; he enjoyed them, almost to the end.)

Fifth and Sixth Houses: There are no planets in these and I see no merit in giving the traditional "Egyptian" rulerships, versus the "modern" rulerships; whether Saturn or Uranus rules the V, whether Jupiter or Neptune rules the VI, is a profitless pace filler. Saturn ("Egyptian") and Neptune ("modern") are most in accord with the facts.

(366) Mars governs your VII House, that of marriage. Not favorable. You will in all probability marry one who is very ardent and who will desire to hold the reins and rule the roost.

(377) Venus in Libra: *more on HPL matrimonial prospects, much of this, as with much of (366) is yes-and-no. The unusual HPL at times rises above all "rules", escapes all bonds of prediction.*

(386) Legacies, inheritance. Gain by marriage, or partnership; profit from marriage partner's gains, earnings.

(390) Neptune influence in (386) means likelihood of not getting full benefit of inheritance rightfully anticipated. Avoid having drugs administered (medically, it is implied). Liability of your going into deep sleep or trance. Drowning (at sea) is not improbable.

(394) Mercury's ruling your higher mind indicates that it is often more active than your "ordinary" or "brain" mind. You have the ability to become a philosopher but not until you have more continuity and concentration. You are quick and perceptive. You will take some long journeys, or travel in foreign countries. You have a metaphysical turn of mind and love mystical subjects.

(402) The Moon is concerned with all your pursuits in life and favors employments of a public or universal character. You should do work which caters to the public at large. There will be many fluctuations in your pursuits. Avoid trade or profession which requires fixity.

(413) The Sun is in and also rules the XI House, that of friends and associates, hopes and wishes, plans and projects. You will realize many hopes. Your friendships in many instances will be firm, and will help you.

(419) Saturn is in your XI House. This indicates some faithful and reliable friends, but some trouble through friends is denoted. You will have friends among the elderly, those considerably older than yourself. You will have some disappointments in your friendships.

(428) Mercury rules your XII House, and is in the XII. You are much interested in the occult, and in matters dealing with the other worlds. You have ability for investigating spiritualism and occultism but you should avoid becoming engrossed in such things, particularly not in the phenomenal aspects.

(441) The majority of the planets are in Airy signs. This give you an inspirational and artistic temperament. You can live much more in the mind than in the senses. You may love sensuous pleasures, but you abhor all things sensual. You have good intellectual ability but it is the artistic that appeals to you more than the scientific, unless it is the philosophically intellectual aspect of science.

(446) The majority of the planets were in mutable signs at your birth. You are versatile, and at times, indecisive, not sufficiently determined.

(472) Uranus rising at the time of your birth, especially in the first house, marks you as one quite out of the common, for Uranus is the planet of originality, invention, often of genius. It will at times cause you to be considered peculiar and eccentric. This position has much to do with your love of the mystical, and it also gives you ability for astrology and metaphysical subjects. You love the wonderful and the profound. Some romance will come into your life, or some sudden and unexpected change either a reversal of fortune or unexpected gain.

Reminiscences of HPL

By E. Hoffman Price, addressing the WITCHCRAFT & SORCERY CONVENTION in Los Angeles, California, Oct. 24, 1971.

(The speaker has edited the transcript, and with thanks for the privilege of doing so. The remarks were impromptu, conversational rather than studied or prepared. The speaker was at once dredging his memory and responding to a most friendly audience. This does not make for good delivery, good arrangement. The flaws, for which there is no apology offered, are glaring when blazing up from the typed transcript. It was otherwise at the convention - we were having fun! Yet I know better than ever why many speakers object to having tape recorders at work, especially when one is free-wheeling, instead of presenting a formal address. - E.H.P.)

"I remember HPL that afternoon in New Orleans, nearly 40 years ago. He was lean, slightly stooped, long legged. He spoke as though he had a dictionary lodged in his speaking-gear. He sounded artificial in his choice of words. He seemed shy, operating under tension. There was a jerkiness of speech. But before we had walked all the way from the Lafayette Hotel down into the *Vieux Carre*, where my studio was, his choice of words and his mode of speaking became entirely natural - I'd become accustomed to it. His archaic *loyal-subject-of-Ring-George-IV* diction seemed to be the only appropriate speech. Once used to him, you would have been distressed if he were speaking as you and I.

The one at 305 Royal Street was the first formal, "fashionable" studio I had ever had. I mean, the first professional work-shop, not the corner-of-the-home, set aside by an amateur. There have been rumors to the effect that I entertained HPL in a studio in the red-light district of New Orleans. This is not true. The yankees and other out-of-towners always confuse the old French city with the "District", as the natives termed the whore-house area, several blocks of "cribs". Certainly HPL was not the sort of person one would invite to a studio in a block of hook-shops!

Fact is, I was rather twitchy because of the studio party which had been scheduled for that very evening. Until Robert E. Howard wired me, I didn't know that HPL was going to be in town. I had heard that he was a blue-nose, a Puritan, and a very unpleasant character. I was ready for the worst. Now I was delighted by the man's charm, which overcame or offset his awkwardness and artificiality of speech, his nervous tensions and shyness. HPL was outreaching, in his own peculiar way. Still, I was wondering what would happen when the "winebibbers and the whoremongers" assembled at my studio.

I had several barrels of raisin wine, old stuff which had done fermenting at least a week ago - also five or ten cases of homebrewed beer and a couple of five-gallon crocks of brew that still fermented. The *Vieux Carre's* writer and painter set, phonies as well as producers, would drink anything - and did!

(I must interpolate that in addition to shop keepers, restaurant operators, and all the other business persons of a town, there were in those days a considerable number of every-day, standard folk who like their forebears, had always lived in the "Old City". The *Vieux Carre* was far more than the habitat of the writer and painter crowd.)

I was wondering whether I should call off the party. I did not want to give Lovecraft a bad case of shock. He was so genuine, so very likeable, so congenial that I wanted to spare his feelings. But, despite my qualms, the party was staged as planned. The Puritan was as much at home with the *Vieux Carre* crowd as he was in his sedate native Providence. One would have thought that he had spent all his life with wine-bibbers and people addicted to riotous living.

Some say that he was at ease because he drank spiked punch, not realizing that it was spiked. This is error! We never served punch in the *Vieux Carre*. HPL needed no grog.

The guests gathered about HPL. He held them fascinated. It was beautiful to see how he was charming them. They did not know who he was. He didn't bother to tell them. His presence was enough.

When all the guests had tottered home, I broke out an enormous pot of *chili con carne*. It was blistering - it would do anywhere along the Mexican border. He loved it, ate bowl after bowl of the peppery stuff. I promised him that we would make a pot of Indian curry when I visited him in Providence. I showed up as his guest, a year later, to make good my word.

There was another guest, the mad-house keeper, as I whimsically called him - Harry Brobst, intern or psychiatric trainee at a Providence hospital, HPL's good friend and neighbor, for the final five years of HPL's life. Harry was going to go out to get a six pack of beer. He wondered whether HPL would object.

HPL said, "Not at all, since it is not in violation of the law of the land, anymore. I have no objection whatsoever."

While Harry was getting the six-pack, I was making the curry, and HPL was sampling it.

"Is it hot enough for you?"

"Ah, a few more spices from Araby and the Indies would help."

So I dumped in more curry powder, and yet more. When it was hot enough to raise blisters on a pack saddle, he said, "It is just about right."

Harry offered him as a matter of courtesy some beer.

"No, no," he said, "Pardon me, but I simply cannot drink the filthy stuff."

"Well, that's all right," Harry said, "Ed and I will drink it."

You should have seen HPL's face - if a man had said, "I'm Count Dracula, nice meeting you," he could never have been so amazed. He looked at Harry - he looked at me. "You mean that you two will drink all that beer?" He couldn't believe us, and then, after we had drunk the six-pack, he still couldn't believe it!

I remember him as the perfect host. I did not realize how little money he had. I'd known he was not getting rich, none of us were. This was 1933. It was not until years later that I knew that he had been busting himself to be hospitable. He decided, for instance, that I should eat in one of those absolutely unpronounceable New England villages - Pot-tawomscott, or some such Indian name - famed for its seafood. He ordered the biggest "shore dinner" on the list, with steamed clams and all manner of other

marine creatures. As for himself, he considered seafood unfit for human consumption. When all the revolting mess was set out, he spoke. I'd never heard him use such language before. I cannot convey the disdain in his voice: "While you are consuming this God-damned stuff, I will go next door for a sandwich. You will please excuse me, I trust?" (The "God-damned" was uttered with a deliberation, a stateliness, a solemnity worthy of a great orator.)

He could not endure the smell of it.

We didn't have the traditional ice-cream orgy. There was a spot - you may have heard of it, and of the 42 different flavors. HPL and a few friends, each ordering a different flavor, and dividing each successive lot among his companions, got as far as 28 kinds, and then called it a day.

HPL was one of my most esteemed, most dear friends. Those who knew Lovecraft were devoted to him. In recent years people in intellectual gatherings have picked him to pieces, psychoanalyzing him. He was a racist, they claim. I think that this is nonsense and not worth the refuting. He was generous minded, and in material things, as generous as his finances allowed, and in fact, extravagant where friends and hospitalities and contributions for good causes were concerned. You astrologers - it is hard to find a group, these days, in which there are no astrologers! - might be interested to know that he was a Leo, and he had all the pride, sensitivity, out-reachingness of that sign, all the generosity. He was a dish all of his own, too, with a dark Saturn touch - "

(Note by EHP: The speaker was cut short by one of those emergencies without which no convention could operate. A jammed schedule, I think, and I had to make way for another speaker, who had to speak his piece quickly, to make way for a dinner or luncheon or something which from its nature could not or must not wait. But, while it lasted, we did have fun, though this was, for some of us, blended with blinks, and chokings-up.)



Stuart Schiff: "Fritz Leiber needs no introduction to any of you, I'm sure, but this multi-gifted man is truly one of the greatest writers of fantasy and science fiction this century has seen. Fritz's possession of multi-Hugo's and Nebulas more than attest to his recognition by the SF&F worlds. He had a short correspondence with HPL and his fine booklet of poems, Demons of the Upper Air, was written under the Lovecraftian influence. Even though a bit under the weather and having already written reams on HPL, Fritz graciously penned a few words for us. Let's just call it...

A
FEW
SHORT
COMMENTS ON
THE WRITINGS OF HPL

By Fritz Leiber

Lovecraft's juvenalia were quite as indistinguished as most such.

Outside of The Horror in The Museum, his editing-re-writings were a tragic waste of time.

He fumbled around a while with his stories in the Dunsanian vein, his stories involving 18th century tombs, etc.

He hit his stride with The Outsider, Dagon, Pickman's Model, The Music of Erich Zann, The Dreams in the Witch House, The Colour Out of Space, etcetera. It is important to note that most of these stories contain definite S U R P R I S E S and shocks.

But then - to my mind of today, unfortunately - he began to make his stories longer and longer . . . and longer, and also cast them in the form of scientific or scholarly reports. The elements of surprise and shock vanished almost completely. By the end of a few pages, or merely the first paragraph, one knew what the climax was going to be and could merely admire and shiver at the nightmarishly slow approach of that foreknown crisis - rather as in a repeated drug trip.

Think what a thriller The Case of Charles Dexter Ward might have been if it had been kept a mystery up until almost the end just what the pleasant young man was up to! As it stands, we get the gist of the story in the first two pages.

It's at best a guess why this happened. Perhaps there grew in Lovecraft a literary contempt for the "thriller" and its surprises. Perhaps his technical abilities were not up to the tricky problems of the thriller with its "now you see it and now you don't" and its careful management of off-stage characters. Perhaps descriptive details began to proliferate uncontrollably in his mind. In any case, he wrote the stories he could with intense care and utter self-absorption. What more can one ask?



IRA A. COLE AND HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT: A BRIEF FRIENDSHIP

BY R. ALAIN EVERTS

In the fateful year 1914, the late Amateur Press enthusiast, Eddie Daas recruited his most celebrated (both within and without Amateur Journalism) and most extraordinary amateur author and budding man of letters, the 23 year old Howard Phillips Lovecraft.

Although Howard did not start to contribute regularly and did not commence the editing of his own journal THE CONSERVATIVE until the following year, HPL did begin his life-long correspondence with several Amateurs who did remain his close friends for many years - first, Rheinhard Kleiner (1892-1949) of Brooklyn, who in turn introduced HPL via correspondence to Maurice Winter Moe (1882-1940), then a teacher in Wisconsin, and who in turn introduced HPL to a former cowboy and uneducated plainsman, the man HPL described as "a strange and brilliant character - an utterly illiterate ranchman and ex-cowboy of Western Kansas who possesses a streak of brilliant poetic genius."

This strange individual was Ira A. Cole, the first in a long line of unsung poets that the lucubrious Lovecraft was to patronize - through teaching them grammar, enlarging their vocabulary and revising their poetic phrases. However, Ira A. Cole was the most amazing and most excellent of these poets, and between the beginning of 1915 until late 1918, when Moe replaced the absent Cole with his genius protege, Alfred M. Galpin, Cole made up one-fourth of the first of several literary coteries so dear to HPL's heart - the famed KLEICOMOLO with its round-robin epistles.

Ira Albert Cole was born on the last day of August, 1883 in Rush County, Kansas, in a small one-roomed cabin. This period of the West was truly Wild and cowboys were very much in existence - indeed, Cole was born four years after Jesse James (whom his mother knew well) was killed, two years before the Gunfight at the O.K. Corral, and four years later, the infamous Doc Holliday died of T.B. in Colorado. From the Cole homestead, the young Ira recalls that he could not even see their closest neighbour - simply the vast and endless expanse of the beautiful plains that became so much a part of the young boy's poetic soul. Ira went rarely to school, perhaps only one or two months a year during winter. His first mentor was Nature, and for the small boy Nature was his whole world. At the age of four, his uncle taught him to herd the family cattle; and at age seven, Ira was herding the cattle by himself, astride a horse. At age 14, the large youth watched over the cattle by himself the whole year around. Since his childhood, Ira was precocious when it came to writing and making up stories, and while still quite young, he had composed a short adventure tale of three chapters entitled Trip Across the Tropics.

During his adolescence, Ira worked hard and often as a cowboy ranging the plains of the mid-West. He took a large herd of cattle from Kansas to Texas and about 1903, he purchased a farm at Bazine, Kansas. Two years later, he married a well-educated young girl of 16 from the East, named Myra Burnett. Ira and Myra Cole became very well-known in Ajay, both of them writers who contributed frequently, and both corresponded with Lovecraft. Myra was a poet, writer and a talented musician, and in order to find an outlet for their common interests, they had joined, about 1912, the Amateur Press Association. Ira became friendly with several Amateur writers, among them Prof. Moe who wrote to Howard Lovecraft about the talents of this plainsman and farmer.

Howard P. Lovecraft became Ira Cole's mentor and his maitre. He taught Cole how to write poetry correctly, and he sent Cole many books on poetry and English grammar - books inscribed to Ira Cole, "Congenial Cole" - "The Plainsman." The friendship between the two began well, and the exchange of KLEICOMOLO letters proceeded at a furious pace. Cole wrote to Moe, Moe to Kleiner, Kleiner to HPL, and HPL to

Cole - then, Cole would keep the letter he had previously composed, add a new one, and shoot off three unread sections plus the recipient's old quarter to Moe.

HPL truly admired Cole's poetic genius and his facile ability to compose his poetry. Throughout most of Cole's poems, one can see the influence of HPL, who encouraged Cole to compose fantastic and imaginary pieces. Especially in the epic "Atlantis" the reader can see clearly that the style and the archaic vocabulary belong to Howard. Howard liked not only the phantasy pieces "The Gnome's Wedding" and "A Dream of the Golden Age" (which appeared in the second issue of HPL's own journal THE CONSERVATIVE in July, 1915), but also admired Cole's poems "To Burns", "To Shakespeare" and also his praise "To Lord Byron."

However, in late 1918, Cole had to leave Kansas for Colorado, and he broke off his relations with the literary circle. Lovecraft reported in a letter to the young Frank Belknap Long that Cole's "imagination was the most weird and active I have ever seen in any human being. But in the end that very streak of overdeveloped imagination and emotionalism was his aesthetic undoing. Worked upon by a hectic and freakish 'Pentacostal' revivalist, he 'got religion' and became an absolutely impossible fanatic in his eccentric sect. He even reached the hallucination stage - he fancied strange voices spoke gospel messages through his tongue - in languages he did not understand."

Ira had indeed become a Pentacostal preacher, God had touched him, and he did indeed speak in tongues - but HPL did not know the whole story, for Cole was certainly not a fanatic, impossible or otherwise. From time to time, Cole and Lovecraft did exchange letters, but for the most part, Cole lost a great part of his interest in creating, and found that his true work lay with the Lord. In 1921, another Amateur Journalist, and correspondent of Lovecraft, the Reverend Eugene Basil Kuntz (1865-1944), paid a visit, at the behest of Howard, to one of the religious meetings presided over by Cole. No doubt the staid and orthodox German-born Kuntz was horrified and outraged by the tent gathering and the xenoglossia of the participants, and forthwith reported the worst to Lovecraft - who judged Cole an "impossible fanatic" and ceased corresponding with him completely. To the young Belknap Long the following year, HPL stated that Cole was "quite dead to Amateur Journalism - but what a meteor he was in his heyday." Sad to say, HPL never did know exactly what a brilliant meteor Cole had become. For since the end of their friendship, Cole has written eleven novels (by dictating them and having them typed out professionally) all of which are yet unpublished save one - IBE OF ATLAN (1948), and about 50 further poems that show still the hand of the master.

The following long poem, "Atlantis", revised and dedicated to the memory of HPL at my request when I visited Cole by chance on the very day of his 85th birthday, he had originally composed as a praise for his friend Howard. Cole composed it in 1918, but he never showed it to Lovecraft and it was remained unpublished for over half a century:

-: ATLANTIS :-

- Dedicated to Howard Phillips Lovecraft -

To one who sits by broad Atlantic's shore,
E'er weaving wondrous songs of ancient lore,
And seeing each morn with Nature-loving eyes
Some god upon the sun kissed billows rise,
To Lovecraft, gentlest of the poet train,
My feeble Muse would wake this falt'ring strain.
Son of the Muse didst ever hear men tell
Of a city olden buried neath the swell
Of that broad ocean rolling evermore
In endless billows by thy chamber door?
Didst ever hear some sage, or read some tale,
That did the beauty of that land bewail
In song or rhymed verse, or e'en the lay
Of some lone bard who sad at close of day,

With nought but his sweet lute for recompense
 In plaintive accents, loit'ring by the fence
 That bounds the Baron's palatial domain,
 To gain an evening's shelter sing the strain.
 Or slumb'ring soft beneath the pallid ray
 Of some far wand'ring star whose distant way
 Through heaven's deepning void, ere breaks the dawn,
 Leads thy fair soul in tranquil dreaming on
 As down some living aisle of golden light,
 To feel the rustle of the winged flight
 Of radiant dreams, creatures of thine own
 Imaginings from Fancy's garden flown,
 That singing to the music of thy soul
 Didst lead thee forth to that enlightning goal
 Whence flows all wisdom and all pulsing song -
 The throne Memnosyne's nymphs have graced so long.
 To list the plaintive melody thy heart
 In rapturous unison with thy art
 Didst sing, and singing to thy vision drew
 Fair pictures in the far off mystic blue,
 Wherever ocean's soft and pursed lips,
 The maiden love of low arched heaven sips.
 And waking then hast to thy window flown
 To make that blissful dreaming all thy own,
 Else in the too real dawning of the day
 Thy soul's bright myth might wing itself away?
 And hast thou loitered long thy casement by,
 In sorrow, but to see those shadows fly
 As from the mighty flood of ocean rose,
 In fiery splendor, where the planet bows
 To meet the ether kiss of radiant space
 The god of day? And hast thou hid thy face
 Like other bards, and wept to see thy dream
 Fade vanishing adown the golden stream
 Where flows the ceaseless shadows of the years,
 Forever lost as are so many tears,
 And mourned that that fair land a myth should be
 Whose very shade escaped by waking thee?
 Oh my beloved friend in thy pure heart
 Let not base envy at my singing start,
 If then my rhyming seemeth to be fair,
 For I would sing a rhyme that few would dare
 The virgin whiteness of a page to mar
 By its recording. But we mortals are
 By Nature's wondrous spirit so devised
 That each one by the other is despised
 Unless by happy chance our actions prove
 The gods would lift us from the common groove;
 And then our fellows of a kindred mind
 Full oft with our frail efforts error find,
 And finding, in a fit of fiendish glee,
 Expose our weakness to the whole country.
 But thou dost know, my learned and gifted friend,
 No Muse of mine with thine might well contend.
 My only claim herein to greatness lies -
 The gods did not my humble birth despise -
 But granted me a vision fair to see
 Which I in turn will humbly show to thee,
 If thou wilt deign my feeble song to bless,
 By no comparison in loveliness
 With that which thy pure soul has sung so long.
 I am persuaded thou thy Muse wouldst wrong
 In such a vain attempt, and not to try
 But just to let its rustic beauty lie,
 If then indeed there aught of beauty be,
 Would seem the fairer course to thou and me.
 Full oft in youth's young day thou hast I ween
 Been tempted by the gay and glit'ring sheen
 Of bright hallucinations, subtly wrought
 By thy too eager inspiration. Naught
 Thy sober reason said had any weight,
 And all day long in blissful dreams thou sate,
 In doubt thy wondrous heritage to test
 Yet longing that sweet offering to wrest
 From the purloining hand of harpy Fate,
 Ere Time's unalterable voice relate
 Thy soul's demise. And yet the sinking sun
 Hast found thy self-appointed task undone,
 Because thy doubting intellect did drag
 From Custom's crucible so much of slag
 Thou could'st not then fair Nature's course pursue
 And follow her sweet shades the morning through,

But e'en must to Convention's dismal Baal
 Make sacrifice of all those beings frail
 Your poet's soul in dreams was parent too,
 Although too late such course you well might rue.
 I, too, oh bard, have felt the blighting curse
 Of those false precepts on my humble verse.
 Full oft when my loosed soul in song would rise
 Convention's spectre fierce the lash applies,
 And grov'ling, down my wounded Muse doth sink
 The cup of degradation vile to drink.
 For in this age the humblest bard must sing
 To her accompaniment or the sting
 Of public ridicule his lay will doom,
 And voiceless through the deep and fetid gloom
 Of yet un-numbered years it e'en must go
 Adown the shores of time ere it may know
 The full sweet echo of its vibrant voice.
 But still to me it seems the better choice
 When I to thee would sing to tune my lute
 With that soft chord which has so long been mute,
 And singing wake the plaintive melody
 Contemporaneous bards may well decry.
 For what the profit, friend, were I to gain
 The world's loud praise and cause thy spirit pain?
 Then let the world today no notice take
 While at the fount of song our thirst we slake.
 For yet in some fair mossy mountain glen
 When Time hath swept aside the race of men
 Whose craven voices now the Muse assail
 Shall some fair minstrel our lot bewail
 To sobbing multitudes; then shall we know
 The rapture that the laurel's fragrant bow
 To ancient bards imparted, and our ghosts
 From far off western isles, with happy hosts
 Of Nature's disembodied spirit folk
 On that fair throng a blessing shall invoke...
 But I would sing, oh friend, not of our verse
 Nor yet of that base crowd with thoughts adverse
 To all of beauty that therein doth lie,
 But let me rather wake in prophesy
 Great thoughts, the fruit of my much dreaming, so
 Should generations yet unborn but know
 The secret of their birth, a pathway bright
 From hidden things, shall lead them to the light
 Of that eternal and unending morn
 Whose matins yet doth linger in the horn
 Futurity's snail-creeping gods stand guard
 Above. The cloud's of morning softly barred
 The eastern heaven's rosy-lighted main,
 The breath of summer toying with the vane
 But lightly stirred their folds. Behind the wave
 Of ocean's waste their fairy pennons gave,
 To one who lingered on the pebbly shore,
 Bright visions and the happy days of yore,
 Ere yet the seed of avarice had grown
 From Adam's planting, and been earthward blown
 On which the sons of his doomed race should feed
 To their great sorrow; and the deadly weed
 Of discontent the Earth had over-run,
 Seemed yet in those bright shades begun.
 Long, long he loitered there and softly dreamed -
 So long the timid mew about him screamed,
 Nor guessed him thing of life but ever flew
 In shortning circles then, and nearer drew,
 And nearer; still his deep eye seaward gazed
 As though some mighty scene his senses dazed
 By its great beauty, and his raptured mind
 Was loath in other sights repose to find.
 Approaching then I heard him softly sigh
 As if some deep set sorrow burning low,
 Like hidden fires lost beneath the snow
 Of aged mountains, though well hid away,
 Yet on his soul's vast vitals still did prey.
 I paused before him there, and strangely cowed
 By his wild god-like beauty, humbly bowed
 And questioned what the grief might be so strange
 In that fair picture thus to disarrange
 One's inner feeling. Slow his sad eye turned,
 As if to hide the pain that in him burned.
 "Friend!" All the morning stillness wildly broke
 To palpitating music as he spoke.
 "Wouldst thou behold a wonder, look afar

Where yon unrisen sun's bright ringlets are,
And tell me what thou seest." Quick I looked.
So beautiful the scene my spirit brooked
In exclamation no delaying, and
In exultation wild, I raised my hand
From its bright radiance my face to shield
While backward my dazed being slowly reeled,
As if unable to behold the sight
That rose in wondrous beauty to delight
The vision. Far, where Ocean's mighty flood
In white-capped waves against pale heaven stood,
There rose, from out the lap of morning wide,
In mighty volume, rolling o'er the tide
To meet the fleeting shadows of the dawn,
A pageant grand of wondrous cloud shapes, drawn
By plunging creatures of the rolling deep -
A goblin rout such as cometh in our sleep
From out the mystic land of phantasy -
When Shades that guard our too deep sleeping flee,
But clothed in so bright panoply I ween
By mortal eye no fairer sight was seen.
Awe struck, I stood my mystic comrade by
And watched the shining vapors drawing nigh
Nor sensed the slightest thought of craven fear,
But deep within my heart a welling cheer
As one who drinketh deep of aged wine
Which long in some old castle's vaulted mine
Hath lain, to steal from graybeard Time away
That soft delight 'gainst which the pious pray,
Flowed pulsing forth, and starting in wild song
I plunged into the flood to meet the throng
And plunging felt not Ocean's briny kiss
But upward borne my spirit seemed in bliss
To greet the Neride train, whose foremost car,
Like some old monarch's chariot of war,
With foaming dolphin steeds had now drawn near.
We may not measure life by hour or year,
Oh friend, with any actuality,
For Time is but a shade that seems to be
And not the vibrant force we reckon it.
Eternity will roll when time has quit
And yet of life we shall not then have proved
By its accomplishments it e'er had moved
A sovereign thing endowed with liberty
Through that dim shadow of infinity.
We sleep and what of time! If we dream not
I am persuaded it has moved no jot.
Insensate time! And dost thou ever sleep?
Oh fie! And where wast thou when I did leap
To meet the vanguard of that sea-born dream?
Perchance in thy slow-flowing turbid stream,
By ever changing cycles slowly made,
Some interstice my soul's ambitious shade
Engulfed, and while thy ceaseless flood moved on,
With that fair spirit train into the dawn
Of vast futurity its shadow rode.
Albeit, Time, today I feel thy goad
Of vanished years, thou canst not me condemn
For life beyond the tide we mortals stem
To gain the pensive pleasures of thy span
Of misery laden hours. Woe waits the man
Whose life bereft of dreams doth madly plunge
To meet oblivion in thy deep sponge,
Whose fatal pores drink ever up the tide
Of senseless souls, who seek life's barque to guide
By thy unreal realities. Not so
That daring adventurer who would go,
As I, between thy carnalized links
To that fair shore whose heaven born beauty shrinks
To nothingness the fading fanes of thine.
The lowly Algae its long tendrils twine
In wild luxuriance around a stone
Where far Sargasso's tepid billows groan,
The eerie gull from crag to crag doth cry
Or o'er the white-capped waves in millions fly;
The slimy shrimp, the graceful fur-clad seal,
Or e'en the fabled braken softly steal
From out the humid wastes that guard it round,
And e'er on its moss-grown slopes are found
Unnumbered bones, old ocean's ghastly gift,
Spoil of wrecked mariners whose spirits drift
From care of their base bodies free

To far off shores of fair eternity.
'Twas there in that wild lonely sea-girt spot
When forth from ocean's bosom upward shot
The god of day, and clutching fast the reins
Of his wild steeds, across fair heaven's plains
His daily race began, alone I stood.
Alone and recking not the wind's wild mood,
But wrapped in golden mists from ocean's foam
That ever upward toward the heavens clome,
I looked afar the gruesome landscape o'er
In vain the Neride train to see once more.
But like the stars of morning they had flown
And only Ocean's ceaseless far flung drone
Recalled the sweetness of that heaven-born song
With which the gorgeous pageant moved along.
Like one who wanders fitfully in sleep,
I turned from that dull shore unto the steep
Of craggy low hung hills and pausing there
Beside a sea-born eagle's loathsome lair
Gan ponder on the inconsistencies
Of life. Already morning's shadow flees
Ere yet the day his matins have begun,
And noonday's panting stretch of race is run
While yet the grass with glistening dew is young,
Mid-afternoon with languid tone is rung
By drowsy vesper bell, and night's deep shade
Falls softly o'er the soul but scarcely strayed
As yet from Life's glittering threshold gay,
Then darkness settles down and ends the day.
And ends the day! Ah friend, and there's the rub,
Dost ken that splendid moth was once a grub
That deemed his life complete and wove his tomb
In morning's hour and faint into the gloom
Of seeming death retired, not knowing then
In summer's sunshine he would reign again?
I wondered not the mist-born train had gone,
I asked not for my comrade of the dawn,
I only mused and musing seemed to hear
Soft bells, as when the dying of the year
Is tolled from ancient ice-encumbered tower;
Or when beneath some maiden's lovely bower
The raptured lover in a wealth of lays
To her delighted ear his zither plays.
Then music sweet the languid air weighed down
And far the topmost peak's encrusted crown
In trembling light to my unquestioning gaze
Seemed wrapped. And forth from out that mystic blaze
There came, in snowy garments clad, a form
Of dazzling beauty and a mighty storm
Of lightnings, seemed to cleave a shining path
Adown the rugged rocks, and to a bath
Neath Ocean's briny billows led the way.
Then hissing loud they plunged their crimson ray
Far, far beneath the seething foam, where she,
So like some fabled goddess, beckoned me.
And nothing doubting then I downward went,
As some bold voyager on conquest bent,
To view the wonders of that hidden world
By ancient chaos to those regions hurled
Whence breaks eternally old ocean's pulse
O'er boundless fields of waving kelp and dulse.
Oh, there be hills that never mortal trod,
And vales alone the blessed abode of God
And there be rivers by whose winding stream
The happy dead in sweet communion dream,
And radiant cities all unbuilt by hand
On fair far plains of heaven's border land -
But there is only one Atlantis. Friend,
Through the pellucid waves with me descend
And thou shalt view the wonders that to me
Seemed only good for poet souls to sec....

COLIN WILSON

(Ed. Note: Lovecraft fans know this excellent and prolific British author by his *THE MIND PARASITES* (Arkham House 1967) and *THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE* (Crown 1971) and some may (and more should) be familiar with his non-HPL material. Mr. Wilson was kind enough to send us the manuscript for his new book *ORDER OF ASSASSINS* which will be appearing in the near future. It is an intriguing final volume of his "murder trilogy", this one concentrating on recent mass murderers and developing theories and realizing truths on every page. Certain parts related to HPL and consequently we reproduce below portions of:

ORDER OF ASSASSINS

Readers who admire the macabre writings of H.P. Lovecraft may be reminded ...of a passage in his best known story, *The Call of Cthulhu*. Cthulhu is chief of the "ancient old ones", monstrous creatures who once inhabited the earth, but who destroyed their civilisation through the practise of black magic; Cthulhu lies in a trance at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, but the time for his return is approaching, and artists all over the world have horrifying dreams of great alien cities. And a professor who suspects what is going on has collected press cuttings that reveal the eruption of strange psychic influences:

"Here was a nocturnal suicide in London, where a lone sleeper had leaped from a window after a shocking cry. Here likewise a rambling letter to the editor of a paper in South America, where a fanatic deduces a dire future from visions he has seen. A dispatch from California describes a theosophist colony as donning white robes en masse for some 'glorious fulfillment' which never arrives, whilst items from India speak guardedly of serious native unrest toward the end of March. Voodoo orgies multiply in Haiti, and African outposts report ominous mutterings. American officers in the Philippines find certain tribes bothersome about this time, and New York policemen are mobbed by hysterical Levantines on the night of March 22-23. The west of Ireland, too, is full of wild rumour and legendry, and a fantastic painter na-



med Ardois-Bonnot hangs a blasphemous *Dream Landscape* in the Paris spring salon of 1926. And so numerous are the recorded troubles in insane asylums that only a miracle can have stopped the medical fraternity from noting strange parallelisms." One feels that if this had been written in 1971 instead of 1928, Lovecraft might have added the Manson murders, the killing of the Otha family, Dean Baker's cannibalism, the Zodiac killer.

The literary parallel is more significant than it appears on the surface. Lovecraft's work is far more

than grotesque escapism. When he talks about a "blasphemous" dream landscape, he does not mean that it contains indecent mockery of the Christian religion, but something horrible, frightening, nauseating, something more like those fungus-like creatures in the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch. His work is romanticism gone sour and bitter; instead of turning away, like Shelley and Keats, to visionary dream-worlds, he creates nightmares that help to relieve his loathing of modern western civilisation. He is fond of the word "loathing", with its suggestion of revulsion from something slimey and slug-like. He writes in one letter of "loathsome Asiatic hordes who trail their dirty carcasses over streets where white men once moved", and in another of his "mad physical loathing" of the semitic types who jam the New York subway, and says that he has often felt capable of murdering a few of them. The feel is reminiscent of certain passages about Jews in MEIN KAMPF. But it would be a mistake to label Lovecraft - or Hitler - a cranky racialist. The hatred is curdled romanticism, a frustrated appetite for beauty. (In the case of Hitler, the anti-semitism originated in Vienna in the years when he was an unsuccessful young artist living in doss houses.) It is "love showing its roots in deepest hell" again. ...Nazism must be seen as an idealistic revolt against the aspects of the modern world that Lovecraft also hated: the materialism and cultural debasement. Lovecraft's "loathing" expressed itself in visions of a remote, nightmarish past that can still make incursions into our modern world; Hitler's, in Buchenwald and Belsen. Hitler once remarked (to Hermann Rauschnig) that although he did not greatly enjoy Goethe, he had to admire him for his line: "In the beginning was action." "To desire and act not breeds a pestilence" said William Blake, expressing the same idea. Hitler desired and acted; Lovecraft desired and acted not. But once we understand the underlying spirit of his writing, with its "blasphemous" horrors and monstrosities, we also understand something important about Norman John Collins and the Zodiac killer and Charles Manson and Ian Brady. The basic spirit of Lovecraft's writing is the basic spirit of Sade's. There is a desire to shock, to shake his fist in the face of modern civilisation. And the use of horror is central to his aim. In fact, as I have pointed out elsewhere, many of Lovecraft's stories could be regarded as science fiction rather than horror stories. Great underground cities built a million years ago, creatures from outer space; these themes are not necessarily horrifying. Lovecraft preferred to treat them in the context of horror because the horror story expresses aggressions, and science fiction doesn't. In a story called The Unnamable, the narrator, a writer of horror stories, mentions that one of his stories had appeared in a magazine in 1922, but that many shops "took the magazine off their stands at the complaints of silly milksops". In fact, something of the sort happened, in 1924; but the story that caused the furore was not by Lovecraft, but by C.M. Eddy, and The Loved Dead caused WEIRD TALES to be attacked for obscenity rather than frightening the milksops. . . .

Lovecraft himself was too much a puritan ever to allow a sexual element to intrude into his stories. Perhaps the nearest he comes to it is a story called The Picture in the House, which describes an old man who has become increasingly fascinated by a book on cannibalism, full of gruesome pictures. "That feller bein' chopped up gives me a tickle every time I look at 'im - I hev ta keep lookin' at 'im - see whar the butcher cut off his feet?" Lovecraft actually uses the word "perversion" to describe the old man's obsession. When drops of blood begin to fall on the book the narrator notices a red stain spreading across the ceiling...

Nearly four decades after his death (1937) Lovecraft's work is enjoying an unexpected revival; like Borges (a writer to whom he is closely related in spirit) he has become a cult among the young. Paperbacks of his weird tales can be found on every seaside bookstall. There is even a pop group that calls itself "H. P. Lovecraft" by way of homage. What

makes the appeal is not the gothic machinery of the horror tale; otherwise there would be a similar revival of all those old writers of WEIRD TALES - Wm. Hope Hodgson, Robert W. Chambers, Zealia Bishop, Clark Ashton Smith. It is the underlying spirit of Lovecraft, the revolt against civilisation, the feeling that the material success by which the modern world justifies itself is the shallowest of all standards, that has made him a cult. Lovecraft was not a democrat; like Nietzsche, he felt that democracy is the rise of botchers and bunglers and mediocrities against the superior type of man. He was not a logical philosopher; he did not ask himself what he would like to put in its place; he only knew that he hated the impersonal rush and hurry of the modern city, and all the standards and values of "industrial man".

....In 1924 he wrote to Edwin Baird: "My daily life is a sort of contemptuous lethargy, devoid alike of virtues or vices...I am not of the world, but an amused and sometimes disgusted spectator to it. I detest the human race and its pretences and swinishnesses - to me life is a fine art, and although I believe the universe is an automatic meaningless chaos devoid of ultimate values or distinctions of right and wrong, I consider it most artistic to take into account the emotional heritage of our civilisation and follow the patterns which produce the least pain to delicate sensibilities..." But in another letter, written at about the same time, he says: "Books are very feeble things. Neither you nor I, for all the classics we have read, has even a hundredth of the joy of Greece and Rome which comes to the millionaire whose car and yacht enable him to linger indefinitely under Mediterranean skies and drink in through all five senses the glory which we are never likely to know save through the dense filter of the visual imagination."

It is important to ask: why does he feel so alienated? Is it his own fault, or the fault of the society itself? Lovecraft felt that there is something rotten about the whole trend of modern civilisation, and that it is this that forces people like himself into the position of outsiders and rebels.

Things are no worse now than they were in Lovecraft's day, or, for that matter, in the days of the "dark satanic mills" of more than a century ago; on the contrary, they have improved. There is more freedom, more leisure, better education, more public subsidy of the arts. But the increased freedom has also increased the number of rebels and misfits. Blake, Nietzsche and Lovecraft were lone "outsiders" (one of Lovecraft's best stories is called The Outsider), solitary rebels in an alien society. As the population increases, and as illiteracy becomes the exception rather than the rule, more and more people come to share their view. Inevitably, it finds its way into action.



CORBEN

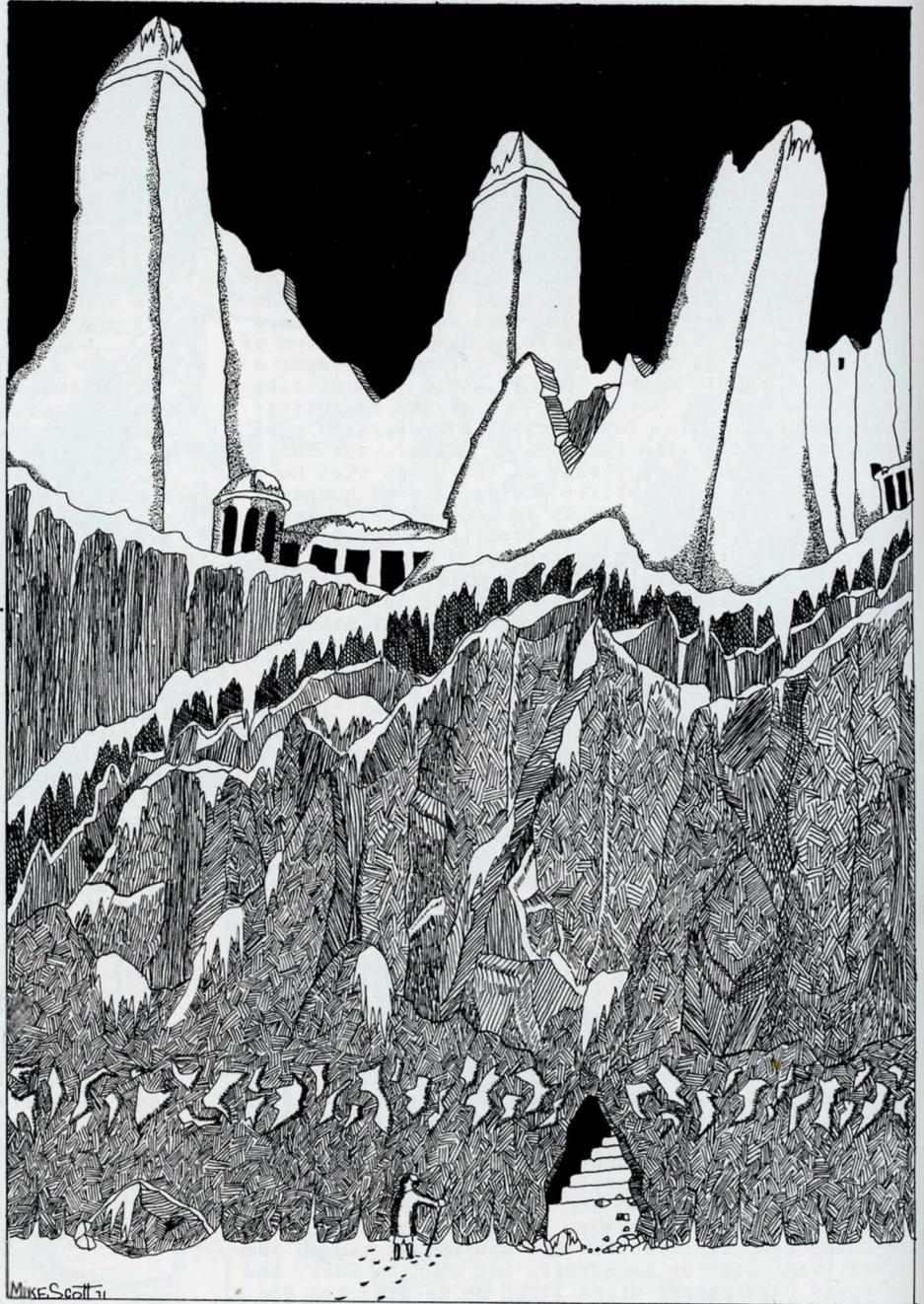
The year was nineteen thirty-three and the country was in the throes of a depression. In a small Pennsylvania town, a young man, just out of high school, had become bitten with the publishing bug. His name was Bill Crawford - William L., in full.

Crawford's first project was a fantasy magazine. The trials and tribulations involved in its launching have no bearing on this article. However, its publication brought Crawford into close association with a number of fantasy and science fiction writers - via the U.S. mail. One of these was H. P. Lovecraft. Despite the fact that Crawford was not particularly interested in the weird tale, Lovecraft became a regular correspondent. During the course of their letter writing, Crawford mentioned his hopes of eventually being able to publish a line of hard-backed books. From this it was only a hop, skip and agony to the publication of THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH.

As with everything else Crawford did at this time, there was very little money available for the project, so Crawford did most of the work himself. However, the linotyping for the book was done in a newspaper plant in a neighboring town. (In 1935 one could get an entire galley of type set for little more than the present cost of one line!) The paper was purchased from Sabin Robbins Paper Co. in Philadelphia and the actual printing was done by Crawford on a ten by fifteen inch press. (Quite an improvement over his first 7" x 11" hand press however). No book binders were available in the small town and Crawford knew of none elsewhere. A friend who worked for a local newspaper plant showed him a few of the tricks of binding a hard-cover book. Presumably, under the circumstances, that binding was adequate, but it has always been something Crawford disliked, since he had hoped that his books would be professional looking.

He and HPL had discussed the publication of other books; in fact, Crawford had wished to start the series with AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS but because Lovecraft felt that THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH was a more literary effort, he held out for the Innsmouth novel first with the other story to follow.

After SHADOW one other book was published by young Crawford. It was not fantasy but something Crawford felt would make money, probably because he was intrigued personally by the subject. It laid a big fat egg, because after it was printed Crawford did not know what to do with it. SHADOW did sell perhaps a hundred or so copies. Of the odd four hundred copies printed, about half were left in the attic of Crawford's home when he left there shortly afterward. Crawford eventually ended up in California and never returned to Pennsylvania. Consequently, all of the unbound sheets of HPL's book and all the many letters he had received from Lovecraft,



Clark Ashton Smith and August Derleth about the book and many other things have been forever lost.

Crawford is presently getting back into fantasy book publishing with Emil Petaja's STARDRIFT and Henry M. Eichner's ATLANTIC CHRONICLES. He has also scheduled Andre Norton's GARDEN OF THE ETERNAL and Petaja's GLORY STONE. In addition, he is struggling with the publication of WITCHCRAFT & SORCERY - a magazine he had hoped would become a successor to WERD TALES.

(Ed. Note: Mr. Crawford's company is Fantasy Publishing Company, Inc., 1855 West Main Street, Alhambra, Calif. 91801. Send a self-addressed stamped envelope for a listing of available publications in the fantasy and science fiction fields. They are most reasonably priced.)

BIOGRAPHIC NOTES ON LOVECRAFT

By George T. Wetzel

About March, 1958 I visited Providence, R.I. to do Lovecraft research in the John Hay Collection of Brown University and to view that part of the city connected with his life and writings. In the library at Brown University I perused many Lovecraft manuscript items, including a number of interesting letters which chronologically should be in both SELECTED LETTERS I and II but are not, and I read also the unpublished thesis by James Warren Thomas (1950) on Lovecraft which I understood Derleth refused to allow to be printed (I myself having even asked for its use in my then Lovecraft Collectors Library). This thesis has some false conclusions (e.g., that HPL sensitively concealed the fact he wore glasses; but I had previously viewed in some amateur press publications several photos of him wearing them in the 19-20s which I gave Derleth who used one of them in THE SHUTTERED ROOM).

But the Thomas thesis was invaluable as it quoted from ms letters of HPL in the Library, giving among other things a 1924 letter's contents in which HPL disclosed that the original of the Shunned House was the Babbit house on Benefit Street. That very day I engaged in some fast detective work to establish the whereabouts of the real Shunned House. (I give fragmentary bits of sleuthing from some recently discovered notes, having once written up a complete account for Derleth which he never returned or published though he promised to in THE SHUTTERED ROOM.)

Apparently I checked a reference that the "Babbit" house was listed in a local Providence Historical Society's files and that Babbitt had been a Civil War officer. I next found a note "1890 Providence City Directory" and following it "#135 Benefit Street."

The next day I accompanied Miss Dorothy Walters, an elderly lady I corresponded with who knew HPL personally; and she showed me many scenes connected with him. When I told her I thought #135 Benefit Street was the real, original "Shunned House", she added it was called by local antiquarians as the "Stephen Harris" house. In Lovecraft's story he develops a lengthy, almost tedious geneology of the occupants of that house, including a Harris family who were the first tenants and victims. Miss Walters also told me that the present day tenant, Mrs. Sara Bullock, "had a lot of French books in the house." Compare this to the story wherein some of the victims shouted French in their delirium and the story's vampire had been a Frenchman.

Across the street from #135 was St. John's graveyard from which vantage point I photographed the "Shunned House" (which picture appears in THE SHUTTERED ROOM, but minus any credit to me.)

As we walked there, Miss Walters added that W. Paul Cook once told her that where we stood - St. John's Graveyard - was the site where Lovecraft scared some friends one evening by telling them a blood curdling ghost story. I looked at a tree growing out of a hillside tomb there and at once thought it was the inspiration, tomb, tree and incident, of The Unnamable. This photograph I also snapped which appeared in THE SHUTTERED ROOM sans credit.

Miss Walters then walked me to the Barnes St. home of Lovecraft and thence to his last home at #66 College Street. (I don't recall if we entered or not but I took an outside photograph which is in THE SHUTTERED ROOM.) The tenants who had just moved out of #66 told her of the marvelous sunsets they witnessed from what once was HPL's study window (one has only to read some of HPL's letters in SELECTED LETTERS to know of his preference for beautiful sunsets.)

She further remarked of an artist colony at #7 Thomas Street, the Fleur de Lys building, which she thought the source of The Music of Erich Zann. The original church of The Haunter of the Dark she was not familiar with but said that Mr. Eddy knew of it. A suggestion to visit HPL's grave at Swann Point cemetery I turned down due to lack of time.

On my way back to my YMCA room I passed Weybesset Street, and above me on the cornice of a building in the gothic style I spied several gargoylish figurines leaning over, watching me, which I snapped and sent to Derleth who never used it. These gargoyles reminded me of the line from The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath : "...a curious face peering over it as a gargoyle peers over a parapet of Notre Dame." This Providence antique which I felt inspired HPL was at #60 Weybesset Street, between Claverish and Foster Streets.

I forgot that when I first met Miss Walters that day at her rented room she told me a number of other things including: Miss Gamwell, Lovecraft's aunt who was once librarian of the Shapley collection, took her meals at a boarding house across from #66 College



St.; HPL took his own elsewhere. Miss Gamwell and HPL lived separate lives. She was robust, good humored, made conversation easily with others; sometimes she was out of patience with her two sisters in their overprotective attitude toward HPL.

She related that Miss Frances Leonard (a niece of HPL's mother) received from Mrs. Lovecraft when she was 10 years old - in 1917 - a doll that Lovecraft had played with as a child.

As I was to return to Baltimore the next day, I visited Dr. William Leet that evening. He explained that when he was called in to attend HPL medically he found the latter sitting in a tub of water which Lovecraft had discovered eased the pain of his stomach cancer.

Removed to the hospital, HPL spent his time writing which Dr. Leet assumed was notes for a story, having heard only that HPL was a "writer". Later Dr. Leet became aware that those notes were HPL's scientific observations on his symptoms. (Where are those notes today?)

Though Dr. Leet said HPL had a soft tenor voice which he characterized as "sweet", he quickly added that HPL was not "sissified" because the nurses all took to him quickly and would not have if he had been a "sissy". Samuel Loveman in "Lovecraft as a Conversationalist" in FRESCO, Spring, 1958, said of HPL, "The texture of his voice was uncomfortably high."

* * * * *

Edward Lucas White, author of LUNKUNDOO AND OTHER STORIES, once said most of his stories were lifted from migraine-induced nightmares. To my knowledge, no one has ever advanced the idea that Lovecraft's fantasies may have been due also to migraine. I read in SELECTED LETTERS I that in December, 1919 and May, 1920, Lovecraft had two nightmarish dreams and awoke with a terrible headache in both cases; one of these dreams became The Statement of Randolph Carter.

Typical migraine headaches awake the sufferer from a sound sleep; and in E.L. White's case also produced nightmares. Lovecraft did possess some of the characteristics of the migraine personality type: he was a perfectionist and above average in intelligence. Excessive sensitivity to external stimuli is another trait. Some migraine sufferers have an acute sense of smell. Lovecraft's sensitivity to cold is a possible trait where he is concerned. (In migraine attacks there is a drop in body temperature and a feeling of coldness or indisposition to cold.)

* * * * *

Lovecraft's writing habits have been touched upon by Derleth. I found some additional facts. John T. Dunn, acquainted with HPL in the amateur press association in Providence in the 1920s, wrote me in January of 1954 that Lovecraft "...told me that he would think of a piece to write and he would stay up to finish it even if it took until six in the morning. He had an income and he did not have to get up as we did to go to work. I could always tell when his letters were written - if they were typewritten, I knew they were done in the daytime; if they were handwritten, they were written at night. He did not wish to disturb others with his typing. ..."

Because of the subtleties in HPL's stories plus the fact that in many he hints and never fully reveals the central horror even at the end, I found it helpful in analysis to use the unusual procedure of reading backwards, paragraph by paragraph from the story's end. In a rather lengthy article on the mechanics of writing, Literary Composition, in the UNITED AMATEUR, January, 1920, by Lovecraft, the following brief quotation from him entirely justifies the above method of analysis used by me:

The end of a story must be stronger rather than weaker than the beginning, since it is the end which contains the denouement or culmination; and which will leave the strongest impression upon the reader. It would not be amiss for the novice to write the last paragraph of his story first, once a synopsis of the plot has been carefully prepared - as it always should be. In this way he will be able to concentrate his freshest mental vigour upon the most important part of his narrative; and if any changes be later found needful, they can be easily made.

* * * * *

The following anecdote by George Macauley, an old HPL friend, in And From Far Hills in his own AJ, O-WASH-TA-NONG (date?) after HPL's death, tells its own story. The paper cutter mentioned herein obviously had been sold by Crawford, the Pennsylvanian who printed the book, THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH:

Last spring we ordered a paper-cutter, to augment the Mayhew Press, from a Jackson, Michigan jobber in used printing equipment. After a long delay, letters and tracers notwithstanding, it arrived having come down from the Pennsylvanian hills, over a logging or some other slow time railroad to the Pennsylvania system, then to us. Our consternation was keen, when we found that all the bolts, and small parts were missing. More letters, more fuming, because work for the cutter was piling up, but it was not for a couple of weeks that the large box came with the missing parts.

We had seen them out, and the machine together, but it was Robie who discovered the reason for writing this, and the reason for taking away all our ruffled feelings about the vexacious delays caused. The small parts were packed in proof sheets of THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH and were corrected in those unmistakable hieroglyphics made only by the remarkable pen of Howard P. Lovecraft.

* * * * *

Did HPL really have a blind spot where music was concerned? In a letter written in November, 1930 he said so himself. On the other hand two letters I saw in the John Hay collection written by him in August, 1922 and September, 1925 appear to contradict this.

I communicated my discoveries to Alfred Galpin in 1958 who since wrote a memoir of his own views regarding this, telling of HPL's interest in a Chopin nocturne and Wagner's Act III prelude from Lohengrin, presumably in the early 1920s.

In that September, 1925 letter I read HPL had just seen and was overwhelmed by the film, "Siegfried" with its grandiose plot. To him the Wagnerian creations were the second greatest artistic monument to the Nordic race, the Gothic cathedral being the greatest. He added that the bass music in Das Rheingold might inspire a demonic tale.

Wagner did things on a grandiose scale; his music is massive, organ-like chords, his required orchestra is gigantic; the Ring Operas are based on the tremendous Mythos of the whole Nordic region. Lovecraft's prose conceptions also tended toward a gran-

diost scale:e.g., The Call of Cthulhu is a record of world-wide phenomena and time-spinning; At the Mountains of Madness is spatially cosmic, galactic and across vigintillions of years.

My conclusions: it was the Wagnerian grandeur of style that attracted him. Instead of growth by music appreciation, HPL's interest atrophied.

* * * * *

In the UNITED AMATEUR for March, 1918 appeared a minute, unsigned biography, Lewis Theobald, Jr. (a Lovecraft alias). As it is of associational interest, an abridgement of it follows:

"...Mr. Theobald...is a scholar and poet of considerable attainments, and was born a little over 35 years ago in Blavelle, France, where his parents were living at the time. When Mr. Theobald was 10 years of age the family returned to England.... Mr. Theobald...claims an even closer connection with English letters...and says... the Lewis Theobald mentioned in Pope's "Dunciad" was his great-grandmother's uncle. Several years ago Mr. Theobald came to America and acted until quite recently as third assistant librarian of the Providence Public Library, where Mr. Lovecraft first made his acquaintance.

* * * * *

In the novel, At the Mountains of Madness, are repeated references to paintings of Central Asian mountains of N. Reerich. HPL often frequented the New York Museum, which museum (according to Richard Hare in ARTS AND ARTISTS OF RUSSIA) had over a thousand of Reerich's paintings, which Hare scathingly described as "a plethora of bare rocks, cardboard mountains and dreamlike clouds."

In this novel there is a "Stygian sunless sea that lurks at earth's bowels". One sees not only the influence of Poe's Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym but also Ms Found in a Bottle with its spectacle of Polar seas pouring through a hole in the Arctic into the bowels of the earth.

The novel itself has several unmistakable internal signs of not being a polished or finished draft. There is in the middle section an excessive repetition of certain dark words that might have been replaced with synonyms. The other flaw is the numerous references to Reerich's mountain landscapes which revision either would have eliminated or made more varied.

* * * * *

A large body of Lovecraft's articles, poetry and a number of his stories first appeared in old amateur press publications of the late 1900s and early 1920s without copyright. I personally saw this state of affairs as early as 1946 in various library collections, beside even now possessing a number myself of these uncopyrighted HPL items in AJs.

In addition, there are something like a dozen aliases Lovecraft had used to sign a number of these AJ items. Both points - the first, non-copyrighted appearance of his works (placing them in the public domain) and second, items reputedly his but under other names (aliases, if you will) - places the whole question of just who can legally lay claim to a part of Lovecraft's literary estate. In view of a number of occurrences over the years it is a question that might well be raised and settled from the viewpoint of the Lovecraft scholar.

* * * * *



C itadel of magic the Druids knew,
R ealm of darkness, black sinister vortex
O f unseen forces, evil and complex.
M enhirs, stained with red no rains can erase,
L ook on phantom scenes no years can efface -
E ldritch rites where some human sacrifice
C onjures monstrous demons - and somber vice
H olds sway once more beneath the spectral blue.

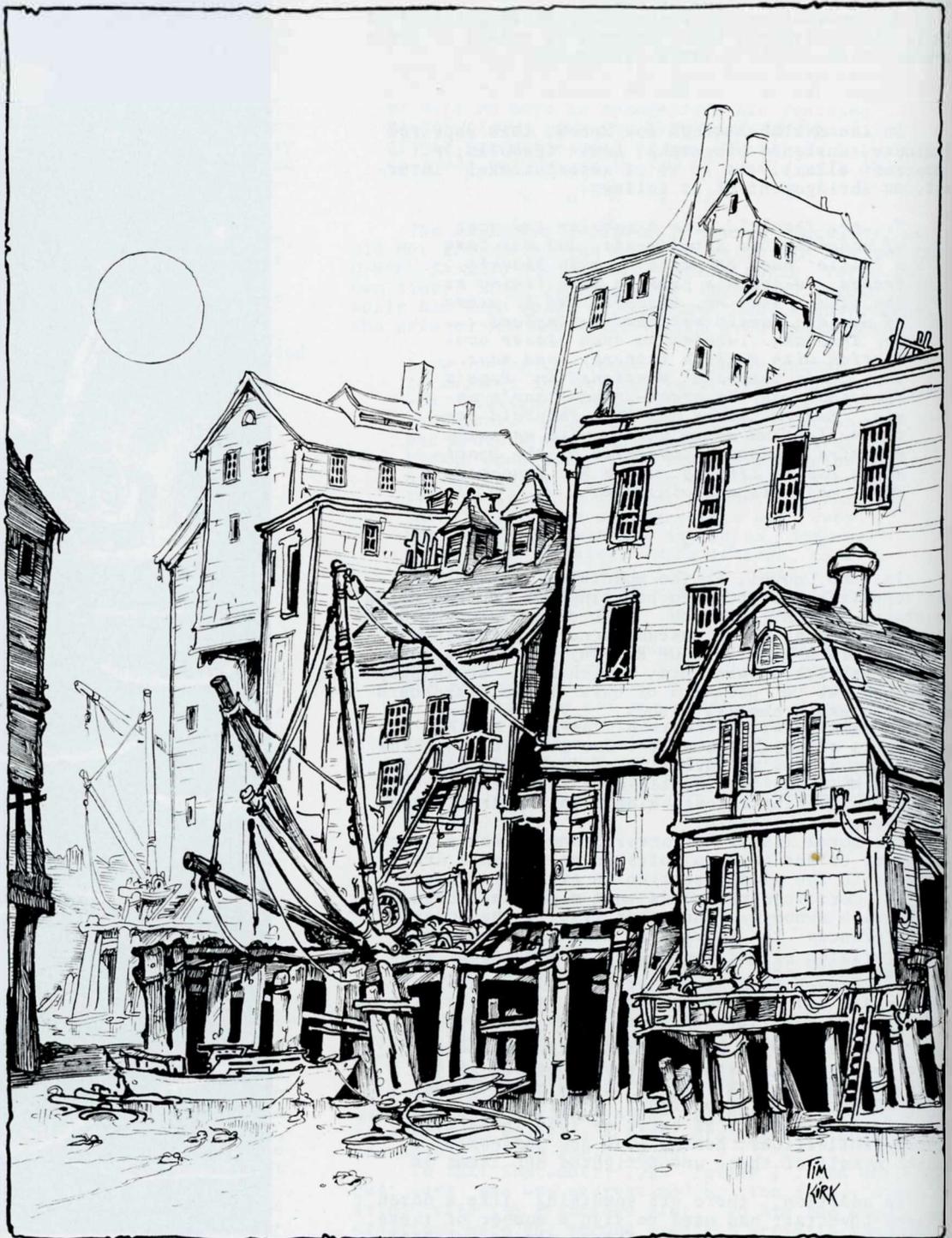
- Walter Shedlofsky

H.P. AND FILMS by J Vernon Shea

H.P. Lovecraft was not a film buff. In the first place, he could ill afford to attend many movies, although the prices were very cheap by today's standards; and he railed against the commercialism of films, with their artistic compromises and their studio-imposed and frequently illogical "happy endings." He made little mention of actors, although they give face, color and music to a scripter's abstractions. Almost always, whenever he saw a historical film, he could find errors in the architecture, costumes and other such details. Yet I noted from his letters that whenever he visited New York and Frank Belknap Long would "drag" him to a round of films, he could always find at least one to give a grudging praise.

For instance, although the Victorian era was a period he detested and he disliked the sentimentality of the Louisa M. Alcott novel, he thought the first filming of Little Women "surprisingly well done" and brilliantly acted by Katherine Hepburn. His all-time favorite film was Berkeley Square, to which he devoted a whole paragraph of praise, since he considered himself an Eighteenth Century gentleman entrapped in the uncongenial Twentieth Century. The film's suspension of natural laws delighted him, and he empathized thoroughly with Leslie Howard.

At the time, I frequently agreed with him that the films of the Thirties were bad. The studio moguls were then at the height of their power and obtusely would order directors and script writers to make changes detrimental to the artistic integrity of their films in order to insure their box-office success. Louis B. Mayer was always far happier with an Andy Hardy film than he was with a Red Badge of Courage or a Strange Interlude made against his better judgment. The evils of the star system were rampant (the classic case of miscasting was Clark Gable as Parnell), and an actor like Frank Fay who had made a great hit on Broadway in Harvey would find himself replaced in the film version by an actor like James Stewart with an assured box-office "name". Films with limited commercial appeal like John Ford's The Informer were rarely made. Both the Will Hays Office and the state board of censors scissored scenes absurdly. Even if



couples in films were supposed to be married, they had to occupy twin beds upon the screen. The use of four letter words was strictly taboo; it was not until 1939 that Clark Gable shocked movie audiences profoundly at the end of Gone With the Wind: "Did you hear what he said? He said *damn*."

Yet, paradoxically, the Thirties seem in retrospect to have been the decade of the cinema's greatest glory. Today, with all restrictions off and writers and directors given complete freedom to follow their artistic bents, they are as self-indulgent as

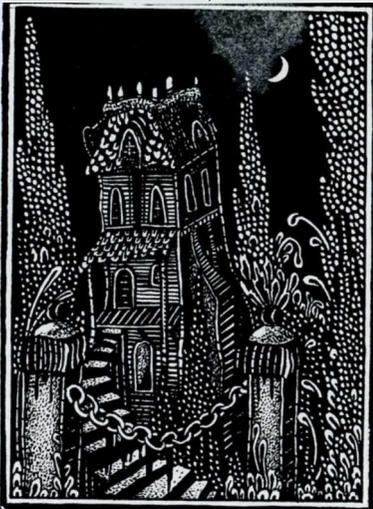
spoiled children and their resulting films are morasses of mediocrity. Great Puritan that HPL was, he would have been shocked and revolted by the explicit sex, the language, the themes, the sadism and sexual perversion of today's films. He would have barricaded himself behind the doors of 66 College Street and become a recluse in actuality.

None of HPL's stories was filmed during his lifetime. The producers were not about to use the tales of an obscure pulp writer when the greatest works of classical and modern literature were available. HPL, of course, could have used the money very nicely, although one wonders what he would have done had he been offered considerable money for the use of one of his tales by a producer he felt certain would botch it.

One suspects that he would have been less than happy with the film versions of his stories which have been produced so far. No one would expect Emerson Batdorff, the film critic of the Cleveland PLAIN DEALER, to know anything of HPL, yet he wrote recently that the film versions of Lovecraft's stories would not scare a child but that the stories themselves were utterly terrifying.

The first film version escaped the attention of most of HPL's fans. Who would have thought, without prior knowledge (which the advertisements, of course, didn't provide) that Die, Monster, Die! which appeared chiefly at drive-ins, was a filming of HPL's The Colour Out of Space? It turned out to be largely an abortion. The early scenes, although the setting had been shifted to England because the picture was filmed there, did provide some of the essential Lovecraftian atmosphere, albeit the late Nick Adams, the idol of the teenage set, was the antithesis of the Lovecraftian protagonist and Boris Karloff was then much too old to be very menacing but the later scenes were just routine science fiction, with Karloff becoming so highly radioactive that he left luminous fingerprints where he touched things. In these scenes the script seemed more like an adaptation of H. G. Wells' The Food of the Gods than any Lovecraftian work.

Poe's box-office appeal is certain; Lovecraft's uncertain, so the next filming of an HPL work again bore the un-Lovecraftian title: The Haunted Palace. The producer had Vincent Price read the Poe poem in the foreword, then he had to shift around for something filmable and came up with HPL's last novella, The Strange Case of Charles Dexter Ward. It was a mistake to hire Charles Beaumont to do the screenplay. Chuck was a good writer in his own right and he turned out several quite presentable film scripts, but in his letters to me he frequently proclaimed his dislike for HPL's stories - and his script for The Haunted Palace showed his antagonism. Charles Dexter Ward itself was perhaps the poorest work of HPL's last period, betraying his tiredness and illness, so that it would not



have been an easy task for even the greatest HPL aficionado to adapt. For box-office purposes Chuck had to bring in an un-Lovecraftian heroine and devise completely new dialogue. Great Cthulhu, when he is finally seen, is just an obscure swirl at the bottom of a pit. It amused me that in the film it seemed to take forever for the hero and heroine to descend to the subterranean depths of the palace, yet at the very end when the whole place was engulfed by flames, they managed to get out in under a couple of minutes.



The third "Lovecraft" film wasn't a Lovecraft film at all! The Shattered Room was allegedly a "collaboration" between HPL and August Derleth, but actually, of course, it was completely Derleth's work. Here again the early scenes were promising, and some fine actors, like Oliver Reed and Flora Robson, were around but the bulk of the novel - and all of the film - was strictly one of Aug's rehash jobs. Having a mad sister locked up in a shuttered room was derived from the Gothic novels like Jane Eyre.

I missed The Dunwich Horror (1970) which played just at drive-ins in my neighborhood, but from all accounts it was another botched job. It is quite possible that the radio version, in which the late Ronald Coleman starred, was a more acceptable treatment of HPL's famed tale. It is my understanding that the fans were disappointed because the monster did not appear in the film; but perhaps that was just as well, for to date every artist who has tried to follow faithfully HPL's description of the monster has come up with something pretty ludicrous. But one suspects that Dean Stockwell was much too "pretty" a boy to play a Whateley, even the more nearly human of the brothers.

There was a film several years ago whose title escapes me at the moment (Fritz Leiber was one of the actors) which had some distinctly Lovecraftian touches, especially in the ancient book which reminded one immediately of the NECRONOMICON. Perhaps the most Lovecraftian film I have seen to date was Let's Scare Jessica to Death (1971), although of course HPL had nothing to do with it. But the New England setting, the Bishop house, and the villagers seemed to have come straight out of HPL's pages. The title was a misnomer;

not only was there no conspiracy to scare Jessica to death, but Jessica herself was still alive at the end of the film (the only one who was). The film was done quite subtly; although there were eerie ghostly moments early in the film, the picture was more than half over before one realized what the theme was. The last third of the film was quite chilling. At the very end there was a suggestion that, just as in The Turn of the Screw, all that had happened in the film had happened just in the heroine's mind.

It is entertaining mentally to become a producer and think about filming other HPL stories. One thinks immediately of an omnibus version of some of his related tales. Perhaps, for a framework, it might be necessary to bring in HPL himself: show him at his desk writing one of them, or looking out the window and hearing the "Music of Erich Zann" on the soundtrack or tossing restlessly in his sleep while dreaming up one of his tales (a number of them, like The Statement of Randolph Carter, had their genesis in dreams). It would not be difficult to find someone to play Lovecraft, for there are a number of HPL lookalikes: the chess champion Bobby Fischer, who could pass for HPL in his younger days; Jason Robards, who could play HPL in one of his irascible moods; the comedian, Pat Paulsen, who could play HPL in an expansive mood; that excellent Swedish actor Max von Sydow (probably the best choice); and even Walter Hille, the retired chairman of the board of a Cleveland department store, who looks much as HPL might have looked if he were still alive today.

One thinks of possibly filming the Randolph Carter quartet. The Dunsanian tale, The Silver Key, perhaps wouldn't lend itself readily to filming, but The Statement of Randolph Carter and especially The Outsider seem "naturals" for the screen. The Outsider was a kind of sequel to The Statement of Randolph Carter, for presumably the ghoul which spoke up the tube to Carter was the same one as the protagonist of The Outsider. Rather obviously, if The Outsider were to be filmed the subjective camera would have to be used, with the protagonist not shown until he views himself in the mirror at the end. I had thought previously that some actor with a gaunt face, like Jack Palance or Richard Widmark, should be made up to appear as the Outsider; but by all rights it should be someone who looks like HPL, for HPL, if only subconsciously, pictured himself as the outcast from society, as he was to do again in the last chapter of The Shadow Over Innsmouth. While the idea of The Outsider derives fairly obviously from Poe's The Masque of the Red Death - a suggestion further enhanced by HPL's patent aping of Poe's style - the story emerges as far more than just an imitation. HPL dismissed his story as "mechanical" but it remains perhaps the most popular of all his works, so that when Derleth and Wandrei put together the first of the HPL collections through Arkham House, they called it, appropriately, THE OUTSIDER AND OTHERS.

There remain, of course, numerous other possibilities for Lovecraft films. I should like to see my friend and correspondent Robert Bloch do at least 1 HPL script; he is quite good at omnibus films, as witness his recent The House That Dripped Blood. Just who would be the ideal HPL director is a matter of conjecture. Fritz Lang is now too nearly blind to do much more directing, and Rouben Mamoulian, the director of the memorable version of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde that starred Frederic March, is probably too old and affluent to need bothering making any more films; but young Curt Harrington shows much promise at horror films, and Roman Polanski's Rosemary's Baby demonstrated he is quite adept at the genre. Roger Corman's work has been decidedly uneven, but his The Masque of the Red Death suggested that he might very well be the director for The Outsider. If one sets one's sights high, one might even look for Orson Welles as the director of at least one of HPL's tales, perhaps The Shadow Over Innsmouth, or for that craggy-faced superb actor, George C. Scott, to appear as one of the HPL protagonists. While HPL's literary output was not markedly large, it was considerably larger than that of Poe, who has been keeping the producers of horror films busy for years.

Late in 1937 a hopeful young artist sent four examples of his work to Virgil Finlay. Ivan Funderburgh typed the following letter to Finlay, who at the time was a rising star in the ranks of fantasy artists:

"I am a young artist struggling to get my work before the public. In a separate container I am sending you four examples of my art work. The scenes are from fantastic stories taken from various magazines. I would appreciate your criticism of them.

I am a farm boy sixteen years old. The only art lesson I have ever taken was a correspondence course in cartooning (Lovecraft made some mention about that sort of thing in 'Pickman's Model'). The only way that I have picked up what little I know about drawing is by studying the works of others, particularly yourself and Dore.

I can only say what so many others do, that I think you are the best artist of the weird in America today. I am an advocate of the old school of drawing which stands for realism both in composition and in rendering. On first thought it would seem that a fantastic subject could not be treated in a realistic vein, but you are able to, and thereby capture that elusive thing - true weirdness. I might add that I have a strong dislike for surrealism and for the decadent stuff that litters the cheap magazines. Your work is ideally suited for WEIRD TALES, which is in my opinion the highest class pulp on the stands.

I am a correspondent of Robert Bloch who seems to like my work a great deal. Please write and let me know what you think of my drawings."

Thirty-three years passed. On one of my visits to Finlay in 1970, he dug out a large, brown envelope containing the above letter and four drawings done by Mr. Funderburgh.

"I never wrote this boy," he admitted. "Why? Well, I was just a beginner myself then and I honestly didn't feel qualified to criticize his work." Finlay was 23 at the time and had been working as a professional for only two years.

Finlay gave me the letter and the sample drawings. The young artist's work was not professional by any standard, but the story was an interesting one and I wondered whatever became of Mr. Funderburgh. He never had anything published in the fantasy magazines, and his name - a unique one, to be sure - was unknown in the ranks of the fantasy fans of that period.

Checking telephone information, I found there were several Funderburghs in the Huntington, Ind. area. I took one at random and wrote a letter. The reply gave me a Tucson, Ariz. address for Ivan. A second letter elicited this reply:

"I was certainly surprised to receive your letter; and I must admit, flattered. Thirty-three years is a long time.

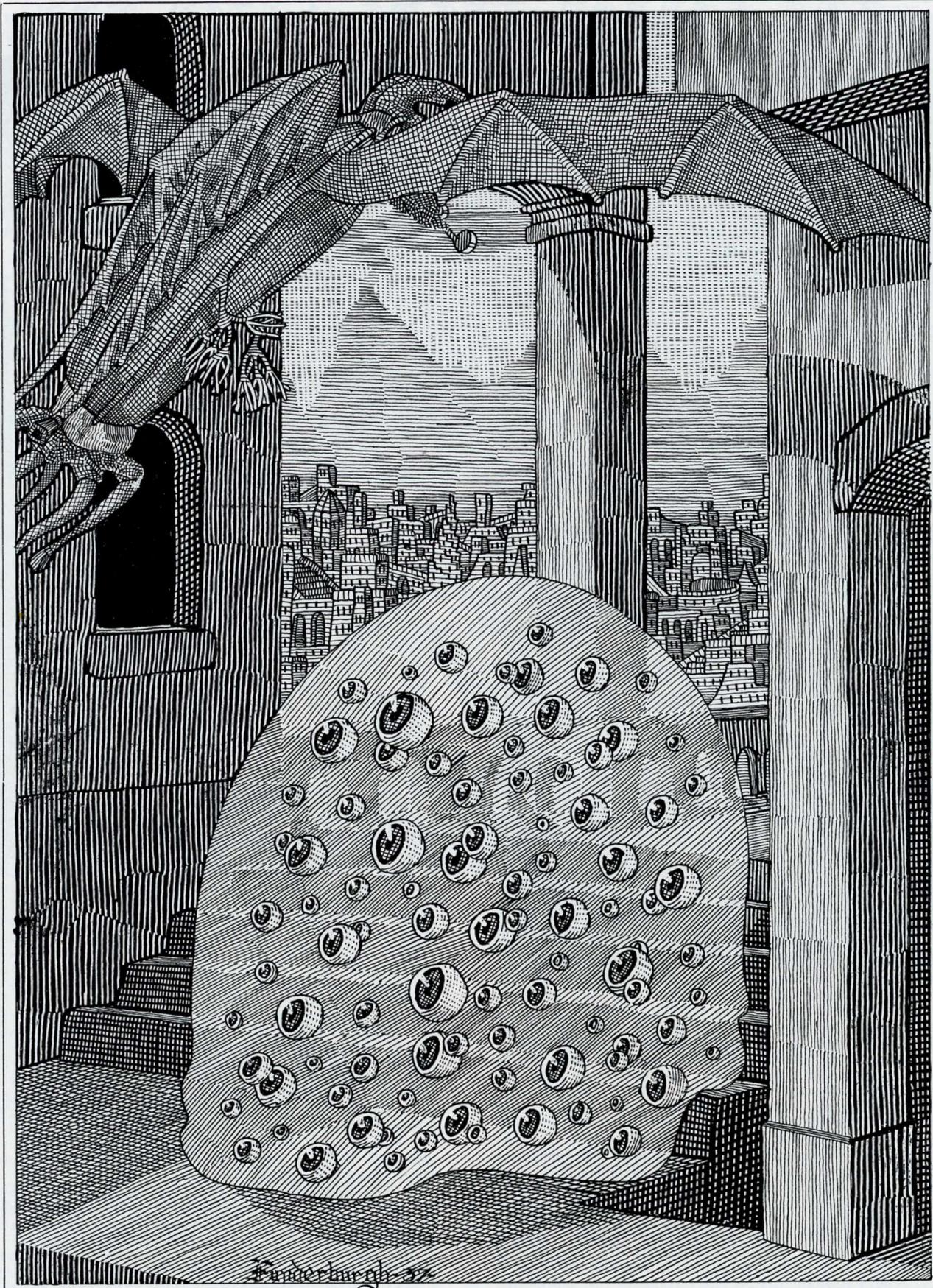
I don't draw anymore, except to amuse the kids. I couldn't possibly draw as good as I did at age 16. Then I had high hopes of becoming a fantasy magazine illustrator. One mag (I forget the name) was going to use my work, but folded before that occurred. Also, author Robert Bloch liked my work, so he sent me a story to illustrate before he sent it in to WEIRD TALES. We sent them in together. His story was taken but my art work wasn't.

After so much disappointment, I switched to playing the piano and have been successful at music for 30 years. I never hit the big time, but am playing steady now at Shakey's Pizza Parlor, and also carry mail in the daytime.

Thanks again for your nice letter, and you may keep the pictures. Incidentally, I always thought that Finlay was the greatest!"

This letter was signed by Ivan Funderburgh. One of the four drawings illustrated H. P. Lovecraft's AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS and it seems only fitting that after so many years Mr. Funderburgh's work finally see print (see page opposite).

It's only speculation but looking back one can but wonder if Finlay had written the youngster in 1937 and offered some encouragement would it have been enough to spark Ivan into a career of art. That he wasn't completely unhappy with the youngster's efforts can be seen by the fact he carefully saved these drawings for more than three decades.



FANTASY

AN OLD ONE AND A SHOGGOTH !
FROM "AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS" BY H. P. LOVECRAFT
IN ASTOUNDING STORIES.

THE HORROR THEME AFTER HPL

BY WILLIAM SCOTT HOME

"Life," H. P. Lovecraft wrote in his *Commonplace Book*, "is more horrible than death."

Death, with its threat of damnation, was horrible enough for the generations of fabulists which preceded him. Motley monsters in the mode of vampire, werewolf or Frankenstein's golem horrified in direct proportion to their ability to maim and kill. In ghost stories, such as Poe's re-possession tales (*Ligeia*, *Morella*) the horror of death appears to lie in the possibility that it may not be complete. Differential death is now a scientific verity, within limits, but more acutely expressed to our minds in the materialistic mode of the Meald-Lovecraft *Out of the Eons*, HPL's *The Thing on the Doorstep*, or even Crowley's *Testament of Magdalen Blair*, where the vision of unsuccoured roving vaporously beyond the grave inspires little fear. It represents rather a repulsion against life - a doubt as to whether its divers torments have an end.

Even Maturin's Melmoth and Poe's Man of the Crowd, the twin geniuses of all crime, appear to hurry through their lives in dread of the fruits of death. In whatever spot the Man of the Crowd's conscience awaited, it could have treated him no more kindly than William Wilson's did him.

To those who dealt with them, these creatures represented no violation of the natural order, but rather fitted into it as they knew it; in every case creatures and phantoms were themselves caged by certain laws of behaviour and dimension, knowledge of which gave men power over them, thereby freeing us from their terror. It is the rare tale in which hero/heroine does not emerge triumphant even if scathed, affirming life.

Poe's lifetime was not over before the horror tale underwent the next development. The massive cosmic forces buried deeply in the tedious novels of Edward Bulwer-Lytton were perhaps the first prefigurings of entities to come, evoking awe (as Scarborough has pointed out) more than fear - had it not been that by the time they were encountered most readers were only capable of exhaustion. Still there is no suggestion that the massive shadow on the crater of Vesuvius or the vague cloudy malignity dogging unsuccessful conjurers can be ordered around or prevented from working damage upon those mortals who accidentally encounter them. The conceptual world of man is ruptured.

By the late 1880's this vein was further developed with genius simultaneously by Arthur Machen, who invoked these elemental presences under the name of Classical deities, and Chambers, who, picking a few names out of some unremarkable Bierce tales, evoked the first horror-city, where the shadows of men's thoughts lengthen at evening, the maddening book, the irresistible King who in fact wears no mask; against whose ebony glare no mind can do other than wither. That much of the inspiration of the first concepts is due to the introduction to the West of garbled versions of Indic myth presented by the Great Alluring Fat Lady Out Yonder, Mme. Blatavsky, whose influence on weird writing is constantly either under- or overestimated, is shown by the fact that both Machen and Blackwood were for a time disciples of Theosophy. Such altogether nonhuman colossi broke through shortly afterward in Blackwood's classic *The Willows* and in Hodgson (*House on the Borderland*, *Night Land*, *The Hog*); but where intrusions in Machen were countered with occult knowledge, or failing that, suicide (*Great God Pan*, *White People*), in Blackwood and Hodgson escape, if occurring at all, was happenstance. There is no suggestion of a malign side of the universe here; the totality is one in which the human viewpoint is inconsequential. The beings in question were not preoccupied with men, but crushed them as



men crush blades of grass. They fit no conceptual framework, but could overpower it in an instant; the order supposed to inhere in the cosmos did not exist. Then the many who became Darwin, Frazer, Planck, Jung, Freud, Einstein, and even the Great Fat Lady, had dismantled the old universe and nobody could put it back together again.

Poe was conscious that mankind violated the dictum that all matter tends to simplicity and disorder, but remade him worthy of his matrix. The horror of these innovators, by contrast, lay precisely in the discovery that one was not *made*, that the recognizable and identifiable personality is awake within an unidentifiable environment. The threat of mutilation here is to the soul, the human-consciousness, rather than the body; death itself may be a gamble - would it lead to any relief or merely open a better-focused eye on the horrors? - but a life of horror-consciousness is beyond bearing.

The pabulum of the Existentialists to the contrary, death is not what makes life absurd but what prevents its being absurd. Inability to accept it is as serious a defect as blindness to human mercy, justice or the existence of evil. Stories whose impacts depend upon physical threats to their characters, with a surfeit of perspiring narrators, chimerical monsters, mumbled prayers, sorcerers with varying degrees of animosity toward rosy cheeks, have become hackneyed - the joke everything turns into with age.

In the midst of this evolutionary process H. P. Lovecraft at the age of fifteen awoke to a sense of horror - of his own body. In The Beast in the Cave he is stricken with fear of a strange creature, dead before even seen, which is covered with hair. At one time, he stresses, it had been a man. The accretion of animal hair apparently ended its humanity. This adolescent essay was his first exercise in the evolutionary horror which became the dominant theme in his work. "If we knew what we are," he wrote, "we would do what Arthur Jermyn did - ", though most of us know and none of us do it; even now, when we have seen a degeneration of H. sap. into monsters which make his Martenses almost comical by contrast and perhaps harbour a suspicion that a worldwide pyre might be the best treatment for the human genetic condition. It was real to Lovecraft who, even if he may not have foreseen it, would have accepted it.

Such degeneration was only occasionally immediate (The Rats in the Walls), more usually gradual, naturally evolutionary (Arthur Jermyn, The Lurking Fear, The Horror at Red Hook). The snarling, cannibalistic beast-self lurked even in those whose ape-ancestors were more than a few generations remote, making HPL's occasional grant of mantic armaments against the siege of external entities to his protagonists a cynical concession in view of the time-bombs ticking in their very flesh.

This horror of our origins is not without foundation. We laugh at apes because they are the closest kin we need not feel ashamed of laughing at; but if those bloodstained phylophagous Australopithecines (Machen's little people) survived, would it be funny? The most human of all animals - insightful, communicative, warfaring, xenophobic, cannibalistic, perverted - in fact, are rats, who inspire few of us with fraternal confidence.

It is easy to find horror in the animal nature of man - consciousness pulsing inside the bestial body, risen out of the slime and darkness: the darkness lingers on our bodies and the slime on our minds - bred of murder ever more facile and more augmented - haphazard and loveless breeding - cannibalism - plagues - carrion-scavenging, clawing and stamping, pushing and grubbing, dancing around split skulls and ripping out beating hearts in an ecstasy of freedom and blood-glut before awesome fires; is that strange alien glow trapped somewhere in the cerebrum's soft jelly, jostled by the smouldering gristle of the medulla, not a parasite, an intruder, a discarnate Monboddonian mind? Has it ever done other than shrink from those excesses which are the normalities of the beast? There was no reason for the animal man to disdain interbreeding with other beasts, such breeding being, after all, a purely animal function. There is nothing abnormal in Lovecraft's sexual prudery, which was carefully imposed in his time and place, but the epithet "hybrid" in his writings expresses not origin but his personal nausea of the spawning beast, applied so often toward the many ethnic groups which disgusted him (in loco mankind in general). In fact, infusion of nonhuman genes simply hastened the process he was sure would occur anyway.

Leonard Cline's unusual and disturbing novel, THE DARK CHAMBER, which HPL praises highly, expressed the identical theme. The horror is innate in the biology of the characters; they "hover", Cline wrote, "in a haze of horror" in the course of life, the search for hereditary impressions necessarily leads to madness and death in the aeonian struggle of fang and claw.

The confinement of consciousness within the object of horror was stroke of genius which makes Lovecraft the third refraction-point of weird writing (after Poe and Machen-Blackwood-Hodgson). We may be free of horrors lurking in the future, but not of those crystallised in the past; from the prison of one's own genes there is no escape. The horror of the human mind netted in strange shapes (The Shadow Out of Time, The Outsider) is one with its persistence in decaying bodies (The Thing on the Doorstep, Cool Air); in the caste society which shaped HPL's thinking there was not even freedom from the behaviour of recent ancestors (Shadow Over Innsmouth, The Festival, The Strange Case of Charles Dexter Ward). Consequently, contra Freud and his gleeful school, Love-



craft says not that the monsters are within us - which renders them as horrible as the liver or larynx - but that we are within the monsters.

As Colin Wilson has pointed out, the writing of fantasy in whatever form is essentially an assertion of freedom. The ultimate freedom is the power to create, or to transmute nature in accordance with one's will (that Crowley was such a lousy weird writer merely shows that those who can do, and those who can't, write); its opposite is the ultimate confinement, the complete lack of power/freedom, such as death, such is the consequence of life's being an accident or joke, the body merely a pawn or cog in some vast scheme under some other control, manipulated for sport, gain or no reason at all. Thus Solzhenitsyn's First Circle is a horror story; Angel Asturias' El Señor Presidente is a horror story; and John Fowles' THE MAGUS is a horror story; and the quality of their horror is not strained. For most people, these suitably sublimated representations of the monstrosity of being man not only suffice but are eminently preferable.

The Great Old Ones, Lovecraft said, created earth life as a joke or accident, but they seem not to have embodied the forces of destiny which would destroy it. This marriage of his basic horror theme to Blavatskian entities is simply an extension of the primal motive -

the monstrous, slobbering, mindless creatures dominating the universe - creating life (breeding) as a sport - quiescent under the evolution of human intelligence, apparently by the chance coincidence of a galactic time-lock, but waiting to break loose again and return man to grunting, rending flesh. That such homicidal jellies managed or even cared to construct massive Riemannian cities can't be explained in human terms, but suggests titan purposes to their apparent chaos, perhaps requiring that human bodies be reduced to gibbering meat to provide the lubricant for some cosmic slide. Still, the history accumulated throughout these later tales (as summarised by Leiber) shows again the futility of existence, as culture after civilisation after race time and again are ground to dust by the cosmic wheel - the ultimate horror of pointlessness so overwhelming to us that even the Marxists reject it.

The truism that we do not know ourselves is today a platitude. While our cerebrums disport in the wildest visions, the cerebellum and medulla stay behind to operate the body, pumping the heart, squeezing the lungs, zapping tone to the muscles. The animal self is more dutiful, and more chained, than the human. Suppose it should decide to throw the man-mind out of its body? The brain has been shown to accommodate up to 4 personalities without stretching. Cancer is merely a case of amoeboid fission on the body's part by which the derivative organism very simply eats its parent alive. Rebellion of the body has afforded significant classics of weird writing (White's *Lukundoo*, Whitehead's *Passing of a God*) and influenced Ray Bradbury's more effective early stories (*Skeleton*, *Fever Dream*).

Fear of both life and death in all its forms is of necessity more extreme and agonizing in the non-religious in their lack of either the conceptually real prospect of an alternative, or any superhuman reinforcement against the flesh-dwarfing forces of opposition. Necessarily, such impact is dulled for the reader who is otherwise disposed as it is heightened for he who is not. The power of HPL's writing depends from the fact that he seems really to have experienced these irruptions in their nakedness - the spate of often random words, the "Gods!", the hysterical metaphors ("after vigintillions of years") exactly as would have transpired had he been writing from fact. Whether this was designed and conscious or was the actual outburst of emotional involvement, we cannot say. Either way, it sets an enormous challenge to any successor, for with nothing more than the defective equipment of man, the self-excusing ape, can any mind face the ever more mysterious and more incomprehensible universe?

The more intensely scientific achievement preempts speculative writing, the more pressure is applied to such writers to find new channels to challenge the human drive. With moon landings, Mars probes, cell and gene manipulation, immaculate conceptions, memory transfers, maintenance of excised brains and remoulded personalities, claims of life in meteorites and revived from the aeons all accomplished facts, new facets must be turned on the human globe. Magic can be seen now as being not apart from logic, but its result; nor is it generally appreciated on what a close scientific basis many alchemists worked or the fact that their goals - transmutation of the elements, life prolongation and imitation, universal annihilation of matter - are long since attained. Free exercise of the will by which conformable changes can be made in the environment without other instrumentation now seems less fantastic.

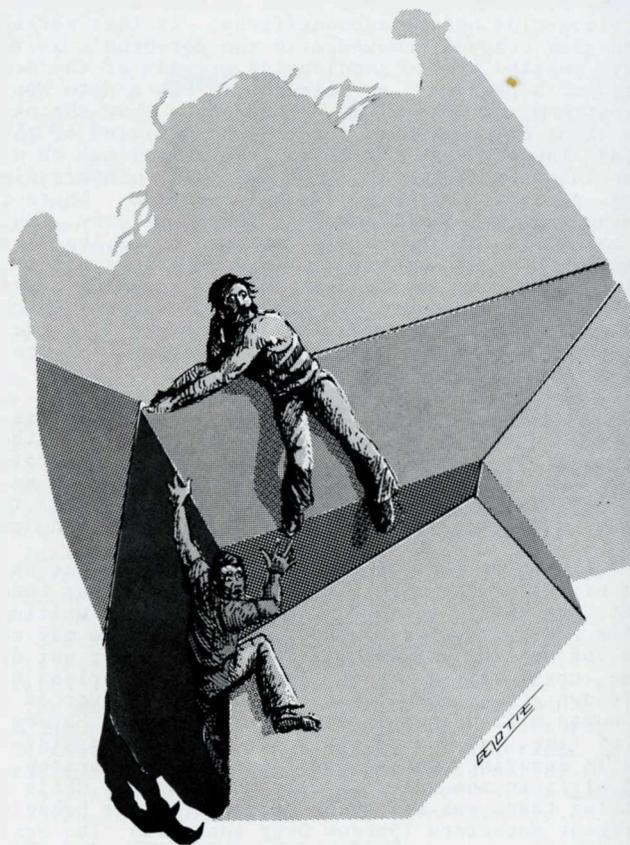
The task of the weird writer since HPL has been not only to find other foci of horror buried in us and cast them in a means suitable for rendering them directly impressive upon the reader's mind - as Tennessee Williams puts it, to convey the sense of the awfulness of life more compactly than life does - but to deal with the fact that the contemporary reader already has the entire background of the field of weird writing and recognizes readily all the symbols, the personal pantheons exposed by Jung and Freud, and by contrast to his predecessors, he can be alerted to events by only sparsely scattered signposts. Occult dramas such as Shiel's wonderful *Vaila* and Phorfor, Poe's truest children, suggest a mode. Character development has become more important; fear and revulsion must now be expressed by minor traits rather than by a tiresome repetition of the invariable adjectives.

There will be no room again for monstrous beings which conform to a cosmic system in which human beings wield as much control as they do. Chance escape remains the mainstay (artistically achieved in W. F. Harvey's little-known but excellent *Midnight House*) and need be no serious handicap; one brainless, ultramicroscopic virus can incapacitate a genius many worlds its own size. Eternal recurrence, the horror which drove Nietzsche mad, has had little reflection in weird fiction, though very interestingly in Chambers; Hodgens' *One By One* reveals that both halves of the dualistic universe may wear deceitful masks and opens speculations on the finding of diabolic tricks in sincerely good lives. The evolutionary horror has by no means been exhausted of possibilities; and the themes of *A Voyage to Arcturus* and *The Wizard of Earthsea* suggest beginnings rather than summations.

Bradbury, Matheson, Sturgeon and others have written competent and readable tales, but follow no system and contribute little to the development of the genre. Nor have many contributions come from other cultures. Lovecraft's racist nonsense aside, his observation that the Latin temperament possesses "knowing hardness preclusive of sheer panic fright" may not explain his popularity in France, nor the popularity of his imitators there; but it explains their poverty of ability, if not why the prolific (Germanic) Fleming Jean Ray is the worst of them all.

The works of Borges will undoubtedly be a guide to new aspects of philosophical horror (as Charles Williams showed that theology was a fertile subject); the takeover of our own familiar world described in Uqbar Tlon, *Orbis Tertius* is a masterpiece of suggestive subtlety, and there are twins to it throughout his work, and though the publications of other Latins - Cortazar, Angel Asturias, Garcia Marquez - reveal to Americans the consistent note of symbolic fantasy characteristic of Latin American writing, their regular fantasists (Dabove, Ocampo, Bioy Casares, etc.) deal with rather minute spiritual transformations.

In an age when everyday horrors of extreme types have become commonplace, it requires supreme ability for the most Lovecraftian thinker to present us with that dark mirror in a guise sufficiently novel to shock us into such awareness that we see ourselves face to face, ourselves to know.



The Cthulhu Mythos: A Study

BY GEORGE T. WETZEL

(Reprinted from HPL: MEMOIRS, CRITIQUES AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES (SSR Publications 1955) with revision and expansion by the author 1971.)

When the body of Lovecraft's prose is studied, it is at once seen that there is a varied and elaborate repetition of certain concepts and supernatural actors to which the phrase "The Cthulhu Mythos" has justifiably been given. The underlying theme in his work, aside from whatever plot is manifested on the surface of individual poems and stories, is the struggle of supernormal entities to regain their mastery over the world and Man from which they were once ousted. The more one studies the Mythos stories of HPL, the more convinced he will become as to their close unity despite their separate fictional frameworks; which brings me to conclude that the Mythos stories should actually be considered not as separate works but rather the different chapters of a very lengthy novel. When viewed this way, many series of stories using the theme of, say, "ghoul changeling" seem logical as they reveal in separate story-chapters the slow disclosure of some particular evil or horror. The gateway between the waking world and the Hell/dreamworld of the Mythos was one such theme that is not immediately revealed in The Statement of Randolph Carter or in The Temple but only finally in The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath, and similarly the nature and powers of Nyarlathotep which HPL never finished, though he came close to completion in The Haunter of the Dark. There are other half-finished concepts and still unsolved mysteries in the Mythos which only study will disclose, and some that no amount of study will ever unravel, because he died leaving some further tales unwritten which could contain the gradual unfolding of a particular mystery, as indeed would have been the fate of the "ghoul changeling" theme without the final story, Pickman's Model.

As to why Lovecraft created his Mythos - his lengthy novel called THE CTHULHU MYTHOS, if I may be permitted - evidence exists in many of his little known philosophical articles written in amateur journals, and in some of his stories and poetry. In The Materialist Today he remarked: "There is no object or purpose in ultimate creation, since all is a ceaseless repetitive cycle of transitions from nothing back to nothing again . . . all is illusion, hollowness and nothingness - but what does that matter? Illusions are all we have, so let us pretend to cling to them . . ." Then there is some development of this recurrent philosophy in the curious poem, "To an Infant" (printed in the BROOKLYNITE, Oct. 1925) of which the following lines give some idea:

"For dreams, as they are most precious,
are most fragile of all we prize,
And the pow'rs of earth that enmesh
would sear them out of our eyes....
...They are all that we have to save us
from the sport of The Ruthless Ones,
These dreams that the cosmos gave us
in the voids past the farthest sun..."

Also, passages from HPL's article, Life for Humanity's Sake, prove his reason for creating the universe of the Cthulhu Mythos.

Other facts about his Mythos are not too well known, especially the fact the Greek mythic ideas were formative influences in his Mythos, despite the known fact that the Dunsany stories gave him the initial push toward creation of his own Mythos. From 1917 to 1923 his poetry is full of Greco allusions and outright rhymed Greek mythic narratives. The



Greco influence in his prose is less obvious, though a quick check shows such unquestionable bits as in The Moon Bog, The Tree, Hypnos, &c. Origination of such things as the Greek entitled NECRONOMICON, the similarity of the Mythos Hell/dreamworld to the Greek Hades, &c. prove again this contention. And in his story, Poetry and the Gods, which is of Greek gods, one sees in Hermes the messenger, the Messenger of Azathoth named Nyarlathotep and in the dream communication of the Greek gods with mortals the same psychic device used later by Cthulhu to contact his cult followers. In the article, A Descent to Avernus, HPL likens the cavernous earth, blighted by things suggestive of horrors in the Mythos, to the Greek Tartarus. His three poems in A Cycle of Verse likewise have a glimmering of the Mythos' horrors but with a Greco taint.

Numerous other interesting facets emerge from the Mythos which a book would truly need to be written to show. Suffice it to remark on HPL's use of the terminal climax, a device used repeatedly by E. L. White, which gives to the work of both that identical quality of a nightmarish dream which likewise ends on a note of final and terrible revelation. Then HPL used in a number of stories a remarkable single feverish crescendo that builds from the start to the ending, increasing, without any single lessening of its fervor but instead a brilliant upsurge of fear.

Lovecraft has been called an amoralist, but in his The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath is discernible the one instance of an effective and poetic moralistic ending. Since this novel was not long after his unfortunate New York sojourn, the conclusion that the moralistic ending, and perhaps the rest of the novel as well, is but a fragment of the spiritual autobiography is well founded.

THE NECRONOMICON

Creation of the NECRONOMICON was one of HPL's most interesting ideas, and there is some basis for thinking that he received some of the inspiration from awareness of the similarly arcane BOOK OF THOTH that occurs in Egyptian mythology. That he meant the NECRONOMICON to have some antecedents in Egyptian arcania can be shown.

I originally had translated the Greek meaning of the title as "Book of the Names of the Dead", but Donald Susan pointed out that "nom:nomos" was more correctly "region", and he interpreted the name to mean "Guide(book) to the Regions of the Dead," which does fit more logically with the character HPL meant it to have in the early stories.

Lovecraft, in his History of the Necronomicon (1936), states that Alhazred, author of the Book, visited, among other places, "the subterranean secrets of Memphis" (Egypt). In the story, The Green Meadow (1927), he tells of an ancient Greek who had translated some awful knowledge out of an Egyptian book ". . . which was in turn taken from a papyrus of ancient Meroe" (Egypt). The well of forbidden knowledge, then, seems to have been Egypt (within the framework of the Mythos) and Alhazred merely wrote of what he found there in the NECRONOMICON.

In The Statement of Randolph Carter (1919) there appeared an old and nameless book which undoubtedly was the first mention in the Mythos of the book and the fact that Harley Warren in the story used that book on his quest beneath a graveyard would indicate that it was a guide to where access would be found to the gateways between the waking world and the Hell/dreamworld of the Mythos. What he encountered below were ghouls who, according to the lines of the poem "Nemesis", guard such places or else lurk there.

Later stories such as The Dunwich Horror have the usage of the NECRONOMICON more as a source text of evil spells. The phenomena of the growth that is found in other concepts and characters of the Mythos is evident in the gradual characterization of the NECRONOMICON.

As to where and how Lovecraft first thought of the name, not the idea, of the NECRONOMICON, I can theorize from a datum found in his serialized article, Mysteries of the Heavens, in the ASHERVILLE GAZETTE-NEWS for April 3, 1915: "Manilius, referring to the Milky Way in his 'Astronomicon'. . ." "An erudite reader like Lovecraft, with some knowledge of Greek, well knew the translation of "Astronomicon" and when later on casting about for a suggestive name for the evil book he first had described in part in The Statement of Randolph Carter, he hit upon the association of ideas of Astro-nomicon, necro (meaning dead) and the fact that a character in the story had used such a book to investigate the dark mysteries beneath a graveyard and the NECRONOMICON had evolved.



Innsmouth "Fishwife" by Rich Corben

NYARLATHOTEP

The first appearance of Nyarlathotep was a prose-poem of the same name in UNITED AMATEUR in November, 1920, and a number of clues to some understanding of him - as meant by HPL - lurk in that work. The name of this god of the Mythos, if broken into "Nyarlath" and "hotep", has some significance at once. "Hotep", a suffix phrase, is Egyptian meaning "is satisfied". Lovecraft used it because it was a recurring suffix for Egyptian names and thus was a "color" to suggest anything Egyptian.

"Nyarlath", if broken down to just the phoneme "nya" is a prefix found in the names of gods of certain African negroid tribes. One such example is the "nyankopon", sky-god of the Ashanti.

Lovecraft spoke of Nyarlathotep as having arisen out of the darkness of 27 centuries. This would place this god as having something to do with the 25th dynasty - the Ethiopian invasion of Europe. Nyarlathotep must then have been incarnate in some Ethiopian ruler of Egypt - must have been the driving power behind the Ethiopian armies that suddenly rose up and made their conquest.

But Lovecraft makes it plain that Nyarlathotep was not a negro, but a swarthy person, when he appeared in later stories. In fact, he seems to have been, in the Mythos, the embodied symbol not only of chaos and the final destruction of the world but also of darkness, as the black entity in the later The Haunter of the Dark (1935); likewise, the black man of the witch covens in The Dreams in the Witch-House (1932).

Another characteristic of Nyarlathotep was his power of demonic possession (the avatar concept used by HPL) and his hinted shape-changing. In the prose poem of 1920 it was said that he was the soul of the ultimate gods who were mindless gargoyles, which would

indicate his shape changing ability. Something of this seems likely in the black bat-like thing from the steeple in The Haunter of the Dark; and in this same story he attempts demonic possession of the narrator.

The Crawling Chaos (1920) does not mention Nyarlathotep, but the story obviously has some connection with him, as HPL refers to him in The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath (1926) as the "crawling chaos"; and The Crawling Chaos was about the final end of the world and probably the twilight of the Mythos' gods as well. In the Fungi sonnet "Nyarlathotep" (1929-1930) this Ragnarok ends with "the idiot Chaos blew earth's dust away..." when Chaos destroyed, crushed, what "he chanced to mould in play." As Chaos seems to have the sense of a deity, here, he must be the creator god of the Mythos, as well as its destroyer. And since Nyarlathotep has the appellation of the "crawling chaos", he must be the creator god; this conclusion is bolstered in part by the fact that he has some close connection with the god Azathoth, who reposes at the center of Ultimate Chaos.

The god Azathoth in the Mythos was never quite developed (though if the fragmentary story Azathoth were ever completed, more might be known as to what his eventual characterization was) but in the prose existing, he does seem to have some connection with Nyarlathotep. Collate the similar spellings of the Mythos god, Azathoth, and the alchemic term, Azoth, meaning "the primogenic source-essence of life." The god existing at the center of Chaos which in the Mythos seems to have been the center of the universe and life, then consider that chaos was a god in the sonnet "Nyarlathotep" and consider the epithet given Nyarlathotep as "the crawling chaos": what is seen is a part of the Mythos still not quite formed but in the slow process of gestation.

THE HELL OF THE MYTHOS

It is in the novel, The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath (1926), that the Hell of HPL's Cthulhu Mythos is fully described and made the locale of a story. Though HPL does not identify this curious sinisterra of dream as the Mythos' Hell, it is so nevertheless and can be shown to be so upon study. The most outstanding proof of this is the similarity to the two-fold Hell of Greek mythology.

In Dream Quest HPL wrote of King Kwiones that "he could not go back to these things in the waking world because his body was dead." King Kwiones was then the soul of a man, dead in the outside world; making the locale of Dream Quest the otherworld of the dead, Heaven, the Elysium of the Greeks.

But this pastoral aspect or Elysium of the Mythos' otherworld had contiguous regions that corresponded to the Tartarus of the Greeks, wherein a number of fearful entities might be encountered - like the domain of the Gugs or the mountain peak of Inquanok where Carter meets the Shantak-birds.

Curiously enough, the Hell of the Mythos was also the dream-world wherein a slumberer's psyche existed during sleep. Carter's own perception of the Mythos' Hell was because he entered it in sleep. As sleepers have both pastoral and nightmarish dreams, HPL was able to make his conception of the dream-world coincide with the likewise twin concept of the otherworld of the dead.

When boiled down, HPL's Mythos' Hell was a commingled otherworld of the dead and the world of dream.

The dreamworld part of this Hell concept was further developed in another way; those adventures therein that the dreamer Carter had, like his meetings with the Night Gaunts, were not the peaceful visions of dreams but the dark-side, its nightmares. There is a possible suggestion in Dream Quest of such dark entities of this Hell's dreamworld aspect, such nightmares gaining access to the waking world (a contemplated story at some time?) and creating havoc. By such horrors running amuck in the waking world, certain hideous demons and human monsters and ghouls in the Mythos would be explained.



In the dream novel there were several places where the waking world was touched upon by some of the sinisterra of the Mythos' Hell, places where these embodied nightmares could enter the waking world, giving rise to tales among men of demons, and possibly explaining also why gargoyles atop cathedrals bore resemblance to the ghouls of this place. Where these entrances touched the waking world from the wood of the Zoogs, there shone the phosphorence of fungi; there was a phosphorescent shining abyss in the story The Nameless City (1921) and in the drowned temple in the story, The Temple (1920).

There were some fearsome gates to this Hell - through the burrow of the ghouls beneath graveyards, as finally revealed in the dream novel; when Carter visits the ghouls he notes that he is very near the waking world which the appearance of gravestones and funeral urns strewn about indicates all too clearly. The line, "Through the ghoul guarded gateways of slumber," from the early poem "Nemesis" (1918), which prefigured some of this, takes on a disturbing meaning.

Harley Warren, in The Statement of Randolph Carter, obviously came to his doom at the hands of such ghouls when exploring burrows under a graveyard.

In this concept of entering the Mythos' Hell not only in dream or even at certain earthy abysses but also under a graveyard or, more specifically, *through* a grave, HPL's awareness of Greek beliefs again was used for imaginative and inventive purposes. "Grave" was sometimes used in the New Testament as a synonym for "Hell" and the entrance to Hell (the Elysium and the Tartarus) was through a grave. Lovecraft utilized this idea in brilliant fashion in his Mythos concept.

A Clerihew by J. Vernon Shea

Pickman painted most unlikely things:
Men like rats, and gaunts with wings.
Though the statement may cause strife,
Pickman always painted from life.

THE GHOUL-CHANGELING

In Lovecraft's hands, many supernatural concepts that were handled by other writers in orthodox fashion, and close to their traditional outlines, became transmuted into something original and refreshingly new. Like the manner in which he elaborated and developed the ghost theme into something not like its traditional presentation and like the manner in which he treated the avatar theme with similarly original presentations, so he did with the ghoul theme, changing some of it from its appearance in ethnic lore. With it, he embodied the changeling concept, a totally different ethnic belief (the changeling idea being Celtic, the ghoul theme, Persian), so that a new supernatural actor or character was invented. By such inventions he gave not only to his own prose a freshness, but also bequeathed to supernatural fiction - already thread-worn with overly familiar supernatural actors - a new lease on life, a new source of plot and character material. This, along with the fusing of science fictional concepts to the supernatural, is what makes his work so interesting.

Who has not puzzled over the identity of the narrator in Lovecraft's The Outsider? Even The Rats in the Walls has several unanswered questions posed within its fictional framework. The mystery produced in these two stories and other tales is found only by their careful study in conjunction with the clue furnished by a later title, Pickman's Model.

To my mind, the start of this mystery was the earlier The Picture in the House (1920). Here, an ancient countryman possessed a book containing pictures of a hideous butcher shop of the Anzique cannibals, and he himself was cursed with a cannibalistic craving.

Then in 1921 was created the nebulous and Poesque horror of The Outsider. Many explanations as to the nature of the narrator have been put forth by readers of this tale, although it is significant that Lovecraft



very obviously refrained from any. Even the climactic discovery of the narrator that a monstrous creature which appals him is his own mirrored reflection does not completely reveal his nature. Beyond the fact that he has existed in a subterranean place below a graveyard, all is vague.

The horrendous The Rats in the Walls (1923) was next to appear. Herein the motifs in the two tales named above reiterate and are further developed. In the grotto beneath Exham Priory a ghastly butcher shop is found. There are cases of fratricide in the family history of the de la Poers, the owners of the place, for the implied reason that the secret of their character, or their true nature, has occasionally been revealed. But most significant is the fact that the passage between the priory cellar and the dreadful grotto was chiselled upward through the foundation rock.'

All these evil adumbrations reach a peak in Pickman's Model (1926). The protagonist of this story is degenerating, and a ghoulish trend is strongly hinted. Richard Pickman speaks authoritatively of ghouls who kidnap human children, leaving their own daemon offspring in their stead. Old graveyards, he says, are frequently inhabited by ghoulish things that burrow through the earth.

Piecing these clues together gives us a single common theme. The decadent countryman in Picture now assumes the character of a ghoul-changeling. The tomb-dweller in The Outsider is a kidnapped human who has dim memories of some teacher similar to the ghoulish mentors painted by Pickman in his picture, "The Lesson". The fratricides in Rats were perhaps necessitated by discovery that family members were ghoul-changelings; certainly the evidence of the subterranean passageway bespeaks close connection of some sort between the human beings and the underground creatures.

Where Lovecraft got the central idea of his story, The Outsider, was apparently a passage in Hawthorne's The Journal of a Solitary Man, from which the following is quoted as evidence:

I dreamed one bright afternoon that I was walking through Broadway, and seeking to cheer myself with warm and busy life of that far famed promenade....I found myself in this animated place, with a dim and misty idea that it was not my proper place, or that I had ventured into the crowd with some singularity of dress or aspect which made me ridiculous....Every face grew pale; the laughter was hushed...and the passengers on all sides fled as from an embodied pestilence...I passed not one step farther but threw my eyes on a looking-glass which stood deep within the nearest shop. At first glimpse of my own figure I awoke, with a horrible sensation of self-terror and self-loathing...I had been promenading Broadway in my shroud!

In his COMMONPLACE BOOK Lovecraft recorded the germ idea of The Outsider and placed after "Identity" a question mark. Even though he may have only had a subconscious idea of the human identity of the character, the source of the story seems evident. The leaving of loose threads in a story (which he eventually tied together in a later story) is akin to Edward Lucas White's style in that this author gave a true nightmarish quality to his prose by such vague and still partially outlined horrors at his terminal climaxes.

Lovecraft recorded in his COMMONPLACE BOOK seven ideas obtained from Hawthorne's AMERICAN NOTEBOOKS and some of his prose. However, five such borrowed germ ideas have relevance to the ghoul theme variations of HPL just considered. To begin with, there is this idea copied directly from Hawthorne's book: "...a defunct nightmare which had perished in the midst of its wickedness and left its flabby corpse on the breast of the tormented one, to be gotten rid of as it might."

Lovecraft jotted down, besides this quote from Hawthorne, a variation of it. When one considers the descriptions and habitations of Lovecraft's ghouls - that

is, the facts that they lingered near dream-gates and were perhaps the embodied nightmares of such a realm - it is quite possible that Lovecraft modified the Hawthorne ideas in this fashion.

Though the foregoing is not conclusive but slightly speculative, this note in the COMMONPLACE BOOK: "Man lives near graveyard - how does he live? Eats no food." is not equivocal. Lovecraft obtained it directly from Hawthorne's Dr. Grimshaw's Secret. Its ghoulish hints are too obvious for comment.

There is one more idea, borrowed from Hawthorne, and its variation in the COMMONPLACE BOOK. The original in Hawthorne's own words is found dated December 6, 1837 as follows: "Stories to be told of a certain person's appearance in public, of his having been seen in various situations, and of his making visits in private circles; but finally, on looking for this person, to come upon his grave and mossy tombstone." For comparison, here are Lovecraft's words: "Visitor from tomb - stranger at some public concourse followed to graveyard where he descends into the earth." But the variation of this that Lovecraft jotted elsewhere in his book concerning in essence "a man observed in public with features and jewelry belonging to a dead man" was used in HPL'S The Festival.

In 1918 Lovecraft wrote "Nemesis" which was one of the most important poems he penned, adumbrating the concept of the dream-gate and its nearby lurkers. But besides that, "Nemesis" foreshadows bits of the Poesque underground landscape of The Outsider; particularly these lines:

"I have peered...
At the many-roofed village laid under
The curse of the grave-girdled ground..."

The degenerating painter in Pickman's Model had a chilling genius in the painting of faces, which Lovecraft wrote, could be compared in their hellishness only to the gargoyles of Notre Dame. This comparison was reiterated in the dream-novel when Carter, climbing a ladder "saw a curious face peering over it as a gargoyle peers over a parapet of Notre Dame."

The gargoyle theme is also found in Lovecraft's COMMONPLACE BOOK in two entries which, I contend, were inspired by passages in George MacDonald's PHANTASTES. Compare HPL's "unspeakable dance of the gargoyles - in morning several gargoyles on old cathedral found transposed" with Chapter XIV of the MacDonald book, reading in part:

I became conscious at the same moment that the sound of dancing had been for some time in my ears. I approached the curtain quickly and lifting it, entered the black hall. Everything was still as death...but there was something about the statues that caused me still to remain in doubt. As I said, each stood perfectly still upon its black pedestal, but there was about every one a certain air, not of motion but as if it had just ceased from movement...I found all appearances similar only that the statues were different and differently grouped.

Compare as well from the COMMONPLACE BOOK "Ancient cathedral - hideous gargoyle man seeks to rob - found dead - gargoyle's bloody paw." the following from MacDonald's chapter XV:

...But I saw in the hands of one of the statues close by me a harp...I...laid my hand on the harp. The marble hand...had strength enough to relax its hold and yielded the harp to me.

And finally, knowing Lovecraft's penchant for quaint humor, I suspect the reason gargoyles were considered by him descriptive of ghouls was because "gargoyle" suggested the homophonic "Gar-ghoul" (gar - fish; ghoul - necrophagi).

Pickman's Model, according to Mrs. Muriel Eddy, an old friend of Lovecraft's, was inspired by a trip he once took to Boston. That story itself is doubly interesting in that it is the only story upon which he lavished so much background research and local color. The tunnels used by the ghouls in this story have, or had, their real counterparts in that city.

In 1840 excavators in Boston's old North End, when digging foundations for houses on the east side of Henshaw Street, found part of a subsurface arch, which, up to at least 1900, could still be seen in part of the cellar of one house there. Subsequent researchers traced a tunnel to the house of Sir William Phipps abutting the Copps Hill Burying Ground in the same neighborhood. Some antiquarians said this tunnel was built by a Captain Grouchy, a later owner of the Phipps House, during the French Wars for smuggling purposes.

Another such tunnel was found extending from the William Hutchinson house on North Street opposite the old Hancock Wharf near Fleet Street.

The narrator of Pickman's Model has a fear of the Boston subway which minor incident Lovecraft undoubtedly developed from knowledge about the tunnels in Boston's South End - an over-all area, incidentally, of about one mile if the tunnel area of the North End is included. One such South End tunnel ran between Province Court and Harvard Place, issuing on Washington Street. A passage branched off this one and extended under the Providence House and the front highway eastward toward the sea, its outlet apparently somewhere near Church Green between Summer and Bedford Streets. These two tunnels were closed off in later years by construction of the Washington Street Subway.

In Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath Lovecraft resorted again to actual lore of Boston when he has Carter notice the ghoul possessing two grave-stones, one from the Granary Burying Ground atop Copps Hill in Boston, the other from a Salem graveyard. The pilfering of gravestones for use as door-steps, chimney tops and window ledges by Bostonians 150 and more years ago is true. Lovecraft, in this passage in the dream-novel, speaks of the ghoul that was Pickman sitting on such a grave-stone "stolen" (as Lovecraft says) from the Granary Burying Ground. Apparently he shunned the known historical human culprits and blamed such prankish pilfering on the ghouls - which goes to prove that HPL had a dry, even quaint sense of humor.



The psychic possession theme and the ghost theme, in a Lovecraft story, are altogether different from their more orthodox presentation in the work of others. In the Mythos, both these themes are at times interwoven so that there emerges a concept particularly Lovecraftian. Thus, the reason for considering both under one section. For purposes of simplicity, I allude to the psychic possession theme as the avatar theme in the Mythos.

HPL embodied both themes in The Tomb (1917), wherein a restless spirit seeks consecrated burial and thereby peace by possession of a man's body and soul. It is very likely that this story was suggested to him by de la Mare's novel THE RETURN, which is similar in part. In HPL's story the memories and personality of the dead man are infused into the living body of the narrator and shares with him a common soul - this latter delineation appears in the later stories of the Mythos; there is also some mention of the wandering of the narrator's dream-soul, another significant point in other later stories.

In The Tree (1920) the metempsychosis of the dead artist's personality into an olive tree occurs. Herbert West: Reanimator (1921-22) deals with reanimated dead - as does the story In the Vault - but by scientific resurrection and is reminiscent of the putrescent horror of Poe's The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar.

The Hound (1922) is a story where the ghost concept borders on the classification of a demon entity. An amulet is stolen by two diabolists from the grave of a ghoul; it is carved with a picture of a winged hound, the lineament of which were "drawn from obscure supernatural manifestations of the souls" of ghouls. This idea that the souls of the dead have terrifying shapes Lovecraft elaborated upon in the later story, The Unnamable. In The Hound, the winged hound is the visual shape of the dead ghoul, which shape kills one of the diabolists and recovers its amulet. When the survivor opens the grave of the ghoul, there comes from the jaws of the ghoul's corpse "a deep, sardonic bay as of some gigantic hound," and the corpse is again wearing its amulet.



The Unnamable (1923) portrays in fuller detail HPL's idea that the psychic emanation (ghost) of a dead man is a grotesque distortion; and since in this story the corpse was extremely hideous in life, being half-human and half-animal, this rendered its ghost so much more grotesque that it could be described by a character in the story as "unnamable". The ghost of such a biological anomaly once living is what attacks the two men in the story.

The Shunned House (1924) is a fuller elaboration of the HPLish ghost concept. The shunned house was built over a graveyard where a vampire had been buried. (In The Unnamable Lovecraft had remarked of the graveyard's retaining the intelligence of generations). Some of the source material of this story can be very definitely traced. In an unpublished ms which Lovecraft sent to Wilfred Talman, titled Who Ate Roger Williams?, there is much of this story's plot. Somewhat more of the same is to be found in The Green Picture contained in Charles Skinner's MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF OUR LAND, Vol. 1, p.76; in fact, much of the same general description in the Skinner opus appears in the Lovecraft work as comparison will show. It is interesting to note that fungus actually will grow atop the ground in which there has been a burial. Lovecraft also embodied another source, verbatim, of the vampire Roulet from the account given by John Fiske in his MYTHS AND MYTH-MAKERS. In this HPL story the ghost of the dead vampire hovers about in a luminous vapor (the special Lovecraft idea of a grotesque ghost is not prominent here) and invades the minds and bodies of its victims. "They share its memories and also the same common soul."

In The Vault (1925) is the closest Lovecraft ever came to the usual form of a ghost story and significantly enough when it was printed in TRYOUT, November, 1925, Lovecraft prefaced it thusly: "Dedicated to C. W. Smith from whose suggestion the central situation is taken."

Ghosts appeared in other Lovecraft stories such as The Evil Clergyman, The Festival and He (this last being of dead Indians). One of the curiosities in the Mythos stories was the ghost of King Kurnaes in the dream-novel whose body lay dead in the waking world but whose ghost frequented the dream/underworld of the Mythos.

The avatar concept has been shown to be interwoven with the ghost concept by HPL but he also wrote other stories in which other beings than ghosts possessed a living person. These other stories were of humans with strange magical powers who performed possession or even mind exchange or of outre life forms who did the same or even the gods, the most notable being Nyarlathotep.

In The Festival (1923) he makes quite obvious what it is that shares a common soul - "the soul of the devil-bought hastes not from this charnel clay but fats and instructs the very worm that gnaws; till out of corruption horrid life springs..."

The Thing in The Colour Out of Space (1927) absorbs all in a fungoid blighted area in its own substance, even humans and their minds - again the common soul idea. In The Case of Charles Dexter Ward (1926-27) the invading entity completely ousts the original soul; whereas in The Shadow Out of Time and The Challenge from Beyond, there is mind-exchange as in The Thing on the Doorstep. Beyond the Wall of Sleep is of an alien mind existing simultaneously in the mind of an earthman.

The most interesting, however, is The Haunter of the Dark (1935) where the sentient blackness from the steeple was the avatar of Nyarlathotep that briefly demonically possessed the mind and body of Robert Blake. This may require some further proof as follows: In this story Nyarlathotep is mentioned as "in antique and shadowy Khem taking the form of man" which indicates that god's power of psychic possession; also, in the passage from which the above quote comes (at the story's end) it is apparent the thing from

the steeple is being referred to. In the same passage it is written: "Roderick Usher - am mad or going mad - I am it and it is I." This points out the common soul and possession of Blake's mind. The reference to Roderick Usher seems unrelated until HPL's remarks on Poe's The Fall of the House of Usher are recalled. "Usher ... displays an abnormally linked trinity of entities at the end of a long and isolated family history - a brother, his twin sister, and their incredibly ancient house all sharing a single soul and meeting one common dissolution at the same moment."

When the lightning strikes the black thing, the fatal bolt is transferred to Blake, since he shares a common soul with it, and he is killed. The aspect of blackness is peculiar to Nyarlathotep, in this story it is evident and it also occurs in the prose-poem Nyarlathotep and in the form of the Black Man in The Dreams in the Witch-House. Since black was a symbol of evil in ethnic tales, HPL obviously meant this god to be the physical embodiment of evil.

CLOSING NOTES ON INFLUENCES ON HPL

An acquaintance to whom HPL was indebted for a few story ideas was the late Edith Miniter of North Wilbraham, Mass., who, though interested in folklore, did not care to write supernatural prose herself. The blasted heath of The Colour Out of Space (1927) and another such spot in The Dunwich Horror (1928) had a physical prototype near her home, which HPL commented upon in a memoir of her.

In that memoir he likewise reminisced about an antiquarian trip on which he had accompanied her to Marblehead, during which she supplied him with the local belief that window-panes absorbed and retained the likenesses of those who habitually sat by them year after year. This idea is part of the plot of The Unnamable (1923). Likewise, Charles Fort documented the phenomenon in his book WILD TALENTS (1932) as happening in 1870 in Lawrence, Mass.

That whippoorwills were psychopomps and of a sinister gathering of fireflies - those were ideas HPL learned from her when he visited her farm in 1928. They were both incorporated into The Dunwich Horror. There was one story given him which he never lived to write. It concerned a damp, dark street near her farm and the tenants of the houses on its hillward side who had gone mad or killed themselves. A corresponding state of affairs in The Rats in the Walls would presuppose that ghoulish-changelingism was behind the mystery this new idea displayed.

Another contemporary who influenced HPL was Jonathan Hoag, to whom HPL dedicated a number of his own poems. Cooperatively with a friend he published the collected poems of Hoag and HPL wrote a preface. In that preface he expressed his admiration for the awesome grandeur of nature Hoag so artistically caught in his poetry. HPL in that preface quoted a line from Hoag's "To the Grand Canyon of Colorado" (1919) where in black caves "vast nameless satyr's dance with noiseless feet." When HPL came to write AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS (1931) he referred in chapter five to that quoted imagery of Hoag's. (See also HPL's story The Transition of Juan Romero for the same imagery.)

In Hoag's poems "Immortality" (1918) and "Life, Death and Immortality" (1919) he used the phrase "beyond the walls" as a euphemism for death. Lovecraft picked up and used the same poetic image in his "Ex Oblivione" (1921). The phrase itself appears in the title, Beyond the Wall of Sleep (1919) in which story its symbolism is somewhat baffling until certain scattered remarks of HPL - that life is a dream, a sleep and that death is an awakening - are collated.

Despite such grim, morose tendencies (which saw their fullest expression in The Horror in the Burying Ground (1937)), a pessimistic philosophy and evidences of a death wish in some of his writing, HPL was not without a balancing sense of humor.

His mock elegies "The Dead Bookworm" (1919) and "On the Death of a Rhyming Critic" (1917), in verse and slightly autobiographical, prove he was no stuffed shirt and didn't take himself too seriously, because in them he made uproarious jibes at his own idiosyncracies. In both he gives himself a facetious lecture for a topheavy diet of books. He scandalizes himself with derogatory lines about being a "scribbling pedant", "a temperance crank" and more. In his story The Tomb (1917) he dynamites his prohibitionist views with the uproarious line, "Better under the table than under the ground."

His anglophilism was said to be an affectation by some. But as he was the grandson in direct line of a British subject not naturalized in the U.S., Lovecraft could claim under British law to be a British subject. His strong pro-British feelings could then be viewed as patriotic fervor.

HPL's interest in astronomy can be traced primarily to his maternal grandmother, Rhoby Phillips, who studied it thoroughly in her youth at Lapham Seminary and whose collection of old astronomical books started him on the subject. His interest for things Grecian was stimulated when he read of the Grecian figures in the constellations. But after failing to find their literal silhouettes, he was sadly disappointed.

Of all the constellations, he admired those of winter. This was remarkable and speaks volumes of his constant observation of night stars for to know the stars of winter one must study them often in bitter cold weather, and we know that he was incapacitated at times by even mildly cold air, being unacclimated to low temperatures due to thin blood and too much indoor seclusion.

STARGAZER 1937 & 1972

P ole star, on this wintry night
O utward beck'ning is your light -
L overcraft, too, was wont to seek
A ffirmation of how weak,
R eally, is the race of Man
I n deciph'ring your commands.
S o know you your faithful "fans".
- Meade Frierson III



STALKING THE ELUSIVE NECRONOMICON
By Roger Bryant

Every once in a while you get a lucky break, when a solution to a problem turns up serendipitously in a place where you'd never expect it and where you certainly weren't looking for it. It's enough to make you believe in the supernatural.

I do believe in the supernatural, by the way. That's how I happened to find this clue. I was reading a book with the imposing title GIORDANO BRUNO AND THE HERMETIC TRADITION, by Frances A. Yates (Random House 1964). Bruno was an Italian philosopher of the late 16th century, a mystic of sorts and also (among many other things) one of the early defenders of Copernicus and the philosophy of science. He was condemned to death by the Inquisition, but his name lives in history by virtue of his role in turning the Renaissance into the scientific revolution.

But the most fascinating thing in the whole book, for me, was a few paragraphs about a book of magic, called PICATRIX, that just may have been a model for H. P. Lovecraft's NECRONOMICON.

Surely one of Lovecraft's most enduring concepts is that of the fabulously rare, jealously guarded and hideously dangerous manual of magic, the "forbidden" NECRONOMICON of the mad Arab, Abdul Alhazred. The great detail given in HPL's History and Chronology of the NECRONOMICON has convinced many that the book really exists, and others search for a similar book on which Lovecraft might have modelled his creation.

The skeptic might say that the "sources" of the NECRONOMICON are already in plain view. Grimoires, manuals of magic, were a dime a dozen in the Middle Ages; the idea of a horrible book appearing on rare occasions and raising havoc whenever it comes to light is a theme already used in Robert Chambers' KING IN YELLOW stories, which Lovecraft praised; and sinking R'lyeh, they say, had its roots in the legends of Atlantis and Mu. Anyway, there is no book whose contents resemble that of the NECRONOMICON; the Cthulhu Mythos proceeded largely from Lovecraft's imagination. All this may well be true, but the specific history of the NECRONOMICON is very similar to the story of another medieval magical tome.

The history of philosophy in medieval Europe is tangled and confused (in my opinion). After the collapse of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century, Europe began a thousand-year period in which the Roman Catholic Church exercised greater control over people's minds and spirits than any of the oft-changing secular governments. The Church in Europe held complete control, not only of religion, but of education, scholarship and the arts as well. And with this stranglehold on education, they controlled literature. The words "library" and "school" were all but synonymous with "church" and "monastery". And in this kind of situation, the Church found it possible to control the very course of thought and learning. Whatever did not agree with the Christian religion as interpreted by the Roman Church, was not permitted. Great bodies of knowledge and philosophy and of literature and poetry vanished from sight in Catholic Europe, and much of it was completely forgotten. Some of it has been lost forever to us.

Outside Christendom, however, the situation was very different. Moslem scholars retained great libraries of classical Greek and Roman literature and forwarded the progress of learning themselves. A great debt is owed to the thinkers of Islam, for they preserved much of value that might otherwise have perished. Beginning in the 12th century, Europeans returning from the Crusades began to bring bits of this learning home with them. Gradually, thinkers in Europe began to realize that there was a whole new world of speculation awaiting them, and in spite of the opposition of the Church, a vigorous trade in ideas sprang up between the West and East.

Among the books that made the journey, and found warm welcome in Europe, was a work called PICATRIX. It was originally written in Arabic, probably in the 12th century, by an unnamed author. It was translated into Latin (a poor translation severely edited) and this edition became popular in the Renaissance. There are references to a Spanish translation, but this version has not survived to the present day.

PICATRIX is divided into four books and is supplied with tables of contents which are of little help since the book has no real plan. The division into books and chapters is quite arbitrary; it is, in short, "a confused compilation of extracts from occult writings and a hodgepodge of innumerable magical and astrological recipes." The author states that he will tell "in simple language" what past sages have "concealed in cryptical words." If you wondered, be informed: he does not.

PICATRIX has a long and honorable philosophical heritage. It adheres to the gnostic philosophy, which postulates a cosmic All (which some call God) and seeks a way for man to gain union with the All and drink from it an infinite well of wisdom and righteousness. It also recognizes the prevailing astrological world-view of its age; the heavenly bodies represent spirits who control various powers and virtues, and who must be cultivated in order to gain any sort of success in this world. The way to influence the heavens is through talismanic magic, which is exhaustively described.

But the subject matter of PICATRIX is unimportant. It pales beside the themes of the NECRONOMICON, which came from Lovecraft's head. PICATRIX may be claimed as an "antecedent of Alhazred" not because of its contents, but because of its history.

Consider the history of PICATRIX. "Picatrix" himself is cited in the text, and the form of the title page that has come to us also names him as the author. But in fact, he probably did not write it all; it seems that he was one of the compilers or one of the sources. He is called "very wise", "most skilled in mathematics" and "very learned in the arts of necromancy." The 18th century writer Arpenius claimed that the book was compiled by "Norbar the Arab" in the 12th century; he gives no source, but the verdict of experts is that the date is as good as any. The Latin manuscripts extant state that it was translated from Arabic to Spanish in 1256, at the order of Alphonso the Wise, but there is no date given for the translation into Latin. There are no Latin manuscripts surviving from before the 15th century, though. The book seems to have never been printed and no 13th century Latin writers seem to have read it. It is true that Peter of Abano (b. 1250) was accused much later of having copied from it, but there is no real ground in his writing for this.

However, the book was certainly well-known by the 15th century. Pico della Mirandola (1463-94) who introduced practical Kabbalah to Renaissance philosophy, owned a copy; his nephew wrote an interpretation of it. A Cambridge doctor, writing about 1477, spoke of "Picatrix in his third book of magic." The fellow who accused Abano of plagiarizing it (in 1514) condemned it as un-Christian. Agrippa d'Aubigne told in a letter, about 1575, how Henry III of France had imported a number of magical books from Spain which he, Agrippa, had been allowed to see after promising not to copy them. The wide reputation of PICATRIX is shown by its appearance in Rabelais. The great satirist included among the characters of PANTAGRUEL (1532) "le reuerend pere en Diable Picatrix, recteur de la faculte diabolique."



1. This, and virtually all the information about PICATRIX, is from the Thorndike book cited later.

Does all this seem familiar? A book of magic written in Arabic, filtering into Europe, undergoing translations (sometimes poor ones) and being circulated rather surreptitiously among thinkers and "magicians"? It certainly sounded familiar to me. HPL's *Black Book* followed just such a history, although he dated its origin earlier and added some printing history.² The printing of the Latin translation was riddled with errors and deletions, but it was widely circulated. The *NECRONOMICON* is a disorganized book but it does have an internal multi-book structure.³

There are plenty of similarities between the histories of *PICATRIX* and the *NECRONOMICON*. Now wouldn't it be nice if I could show that Lovecraft had heard of the former?

Well, it is reasonable to suppose that he had at least heard of it in some way. He was familiar with the work of medieval and Renaissance philosophers and alchemists, as shown in his convincing background for *THE CASE OF CHARLES DEXTER WARD*. It is possible that he read of *PICATRIX* in connection with his wide reading in magic and alchemy. Moreover, he was familiar with Rabelais.⁴ If his edition of *PANTAGRUEL* had notes to explain the satiric references to the modern reader, he would have again come upon *PICATRIX*.

But it is not sufficient to show that Lovecraft might have seen some reference merely to the existence of *PICATRIX*. It must be shown that he had read of its history, and early enough that he could model the history of the *NECRONOMICON* after it.

And I cannot quite do it, but I can come close. To the best of my knowledge, the first detailed research into the history of *PICATRIX* in English was published in 1897. J. Wood Brown, writing in *AN INQUIRY INTO THE LIFE AND LEGEND OF MICHAEL SCOT*⁵ gave a brief summary of the book's history and expressed the hope that it would never be rendered into a modern language.⁶ It is conceivable, but not too awfully likely, that Lovecraft had read this book.

But the second volume of Lynn Thorndike's *A HISTORY OF MAGIC AND EXPERIMENTAL SCIENCE*, published in

1923, is the crucial source. This book contained a full chapter on *PICATRIX*, including full and complete details on its history. 1923...is that early enough?

The first reference to Alhazred in Lovecraft's fiction is in *The Nameless City*, written in 1921. The *NECRONOMICON* is first mentioned in *The Mound* (1922). But what I'm looking for here is not passing references to the name of the thing but for the complex history of the Book. In *The Festival* (1923) there is mention of a Latin translation by Olaus Wormius, but aside from this the first summary of the remarkable history of the *NECRONOMICON* is in the oft-quoted letter to Clark Ashton Smith, dated 27 November 1927. That leaves more than four years in which Lovecraft might have come across Thorndike's book.

But did he?

Darned if I know! *A HISTORY OF MAGIC AND EXPERIMENTAL SCIENCE* was a successful book right from the start. The first two volumes were published together in 1923.⁸ They were widely praised, widely reviewed, and widely purchased by libraries who were happy to find books on magic whose scholarship was a little more dependable than the naive credibility of Lewis Spence or the mystical incredibility of A. E. Waite. It seems to me that if Lovecraft heard of this book at all, he would have seized the opportunity to read it. It would have been right up his alley.

There is no mention of it, though, in *SELECTED LETTERS* published by Arkham House. But there are thousands of pages of letters in the hands of private collectors and in the Brown University collection. Lovecraft liked to tell his friends when he found a good book; *SELECTED LETTERS* are full of such off-the-cuff reviews.

I think it not unlikely that one of these days, someone will notice a reference to the Thorndike book among HPL's letters. When they do, I think we will have good evidence for the book on whose history the shunned *NECRONOMICON* was modelled.

You people who are fortunate enough to own some Lovecraft letters, or have a chance to browse in the Providence libraries - keep an eye out for it, will you?

2. It was common in the time of *PICATRIX* to date one's books a century or two or three earlier; it gave them added authority. There are grimoires which claim to be the work of King Solomon (referring blithely to such people as Charlemagne and the Apostle Paul) and the works of Hermes Trismegistus were supposed to be written by a contemporary of Moses.

Personally, I think HPL might have enhanced the idea of a terrible, forbidden book if he'd left out any mention of its being printed. A musty old manuscript, subject to God knows what errors on the part of some harried scribe, evokes a much darker image to me.

3. Or so we're told by Simon Orne, who was "confounded by ye VII. Booke of ye Necronomicon."

4. "Selections from Rabelais' shapeless and pungent *GARGANTUA* and *PANTAGRUEL* are timely," says HPL in *Suggestions for a Reading Guide*.

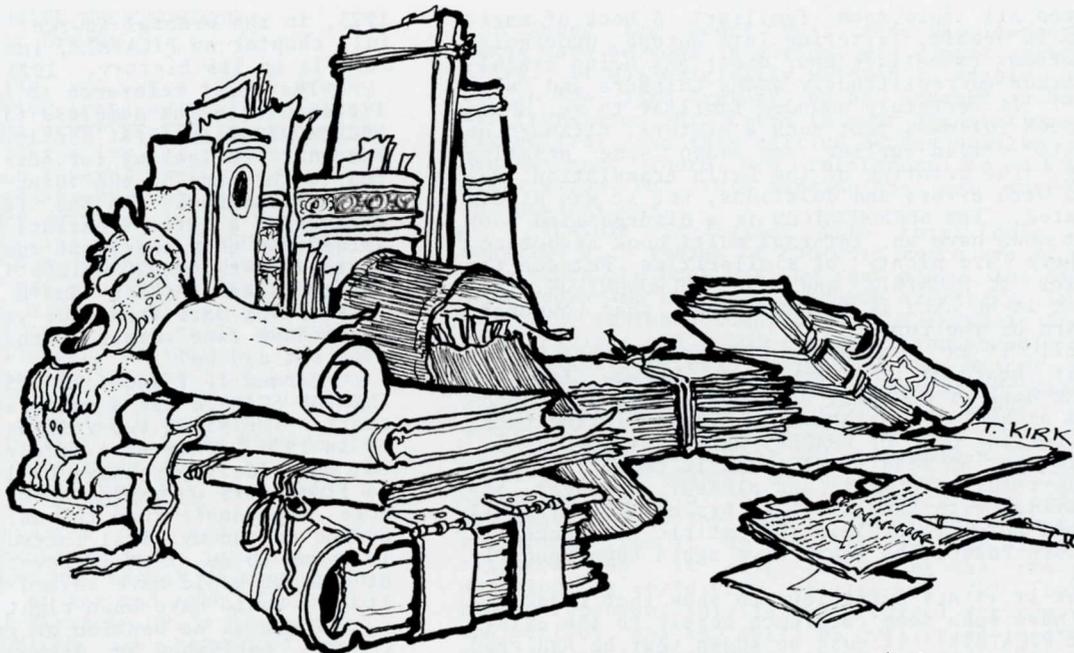
5. Michael Scot (1175-1234) was a Scottish astrologer and magician who spent many years in Moorish Spain studying the writings of Arab magicians. He eventually became court astrologer to Ferdinand II of Sicily. You can read about him in *Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Scot may or may not have seen *PICATRIX* but he was certainly familiar with the sources of that compilation, and helped pave the way for its acceptance when he returned to Christendom.

6. Mr. Brown's hopes were dashed. A German translation was published in *STUDIES OF THE WARBURG INSTITUTEV* Vol. 27, 1962.

7. Somewhere in his published letters Lovecraft mentions that Abdul Alhazred was a pen-name he adopted when he was a boy.

8. Further volumes appeared until the series concluded with Volume 8 in 1958. It's the finest work on the subject I've ever seen. Columbia University Press is the publisher.





NOTES ON COLLECTING LOVECRAFTIANA
By Stuart D. Schiff, Assoc. Ed.

The ultimate in fantasy collecting was best expressed by Robert Bloch in his classic story, The Man Who Collected Poe. Herein the mad Launcelot Canning had through necromantic processes obtained Poe himself whom he held prisoner and forced to write while in captivity. A collector cannot ask for more than that. Short of sorcery, though, what should one consider when collecting the works of Howard Phillips Lovecraft?

In order to do this properly, the collector must have an understanding of the value and desirability of the items by a literary entity. These items, of course, vary from writer to writer but one can make certain generalizations, nonetheless. The most desirable items are holographic manuscripts and drafts. Whereas typed manuscripts (more properly referred to as typescripts) are interesting, their value is often very small. Unless a typescript is signed and contains holographic corrections (the more the better) its value bibliographically is reduced and likewise its financial value. Only where an author is known not to use holograph in creating his works does an authentic typescript approach the value of what that author's handwritten manuscripts would be.

Other than a manuscript, the most desirable object for the collector is a first edition of a work. In almost every case, this is the most sought after and valuable presentation of the item, although some special editions prove an exception to this. Although many have tried to explain, there is no real reason for this value of the first impact of the work in permanent form (except just that - it is the first presentation thus to the literary public.) On every scale of book collecting, though, the top value of a work is assigned to the first edition and this is what the collector should seek in the great majority of cases.

One other important consideration to collectors is the author's autograph on a work, especially his own literary endeavors. The signature gives the work desirability and value through its association with the author. The value of an author's autograph varies greatly from author to author. The signed item itself and whether the author is still living (and thus able to create more autographs) have great bearing on the value of an autographed work.

With these generalizations before us, let us look specifically at the work of H. P. Lovecraft. As to holographic manuscripts - well, unless you're able

to buy Brown University, most of these are unavailable. There are some in private hands but their transfers are few and far between and I've only heard rumors of their availability for sale. However, there are a few typescripts available and their financial value is commensurate with whether Lovecraft's signature is upon them and the number of handwritten corrections. An unsigned typescript with only a correction or two does not have much value compared to one with numerous corrections. This should be borne in mind when preparing to make a sizeable investment in one.

About the best chance a collector has of obtaining Lovecraft-autographed material is to get one of his many postcards or letters. I've seen huge prices of up to \$50 per page on Lovecraft letters, which is to my mind a bit high for items which number in the hundreds, if not thousands. As much as I admire HPL's erudition (and I do recognize the importance of unpublished original thoughts) I do not feel prices quite so high are justified. Indeed, though, if one does desire letter material but cannot afford such, HPL did write a large number of postcards upon which his microscopic script allowed much to be said, and these are less expensive. Interestingly enough, HPL's full signature is not that common as it was his habit to sign most communications simply "Ech-Pi-El."

Since there are only 3 antemortem works of HPL fiction, only these may bear his autograph. They are THE SHUNNED HOUSE, THE CATS OF ULTHAR (a pamphlet) and THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH. In a letter to me, August Derleth said "...less than a dozen of them (THE SHUNNED HOUSE) were inscribed by Lovecraft and they all went to close friends. As to THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH, about 20 of these were inscribed." As to the booklet, my investigations have shown only one signed copy. I can say with authority then that signed copies of Lovecraft books are rare, expensive and extremely desirable.

I've pondered whether to categorize the Lovecraft fiction as to value, rarity or desirability and decided to compromise a bit by lumping them altogether and selecting a Big Three. They are THE OUTSIDER, THE SHUNNED HOUSE and THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH. Because of its place as the first Lovecraft story collection (although posthumous), the first Arkham House book, and the best known of HPL's publications, I would suggest THE OUTSIDER as the cornerstone of any serious Lovecraft collection. THE SHUNNED HOUSE (1928) was printed in an edition of less than 225 copies and many consider this to be Lovecraft's first book despite the fact that it was never really distributed. Those distributed went mostly as unbound sheets (R. H. Barlow is said to have bound seven copies).

These are the true first state of THE SHUNNED HOUSE and far more desirable to the HPL collector than the second and third states of the first edition sheets as released by Arkham House. The third of my HPL trilogy is THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH (1936). The first and only hardcover book truly distributed during HPL's lifetime and the other first book of HPL's, there were only about 200 of these bound. In summary, I feel all 3 of these are of equal importance to a collector of Lovecraftiana and form the tricapitate foundation for a solid HPL collection.

I would be remiss not to mention a fourth title which is almost equally valuable monetarily as each of the Big Three, but not a landmark such as a first book. The title is BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP and it contains the HPL fiction not published in THE OUTSIDER. It should rest proudly on a shelf with the Big Three.

On the level of the ultra-Lovecraft collection, there are three more titles of vast importance which include THE CATS OF ULTHAR, NOTES AND COMMONPLACE BOOK, and the Stickney memorial poetry pamphlet, HPL. THE CATS OF ULTHAR gathers its importance by being one of the only three separate pieces of antemortem fiction by Lovecraft and its press run of 42 copies does not add up to many available copies. NOTES AND COMMONPLACE BOOK was a 75 copy booklet stating HPL's ideas on story writing, analysis of the weird tale, etc. This was the first permanent edition of this most important essay. Thirdly, in my ultra-trilogy I included Corwin Stickney's memorial chapbook of poems by HPL. This is one of the most esoteric items in Jack Chalker's bibliography of books and pamphlets (DARK BROTHERHOOD, Arkham House, pp.215-224), there having been a scant 25 copies, distributed only to subscribers to the AMATEUR CORRESPONDENT. I've waived as to whether to include this since possibly only a Lovecraft collecting "nut" would find this of interest but I feel it was the first memorial to HPL, and it did contain the first publication of the now famous Virgil Finlay portrait of HPL so it has definite import and completes this trilogy.

Without specific comments I will list here the other HPL titles of importance which should be included in a bibliographically sound collection. Almost all the Arkham House titles now command high out-of-print prices. They include MARGINALIA (1944), THE LURKER AT THE THRESHOLD (1945), THE SUPERNATURAL HORROR IN LITERATURE (1945), SOMETHING ABOUT CATS AND OTHER PIECES (1949), THE SURVIVOR AND OTHERS (1957), THE SHUTTERED ROOM AND OTHER PIECES (1959), DREAMS AND FANCIES (1962), THE SHUNNED HOUSE (1962), COLLECTED POEMS (1963), AUTOBIOGRAPHY: SOME NOTES ON A NON-ENTITY (1963), and THE DARK BROTHERHOOD AND OTHER PIECES (1966). Still in print are SELECTED LETTERS I, SELECTED LETTERS II (1968), TALES OF THE CTHULHU MYTHOS (1969), THE HORROR IN THE MUSEUM AND OTHER REVISIONS (1970), 3 TALES OF HORROR (1967) and SELECTED LETTERS III (1971).

Let us look now at the amateur material by H. P. Lovecraft. These items are most difficult to classify with respect to value and are downright impossible to obtain in any great quantities. Brochures like THE MATERIALIST TODAY (1926), LOOKING BACKWARD (1935) and others are invaluable components to a superior Lovecraft collection but certainly not essential to a sound collection. These booklets and the original publications themselves such as THE TRYOUT, THE UNITED AMATEUR, THE CALIFORNIAN, etc. all are unique and important items if they contain first Lovecraft appearances and add value and distinction to a collection. However, these are largely frills to a collection-beautiful, unique and important but frills nonetheless; without the Big Three, having them would be like air conditioning without a house, a saddle without a horse, but they do add that special touch to a collection.

Before ending these notes, it would be unfair to leave out the collector of Lovecraft who is "just a reader" and desires all the fiction of Lovecraft but cannot afford the incredibly high prices of most of

the items mentioned previously. I purposefully left out the following 3 hardcover Arkham House titles (which I now include) from my list of important titles. They are DAGON, THE DUNWICH HORROR and AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS. They contain all the Lovecraft fiction from THE OUTSIDER and BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP and cost about \$350.00 less. And for those collectors whose purse strings are even tighter or who do not desire hardcover books, Beagle pocketbooks have reprinted almost all the Lovecraft fiction in about 5 softcover volumes.

In conclusion, I have tried to give some comprehensive bibliographic views toward collecting the works of HPL. I hope my ramblings have been of value and aid those many out there who would attempt to build a solid Lovecraft collection of import. Let me wish all of you the best of luck in these pursuits!!!

I am currently preparing articles and lists in the pursuit of nailing down and cataloging the whereabouts of autographed material by HPL. This includes signed books, manuscripts, letters (outside of those at Brown University). Anyone who can help me in these pursuits, please write me at the following address:

Stuart D. Schiff
55 Irma Drive
Oceanside, New York 11572



These notes presuppose that one has obtained bibliographic information on HPL from the several sources: THE DARK BROTHERHOOD (Arkham House 1966); NYCTALOPS or BIBLIOTHECA: H.P. LOVECRAFT (David Sutton's publication) of Eddy C. Bertin's lists, or the revisions of Jack Chalker's index forthcoming from Mirage Press.

Many of the younger Lovecraft addicts have recently been brought into contact with the Master through paperback collections, notably those of Lancer, Beagle and Ballantine, and find themselves interested in learning more about the man's work and what others have said about him.

There are two ways for the confirmed Lovecraftist to obtain desired material: either purchase the originals or photocopy them. In the 1940s through the 1960s much Lovecraft material was obtainable in volumes published by Arkham House and edited by August W. Derleth and, initially at least, Donald Wandrei. However, the average number of copies of any one edition of collected Lovecraftiana never exceeded 3,500 and was sometimes as low as 1,200. Consequently many of these volumes are now out-of-print (o.p.), obtainable only in the rare book market, if they may be obtained at all. Because of the hold which Lovecraft has on many of his readers, these "reminiscence books" have often been purchased as keepsakes so that for the most part, they may be expected to be out of the marketplace for good.

Many must, therefore, give up the wish for originals and devote themselves to the collection of reproductions of the o.p. materials or their study at an institutional or public library. It is usually possible to obtain photographic copies at ten cents a page or so, which is sufficient for short pieces but hardly practical for a volume of several hundred pages. The recently out-of-print Arkham House editions may be available from various book dealers at less than the reproduction costs of a library copy.

Much Lovecraftian material may be found at Brown University Library, together with many of Lovecraft's manuscripts and letters. This material is non-circulating and must be photocopied there, at a considerable increase in cost.

The next richest source of published Lovecraft material is the Library of Congress. LoC has been very helpful in sending my local university library some of the books I needed. However, when the material could be found at other libraries, LoC will not send their copy but will instead inform one where the book may be found. Because of this policy, LoC is not a panacea for all book problems, although these librarians will help one locate the book in question.

The following is a sampling of the more interesting Lovecraftiana and some sources to be contacted for interlibrary loan:

One of the most essential books is THE DARK BROTHERHOOD. In addition to the bibliography mentioned above, it contains other articles and interpretations of Lovecraft. The libraries of Duke, Emory and Louisiana State Universities have, and will loan, copies.

Emphasizing the rarer material - there are two editions of THE COMMONPLACE BOOK, which differ interestingly but not substantially. The first (Futile Press, Lakeport, California 1938) was edited by an HPL friend, R. M. Barlow. Seventy-five copies were printed in hard-bound edition and LoC has No. 38. The other edition (annotated by August Derleth) can be found as a part of THE SHUTTERED ROOM AND OTHER PIECES (Arkham House 1959). This has been long out-of-print as well, but the Duke University Library has the book and will send it upon request.

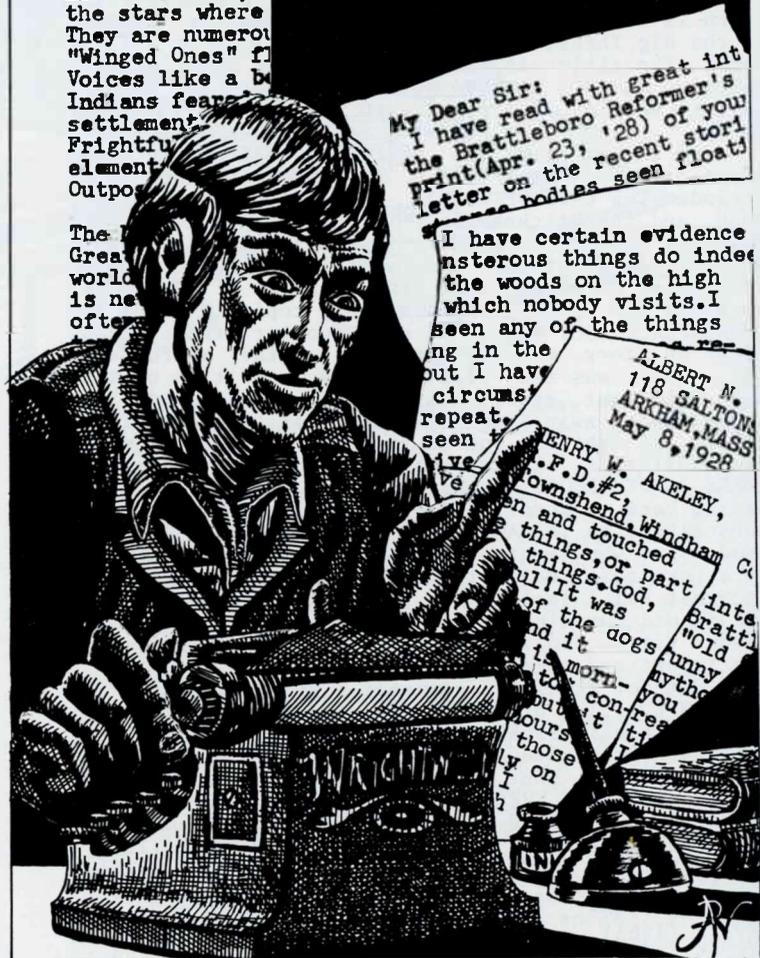
Some of the books which I needed in preparing my

THE PENNACOOK MYTH

There are many in New England India these tales are most are singular Tribal legends of "the old ones" These creatures live on earth, in the stars where They are numerous "Winged Ones" fl Voices like a be Indians feared settlement Frightful element Outpost

The Great world is ne after

BRATTLEBORO REFORMER



dissertation could not be sent because of their fragility, so I had to have the material I wanted copied at the university. Such was the case of BEYOND THE WALL OF SLEEP (Arkham House 1943). Fortunately, some of the material in this book has been reprinted in more accessible volumes so that I could keep the library copying fees to a minimum.

The Asa G. Chandler Library at Emory University has a copy of MARGINALIA (Arkham House 1944), edited by Derleth and Wandrei. They will lend it, although their copy is well worn and fragile.

Lovecraft's long essay, Supernatural Horror in Literature, as published by Ben Abramson of New York in 1945 is in the Library of the University of Illinois. This edition is exactly the same version as is printed in DAGON AND OTHER MACABRE PIECES (Arkham House 1965), except for the short introduction by Derleth, which may be of some help.

THE LURKER AT THE THRESHOLD (Arkham House 1945) is available at the Enoch Pratt Library in Baltimore, Maryland; however, it has been rendered much more accessible of late by the Beagle Books paperback edition.

A volume containing minor fiction available elsewhere but other material as yet unreprinted is SOMETHING ABOUT CATS AND OTHER PIECES (Arkham House 1949). The well-worn copy at Duke University Library will be made available upon request.

The Indiana University Library has DREAMS AND FANCIES (Arkham House 1962). This book may possibly be of some use itself, although the stories in it are reproduced elsewhere. There is a 50 page section of Lovecraft letter excerpts containing specimens from the to-be-published 1932-1937 period. All of the other letters except one have been printed in the first 3 volumes of SELECTED LETTERS OF H. P. LOVECRAFT (Arkham House 1965, 1968, and 1971).

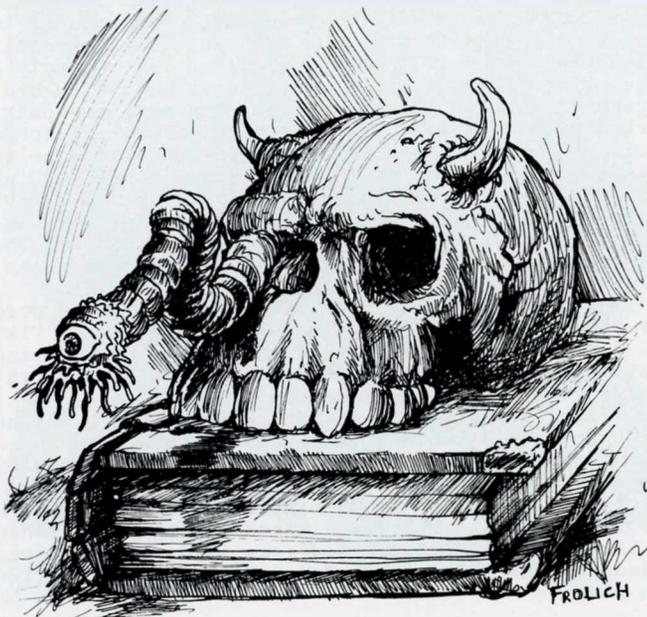
Two books that I have found of special interest are by August Derleth. One of these, the nearest thing to a biography of Lovecraft, is entitled H.P.-L.: A MEMOIR. It too was published by Ben Abramson in New York in 1945. Its length is 120 pages and the copy which I used is owned by the University of North Carolina library. The other Derleth volume is much smaller - a forty-two page chapbook, in fact. Its contents include articles on the Mythos, the unfinished manuscripts and the writing habits. The book also includes the brief but informative Barlow Journal and 4 Lovecraft letters. It is SOME NOTES ON H. P. LOVECRAFT (Arkham House 1959), and both the Yale University and University of Indiana libraries have the book, the latter permitting its loan.

Much of the interesting material on Lovecraft has been published in magazines over the last 35 years. Yale University stocks Joseph Payne Brennan's MACABRE and also has the Howard Phillips Lovecraft Memorial Symposium (in the Spring, 1958 issue of FRESCO), edited by Stephen Eisner. The symposium includes several articles by friends of HPL. Another good source for the symposium is Northwestern University Library, which also has THE READER & THE COLLECTOR.

Other libraries in Providence than Brown University's can be consulted and there is, when all else fails, the New York Public Library. They charge a minimum fee for duplication, so I recommend that all articles needed be secured at one time, if one must use their services.

One final note: I found an informative series of Lovecraft articles in H.P.L.: MEMOIRS, CRITIQUES AND BIBLIOGRAPHIES, edited by George T. Wetzel. It contains 84 pages, most of which are useful; the LoC has a copy and will lend it. (Ed Note: elsewhere in this magazine is a revised and expanded version of Mr. Wetzel's article on the Cthulhu Mythos from this book.)

This is not an extensive gathering of material by any means but what is here may, I hope, prove useful to some Lovecraft aficionados who are in the midst of discovering more about the complex, creative mind of HPL.



TO MOUNT SINAI

(Dedicated to George F. Haas)

Grim mountain, on your lowering slopes I stand,
Cowed by the sound of thunder in the skies,
While your dark crown of cloud spreads o'er the land
And stirs my mind to yet more dark surmise . . .

Cowed by the sound of thunder in the skies,
I sense beneath your flanks those monstrous Things
That shall one day awaken and arise
And - oh, to stifle these mad visionings!

I sense beneath your flanks those monstrous Things,
Grim with a hatred vast as outer space,
That lurk and strain to burst their prisonings
And rise in power to smite the human race.

Grim with a hatred vast as outer space,
Those sleeping Powers shall one day wake and rise
To smash this Earth as with a giant mace
And strew its shards across the darkened skies.

- Richard L. Tierney

MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS

Grim ranks of frozen spires rear high to face
The world like walls that guard far lands of dream -
White, ivory fangs whose jagged summits seem
To lance the skies and pierce the fringe of space.
No life survives in that Antarctic clime,
And yet the demon wind that pipes and shrieks
Among those spires is like a voice that speaks
Of evil things in accents old as time.

No man has seen beyond that range of snow
The vast, black city sprawling grim and cold,
Yet dreamers speak of monstrous things of old
That ooze through vaulted corridors below,
While some have warned of what may rise again
From the black gulfs to face the world of men.

- Richard L. Tierney

MANY-COLUMNED IRAM (Based upon a legend from THE ARABIAN NIGHTS)

Upon what ethereal scenes
of vanished splendor have I gazed?
What wild, unhallowed, lost desmesnes
form brief immemorial dreams
That haunt my mundane days? What means
that horrific hand etched on beams
Of porphyry whose purple sheens
lie dulled from sand and time, and mazed
With necromantic tale of queens
who sleep in dust beneath the hazed
And shrouded moon? - a tale that keeps
its lost lament in the pale gleams
Of starlight. Yet, one man careens
into that land of mad extremes,
And reads the tale on pillared screens
and reels out in the desert - crazed.

Doomed now to oblivious night,
lost Iram rusts, ever-autumned.
Rare, exotic, her golden sight
paled to mere insignificance
Allah's paradise, holy-white -
her palaces, many-columned,
Set thick with gems whose blinding light
lit all with golden radiance.
Enraged at man's audacious might,
did Allah with horrific hand
Crush the pomp and power of this sight
and smite to shards this wondrous land?

- Walter Shedlofsky

CTHULHU IN MESOAMERICA
By Richard L. Tierney

One of my favorite Cthulhu Mythos stories is The Mound, a short novel conceived by Zealia Bishop and published with her name appearing as that of the sole author. Yet we all know that this tale is primarily the work of H. P. Lovecraft. It certainly reads like one of his stories and he obviously took a very great interest in it - so great an interest, in fact, that it now stands not only as an incorporation into the Mythos, but as a major extension of it. According to Derleth's introduction to THE HORROR IN THE MUSEUM, Frank Belknap Long also had a hand in it.

The interesting thing about this story is that it really does tie in very well with the religions of the ancient Indians who inhabited Mexico and Central America - the Aztecs, Toltecs, Teotihuacanos, Zapotecs and Mayans - just as Bishop and Lovecraft imply. Perhaps one or both of these authors had a very detailed knowledge of Mesoamerican religions, or perhaps the correlation is due mostly to chance; I do not know. Still, it is interesting to observe some of the correlations.

Francis T. Laney, in his long-out-of-print article, The Cthulhu Mythos: A Glossary, equates Cthulhu with the Aztec god Huitzilopochtli. I have never been able to discover where he might have read anything that would lead him to make this correlation. Huitzilopochtli was the patron god of the Aztecs who led them to the "promised land", the island in the center of Lake Tenochtitlan where they founded a capital, much as Yahweh led the Hebrews to Canaan. He has nothing to do with water or "Deep Ones" - he seems primarily a war god - again like Yahweh - and he was born of a virgin-mother goddess. Perhaps the final letters of his name, "chtli", have something to do with Laney's correlation. At any rate, he would seem to be more likely one of the spawn of Yog-Sothoth, who is known to beget his progeny on mankind...

But in The Mound we read that the humans who occupy blue-litten K'n-yan, which land lies somewhere far within the earth beneath the southwestern United States, carried on trade or contact of some sort with the surface Indians of centuries ago. The people of K'n-yan worshipped Yig and Cthulhu, and their images often occupied the same temple. Furthermore, it is definitely stated that Yig is the prototype of the great Mesoamerican god Quetzalcoatl, the "feathered serpent."

Now, the interesting thing is that there is a very important archaeological site in central Mexico where Quetzalcoatl was evidently worshipped alongside another god who bears some striking resemblances to Great Cthulhu. This site is Teotihuacan, a huge ancient city which was abandoned long before the Aztecs or even the Toltecs came to dominate central Mexico, and the god is the one that the Aztecs later came to call Tlaloc, the Rain God.

Teotihuacan, in the Aztec language, means "place of the gods." The pyramids there are so huge that the Aztecs evidently thought they had been reared by the gods in ancient times. The largest one is as big around at the base as the great pyramid of Khufu in Egypt. But the most interesting thing pertaining to this study is that one of the lesser pyramids, a famous one often called the "Pyramid of Quetzalcoatl," contains carvings along its sides of two deities, one of which is obviously a serpent and the other some strange being with perfectly round eyes and suggestions of tentacles around his mouth. These deities are supposed to represent the prototypes of the later Aztec divinities, Quetzalcoatl and Tlaloc. But one of the most amazing things about this pyramid-temple is that along its base, beneath the carvings of the two gods, are bas-reliefs depicting *marine* motifs - and this despite the fact that Teotihuacan is several hundred miles from the sea. The designs are primarily of snails, scollops and other mollusks.

After the Teotihuacanos (whose city seems to have been mysteriously abandoned along with a great many others around 800 A.D.) the Toltecs dominated the central Mexican plateau. Their principal god was Quetzalcoatl, but they, too, worshipped Tlaloc. They depict him on their vases and urns as a more human-like being than did the Teotihuacanos, but his eyes are still huge, round and expressionless and there are suggestions of tentacle-like appendages around his mouth. The Toltecs' capital city, strangely enough, is called "Tula"!

Still later, in Aztec times, Tlaloc was worshipped atop the greatest pyramid in Tenochtitlan (Mexico City) alongside Huitzilopochtli rather than Quetzalcoatl, who now had a pyramid of his own. Quetzalcoatl came to be worshipped on circular, truncated pyramids, rather than those in the shape of a coiled serpent.

It was supposed by the Aztecs that there was not merely one "great" Tlaloc, but many subservient ones as well, especially four who ruled over the four quarters of the earth. They were somehow considered to be associated with frogs - a rather striking association considering some of Derleth's stories in which croaking frogs herald the coming of Cthulhu or his minions. Students of Aztec mythology suppose that the croaking frogs announce the advent of rain and that this is how batrachians were first associated with Tlaloc, the rain god. But HPL students know better, I'm sure

When we consider other Mesoamerican cultures, the resemblances continue to hold: the Zapotec culture, well inland, depicts its rain-god, Cocijó, as fundamentally human, yet with a queerly long and tentacle-like proboscis and with huge ear-rings that resemble the round, staring eyes of Tlaloc; the Totonacs on the Gulf coast have temples to Quetzalcoatl in the truncated shape, roughly like a coiled serpent. But the really striking correlations occur when we study the coastal Mayas of the Yucatan Peninsula.

The Mayan rain god, the equivalent of the Aztec Tlaloc, is called Chac. He is depicted on the limestone-built temples of the region as a being possessing not only round, staring, expressionless eyes, but with a coiling, tentacle-like proboscis exhibiting suction discs on both sides! In the recently-excavated city of Dzibilchaltun there is actually a representation of Chac showing him with several long tentacles protruding from the side of his head - tentacles with suction-discs.

In the long-abandoned city of Chichen-Itza, the Mayans used to sacrifice young men and maidens to Chac by throwing them into a deep well, or "cenote," which was sacred to the god. Yucatan is entirely a huge, flat plain of limestone, honeycombed with underground caverns winding off to the sea, and pock-marked with "cenotes" or wells marking the collapsed roofs of water-filled caves. Chac was supposed to live at the bottom of the particular "cenote" at Chichen-Itza. If the thing the Mayans actually worshipped was one of the squidlike minions of Cthulhu, it could have easily oozed in from the ocean via the underground waterways draining the limestone peninsula

Another striking correlation: the Mayan word for the serpent-being was not Quetzalcoatl but "Ik" or "Ix" - a word identical to "Yig", considering that the Mayans had no phonetical alphabet but rather a complex system of hieroglyphics!

Finally, returning to the Aztecs, there was an earth-god Tlaltecuthli, who was represented as a huge frog or toad. He is considered to be one of the older gods in Aztec mythology, antedating Quetzalcoatl and Tlaloc among others. Students of HPL who have read The Mound will recall that the worship of Tsathoggua, the toad-god, (see illustration), preceded the worship of Yig and Cthulhu in blue-litten K'n-yan.

I could make some more correlations here, like equating Cthugha with Huehuetectli, the fire-god of the Aztecs, or Nyarlathotep with Tezcatlipoca, who is the god of Evil and takes many forms including that of a jaguar, or Hastur with Mictlantecutli, Lord of the Dead, whose association with the *dios murcielago* or bat-god seems similar to Hastur's rule over the bat-winged Byakhee. But I won't detail all these associations; I think the reader can see the technique I am using. It is probably the technique theologians everywhere have always used: first establish your conclusions and then correlate them with your data.

This is not to say, though, that there are not some very striking correlations between the Cthulhu and Mesoamerican mythos. I have tried this same technique on other existing religions such as the Incan, the Polynesian and the Hebrew-Christian; in all cases, I have found striking correlations here and there; but to date I have found none more striking than the relationship between these two.

Did HPL or Zealia Bishop deliberately incorporate elements of central American myth into the structure of the lore of Cthulhu? I think it quiet possible. Perhaps someone can document this more fully some day.



PICKMAN'S PASSING

Men expressed their relief instead of their grief
 When Pickman at last passed away.
 The service was read by his brother Ned
 But few tears were shed that day.
 They buried him quick for he had been sick
 With a malady strange to behold;
 No mortician would dare bestow time or care
 On a corpse so corruptibly old.

All through the black night were sounds of a fight
 And howling deep down in the ground.
 Some men of strong nerve were brought to the verge
 Of collapse, for in searching the town
 They had discovered some fiend had uncovered
 All the graves that near Pickman's lie,
 And it was said something pushed up the dead
 From *below!* Had Pickman passed by?

- Ralph Wollstonecraft Hedge



Last summer at Dallascon Robert Bloch announced that Rod Serling's NIGHT GALLERY would be using at least one adaptation of a story by H.P. Lovecraft. I can recall that my feelings at the time were mixed. I was glad that the media were at last awakening to the potential of HPL's work. (Prior to this there had been only a couple of obscure radio plays and the four more-or-less Lovecraftian films.) On the other hand, I was apprehensive that the adaptations would not do credit to their source.

Last year the six episodes of NIGHT GALLERY done as one third of NBC's THREE IN ONE were all passable. I have particularly fond memories of The Dead Man, The Black Bag, and especially of the excellent adaptation of Blackwood's The Doll. Thus when the season started my hopes were fairly high. They fell as the season progressed and I watched Jack Laird and company fall short of even fair quality again and again.

The first shadow of HPL to appear was in the short (Thank Yogi!) segment, Professor Peabody's Last Lecture. Done as an intentional farce it emerged as a fairly amusing effort, loaded with "in" jokes that must have caused vast confusion in the dens of thousands of middle Americans. The skit consisted entirely of a lecture by a Professor Peabody on the "Cthulhu Religion," which he dismisses as pure tripe. After running through the entire pantheon of Great Old Ones (astoundingly accurately...there were only a couple of mistakes) and displaying a copy of the famous black book he pays the price for speaking the name of Hastur aloud.

Only a few weeks after this, on December the first, the first of the Lovecraft adaptations appeared. By the end of the show I was praying that it would be the last. Pickman's Model was pretty much of a disappointment; adapted by Alvin Sapinsley, the segment ran for about thirty minutes and starred Bradford Dillman and Louise Sorrell. And I can hear everyone who didn't see the show asking what role Miss Sorrell would play in a story with all male characters. The answer lies in the ancient revered belief that a pretty face adds audience appeal. It is the same ancient and revered belief that gave us Sandra Dee in THE DUNWICH HORROR.

The addition of a female character, a Miss Goldsmith, was fairly easy to overlook. It allowed a much better development of Richard Upton Pickman than a male character would have. She is a young art student in one of Pickman's classes who is drawn to him, despite the obvious disinterest on his part. She pursues him as far as his studio where she meets with a ghastly set of adventures and views Pickman's other unspeakable paintings before the artist himself disappears in the arms of an eldritch night-thing.



Doesn't sound too bad? It was. The substitution for Lovecraft's brooding, gathering horror of an agile stuntman in a rather ludicrous ghoulish suit is all but unforgiveable. Only the scenes where Miss Sorrell enters the house and begins a slow walk toward the attic studio hold any of the tension of HPL's story. The painting around which the tale centers, "Ghoul Feeding," is excellent, but the attic pictures range from crude sketches to an almost hilarious "family portrait."

It is this portrait which, I think, most upset me. Where Lovecraft achieved rather subtly the revelation of Pickman's inhuman ancestry (completely inhuman...he was a changeling...not a hybrid) NIGHT GALLERY chose to reveal it blatantly in a portrait of Pickman, a human woman and a ghoul, all posed as though for a family photograph. To add to this effrontery, Mr. Sapinsley had to point out to all the mindless tube-addicts, what has been obvious for at least ten minutes, in Miss Sorrell's final line, "He painted what he saw...and what he was!!!"

To be completely fair, I must allow that the show did have some good parts: some of the build-up, the discussion of certain unsettling legends of antiquity relating to tunnels honeycombing the bedrock of the city, leading to many basements, to graveyards and to the sea. The opening sequence was good also where two men find Pickman's lost studio along with "Ghoul Feeding." I assumed at the time that this was to be used to provide a first person narrative and was disappointed when it turned out to be only a motivation for the "clever" ending where the two men are on the verge of freeing a snarling ghoul. Altogether though, the whole effort made me most un-anxious for more televised Lovecraft.

Within 5 minutes after the end of that night's program I knew that my hopes were in vain. The previews showed scenes from a story that could only be HPL's Cool Air. A brief hope flared again within me. Maybe next week... It was easier to have hopes for Cool Air since it is not a particularly Lovecraftian story; that is, it does not involve inhuman beings or unwieldy special effects. I thought that, surely, if any HPL story can be done right on TV, this will be it.

Cool Air was well done. It is probably one of the best things to appear on NIGHT GALLERY this season. The framing sequence of a person visiting a lonely, wind-swept graveyard was used effectively to allow Barbara Rush to narrate the tale in first person. The pacing of the show was slow and powerful with none of the foreshadowing that weakened Pickman's Model. Serling's adaptation was almost completely faithful to the original (with the inevitable feminine substitution, of course).

Only at the end did the effort fall short of greatness. The form of the corpse when it is revealed is just not all that horrifying, certainly not the "pool of foulness" that HPL described. I realize that this inability to make things too horrible is an inherent failing of a mass medium like television. Protest over excess horror was one of the factors that killed WAY OUT, probably the best Weird Tales series ever to be televised, but last season, in Leiber's The Dead Man, NIGHT GALLERY managed to create a truly shuddersome corpse. This is, however, a weak complaint.

The other flaw at show's end is the gimmick that Serling, or his producer, felt was necessary. This was a shot of the man's grave in the end of the framing sequence. Refusing to end the tale with the end of Miss Rush's excellent narration, someone insisted on a shot of the gravestone with two death dates, apparently wanting to insure that there was no one in the audience who did not understand the point of the story.

I suppose that we all have certain HPL stories that we'd like to see adapted to film. For my part, I would like to see The Haunter of the Dark done properly. There are rumors of film versions of other Lovecraft stories, and I suppose that the possibility of future NIGHT GALLERY adaptations exists. We can only pray to whatever dark gods rule the mass media that they are done right

LOVECRAFT'S FOLLIES: A Play in Two Acts by James Schevill. Chicago, The Swallow Press 1971. 90 pp., \$2.00, paperbound. Review by J. Vernon Shea.

At present James Schevill teaches writing at Providence's Brown University, which presumably accounts for his interest in HPL. Brown's theatrical group, the Trinity Square Repertory Company (apparently not so "square" as its title would indicate), asked Schevill, who had acquired somewhat of a reputation as a poet and playwright, to write a play for them; so what more natural than for Schevill to turn to HPL, Brown's chief (perhaps only) literary glory, for his inspiration?

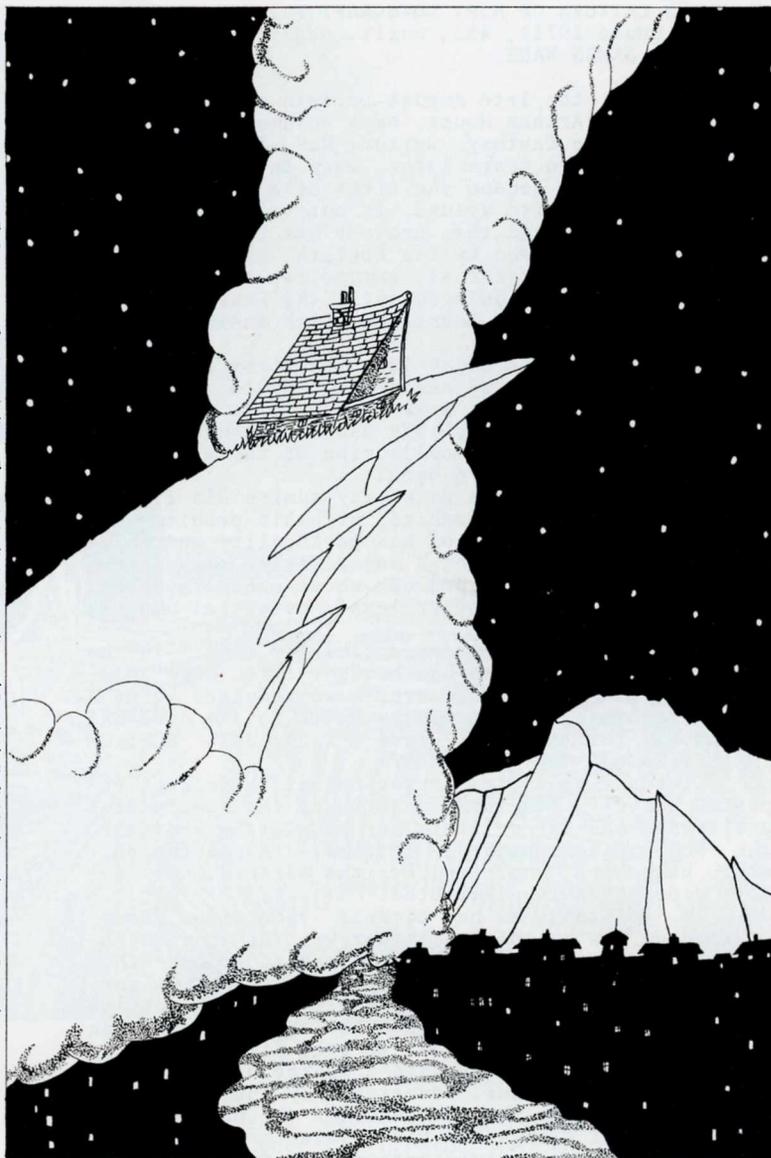
Lovecraft's Follies premiered from March 10 to April 11 of 1970; but news of its existence percolated very slowly through the circle of Lovecraft's fans and former correspondents, and the news apparently was not good, not good at all. Cries of "Sacrilege!" and "Lese majeste!" were heard. "'Lovecraft's Follies' indeed!", Robert Bloch sniffed. Almost everyone, without even knowing the contents of the play, bristled at the title, for Lovecraft, of course, was much too prim and circumspect in his behavior ever even to contemplate committing any "follies." The fans might have gone along with the title, Lovecraft's Idiosyncrasies, for everyone knows he had more than his share of those, but *follies*...?

I must admit that I came to the reading of the play prepared to dislike it. "One would wish that Mr. Schevill had written the play with more than just a superficial knowledge of the works of H.P. Lovecraft," was a sentence I had already prepared to use. As it turned out, apparently Schevill *does* know quite a lot about HPL; I was startled in Scene 1 of Act I by the action of HPL, aged 2, of slapping his father on the leg and shouting, "Papa, you look just like a young man!", for this episode was described in just such language in one of HPL's letters to me.

Lovecraft's Follies is *not* a play about HPL at all; Lovecraft is used only as a point of departure, a symbol. The central character is a scientist-artist named Stanley Millsage, who has suddenly left his job in Huntsville, Alabama at the Marshall Space Center to come to Providence, where he has created a sculpture of HPL out of old WEIRD TALES covers. We do not learn until late in the second act that the reason for his flight was that one night precisely like the protagonist in Ray Bradbury's story, *The Pedestrian*, he had decided to take a walk and during his walk he had tripped over some construction work, whereupon he was immediately surrounded by policemen and later taken to a mental hospital for two weeks for "observation." Like Oppenheimer, whose trial as a security risk is re-enacted in the second act, Millsage has become "suspect"; and the Space Center enlists the aid of Millsage's wife and his brother Paul to try to bring him back to his "senses." One wondered why Oppenheimer's trial was brought into the play, apparently so willy-nilly, until he read this explanation from Schevill himself: "I was born and grew up in Berkeley, California, in the midst of the exciting, major discoveries in nuclear physics. E. O. Lawrence, the head of the Radiation Laboratory and the inventor of the cyclotron was a neighbor, and Oppenheimer lived on the hill above our house."

Millsage is not supposed to be a fictional representation of HPL; indeed, he is the antithesis of Lovecraft, for at one point in the play he says, "I don't happen to be the kind of person who can live alone. I don't like to look at myself in the mirror. I like to look at a woman. It's a softer reflection." But HPL's work fascinates Millsage, who tells his wife: "What I am trying to say to you is that maybe we have to go through the fantastic world to get to our own reality." Possibly, as James Wade claims, the work of someone who died in 1937 has little pertinence to the problems of the modern world; but James Schevill apparently did not think so, and this reviewer doesn't either.

Lovecraft's Follies may bewilder a lot of readers. Like all plays, it cries out for theatrical representation, for it is a satiric, surrealistic extravaganza-with-music that demands ingenious staging. It is very much "with it": like *Hair*, like *Lenny*, it is an exciting new stage concept. Perhaps it ultimately



MIKE SCOTT

fails, but one would need to see it upon a stage to determine that, rather than just a reading. Obviously, it is not great art, but then how many works of the modern theatre are?

A detailed synopsis of the plot would only confuse the reader. For the Lovecraft buff, there are some "goodies": perhaps only crumbs, but *good* crumbs. There is a very vivid scene in which HPL, aged 2, is forced to climb upon a table and recite Mother Goose verses while his mother berates his father for his syphilis. The end of the second scene is utterly chilling, with the actors suddenly chanting the familiar sinister Cthulhu chants and with one scene from *The Rats in the Walls* re-enacted. And later on Schevill mocks at HPL's theories of Nordic supremacy in a fairly feeble skit in which Tarzan and Chocmah are captured by the Green Goddess and HPL urges Tarzan to "think white."

But, as noted previously, the play is not primarily about HPL but about man's insecurity in a world of technology. As with almost everyone else, Schevill's attitude toward technology is a bit ambivalent: he marvels at man's space achievements (and provides a really superior re-enactment of the moon landing), but is aghast at some of technology's methods and its debasing effect upon man's spirit. And his play, with all its manifold defects, should provide a stimulating evening in the theatre or a provocative reading experience.

In 1946, the late August Derleth announced publication by Arkham House of a volume of selected letters of the fantasy writer, H.P. Lovecraft, his mentor. Nineteen years later, when the book finally appeared, it had become the first of a set of three; now that the third volume is out, the total has swelled to five, and the project has become a posthumous one supervised by the Derleth heirs, completion of which - so far as anyone can determine at this point - may be delayed until the Lovecraft centenary in 1990, or at least the 50th anniversary of his death in 1987.

Derleth had the right idea the first time - one book, carefully edited and pruned, would have been enough. The five-volume set, amounting to a probable 2,000 pages, will be far less useful and enjoyable a monument than a single collection of three or four hundred pages would have been.

After all, as much as we may admire his fiction and his intellect, sympathize with his problems, or respect certain aspects of his personality and philosophy, Lovecraft was not a major figure such as Emerson or James, every word of whose ephemera is apparently of interest, or at least potential use, to the specialists.

And now that Derleth, a fabulous miner in the Lovecraftian depths who has brought forth more gold, and dross, than HPL would ever have imagined he produced, is himself gone, who is there to sit down and refine all this material into a manageable BEST OF THE LETTERS OF H.P. LOVECRAFT?

Like any prolific correspondent, Lovecraft repeated himself, sometimes describing the same places and events (he cared little for people) in virtually the same words in several letters. Though the epistles have been shortened by the editors, not all this repetition is eliminated.

In addition, as he himself recognized, Lovecraft used his voluminous letter-writing to formulate his own views and attitudes, and to bounce them off his various correspondents in a slow-motion version of the give-and-take of face-to-face discussion denied him by his self-imposed isolation. (More than one of these letters comes to over fifty pages in print!) All this presupposes a degree of prolixity.

This third volume, covering only the years 1929 to 1931, represents the emergence of the mature thinker. He still clings to his insular preference for Nordic-Anglo-Saxon civilization, but finally admits that, rationally, this is simply because of the circumstances of his birth and environment, not due to any intrinsic values, which must necessarily be denied by a scientific analysis.

He still judges "primitives" as inferior, including the negroid race; but this is probably unavoidable in a natural snob raised on the pseudo-scientific racism of Gobineau and Houston Chamberlain, at a time when they were still taken seriously.

The respect which he grants, however grudgingly, to Orientals, Slavs, Italians and Jews as members of high cultures sits oddly with the fulminations against minority groups that still strew these pages. But he goes on record quite clearly as opposing not only miscegenation but any close contact whatever between differing cultural groups, on the grounds that such groups are fundamentally and irreconcilably hostile to one another - an observation which not much that happens in the U.N. today would tend to disprove.

There are passages of amusing whimsy and exalted prose in these pages; of warm nostalgia and penetrating observation. But it is not disparaging Lovecraft's pre-eminence as a letter-writer - earned in terms of sheer volume alone! - to point out that he has some epistolary quirks that can become annoying. As if to compensate for his ornate 18th century sty-



le and archaic spelling, he regularly throws in frivolous passages of current (now dated) slang or crude patois, a device that probably didn't bother the recipients of the letters, but which palls over hundreds of pages.

But taken all in all, the real man is there in these letters, concealed as he may be in mannerisms and Mandarinism: this complex blend of neurasthenic invalid and Nordic superman; of arrogant poseur and lonely misfit; of cosmic fantasist and rigorous scientific materialist; of scholar, scoffer, and seeker; of life hater, and lover who never found object worthy of his love, or who never found himself worthy to offer love, save in the indirect guise of these torrential, compulsive letters which both clamor for and repel that affection which was, after all (as he never realized) simply his due as a human being.

THE DERLETH MYTHOS
By Richard L. Tierney

(Illo by Virgil Finlay for Derleth's *The Return of Hastur* from *WEIRD TALES*; original loaned by Steve Leventhal of the Haunted Bookshop (see last page) and permission to reprint granted by Mrs. Beverly S. Finlay)

The "Cthulhu Mythos" is largely the invention of, not H.P. Lovecraft, but August Derleth.

Lovecraft, of course, did the groundwork. He invented most of the gods, demons and servitors - and, above all, he provided the spooky, gothic atmosphere necessary to the genre. Yet it seems to me that it was Derleth who established the concept of a "Mythos" to comprehend all the Lovecraftian concepts.

Lovecraft himself seems never to have entertained such a concept. His outlook on the supernatural and the cosmos seems to have been basically dynamic - it was constantly developing through out his life. Derleth's attitude on the other hand was largely static; he appreciated Lovecraft's concepts but cared less for developing them than for systematizing them. His efforts were interesting but less than successful from an aesthetic point of view. This is not to say that Derleth was unaesthetic but merely that, in my opinion, his basic outlook was non-Lovecraftian and his attempt to carry on the Lovecraft tradition left out something vital.

Derleth probably coined the term "Cthulhu Mythos." If he did not, he certainly developed the attitude that goes with that term. Consider the basic premises of the "Mythos": a cosmic cluster of "good guys" (Elder Gods) protecting the human race from the "bad guys" (Ancient Old Ones) who are striving to do us (humanity) in! Derleth maintains that this is all a parallel of the "Christian Mythos", with its bad against good, and with humanity the focal point of it all. Evil Ancient Ones are striving to take our planet from us, but angelic Elder Gods always intervene in time to save us.

I grant Derleth the right to his view of the cosmos, but the sad thing is that he has made all too many believe that his view is that of Lovecraft also. This is simply not true. Lovecraft's picture of the universe and Derleth's are completely dissimilar.

Derleth seems determined to link the Cthulhu pantheon with Christianity and the Medieval tradition by making it a struggle between "good" and "evil" from an anthropocentric point of view. Too, the concept of "elemental forces" in the Mythos seems to be Derleth's own - borrowed from the ancient theory that all things known to us are compounded from the four elements: fire, water, earth and air. Derleth runs into many contradictions here. For instance, he makes Cthulhu and his minions water beings, whereas *The Call of Cthulhu* has them coming down from space and building their cities on land; only later are their cities submerged by geological upheavals, and this is a catastrophe which immobilizes the Cthulhu spawn. Hastur is portrayed as an "air elemental", while at the same time Derleth implies that he lives on the bottom of the lake of Mali. Yog Sothoth and Nyarlathotep, probably the two most purely Cosmic of all Lovecraftian entities, are squeezed into the "earth" category; while, finally, he invents the fire elemental, Cthugha, to round out his menagerie of elementals. (Lovecraft invented no beings that could be construed as "fire elementals"). Cthu-



gha comes from the star Fomalhaut - presumably because Lovecraft once mentioned that star in one of his sonnets.

Elementals aside, the whole basic concept of Derleth's "good-versus-evil" Mythos seems as non-Lovecraftian as anything conceivable. Lovecraft actually regarded the Cosmos as basically indifferent to anthropocentric outlooks such as good and evil. The "shocker" in his best tales is usually the line in which the narrator is forced to recognize that there are vast and powerful forces and entities basically indifferent to humanity because of their overwhelming superiority to Man.

Most writers continuing the "Cthulhu Mythos" in fiction or documenting it in scholarly articles are merely perpetuating the misconceptions begun by Derleth. I feel Lovecraft reached his highest imaginative peak in the two novels, *The Shadow Out of Time* and *At the Mountains of Madness*. In both these tales, Lovecraft turned the whole universe into a haunted house, so to speak, linking the findings of modern science to the flavor of Gothic horror. In so doing, he created a type of "creepy" story that 20th Century man could continue to believe in even after the traditional trappings of cemeteries, crumbling castles, haunted mansions, etc. began to acquire the flavor of clichés. But Lovecraft's followers have never pursued this line of development. Without exception they all leave Man and his values at the center, in the Derleth tradition, and most of them even continue to use the non-HPL devices of "Elder Gods", "elementals" etc. while writing endless variations on the basic Lovecraftian themes dealing with Dunwich and Innsmouth.

To sum up: The Cthulhu Mythos as it now stands is at least as much Derleth's invention as it is HPL's. The line of Lovecraft's development remains open - no one has really taken up as yet where he left off - and it leads toward the cosmic. Yet if one wants to get to the heart of what Lovecraft felt about the cosmos, one must sidestep Derleth and his followers.

By
James Wade

Although I was born in a drab, raw industrial suburb of St. Louis forty years after H.P. Lovecraft made his appearance in the ancient New England seaport whose gracious architecture and fading traditions he loved so much, I had a somewhat Lovecraftian childhood, in the sense that I was overprotected, reclusive, bundled up against the cold; and developed precocious interests in astronomy, paleontology, mythology, and the scribbling down of little imitative fantasy stories (the first actually dictated to my father before I could write.)

My present situation shows some parallels, too; since, during a dozen years of residence in South Korea, I have made most of my living for most of this time by revision and ghost-writing - primarily of English publicity for the Korean government, plus the editing of journalistic and scholarly material, translations and otherwise.

However, I diverged from the Lovecraftian pattern to develop into a composer, not a writer primarily, notwithstanding the thousands of newspaper and magazine pieces, the fiction, and the three books I have had published. In addition, I am an enthusiastic seafood lover and a convivial - occasionally even bibulous - non-Puritan; have contracted a lasting marriage; and am in the midst of raising an identifiably if untypically American family on foreign soil.

There comparisons end, becoming too attenuated. I have, however, over the years remained a dedicated Lovecraft "fan", collector, commentator, and sometime imitator since I first discovered H.P.L. via that rich yet inexpensive treasury, the Tower Books edition of THE BEST SUPERNATURAL STORIES, which I purchased for 49¢ in Woolworth's in 1945, when I was 15.

I was soon in touch with Arkham House via its ads in WEIRD TALES, of which I became a regular reader about this time. But I was just too late to acquire the first two Lovecraft omnibuses at list price (how I obtained them gratis, and then lost them again during a hectic three-month period in 1959, is another story).

I soon added to my collection MARGINALIA and THE LURKER AT THE THRESHOLD, books I still possess, plus every subsequent volume of the pantheon; though at first I was fonder of the New England stories such as In the Vault than of the Mythos tales. Before long, though, the daring cosmic escapism of the Mythos found resonance in my early scientific interests, and I immersed myself in the universal mythology of The Shadow Out of Time and At the Mountains of Madness.

During the two-year period 1945-46, I wrote a sonnet sequence seeking to honor Lovecraft in the 18th century language he so admired (eventually published in THE ARKHAM COLLECTOR No. 4); a blank verse narrative with a Mythos basis; and a long story combining several Mythos themes (the latter two items are now being brought out as curiosities in THE DARK BROTHERHOOD JOURNAL).

The novelette I hopefully sent to August Derleth of Arkham House, who criticized it severely, not realizing that it was the work of a 16-year-old. (It was hardly more clumsy or derivative than the weird fiction he himself was writing - and selling - at that age and much earlier.) This rebuff ended my Lovecraftian writing phase for 21 years; though I did turn out half a dozen or so dissimilar horror tales in my twenties that are now beginning to receive professional publication.

In 1967 I learned that Arkham House was planning an anthology of new and old Mythos stories primarily by writers other than Lovecraft. Coincidentally, TIME carried a report on Dr. Lilly's research into

dolphin intelligence that suggested to me a link with Lovecraft's undersea races. The result was my 10,000 word novella, The Deep Ones, published in Arkham's TALES OF THE CTHULHU MYTHOS and reprinted (in a somewhat longer and different original version) in the second volume of the Beagle paperback in 1971 (a French edition is due too, I understand).

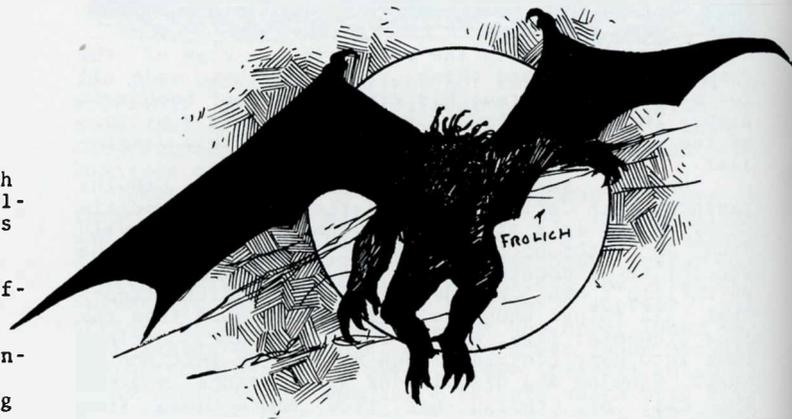
Having belatedly re-entered the world of H.P.L. as an active writer, I tossed off two satires: A Darker Shadow Over Innsmouth (THE ARKHAM COLLECTOR No. 5) and a mass-media spoof (THE ARKHAM COLLECTOR No. 10), plus several essays and specialized studies for "fan" publications. There is some interest on the part of the NATIONAL REVIEW, for which I have written literary essays, in publishing future studies of Derleth and perhaps Lovecraft that I might undertake.

The recent death of my old friendly enemy, Derleth, however, put an end - so far as I can see - to any feasible future professional markets for new fiction in the Lovecraft tradition. Perhaps this is just as well since Derleth's own efforts to continue the Mythos pattern - usually, and unforgivably, with Lovecraft listed as co-author - have been lamentably weak and unconvincing. It is probably better to regard the Mythos as a closed universe including only the Lovecraft writings and a few stories written in his lifetime which he approved or even revised himself.

Lovecraft's influence on me (and others) has not been confined to the narrow field of macabre fiction. Study of his life, letters, and personality gave me an early admiration for him as a man of uprightness, integrity, and dedication to high ideals (as he saw them), battling a devastating array of psychic handicaps and hang-ups, turning his agonies into myths and, yes, occasionally art.

I never shared his prejudices, predispositions, predilections, or peevishness; but examining them has helped me gain, I think, an understanding and a more tolerant sympathy for those who are different and, at first glance, unprepossessing. This tolerance, I hope, characterized Lovecraft himself at his best (which may not have been often; but who can claim more?).

Thus I don't think the time and energy I have devoted to study and emulation of this greatest of the Old Ones of modern fantasy have been wasted. Lovecraft, with his strange but oddly attractive personality, and his posthumous Svengali, Derleth, are both gone now. But their influence continues to spread like bright ripples radiating across the stagnant flow of fantasy fiction, that meandering, beguiling literary stream in whose shallows, for reasons that seemed to them sufficient, they chose to skulk.



GRUDEN ITZA: The Evolution
of a Sub-Mythos

by Don Walsh, Jr.

H. P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu stories uniquely snare imaginative readers for several reasons, but among them is the great facility with which HPL intertwined the real and the fantastic. It is this skill at juxtaposing the esoteric with the bogus which led to escapades like the stuffy ads for copies of the *NECRONOMICON*, and perhaps vain searches through libraries for the catalog of Mis-katonic University.

HPL not only invented a bibliography and a pantheon, but also a geography. The Arkham - Dunwich - Marblehead settings in Lovecraft's New England served not only as the locale for his stories but also for much of the work of Kuttner and Derleth (among others) in the Mythos.

However, when August Derleth read my first attempt to pastiche HPL in 1966, his first and major suggestion was to switch from the New England setting to a Louisiana motif. As an example of the sort of gutta-percha framework Derleth wanted me to build my stories around I was given the initial volume of J. Ramsey Campbell. Apparently, the suggestion took hold, for Derleth bought the next piece I sent him - *The Rings of the Papaloi* - although he didn't see fit to publish it for four and a half years. And I was well on my way to building an entire southern setting for Cthulhu tales.

Such an idea is not without precedent. By way of moral justification there is the fact that HPL once lived in New Orleans, albeit briefly. And as a port second only to New York the Crescent City certainly would fall under the dominion of the water-elemental. (Besides being decadent enough to be hospitable to the Deep Ones and their spawn.)

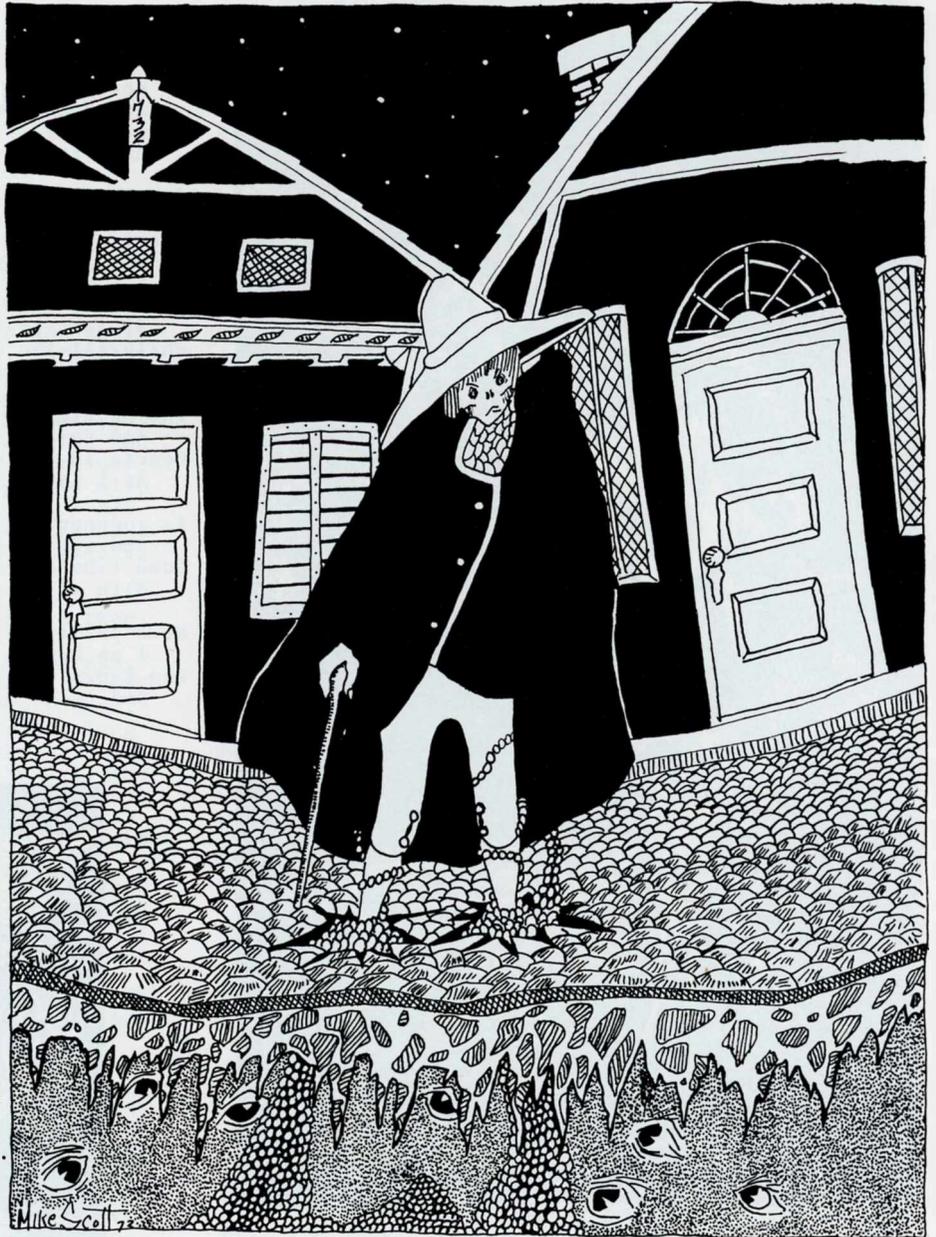
And then there is the bayou passage in no less than the key Mythos story, *The Call of Cthulhu*. Inspector Legrasse's tale served as inspiration for some details of *The Rings of the Papaloi* in fact.

Robert Bloch set several of the stories included in *THE OPENER OF THE WAY* in New Orleans, although they were not properly Cthulhu tales.

And Colin Wilson, in his fine *The Return of the Lloigor* mentions a lost city in the tradition of R'lyeh and Kadath, called Gruden Itza, sunken beneath the swamps outside New Orleans. Zealia Bishop's *The Mound* places the subterranean city of K'n-yan in the Caddo section of Oklahoma; certain sections of north-west Louisiana also contain indigenous Caddo people.

So: I felt sufficiently justified to begin assembling these and my own ideas into a unified fictional region suitable for background for a body of Mythos stories. Campbell (and later Brian Lumley) did much the same thing in England. Derleth himself toyed with a Wisconsin setting for a time - producing such classic Mythos stories as *The Dweller in Darkness* which introduced Cthugha. (To my mind, little in the Mythos is more worthy of full exploration than the rivalries between the Great Old Ones.) Lin Carter, whose Mythos work is well above the level of most of his other fantasy, is presently engaged in assembling a Californian motif for Lovecraft tales.

Louisiana, with its history of voodoo, its racial polyglot of Indian, Spanish, French, Acadian, and Negro bloods, its pronounced patois (Cajun), and its singular geological make-up is such a fertile ground for Mythos material that there is little need to invent weird settings or suggestive place-names. They exist in abundance.

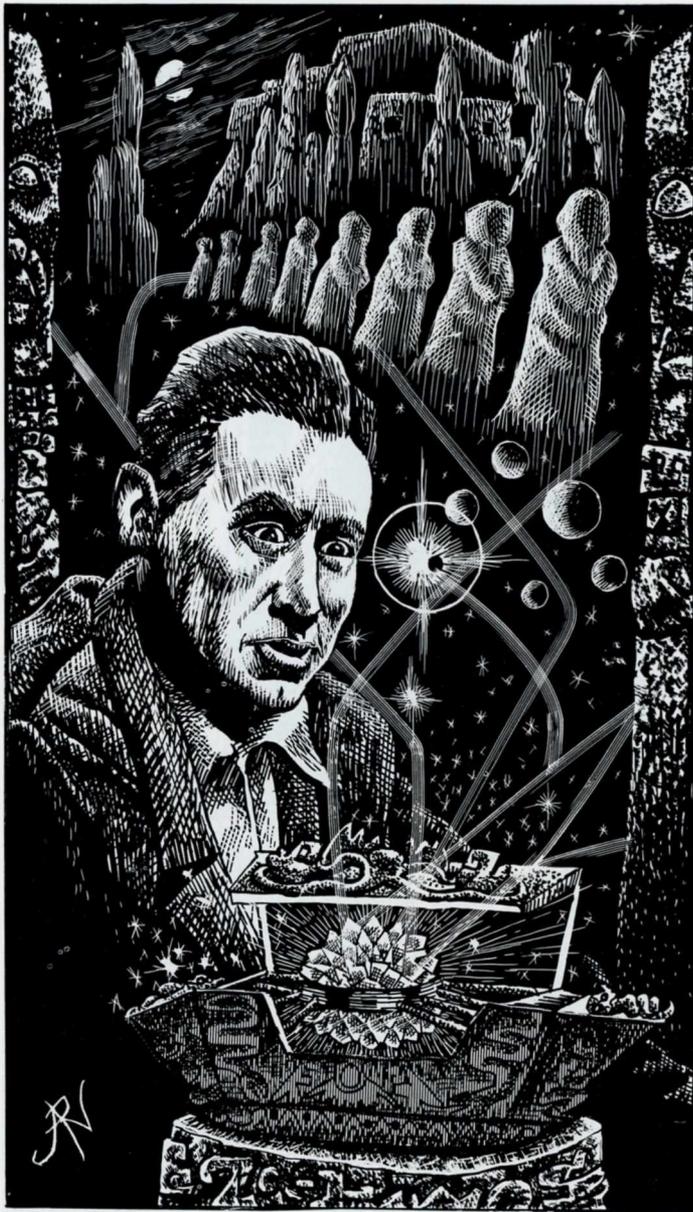


In the first place, much of the Gulf Coast exists in a state of so-called tidelands - shifting ocean floors, small land masses rising and falling constantly. A gradual shifting of the entire cartographical overview, this causes thorny tax and boundary problems for the state and federal governments.

In my Louisiana-Cthulhu stories I have used such actual settings as Isles Dernieres, Raccoon Point, the Black Bayou, and Morgan City. In addition I have invented (so far) the Delarieu plantation, known as the Black Plantation, where in the last century a family of alleged sorcerers maintained an uncommonly large slave population - which seemed to remain constant despite heavy purchases of human chattel on the New Orleans blocks. And of course Colin Wilson's Gruden Itza will figure prominently.

The story under immediate attention at the moment is a 7,500-word piece about a confrontation between a pawn of the Old Ones and a wise Kabbalist, entitled *The Spengler Sabbath*. Others - tentatively titled *The Dark Plantation* and *Gruden Itza* - will follow.

Advice to would-be Arkham House writers: use your own home ground. Research your region's dark history and its geography, and fit it into the Mythos. In such a way the tapestry of the tales of Cthulhu grows - and you become a writer.



FINAL CALL

(For Blake, on Federal Hill)

The lighthouse gleams in hues of red,
as night accedes to waves and foam;
the spectral light, as of the dead,
repeats itself through field and loam.

The winds conspire and speak tonight,
the music of the clouds contends;
the sunken city shines with light,
the effulgent pillar portends.

The human hands release the wheel,
the human hands in weakness halt;
the dreaming poets speak, then feel
the movement of the benthic fault.

The moon obscures with bat-like forms
as throaty chants are consummate;
the lighthouse for its keeper mourns
and the hearts' pulsations abate.

The earth, the sea, the sky converge,
combine in sharp response at last:
babblings of eldritch horror urge
pennings of the cosmically vast . . .

The tragic tale surely ends here:
the ravings of a mind gone mad,
but is it aught save wild-eyed fear?
or glimpse of real horrors he had?

- John Jacob

CRESCENDOS FOR THE WIND WALKER

So weary of my tawdry times
And seeking solace in the past
I put aside my nightmare rhymes
And travel where the myths are cast.

I walk alone, a trespasser,
In the twilight lands of doom,
Where shadow shapes of night bestir
To play dissonances of doom.

The Moon, my once proud journey mate,
Is lost in spawning stellar clouds,
While all the worlds have met their fate
Their ghosts wear nebula shrouds.

The haunted nightland cities burn
And nothing will rise from their pyre,
Comets in their orbits writhe and turn
As I seek the Guardian of Fire.

In judgment's midnight radiance, I dream
And set my course through star mists,
Down time's whole unbounded stream
With all its labyrinthine twists.

Down pallid paths, through R'lyeh's mouldering ways
I am hunted by a grim and silent stalker
Who knows where great Cthulhu stays
And calls me "The Wind Walker."

- Richard Heffern



The Weird Tale of Phillip Love

BY JOSEPH F. PUMILIA

I screamed. My anguished cry was lost in the angry howl of the arctic wind, tossed across the hideously luminous sea and smashed upon the ice-encrusted towers of a daemon city older than Man. The roar and flail of the wind seemed to presage the end of my universe, as though all eternity was being sucked down into some cyclopean maw. Again and again the relentless waves snatched at my feet, thrusting ravenously up the basalt precipice where I clung with bloody fingers. I was certain that the fluttering shadows cloaking the moon were not clouds, but the wings of unspeakable flying things of slime and fang and hard leather, gristle, blood and claw, soaring after nocturnal prey. My fingers began to slip even as I clutched at precarious safety, and - horror upon horror - the sea opened, and there arose a great and heaving monstrosity which mere language is inadequate to describe.

I screamed.

Far below me came a terrible cry from a thousand bestial throats, "Utl! Utl! Utl!"

"Heigho, wake up, Sonny! It's just a bad dream."

The calm clear enunciation of the words seemed to give me more reassurance than the words themselves. When I opened my eyes, I saw the pale, long-jawed face hovering over me, and the lanky arms reaching out of the old grey dressing-gown to pull the covers up about my chin. At the same time Snowball came crawling up to see what the excitement was about, peering into my sleepy eyes with his green slitted ones.

"Gawd! If you weren't having a roaring nightmare," he said. "Maybe it was those three helpings of ice cream right over your big swallow of Eddie Poe that loosed the unnamable horrors in your punkin' head, eh, kidlet?"

There was a squeak of springs and a minor earthquake as my cousin sat down on the old couch and yawned.

"Is it morning?" I asked, hopefully.

"Oh, goodness no. It's three in the ayem, an unholy hour for Sonny to be up and around." Snowball scratched at his sleeve, and he took her into his arms and began to pet her. "There must be some sinister emanations sopped up by my sanctum sanctorum that leaked out of the walls to produce such terrible nightmares your first night here. But never mind. Go back to sleep and I'll sit here with Snowball to fend off the foul fenny fiends till you're snug in dreamland."

"I don't want to go to sleep," I said in a small voice. "I'm scared."

"Nonsense. There's no such things, whatever they were. Take Grandpa's word for it. If there were, I wouldn't have to invent so many of them."

I curled up my legs and rolled up against my cousin, and with my face half into the pillow, confessed, "They were hollering 'Utl! Utl!'"

The springs squeaked again. "Utl? That's a coincidence, isn't it, Snowball?" Snowball purred as Howard scratched her chin. He yawned again. "Back to sleep, now, so Grandpa can catch up on his own. I won't take no for an answer."

And he sat there till I lay very quiet, and I don't think I went to sleep just then, for it seems as though I can remember him moving around on his side of the room and talking to Snowball. It sounded like: "Hear that, kitty? Utl-utl. And do you suppose it came from the sea, too? Ah, there never was a king more noble than a cat, even our sovereign George III, God save him!" After that there was a rustle of paper and - sleep.

One day about two weeks later two things came for cousin Howard: a visitor and a letter. While he was splashing in the tub upstairs, the phone rang. Aunt Lillian sent me upstairs with the message, and seconds later my cousin appeared fully dressed and ran downstairs to take the call. It was a writer-friend from his "long lost childhood," and while he was waiting for him to arrive, he began to sort through his mail, which I'd brought to his room earlier.

"This is damned strange," I heard him say. I watched solemnly from the door as he ripped open a big manilla envelope. He took a scrap of paper from inside, scanned it, studied the postmark on the envelope, then peered at some other papers inside and frowned. "I'll be damned!" he repeated.

Then there was a wild honking and beeping from out front, and his expression changed completely. He snatched his coat, ran to the window and waved, and patted me on the head on his way out.

"Keep out of trouble, Sonny," he called to me. "I'll make a full report when I get back."

"Can't I go?" I asked plaintively.

"No, not today. Don't know when I'll be back, and your aunt would have me on the rack if I kept you past naptime. Go and read that book I showed you - stars and planets, and all that."

And he strode with long steps down the front walk and climbed into a battered old Essex where a smiling man with a straw hat and green suspenders was waiting. After they drove out of sight, I ran back to his desk to look at the envelope.

The first scrap of paper he'd read was a handwritten note: "You can't fool me, Howard. I'd know your stuff anywhere, especially your bad stuff. Of course, this is a joke. Or is your dotting aunt trying to market your prepubescent juvenalia? Why don't you pretend somebody else wrote this and then revise it? Don't forget to pay yourself, of course! Come on, send me some of the good stuff. And get your typewriter fixed." It was signed by the editor of a popular pulp fiction magazine.

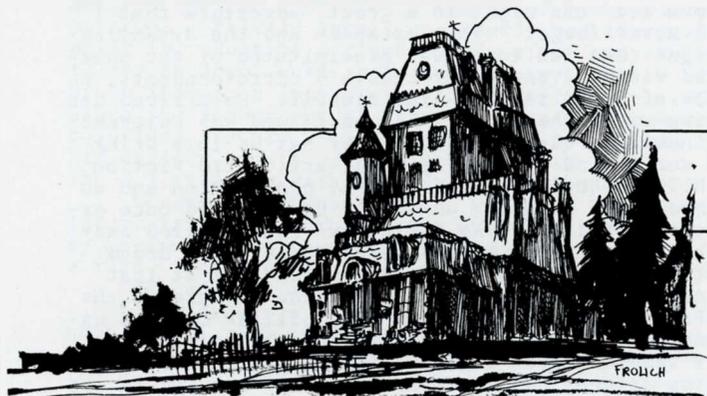
The papers inside the folder were a manuscript of two typed, single-spaced pages. The corners of the pages were badly mutilated. There was no return address anywhere. On the first page of the manuscript was the title and author:

THE PHARAOH'S CAT

by
Phillip Love

The rest of the manuscript, though typed, was hardly legible. Scarcely a word or line was not without incredible errors of spelling or composition. But the story itself reduced me completely to a trembling state, not because of any intrinsic horror but because it reproduced in detail my terrifying dream of a few nights before!

Not knowing what to make of this mystery, I replaced the papers as they had been, and took up the astronomy book he had recommended to me after I had



asked him some questions about the origin of the universe. The book was but one of the nearly 1,500 books he had managed to cram into his first floor room. I spent the rest of the day in his library, but I'm afraid my mind wasn't on astronomy. And when Aunt Lillian came to announce dinner she told me I was surely following in her nephew's footsteps, for he had been a bookish and precocious child.

Howard was actually a distant cousin. He was not old, even though he called himself my Grandpa. He and his aunt had generously taken me into the household after my mother had died, leaving me alone and I greatly appreciated this kindness, for they were by no means well off. There was a small income from a mortgage they owned on an old quarry on the outskirts of Providence, but the main, and only other, source of income was my cousin's revision work which consisted of revising stories for would-be authors - that and his own writing, of course. Despite the fact that he absolutely did not believe in the supernatural in any form, he specialized in horror stories, or weird stories, as he called them.

We lived in a big Victorian boarding house on Barnes Street. Howard had a room with kitchen alcove downstairs, and my aunt lived upstairs. I had been provided with a garret room.

It was summertime in Providence, and I was spared the burden of school while Howard fired off epistles to various branches of the family searching for someone to take me in permanently. There weren't many children of my age nearby, and I often spent the day reading in the library, or through the file of WEIRD TALES Howard kept on top of the bedstead. Sometimes I would open up the glass-doored cabinet and read through Howard's unpublished manuscripts, of which there were many - at least the typed ones, of which there were only a few. Those he had not transcribed on his 1906 Remington were almost totally illegible, and he often said that sometimes he couldn't read his own writing! Yet he dreaded typing up a long story, and sometimes his stuff would languish for years in this hieroglyphic form.

While he wrote mostly for WEIRD TALES, he had a very low opinion of the magazine. He considered the stories it printed as trite and unimaginative and said that the editors had turned down some of his stuff because it was over the heads of "the herd." He did not consider himself a commercial author, however. He thought of himself as a gentleman who dabbled in literature. He once told me that if he could find the kind of stories he liked, he wouldn't bother to write any.

One curious thing about my cousin is that, though he'd lived in Providence virtually all his life, he knew very little about certain sections of the city. Old Providence, of course, was his dearest love, and he had a lively architectural interest in the old colonial structures, in the quaint carvings upon its gravestones and in the twisting streets of the ancient slums. For the modern town with its autos and business sections and drab, modern buildings he had little love.

His acquaintance with certain of the older areas of town led one night to a great adventure that I shall never forget. This escapade and the Byzantine intrigue that led to it was precipitated by the unexpected visit of one of my cousin's correspondents, a writer of weird stories like himself. He arrived one evening with the moon at his back and was welcomed into Howard's quarters where they sat up late drinking coffee and discussing life, art, weird fiction, THE WITCH CULT IN WESTERN EUROPE, prohibition and an occurrence of *deja vu* which my cousin had once experienced and which he logically rationalized away as the remembrance of a similar scene in a dream. I sat through part of this discussion, but at last the nine o'clock curfew rang from the steeple of the old First Baptist Church and Aunt Lillian came to usher me to my quarters in the top of the house. I don't remember dreaming anything in particular after falling asleep, but I was subsequently awakened in the dead of night by two spectral figures looming over my bed. One was my cousin and the other was his visitor.

"Ere ye wake, kidlet?" Howard asked. "The Sultan and myself are going slumming in yonder dream-world on a quest for mystery and horror." He pointed a lean finger out the window toward the moon-dusted streets and angled roofs. "And we need an interpreter for certain prehistoric hieroglyphs and a guide through the nether regions."

"What? Who?" I asked sleepily.

"You, of course," said the Sultan. "Where's his clothes?"

He found them draped over a chair, and the two of them managed to encase me in my raiment without so much as a muffled protest on my part. By the time they got to my shoes I was wide awake and beginning to realize what was going on.

"But what will Aunt Lillian say?" I protested.

"The dear child need never know," said Howard, and taking my hand, he led us tiptoe down the hall, past the rooms of the other tenants, and down the stairs, with the Sultan bringing up the rear. We crept out the front door like a trio of desperadoes "on the run."

My blood was racing at the prospect of this journey, the appreciation of which was heightened by the delicious sense of the forbidden. Howard, who could see extraordinarily well in the dark, took the lead, but fortunately for me the moon was nearly full, transforming the ordinary wooden houses and familiar flora of our neighborhood into an enchanted world of crystal and gossamer.

As we walked down the silent streets that twisted over the hills of Old Providence, my companions engaged in whispered communion, now and then pausing to let me take in some especially ghastly sight, such as the huge mansion near our place that had been built in 1801 and was now said to be haunted. By the light of day, I'd not have given it a third glance, but its brooding nocturnal appearance was enhanced greatly by Howard's recitation of several eerie tales probably fabrications on his part but scarifying none the less!

How can I ever describe that pilgrimage through the uncharted labyrinths of that nighted city? What map could ever lead me to those wonders, those fantastic vistas and moonlit realms. No, the *terra incognita* revealed to my wondering eyes lies within the bounds of no map ever drawn. The sites I visited that night belonged to Howard's world, not ours.

Where did we go? Names come to mind - the mysterious Quinsnicket woods, the dark banks of the twisting Seekouk, the horrible alleys in the slums of Federal Hill, the rotting warehouses and wharves of the antique waterfront, the weed-bordered road and loathsome hovels of Poe Street, the hillside cemetery of St. John's, haunted in life by Edgar Allen Poe himself, and all the hidden places that cowered beneath the looming gambrel roofs and crumbling, hollow-eyed steeples.

My two abductors whisked me cheerfully along with them, sometimes half-dragging, half-carrying me to the crests of high hills, where they stretched out bony fingers on moon-paled hands, aiming my eyes at far fantasies, past the jagged roofs, marching gables and crooked spires to great circles of hanging stones where the bloody Druid-folk readied for battle against the legions of Imperial Rome, to domed, bulbous mosques and tottering minarets and beyond, far beyond to the ziggurats of Ur and the sacred Olympus.

"There - there lies Carcosa, beyond that shroud of mist," whispered Howard, "and over there" - he only moved his hand but it seemed to me that there was a great rent in time itself, drawing back the curtain of stars to display a hideous, terrifying, cosmic vista of black emptiness and transmundane horror wherein burned five anomalous orbs. "Those are the Hyades, where great Hastur lies bound in the lake of Hali!"

"Aye," said the Sultan, "even as it is written in the book of the Arab."

And there were unpaved streets and skulking shadows in the darkness, seething shadows that oozed over fences in a stealthy tide, that loomed from high trees and all manner of shadowed places. These silent daemons followed us in our journey through chur-

chyards with lichen-crusting headstones, past crumbling crypts and toppled crosses, *watching* us on our journey into their nighted realm - *the cats of Providence*.

They meowed, screeched, sniffed, padded, leaped, flew, crawled, crept and flowed around us, a liquid tide of night-dwellers, the true denizens of the midnight land we were only visiting.

"Where'd they all come from?" I asked.

"From the catacombs, of course," said the Sultan.

By the light of the moon we named them: tortoiseshells, Abyssinians, Manxes, inscrutable masked Siameses, Angoras, Persians, graveyard cats, alley cats, two-fisted tom cats, and, of course, the rare Tibetan temple cat and the sacred cat of Egypt.

And high above us on a crazy-angled roof we saw a black shadow with a long tail on one end, two firefly eyes on the other and a hunched back between - this contorted hieroglyph punctuated by an unearthly shriek I deciphered as none other than our Snowball himself, undeniable Lord of the dark brotherhood sporting at our feet.

At the command of the cat-sultan, the feline tribe came about in a furry wheeling and some of the lieutenants made answer. Another screech soared from the throats of that four-footed mob and before our eyes the cat-nation vanished as one in soundless thunder down the twisting streets. Where had they gone? On some mission of vengeance or on a foray against foreign invaders? We heard the sounds of battle later that night, but my cousin assured me it was not the cats but the damned roaring in their chains.

There was an endless round of these dark streets and sinister alleyways, tumbled stones and hideously slanting steeples, eldritch ruins still used for rites of abominable sects who evoked awful things in subterranean caverns and unnamable things sealed in crystals marked with wormlike signs from a blasphemous book of forbidden lore. Did we fly over them? Or did we traverse deep below them, in slime-bounded, fungus-litten tunnels digged by formless Tartarean horrors? When did we emerge? When did dreaming merge with waking? Were there yet unremembered journeys behind me, blocked from my conscious mind by terrible shocks and traumas? All I know is that I do not remember returning to my room or falling asleep and it was the shock of a lifetime to wake in my own soft bed, with the sun warming my face and my clothes neatly folded on the chair as I had left them upon retiring the night before.

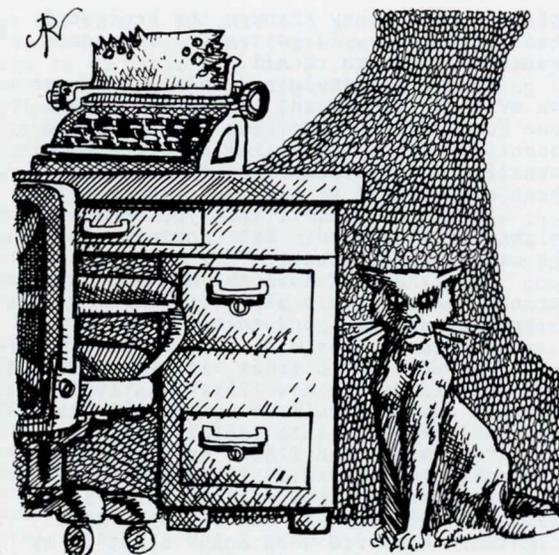
I was not certain whether or not the phantasmagoria I had recently experienced had been real or imagined. So, quite disbelieving, I slipped downstairs and peered through the keyhole of Howard's room. I could see him slumbering peacefully atop his bed fully clothed, his dressing gown drawn over him partially. But this was not unusual, for he often stayed up late writing. Unsatisfied, I returned to my room where almost immediately I spotted the degenerate state of my previously highly-polished shoes and muddy stockings. I went back to bed but was forcefully ejected (with difficulty) by Aunt Lillian who didn't believe in children sleeping late.

Howard also was up earlier than usual, roused by Aunt Lillian. She told him she was worried about my health. She said it was unnatural for a boy my age to be so fatigued and listless. Howard was in a bad humor after that and was further peeved by some missing stamps.

"Give him a vitamin pill!" he said. "Whatever it is, it's not a terminal case."

Once he got me alone, he said with a confidential wink, "Sonny, do your aged Grandpa a favor and go play around outside for an hour or so. Vigorous yells and leaping will be appreciated, preferably where my disraught Aunt can see you're perfectly okay. You can nap in my room afterward. I'll say you're studying."

I was roaming around outside - not exactly yelling and leaping - when the mailman came by. Glad for an excuse to end my exercising, I took Howard his mail. One of the items was a large envelope, which he looked at curiously for a moment before opening.



"This can't be the thing I just sent - it's too soon for that to be returned. What can it be?"

"Open it," I suggested.

He tore it open. He read a letter inside. "It's from little Farnie," he said. "Maybe he wants something revised downward so his moronic readership can understand it."

Looking at the accompanying manuscript, his expression changed. He frowned. "I'll be damned," he said, softly. He looked at me, then at the manuscript, then at me again, then bounced his fist off the desk. "An exceedingly arcane mystery, this," he said, handing it to me.

For the second time I read the name of "Phillip Love" on a story. This one was "The Curse of the Beast". As before, the manuscript was terribly typed and was wrinkled and torn. The comments of WEIRD TALES' editor this time reflected annoyance but this was mitigated by the suggestion that some jocular confrere of Howard's was having a little fun at their expense. I looked up from the note to find Howard's eye transfixing my angelic countenance with such an inquisitorial stare that I felt utterly guilty from head to foot.

"I swear it wasn't me," I blurted with such fervor that I made myself even more suspicious.

"Let's give it the Sherlock Holmes acid test," he suggested, pulling a sheet from the manuscript and holding it up to his eye. Then he showed me a word containing the letter "Z" to which he drew special attention.

"Notice the break in the angular slant of the letter," he said. "It is identical with the 'Z' on this here machine; ergo, this abomination was engineered on this very same Remington - Q.E.D. Elementary, my dear Watson, eh, wot?"

I could only shrug helplessly.

He sat back in his chair, which emitted from its decayed springs and bolts a squeak of Pythonian proportions. "Little Farnie apparently had the perspicacity to recognize a rough parody of my own style, a talent no doubt worn into the slippery grooves of his brain through a long history of rejecting my stuff. Since the appearance of these manuscriptic mongrels coincides roughly with the coming of the Sultan from his eastern haunts, it could be the old fellow's having a little fun with senile old grandpop."

However, a consultation with our friend on a later visit only deepened the mystery, for he swore by various divinities that he had had no part in such a ruse, though he admitted that it wasn't a bad jape.

"We are not amused," said my cousin.

But there was an eerie side to the mystery, for when I had read through but a part of the strange, badly typed story, I recognized it as a poorly-written account, more or less accurate, of the second dreadful nightmare that I experienced since my stay in this house. This dream had occurred some nights

after our journey through the benighted city and I had completely forgotten its substance, which this manuscript was to recall.

When I had explained this, with some trepidation on my part, to Howard, he had exclaimed, "Now there's one for Charles Fort!" but he refused to say what he meant by that. Now in the presence of his friend and myself, he admitted that the exact same dream had been experienced by him the same night!

"I didn't want to tell you because I thought you might be frightened. But fortunately, everything can be explained rationally."

"Aw, shucks," said the Sultan. "You mean you aren't hooked into a party-line from worlds beyond? I knew it was too good to be true."

"The only possible explanation is as follows," said Howard. "Both times, it was myself who was originator of the dreams. This is a logical assumption, because as you know I am uncommonly susceptible to such weird forays into dreamland."

"But how could I have dreamed the same dream?"

"Simple," he said. "I talked in my sleep. My unconscious mumblings reached Sonny's damp little ears and took root in his dreaming mind. That first nightmare occurred when Sonny slept in my room his first night here."

"And the second nightmare? He was sleeping upstairs and you were downstairs. Explain that, without dragging in thought-transference, if you can."

"Why are you so hot on thought-transference? I wouldn't be surprised if you indulged in seances and Christian Science. The second dream obviously was engendered in the kid's brain when my own phantasy was transferred to his mind verbally - not telepathically - as we carried him up to his room and put him to bed after our starlight tour. You recall I was discussing a story idea I'd conceived during that afternoon?"

"Hmmm," mused the Sultan. "I don't remember that we discussed it in that much detail. Besides, it doesn't resemble this silly manuscript that much."

"I have an answer for that, too. First, my junior assistant here didn't reveal to us the substance of either dream until after he had read those two strange manuscripts..."

"Which I hope you can explain, by the way."

"I can. And since we're all agreed that the human mind's responses and memories can be *coloured* by certain events, it's my contention that Sonny 'misremembered' his dreams to fit the manuscripts, making a superficial similarity even stronger."

"But I didn't lie," I protested.

"Of course not," said my cousin. "It's just that these poor grey things in our skulls sometimes play tricks on us. They make us forget things we want to remember, and sometimes even make us remember things we never actually experienced in the first place."

But our visitor only shook his head, laid a hand on my arm and said, "I'm with you, kid. Don't believe a word of that stuff. Mental telepathy is the only answer possible." To Howard, he said, "Now, if Professor Freud will be so kind, where *did* the manuscripts come from?"

Without hesitation, my cousin replied smugly, "I typed them."

We were both astounded.

"In my sleep, of course," he added, not as authoritatively.

"Baloney!" said the Sultan, holding his nose and waving his hand in the air.

Howard shrugged. "I admit it's odd, but it's the only explanation. As one of my young correspondents informs me, Sherlock Holmes once said, after you eliminate the impossible, the remainder, no matter how improbable, must be your answer."

And there the matter rested. I spent the rest of the summer at the house on Barnes Street reading in the library of my cousin, visiting a cinema show at the Strand with him occasionally, and touring the town with him, or, in a more restricted fashion, on my own.

By mid-August, after a vigorous letter-writing campaign to scattered relatives, arrangements had been made for me to live with the family of another distant cousin who had done some business with my father years ago in Boston. I realized the necessity of the move and I was anxious to meet my Boston cousins, but I was sad, sad indeed, to leave the bustling Barnes Street household, the wonderful library, and my peripatetic cousin and his encyclopedic interests.

Howard was determined that I should make the transition painlessly. For the last week of my stay, we toured his beloved Old Providence and its verdant hills. Some of what we saw he undoubtedly must have traversed before, but he kept up a pretense that it was all new to him.

"No, Sonny, don't believe I've ever been up this way before. Why, heigho! I never saw that court. Lookit those vines, lookit those crumbling bricks. Don't they just hint at elder mysteries? Can't you just feel the ancientness of it all?"

Occasionally we seemed to strike on new territory that *was* new ground, even to him. Sometimes when we did so, he would pause for a moment, genuinely puzzled, and say, "I don't *think* I've ever been here - but it looks so damned familiar. Especially the rooftops and gutters, and those garbage heaps - well, *deja vu* be damned. Let's have a look, eh, kid? Lead the way for old grandpa."

On my last night there, I summoned the temerity to show him some juvenile attempts at poetry that I had produced, in imitation of something I had read in one of his books. He pronounced them promising and encouraged me to keep at it. He promise to write me after I had gotten settled in my new home and said that I must keep him informed about my situation. We kept at it through the late evening, and I found to my amazement that I was discussing with him almost as multitudinous a range of topics as he and the Sultan had covered so many weeks before. Most of what I propounded had actually been gleaned from his library as he well knew and often he would point out where he and the author of some book differed on a thing, and instructed me in making my own judgments on these matters.

"It's all aesthetics, my boy. None of your right or your wrong, or any of that infallible claptrap. Life is art and art is life. Aesthetics is the only ethic."

And then the old First Baptist Church rang out its doleful nine o'clock curfew and Aunt Lillian appeared to let Snowball out and to see me off to bed. I lay awake long into the night, watching a scimitar moon slice its way through the cloak of night, chasing shadows around the room. *And I dreamed.*

There lay before me the queerly twisted image of a sleeping, yet malignantly alive city - all sharp angles and impossible curves, like something reflected in a shattered mirror. Through those cobbled streets I wandered, low to the ground as though in throbbing apprehension of the arachnid-architect of this tangled metropolis. I walked, I ran, I leaped, I climbed, skipping nimble and catlike atop the oddly-peaked roofs, inhaling terrible unearthly odors billowing like unhallowed incense offered to the unhallowed gods. Over all this was the eldritch presence of a ravenous *something from beyond* and a soundless cry within my brain, a terrible soundless chant somehow emanating from within...

"Utl! Utl! Utl! Utl! Utl!"

I knew that I was on some dreadful quest, the object of which seemed to elude my searching, grasping thoughts. That it was something ancient and awesome I did not doubt. That it or some *manifestation* of it was harbored in the tenebrous recesses of this angled city was a certainty. Though at first my attitude was one of curiosity, soon it intensified to a mania, a compulsion, and there grew in me the lurking fear that somehow the thing that was the object of my quest was drawing me inexorably to my doom.

My sense of horror was heightened by the fact that I gradually became aware that I was not inhabiting my true form!

Looming about me were terrors impossible to describe, terrors whose barriers of fear I crossed no longer out of antiquarian interest, but because of some driving force beyond me, drawing me onward, as the moon draws the sea. I was certain now, as I approached the place of final horror, that *this* was not a dream. The house on Barnes Street, my cousin, my aunts - all wisps of dream. *This* was reality. But what lay beyond that pall of darkness looming before me? *What* the source of that hideous snarling? - *those eyes, those fangs - Ai, ai - almighty Bast, protect me ...*

Beyond the window the spires and roofs of the ancient city dreamed under a silver moon. Far, far in the distance a dog howled. I cowered against the wall, clenching the bedclothes protectively around me, shivering.

We buried Snowball the next day in a shady nook behind the house. Howard told me that it could only have been coincidence that I knew of the cat's death, and that I had found the body so easily because I had determined the direction of the howling dog the night before - the dog that had destroyed poor Snowball. He *said* that he could not recall *his* own dream of the night before.

I didn't press my own theories on him, since he's already made his scientific materialistic outlook quite plain. He regretted not being able to see me off but assured me that only the most pressing of appointments had necessitated his absence. After some cheerful parting words, he left me in the company of the faithful old Delilah, Aunt Lillian being ill that morning with a bad cold.

While waiting for the bus at the Eddy Street terminal, the faithful old Negress said to me, "That's awful

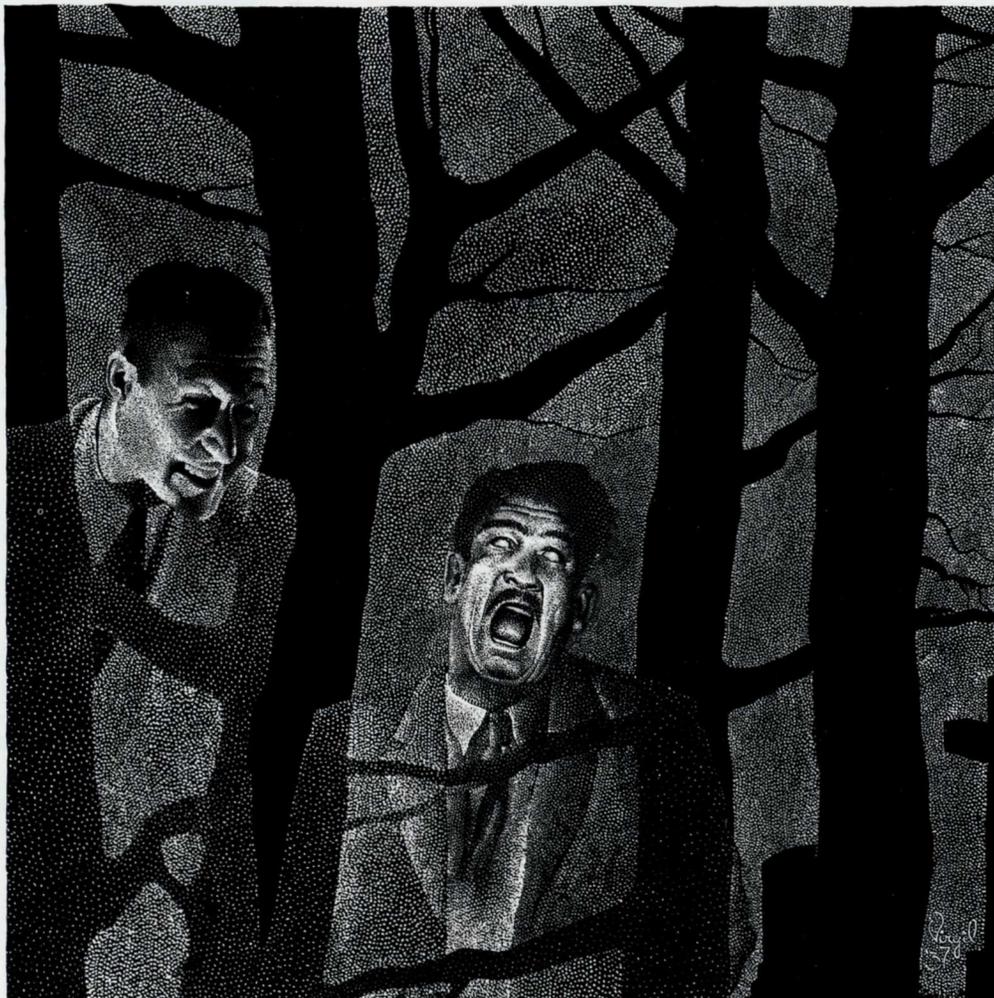
terrible about that cat. He sure was a run-around scallawag. And he was smart, too. Why you know what I seen one day when I came in to clean up, and Mr. Howard was sleeping? That cat was all over that typewriter, a-hitting at the keys like nobody's business. I sure did laugh."

"Did you see what he was typing?"

"Don't be silly, child. Cats can't write words."

And then I remembered the dreadfully bad typing of the "Phillip Love" stories - almost as though they had been typed by someone whose fingers were too big for the keys. And the curious mutilation of the page corners could have been caused by a cat's teeth. And the missing stamps... But it was all so unbelievable! Yet my cousin always did have a strong personality, and I read something years later about the famous talking mongoose case in Wales, which Fodor had investigated. Could the case of Snowball have been the same thing? Could Howard's unconscious mind actually *possess* the animal, and sometimes roam the streets at night in control of the cat's body, later remembering these experiences as dreams? Perhaps this is why he so loved those nightmarish twisting alleys of the decayed slums. I think that such a theory would explain those incidents of *deja vu* better than Howard's concocted after-the-fact rationalizations. Perhaps this strange nocturnal symbiosis was a unique thing, peculiar to this man and this cat. But after all, he always did have quite an affinity for the *felidae*...

Which causes me to wonder whether, when he died early that morning in March, 1937, in the Jane Brown Memorial Hospital, his literary output on the very brink of oblivion, perhaps as his hardy Yankee soul sprang free, perhaps down on the street behind, where the janitors had industriously piled the refuse of the day before, *perhaps there was a wandering cat...*



SOME UNPUBLISHED HPL CORRESPONDENCE

(Between the years 1933 and 1936 it has been reported that H.P. Lovecraft engaged in correspondence with Ralph Wollstonecraft Hedge, Artemis Flinch, Josiah Twattle and other noteworthy personages. For years scholars have searched, albeit half-heartedly and in vain, for traces of this alleged correspondence, but only recently did the news burst upon a startled, but basically unreceptive, community of Lovecraft fans that this correspondence had been unearthed. Unfortunately, there are no extant letters from HPL in any of it and the following sample should be as much as, if not more than, anyone could ask.)

7 River Street
Ottauquechee, Mass. 01933
12 December, 1933

Mr. Howard P. Lovecraft
10 Barnes Street
Providence, R.I. 02910

My Dear Howard,

How delighted I was to hear again from you. I was very much afraid that my most negligent and careless loss of your original ms AZATHOTH would place you forever beyond my ken and most deservedly so. What a forgiving nature you possess. Let me hasten to recount by way of apology the circumstances under which this tragedy occurred:

I had, per your thoughtful suggestion, taken pains to set a proper mood for the reading of this story, to wit: I proceeded upon receipt of it to procure candles, a warm shawl, and a camp stool and went out to the Indian burying grounds in the hills beyond the town. Placing the largest of the tapers firmly atop one of the megaliths which abound there, I sat on the camp stool and patiently awaited the falling of the night. Then I lit the candle and started reading, drawing the shawl close about me to guard against the cool of the eve. I was just at that scene where (illegible) had taken (undecipherable) to (untranslatable) over the (indescribable), when all of the sudden I knew that someone, or some thing, was close behind me! The guttering candle threw long eerie shadows on the megaliths in front of me and a low, keening noise came to my ears. A cloud drifted over the moon and the whippoorwills struck up a chorus of ululations. The manuscript was fluttering in my hand. It was a moment straight out of one of your tales, or Hawthorne's, or Poe's, or Bierce's, or Blackwood's, or Machen's or my own, for that matter. I screwed up my nerve and turned around abruptly and. . . the candle went out! For in my absorbed reading of your story I had completely disregarded the hour and the length of the candle. There, in the pitch black with nothing to defend myself but those many, many pieces of paper, covered with your fine, crabbed handwriting, I felt I had but one choice - I stood up and flung those pages straight at the nameless horror behind me and ran like hell for town.

The next day with several cronies I returned to the spot and there to our horror we found. . . the remains of a small campfire, an opened tin of beans (empty) scorched rather badly on the bottom, and no sign at all of my camp stool! One of the chaps pointed out that the fire seemed to have been started by crumpling together a vast quantity of paper and applying one of the matches I recalled having left behind, but I believe you and I know that these superficial clues are merely intended to deter further investigation of the nameless rites doubtless conducted there to which I would have fallen victim had I been apprehended as THEY intended. (The ground was surprisingly free of cloven hoofprints, though.)

Looking forward to your most recently completed

PAGE 62

manuscript, The Lurker at the Threshold, I remain...

Yours,

Arr- Dubul-yoo Aitch

P.S. You neglected to mention what you thought of my poem, "The Creature from the Black Lagoon". Do you approve of the change of title from what it was originally, "Godzilla"?

- R.W.H.



COMING HOME FROM THE
DUNWICH BOOKSTORE

31 Cobblestone Street
Johnstone, Me. 00913
11 March, 1934

Mr. H. P. Lovecraft
10 Barnes Street
Providence, R.I.

Dear Mr. Lovecraft,

It was very nice of you to suggest that I read the stories of Mr. Ambrose Bierce. I spent all last winter and this spring doing this and have written him many letters but have received no reply. Would it be troubling you to ask for a better address than care of his publishers?

Despite what you say, I still maintain that you are my literary idol and that I must strive to capture the essence of cosmic outsidership of which you speak. Compared to your works, such stories as Machen's The Willows or Blackwood's The White People pale to insignificance.

Frankly, I cannot see what you find of interest in old buildings. We've got a lot of old shacks up here, some built as early as 1873! I am not sure what you're talking about but I don't think any of these have gambrel roofs; in fact, not many of them have any kind of roofs at all, not the ones that are that ancient anyways.

You know, sir, since we started correspondence, when I was 12, I think I've grown up a lot, thanks to your influence. I mean it takes a certain maturity to be able to send stuff to Farnie once a month, every month for 3 years now, and get those same rejection slips back, without taking it personally. Do you agree? Should I use a pseudonym?

Well, after a lot of thought I decided that I'm going to change my field of writing, so I'm going to

give you some of my story ideas that will really sell. You see, I'll get the benefit out of seeing my ideas in your stories and you'll get the money. Won't that be great!

Here's the first one: There's this old witch, or maybe three old witches - use your artistic judgment on the matter. They see this knight coming by on the moor and they tell him he's going to be king one day. They tell him that he can't be killed by anyone who was born. So he and his wife kill the old king and that makes him king. It can be really bloody about here. Then he thinks that he's got it made because nobody can kill him who's been born. Then this big glop comes out of the stars and splatt it's all over for him because it had never been born. Neato, huh?

Best wishes, Artemis Flinch



Marsh Road
Dunwich
Cthulhumas, '34

Mr. Lovecraft
Providence, R.I.

Dear sir,

Ken ye well, I were clearing ground near Round Mtn. nigh fortnit ago and come on an olde book. It had writ on it WEIRD TALES and inside I found where you had writ some too. Young Obed - that's me - talked at me the meaning some and I fetched it to the ~~cove~~ - cave, I said, cave and we commenced to study on it. Feared to tell ye, some as ye writ come close, ~~which~~ which, I mean, which is not a Good Thing. So little Obed here - that's me, again - is writing down like I tell him and I be telling him to tell ye, BEWARE! - Mister, he really means beware. -

Yrs. (name withheld by a
curse)

No. 97 Twattle Way,
The Downs,
Epsom, Leics. G.B.
12 February, 1936

Mr. Howard P. Lovecraft
65 Prospect Place
Providence, Rhode Island Colony
New World

Dear Mr. Lovecraft:-

My solicitors, Bartleby, Bartleby & Scrivener, have advised me that I would be within my rights in making the following demands respecting certain of your allegedly "fictional" accounts which have caused me considerable pain, suffering, anxiety, and trouble to wit: My maternal grandmother was born in Ancester and spectral legend has it that as a girl she was servant to a certain de la Poer family in whose service she was rendered quite completely mad by what she saw in a garden. I am informed that Tifton & Meyer, Publishers, were considering a certain short story by you for inclusion within a new publication, GHASTLY CREEPS; in the course of such consideration, they chanced to pass the same to my solicitors, who serve them as well, and these gentlemen were struck by the libellous element of your tale. Naturally, Tifton & Meyer rejected the story as honour would behoove and so to cleanse properly the good name of Twattle it will be necessary for your publishers whom I understand are currently serializing an arctic adventure fortuitously not set in a recognisable portion of Great Britain, to print a retraction. I would not presume to advise as to the manner in which reparation could be made; this is entirely up to you and your solicitors - however, inasmuch as there are future installments of this arctic adventure and I have some skill with the King's English, I have gratuitously supplied on separate papers enclosed an odd chapter which you might include at some point or other which will set the matter right. Naturally you would have to conform the names of the characters to your own story at that point but in essence, it is a scene in a grotto near Ancester in which the servant girl (grandmama) approaches a swineherd who's been troubled with rats and offers him the use of her cat, Ulthar. The swineherd gushes his gratitude and remarks upon the child's clarity and sanity - even after her experience in the garden - while his fungous beasts nod approvingly.

Awaiting your next publication, I remain...

Yours,
Josiah Twattle

3125 Chantilly Lane
Quonset, Missouri
April the 3rd

Mr. H. Phillips Lovecraft
66 College Street
Providence, R.I.

My dear Mr. Lovecraft,

Through the good graces and astute acumen of a marvelous lay preacher for whom you have performed revisionary services, I have your address and take pen in hand to write you concerning the possibility of securing your services in revisions of my writings. I am assured that your rates are most reasonable which is fortunate since my writings tend to what some might term excesses. * * *

(p.12) To get to the issue then, this Chinese story of a peasant and his tribulations and *** (p.21)...needs revision and more "local color" as I have not had the opportunity to travel west of Spokane nor east of Twin Bluffs, where one summer I... (p.34)...if you would be so kind as to undertake this assignment, I shall ring my uncle (a cattle shipper) to reserve a box car on next Saturday's eastern sojourn of the Flat Rock, Topeka and Burlington R.R. to transport the mss to you for a quick look, and while I'm thinking of it, could you possibly suggest a pseudonym not too dissimilar from my own? ***

(p.52) With fondest regards, Opal Buckley

THE BOOK OF MADNESS

The shop was old and odorously
 And hidden in a nook,
 Beneath a pile of manuscripts,
 I found the mythic book,
 A book where worms had made their nests
 To feed on gray mildew.
 I turned the pages back and forth
 And read the runes, and knew
 I held the eldritch tome of old,
 THE NECRONOMICON,
 The gateway to the nameless voids
 Where Alhazred had gone.

I put the book beneath my arm
 And headed toward the door,
 Through twisting catacombs of shelves
 That wound about the store,
 Past books that rotted in great piles,
 And bins where mold oozed deep,
 Down ancient, darkling corridors
 Where shadows seemed to creep.

I bought that book and took it home,
 I read it night by night,
 And studied all its necrous lines
 By dancing candle light.
 And on the last page of this book
 In cryptic, crabbed hand,
 Were runic words, signed by Abdul,
 That gleamed like fiery brand.

I read those words and made the signs,
 I did not dread nor fear,
 I voiced the magick runes out loud
 For ancient gods to hear
 The Arab stood before me now,
 Conjured by ancient spell,
 His robes smelled of some noxious spawn
 Released from Cthulhu's hell.
 Try as I might, I could not see
 His secret, hidden face,
 Nor could I find his sorcerous eyes,
 Which looked on Cthulhu's race.

"Ah, you are melded to my mind,"
 The necromancer said,
 "You called me back with my own words
 From madness of the dead,
 And you must follow where I go,
 Through gulphs of endless night,
 Through time and space, cross ebon lands
 Pierced with a nightmare blight;
 Come, come with me, and watch the gods
 In old and hideous guise
 Torment mankind, deform the best,
 Betray and haunt the wise!"

"This cannot be!" I gasped, and screamed
 "You are not what you seem.
 Though raised by magick from the dead,
 You're nothing but a dream!"

THE QUARRY

A hunted creature pauses, panting, at the brink of a dream
 Chilled by quick backward glimpses of a grotesque shape
 Lined against the whipped cream curds of the frozen sky;
 Wearily it hunches through the city gates, beyond the gleam
 Of reflected firelight, into the silent sewers that gape
 With antiquated leaden covers strewn awry;
 Through the fetid jungle pipes that teem
 With phantom vermin; past the catacombs below
 Where the mouldering mummies of the old ones undiscovered lie;
 Piercing the dusty cobwebs of the world until the tunnels seem
 Impossible. There the desolate creature confronts his hideous foe,
 And one can glimpse the quarry clearly: 'tis I! I!

- W. Paul Ganley



THE BOOK AND THE HORROR

Then

I read a book, an evil book,
 Filled with black arts of blasphemy.
 Fear ripped my heart, my senses shook,
 And evil thoughts invaded me.

I chanted spells and called to things
 Beyond the gulf of time and space -
 The window burst to monstrous wings,
 And nightmare leered with loathsome face.

Fear-petrified, my brain grew cold
 With mind and soul by horror bound -
 Then dawn's bright gold destroyed the hold,
 And horror fled with flapping sound.

Now

I dread the night when stars are right
 And horror wings from timeless pole,
 To claim the prize no spell or light
 Of dawn can thwart - my mortal soul.

- Walter Shedlofsky

THE DOOM PROPHEIT
 (Dedicated to H.P. Lovecraft)

I have gazed beyond the Gateway
 At the meeting of the Sphres,
 I have seen the dreadful Beings
 That wait out the countless years,
 And have heard Yog-Sothoth's voice
 Reverberating on my ears.

In a mystic sphere of crystal
 I have peered down Nightmare's well
 And have seen the bat-winged legions
 Flying on the night-wind's swell
 And the flame-eyed, night-black Titans
 Straining at the gates of Hell.

I have seen the primal creatures
 Spoken of in ancient lore -
 The monstrous, star-born Elder Ones
 Who ruled here long before,
 And the bloated, loathsome Shoggoths
 Burrowing in the earth's dark core.

I have seen the deathless Evil
 That survives from earth's dark past;
 I have sensed its lurking menace
 In the nether caverns vast,
 And I know what dreadful destiny
 Must face us at the last.

Now I see the Spawn of Yuggoth
 Winging down from outer space,
 Bringing thundering destruction
 To the trivial human race,
 While the clouds before the sunset
 Form a skull's sardonic face.

- Richard L. Tierney

PSYCHIC

The mind is like a piece of bright-lit, cultivated land,
 Where logic reigns, and boundaries are straight, and corners square.
 Around it spreads a swampy, torrid, twilight border band
 Where gaudy blooms arise from vine-hung boughs in steamy air.

Along the vines, with eightfold coronets of diamond eyes,
 Colossal, hairy spiders stalk gigantic butterflies;
 And silent, scaly reptiles softly scull and slither where,
 Below, among the rotting roots, the still, black water lies.

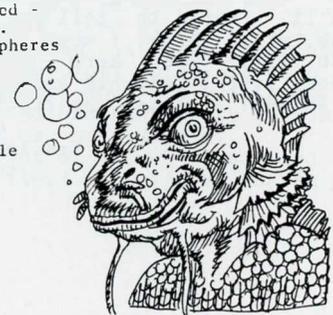
Beyond this dubious march, unknown and lightless regions stand,
 Where nameless, formless, unseen creatures shamble, howl and glare,
 And sometimes they break in, and then the rule of reason dies.

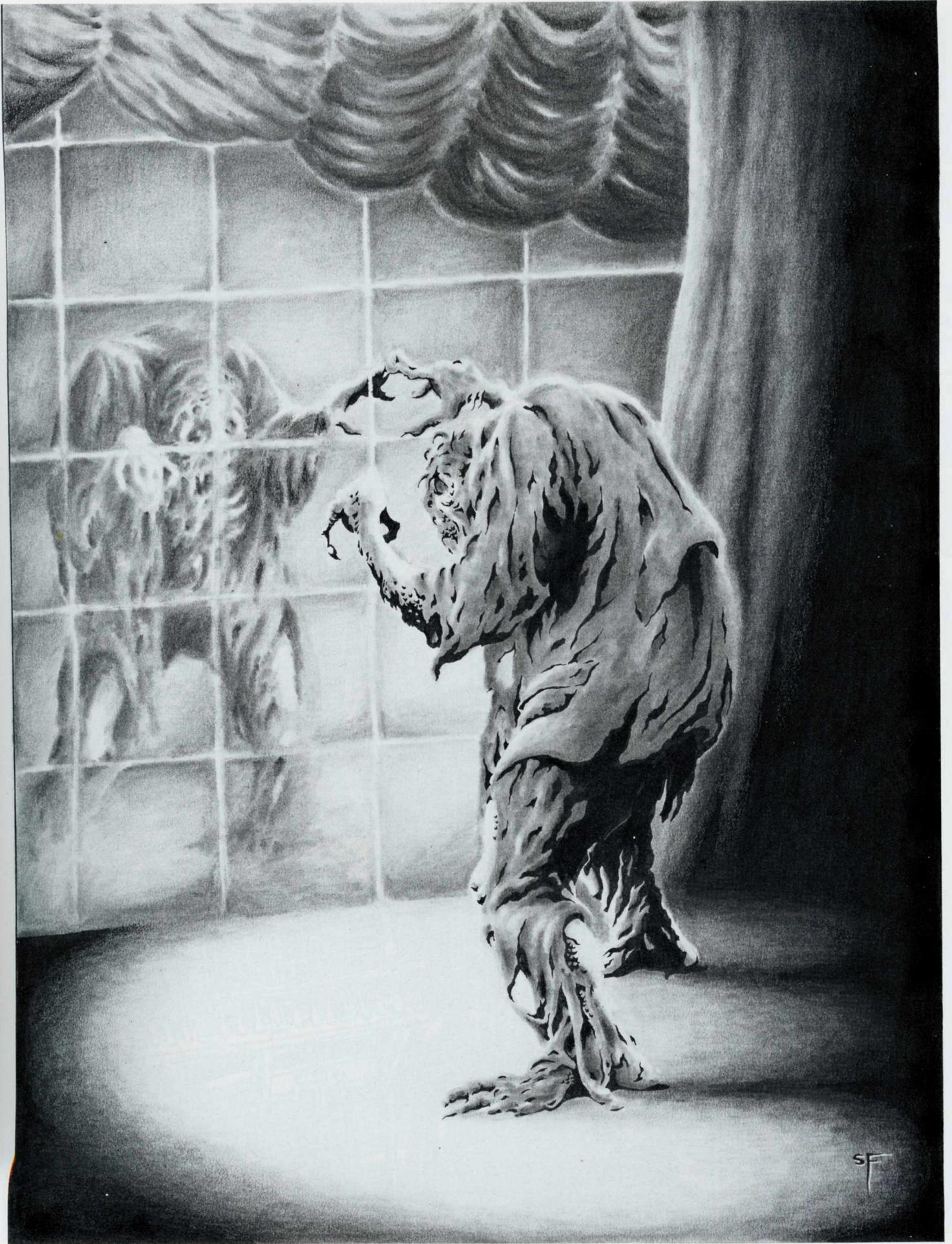
- L. Sprague DeCamp

FOUND IN A STORM-DESTROYED LIGHTHOUSE

Few know the horrors Earth's dark past has spawned -
 Horrors that reigned before the age of mankind dawned.
 Few guess what Powers from vast, trans-stellar spheres
 May yet traverse the gulf of intervening years
 That shields us from the things we must not see
 Lest knowledge send us fleeing to insanity.
 Few dream what slimy, green-eyed Evil sleeps
 In the black canyons of the ocean's haunted deeps.
 Mankind - bland fools! - you could not bear to gle
 The monstrous Doom that only I - O God! - have seen.

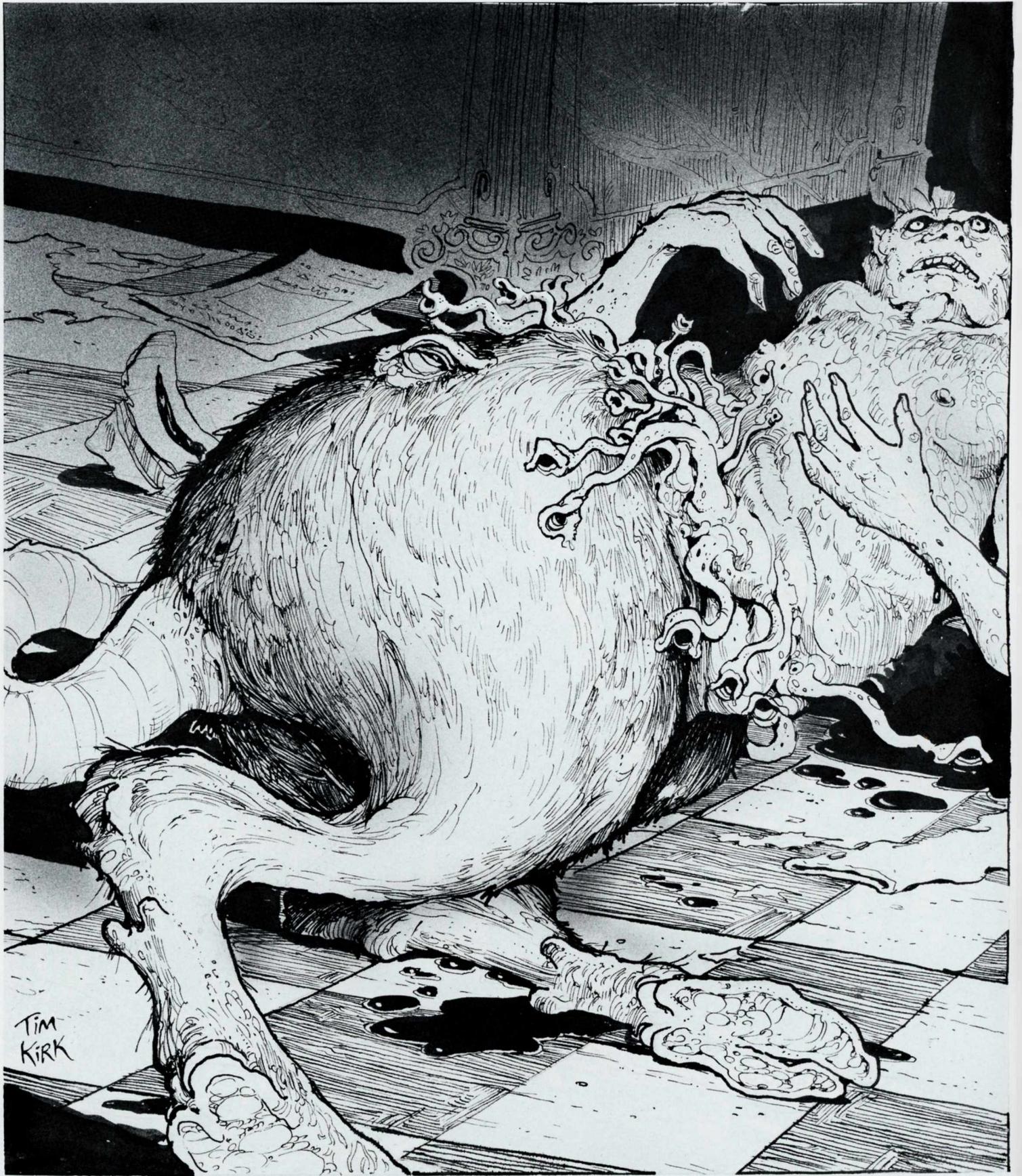
- Richard L. Tierney













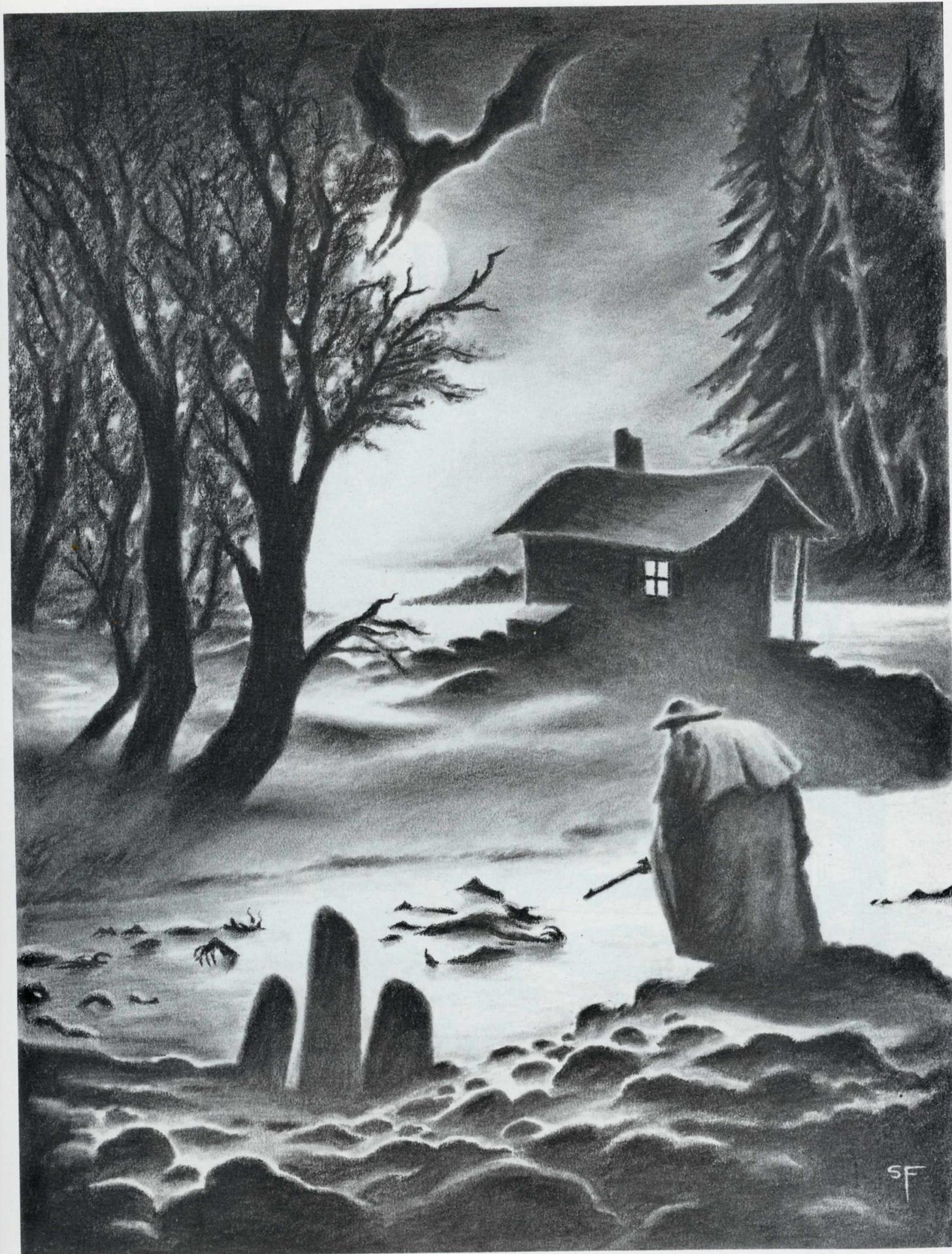
Frobese
10/71

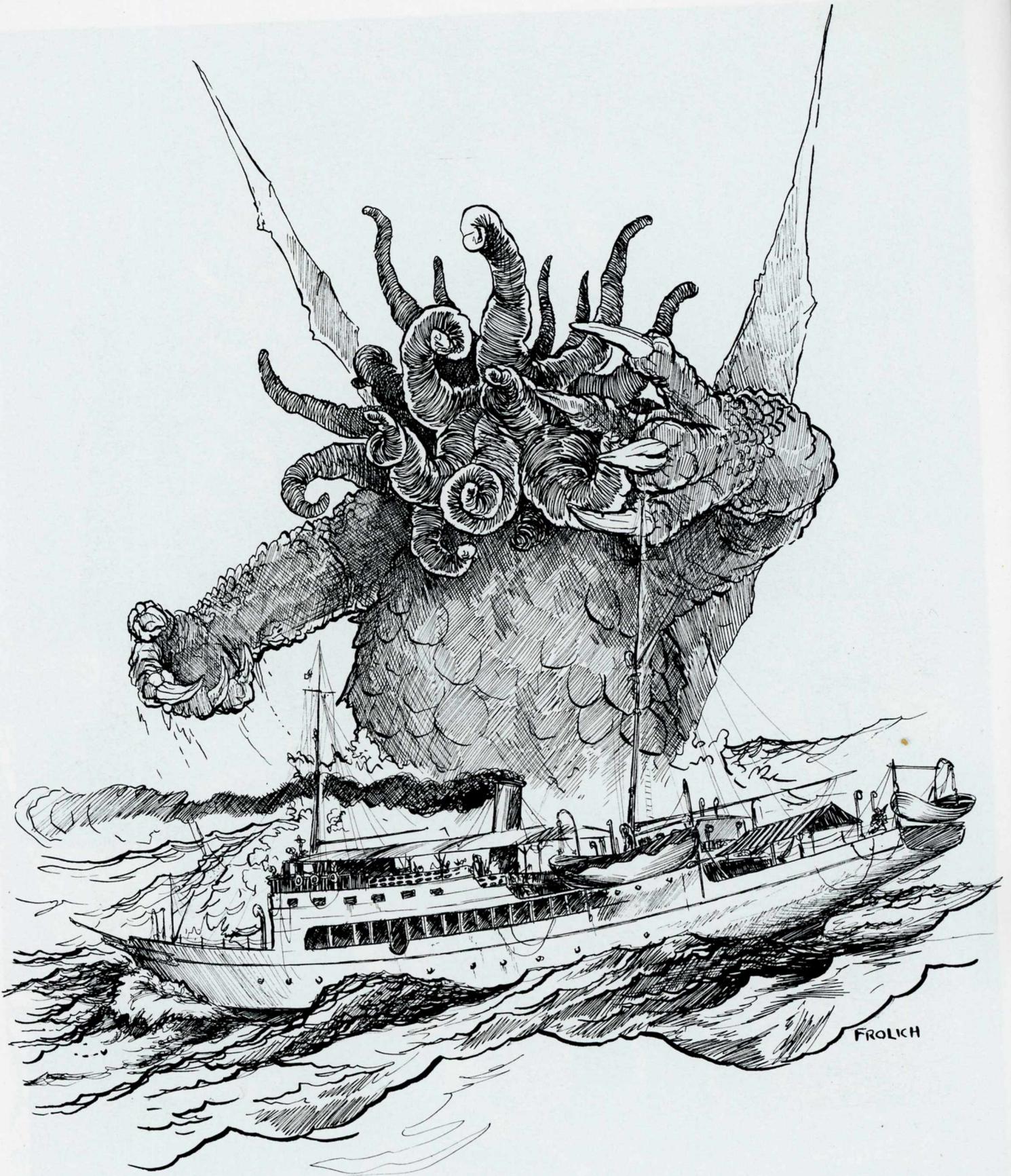




JOHN ADAMS RICHARDSON '71



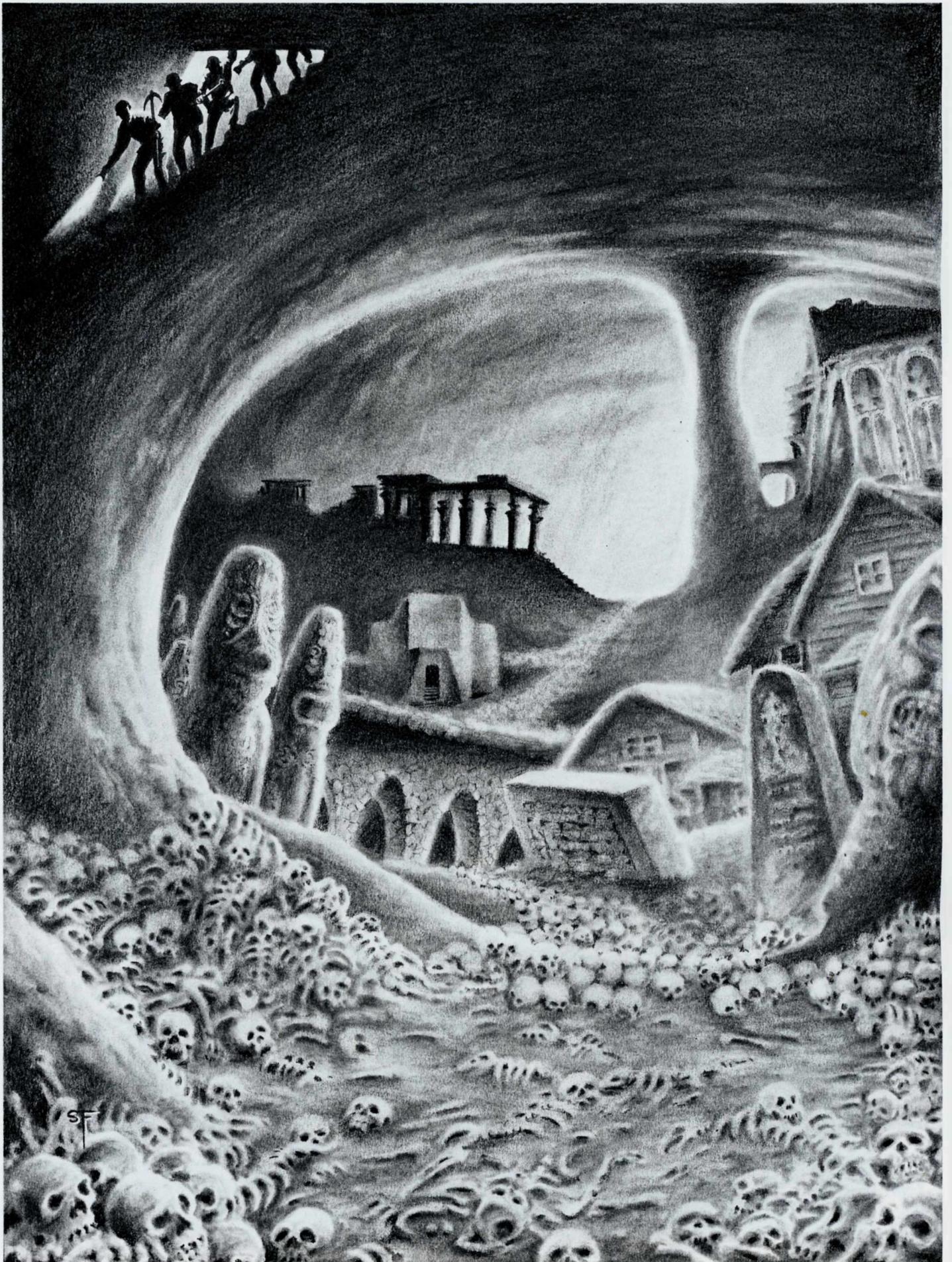
















The Terrible Parchment

by Manly Wade Wellman

Preface: "It strikes me that this is a period piece. It's set in the apartment we had back during the 30's on east 24th Street, NYC - comfortable though not showy. The couple here might well be myself and my wife, whose name is not Gwen. The Kline mentioned was the late Otis Adelbert Kline, a good friend of mine, a writer and an Orientalist. Clark Ashton Smith and Robert Bloch are themselves. Father O'Neal was an old family friend in another part of the country.

"The 1930's were grim, with the depression in full cry and Adolph Hitler making unpleasant noises; but Kline and Smith and that great editor, Farnsworth Wright, were alive and vigorous, and you could buy WT for a quarter if you had a quarter." - Manly Wade

*Wellman
10/10/71*

(To the memory of H. P. Lovecraft, with all admiration)

"Here's your WEIRD TALES," smiled my wife, entering the apartment.

"Thanks, Gwen," I said, rising and taking the magazine she held out. "But surely it's not the first of the month."

"Not for two days yet," Gwen assured me. "But just as I came to the front door, a funny old man bobbed up with an armful of magazines - advance copies, I guess. He stuck a copy of W.T. right under my nose. I gave him a quarter and - oop!"

I had opened the magazine and a page fluttered to the floor. We both stooped for it, both seized it, and we both let go.

Gwen gasped and I whistled. For that fallen page had a clammy, wet feel to it. Dank is the word, I think. Still stooping, we grimaced at each other. Then I conquered my momentary disgust, picked up the page and held it to the light of my desk lamp.

"It's not paper," Gwen said at once.

No more it was, and what could it be doing in WEIRD TALES? Though it looked weird enough. It was a rectangle of tawny, limp parchment, grained on the upper side with scales, like the skin of some unfamiliar reptile. I turned it over. The other surface was smoother, with pore-like markings and lines of faint, rusty scribbling.

"Arabic," I pronounced. "Let's phone for Kline to come over. He reads the stuff."

"There's a Greek word," Gwen said. Her pink-tipped finger touched the string of capitals at the upper edge:

NEKPONOMIKON

"Necronomicon," she spelled out. "P would be rho in Greek. Sounds woogey."

"That's the name of H. P. Lovecraft's book," I told her.

"Book? Oh, yes, he's always mentioning it in his stories."

"And lots of W.T. authors - Clark Ashton Smith and Robert Bloch and so on - have put it into their stories," I added.

"But Lovecraft imagined the thing, didn't he?"

I laid the parchment on the desk, for my fingers still rebelled at its strange dankness. "Lovecraft describes it as the work of a mad Arab wizard, Abdul Alhazred, and it's supposed to contain secrets of powerful evils that existed before the modern world. It's become legendary."

Gwen stared at it, but did not touch. "Is it some sort of valentine or April Fool joke, stuck in to thrill the subscribers? If so, it's cleverly made. Looks a million years old."

We pored over the rusty scrawl of Arabic, our heads close together. If it was a fake, there was every appearance of dimmed old age about the ink.

"Kline must have a look at it," I said again. "He may know what it's doing in WEIRD TALES."

Gwen studied the last line of characters.

"That part isn't faked," she said suddenly. She paused a moment, translating in her mind. "It says, 'Chant out the spell and give me life again.'" She straightened. "Let's play some cribbage."

We both felt relief as we turned away. Light as had been our talk, we had been daunted by a sense of prodding mystery. I got out the board and the cards and we began to play on the dining table.

Ten minutes later, I turned suddenly, as if a noise had come to my mind's ear. The parchment was no longer on the desk.

"It's blown off on the floor," said Gwen.

I rose and picked it up. It felt even more unpleasant than before, and this time it seemed to wriggle in my hand. Perhaps a draft had stirred it. Dropping it back on the desk, I weighted it with an ash tray and went back to the game.

Gwen beat me soundly, adding to her household money thereby. I taunted her with suggestions of a girlhood misspent at gaming-tables, then turned idly toward the desk. I swore, or so Gwen insists, and jumped over to seize it.

"This is getting ridiculous," said Gwen, fumbling nervously with the cards.

I studied the thing again. "You said the last line was in Latin," I remarked.

"It is in Latin."

"No, in English." I read it aloud. "Chant out the spell and give me life again". And the next to the last line was in English, too, I realized.

It also was written with fresh ink, in a bold hand:

"Many minds and many wishes give substance to the worship of Cthulhu."

Gwen looked over my shoulder. "You're right, dear. 'Many minds and...' What does Cthulhu mean? Anything to do with the chthonian gods - the underground rulers the Greeks served?"

"I shouldn't be surprised," I said, and it sounded even drier than I had intended. "Cthulhu's a name that Lovecraft and Smith and the others used in their yarns. A god of old time, and a rank bad one at that."

Gwen shuddered, and turned the shudder into a toss of her shoulders. "Maybe the many minds and wishes gave substance to this page of the Necronomicon."

"Nonsense, the Necronomicon's only Lovecraft's imagination."

"Didn't you say it had become a legend?" she reminded, utterly serious. "What's the next step after that?"

"What you suggest," I said, trying to be gaily scornful, "is that so many people have thought and talked about it that they've actually given it substance."

"Something like that," she admitted. Then, more brightly: "Oh, it'll turn out to be a joke or something else anticlimactic."

"Right," I agreed. "After all, we're not living in a weird tale."

"If we were, that would explain things." She warmed to the idea. "It was turning deliberately into language we could read. When we hesitated over the Latin..."

"...It accommodatingly turned into English," I finished.

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamed of in your philosophy."

"Trite but true. Still, my name's not Horatio,

and it's bedtime. Let's not dream any philosophies that'll turn into nightmares." Once more I picked up that clammy parchment. "I'm putting this under stop-page."

Opening the dictionary on the stand beside my desk, I laid the parchment inside and closed the heavy book on it. "There it stays until we get Kline here tomorrow. And now to bed."

To bed we went, but not to sleep. Gwen squirmed and muttered, and I was weary in every portion of my body except the eyelids. We got up once for sandwiches and milk, and again for aspirin. A third time we lay down and I, at least, dozed off.

I started awake to the pressure of Gwen's fingers on my shoulder. Then I heard what she had heard, a faint, stealthy rustle.

I reached for the light chord above the bed. The room sprang into radiance, and through the open door I could see the living room. I sat up in bed, staring.

Something hung down from between the leaves of the dictionary by the desk, something that moved. Something that would be rectangular if laid flat, but which now seemed to flow from its narrow prison like a trickle of fluid filth.

"It's going to come here for us," breathed Gwen, almost inaudibly.

The parchment worked free and dropped to the floor with a fleshy slap, as though it had soft weight. It began to move across the rug toward the bedroom door. Toward us.

Perhaps I might describe painstakingly how it looked as it moved, how it humped up in the middle and laid its corners to the floor like feet. But how can I convey the horrid nastiness of it, how visualize for you the sense of wicked power that it gave off in waves almost palpable? You might get an idea by draping a sheet of brown paper over a creeping turtle...No, that sounds ludicrous. There was nothing funny in the way that parchment moved, not an atom of humor.



Gwen crouched, all doubled up and panicky, against the headboard. Her helpless terror nerved me. Somehow, I got out and stood on the floor. I must have looked unheroic with my rumpled hair and my blue pajamas and my bare feet, but I was ready to fight.

Fight what? And how?

It came hunching over the door sill like a very flat and loathly worm. I saw the writing on it, not rusty-faint but black and heavy. Snatching a water glass from the bedside table, I hurled it. The foul thing crumpled suddenly sidewise. The glass splintered on the floor where it had been. The parchment came humping, creeping toward my bare toes.

"Smash it," wailed Gwen. She must have been ready to faint.

Against a chair leaned her little parasol, with a silken tassel at its handle and a ferrule of imitation amber. I seized it and made a stab at the invader. The point thrust the center of it against the floor, pinned it there for a moment. Then I saw in what manner it had changed.

At the top NEKPNOMIKON still stood in aged ink; but the Arabic writing was transformed into English, large and bold and black as jet. Stooping to pin it, I read at a glance the first line.

A thousand times since I have yearned to speak that line aloud, to write it down, to do something to ease my mind of it. But I must not, now or ever.

Who shaped so dreadful a thought? Abdul Alhazred is a figment of Lovecraft's imagination. And Lovecraft is human; he could never have dreamed those words that lie on my mind like links of a red-hot iron chain. And they were but the start of the writing. What could it have been like in full?

I dare not surmise. But suddenly I knew this for truth, as I tried to crush the parchment beneath the inadequate parasol - the formless evil of centuries had taken form. An author had fancied the book, others had given it being by their own mental images. The legend had become a fearsome peg on which terror, creeping over the borderland from its forbidding realm, could hang itself, grow tangible, solid, potent.

"Gwen," I called, "hide your eyes. Don't look. Don't read."

"What?" her pale face moved close as she leaned across the bed.

"Don't read!" I yelled at her.

The parchment squirmed from under the tip of the parasol. It reached my foot, it was climbing my leg.

Would it scale my body, drape itself upon my face, force its unspeakable message into my mind? Because then I'd have to speak.

The burden would be too great. My lips would open to ease the torture. 'Chant out the spell...' and the world would be crushed under the fearsome feet of Cthulhu and his brother-horrors. What sins and woes would run loose? And it would be I, I who spoke the words to release them.

Dizzy and faint, I ripped the thing from my leg. It clung, as though with tendrils or suckers, but I dragged it free and dashed it into a metal waste basket, among crumpled bits of paper. It tried to flop out again. I snatched my cigarette lighter from the bedside table. It worked, it burst into flame and I flung it into the basket.

The mass of paper kindled into fire and smoke. Up from it rose a faint, throbbing squeak, to be felt rather than heard, like a far-off voice of a bat. Deeper into the little furnace I jabbed that outcast messenger of destruction. It crinkled and thrashed in the flames, but it did not burn.

Gwen was jabbering into the telephone.

"Father O'Neal!" she cried. "Come quick, with holy water."

Then she hung up and turned to me. "He'll be here in two minutes." Her voice quavered. "But what if the holy water doesn't work?"

It did work. At the first spatter, the parchment and its gospel of wickedness vanished in a fluff of ashes. I pray my thankfulness for that, every day I live. But what if the holy water hadn't worked?



BY BRIAN LUMLEY

Blowne House, 19th May.

Dedication: This one with special thanks, for the memory of August Derleth, who sanctioned it; and for all those splendid scriveners of macabre tales who, over the years, have enlarged upon or borrowed from the Cthulhu Mythos of H. P. Lovecraft. In so doing, they have helped to keep the Mythos alive for the rest of us to enjoy:

That is not dead which can eternal lie,
And with strange eons even death may die.

"The nethermost caverns are not for the fathoming of eyes that see; for their marvels are strange and terrific. Cursed the ground where dead thoughts live new and oddly bodied, and evil the mind that is held by no head. Wisely did Ibn Schacabao say, that happy is the tomb where no wizard hath lain, and happy the town at night whose wizards are all ashes. For it is of old rumour that the soul of the devil-bought hastes not from his charnal clay, but farts and instructs THE VERY WORM THAT GNAWS; till out of corruption horrid life springs, and the dull scavengers of earth wax crafty to vex it and swell monstrous to plague it. Great holes secretly are digged where earth's pores ought to suffice, and things have learnt to walk that ought to crawl..."

I
THE NETHERMOST CAVERNS
(From the Files of Titus Crow)

Blowne House,
Leonard's-Walk Heath,
London: 18th May 196-

Ref:-53/196-
G.K. Lapham & Co.
Head Office, "GKL Cuttings,"
117 Martin Fludd St.,
Nottingham, Notts.

Dear Mr. Lapham,
Please alter my order as it stands to cover only the most outstanding cases, on which your continued co-operation would be appreciated as ever. This action not to be misconstrued as being all but a cancellation of my custom, on the contrary, but for the time being I would rather you concentrate your efforts on my behalf to FULL coverage of one special line. I require ALL cuttings - one copy of each - from all 43 dailies normally covered, of current occurrences involving earthquakes, tremors, subsidences and like phenomena, (and back-dated to cover the last three years where at all possible,) to continue until further notice. Thank you for your prompt attention;

Yrs. faithfully--
T. Crow

Ref: -55/196-
Edgar Harvey, Esq.,
"Harvey, Johnson & Harvey,"
Solicitors,
164 Mylor Rd.,
Radcar, Yorks.

Dear Mr. Harvey,

I am given to understand that you were the literary agent of Paul Wendy-Smith, the young writer of tales of romantic and/or macabre fiction, and that following his mysterious disappearance in 1933 you became executor to the estate. I was only a very young man at that time, but I seem to remember that because of certain special circumstances publication of the writer's last story (showing, I believe, strange connections with the disappearances of both the author and his uncle, the explorer-archeologist Sir Amery Wendy-Smith) was held in abeyance. My query is simply this: has the work since seen publication, and if so where may I obtain a copy?

I am, Sir - hopefully
expectant of an early
answer - Yrs. sincerely,
T. Crow

"Harvey, Johnson & Harvey;"
Mylor Rd., Radcar, Yorks.
22nd May.

Blowne House

Dear Mr. Crow:

Regarding your inquiry, (your reference 55/196 of 19th May,) you are correct, I was executor to the estate of Paul Wendy-Smith - and yes, there was a tale held in abeyance for a number of years until the Wendy-Smiths were both officially pronounced "missing or dead" in 1937. The story, despite being a very slight piece, has seen publication more recently in an excellently presented and major macabre collection. I enclose proofs of the story, and, should you require the book itself, the publisher's card.

Hoping that this covers your inquiry to your complete satisfaction, I am, Sir:-

Yours sincerely --
Edgar Harvey.

Blowne House
25th May.

Ref: -58/196-
Features Reporter,
"Coalville Recorder;"
77 Leatham St., Coalville, Leics.

My dear Mr. Plant,

Having all my life been interested in seismological phenomena, I was profoundly interested in your

Blowne House
25th May

article in the issue of the RECORDER for 18th May. I know your coverage was as complete as any man-in-the-street could possibly wish, but wonder if perhaps you could help me in my own rather more specialized inquiry? Tremors of the type you described so well are particularly interesting to me, but there are further details for which, if it is at all possible you can supply them, I would be extremely grateful. Calculations I have made suggest (however inaccurately) that the Coalville shocks were of a linear rather than a general nature; that is, that they occurred on a line almost directly South to North and in that chronological order - the most southerly occurring first. This, at least, is my guess, and I would be grateful if you could corroborate, or (as no doubt the case will be) deny my suspicion; to which end I enclose a stamped, addressed envelope...

Sincerely and appreciatively
Yrs, I am, Sir -- Titus Crow



Ref: -57/196-
Raymond Bentham, Esq.,
3 Easton Crescent,
Alston, Cumberland

My dear Sir:

Having read a cutting from a copy of the NORTHERN DAILY MAIL for 18th May, I would like to say how vastly interested I was in that article which contained certain parts of your report on the condition of the West sections of Harden Mine's old workings, and feel it a great pity that Sir David Betteridge, scientific advisor to the North-East Coal-Board, has chosen to look at your report in so unenlightened and frivolous a manner.

To me, while admittedly knowing little of yourself or your job, it would seem rather irresponsible on the part of so large and well-founded an industrial board to employ for twenty years an Inspector of Mines without, during that time, discovering that his "faculties are not all that they should be!"

Now, I am not a young man myself, indeed at 63 years of age I am far and away your senior, but I have complete faith in MY faculties - and since reading certain of the things in your report which I can (in a rather peculiar way) corroborate, I am also sure that you were QUITE CORRECT in the observations you made in the complex of the discontinued Harden workings. Just how I can be so sure must, unfortunately, remain my secret - like most men I am adverse to derision, a point I am sure you will appreciate - but I hope to offer you at least some proof of my sincerity in writing this letter.

Thus, to reassure you beyond any doubt that I am not simply "pulling your leg", or in any way trying to add my own sarcastic comment to what has already been made of your report, I return your attention to the following:

Other than mentioning briefly certain OUTLINES which you say you found etched in the walls of those new and inexplicable tunnels which you discovered down there cut (or rather "burned", as you had it) through the rock a mile below the surface, you seem reluctant to describe in detail the content or actual forms of those outlines. Might I suggest that this is because you did not wish to be further ridiculed - which you feared might well be the case should you actually describe the etchings? And might I further TELL you what you saw on those unknown tunnel walls; that those oddly dimensioned designs depicted living creatures of sorts - like elongated octopi or squids but without recognizable heads or eyes - tentacled worms in fact but of gigantic size?

Dare I lay my cards on the table yet more fully and mention the NOISES you say you heard down there in the depths of the earth; sounds which were not in any way the normal stress noises of a pit, even given that the mine in question had not been worked for five years and was in poor repair? You said CHANTING, Mr. Bentham, but quickly retracted your statement when a certain reporter became unnecessarily facetious. Nonetheless, I take you at your original word: you SAID chanting - and I am sure you meant what you said! How do I know? Again, I am not at liberty to disclose my sources; however, I would be obliged for your reaction to the following:

*Ce'haiie ep-ngh fl'hur G'harne fhtagn,
Ce'haiie fhtagn ngh Shudde-M'ell.
Hai G'harne orr'e ep fl'hur,
Shudde-M'ell ican-icanicas fl'hur orr'e G'harne.*

Restricted as I am at this time regards further illuminating my interest in the case, or even explaining the origin of my knowledge of it, but still in the hope of an early answer and perhaps a more detailed account of what you encountered underground I am, Sir

Yrs. sincerely - Titus Crow

"Coalville Recorder,"
Coalville, Leics.
28th May.

Blowne House

Dear Mr. Crow --

In answer to your 58/196-, of the 25th:

The tremors that shook Coalville, Leics., on the afternoon of the 17th, were, as you correctly deduced, of a linear nature. (And yes, they did occur south heading north; have in fact continued, or so I believe, farther up-country). As you are no doubt aware, Coalville is central in an area of expanding mining operations, and doubtless the collapse of old diggings was responsible, in this area at least, for the peculiar shocks. They lasted from 4:30 until 8:00 P.M., but were not particularly severe - though, I am told, they had a very bad effect on certain of the inmates of the local Thornelee Sanatorium.

There were too other slight surface subsidences, not nearly so bad, almost a year ago. At about that time also five miners were lost in the collapse of a very narrow and unproductive seam which they were working. The twin brother of one of these men was in a different part of the mine at the time, and much sensational publicity was given his subsequent condition. I did NOT cover his case though it was done up pretty distastefully in a hack contemporary of the RECORDER under the heading: "SIAMESE MINING HORROR!" Apparently the living twin went stark staring mad at the very instant his brother and the other four men were killed!

You should be interested in a series of articles which I am at present planning for the RECORDER: "A HISTORY OF THE MIDLANDS PITS," to be published later this year, and I would be pleased to send you the various chapters as they appear if you so desire.

Yours faithfully
-- William Plant.

Alston, Cumberland;
May 28th.

Blowne House

Dear Mr. Crow,

I got your letter yesterday afternoon, and not being much of a writing man, I'm not sure how to answer it, or even if I can find the right words.

First off, let me say you are quite right about the pictures on the tunnel walls - and also about the chanting. How you could know about these things I can't possibly imagine! So far as I know, I'm the only one to have been down that shaft since they closed the pit, and I'm damned if I can think of any other spot on or under the earth where you might have heard sounds like those I heard, or seen drawings the like of them on the tunnel walls. But you obviously have! Those crazy words you wrote down were just like what I heard...

Of course, I should have gone down there with a mate, but my Number 2 was off sick at the time and I thought it was going to be just another routine job. Well, as you know, it wasn't!

The reason they asked me to go down and check the old pit out was two-fold - I'd worked the seams, all of them, as a youngster and knew my way about, and of course (to hell with what Betteridge says) I AM an experienced inspector - but mainly someone had to do the job to see if the empty seams could be propped up or filled in. I imagine that the many subsidences and cave-ins round Ilden and Black-hill have been giving the Coal-Board a bit of a headache of late.



Anyhow, you asked for a more detailed account of what I came up against underground, and I'll try to tell it as it happened. But can I take it that everything I say will be in confidence? See, I have a good pension coming from the Coal-Board in a few years' time, and naturally they don't much care for adverse stuff in the press - particularly stuff to worry local landowners and builders. People don't buy property that's not safe - or ground that's liable to subsidence! And since I've already had one ticking-off as it is, well, I don't want to jeopardize my pension, that's all....

I think what really annoyed the bosses was when I went on about those tunnels I found down there - not old, timbered seams, mind you, but TUNNELS - round and pretty smoothly finished and certainly artificial. And not just one, as they said in the "MAIL", but half-a-dozen! A proper maze it was. Yes, I said those tunnel walls were burned rather than cut, and so they were. At least that's how they looked - as though they'd somehow been coated on the inside with lava and then allowed to cool!

But there I go running ahead of myself. Better start at the beginning....

I went down the main shaft at Harden, using the old emergency lift-cage which they hadn't yet dismantled. There was a gang of lads at the top just in case the old machinery should go on the blink. I wasn't a bit worried, you understand, it's been my job for a long time now and I know all the dangers and what to look for.

I took a budgie down with me in a little cage. I could hang the cage up to the roof timbers while I looked about. There are still some of the old-fashioned methods you can't beat, I reckon, and the budgie was so I'd know if there was any firedamp down there - methane to you. A heavy gas knocks a bird out in a wink, which lets you know it's time to get out! I wore protective gear and high boots in case of water - Harden's not all that far from the sea, and it's one of the deepest pits in the country. Funny thing, but I EXPECTED water, yet as it happened I was quite wrong; it was as dry as a bone down there! I had a modern lamp on my helmet with a good, powerful beam, and I carried a "map" of the galleries and seams - standard procedure but hardly necessary in my case.

Well, anyway, I got down the shaft all right and gave the old hand-set at the bottom a twirl to let the boys on top know that everything was well, and then I set out along the horizontal connecting-shaft to the west-side galleries and coal-seams. Now, you have to understand, Mr. Crow, that the main passages are often pretty big things. Some of them are almost as large as any single tube-tunnel in London. I mention this to show that I wasn't shut in, like, or suffering from claustrophobia or anything like that, and it wasn't as if I hadn't been down a pit before - but there was, well, SOMETHING!

It's hard for me to explain on paper like this, but - Oh, I don't know - I had this feeling that - It was as if - Well, did you ever as a child play hide-and-seek and go into a room where someone was hiding? You can't see him, it's dark and he's quiet as a mouse - but you know he's in there all the same! That's what it was like down there in that deserted mine. And yet it WAS truly deserted - at that time anyway....

Well, I shook this feeling off and went on until I reached the west-side network. This is almost two horizontal miles from the main shaft. Along the way I had seen evidence of deterioration in the timbers, but not enough to explain away the subsidences on the surface. So far as I could see, there had been no actual cave-ins. The place did STINK though like nothing I'd ever smelled before, but it wasn't any sort of gas to affect the budgie or me. Just a very unpleasant smell. Right at the end of the connecting shaft, at a spot almost directly under Blackhill, I came across the first of the new tunnels. It entered into the shaft from the side away from the sea, and frankly it stopped me dead! I mean, what would YOU have made of it?

It was a hole, horizontal and with hard, regular walls, but it was cut through SOLID ROCK and not coal! Now, I like to keep slap up to date on my methods, but I was pretty sure right from the start that this tunnel wasn't dug using any system or machinery I knew of. And yet it seemed I must have missed something somewhere. The thing wasn't shown on my map, though, so in the end I told myself that some new machinery must have been tested down there before they'd closed the mine. I was damned annoyed, I'll tell you - nobody had told me to expect this!

The mouth of the tunnel was about eight feet in diameter, and although the roof wasn't propped up or timbered in any way the bore looked safe-as-houses, solid somehow. I decided to go on down it to see how far it went. It was all of half-a-mile long,

that shaft, Mr. Crow; none of it timbered, straight as a die, and the neatest bit of tunneling work I've ever seen underground in twenty-five years. Every two hundred yards or so similar tunnels would come in from the sides at right-angles, and at three of these junctions there had been heavy falls of rock. This warned me to be careful. Obviously, these holes weren't as solid as they looked.

I don't know where the thought came from, but suddenly I found myself thinking of giant moles! I once saw one of these sensational film-things about just such animals. Possibly that's where the idea sprang from in my mind. Anyway, I'd no sooner had this thought than I came to a spot where yet another tunnel joined the main one - BUT THIS ONE CAME DOWN AT AN ANGLE FROM ABOVE!

There was a hole opening into the ceiling, with the edges rounded off and smoothed in some way I don't understand, as if by heat like I said before. Well, I went dead slow from then on, but soon I came out of the tunnel into a big cave. At least, I took it to be a cave - but when I looked closer at the walls I saw that it wasn't! It was simply a junction of a dozen or so of the tunnels. Pillars like stalactites held up the ceiling. This was where I saw the carvings, those pictures of octopus-things etched in the walls - and I don't think I need add how much THAT put the wind up me!

I didn't hang about there much longer, (apart from anything else the stench was terrible,) but long enough to check that the place was all of 50 feet across and that the walls were coated or smoothed over with that same sort of lava-stuff. The floor was flat enough but crumbly, almost earthy, and right in the middle of the place I found four great cave-pearls. At least, I THINK they're cave-pearls. They're about four inches across, these things - very hard, heavy and glossy. Don't ask me how they got down there, I don't know, and I can't see how they might have formed naturally, like other cave-pearls I remember seeing when I was a kid. Anyway, I put them into a bag I carried and then went back the way I'd come to the terminal of the west-side workings. By then I'd been down there about an hour and a half.

I didn't get far into the actual coal-seams. The first half-dozen were down. They had collapsed. But I soon enough found out what had brought them down! In and out of the old workings, lacing them like holes in gorgonzola, those damned smooth-lined tunnels came and went, literally honeycombing the coal and rock alike! Then, in one of the few remaining old seams that still stood and where some poor-grade coal still remained, I came across yet another funny thing. A tunnel, one of the new ones, had been cut right along the original seam, and I noticed that here the walls weren't of that lava substance but a pitchy, hard tar - exactly the kind of deposit you find bubbling out of hot coal in the coke-ovens, only set as hard as rock!

That was it - I'd had enough - and I set off back toward the main shaft and the lift-cage. It was then I thought I heard the chanting. Thought? Like hell, I thought - I DID hear it! And it was just as you wrote it down! It was distant, seeming to come from a very long way away, like listening to the sea in a shell or hearing a tune you remember in your head... But I knew I should never have been hearing things like that down there at all, and I took off for the lift-cage as fast as I could go.

Well, I'll cut the rest of it short, Mr. Crow. I've probably said too much already as it is, and I just hope to God that you're not one of those reporter fellows. Still, I wanted to get it off my chest, so what the hell care I?

Blowne House
30th May.

To: Raymond Bentham, Esq.

Dear Mr. Bentham:

I thank you for your prompt reply to my queries of the 25th., and would be obliged if you would give similar keen attention to this further letter. I must of necessity make my note brief, (I have many important things to do,) but I beg you to have the utmost faith in my directions, strange as they may seem to you, and to carry them out without delay!

You have seen, Mr. Bentham, how accurately I described the pictures on the walls of that great unnatural cave in the earth, and how I was able to duplicate on paper the weird chant you heard underground. My dearest wish now is that you remember these previous deductions of mine, and believe me when I tell you THAT YOU HAVE PLACED YOURSELF IN EXTREME AND HIDEOUS DANGER IN REMOVING THE CAVE-PEARLS FROM THE HARDEN TUNNEL-COMPLEX! In fact, it is my sincere belief that you are in a constantly increasing peril every moment you keep those things!

I ask you to send them to me; I might know what to do with them. I repeat, Mr. Bentham, DO NOT DELAY BUT SEND ME THE CAVE-PEARLS AT ONCE; or should you decide against it, then for God's sake at least remove them from your house and person! A good suggestion would be for you to drop them back into the shaft at the mine, if that is at all possible, but whichever method you choose in getting rid of them - do it with dispatch! They may rightly be regarded as being infinitely more dangerous than ten times their own weight in nitro-glycerin!

Yrs. V. Truly--
Titus Crow

Blowne House
5 p.m., 30th May.

To Mr. Henri-Laurent De Marigny.

Dear Henri,

I've tried to get you on the telephone twice today, only to discover at this late hour that you're in Paris at a sale of antiques! Your house-keeper tells me she doesn't know when you'll be back. I hope it's soon - I may very well need your help! This note will be waiting for you when you get back. WASTE NO TIME, DE MARIGNY, BUT GET ROUND HERE AS SOON AS YOU'RE ABLE: -

Titus.....

I finally arrived at the shaft-bottom, by which time the chanting had died away, and I gave the lads on top a tinkle on the old hand-set to haul me up. At the top I made out my report - but not as fully as I've done here - and then I went home. I kept the cave-pearls, as mementoes if you like, and said nothing about them in my report. I don't see what good they'd be to anyone anyway. Still, it does seem a bit like stealing. I mean, whatever the things really are they're not mine, are they? I might just send them off anonymously to the museum at Sunderland or Radcar. I suppose the museum people will know what they are ...'

The next morning the reporters came round from the "DAILY MAIL". They'd heard I had a bit of a story to tell and pumped me for all I was worth. I had the idea they were laughing at me, though, so I didn't tell them a deal. They must have gone to see Old Betteridge when finally they left me - and, well, you know the rest.

And that's it, Mr. Crow. If there's something else you'd like to know, just drop me another line. Myself, I'd be interested to learn how you come to know so much about it all - and why you want to know more....?

Yrs. sincerely--
R. Bentham

P.S. Maybe you heard how they were planning to send two more inspectors down to do the job I'd "messed up". Well, they couldn't. Just a few days ago the whole lot fell in! The road between Harden and Blackhill sank ten feet in places, and a couple of brick barns were brought down at Castle-Ilden. There's had to be work done on the walls of the Red Cow Inn in Harden, too, and there have been slight tremors all over the area ever since. Like I said, the mine was rotten with those tunnels down there - I'm only surprised (and thankful!) it held up so long! Oh, and one other thing. I think that the smell I mentioned must, after all, have been produced by a gas of some sort. Certainly my head's been fuzzy ever since. Weak as a kitten, I've been and damned if I don't seem to keep hearing that awful, droning chanting sound! All my imagination, of course. For you can take it from me that Old Betteridge wasn't even partly right in what he said about me ...

R.B.



DARK PROVIDENCE

By
Jerry Saunders

The speaker had gone overtime because of a flood of questions from the floor, so the lecture did not end until a quarter after ten.

The member of the audience who perhaps had gained the most pleasure from the talk was a thin gentleman in the second row. This man had asked no questions but had listened intently, mentally comparing his own exhaustive researches of the heavens with those of the speaker. At times a faint smile would flicker across his face as he caught an erroneous statement from the man on the stage.

When at last the hall began to empty, the thin gentleman breathed a sigh of relief. Much as he had enjoyed the lecture, he was beginning to wish that he had not ventured out. He did not feel well and knew that he would soon feel worse, for it was undoubtedly very cold outside by this time. He buttoned his coat as securely as possible and made for the door.

Upon reaching the threshold he automatically glanced upward to find a favorite constellation which had been mentioned in the address. He frowned as he saw only blackness above. The stars were obscured by thick clouds, and to his consternation he felt an icy wind strike hard against him. The weather had undergone an abrupt change, and while it was merely inconvenient for the others, it was perhaps deadly for him. All his life cold had been his enemy; maybe tonight it would achieve its final victory.

The lights of the last automobile had disappeared into the gloom now and the footsteps of the last pedestrian had died away in the distance. He was alone on the sidewalk, alone as he had often been during his life, as a child and now as a man. But he was not truly alone now, for as the wind knifed through the inadequate coat the spectre of the Grim Reaper seemed to pace soundlessly near him. So far to walk before he reached home...

Clenching his teeth and bending forward, he struggled against the onrushing gale. It was slow going, and soon he began to feel desparately weak. Nausea attacked him and his head throbbed. A numbness slowly spread through his legs, causing his steps to slow even more. His eyes watered profusely, blurring his vision and making it ever harder for him to find his way.

Once he stumbled against a streetlamp post and as he rubbed his aching head he used the meager light cast by the lamp to take stock of his surroundings.

To his absolute surprise he found that he had evidently lost his way. He did not know how far he had gone since leaving the lecture hall, and he could find no familiar landmarks of any kind around him. This was curious, for he knew the city perhaps better than anyone else who lived in it. Also, he was accustomed to the streets at night, having habitually taken midnight strolls along the thoroughfares of both the older and newer parts of town. Yet, his present position seemed utterly alien to him.

As he stood thinking amid the yellow pool of light, two things happened, each of which startled him. A tiny flake of wet coldness fell upon his face and at the same time he thought he glimpsed something moving in the shadow of an old building to his left. A moment more convinced him that it was snowing and that someone or something was following him. He wanted to stay in the light and make use of whatever feeble protection it could afford him, but he decided not to tarry since he had no weapon, should one be required.

He moved up a small street, glancing behind him as he went. His second backward look showed him something slipping through the shadows of buildings, carefully avoiding the light. He stopped for a moment and so did the movement in the shadows. Suddenly he had the distinct feeling that he was being watched, and from several directions. He whirled to look toward his right and just caught a telltale disturbance of the smooth contours of shadow.

Now he was almost to a second streetlamp. It was a good thing, for the effects of his brief rest at the first lamp had now worn off. He was near to collapsing, but his will overruled his weakness. He was in a strange place and was being followed by the unknown. It was no time to surrender to his aching body and taut nerves. He waited for fresh signs of

his stealthy pursuers. He had not long to wait before he made out at least four of them. They were flattening themselves against the tumble-down buildings and shunning the small expanses of light.

He did not know what it meant; he had never heard of street gangs in the city. He had always felt safe to walk the streets at any hour. But as he considered this, the thought came home to him that he had at times fancied that he was being watched as he took his nocturnal walks. Sometimes the sensation had crept up on him as he traversed some particularly dark street; other times it had started when he stepped out of his house.

He expected to be rushed at any moment by those who lingered in the shadows. This, however, did not seem to be their intention. He thought of calling loudly for the police but did not do so. For one thing, such an action might call forth a violent assault from the mysterious group. Besides, he did not believe that any policemen were near this desolate spot.

A low howl, like that of a wolf or dog, came to his ears. He shuddered at the sound. Howling at night had always made him uneasy. Another howl came, followed by another. And it was almost more than he could do to keep from fainting when he saw one of his pursuers get a little farther into the light, drop down on all fours, and produce one of the howls which he had been hearing.

The snow was falling heavily now and a good amount had accumulated on the ground. His feet slipped in it repeatedly and he was dashed to the pavement. His mind reeled and he knew it all must be a dream...

There was a long succession of dark, twisting streets, blinding showers of white, and furtive shadow-movements before he finally fell, utterly spent, in a snow-bank. There had really been no hope at all for him; the cold was doing its work well. But he would have welcomed such a death, compared to what he might expect from the horrors behind him.

Before he lost consciousness there came one last image; a ring of hairy faces with dog-like muzzles and flashing fangs, a circle of visages drawn from nightmare, staring down at him with luminous green eyes...

* * * *

"What's going on there?"

The cry brought him back to his senses, and he suddenly felt himself falling. He hit the soft snow and with an effort struggled to his feet. A policeman confronted him.

"Are you all right, Mister? No, wait - I see you aren't. Here, lean on me. I'll confess I thought you were drunk, the way your friends were carryin' you. Guess I scared them off. They sure ran like blazes."

"Carryin' me - did - did you say that they were carryin' me?"

"Sure! But look, Sir, we better get you to a doctor."

No - no, I'll be quite all right - I must get home - I live at Sixty-six College Street - if you could help me get there...."

"Why, I don't have to help you! You're there already! That should be your home." He looked where the policeman pointed.

"Yes. Yes, it is. But how - how did I get here? The last thing I remember was being in a strange neighborhood."

"I told you, Sir. Your friends must've brought you here. I saw 'em carryin' you."

"You mean you saw them?"

"Well, just from a distance. But you *did* know them, didn't you?"

"Why, yes - yes"

He left the policeman for a moment and walked to where a light flooded the snow-covered street. Bending down, he looked at the several sets of tracks in the snow. None of them were his. And none of them were human.

"Look out, you!" cried a hoarse voice.

An automobile, driven by a young man far gone in drink, narrowly missed him. When it passed he looked again at the street. The tire tracks had obliterated all other marks in the snow.

Bidding goodnight to the policeman, he went into the house where he knew his worried aunt would be waiting up for him.

OTHERS WHO ARE NOT MEN

By W. Paul Ganley

-I-

I had purchased twelve acres of woodland in the Black Mountains of West Virginia some eight or ten years ago, upon a happy occasion when I had been particularly fortunate in a stock transaction - some Canadian uranium properties I had obtained for pennies a share had blossomed, and I sold them for dollars before the price could dwindle again, as it subsequently did. The region was utterly wild and unspoiled, save for a delapidated shack near the foot of a waterfall that bordered my property. The land, a narrow strip crossed near one end by a nameless stream, was a tiny patch of privately-owned country sandwiched between two state parklands, and should have been relatively expensive, but was not. I had spent an occasional weekend there, fishing and hunting, when I could escape from the constant pressure of business, camping out because the deserted shack was unsuitable as shelter.

When I celebrated my forty-first birthday with a mild heart murmur, my physician warned me that it would be necessary for me to take a lengthy vacation, preferably in a location where I could enjoy mild exercise, breathe unsullied air and, most important, not be subjected to business worries.

"Hank," he told me, "You must be a fairly wealthy man. You own a thriving business. You're a widower with no family responsibilities. Sell 'Hartley Enterprises' outright, or put it under a good manager for a few months, and take off for that woodland mecca you're always telling me about. Do some physical labor, light labor; don't exert yourself too strenuously, though, at least at first. I don't guarantee a full recovery, but I'd give odds on it if I were a betting man. What I do guarantee you is that if you keep on as you have been, you'll be dead inside of 2 years."

I had been working hard. Partly to keep from thinking about Eleanor and Bill, and how they might be alive today, if I had just thought to take - but that is another story, one best forgotten. I had not been to the place in over a year, and I resolved to follow Doc Parry's advice, though I feared solitude and what paths my quiet thoughts might follow.

I made arrangements through a friend to have a small log hut constructed above the waterfall, barely out of sight of the ruined shack, and spent some time arranging to have my business carried on by a manager. Larry Hanover, whom I chose for the job, had been with me for years, and I looked on him almost as a younger brother. Although not brilliant or imaginative, he was trustworthy. In fact, I have arranged to leave the business to him, if I do not sell it first, since I have no close relatives, and he loves the work nearly as much as I do.

I arrived late on a chilly early afternoon in mid-March. The cabin, newly completed, was damp and



cold. I parked my Ford wagon about two hundred yards downstream and toted a light bag and some groceries up the gentle knoll to the cabin. When I reached the door, I was panting, despite the very slight nature of my exertions, and I was disinclined to return to the wagon and fetch my remaining belongings. So I pulled the door to, latched it, and set about starting a fire in the tiny stove. In these times, with chemical starters and fuel-impregnated charcoal, this was relatively simple, and within twenty minutes the chill was gone from the atmosphere within the room. It had had an odd, musty odor that was out of keeping with its newness, but soon I no longer noticed this. The four hour drive and the subsequent short walk had made me tired; so I ate the remainder of my travel lunch, lay down on the bunk and slept soundly till dawn.

In the morning I unpacked the stationwagon and stowed my belongings away in the cabin. This first week I did not hunt or fish, but I obtained a modicum of exercise by walking aimlessly about the woods or along the stream with my old polaroid camera, searching for interesting compositions. Gradually I was recovering my stamina, and although I followed Doc Parry's injunction against too much exercise too soon I could feel my body growing stronger.

I had brought no reading matter with me, preferring to express my own thoughts, sensations and speculations, so I had decided to keep a journal; and each evening, after the dinner plate had been washed in the stream, I recorded the trivial events of the day. Particularly in view of later events some of the things I wrote were puerile, others intriguing. I have since destroyed much of that journal as arrant nonsense, but have incorporated some of it into these notes, which detail only the important happenings and skip the trivia.

For about a month I lived a solitary existence, slowly gaining strength and reveling in the primitive life. I began to fish, though I held off trying to do any hunting, contenting myself with a bit of target practice at sparrows. One trip to the village in that time represented my sole contact with the outside world. The villagers are a queer bunch. Although I have come here fairly often for a number of years, and own this land, they still consider me a stranger. During this month they knew I was here (in fact, three of them had been hired to build this cabin) but none had dropped by to see if I was here or how I was doing. For some reason, they do not like this part of the territory - they tend to avoid coming around even in my absence - and I had had to pay an exorbitant wage (by local standards) to get them to work on the cabin.

Then Bill Fowler stopped by. He was not a villager, only down for the week-end. He owned a stretch of land that began where my line stopped.

"Not roughing it any more, I see," he commented as we sat smoking and watching the waterfall.



"I'm down for the whole summer," I said. "Bit of a rest. Been overdoing it."

"Didn't see you here at all last year."

I nodded. "Too busy at the office."

"Funny thing happened here last year," Bill said relighting the stump of his cigar. "My dog got himself killed."

"How's that?"

"You remember old Silver? Brown and white haired pointer? We'd bagged a few things and I was getting set to turn back for camp. We were upstream, down near the edge of your acreage. Silver caught some kind of queer scent and went storming off, barking for all he was worth. I took after him fast, because I'd never seen him act that way before. But I lost him."

"What happened?"

"I heard him give one loud yelp, and then nothing. Hank, that sound put the hairs on my neck on end. I tried to find him and stumbled around for about half an hour, mad as hell, but saw no signs of him. Then I came across that old shack downstream. You know? He was there, just outside the rotten walls, lying on the ground. Dead. Dead as a door-nail."

"What killed him, Bill?"

"Damned if I could tell," he said, shaking his head in puzzlement.

"But . . ." I frowned.

He said with acerbity, "Sure, I'm a physician. I could tell if he was shot, or strangled, or mauled by a bear, or even poisoned. Or whatever. But as far as I could see, the damned mutt was in perfect shape, physically, except that he was dead." He paused. "Of course, I didn't do an autopsy. I buried the fella there in the soft ground and chalked it all up as just one of those things. But . . ."

"Yes?"

"Well, nothing. Nothing. Only it was damned queer."

I could see something else was on his mind, but I couldn't persuade him to admit it. I didn't try very hard. What was a dead dog, to me, anyway?

As May turned to June, a few other hunters occasionally stopped by for a word or two, and I started doing a bit of hunting myself. One of the others was a fellow I knew pretty well - we had swapped stories over the evening campfire a number of times in the past, and I liked him as a hunting companion. He usually knew when to talk and when to listen. This time he decided to talk.

"Seen Bill Fowler this year?"

I nodded.

"Tell you about his dog."

I nodded.

"Strange. Dog dying like that, not an old dog either. No reason why.

I said, a little worried, "I suppose an excited dog could suffer a heart attack, or something, even a fairly young one."

He shook his head.

"No, there's something queer about it. I'll tell you. I've gotten in with one or two of the local crowd. My wife's mother has cousins hereabouts. They told me some of it. Bill doesn't know the details, but he guesses." He lowered his voice. "Silver wasn't the first dog to die there, like that. There have been two others, maybe three, in the past twenty years, and still others have disappeared from sight around that area."

"What do you mean? Did they die here by the waterfall?"

"By the shack. That shack back there. It's why the locals don't care to come around here, I guess, Hank. They say there are hauntings here."

I frowned. "You mean . . . ghosts?"

"I don't know what I mean, exactly. But you won't catch any of the townspeople near this place after dark. Even the ones who built your cabin - they were gone from here by four o'clock every afternoon."

"Rot," I said, and I meant it.

Afterward, I got to thinking about the situation, however. It was queer enough, certainly, but not so queer as all that. Dogs do die, after all, and in a twenty year period it isn't so strange that three or four should die in the same general locale. Especially when that locale includes a broken-down shack, where an animal or two might have made nesting places. That would draw dogs, surely.

No, there must be something else, as well; since I was becoming just a wee bit bored, I decided to find out what that something might be. My plan was simple - there was a doctor in town, Dr. Jason Rigby, an old G.P. who was retired but kept up a local practice. He was originally born in this town, though he had mostly practiced in Henderson (the county seat), thirty miles southwest of here, and I thought he could be approached. I had the perfect excuse to see him.

Next afternoon found me stripped to the waist in Doc Rigby's office. He probed for a while with stethoscopes and things and took a blood sample. Finally he told me to get dressed, and I sat down as he finished scrawling indecipherable comments on my record card. I waited in silence.

"Course, I don't have any of the new-fangled electronic gadgets down here," he said, "But I'd say you are in pretty good shape. Some of these modern doctors haven't got the sense of a midwife, but yours seems to have done all right by you."

"Then I'm cured?" I exclaimed incredulously.

"Well on the road to it," he replied. "Stay healthy, live outdoors a lot, do some physical exercise, you might live to be ninety."

"And if I go back to my business in the city?"

He shrugged. "The strain got you once. It may again. It's your decision."

I thought about that a minute. Then I decided to let it go and make a frontal attack.

"Doctor, you're familiar with the local situation. Is that place of mine really as healthy, or safe, for me as I thought when I came here?"

He stared at me oddly, but did not reply.

"I mean," I stammered, somewhat disconcerted, "I've just been wondering about a couple of things."

"Dogs?" he inquired drily.

"For one thing, dogs," I agreed. "And people, too. It took a lot of persuasion to get some of the local people to build that little cabin of mine. I've spent some time wondering why." I finished almost apologetically, "I have quite a lot of time on my hands for wondering, these days."

Rigby stared at me with his piercing eyes for so long that I was convinced he would refuse to reply. I fidgeted. Then he asked, "Have you been sleeping soundly?"

I acquiesced, surprised a little. "Very well."

"Rumors - that's all there are, outside of the dogs..." His voice trailed off. "But I do know a little about old Zacharias."

Back when his grandfather was a young man, Rigby told me, old Zacharias had moved into the region and built his shack on my property, where he then lived with his son. The son was even more mysterious than the father, for few people even caught glimpses of him, those few remarking on his apparent ugliness. He was reputed to be an invalid; at least one of those who had caught a glimpse of him outside the cabin remarked that his hands were bandaged and that he appeared to walk with an infirm gait.

Old Zach was very much of a recluse, and rarely entered the town except to obtain a few stores such as salt and molasses. Children out hunting might spy his traps occasionally, or even see him fishing, and he would mutter a few words of sullen greeting; but that was all. The son never hunted or fished, presumably because of his infirmity.

Then one evening the thing happened. A toddler, the doctor's own great grandaunt Anne, disappeared from the town, and the most diligent search failed to locate her. The doctor did not know how suspicion

came to dwell upon old Zach, or even if it was justified, but apparently that was what had happened. Six men, armed with rifles and shotguns, went to the shack at sundown of the following day.

Outside the door, just off the trail, legend has it, lay a small sandal, recognizable to Anne's father as having belonged to her. At that, their uneasy and nebulous suspicions confirmed, the men broke into loud curses, and shouted wildly for old Zach and his son to come out and face them. One or two shotguns were fired at the cabin.

Now the doctor's story became indistinct, as though no one had ever told him the exact details of what had occurred. Clearly the men themselves never quite knew. Apparently a wild shriek issued from the cabin, and there was a loud rumbling sound, as though the earth itself were trembling.

Then the shack collapsed with a violent clap, like thunder.

As the doctor told it, the men tried to probe the ruins for the bodies of Zach and his son, or for a sign of the child, Anne; but there were evidently traces of gas about the place that prevented a thorough search. The gas, or whatever it was, was described as having a musty odor, and as producing faintness. Two of the men were rendered unconscious by its effects, and had to be carried away from the vicinity by the others. The result of this was a superstitious dread of the region that has persisted even to the present generation.

Dr. Rigby told me his father had a scientific theory regarding the whole affair - he believed that there was an underground pocket of natural gas in the region which had been breached by the construction of a cellar or storage pit under the house. The shotgun blasts having been too much vibration, the gas broke loose from its subterranean cavern and blew up the shack, killing old Zach and his son instantly.

Privately I wondered. The shack still had most of three walls standing, and much of the roof remained intact even after seventy some years. The other part, as I recalled, had collapsed inward, almost as though some modern Sampson had pulled the entire structure down upon him. Would this have happened if a gas pocket had exploded under the house?

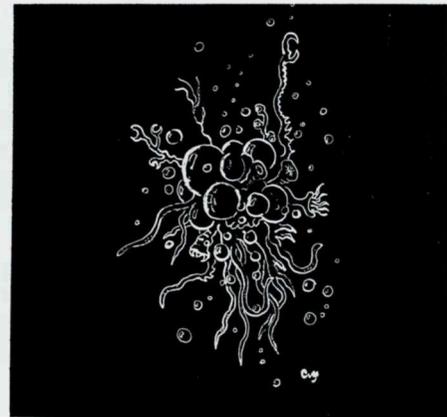
As an afterthought, Rigby told me that the body of little Anne Rigby had been washed ashore the next morning far downstream in the creek. It was apparently much battered, and it was bruited about that she had been swept over the waterfall; but he said he had the distinct impression that there was something about the corpse that was horribly queer, something his elders would not tell him, and would scarcely discuss among themselves.

"The gas theory would explain the death of the dogs!" I exclaimed, after Rigby's tale was concluded. "There must still be some gas leaking out there, at least sometimes."

"If you believe the theory, then perhaps so." he replied.

"What other theory can there be?" I queried.

He shook his head. "I don't know." And he refused to discuss the matter further.



After a week of contemplation I decided to take action. I loved hunting, fishing, the outdoor life in general - but I was used to a heavy regime of mental activity, and I was bored doing nothing else. I had a second reason for acting, besides pure curiosity. A practical man, I needed a practical motive. And I remembered in the doctor's tale that the shack was described as smelling musty. That rang a chord - I paged back through the remnants of my original journal to my account of the day I had first arrived at the cabin. Yes, I had recorded the fact that my cabin smelled musty, despite its newness, when I had first entered it.

Did it mean anything? I thought it might. It could mean that the gas pocket extended under my cabin as well as under old Zach's, and that could be very dangerous. Furthermore, I came to wonder whether this gas, anesthetic in small dosages as apparently it was, might not be the prime cause of my dreamless, sound sleep. I had never slept so well in my whole life - perhaps in this respect the gas was not dangerous to me; many poisons, when taken in small amounts, are beneficial. But I was unhappy, to say the least, at the prospect of continuing to live over a veritable powder keg.

When I determine upon a definite course of action, I make my preparations carefully and methodically; this has been a trait of mine since childhood. My initial step, in this case, was to order some equipment, including a surplus gas mask and scuba diving kit with tanks of compressed oxygen and air. I also purchased two canaries. Despite the advances in technology made by our twentieth century culture, the best contamination-detector for air is still a canary. Of course, Larry Hanover must have been puzzled about my instructions, for he acted as my agent in making the purchases, but I am sure he lost no sleep over the matter. As I have explained before, he is a good fellow, but badly equipped when it comes to imagination.

Three days after Labor Day, I was ready. I had noticed that the canaries had little difficulty in adjusting to the living conditions in my cabin. Was it my imagination that they were less active than most such birds? - perhaps; I had never kept canaries before. In any event, the valley was generally windy; the breeze that swept down from the northeast was welcome in the heat of the summer, and my window was constantly open. This might have counteracted the major effects of the gas that I suspected was seeping up through the soft clay soil.

I brought the gas mask and the oxygen tank, which I had equipped with a breathing mask, down to the old shack in my Ford Wagon, which I drove right up to the front, for the ground was not too bumpy in this area. It was six o'clock in the morning. Noone was around for miles, I was certain. I took the cage in which I had brought one of the canaries and approached the ruined shack, keeping a cautious eye on the bird's demeanor. It was angry at me for disturbing it, and a little fearful, but it seemed to be perfectly all right physically.

I looked over the ruins. Odd that I had never noticed - the weeds were not growing anywhere near it. Well, I hadn't known before that the shack was over seventy years old. The wood did not look rotted. I sniffed the air. No musty smell. The bird was quieter now, but was still healthy.

I decided to begin my explorations at the wall that was least ruined. In this wall the front door stood, tightly shut. I had taken along a heavy hammer and a chisel and these proved to be more than sufficient for the task at hand. Two solid blows served to tear loose the crumbling hasp and in another moment I had pried open the door and stood blinking into the dusty interior. Light entered through the many damaged places and I could see fairly well; just to make certain I did not overlook anything, I lit a Coleman lantern and hung it over the entrance on a peg.

Evidently there had been two rooms in the shack and this part was not terribly damaged at all; the partition was bent awry, and a few timbers from the roof had sagged floorward, that was all. It was the second room, to the rear, that had suffered most of the damage. Still I was in no hurry to attempt to paw through the worst part of the ruins. A small block and tackle I had rented was lying in the stationwagon; I had no intention of clearing up the splintered logs and debris with my hands alone. But before I started the job, I wanted to look over the relatively intact portion of the place thoroughly.

Occasionally I glanced at the canary, whose cage I had put down on a primitive-looking bookshelf, but it seemed perfectly lively. Perhaps in the coolness of the morning, the gas did not seep out, but I would take no chances. I went back out and dragged the oxygen tank into the shack and draped the gas mask around my neck. I could don it in two seconds flat, should the necessity of doing so occur.

The room struck me as being perfectly normal - the kind of parlor a hermit of rather primitive means would be expected to have. It had probably never been neat or orderly. In fact, it resembled the inside of my own cabin. There was only one difference. I had brought along no reading matter with me; I was never much of a reader, anyway. But this fellow had about five large shelves just crammed with books. I glanced at them curiously, but most of them meant nothing to me. By a freak of chance, the roof above the bookshelf had remained almost intact, and they hadn't been weathered irreparably. Not that they were in fine condition; many must have been ancient and faded even before old Zach could ever have purchased them, they were so old. I decided to take some of them back to my cabin with me for study, and began to stow them away in the wagon. Once started on the task I kept at it until I had them all; I decided that would be safer, for some of those books looked valuable and one or two ominous creaking noises had brought home to me the fact that the structure was none too sturdy, and might collapse when I began to clear away the debris in the back room.

At this time, even with concrete evidence before me, I had not the slightest inkling or premonition of the true situation. I had worked out a scientific theory, or one that I thought was scientific, based on Rigby's explanation. The only flaw in the gas theory, I had decided, was that an explosion would have blown the wreckage out, whereas the place had obviously collapsed. Once, in college, I had been considering majoring in science and I had had a course or two in chemistry. My recollections, though dim, were that a chemical explosion usually results from the ignition of a mixture of air and an inflammable material because the products of the reaction (normally carbon dioxide and water vapor) are gases at a high temperature, and they therefore push outward at a high pressure. This outward push is the explosion. But what if some unknown gas were to produce a solid product (I remembered vaguely that phosphorous pentoxide was such a solid combustion product)? Would not this lead to an implosion not an explosion? Surely the result would be that the gas mixture might ignite to produce a solid compound, leaving almost a perfect vacuum behind. Air pressure from outside would collapse the walls. The only difficulty is that I knew of no gas which would have such an effect.

After packing the books, I decided to take everything else in the shack that could be moved. Things like the table, the chairs, and the cot that had lain in one corner of the room I left outside. There were a few small items that I stowed away in the Ford. They were curiosities. I wondered about them, but they could have been souvenirs of a trip abroad. For example, there were five little statuettes of the general sort I have seen for sale in Hawaii and in African shops. Ugly little monsters. One was especially disgusting; the carver must have been a madman, or else he was affected by a pretty wild nightmare. It had tentacles about its head, and - but there is little point in describ-

ing the abomination in these notes; it is, after all, right here in the room with me. Odd - once or twice, I have decided to destroy the cursed image, and have actually picked it up with the intention of tossing it over the waterfall. Each time I have changed my mind. Ugly as it may be, it is nevertheless a work of art, one of the most realistic idols I have ever seen, for all that it is a fantastic design.

After cleaning out the accessible part of the shack, I started on the rest. I was glad to get outside again, for I had raised a lot of dust. But there was no sign of gas, and the canary was perfectly all right. I took his cage with me. The job of removing the fallen timbers and logs was not easy, even with the aid of the block and tackle. But I was not interested in enlisting the aid of the reluctant (and expensive) natives and the visiting sportsmen had now quit these parts. By mid-afternoon, I could see that I would need another half-day to finish, but I persisted until near sundown.

It was with a sudden start of fear that I saw my canary lying on its side in the cage. Its wings were faintly fluttering.

I reacted by grabbing the gas mask. With fumbling fingers I put it on and cautiously breathed. I was trembling. Obviously I had been affected, too, because it must have taken ten or fifteen seconds, not two, for me to adjust the mask upon my face. I felt dizzy, suddenly, and felt myself sink to the ground. I knew the fumes would be stronger there, but I could not help myself.

Gradually I breathed more easily and my head cleared. The gas mask was performing its job. I was thankful - I had never been quite sure it would be effective against an unknown vapor. As soon as I could I got to my feet and stumbled toward the Ford, carrying my bird cage. I used the small oxygen tank to try to revive the canary, but it was useless - the bird was dead. Shaken, I removed the mask and drove to the cabin.

Strange to say, this unfortunate experience did not deter me from my self-appointed task. If anything it strengthened my resolve. To tell the truth, I had begun to wonder if my elaborate preparations (the gas mask, the canaries and so on) were really necessary, or just a bit of rather juvenile posturing. Now that the canary and the gas mask had probably saved my life, I felt justified and a little smug.

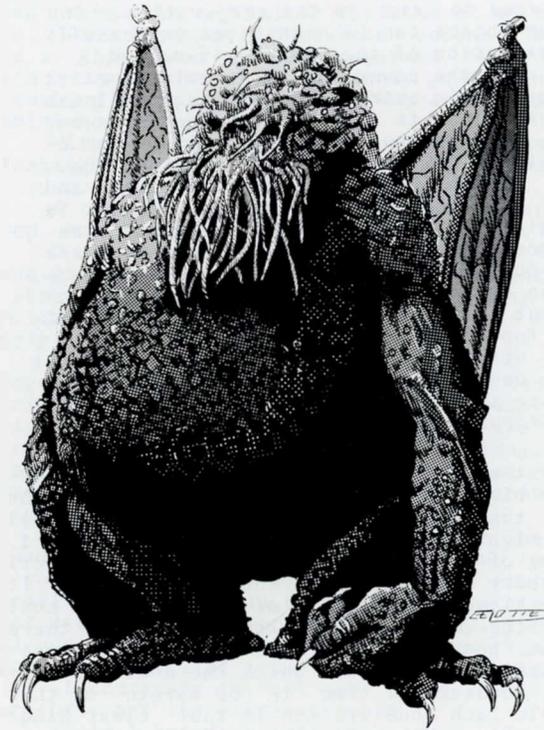
I found that the after-effects of my experience, a general lassitude only partly attributable to my physical exertions, were erased when I tried breathing pure oxygen. I did this cautiously, for I knew that it was not safe to inhale pure oxygen for long periods of time; but no ill effects occurred.

That night, for the first time in well over five months, my sleep was disturbed. I dreamed incessantly. I do not recall the dreams very vividly but they seemed to center about figures resembling the statues I had rescued from old Zach's hut, particularly the ugly one with tentacles. It seemed to me that I chanted his name, a name that resounded in my brain, a word of great power; but then I woke and the memory faded and was gone. I was drenched in sweat and had fallen out of my cot onto the floor.

I must have hit with a bang, for I would swear that those figurines had moved, changed their positions a little from where I had placed them. At the time I shrugged this off as nonsense, but the half-memories of those dreams still disturbed me. When I tried to compose myself for sleep, nothing happened. Finally, I hunted down the package of capsules Doc Parry had given me to use as a sedative. It was a medicine I had never needed, once I arrived here in this valley. I swallowed two of them and returned to bed. Soon I slept, and if I dreamed again I have no recollection of it.

Next day it rained and I was dog tired anyway, so I put off finishing the job at the shack and decided to explore my cache of books instead.

I had made quite a find, I now realized. Some of them were perfectly ordinary treatises on scientific subjects - for instance, there was Newton's



PRINCIPIA and an old volume on optics by the German poet Goethe. More heavily represented were books on the pseudo-sciences. There were treatises on astrology, on alchemy, on palmistry and phrenology, on Tarot cards, and the like. Most of the books were in English, German or Latin. All were annotated in English in a neat script.

These accounted for perhaps half of my literary treasure trove. The remainder seemed to consist of books on religion or magic or mysticism. I had heard of Albertus Magnus and of the Tibetan book of the dead and a few others. But I had never encountered such authors as Ibn Fozlan, Cosmas, Jules Bois, and Petrus Cirrelius; and I had never dreamed of the existence of such treatises as Muller's BEITRAG ZUR GESCHICHTE DES HESENGLAUBENS UND HEXENPROCESSES IN SIEBENBURGEN, J. G. Dalyell's DARKER SUPERSTITIONS OF SCOTLAND, Dom Augustin Calmet's TRAITE SUR LES APPARITIONS DES ESPRITS, Casselius' DE SACRIFICIIS PORCINIS IN CULTU DEORUM VETERUM, or Collin de Plancy's DICTIONNAIRE INFERNAL.

These represent only a few of the books that I found. Finally, after sorting through this group, I came upon a set of five other books, wrapped carefully in oilcloth. I call them books, but they were really notebooks, filled with the neat hand I had noticed earlier in the margins of some of the other volumes, old Zach's no doubt. I read parts of them out of curiosity. They seemed to have been copied from some sort of magical texts or treatises, perhaps ones so rare that old Zach could not buy (or steal) copies, and thus was compelled to make them by hand. But his neat handwriting was as easy to read as a Xerox copy of the original would have been.

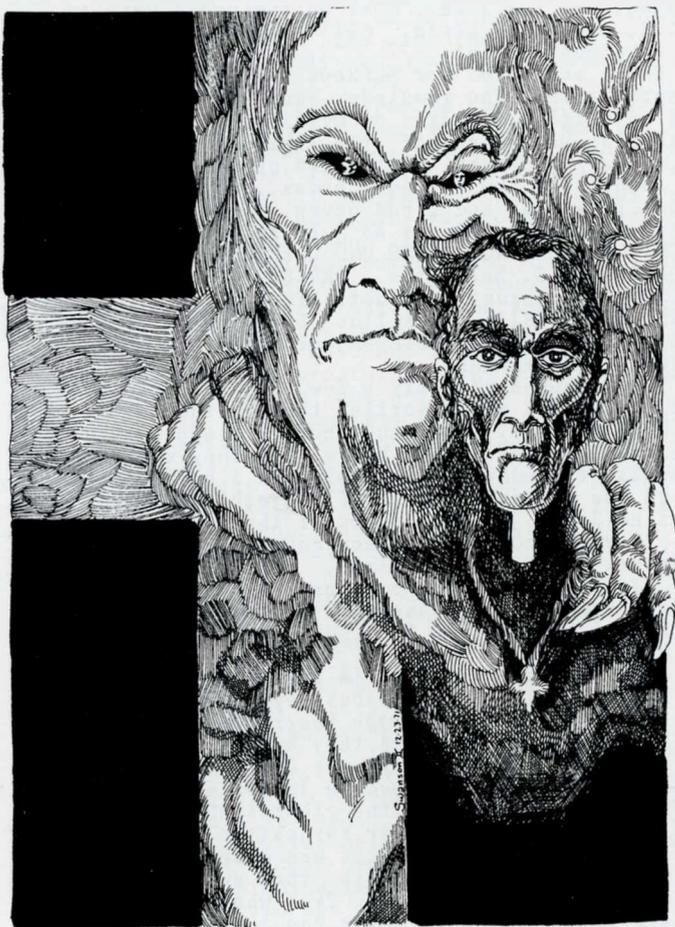
And some were prisoned in the farthest stars, others in limitless spaces beyond the Earth. But paths exist between the realms of Earth and those places where they abide. The gates that lead to these ways are closed and locked but keys may be discovered in concealed places. When the stars form the right symbols in the skies, when the proper invocation is recited and the proper sacrifices are made, these gates will open and those that dwell beyond will enter this world. Even when the stars are wrong, men with power can call to them across the vast spaces and they will answer. A likeness, or simulacrum, of the prisoned ones

can be used to aid in the conjuration; and such an object can be inhabited temporarily by an extension of the one-who-is-called.

Men with the power and the knowledge exist, worshipping in secret and waiting until the sky turns round to reveal the proper time, and others, who are not men, also wait. Some of these others have bred with the sons and daughters of men, giving birth to strange and damned creatures called *Iathni*. These, in particular, have the power to call upon the imprisoned ones, and, even when the stars are wrong, possess dominion over their messengers. When the *Iathni* call, the messengers will answer. But their answer means death if the ritual is imperfect or incorrectly voiced.

The others who are not men wait in secret regions beneath the waters of the world and among the snows of the high places and within the sulfurous bowels of the earth.

I was extremely uncomfortable after reading parts of those blasphemous notebooks and as soon as the rain ended, took a long walk until dark. As I fell asleep that night with the help of sleeping pills, I kept thinking of what I had read concerning the sacrifices necessary for calling on the "messengers". It involved the blood and entrails of a child, and I could not help feeling certain that I knew, now, what there was about the body of little Anne Rigby that was "horribly queer," the subject which the doctor's elders refused to discuss. For in the margin of this notebook, old Zach had written in that clear hand: "Cirrelius implies that a female child under the age of six is ideal here, but that the blood of calves will sometimes do instead. Cannot take a chance on the calves - it will have to be a child."



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The following morning was overcast but not rainy. After some breakfast I felt better, though I had a slight headache from the sleeping tablets. I managed a fairly early start and had finished dragging away most of the debris from Zach's place by noon. Apparently the gas tended to seep out only in the afternoon; I was not bothered again by any such manifestation, though I kept a careful watch on my second canary.

The pickings were slender, compared with the books and curios I had found earlier in the intact portion of the shack. Several rusted pieces of metal, what seemed to be an old notebook but was now a mass of yellow pulp, and one of the curious statues. And the skeleton. It was a human skeleton, of that I was certain, and since it was about five and a half feet in length I assumed it was that of old Zach, who had been caught in the shack when it collapsed. Near the skeleton was a trapdoor.

The door was set into the earth where the far wall of the cabin had been, and consisted of a heavy stone slab with a solid brass handle imbedded therein. The stone slab looked old - really old; but that may have been my imagination, for I am no archaeologist. The brass handle was of much more recent origin, though it was caked with a green film of corrosion. The trapdoor was slightly ajar, as though the explosion or implosion that had occurred seventy-odd years ago had distorted the opening and prevented the stone slab from fitting properly.

Now I thought I understood the source of the gas. Apparently the trapdoor led to a subterranean passage contiguous with the gas pocket; through the partially open trapdoor the gas could slowly escape. I saw no signs of the remains of Zach's son and could only assume he had been overcome by the gas down in that mysterious vault or tunnel below ground.

Understandably, I equipped myself with the flashlight and replacement batteries since the lantern was probably useless in the atmosphere below. A sudden inspiration took me back to the Ford where in the glove compartment I had cached a stack of political bumperstickers. These reflectors might serve as trail markers if the subterranean passage was extensive. It was difficult for me to get the cart-carried compressed air tank down to the floor of the tunnel, though it had been easy to open the huge trapdoor using the block and tackle. Once down, however, I found the going moderately easy. Pulling the tank along behind me, flashing my light in front, I moved slowly forward on my initial search of the subterranean passageway.

It was no cellar down there - it was a wide man-made tunnel, perhaps a century old, perhaps older. After I had gone a few yards, however, the constitution of the passage changed drastically. There were indications of extreme age. Stalactites studded the ceiling, and queer species of fungi fed upon the crumbling walls and floor. My boots left shallow imprints in the stuff, and they glowed.

When the passageway branched, I chose the right-hand path, for the other was smaller and I thought it might be less interesting. I marked it with a reflective sticker. The floor now became relatively smooth as though worn by the passage of many feet over millennia. Now the walls too became less irregular; the cavern gradually took on the aspect of a real tunnel, being quite uniformly rectangular, though limestone formations still appeared on the high ceiling.

Suddenly, without prior warning, I encountered a barrier. At some time in the past a rock fall had apparently occurred, partly blocking the tunnel. Indeed, I thought initially the blockage had been complete, but on carefully sweeping my flashlight across the rubble I discovered a small passageway near one wall. In the shadowy illumination it appeared almost as though the path had been cleared by someone after the rockfall had occurred, but I dismissed this notion as fancy. This damage must have been made at the same time as the destruction above ground, and after that who or what could have survived down in this atmosphere of unknown gases?

With some difficulty I managed to drag my equipment through the opening and in a few minutes I was beyond the barrier. I gasped in utter confusion as I flashed the light around.

I stood at the entrance to a huge cavern, almost an amphitheater; so extensive was it that the beam from my light did not reach the ceiling or the far walls. Scattered about throughout the gigantic room were countless numbers of shadowy figures. Their indistinct outlines made me shudder with cold fear, as the grotesque shapes seemed to move toward me.

Then I let my breath out in a heartfelt sigh of relief. My nerves were playing games with me. They had only seemed to move, in the wan beam from my flashlight. They were not alive - they were stone statues of some kind. I approached the nearest of them, after fastening a reflective sticker on the wall next to the entrance.

The statue was of a man in a kneeling position. This man, fashioned in the shape and garb of an Indian, carried a bow and a quiver of arrows. The nobility of his perfect masculine form contrasted markedly with the expression on his face, which was one of joyous yet fearful servility.

He knelt before a second figure that was not human. About five feet tall, this idol was sculpted in the form of a squat, rodent-like being which stood upright on its hind legs, the front legs, or arms, being held out toward the man. The "arms" ended not in hands and fingers but in crab-like claws, one relatively large one and five smaller ones.

Slowly, fear and excitement mounting, I went from statue to statue, studying each for a few moments in the waning light from my torch. There was no doubt of one thing - the batteries would not last much longer. I had purchased them in town and they obviously hadn't been very new. I would have to switch them. I had practiced such a maneuver in the dark some time ago but now my hands were trembling and a curious chill was creeping down my spine. It was most annoying - I was actually afraid to turn the light off long enough to make the change. Was there a concrete reason for feeling fearful? Had I heard or seen anything down here other than ancient statues? No. It was purely instinctive reaction, caused, I decided, by the queerness of the statues.

For the statues were queer - bizarre and unearthly. Some of them were life size replicas of the tiny statuettes I had found in old Zach's cabin. Others depicted more of the snout-faced, claw-handed creatures with monstrous unlidged eyes. The rest showed men - Indians, white men, orientals, primitive humans who looked to me amazingly like Neanderthals, and others not properly men at all, unless one might call them ape-men.

The men or ape-men were always shown in attitudes of supplication or worship, and the objects of this distasteful submission were always the claw-handed ones or the other, more horrible shapes whose tiny replicas Zach had possessed. One of the scenes shown I could interpret only as a kind of ritual sexual intercourse between one of the male claw-handed creatures and an Indian woman, her face showing a kind of unholy joy, and in a subsequent scene the woman was shown bearing a child with the features of a human baby but the hands of a claw-thing. Another scene depicted was apparently a sacrifice, a human child being literally torn to pieces by several of the claw-handed ones who were presenting the bloody flesh respectfully on an altar to the tentacled being, the worst abomination of all. It was disgusting, the more so because each figure was so finely molded as to make one believe it had been sculpted from life! And it is not very hard to imagine how much more the life size figures affected me when even the miniature ones had revolted and depressed me.

I took a firm hold on myself and opened the back of my flashlight, dumping the worn-out batteries on the ground, and carefully inserting the new ones. I realized that I had my eyes closed, suddenly, and op-

ened them with a grunt of distaste at my own cowardice. Then I gasped. Somewhere across the huge room was a glow, and the glow appeared to be in motion. With a cracked voice I foolishly yelled through my breathing mask: "Who's there? Who is it?" and the glow diminished and vanished.

With shaking fingers I screwed the back of the flashlight on again. An intense light again flooded my surroundings.

I thought I heard a clicking noise far across the room, but decided I must have imagined it.

Checking my watch, I realized that I had been underground much longer than I had thought. Quickly I shone the beam of the flashlight on the pressure indicator gauge of the air tank. It was two-thirds empty. Time to be getting back.

Now I felt another chill of fear. I could no longer see the entrance through which I had come. I could not even see the walls. I was trapped in the midst of a jungle of obscene statues. Everywhere I turned to look I saw them. Again my imagination insisted they were moving, coming toward me. For a moment I was panicked. Then my common sense reasserted itself.

The sacrificial rite scene was the last of those I had studied. I judged that I had come to it slightly to the left of the line between the tentacled monstrosity and the child sacrifice. I retreated along that direction, not encountering a familiar statue, and moved first to my left, then to my right, finally spotting a familiar group. Breathing a sigh of relief, I continued to back away along the line joining these and the previous scene.

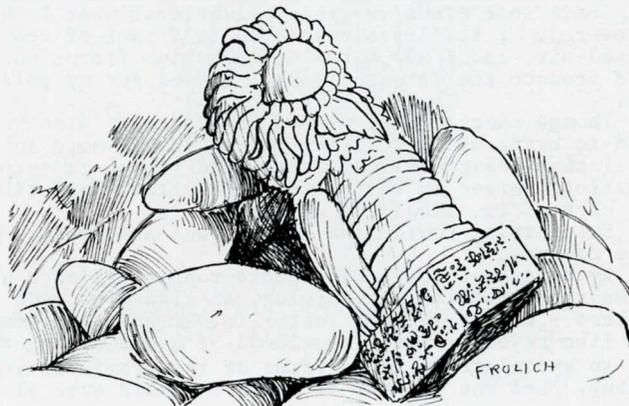
Again I heard the clicking sound. It was nearer and it was not imagination. I hurried as much as I could, but twice lost the path, and once was uncertain of whether I had ever seen one of the groupings before. The clicking sound came again, closer still, and I suddenly had a considerably disturbing thought. I envisioned one of those claw-handed statues opening and closing its claws with a snap! I put the thought from my mind and went on.

Finally, as I flashed my light ahead, I sighted the orange glow which could only have come from my marker; and I panted as I moved forward. When I reached the entrance to my passageway, I laughed aloud in glee. The sound, muffled through my breathing mask, seemed to echo ominously through the cavern.

Click! Click! The nerve shattering sound seemed to be right at my back. Frantically I pushed my air tank into the tunnel and through the channel that chance - or someone - or something - had made past the fallen boulders.

Once on the other side I paused and swept the flash back down the tunnel. My heart leapt. I wasn't certain what I saw, but it looked like two eyes - monstrous, huge orbs as big as those of the claw-handers. But my glimpse was transitory - the clicking sound stopped and the eyes, if they were eyes, vanished.

Deep in thought, I made my way back to the end of the tunnel without further incident. I certainly was overjoyed to see the late afternoon sun once more.



Here end the notes left by Hank Hartley, my boss and my friend. About two weeks after the last entry, a passing hunter had discovered Hank's body sprawled in his cabin. The death had been a violent one - gore splattered the floor and walls - and the corpse had been badly mangled and mysteriously clawed.

Since Hank had no surviving relatives, the funeral responsibilities devolved upon me. I was his only heir. I at once left the business I had been managing for him, anxious to find out what had actually happened, and headed for West Virginia. I ran up against a stone wall. The authorities attributed the murder to a (hypothetical) homicidal tramp, had stamped it unsolved, and seemed to be trying to forget all about it as quickly as possible.

They were not uncooperative in minor ways. They did let me see all the evidence, released Hank's belongings to me, and even let me use the cabin for a while, though they warned me casually that it might be a dangerous place to stay.

The Ford stationwagon was still parked off the road - its battery had run down and I could not start it. It was still filled with a lot of Hank's odd paraphernalia, and apparently it had not been searched. I saw to the thorough cleaning of the cabin (with the aid of a very nervous local woman); then, more or less settled in, I decided to conduct a careful search for any further clues to what had been happening. The journal that I have already shown to you is one of the first things that I found - in the front seat of the stationwagon, where Hank had apparently stored it in preparation for a trip to the village.

Unfortunately, the journal left even more questions unanswered than before. Had Hank gone insane in his solitude? I found no traces of the strange old books or the demonic carvings or statuettes he had written of. If they had been in the cabin before his death, they had since vanished.

I continued to search the auto but found nothing else of major interest. Then I concentrated on the house, hoping that something ignored by the police would prove to be of significance in the light of what I now knew. Shoved under the bunk bed I found the one chilling piece of evidence without which I might even now dismiss the whole affair as a bout of temporary madness on the part of a sick man. Even now I do not know how completely I believe my own deductions (and Hank had said I was unimaginative!), but that evidence ...

One other place I decided to search carefully was the old shack. I found to my astonishment that it was a total wreck. But Hank's block and tackle arrangement came in handy and I cleared away some of the debris over the rear part of the building. I found the trapdoor just as Hank had described it, except that it was sunken into the ground and only after many attempts with the block and tackle did I succeed in wrenching it loose. Below I found nothing but a solid mass of tumbled rock and dirt - the tunnel, if tunnel there had been, was entirely blocked.

Near the trapdoor, under debris, I made my other significant find - one of the abominable figurines Hank had described. It was one of the ugly claw-handed ones, entirely unhuman except that it walked on two legs. I carefully stowed it away with Hank's journal in the back of my car.

In his notes Hank characterized me as unimaginative and stolid. Perhaps I am or was. But I am good at one thing that all engineers should be good at - examining evidence and putting it together; erecting a structure of logic. Now here is the evidence that struck me as undeniable and meaningful:

1. Hank's discoveries of the underground passages leading from the old shack to a marvelous collection of statues or idols.
2. The facts regarding a sort of black magic incantation and the blood and entrails of a murdered child (not necessarily that the magic would work!).
3. Hank's observation of a presumably claw-handed, snout-faced thing that was able to live in a nox-



-V-

Next morning I awoke at dawn, having gone to sleep almost immediately after taking a hasty meal. I had been utterly exhausted from exertion and fear. But in the morning I felt refreshed. In the cheery glow of the dawn sun my adventure of the previous day seemed absolutely incredible. And my fear of that unearthly clicking sound seemed irrational and laughable. I was keen to go down into that amazing cave again. This time I intended to take photographs and, if possible, to bring back some other tangible evidence of what I had discovered. I still possessed one full tank of compressed air, and I had a box of magnesium flares which could produce the intense light I needed for my polaroid.

Though chuckling at my own cowardice, I also decided to bring along a rifle. If something more substantial than phosphorescent fungi or dripping limestone formations lurked in that cavern, a bullet would take good care of it, should it prove hostile.

But nothing could live in the foul atmosphere of those caverns!

By tonight I shall have photographic evidence of the most spectacular anthropological find ever made anywhere - a site to make Easter Island and Stonehenge look like rejects from Disneyland! I'm too weary, though, to speculate on the origins of the grotto or its meaning. Let the experts at Harvard puzzle over it.

ious atmosphere, but apparently feared his flashlight. Was it trapped below ground until Hank cleared the fallen timbers away from the stone slab?

4. The disappearance of all the books and idols that Hank had found, coincident with his death. (I believed in their existence, now that I had found the one in the debris of the shack.)

5. The fact that Hank had apparently been clawed to death - and not by any animal.

6. The fact that the murderer apparently drank some of Hank's blood and ate his entrails - or at least these were missing; as perhaps was the case with little Anne Rigby long ago.

7. The occurrence of another phenomenon I had uncovered - a minor earthquake that had taken place on approximately the same date as Hank's murder.

If some monstrous creature exists or once existed down there in those subterranean passageways (certainly not old Zach's son by a non-human mother - wouldn't that be absolute nonsense) it might have been able to escape via the trapdoor and to follow Hank to his cabin. That it retrieved the books and idols when it killed Hank seems a forgone conclusion. Did it use Hank's blood and entrails as part of some ghastly calling down ceremony that is beyond any reasonable imagination? Say that the earthquake was a coincidence, a welcome one, that buried that abomination forever; or call it an act of God.

Only don't say that I am an unimaginative person. Perhaps I was; but after the past three days I shall never be one again. Indeed, that very first night I began to experience the oddest dreams - I never dreamed before, as a rule - dreams of far-off places and odd creatures. And last night I swear I was awakened by a prowler that made an odd, rhythmic clicking sound. Luckily I had installed a solid night latch on the cabin door. I had no weapon with me, and I did not investigate.

A thought occurs to me. Hank mentioned a second passageway in that tunnel. Could it have led to the waterfall? That would account for the little girl's body having been found far downstream, rather than being lost in the caverns. And if that passageway had been clogged by the first earthquake (what Hank thought to be an implosion) might it not have been opened again by the second one?

Could that creature still be alive and hunting me? Now that is imagination!

Nevertheless, I have decided to leave at once. If it wants me (if it is out there - and I am coming to believe this, despite all common sense) then it will have to trace me all the way back north. This manuscript will be safe from marauders in the library at Brown - they make a specialty of strange manuscripts and books there - and just let that thing even try to find me in the middle of Boston!

At least I'll know it if I see it, for I have its picture.

Hank must have gone back down below, as he planned. He took a polaroid camera with him. The camera had been under the bunk bed, as I mentioned before, empty but for the last remnant of a roll of film - whatever photographs he had taken were gone with the books and the idols.

But I was smarter than the creature in this respect at least. If it tossed the empty camera aside, I did not. When the last picture from a roll of type 47 polaroid film has been taken, the negative remains in the camera. And if it is not exposed to light long, it doesn't fade. Furthermore, it may be made permanent by rubbing over it the same solution normally squeegeed over the prints themselves.

The picture had evidently been the last one Hank had had time to snap. Then he must have run from that underground cavern as though all the demons of the dark were after him.

For at least one of them really was.

Even on the negative one could see clearly that the main figure in the photo, limned against a background of weird, misshapen idols, was a living, menacing being.

It was coming toward Hank and it had its peculiar claw-like hands outstretched. It looked a great deal like the claw-handed statue I had found, except for its features.

The worst part, I think, is that its face, though grotesque, is recognizably manlike.

-VII-

Brown University
Providence, R.I. 02910
March 11, 1972

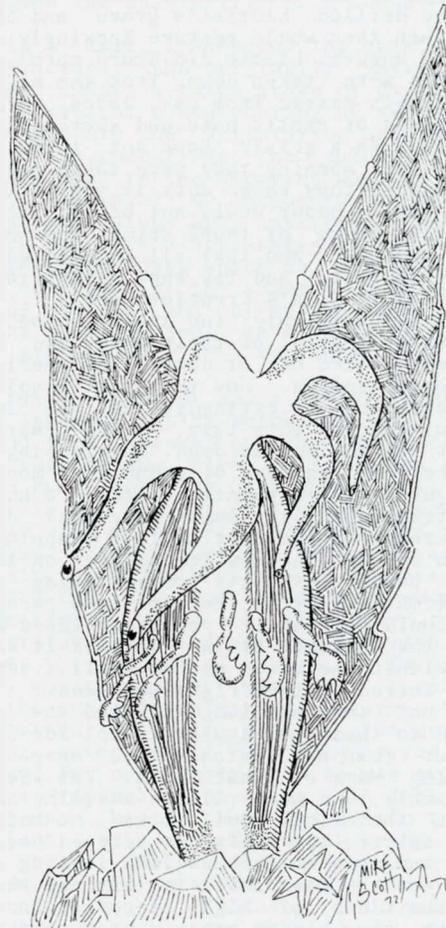
Dear Mr. Frierson:

Re your recent inquiry, the original of this curious manuscript was recently removed from our closed stacks under very distressing circumstances - a night custodian was mysteriously clawed to death, but of course we make microfilms of all our special materials. A copy of the idol was also taken, though the original remains locked in our special vault. We have made inquiries of the man in Boston who delivered these notes into our keeping - a Mr. Lawrence Hanover, an engineer - but he seems to have disappeared under mysterious circumstances.

Perhaps in the course of your studies you will be able to elucidate these mysteries.

/s/ Walter Quednau
Chief Librarian

Enc: microfilms of journal of H. Hartley; statement of L. Hanover; photograph of claw-handed idol; copy of a negative of a polaroid print. Publication rights granted.



The Return of Zhosph

BY GARY MYERS

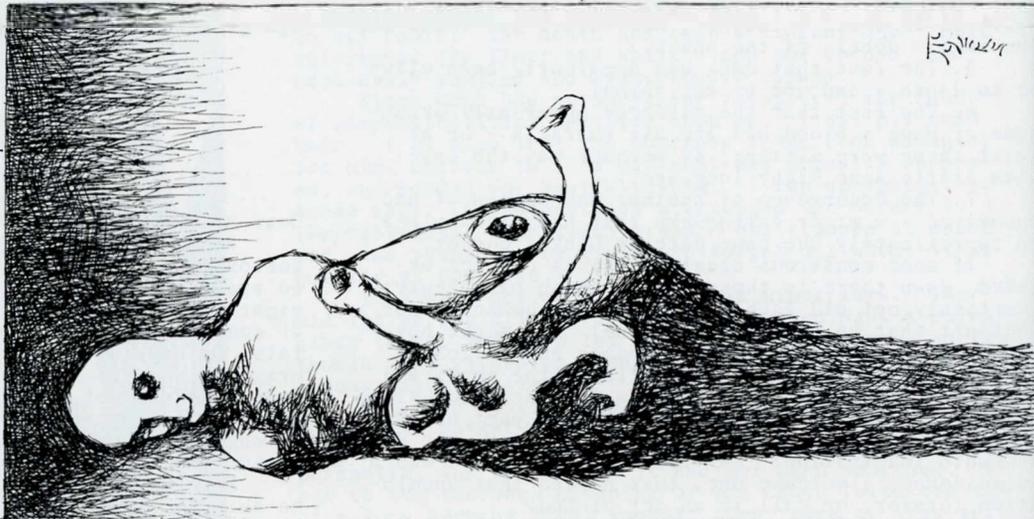
(*Illo, also by Gary Myers, has nothing to do with this tale but it fits, so why not...?*)

In which of the Seven Cryptical Books is forgotten, Hsan records this peculiar and exceedingly doubtful fact: that wisdom possessed in life is not permitted to pass with the soul toward whatever death really is, but cleaves to the mouldering corpse to fester and diminish even as flesh beneath the gentle nibblings of worms. Such perhaps is the reason dust from certain graves is valued in unlawful practices, and why necromancers are burned, lest the worms acquire arcane knowledge it is better they should not have. And such most certainly drove Snurd in secrecy through the high iron gate of Zulan-Thek, onto that dim, star-litten plain where they of Zulan-Thek were wont to inter their dead in dreams that died before men's wasted souls.

Of Snurd and his dubious parentage men once hinted unmentionable things, indicating as evidence that hitherto only the destestable ghouls and kindred horrors were known to inflict such enormities upon the dead. What, they inquired of one another in hushed voices, became of the fat miller before the sextons came, and who defiled Klotlei's grave and Shek's in the night? Then they would gesture knowingly but make no more lucid answer. Little did Snurd care! He knew how the bones were taken down from the high place where the camels passed from Gak, laden with bright silks and spices of exotic name, and where malefactors were displayed on a grisly hook set there for that purpose, only that morning they were taken and dragged by the muffled sextons whose duty it was, to the catacombs where their odour would not offend the camels. He guessed the nature of those crimes for which this penalty was exacted, and that all to some degree approximate witchcraft. And few knew better than Snurd what is written in Hsan's Cryptical Books.

He went out with only the stars to see: they of Zulan-Thek were fearful of their dead, and kept the Night securely bolted out of doors and peering vainly at shuttered windows. How the Night finally overcame these barriers to extinguish all the lamps and hope, does not concern this tale. Snurd feared neither darkness nor the buried dead. But leaping grotesquely in the deep shadows of crumbling mounds, he ran his tongue over his pointed teeth in a hunger not often manifested by fully human persons. He remembered the screams of the carrion fowl flapping darkly in the gloom around the mewling bundle on the hook, and how the bundle lost its tongue trying to charm the raven from its eyes. Perhaps, ah, perhaps the avid beaks could not wholly penetrate those bleeding sockets to the maddened brain. Perhaps it was still shut away within the clean picked skull.... And Snurd laughed and leered at the frightened Moon.

It did not take him long to find the path the sextons used in their particular trade, for Snurd was more familiar than any sexton should have been with the startling ways of that path. The weeds there grew too quickly, and made little rustling noises even without the wind. But it was no business of Snurd's who stirred the weeds. He hurried over a confusing rise and between the huddled, leaning boulders and moments ere the Dawn paled the East in wholesomer lands and the tides of Night receded, Snurd crept near to that vine-hidden stone door with the hippogryph on either side. The graven signs and expressions on the faces of those images were too worn to ascertain their correct meaning; but the swollen vi-



nes slithered quietly back at his approach, and Snurd passed through and down the fifty-seven lightless steps to those darker lower halls where it must be blasphemy that light should ever come. Snurd had not that inconvenience of requiring light to see, and moved quickly and with improbable sureness over the floor slimed and worn smooth by the passage of nameless things and Time, disturbing the rats and less pleasant things with his breathing. The rats were whispering plots in the dark with uncouth scarabs. Once he spied a light beneath a secretive door. But something behind that door rattled its moldy claws and snarled, and made him think better of opening it. He came at last to a little unlighted vault and found where the sextons had deposited the leavings of the grisly hook. It was doubtlessly only his imagination that the pale skull *grinned* when Snurd entered the room....

Thus ends the unhappy tale of Zhosph as recorded elsewhere, and told once by them of Zulan-Thek until the Night came with his retinue of shadows to feast in Zulan-Thek's palaces and fanes, attended by Fear: that when the sextons who had carried Zhosph's bones returned to the hippogryph-guarded entrance on a matter of unfinished business, they found things not quite as they had left them. The faces of the hippogryphs seemed altered and strangely smug, and the vines misbehaved shockingly, deliberately tripping the frenzied rats as they fled madly from the catacombs, and strangling them in a manner the sextons did not like. But worse was the wailing in the depths that had frightened the rats. One man later averred that it moaned disturbingly of something evil that should have been dead but scratched subtly in the back of the mind, *changing* things for a purpose and tittering within. And certainly they all heard that tearing scream in the dark, and saw afterwards the queer little being with large ears that scampered up the dark stairs and made a terrible Sign at them before drying its curious wings and fluttering back toward Zulan-Thek against the cryptic stars, to bargain with the Night.

When at last the sextons had conferred in bleak whispers and descended to that tiny room where they had left it, they found the skeleton of Zhosph the thaumaturge disturbed, the skull split like the rind of a pomegranate and the sorcerer's brain quite gone. This was attributed to the activities of rats, until later. One other thing they found which was less easily explained: a shrivelled yellowish membrane much as a serpent might leave in moulting, or the chrysalis of certain rare moths, not entirely recognizable as the skin of Snurd turned inside-out. The sextons did not pause long to ponder the riddle.

The Drawings on the Desks

BY JOHN SELLERS

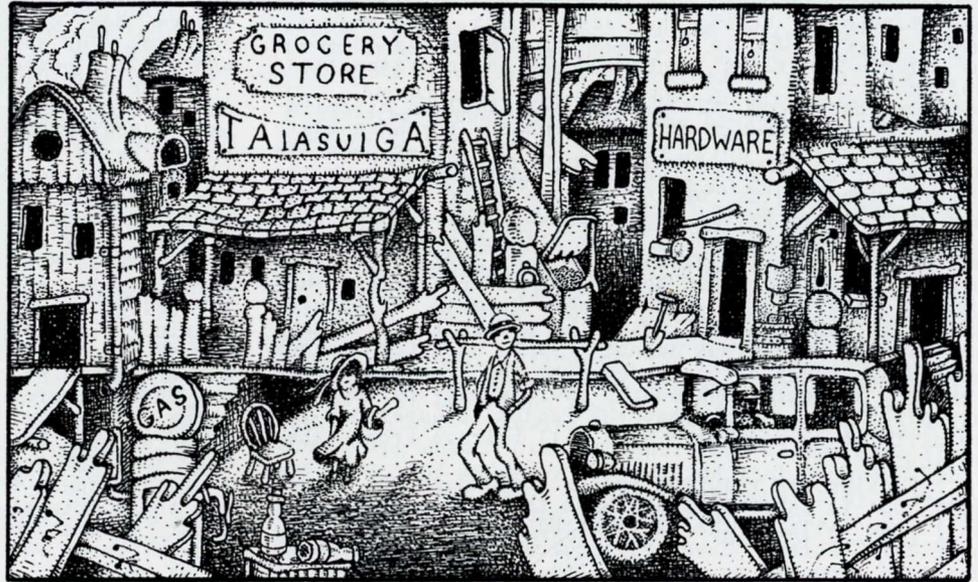
Due to certain narrow-minded officials on the school board, who have refused to heed my warnings and have already foolishly appointed another teacher for the Talasulga school district, I am forced to reveal publicly what I have testified to these last few weeks, behind the locked doors before the State of Alabama's educational administrators. This action will undoubtedly arouse little emotion among the sceptical and apathetic majority; however, if, with full knowledge of the horrors I experienced as a result of my attempt to educate the offspring of the denizens of that accursed town, the school officials decided to place another instructor's life in jeopardy, then whatever harm befalls that unfortunate person will rest on their consciences - not mine.

To establish firmly my moral fibre and soundness of mind, so that you will not imagine me, as do the members of the school board, some eccentric occultist who discerns a myriad of nonexistent supernatural horrors in every dark corner or secluded house, I must rely solely on my strong Christian upbringing and sound education in reputable institutions of higher learning. While my one surviving aunt may alone attest to my religious foundations, the enrollment records of such schools as Harvard, Boston College and Auburn University will substantiate my claims to a rewarding college career, culminating in a well-earned master's degree in the expanding field of education.

It was with such impressive references that I secured a teaching position at the elementary level in the spring of 1933, and for five years thereafter I taught in the Georgia school system. While my memories of teaching in that fine state are pleasant and wholesome, it was my teaching philosophy at the time that an earnest instructor would not limit himself to one school district in order to avoid the mental stagnation which results from the monotony of a continuing environment. Being unmarried and therefore free from any retarding family ties, I was able to adhere to this maxim and applied for a transfer to the State of Alabama, home of my previous alma-mater.

I had submitted my resume to the Alabama Board of Education hoping to obtain employment in one of the state's many beautiful and prosperous cities. Words cannot describe my supreme disappointment on discovering that I had been appointed a faculty member of a school in a segregated rural town, primarily inhabited by superstitious "hillbillies" who resented the education of their children. In fact, I use the term "faculty member" satirically - I was the entire teaching force. For, as ridiculously absurd as it seems in this day of such impressive educational complexes, Talasulga maintained only a one-room school building left over from the turn of the century.

However, I am getting ahead of myself. The first occasion that I set eyes on district school number five was on September 21st, two weeks before the impending semester was scheduled to begin. I was so immediately repelled on encountering the aurora of desolation and unhealthiness which emanated from the dilapidated stores and houses that made up the town proper, I could not bring myself to stop and continued driving past the decayed edifices and unkempt pedestrians who would turn and stare at my car with stone faces and unfriendly eyes. Finally, with the aid of the map, I found the antiquated school build-



ing lying off the main road on the outskirts of Talasulga. At first, I could not accept what loomed before me as reality. While the poverty previously witnessed connoted such backwardness, I had still not dismissed the possibility of a competent school.

Somewhat in a daze, I surveyed the massive, arched-roofed structure; the originally white building, which rested under a thick grove of pine trees, was urgently in need of a new coating of whitewash - not only to rejuvenate the splintering original coat of paint, but to camouflage the abhorrent, obscene graffiti engraved in the decaying wood of the exterior walls. Regaining my composure, I ascended the flexible wooden steps and, inserting a key into the rusted lock of the weather-beaten portal, forced open the screeching door which had not been violated since the beginning of the summer. A malodorous atmosphere of peculiar and offensive odors greeted me but, as the foul air soon gave way to the inflow of fresh, I stepped over the threshold and into the classroom.

The musty interior had a gloomy aspect due to the thick layer of filth which engulfed the peaked windows and thus allowed only a minimum of sunlight to filter through the aged, yellow glass. The cobwebs which hung from the high beamed ceiling swayed listlessly in the current of evening breeze entering through the open door. Proceeding toward the teacher's rostrum through the maze of scattered student desks, I discerned the presence of lead pencil drawings beneath the thick coating of dust which enveloped the desktops. Using a handkerchief to sweep away the stratum, I exposed several devilishly detailed sketches the subject of which, as far as I could ascertain, was the former instructor. I was acquainted with the uncomplimentary caricatures that juveniles will render of their mentors, but never in all my teaching career had I ever encountered such immense hatred for one instructor as was evidenced in those awful drawings. Comparing each desktop, I noticed that one ghastly theme was common to all the illustrations; each depicted a man being inhumanly tortured by some mockery of nature which seemingly had invaded the very classroom I was then in!

With a feeling of loathing, I turned my attention from the sketches and made my way to the desk of the former instructor. Disregarding the unclean appearance of which I have already made note, the desk appeared as if the teacher had not left it more than a few minutes before! There were various corrected assignments lying about, a vase of dead flow-

ers and an engraved nameplate designating the former teacher to have been a Mister Travers. I could not help but begin to wonder what would compel this Mr. Travers to vacate the premises in such haste as to completely disregard what he left behind. Indeed, the blackboard behind the desk, which was then a shade of grey due to age, was not completely erased of simple equations probably used in an arithmetic lesson.

On inspection, the desk drawers yielded miscellaneous papers through which I rummaged for what must have been an hour until reading was no longer possible because of the insufficient light entering through the nearly opaque glass of the windows. The faint chirping of crickets in the night air was audible as I placed the remaining papers in my briefcase and once again walked down the aisle of student desks. Try as I might, I could not avoid looking at those horribly suggestive sketches of that ghastly anomaly of nature which in some aspects resembled a huge frog, though normal-size amphibians do not possess such keen talons and acute fangs as protruded from the creature's webbed feet and cavernous mouth. Surely, any further description would encourage the reader to question the veracity of my narrative so I will refrain from elaboration.

Closing the reluctant doors behind me and stepping out in the moonlight upon the steps, I sensed that the walls of the antiquated edifice concealed some dark secret, however, I quickly dismissed such immature thoughts as childish and unbecoming to one as sensible as I. Once back in my automobile, I decided against returning to Talasulga and seeking accommodations for the night in that travesty of a town but, rather, to drive to the neighboring town of Beauville which, according to my map, was only a twenty minutes' journey to the south. Approximately a half hour later, I arrived in Beauville and, finding the quaint mixture of antebellum and modern architecture more inviting than the rotting structures of its sister city, I secured a hotel room there and spent most of the night attempting to rationalize the predicament I was in.

From the following morning, after returning to Talasulga to post announcements pertaining to the beginning of school and the penalties for truancy (for I had resigned myself to teaching at least one semester until a suitable replacement could be found) to the first day of class, I suffered considerable abuse from the citizens of that town. After being observed posting the notices on the barren bulletin board in the dilapidated town hall, my occupation and objective were apparently simultaneously known among the populace as I immediately became the target of their insults. On the occasions that I would stroll along the archaic, elevated wooden sidewalks of the main street, which consisted primarily of several general stores, two squalid hotels which appeared deserted, and a few saloons and cafes which were always heavily patronized, some degenerate would inevitably approach and have the audacity to shower me with vulgar and degrading language, calling me an "outsider" and ordering me to "git". Even the young mocked me at every opportunity but that could at least be dismissed as the natural gap between teacher and student. Nevertheless, I refused to condescend to their ethics and offered no verbal retaliation; instead, motivated by an urge to avenge the indignities I had suffered, my sojourns to Talasulga were limited to the school building which I began to restore with a frenzied determination. Those simple-minded people had defeated their purpose as the insults only aroused my desire to remain and educate the delinquents of these degenerates.

I scrubbed the windows, replacing the panes that were too saturated with filth to redeem, and cleansed the student desks free of those artistic efforts of the morbidly deranged. After rinsing clean the last desktop, I found the classroom relieved of some malevolent entity which had previously brooded within its decaying walls. As a result of a letter to the Alabama Board of Education, a new set of elementary readers, to replace the classroom set which had been treated with the same disrespect displayed toward the furnit-

ure, arrived at the post office in Beauville, where I was renting a room. From my own pocket came the finances necessary to secure a crew of painters to repaint the exterior. It was not an easy task locating a crew that would make the trip to Talasulga from Beauville; indeed, most prospects had refused my applications for service. For some reason, I suspected that distance was not the prime motive behind their blatant refusals.

The chain of events which terminated in a frantic escape from that town of white trash - I have no qualms about referring to the people of Talasulga as such - began in the third week of the semester. The previous two weeks I had been pleasantly surprised by the courteous and respectful facade which the students had maintained. The only subject which the class, as a whole, took an intense and peculiar interest in, as they shunned both arithmetic and grammar, was history, particularly the study of ancient civilizations and the religious cults prevalent in the youthful stages of mankind's development. Oddly enough, the pupils appeared to command already a good deal of knowledge concerning these cults, often volunteering information new to me, referring to obscure gods and forgotten tomes of eldritch lore. A few claimed they could speak as well as translate the Arabian language, which they said was learned from "the book"; however, since I did not speak the language and knew little concerning those trivial religions, I could not verify all their wild claims and assumed they were reading too many of those vulgar periodicals popularly referred to as "pulp."

The first link in this unholy succession of happenings was the reply to a letter written to the Board of Education inquiring as to the present whereabouts of Mr. Travers so that his forlorn papers might be forwarded. I had previously petitioned the class to help in my quest; however, when confronted with the question, they began to whisper among themselves and grin in a most disturbing fashion. The correspondence read:

Dear Mr. Cartright:

In regards to your inquiry concerning the address of Mister Samuel Travers, I regret to inform you that this fine and loyal teacher died after the close of the previous school year.

While reports are vague, Talasulga authorities assure us that Mr. Traver's untimely demise was the result of a tragic freak automobile accident. His death came after twenty-five proud years in the service of Alabama's educational system, though he was in his initial semester at Talasulga....

However, if I were to select one incident which was responsible for that night of October twenty-first it would be the corporal punishment I was forced to bestow upon Andrew Cunningham in reward for his disobedience. Every school teacher usually has one or two pupils who must be constantly admonished for their lack of decorum or disrespect for authority. Andrew Cunningham was, from the first week of class, a constant thorn in my side, ceaselessly talking during my lectures or paying no attention whatsoever to classroom activities. It was because of this inability to behave and conform to my standards that on October nineteenth I swatted Andrew five times across the knuckles with a yardstick. After I had dealt out the punishment and Andrew had resumed his seat in the back of the room, the other students refused to respond to my teaching endeavors, preferring to stare silently at me with faces contorted in anger in order to symbolize allegiance for their comrade. Seeing that further efforts on my part would only bring continued negative response, I dismissed the class early.

After the congregation shuffled out the door, Dawes Palmer, who had remained seated, rose and walked toward my desk. Dawes was one of my few charges who appeared anxious to improve scholastically, while pretending to be as disinterested as the rest; I detected that he would always manage to scribble down a few notes and usually did fairly well on the examinations.

"Yes, Dawes?" I inquired, not knowing exactly what to expect.

"Well, suh," he began in a nervous fashion, constantly glancing in various directions as if to assure himself that we were alone. "I reckon I shouldn't be tellin' ya this...but what ya gone and done to Andrew wan't smart. Ya see, his kin come from up no'th, near Dunnich an', well...he got even with old man Travers for less than wut ya did today."

"Mr. Travers died of an automobile accident. Are you insinuating that Cunningham had anything to do with that?"

"Wan't no car wreck that got Travers...t'was what Wizard Cunningham called down from the sky, an' that, suh, is the gospel truth," replied Dawes, as he pushed the wave of black hair from his forehead which was now beaded with nervous perspiration.

"Why are you telling me this, Dawes?" I asked, not at all placing any credence in his tale.

"Well, suh, mistuh Cawtright, ya seem to care 'bout wether we learn or not...fixing this place up an' all when the state never had a mind to," he said, blushing. "I best be goin' naow, ain't no sense in stayin' longer than I have to. Thar's some that hold Andrew knows wut ya say tho' he weren't around when ya spoke it. One mo' thing, suh, beware of them drawings."

With that ominous note, Dawes Palmer turned and departed - never to be seen by me again. I pray that he did not sacrifice his life for mine.

It appears as if I can no longer avoid writing about that accursed night of Oct. 21. Though I have beseeched God that the memory of that eve be erased from my mind, I fear that even He shuns the forces set in motion during those awful, black hours of my life. Somewhere, in the recesses of my subconscious, lingers still the horror I endured on that stormy night and it is that horror which periodically surfaces and reduces me to a gibbering mass of nerves and fright.

Since the punishment of Andrew my relationship with the class (which lacked the Palmer boy) steadily deteriorated until, two days later, the school day was little more than a verbal duel between my students, with Andrew Cunningham as their ringleader, and myself. Therefore, when I discovered after class, as I was preparing to depart for Beauville, that all four tires on my automobile, which had been parked behind the school building, were maliciously slashed, my reaction was more of repugnance than of surprise. None of the juvenile delinquents was loitering about, which was to be expected under the circumstances, so I was forced to give up any hope of immediately apprehending the vandals who had done the deed; however, I was planning a serious talk with Andrew Cunningham and his folks as soon as possible. Retiring to the classroom, I faced the alternative of attempting to walk or hitchhike to Beauville along the infrequently traveled road or remaining in the relatively comfortable confines of the school. I chose the latter course of action, primarily in view of the impending inclement weather, and it is that decision which I regret today and, I fear, will regret the rest of my days upon this earth.

The first few hours of my confinement I occupied myself by correcting the previous week's assignments which were, despite attempts on my part to instill a basic knowledge of arithmetic fundamentals into the limited mental capacities of my charges, of poor and disheartening scholastic quality, though the problems were quite elementary. Becoming so engrossed in my work, it was some time later before I noticed that the promised raindrops were arriving, entering through a partially open window in the rear and pooling on the wooden floor beneath. Looking out the water-blurred pane as I sealed the aperture, I could see the pine trees beginning to sway back and forth as the storm grew.

It was approximately nine o'clock when I finally situated myself behind my desk and, with a spare blanket over me for warmth, fell asleep to the howling of the wind and the pounding of the rain as it cascaded down upon the aged roof above.

Some two hours later, I was abruptly jolted from my slumber, which had been plagued by dreams of the most disturbing sort, by a vigorous pounding on the front door. Believing it to be a waylaid traveller who had been caught in the downpour and, seeing my light from the main road, was now attempting to arouse me in order to obtain shelter, I arose from behind my desk and sleep-drugged proceeded in the direction of the door through the aisle of student desks. Though I shouted acknowledgment, the pounding continued to grow in volume and force.

I was but ten feet from the portal when, passing the last desk in the row, my attention was gripped by what I saw, out of the corner of my eye, on the desk-top. For there was one of those horrible drawings which only demented and perverse minds could have conjured into existence, uncannily similar to the type I had diligently crased prior to the beginning of the semester. The same hideous theme as before was represented in the illustration - the only difference between this delineation and the previous sketches was that it was now me whom the creature was attacking in effigy. It was then that I recalled the warning of Dawes Palmer: "Beware of the drawings!" because of the thing which "Wizard" Cunningham called down from the sky, and suddenly I realized that I had played right into the hands of those degenerates by staying here in the classroom and whatever stood, or crawled, or stooped, on the other side of the door was not entreating entry - but forcing it!

My mind sank into the abysmal depths of horror and loathing as the aged wood of the door began to creak and bend ominously under the unnatural pressure that was being exerted upon it by the demoniacal monstrosity I had reason to believe was on the other side.

Like the disconsolate dreamer in nightmare who treads a cosmic treadmill when fleeing from the blasphemous figments of his imagination, I turned and stumbled over the desks in a desperate effort to get as far away from the creaking portal as the building's dimensions would allow. The blood in my veins congealed as, with my back against the blackboard, I could now distinctly hear a scraping sound in addition to the continual pounding, unmercifully bringing to mind the creature in the drawings with webbed feet and the razor-sharp talons which adorned them.

Growing hysterical, my mind no longer attempted to rationalize with logic, for surely it did not apply to the predicament at hand, but began to react solely on instinct - the instinct of self-preservation.

Running to the closest window, I pushed it open, allowing the rain to pour into the classroom and douse the surrounding area. Seeing that the aperture was wide enough to allow my body to pass through, I heaved myself onto the slippery sill.

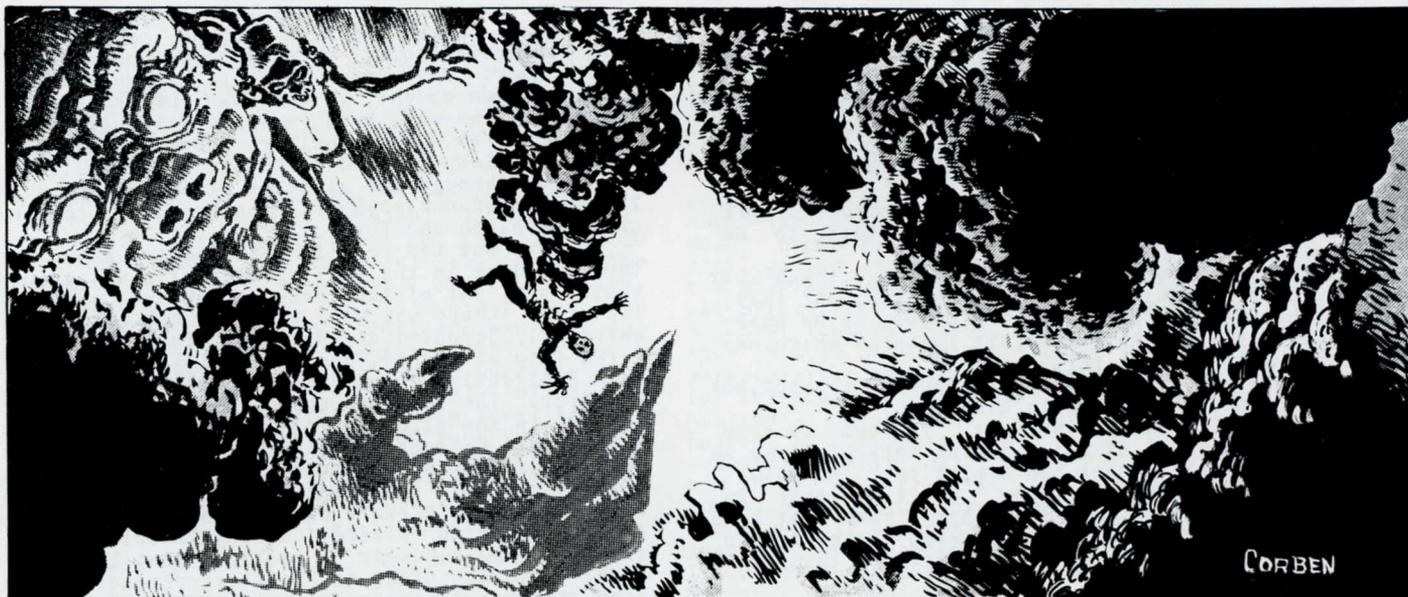
Suddenly the crackle of splintering wood pierced the air. I turned just in time to see a monstrous, slimy and water-soaked claw entered through a newly formed hole along the base of the door!

With frantic haste, I climbed over the sill and lowered myself to the muddy ground below. Avoiding the front of the school building, I ran headlong for the main road plowing desperately through the foliage.

Of my nightmarish escape through the twisted undergrowth to the main road, and my subsequent "rescue" in the early morning hours by a sharecropper in a tattered pick-up truck on his way to Beauville, there is little to say but that I will never forget either.

The members of the school board scoffed at me when I related my experience before them, insinuating that I am deranged and in need of psychiatric care.

However, they have admitted, rather reluctantly, after investigating the school building at Talasulga, that the new instructor will have to see that a new door is installed due to the fact that the former portal is now a mass of shattered wood and that the student desks are in need of a good cleaning.



Threshold to Boomerack

BY ROBERT C SUDOL

I waited in the dark shadows of the old graveyard for my notorious hireling. The hour was midnight, and a full moon shone dimly from behind sepulchral grey sky. It was the appointed hour. Footsteps sounded. I tensed. He had come.

"You've got it!" I gasped as I beheld the sinister tome clasped in his hands. The DRUILLARC was its name, given in honour of one of the anti-ent devil-gods by its mad author, Sartorius Morinon, whose body had been found splattered about his study over half a century ago with this most damnable of hellish books opened to a blood-stained page.

As I took it from the infamous one's hands to examine its authenticity, I drew back with shock and revulsion.

"Your hands are bloodied!"

The scoundrel did not reply but stared back coldly.

I checked the rich binding. No less than human flesh. I opened the volume and leafed through unholy chapters. Its centre was stained with dried blood. I shuddered at the thought of what sorcerous words were hid beneath. Satisfied, I smiled. A purse of gold changed hands and we each went our unhallowed way.

My studies of the outre had made known to me the existence of gateways to infinity created by an eldritch race that once lived upon a star so far removed from this sphere that no eye of man has yet marked its light. With the powerful aid of the Book, I would summon the Ghouls-Kings and, with almighty words to bind them, force them to do my bidding. I would command them to bring me one of the antient thresholds to infinity.

With grim purpose I entered my study and bolted the door. I opened the frightful volume with trembling hands. My eyes were almost blinded with the Ultimate Obscenity.

With hoarse voice I mouthed the horrendous blasphemies. There was booming thunder and brilliant lightning in the heavens. A daemonic wind shrieked in the Cosmos above, though not a tree-branch stirred outside. I grew fearful, but I continued - for I could not stop. I was possessed!

My voice rose to a crescendo of horror as I shrieked the most awesome of Ultra-Cosmic Commands. The ritual was ended. With a blast of hellish light the Ghouls-Kings appeared. They were bound

to obey me. With Saxon pride I met their frightful gaze, but my flesh turned white, my blood chilled.

"The Doors to Infinity - bring me one!"

From the aether it coalesced and formed. A mirror the size of a man that reflected jet blackness upon its face was one of the elder thresholds; the glass was clasped in a frame of unworldly metal bearing runes of dark magic and forgotten meaning. I felt its most smooth face with hungry hands. It was unyielding and bitter cold.

"The Key to the Door!"

A frightening character appeared upon the mirror's face in a cold blue mist. Taloned fingers pointed at the Primal Sign. I understood. The symbol vanished.

Sending the vile fiends back to the unspeakable hell they crawled from, I laid the Book upon my desk and with my finger made the Sign upon the mirror. What mighty necromancy! I pushed and fell through the Door. I was beyond the Threshold.

I was hurtling into an uncharted space that was colder than the snows of a wind-swept arctic waste and more silent than a tomb. I was bare of even that apparel that wraps a naked man - my mortal-coil was gone, I was but a formless shadow of a man.

I did not see through mortal eyes but rather perceived with a sense far exceeding vision in its clarity. I did not feel as man feels but I felt. Above me beckoned a billion stars but only one sanguine sun bore mastery over the world below. Barren and lifeless landscapes spread out before me. Over these I streaked; over titanic mountains and abyssmal gulfs I flew till presently I reached a whirlpool the size of a thousand earthly oceans. On the distant shore of this dark sea a darker citadel of lunatic architecture brooded.

Through a gaping great hole in its colossal roof I soared down into its misty labyrinths that were devoid of light. The edifice was like the titanic tomb of a god. Its odour was of decayed life and biological corruption.

Many wondrous yet frightful marvels I discovered in the castle's strongholds and at every turn my imagination was staggered with thoughts of what lay beyond a dark corridor's mysterious bend.

I presently came upon a hall so spacious that Mother Earth without discomfort might dwell within. I was hopelessly overawed by the marvel and majesty of it all. I was a god of the Ultra-Cosmos, and this was my heaven, my Valhalla - Eden itself.

An untouched treasure hoard far exceeding human ken was my prize. A trillion Eves beckoned to

me. Not a jewel had a remote counterpart on Earth. Colours no mortal rainbow ever bore, facets no elvish stone-cutter could have wrought - brilliance surpassing a thousand radiant suns were their gifts! The unworldly metals and their forms were no less splendid!

In utter bewilderment I pondered. Did I wear my true face here and only a mask on my native world? All the known Universe was but a shadow to the least of these riches, and here I was a shade.

Grasping a cluster of the choicest jewels with aethereal fingers I fled from I know not what, like a thief in the night. But surely no thief on Earth ever stole a treasure the likes of mine. Through nighted corridors, out of the gaping roof and into the dark sky I darted. There was something unholy and blasphemous about this citadel of priceless riches and infinite wonder that terrified and revolted me. I swore never to return.

Refracting the light of the sanguine sun, the gems looked like a falling crimson star or a bloody comet streaking across the heavens. They must have been the alarm that gave away my shadowy presence.

I sensed It's vast intellect reaching out to probe my mind and leave most damned lunacies in reason's place. It was a horrendous monstrosity spawned in the nethermost pit of Hell! It was a tentacled mass of gibbering scum that planted the fruits of madness in my poor and naked mind. From the dim edges of infinity It came - It pursued me at speeds far greater than that of light. It seemed a hopeless effort to flee. But on I swept, screaming through Ultra-Cosmic space. If It ever caught me and from my dissected thoughts learned the Key to the Threshold, the Universe would be doomed! The fate of Man rested upon my shade. I would not desert my kind. The strongest instinct in all Nature's creatures, the instinct of self-preservation, was in me multiplied infinitefold for all the noble race of Man.

The Crack of Doom! I had ventured into the Crack of Doom! "What a hellish piece of sorcery wert thou to bring me here, Threshold to Doomcrack."

As I regained the Threshold, the Thing had lessened the distance between us. I made the Sign upon the black Door with a shade of a finger and left that evil world. My last glimpse was of the Blasphemy's tentacles reaching out across the incomprehensible span of space to engulf me.

I found myself lying prone in my study at the foot of the Threshold. I was clothed in both body and robe, and unharmed. Clutched in my hands were the unearthly jewels I had stolen from the Monster's lair.

Dropping the gems, I looked at my pocket watch. No time had elapsed since I had entered the portal, not a moment...yet it had felt like eternity. Yes, surely Time is relative. Someday we may find the day we are living exists but in our imagination.

I regarded the Door and knew what deed had to be done. No one from this Side must ever again enter the Door, lest the Beast learn its secret and destroy the Universe we know.

I hefted a heavy chair and beat it upon the mirror. The chair splintered asunder but not a scratch marred the mirror's ugly grinning face.

I looked at the DRUILLARC upon my desk. I grasped it and once again conjured the royal fiends of Hell. They appeared. I bade them destroy all the mirrors ever wrought on that nameless world under that unspeakable star. I know not whether they did or not, but the accursed glass vanished before me in a fiery blaze. Most damnable threshold gone, I cast the monstrous hierarchy back into their infernal abode, and into the fire I cast the dread DRUILLARC. How it burned! How gaily, how mockingly, it burned!

I looked to the floor. The jewels lay where I had strewn them. I lifted them and contemplated their perfect symmetry and beheld their unworldly beauty. They were worth far more than all the riches of our Universe.

Tinselled poison and baneful bauble. Ha! So was beauty - marvelous to behold, yet the bane of Man. It

was nearly mine. I laughed! How hard and long I laughed.

(The foregoing was a transcript of the statement of Mr. Richard Rheinhart, a mental patient at Gillead Medical Centre, given under an hypnotic trance.

Although his lunacy is plain, it is most disturbing that his tale correlates remarkably well with certain facts.

A Sartorius Morinon did indeed exist and died a most gory and mysterious death about 60 years ago.

The brutal murder of a Mr. Arthur Pickman was discovered in Mr. Pickman's house which is located in the small fishing village of Christford, Mass. on the same bleak December's Sunday morning that Mr. Rheinhart was found insane by a Mr. Roering and wife.

Driving along the coastal road into Christford to attend religious services, they were shocked to hear lunatic laughter echoing from Mr. Rheinhart's secluded seaside cottage. His knockings unanswered, Mr. Roering forced entry into both house and study to find Mr. Rheinhart thrashing upon the floor laughing the chilling laughter of madness. Streaming through his blood-sweated hands were a bedazzling treasure of priceless jewels that bore no names upon this earth - James Masters, M.D., Gillead Medical Centre, Boston, Mass., December 27, 1901).

THE TEMPLE

In the remote reaches of the world Za'n
Lies a peak, seldom surmounted by man.
There, under a gibbous moon's ominous spell,
Looms forever the lost dreamer's oracle:
Rogue god Athsuga's blasphemous temple.

Around the structure's luminous walls,
Where the hopeless dreamer in nightmare crawls,
Lies a sucking quagmire made of charnal clay
Composed of death and abominable decay
Where many a dreamer's hopes are laid.

To the brink of this unholy quicksand
I came alone, immaterial, to stand,
For in my dream-quest I had wandered.
Now, as the rolling stormskies thundered,
I stood alone where so many had blundered.

But in mystical volumes I'd been reared,
So, well versed to challenge outer-spheres,
And armed with necromantic incantations,
I strove forward to gain my destination,
Overcoming all nefarious limitations.

I traversed the moat by an ancient rune,
Leaving behind death and the jeering moon.
In a limitless hall I found myself, aware
Of the slimey columns and noxious air;
I proceeded forward with instinctive care.

Ahead, I espied the curiously carved altar
To which I proceeded, daring not to falter.
There squatted the god who'd decide my fate,
A mass of size and form indeterminate,
Before whose presence I dropped, prostrate.

Help in my homeward trek I petitioned,
For I longed to be in my former condition,
But hearing his reply I could only moan,
For his instructions no one could condone:
After doing his deeds, I couldn't come home.

The shapeless deity appeared amused
That I, a mere mortal, would refuse,
But I turned and descended back to Za'n,
Where lies a peak, seldom conquered by man,
Where I shall remain forevermore...damned.

Planetfall on Yuggoth

BY JAMES WADE

By the time the Pluto landing was scheduled, people were tired of planetfall stories. The first human on the moon may have taken a giant step for mankind, as he claimed; but in the half-century following, each succeeding stage in the exploration of the solar system became more boring than the last. The technology was foolproof, the risks minimal, and most of the discoveries - while epoch-making for all the sciences - were too complex and recondite to be dramatized for the man in the street, or in front of his Tri-V screen.

They even stopped giving the various expeditions fancy names, like that first Project Apollo to the moon, or Operation Ares, the Mars landing. They actually let one of the crewman of the space craft - a radio operator named Carnovsky - name the Pluto jaunt, and he called it "Operation Yuggoth," frivolously enough, after the name for the planet used in pulp fiction by some obscure author of the last century.

Of course, the media dutifully carried the same stale old textbook research about how Pluto the last planet to be discovered and the last to experience human visitation, was merely a tiny chunk of frozen gunk over three and a half billion miles from Earth that took 248 earth years to circle the sun, and how if the sun was the size of a pumpkin (which it is not, so it was hard to see the sense of the comparison) Pluto would be a pea about two miles away, and how it was probably once a moon of Neptune that broke away into a very irregular orbit and thus possibly didn't qualify as a real planet at all.

The whole upshot seemed to be that here was another airless, lifeless, frozen world like all the others not on our sunward side - in which latter case they were airless, lifeless, sizzling worlds.

After the invention of the long-predicted nuclear fission drive, even such vast distances were minimized; the trip would have taken only

two weeks from Earth, and from the deep space station beyond Mars it wouldn't last that long.

No one except scientists expressed any disappointment that remoteness did forbid live Tri-V transmission, and they'd just have to wait for the films. The fact that a brief on-the-scene radio report was scheduled to be relayed via several earthside beams even drew complaints from a few music buffs.

We had all seen pictures of the ship before (or ones just like it): a pair of huge metal globes connected by a narrow passage, never destined to touch the surface of any world - the little chemical-fuel scouts did all the real exploring.

Altogether, it was shaping up as a megabore.

The broadcast promised to be even more tedious than the build-up. Arrived in orbit over Pluto, the space craft reported no glimpse of the planet's topography, due to a cloud of frozen mist - which, however, analyzed as not too dense for the scouts to penetrate. There was a lot of delay while the first scout was prepared and launched, carrying the radioman Carnovsky who had dreamed up the Operation Yuggoth tag and five other crewmen.

Carnovsky gave a running account as the small rocket approached the surface and grounded. First he spoke of milky, churning mists hovering over the vast icefields, half-discerned under their high-power searchlights. Then, with mounting excitement, the crackling interplanetary transmission reported a lifting and clearing of the fog. Next came a gasp of awe and that incoherent babbling which was traced in part later to garbled, half-remembered quotations from the pulp writer who had fantasized so long ago about dark Yuggoth.

Had Carnovsky gone mad? Did he somehow kill his fellow crewmen on the scout, after planting a time-bomb on the spaceship before they left it? In any event, no further transmission was ever received from either vessel after the hysterical voice from the scout abruptly broke off.

This is how the broadcast ended: "Mists are clearing - something big towering up dead ahead - is it a mountain range? No, the shapes are too regular. My God! It can't be! It's a city!



Great tiers of terraced towers built of black stone - rivers of pitch that flow under cyclopean bridges, a dark world of fungoid gardens and windowless cities - an unknown world of fungous life - forbidden Yuggoth!

"Is that something moving over the ice? How is it possible in this cold? But there are many of them, heading this way. The Outer Ones, the Outer Ones! Living fungi, like great clumsy crabs with membranous wings and squirming knots of tentacles for heads!

"They're coming. They're getting close! I - "

That was all; except that those few on Earth - those who were not watching the variety shows on their Tri-V's but who were outside for some reason and looking at that sector of the sky where Pluto is located - experienced the startling sight of a bursting pinpoint of light as, over three and a half billion miles away, the atomic fuel of the spacecraft bloomed into an apocalyptic nova, writing finis to the ill-fated expedition, and to Operation Yuggoth.

But scientists don't discourage easily. They admit that Pluto may hold some unsurmised danger - though certainly not connected with Carnovsky's hallucinations - and it may be best to stay away while unmanned probes gather more data.

Now, though, they're all excited about the plan to send a manned ship to a newly-discovered, unimaginably remote tenth planet that hasn't even been named yet.

The new project, for some reason, has been dubbed "Operation Shaggai."



Your publishers announce the planned publication of a book of the favorite recipes of H. P. Lovecraft, to be titled THE SKULKER IN THE SCULLERY.

The volume will be divided into five sections: Cheese, Beans, Chocolate, Ice Cream and Coffee. There will also be a Lovecraft Diet which is designed to assist anyone who follows it to fade away to nothing on 15 cents a day.

A special appendix will be devoted to Sea Food, including such time-tested culinary delights as Oysters Innsmouth, Flounder a la Obed Marsh and Filet of Deep One.

The book is tentatively scheduled for late 1987 or 1988, by which time it will cost at least three times as much as any plausible price that might be announced at this time.

"This is something else." - Julia Child

"I provided the foreword" - James Wade

PREDATOR

BY WALTER C. DEBILL, JR.

AMERICAN BULLETIN OF PALEONTOLOGY, Jan. 3, 1968: ... most remarkable Eocene fossil of the early mammalian order Creodonts, clearly related to the 34" skull found in Mongolia by Andrews in 1925. The mode of locomotion of this creature remains utterly mysterious; the limbs are atrophied almost as completely as in whales, yet it unquestionably lived on land. The eyes had also atrophied, giving it the aspect of a gigantic mole. The teeth indicate that it was carnivorous...

Diary of Harold Trilling, February 4, 1971: ... Sylvia has really picked the most marvelous place for her "Abbey of Yidhra" - two stories, foot-thick native stone walls, small-paned casement windows - and the location is ideal, in the rocky hills north of town. We're in a little canyon off the main road, surrounded by ancient oaks. The nearest neighbor is a half mile away so we shouldn't get any complaints about the ceremonies - "Yidhra" doesn't go in for noisy rites anyway. I keep telling Sylvia that the term "Abbey" is inappropriate, signifying a nunnery or monastery rather than the sort of cult center and temple she's established, but she says southern California is so full of "temples" that we couldn't get anyone to look twice at another one.

I wish I could really believe in Yidhra the way Sylvia does. The beautiful, awesome and terrible earth-mother is a magnificent image all right - but I'm afraid having to operate the hidden projectors and slip the hashish into the sacramental wine for so long has permanently dulled my capacity for spiritual belief. I do find the ceremonies very moving but it's not Yidhra I believe in, it's Sylvia. When she throws back her hood in the torchlight, her hair is shimmering gold and her voice is a silver trumpet far away - the robe softens the angularity of her figure and every movement is pure, eternal femininity. Yet in daylight she often seems quite plain and her voice is almost brassy - I think the only time she's really alive is when the torches burn and Yidhra calls. Sometimes when she talks about her mystical experiences in New Mexico and Laos I think she's a bit mad, but it's a beautiful madness. May Yidhra grant that she always have someone like me to handle the practical side of things!

The cellar will be perfect for ceremonies, though we'll have to heat it for our pampered middle-aged clientele. Sylvia wants me to break through the wall behind the altar to make an "Inner Sanctum" from which to make her dramatic entrances, which will be an ungodly amount of work if there's solid rock behind it. I thought I saw some cracks in the mortar there, though, maybe some of the stones are loose...

Mrs. Herbert Wilkerson, August 12, 1971: ... meet the Priestess in the Inner Chapel? How thrilling! You must have great confidence in my spiritual development, Mr. Trilling...

AM. BULL. PALEONT., May 8, 1968: ... further excavation has only deepened the mystery of the enormous limbless Creodont. The site of the find proves to have been a deep, narrow cave at the time the creature lived, and the original cave floor was littered with the bones of smaller animals. All were marked by the teeth of the Creodont; the majority show some teeth marks of smaller predators, but not to the extent one would expect if the thing were purely a scavenger. And even a scavenger needs some form of locomotion to get to its food...

Harold's Diary, April 4, 1971: ... I don't know about her new policy of staying in the Inner Chapel behind the altar all the time, appearing only at the climax

of the ceremony. It's certainly dramatic enough and sets up the impressive special visits with her for especially well-heeled devotees, but it throws the entire burden of salesmanship and stage-managing on me. She could at least come out and help before the worshippers arrive. I'd have been better off if we hadn't found that cave behind the wall. The special visits are really effective though, with the heavy wooden door opening behind the heart-shaped altar and then the stone steps leading downward, and of course the advanced worshipper stoned out of her mind. And her seclusion and "meditation" have put Sylvia in fine form for the ceremonies, pale face and shining eyes, almost ghostly voice, "...and the Mother of Darkness shall reign, bringing endless life to her servants, the Lurkers in the desert, Xothra the Devourer in the earth, the great-winged Y'hath in the sky..."

But I wish she would come out sometimes. I feel I hardly know her these days - she's becoming a distant, dreamlike figure to me...

THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS, original version, ca. 1240 A.D.: ... Bodoncar-munqaq chided Dorben with laughter because the arrow struck the stag in the flank, and the two followed the blood (trail) of the stag on horseback. After a while they saw that a wolf was also following the deer and Dorben prepared to shoot at the wolf. But Bodoncar-munqaq, seeing that the wolf was behaving strangely, said, "See you that the wolf does not slay the stag but drives it as the sheepdog drives the sheep. Let us follow and watch." And Bodoncar-munqaq and Dorben followed at a distance and saw the wolf drive the stag into a narrow canyon (which they had) not seen before. Dismounting, they followed quietly into the canyon and saw the wolf drag the deer alive into a small cave. Shortly the wolf came out of the cave with a still lean (empty) belly...

Mrs. Wilkerson, August 12, 1971: ... down there? I hadn't thought the passage went down so far - it's a natural cave, isn't it? I don't know if I...

Harold's Diary, June 15, 1971: ... tired all the time, I sleep practically all of the time that I'm not working on cult affairs or taking care of Sylvia. She hasn't come out for weeks now. I think she's getting rather morbid, but she's still charming. I took Mrs. Arbogast down to see her last night and Sylvia had her laughing and cooing banalities in no time. Sylvia didn't tell me how much she donated after I left them alone but I was too stoned to care about money anyway.

THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE MONGOLS: ... Afterwards Bodoncar-munqaq and Dorben returned many times to watch the wolf carry animals into the cave and come out without having eaten them, but each time they feared to enter and search the cave, Bodoncar-munqaq saying that he felt a presence as of evil gods.

Finally one day when Dorben had drunk much araqi (fermented mare's milk) he pushed Bodoncar-munqaq aside and entered, saying that a beautiful goddess lived in the cave and sang to him sweetly and promised him many things if he would enter and make obeisance. When after many hours Dorben did not come out, Bodoncar-munqaq returned to the camp and summoned many armed warriors, insisting that none who had drunk araqi that day should come. It was thus that Bodoncar-munqaq and the others entered the cave and found the...

AM. BULL. PALEONT., June 3, 1969: ... shows the most extreme adaptation to extended hibernation ever observed...

Chants from the TEXTS OF MLOENG:

Xothra the Ravenous!
Xothra the Hidden Devourer!
That which rests in the earth
In its lair of stone
That which calls...

Harold's Diary, August 12, 1971: ...the policeman who came last night about Mrs. Arbogast was really hostile until Sylvia got hold of him and turned on the charm. It seems Mrs. A disappeared the night of her visit with Sylvia. I really didn't want to take him down there but I was full of hashish and the whole thing threw me into such a panic that I couldn't think of anything to do but let Sylvia handle him. I had a little trouble getting him to go down the stairs behind the altar, something about the atmosphere of the place really bothered him and he acted completely paranoid, but once Sylvia went to work on him he relaxed and didn't give us any trouble at all. In fact, I remember at one point she had him shrieking with laughter, though I can't remember what about - I was so spaced out I could only stand there and giggle.

Tonight I'm taking Mrs. Wilkerson down to see her. Mrs. W's a Boston politician's widow and seems a bit touchy and sceptical. I wouldn't pick her for a special visit if she weren't positively dripping with cash. Sylvia will have to be exceptionally impressive because I can't slip the old bag any hash - I think she suspects that the sacramental wine is doped...

* * * * *
 THE LOST BOOK OF HERODOTUS, ca. 445 B.C.: ...and Wanderers in this region of the desert are warned to beware of that which is called Xothra; for it is said that ragged beggars appear in the desert and offer the traveller alkharaf weed to chew upon, which if taken lulls the mind with pleasant sensations and fancies; whereupon these beggars invite the traveller to visit certain places in the hills where there are beautiful women or jewelled palaces or some other desirable thing. But of those who have taken the weed and gone into the hills, none has ever returned; some few travellers have declined the weed and gone, and of these it is said that one returned; but his tale is not of fair women or of jewelled palaces but of a thing which chilled the blood of those who heard the tale...

* * * * *
 Mrs. Wilkerson, August 12, 1971: ...What an awful odor! Are you sure there isn't something dead down there?...

* * * * *
 Private correspondence of Dr. Richard Marbridge, August 3, 1971: ...think I may have hit on the only possible explanation. It was a predator; it could not go to its prey; therefore, its prey came to it. How could this happen? Not by chance; that would have been too inefficient for survival. Attraction by odor? Think of an animal living most of its life immobile in a narrow cave; the accumulated stench would almost surely drive off any other creature. The only explanation is telepathic control.

Now, what form could this control take? It seems clear that the thing not only lured food directly but induced other predators to bring food to it. It is most unlikely that it evolved such a complex ability merely to devour both the gift and the giver at one "sitting"; it must have actually enslaved other predators, sending them out time and again to fetch prey. But this required letting the slaves roam about freely, possibly at great distances, using their own hunting ability to the fullest extent. I think this required a very subtle form of control, probably some sort of hallucinatory experience acting as an incentive to carry out the thing's wishes. I wonder what sort of hallucination would induce a wolf to bring home the bacon? A nest of warm, cuddly, ravenous little pups? Or perhaps....

* * * * *
 Mrs. Wilkerson: ...Sylvia!? LET GO OF ME, YOU MANIAC! OH MY GOD that THING!...

* * * * *
 Harold's Diary, September 2, 1971: ...looks like Mrs. Harris isn't going to show up tonight. Sylvia will be absolutely furious - no "special visits" (or large donations) since Mrs. Wilkerson last month. I'm almost afraid to go down there and tell her...

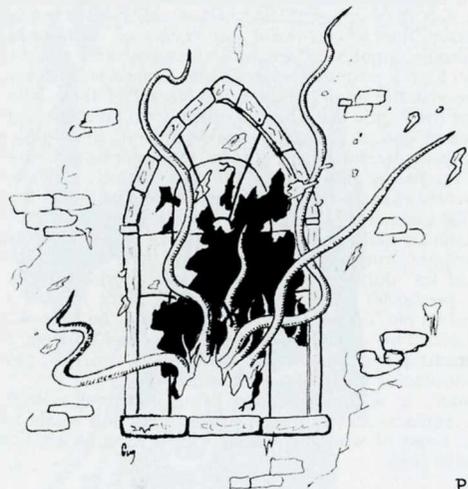
* * * * *
 Classified Ad, House for Rent, September 22, 1971: 2 story 9 m native stone, near town on...



THEY WAKE OFF INNSMOUTH

Off Devil's Reef it's said there loom
 Loathsome beings that escaped the booms
 Of depth charges lodged there in the past
 By obedient sailors, their questions unasked.
 The jumbled rocks, then shifted, have since
 Realigned and eerie changes now evince,
 Which suggest a mysterious upward surge
 From fearsome depths it was sought to purge.
 Bubbles of unworldly hue are sighted
 At times in that area so evilly blighted,
 And glimpses of the nameless things below
 Have chilled chance mariners to the marrow.
 "Before the moon twice more wanes,"
 Say the hags in doom-shrouded lanes,
 "THEY will issue forth to claim their due."
 Now, will the Innsmouth horrors begin anew?

-Ralph Wollstonecraft Hedge





"One must ever be cautious against injuring or harming those under the Protection of They; moreover, also the defiling of Their treasures, for acts against both servants and baubles are of Great and Awful censure by Them and Retribution is swift, and nothing may forestall its inevitable execution, though the guilty one hide beyond the ends of the earth"

*Poe Scut: YE GNAWERS BENEATH
AND OTHER MARVELLES OF YE
ELDER WORLDE*

I

There are many things that can scar and transfigure one's life and make living thereafter unbearable. Accidents and incidents are numerous in everyday life. Not one day passes by without one's hearing of a homicide or car wreck on the news bulletins. It's tragic, of course, but we give little thought to the implications it has upon members of the victim's family or friends. And what of the terrible experiences suffered during war? God alone knows what bloody horrors and atrocities I saw during that great bloodbath. How shattered were the later lives of those involved and how weary did they become of living after witnessing those horrors. Yet, there are things more horrible in life than what men can do to one another, nor do many know what these things are. Yes, war is horrible; yet I never buckled under that terrible flood of violence. For it hardened me against anything life had to offer . . . so I thought, I hadn't reckoned on Jeffrey Mantell showing up later in my life.

My name is Austin Wesley. During World War II, before I was an admiral, serving on a destroyer that was one among many seagoing watch dogs protecting convoys from the Nazi submarines, I got to know a sprightly young seaman named Jeffrey Mantell quite well. Mantell was an able sailor and a competent leader who was rapidly advanced to the rank of ensign during our friendship, and was later transferred to another destroyer. After perhaps a year I heard that Mantell's destroyer had been torpedoed and sunk in the North Atlantic. As time passed and survivors were rescued it was apparent that Mantell was not among them, and, presumably, he was "lost at sea". I was unable to see the final result of the search as I was commissioned to the Seventh Fleet in the Pacific War Theatre.

After the war, Florence, my wife, and I returned to Kansas City after my stay in San Diego. We resettled in our old, familiar part of town on the Kansas-Missouri line where quaint old houses of distinguished history still stand, handsome tributes to the early founding of a respectable society in Kansas City. I am a retired admiral and still retain a prestige among the elite of society here and the fond and admiring respect of those who remember my campaigns of the Pacific naval battles. Away from the deafening horrors of war my life became one of pleasant, prosaic calmness, colored by social elegance and my intriguing oceanographic studies. I had done much of the latter during my stay in the Pacific and now had quite an extensive collection of specimens and was involved in many research projects in conjunction with universities.

In the summer of 1956 Jeffrey Mantell appeared at my social club, one of several country clubs in this select centre of city life. Mantell's appearance was a surprise in many ways. For one thing, there was my belief that he had been "lost at sea" during the war. Also, I was surprised that he had made an apparently permanent move to Kansas City, since he was a staunch New Englander of an old Yankee line from Maine. Why he forsook the sea and the coast was beyond me, as he had had a deep affection for them. Moreover, there was the surprising fact that he was able to join this rich, private, and select group of individuals I was a member of.

Mantell, it seems, had been living here long enough to make the appropriate contacts and had a good appearance and family background that appealed to those of worth in Kansas City, and so he was accepted into the club and social circle.

He was as surprised upon seeing me as I was upon seeing him. After all, he had lost contact with me during the war. Of course, after civilities I immediately questioned him about what had happened to him after his "disappearance". Mantell gave me the oddest look, almost as if the remembrance gave him grave displeasure. Then in embarrassment at his visible distaste he told me in capsule what had transpired. He explained how his ship had been torpedoed and he and his crew had escaped in separate lifeboats. However, he was separated from his companions by a fierce storm and an ordeal of survival followed in the open life boat. He won out against death and was rescued fourteen days later. I pressed him for more details of his adventure, politely of course, but again he showed that discouraging expression and excused himself, saying that he didn't like to recall it.

I ordered us both scotch and sodas and, after we refreshed ourselves, I changed the subject to New England and asked him about his home-state of Maine. He talked much about his old home and the current prosperity of the sea-coast state, but he was rather vague about his reasons for leaving, muttering, "It's best to have one's footing on really dry land." This I thought odd.

He talked of his new home in Kansas City and the substantial income he had inherited from his father, a wealthy shipping-line owner. As he talked on I noticed for the first time how much Mantell had changed both in looks and personality since the war. I am well over sixty years old and yet here Mantell was only forty-five and looked my own age, with greying hair and furrowed face. Mantell, once a rambunctious, wild young fellow who would spit in the devil's own eye, was now nervous and visibly dreary in spirits. He seemed oddly fearful of the past and could only talk of "now," avoiding as much as he could references to the sea and the coast. Yet he seemed his old self when I talked of the past, particularly the part I played in the war in the Pacific.

When he got ready to leave he knew a considerable amount about me, yet I had but a smattering of his history. I asked him to visit Florence and me, and soon too. He gladly accepted my invitation, promising to do so.

Mantell did indeed visit probably sooner than he had planned, for when I returned home from the club that day Florence had been talking with neighbors and had planned an elaborate dinner-party, another of many held frequently in our neighborhood. I told her of Jeffrey and she naturally insisted that I invite him. Mantell eagerly answered our invitation with an affirmative, I suspect in order to establish himself more firmly among the upper class here in town.

I wish now that I hadn't invited him as he then demonstrated the first of the many eccentricities that alienated him from those in his class, and in due time also alienated me. It was also the first intimation I had of his overwhelming disgust of the sea. At the dinner Mantell eagerly introduced himself to one and all and after the usual polite civilities attending one of these parties I got him aside. I told him that I wanted to show him something that would doubtless interest him and took him to my den to show him my collection.

Now I have said I'm interested in oceanography, and I have done considerable research in marine exploration, undersea flora and fauna and have written many papers. I immediately noticed Jeffrey's reaction to my study. He became nervous, extremely nervous, and he tried to conceal it making it only more apparent. He politely declined my invitation to view my specimens. I didn't want to spoil his evening so I showed him to the door. As he passed out he caught sight of an iridescent nautilus shell atop one of my filing cabinets and perceptibly paled. He seemed transfixed, staring at the pearly shell, and I mistook his actions for a manifest interest in the object. Yet when I offered to show it to him and reached for it, he stuttered a refusal and quickly walked from the room. It seemed a strange reaction to me and I closed the den and followed him. The worst of his odd behaviour was yet to come.

I've known of people being repulsed or sickened by certain foods, but nothing as extreme as what followed. The servants brought out a delicious souflee of crab and Mantell, upon seeing the dish, literally pushed the bowl away and threw himself backwards from the table, spilling the excellent soup.

Of course, this bizarre reaction made it look bad for the flustered Mantell from there on. I certainly understand that some people don't like seafood, but Mantell was highly agitated, falling into a coughing and gagging spell. I urged him from the room and he stiffened himself with several vodkas.

"It's my new reformation . . ." he chokingly said. "I've taken a new religious outlook on my life, you know . . . can't eat any food the Bible forbids . . . the unclean, you know . . . especially seafood . . ." His eyes shone strangely. . . . and then what with that bad experience during the war . . ."

I understood and informed our guests of Mantell's embarrassment and his reasons. Mantell excused himself and left hastily, although not before apologizing to Mrs. Coriell. Her husband, Vern, cornered me later and joked over drinks. "For an old 'sea-legs' he doesn't take to fish, now does he?" I laughed half-heartedly, feeling inwardly distressed that a seaman with courage during the war was seemingly a neurotic now. I made up my mind to help Mantell with his problems. I wish to God now that I'd never made that vow.

II

I saw little of Mantell in the days that followed the dinner-party. But after a week or two of absence he returned to the club. There were, of course, nods and whispers in his direction, but for the most part the others understood Mantell's odd behaviour. Mantell seemed to steadily lose his nervousness and I suggested some pastimes, hoping these activities would be of therapeutic value to his disorders. We took to playing golf regularly and I began priming Jeffrey for a serious study of the arts. These hobbies brought out that old spirit of his I'd been so familiar with during the war, and I thought that surely he was becoming his former self.

These were the best times of our friendship. Mantell even attended parties again, and his new behaviour caused his critics to reassess their former attitudes toward him. There was one time, however, when he acted rather peculiarly: that was on one of our junkets to the Nelson Art Gallery. There Mantell came across some relics in an Oceanic exhibit in the Ethnic art displays. He noticed one particularly: a strange fish wrought in gold, and that startling transfixation that had manifested itself in his features that night in my den came over him again. He visibly shook himself, clearing away whatever dark thought clouded his mind, and moved on.

But after a couple of months Mantell began manifesting deterioration. He looked haggard most of the time, wearily drawn out, his eyes darkened. "Not getting enough sleep . . ." he'd mutter in reference to his harried appearance. He also began drinking heavily at and away from the club. His heavy drinking and constant grumbling soon brought a new barrage of whispers upon him; finally, in the end, it culminated in a threat of removal from the club.

Prior to this time Mantell had been reticent, refraining from talk of the sea and what had occurred after his ship sank. Now between his drunken lethargy and outbursts of incomprehensible anger he would blurt out incoherent references, spiced with nods at apparently malignant remembrances and shudders. I told him to try to forget the ordeal he had gone through for the sake of his nerves, yet he tenaciously clung to those old dark memories. I felt sorry now for my early wish to learn of his experiences, for they were manifestly terrifying to judge from the present conduct of Mantell.

Mantell continued to get deeper into these awful memories as time went on. He mentioned things which seemed pure fantasy of a sinister bent, and his mutterings ran in incoherent ramblings . . . about "the Slimey Stalkers of the Sea Floor"; the "Wrigglers of the Deep Warm Muds"; hints about something called the "Palace of Phosphorescent Splendour", and another place called the "Chasm of Crimson Renders". From these inexplicable mouthings he'd turn to talk of seemingly real things, such as . . . "Roderik, the babbling old fool! Why'd he hide certain things from me? Curse him!" . . . "THEY come inland to Maine on moonless nights, especially at Roodmas" . . . "What connection have THEY with the furtive hill-things that flutter among the round mounds at nightfall in Vermont, eh?" . . . "Thought that THEY wouldn't come inland, you know . . . Never to a place as far inland as Kansas!"

My associates began to voice disparaging views on Mantell, especially Barwell, a close friend of mine and also a psychiatrist of note. Barwell found Mantell's actions and personality most disturbing, being impressed with Jeffrey's rapid disintegration. He therefore told me, as Mantell's close friend, to try to find out what was the trouble and help him get a hold on himself. But that was easier said than done, for after some asides to me about his mysterious worries Mantell saw through my actions. Jeffrey never liked pity and he violently expressed himself in that belief now. He exploded with a barrage of curses at me and stumbled drunkenly out of the club. Barwell started to say something to me, but I was up from my seat and after Jeffrey.

He was loping across the green to the parking lot and I was up to him within moments. I started to speak, but he whirled around and looked at me sadly with those wearied eyes. "I-I'm sorry, Austin . . . for back there in the club . . . got to quit drinking so much and get more sleep . . ." He drew in a deep breath of the cool breeze blowing across the lawn and said, "Thank God, there's no salt in the breeze! How I hate New England now!"

III

I did not see or hear from Mantell the rest of the week until Saturday night. I received a call along about 10 o'clock, and he was terribly upset. He had to talk to me immediately. Soon he knocked at the door and staggered in. I noticed that he had an odd limp; his leg seemed hurt. He collapsed into a corner chair and gazed at me with unnerving penetration, a gaze that was filled with some terror deep within his soul and sorrow that I couldn't understand that terror.

"Care for a whiskey?" I asked, hoping that it would calm him.

He muttered an affirmative and opened his dry, cracked mouth: "I've got to tell you, Austin . . . it'll drive me crazy if I don't . . . can't keep it to myself . . . about when I was lost at sea . . . after the ship was torpedoed . . ."

I handed him his drink. "All right," I said, "Go ahead . . ."

"I have to tell you," he seemed to apologize. "I can't sleep at nights . . . the dreams . . ."

"Dreams?" I asked.

"Nightmares is the best word!" he answered, "Nightmares . . . they kept me awake for fear of having another of them . . . awful . . ."

"You had one tonight?" I asked.

"Yes . . ." He gulped down his whiskey and accepted another. "But I must tell you what happened. Maybe then you'll see why I hate the sea and anything to do with it. It's your choice to believe or not, though I wouldn't blame you in the least if you doubted it.

"It was in December that our ship was torpedoed in the North Atlantic, as you recall. It was a bitter, frozen time of the year, a time of fierce storms. The Nazis blew us through in midsections and it was all up. She sank quickly and it was a mad scurry for the lifeboats. I got into one and was waiting for the others in my party to reach me when the upper deck blew. The explosion threw part of my boat crew into the sea and shredded the others; nobody lived, of course. I rowed like mad, pulling myself far from the dying vessel. I soon found other boats floating around me and recognized our old companions Strand and Coorbin in one vessel. However, a rising wind forced me farther from the others and though I pulled against the blast I couldn't make headway. Then the storm burst full upon me with torrential, frigid rains and I had to secure the tarpaulin over the boat. In this way I rode out the storm in darkness, afraid of capsizing at any moment.

"When the storm finally spent its fury, I had no idea how many hours or days had passed. My watch had stopped. On I rode in the wind-racked sea and slept uncomfortably, troubled by evil dreams of peculiar strangeness. Later, I awoke and pulled back the tarp and peered out. I perceived a glimmer in the distance. As I drew closer I saw that it was a twinkling light that shone afar. Closer still and I made out the light atop a dark shaft of stone, a lone tower rising from a reef so low that it was almost level with the raging ocean. I began steering for the beacon and was afraid the currents might rush me past this harbourage. But no. I was borne straight to the thing, almost as if the sea wanted me to arrive at this destination.

"I secured the boat on the rocky shore and ran up to the bleak tower. The light winked oddly down at me as I stood staring. It seemed as if writhing forms and weird vistas flared out in its cold, pale quavering glare. Then I noticed that, though there was a glimmering of light at the summit of the tower, no light swept the heavens as other lighthouse beacons do. Next the tower itself baffled me. It was odd looking and its outlines seemed to waver before my eyes. It seemed to be leaning at one moment, then erect the next, and then it would seem to be lying horizontal, extending toward the dark horizon as if it were a two-dimensional drawing lying on a piece of paper before me. That's not right, Austin—things shouldn't be like that! I attributed it to my rough treatment at the hands of the storm.

"I pushed on to the lighthouse's base, running over the slimey reef to where the tower stood and I leaned against it for support, gasping for breath. Immediately I drew back from its stinking, foul surface, a dark basaltic surface covered with nasty, uncouth hieroglyphics that extended from its base to its top. I searched for the door. I couldn't find one. Nowhere in that cylinder of noxious, beslimed designs could I find an opening . . . and God help me, Austin . . . I swear that I once ran around the tower and it was a huge cube; again I ran around it and it was a pyramid; again and it was an octagon; then again and it was once more a cylinder. The elements and the mad geometry of the place got to me and I began running my hands over those designs. Suddenly, as I pressed several glyphs at once I perceived a crack that ran from out of the middle of the tower's base and rapidly widened. The crack gaped further, and the apparent door shifted to a side to side movement and dissolved into nothing.

"A nasty blast of foul air rushed out to meet the sea winds - a stink, as of indescribably, long-dead sea-things. The noxious vapor overwhelmed me, weakened as I was, and I collapsed in a heap on the rugged reef. The last thing I saw before I was swallowed up by unconsciousness was a peculiar, dark figure moving toward me . . . a man with a queer gait, as if he limped.



"When I came to I was in a strange, odd-angled room that seemed to glow, as with a weird phosphorescence. My eyes became adjusted to the eerie glow and I made out my host. My dear God - I've seen degenerate enough people, but this fellow - I don't even see how interbreeding could have produced such a monstrous figure. I thought of the mocking figures in the crowd around Christ in Bosch's "Ecce Homo". He looked like a toad he was so infernally ugly, with his fat pouting lips and bulging eyes, and a nasty tangle of beard that looked like wet seaweed hanging from his all-too-corpulent face. In that crazy phosphorescent glow even his face seemed covered with scales, but I wasn't sure. Seeing I'd come to he pulled back the cup of awful tasting liquor that he had administered to me.

"He held up a bottle that looked incredibly old. 'It still be good!' he chuckled in a thick voice that sounded nauseous, as if mucous clogged his pale, puffy throat. 'Tis an old philtre to return those from the cold clutches of Dreams'.

"He grinned and showed a mouthful of tiny sharp-pointed teeth. 'Ye be from a ship that uz lost, eh? The others? ... Maybe there uz more a'ye a'comin' in the storm? Outside it uz blowin' hard ... Him Who is Not to be Named uz drivin' his Hounds across the heavens ...

"I was separated from them,' I muttered. 'Maybe they'll see your beacon and come here.'

"He cackled with a nasty gurgling that made me think of a fish on dry land, gasping its last breath. 'No others come - only one uz brought here ... only one. Ye be that one! He seen fit ta bring ye 'ere - un He's done that. Come, I has ta show ye the Place!' I protested feebly against walking.

"He began limping off toward a stairway that seemed to be first in a corner, then up toward the ceiling, then next set in the floor. His walk was an odd gait, and his hopping made me think more disgustedly of a toad. He turned his oddly flat head and his ugly face caught the cold glare of the phosphorescence off the walls. 'Ye come now!' he said, his voice rather deeper and strong amid the mucous rumblings of his throat. 'Ye are the Awaited ... He awaits ye.'

"I thought this reference was to the real keeper of the lighthouse and he wished to see me. With a shudder I followed the old man. Was I descending or ascending the stairs? I couldn't tell then, nor can I tell now. But I did see things in those cold, wet, tartarean regions of hellish dark slime below ... hopping things running from us ... strange spiney creatures that clacked in darkness ... flopping abnormalities that no sane man has ever seen. You'll never see such things in those biological or oceanographic books of yours, Austin! Finally, the stairs ended and I beheld the most fabulous wonder of all. It lay vast and gargantuan before me: an immense undersea cavern, illuminated by phosphorescence, filled with gold relics and strange glowing jewels. It extended for leagues and all along that expanse lay hills of treasure. I shuddered to think of the waves rolling overhead, but I was immediately drawn back to the glittering, rich mounds about the steps. I muttered to myself, *Gold ... jewels ... tons of it ... must be a storehouse of loot from sunken ships! Likely Spanish gold!*

"The old man heard me and paused, turning. 'It be Their gold! Not men's! ... Not Spaniards as ye say! These Spaniards try to take Their gold ... they can't ...' he chuckled. 'No, these men can't ... They took them when they try to!'

"Are you telling me the Spaniards were here at this lighthouse?'

"Aye, she be stand here a long time! She be stand here a long time afore the Spaniards came!"

"Who do you speak of as 'They'?" I asked.

"'It be Those Beneath the Waves! They own all the riches ye see; it is Theirs by the Right given Them by Him!' he cackled, looking at me in some kind of crazy triumph now.

"Him?" I asked. 'The same one I'm to meet?'

"Aye! Ye be His by His Right of the Sea's Rage and the Time draws near ... ye Solstice is nigh! The old man named 'Him' as someone or something whose name I can't spell, much less pronounce, but the old man bubbled something to identify 'Him'. It was hideous how his eyes glared fiendishly as he croaked the unpronounceable syllables.

"I bent down to examine some of the golden objects and saw that I was mistaken about their being Spanish. Some unknown culture made those objects. Some bore the same repulsive hieroglyphs on them as those on the outside of the tower. Some bore fish glyphs while others carried a noxious glyph of a squid or octopus on them. Then the old man was pulling at me with his boney fingers to move on and follow him. I stood up and shivered to see the webs between his fingers and the scales covering his horny hands.

"I followed him on a pathway amid the mounds of gold and over a sort of sculpted basalt bridge above the relics. The designs on the stonework were the same weird hieroglyphs and sickening bas-reliefs. Then the old man brought me before a hideous altar, behind which loomed a monolith whose outlines changed and dissolved in the queer phosphorescence. Atop this menhir of black stone was a statue of a grotesque and horrible being so utterly removed from the weirdest designs of earthly artists that it could have been fashioned by inhuman hands on some far star. It seemed an unclean conglomeration of unhealthy forms, the only one I could make out being an octopus or squid that served as a head. It seemed to crouch in an abominable malignance.

"To my ejaculated question came the reply 'It is He in His Image! Now you must go to Him, as He brought you here!' Suddenly the old devil's arms grabbed me from behind. An elbow clamped round my throat and a powerful grip pinioned my arms. My breath was going and I was blacking out. I guessed the old man's terrible intentions and feigned unconsciousness. He released my throat and pushed me up onto the altar.

"I peered through half-closed eyes at him as he pulled a grotesque, golden knife out of his belt and began some ghastly chanting. It was gibberish and now and then it contained 'His' equally unpronounceable name. He raised the knife and advanced toward my prone body. I lay still, letting him get close enough, then lunged forward, off the slab, kicking him full in his ugly face. It

gave me time to get to my feet, but he was on me in an instant and we were locked in a death grip.

"He tried to push the knife toward my throat, but I held him off. Dear God! - Austin, I couldn't and wouldn't have believed that he had such strength. He held me tight and tried to break my hold on the sacrificial blade, and we went rolling and bumping against the altar and obscene relics. All the while he foamed like a madman, chanting in that gurgling voice. Over and over his noxious tongue rolled those hellish words. Finally, I loosened his hold on the knife and it dropped on the altar top; but he came at me full-force, clawing and spewing, snapping his flabby frog-like mouth, showing row upon row of terrible needle-like teeth. My flesh and clothes were literally hanging from me in shreds and I knew I had to finish him soon or it was all up for me. In a quick glance at the knife I saw that it had wedged upright in a gap on the altar stone. An instant later I whirled the old man's back to the altar, locked my leg around his own, and threw myself against him, flinging him across the stone face. A marrow-freezing cry of rage and agony welled bubbling from those fishy lips. Spittle sputtered from his trembling mouth, then the face grew rigid, and those bulging eyes glazed over. I stood in silence and almost fell to vomiting when I saw that the blood flowing out from under the body and down the stone altar was not red.

"I shuddered and forgot my gorge rising as I looked up at that malignant idol. How it glared at me! How fiendishly alive it seemed! In terror I turned and ran up the steps, and the hellish stones seemed to rebel against me all at once. I lost my balance and fell. With bleeding hands and face I got up again and ran on, fighting my disordered equilibrium for balance and sanity. I reached the door to the stairway into the tower. On a sudden impulse I stooped to the glittering relics to grab up some of the gold and jewels to show the outside world proof of this slimy hell-hole - if I escaped! I looked up toward the altar in horror for I heard sounds ... sucking and slithering sounds ... noises as of mighty waves crashing into cyclopean cliffs ... and above all the noxious blubbing chant of nightmarish words at some ethereal height above me!"

Mantell collapsed in a shuddering, nervous mass. I made to aid him for he was so agitated at this point that I resolved to stop him. "No, Austin!" he said falteringly, "I've got to tell it all ... all!" He drew in a jerky breath and then continued:

"I made my way up, out of those sea-spawned nether regions of madness into the tower and ran from there out the grotesque door onto the wind-racked reef into a new, raging tempest. I ran to my boat, ever slipping, still clutching the golden treasure, ever feeling that malignant tower behind me - like some titan bulk looming up to crush me in retribution. I climbed into the vessel and steered into the open sea where the tempest soon caught me in its grip and sped me away from that accursed tower. I looked back at the island and the light of the beacon seemed like some gigantic obscene evil eye glaring after me. Sudden fear seized me and I shoved the gold and jewels into a waterproof seabag in the lifeboat's storage compartment. I ducked under the tarpaulin and closed up the boat, for I thought I had seen something coming out of the lighthouse - something that I didn't want to see closely. Then I heard a monstrous wailing cry that reached to the storm-racked heavens and plumbed the black depths of the ocean and it struck some horrible responsive chord within my soul. My strength gave out and I fell into a faint.

"When I awoke the tarp was drawn back and bright, wholesome daylight shone on my face. I was safe on board an American destroyer. It was odd ... I had taken the golden treasure to show as proof of my tale - yet now an impulse directed me to conceal those eldritch relics, as if something didn't want me to show the outside world proof of my nightmare. Though I couldn't make myself show the gold, I told about the black reef and lighthouse. But, by God - they couldn't locate any such place in the Atlantic. I stopped telling them about it as I knew they'd soon think I was insane.

"It was during this time at sea that I began having the nightmares - hellish things. Something would come in the night and disturb my sleep ... Mantell shivered. "It's some awful, slimey thing, like it had crawled up from the sea floor. It has appendages - many of them, whether they're legs or what I've no idea. But it crawled up on my bed at night, trying to get me - and I woke up screaming like a madman. It got closer each night - just as it has done tonight!"

"I was finally discharged because of these nightmares and was put for sometime in a landside hospital where I was lost from the "Thing". It bothered my sleep no more. Seeing I had lost my odd mental condition my doctors agreed on a release from the hospital for me. However, before release could be effected I had the worst luck, contracting appendicitis. I was operated on immediately and given ether as an anesthetic. As I fell into blackness I felt my spirit detach from my body and float into chaotic darkness. Colors and patterns shifted before me and then I saw stretching out in a watery green gloom a titanic city! Its contours and outlines shifted in arabesques of fancy that was surely not from the light dimly filtering down from above - it was like that hellish lighthouse in the Atlantic!"

"I saw things, leperous toad - things that swam in infernal sarabands around the towers and minarets of the underwater place. Avenues of vast stone buildings reminded me of sepulchres and I felt the loathsome horror of slimey decay all around. Before me rose a titanic mountain with cyclopean structures atop its dome as an acropolis and I thought of Poe's enigmatic poem 'The City in the Sea'.

"Suddenly, I felt a horrible presence, I was aware of some evil Intelligence watching me. The presence was closer now, drawing me up to the great undersea mountain. I began fighting for my will and trying to pull away. I was drawn closer and I strained to free myself from the malevolent pull. Suddenly I was free and floating back into the blackness of space. I awoke as the intern was rousing me. The operation was over.

"I was detained at the hospital longer. I feared the nights greatly for the 'Thing' seemed to have found where I was now, and just as when I was at sea I began having the horrible nightmares again. I felt the presence first in the sea

beyond the window; nights later it was at the window; then closer still within the ward on following nights. It was making its slimey way slowly toward me each night. I knew I would be detained even longer if I spoke of the nightmares again, therefore I kept quiet. Believe me it wasn't easy! Thank God, they released me before the Thing reached my bed!

"After my discharge I hurried back to my home in Maine and discovered that my father had left me a sizeable inheritance when he died. This set me up quite well and for some time I was comfortable as the Thing couldn't seem to find me again. But it didn't last long, for through my dreams it seemed to sense me and the nightmares came again. The Thing was beyond my seacoast home out in the vastness of the Atlantic and getting closer each night.

"Finally, the nightmares became too much and I had to tell an old friend, a confidante who was incredibly old and possessed a deep knowledge of curious lore and legends of the sea. He was particularly interested in my narrative of the undersea city and the horrible presence there. He told me to write an old fellow named Roderik who lived in Nova Scotia and who knew of certain unwholesome dark secrets of the northern hills and seas.

"I wrote the recluse and fully explained my story and subsequent dreams. Roderik replied that I had not imagined it all, nor was it hallucination. He proceeded to tell me many fiendish anecdotes of a repulsive folklore and repeatedly told of the eternal monstrousness of the sea. 'Just look at Frazer's GOLDEN BOUGH!' he said. 'The Egyptian priests, those delvers in arcane darkness, knew things - loathsome things . . . and they rightly feared the sea!'

"He told me of hideous old books and texts that support this curious folklore and body of ancient myths and legends. Books that speak of ancient horrors on pre-human earth and of some hideous race older than mankind that once ruled this planet and, secretly, still exists. In particular, he spoke of my situation, saying that I had defiled the sanctuary of these beings and had killed one of their servants. I was being hounded thus in retribution, but he shunned speaking of what that final retribution might be. To point up the truth of the situation he quoted from a damnable ancient French text by the medievalist Jean Poe Seut concerning guardians of certain treasures held by these beings. THE HORDES OF GHOULES was another abomination related to treasure-troves and guardians. WONDERS OF THE SEA FLOOR by Bascolm gave some ghastly revelations concerning my plight.

"Roderik wrote that on certain moonless nights things came ashore from the sea in Maine, Massachusetts and Nova Scotia. He told of hidden cyclopean ruins deep in Maine's dark forests. To aid me Roderik consulted Alibeck's TRUE GRIMORE to find - so help me, Austin - a magic spell to free me from this malignant curse. But nothing could be found. Finally in one vague communication he told me to take the treasure and get rid of it. Dump it into the sea, off the coast of Ipswich, Massachusetts. Well, I tried but somehow I felt strangely compelled to keep the gold and jewels and I couldn't bring myself to do it.

"At this time I began to feel the Presence more strongly: the Thing began coming so close to the house in my dreams that I fled from Maine to Pennsylvania. I kept up my correspondence with Roderik in hopes of an answer to the hellish situation. But soon the Thing had found me again and so I moved on to Wisconsin, but in vain. I told Roderik that I had finally decided to move far inland from the sea, to Kansas. There the Thing would never find me. Roderik again told me to get rid of that infernal gold and I tried again, but in vain. I would not be safe in Kansas and he quoted from Thunstone's MYTH PATTERNS OF THE SHONOKINS about horrors that lurked in the Plains States. You'd shiver, Austin, if you knew what things lurked in certain mounds in Kansas and Oklahoma."

He paused, and I asked, "So that's why you moved here?"

He nodded and concluded his narrative:

"Yes, I moved here and was left in peace for some time - the longest time I was ever free of that Horror. But, as you can guess, It's found me again. It's been getting closer each night. It's some spectral avenger come to claim retribution on me . . . and I can't get rid of that treasure! I've tried but I can't - I'm somehow linked in unholy union with it."

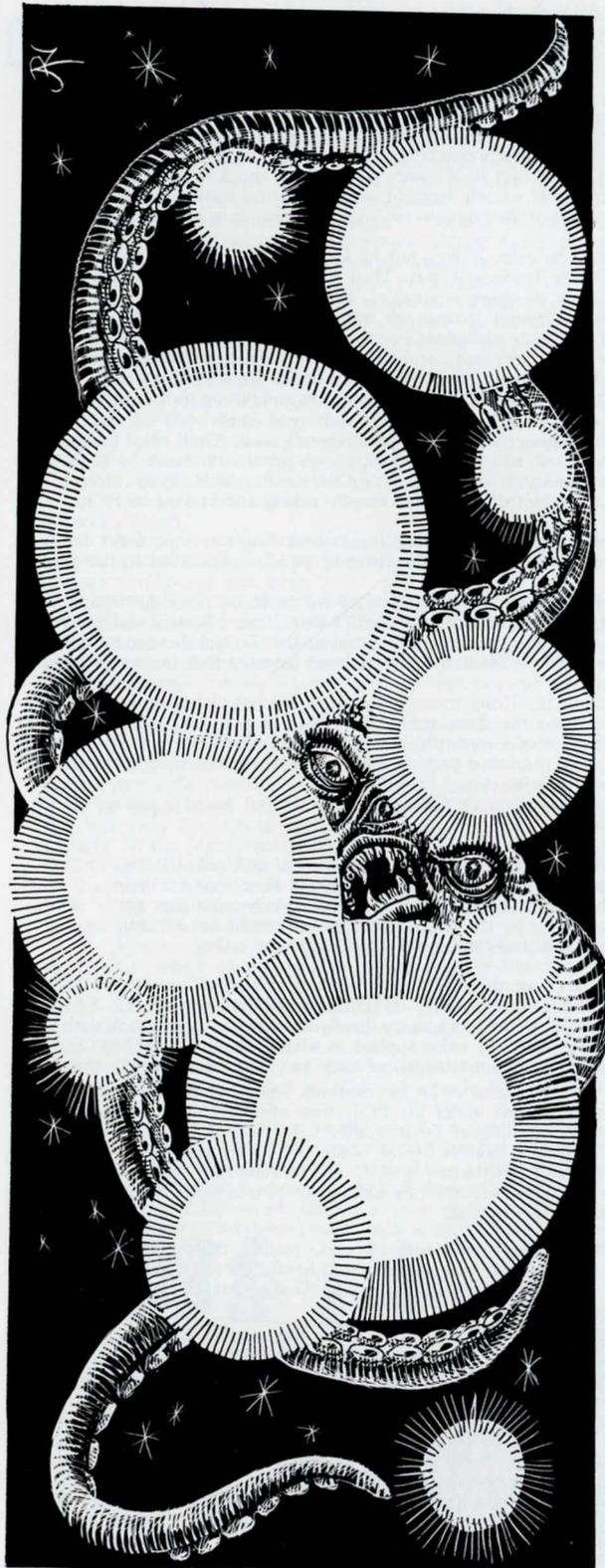
He slumped back into the chair and sat with his eyes closed for some time. Finally, he opened them and asked me the inevitable question: "That's my tale, Austin. Do you believe any of the whole outrageous thing?"

I sadly confessed that I did not, and politely told him that it was all some mental trouble brought on by his ordeal in the war. I explained each situation of his story in an analytical manner and gave a probable answer as to what had really happened. And his dreams were just that . . . dreams.

Mantell became nervously aggravated at my deductions. "Maybe this will change your mind!" he said and pulled at his pants cuff. "You see It has come to me tonight and clung to my leg . . ." I saw that it was the same leg that he had limped on when he came in. He pulled up the cuff and exposed the bruised and purple flesh beneath, as if his leg had been caught in a terrible vice-like grip.

IV

The worst was yet to come. The final all-engulfing horror that took Jeffrey Mantell and has shattered my life forever. It is a strain to even write of it, but that night I thought the exposure and brutal treatment Mantell had suffered at the hands of the elements had caused a terrible derangement in the seaman's mind. I told him we could discuss his story further in the morning and that he'd best return home and get a good night's sleep. At this Mantell started and paced. "But *It knows* where I am now! I can't sleep! It will come to me again!" He intended to stay awake for what little was left of the night. Seeing his unyielding state of mind, I told him to spend the night here at my home as he really needed the rest to get a grip on himself. He hesitated and then blurted out that perhaps the "Thing" would not sense his presence in my home - at least for a while. So Mantell spent the night at my home. I awoke early the next morning and went to the guest room. Mantell had left a note on the endtable saying that he had gone - that he would search through the old



manuscripts and books and give me literary evidence of the horrors of the sea. I shrugged my shoulders, intending to visit Mantell later that day . . . with Barwell, the psychiatrist.

At about six o'clock in the evening Mantell called. That is when the horror started. It's hard . . . extremely hard to make oneself recall a terrible event or accident. It's harder still to remember a frightening nightmare. But I must. I must now - for my own good and sanity - have this out in writing. Others must know the truth of what happened to Mantell and what may happen again.

Mantell rang and rang, as I was detained in my study, having discovered a new fascination in my oceanographic collection after the seaman's outrageous tale.

"Thank God!!!" blurted out a sobbing cry. "Hello - anyone - Austin?!? Ugh! - God help me, Austin! It's come again!!!"

"What?" I asked.
"Yes! What with not being able to sleep these nights... I was afraid... it was too much strain and I dozed off a couple of hours ago... Ugh! God! It got me, Austin! It got me!"
"Stay calm, Mantell!" I tried to say it reassuringly. "I'm coming right over! I'll bring help!"

"All right..." Mantell sobbed. I heard the receiver click.
A pelting rain was spattering the driveway of Mantell's home as Dr. Barwell and I pulled into it. We were greeted by a shocking caricature of poor Mantell: a deplorable wretch, haggard, pale, and a mad light shining in his eyes. As we stepped out of the rain into his house I noticed how surprisingly damp it was inside.

We tried to calm Jeffrey but he kept jabbering how awful "It" was - how indescribably hideous it was. Then he pulled up his shirt sleeves and showed us those shocking wounds... how they sickened me!... swollen, purplish blotches: round wounds all over his arms... already blotated and festering as from some malignant poison. Barwell, upon seeing these wounds, addressed me in a shaky but confident voice. "Hold him!" and immediately took action. Barwell removed a hypodermic needle from his supplies and filled it with a tranquilizer. Mantell saw our intentions and put up quite a fight.

"No - don't - you don't understand - you idiots! NO - I can't sleep again! You don't understand!" He was screaming now. "God! - No! Keep off!! D'ya hear me!!! - Read the books, Austin - it's proof - the books! - It's *Their* treasure - confound you - stay back! - Not the needle - No!! - I can't sleep - I'm not mad!!!" He was frothing at the mouth, rolling and kicking to escape our grasp.

Somehow Barwell succeeded in administering the tranquilizer and we helped Mantell up to his bedroom where he rapidly succumbed to the drug's influence.

The storm was fully unleashed as we made our way downstairs and decided to stick the night out in Mantell's home. I asked Barwell if it had been necessary to tranquilize Jeffrey and he replied that he had done so because of those ugly wounds on Mantell's arms. Barwell asserted that the wounds were self-inflicted.

We sat in the living room talking and Barwell picked up some of the books scattered on the floor around the divan Mantell had slept on in the afternoon. These books were the "literary evidence" he wanted me to read. They were hoary old tomes and no doubt were worth a fortune. I thought of the old recluse Roderick.

I recognized Frazer's *GOLDEN BOUGH* and found a passage underlined by Mantell:

"The Egyptian priests loathed the sea, and called it the foam of Typhon: they were forbidden to set salt on their table, and they would not speak to pilots because they got their living by the sea: hence they too would not eat fish, and the hieroglyphic symbol for hatred was a fish.

I picked up another volume, a crumbling edition of Jean Poe Scut's *YE GNAWERS BENEATH AND OTHER MARVELLES OF YE ELDER WORLDE*. Heavily outlined in a shaky line by Mantell was a paragraph with the most hideous connotations when applied to what Mantell had spoken of. The French translation was from the original Latin and read something like this:

One must ever be cautious against injuring or harming Those under the Protection of They; moreover, also the defiling of Their treasures, for acts against both servants and baubles are of Great and Awful censure by Them and Retribution is swift, and nothing may forestall its inevitable execution, though the guilty one hide beyond the ends of the earth.

Barwell saw my surprised look upon reading these entries and said, "You ought to read what he's underlined in here!" He held up Grodzinania's *PRIMEVAL SECRETS*. Barwell grimaced. "God, what awful madness this author... here, just read what it says!"

He handed me the volume but I had not time to read as a cry came from Mantell's bedroom. It was a hideous wail, a sound we could scarcely separate from the howling wind amid the raging storm outside. We both sat stunned for a moment by the unearthly cry, then I moved to the stairs. It was Mantell moaning and groaning in some awful, inexplicable agony. I stepped up to the stairs, placed my hand on the railing, and, almost simultaneously, jerked it away. The bannister was covered with a dew - a cold wet sensation of horror filled me and I felt the hackles rise on the back of my neck. Now Barwell was with me and he too sensed the strange watery presence in the air. Then there was a tremendous crash of thunder, the thermal explosion of a lightning bolt and the electricity failed.

Suddenly a maddening wailing cry arose in time with the roar of the wind, and as the storm rose in crescendo so did the wail. Then there was an awkward stumbling and a deafening crash of glass and wood. We rushed upstairs, stumbling in the thick darkness, falling against wet, spongy carpeting. I reached the bedroom first and as I grabbed the doorknob I felt its surface cold and slimy. I threw open the door and in we rushed.

We were stunned a moment by the onrush of cold, wet air that pressed around us like malignant arms and rushed down our lungs. We felt as drowning men in the sea. All around flowed a hellish, smothering miasma of dampness. We caught hold of ourselves and turned to Mantell's bed. It was empty, and curtains blew upon a roaring nightwind through the broken east window. Below in the rain-soaked yard lay the twisted, broken and very dead body of Mantell.

We rushed downstairs and out into the storm and carried Mantell into shelter before realizing he was beyond help. His body was badly lacerated from shards of glass, but most damning were the wounds all over his chest and face -

round, purplish wounds such as those we saw earlier on his arms. As we laid Mantell on the divan the wounds struck me as familiar - I had seen fish that carried such wounds during my studies. Barwell pulled back Mantell's nightshirt and exposed his bloody chest. Then all the mad things Jeffrey had told me rushed in on me in an all-engulfing realization. I shrieked and fainted...
Mantell's heart had been chewed out!

V

The police came and questioned us for what seemed like hours - I felt all wrong and before it was all over Barwell had to give me a tranquilizer. But it was so damning now... everything that Jeffrey had told me fit... and we had doomed the poor wretch!

The police and Barwell call it suicide, and yet they fearfully recognize that no fall could have so mutilated Jeffrey's body. Much less, how could Mantell have run across the room and flung himself through the window under such deep sedation? Suicide is merely a label to cover the real horror beneath, and I know what that horror is! I know that "Something" killed Jeffrey Mantell.

Those hideous wounds - ugh! I shudder to recall those sickening, malignant scars - round scars - round wounds like those made by giant squids on whales in titanic struggles in the deep seas... and the gaping hole where Mantell's heart had been... his chest ripped open as by a parrot-like beak... and now I recollect the tale of the lighthouse and I shudder.

Now I realize how true it all was: that Mantell did fight and kill the old lighthouse keeper; that Mantell did flee the nameless mad reef with some of the golden treasure. I know that it is true, for I found the treasure in Mantell's home: it is glittering gold and jewels fashioned in cold, evil, obscene shapes. An octopus motif of curious design is repeated on most of it, and it repels me. But no more, for I have thrown it all into the river and tried to forget Jeffrey Mantell and his seemingly "insane" story. Yet I felt strangely like keeping one of the relics on an impulse. It is a beautiful ring of gold with a stone of nautilus shell that fascinates me, and I stare at it for hours. I must forget Mantell... I must.

* * * * *

It is later. Yet now I am worried for I haven't been able to sleep well of late, and more recently now have come the nightmares. Something comes in them. Each night it gets closer and is more vivid. Something on the seafloor... slimy, flowing, writhing... I am afraid of these odd dreams...

POST SCRIPT:

Dr. Justen Skellman
Yorks Institute
Kansas City, Missouri

June 26, 1956

Note to Dr. Shiff:

Dear David,

I'm sending you this diary. Mrs. Wesley found it among Mr. Wesley's papers in his study. She gave it to us feeling that it might give us a clue to his recent "illness".

Mr. Wesley is worse now, having reached an unfortunate state of psychotic behaviour. We found him this morning with several round wounds on his arms. Apparently self-inflicted.

Best,
Justen

P.S.: I hope that you and Susan can make it to the dinner-party Saturday.



A Madness from the Vaults

by I Ramsey Campbell

Beneath the city of Derd on the planet of Tond lies a labyrinth of vaults, whose origins remain obscure. The yarkdao who built the city could intuit no explanation for their presence, nor were they encouraged to explore by the fragmentary legends of well-nigh endless passages, linked in a manner that defied mapping. The yarkdao assumed that the vaults had served some hermetic function in the lives of the unknown citizens of that ruined pyramid-city on whose foundations Derd was to be built and neglected further thought. In the heyday of Derd, some yarkdao elected to be entombed in the vaults rather than suffer abandonment on the peak of Liota above the city, but such rebels were uncommon. The openings from the vaults which occasionally gaped on the streets of Derd were avoided by the multitude, deterred by the legend that on certain nights the corpses preserved below would stalk forth from their alcoves and emerging, their faces turned to the dead and ashen sun of Baalblo, would parade through the streets.

At the end of its life, Derd lay beneath the tyranny of its last governor, Opojollac, whose law for any crime required the culprit to be cast into the vaults. The poorer quarters of the city were laden with the corpses of those whose taxes had enriched his robes with glimmering black charms, while the richer yarkdao could only weep as their mansions crumbled beneath the ever-rising crystal serpents with which Opojollac's palace was spired. In Derd the names of the new-born were no longer the outcome of a day-long christening ritual but were subject to the whim of Opojollac, who thus ensured that none could boast a name so sonorous as his and by that token hold sway over his city. Certain words, phrases, and syntactical modes were the property of Opojollac alone, for on Tond language is power. There were rumours that he might order a temple built to himself, and none dared meditate on the eventual fate of those virgins who were summoned to his palace; although some said that at such times the crystal serpents would rise redly gorged against the green sun, and some, indeed, that they would preen their scales lethargically.

So Opojollac ruled through myth, and decadence simpered in Derd with lips painted with the blood of torture; and with decadence came apathy. Nonetheless, at the rising of a day, as Opojollac dined beneath the translucent roof formed of a shell found in the desert, a servitor fought free of the curtains of mauve skin which veiled the entrance to the dining-hall and presented himself, bowing backward towards Opojollac through his legs.

"O omniscient and benevolent Opojollac," he moaned. "O omnipotent -"

"Your praises, however fulsome and gratifying," pronounced Opojollac, "represent an interruption of my meal. Cease, and justify your presence, but first show me your tongue - yes, it appears tender, and if it cannot provide a satisfactory explanation I may well transfer it to my plate."

"Amen. O gracious Opojollac," responded the servitor, shuddering. "A yarkdao waits outside, saying that he must speak to you immediately of some danger to your glorious self."

"I imagined I heard a participle," mused Opojollac in a voice hoarse with mirthless laughter. "Guard your syntax. Let the yarkdao enter, reminding him the while that he may not behold me otherwise than inverted. As to your tongue - perhaps I may benefit from allowing it to mature a little."

Almost immediately, a yarkdao in tattered robes appeared, bowing once without grace. "O governor," he said, "there is a yarkdao dead in the Streets of Pleasure -"

But Opojollac laughed without humour. "I am alive," he cried, "and it follows that such deaths cannot affect me. Since the pleasure-givers do not trouble me, their methods of extracting payment are no concern of mine. Servitor, have this intruder shorn of all but the last syllable of his name and cast him to the vaults."

The servitor, skilled in the ways of Opojollac's palace, managed while yet bowing to capture the miscreant, and Opojollac returned to his meal. But coincidence dictated that Beav Lanpbeav, Opojollac's chief administrator, should that day be collecting taxes in the Streets of Pleasure; and presently, while Opojollac was trifling with his collection of musical instruments, Beav Lanpbeav craved audience. "Play to me," Opojollac commanded, "and tell me your tale."

The administrator took up a lute tuned in quarter-tones, shuddering at the stains which marked its frame and remembering how Opojollac had acquired the instrument. But it was the governor's favourite toy, and Beav Lanpbeav had so ingratiated himself with Opojollac by his art that he was not required to bow; so, while the dissonances of the lute touched the petrified trees which were the pillars of the hall, he spoke.

"O beneficence, I had made my way through the Streets of Pleasure and was about to quit them by the northward egress, when in my path I encountered a crowd of the tenants of the street. I called upon them in your name to move aside, which, of course, was done with dispatch; yet I observed that they huddled to the hives on that side of the thoroughfare farthest from an entrance to the vaults. Beneath the green rays of Yifné that entrance seemed instinct with movement of a kind I could not distinguish. When I approached, I saw tracks of a nature unknown to me, as if something that possessed an ill-matched number of limbs had emerged from, and returned to, the vault. I turned then to that which lay in the street, but for a space could make little of

it. It appeared to be a black and pitted mass trampled into the earth, more than the height of a yarkdao in span, and acrawl with insects. 'What droppings is this?' I shouted in your name. 'Who has befouled the street?' But from beyond one of the barred doors, a voice cried that the mass in the street had but recently been the husband of one of them."

"Doubtless a sorcerer's revenge," Opojollac mused, but he frowned. "Nevertheless, I and no other hold power in Derd. Go now, send forth spies and be quick to bring me any further such tales."

Days passed, and Opojollac kept to the hall of music, where he tried to coax from his instruments the tunes which the embalmed songsters suspended among the trees had sung in life. But always he failed, and each day brought new tales of the unknown peril that stalked the city. At last Beav Lanpbeav took up the lute once more and told Opojollac of his findings.

"O kindly tyrant, it seems clear that a forgotten monster has come forth from the vaults. Many have spoken of a shape which rears forth from the entrances and leaps on its prey from the shadows. You must know that those entrances from which it preys draw ever nearer to your palace and that there is an entrance situated near your portal. There is but one course to take: to ask counsel of the protectors of our world, the Globes of Hakkthu."

"For once your wisdom is equal to my own," Opojollac said. "Go then and seek counsel."

"Not I, for pity," Beav Lanpbeav cried, paling. "For they would scarcely grant indulgence to my poor tales. Me they would crush; you have the language to converse with them."

It troubled Opojollac that his dealings with the city of Derd might find little favour with the implacable Globes; yet he admitted grudgingly that his administrator might prove less equal to the task. So he made ready, donning a robe like a skin of mirrors for the desert, and took his leave. Glancing back, he saw Beav Lanpbeav musing among the black branches and pale silent songsters within the hall.

Slowly Opojollac passed among the low mansions which were dazzled by his palace, and between the brown hives of the poorer quarter. Few yarkdao were to be seen nor were caravans of traders to be heard; and everywhere, it seemed, gaped the entrances to the vaults. At last, close to the rim of the city, Opojollac approached one of the entrances. Within, the dark rough walls stretched away beyond his sight and beads of moisture gleamed from the shadows. At the edge of total darkness Opojollac saw an image set in an alcove; he distinguished a limbless torso surmounted by a pitted, malformed head, flat like a serpent's whose wide mouth and deep-set eyes were frozen in a vapid smile. Vague memories stirred of tales told at the birth of Derd, but Opojollac shrugged quickly and hurried out into the desert.

Already, against the dazzling white sand, he could see the broken totem-pillars which marked the tip of the path to Hakkthu. He gained this path, which was formed of cracked and treacherous fused sand, and, as he hurried on, the blinding desert coated his eyes. Soon he found it difficult to distinguish his surroundings or to reassure himself of the reality of what he saw. Once he imagined that from a shattered amber dome on the horizon, thin tattered figures pranced forth and beckoned hungrily to him, and some immeasurable time later that he glimpsed a huge, toothed head struggling to raise its body from the sand.

At last the path began to dip and he knew that he was approaching Hakkthu. He paused to brush the paste of dust and sweat from his face, and the mirrors flashed intolerably on his arms. After a while he made out, in the omnipresent whiteness a gigantic cloud of dust which puffed up incessantly from a hollow of the desert. Opojollac drew all the power of his language to him and hastened down the unsteady track to stand at the lip of the hollow.



Within the restless cloud of sand, which loomed more mightily than his palace, he thought that he perceived the rolling of great rusted surfaces and heard a low unceasing rumble, like the musings of a metal colossus. He threw himself down and, crying out the ritual invocation, began to address the Globes.

"O ageless Globes, who have moved since the beginning of Tond and who, before the birth of my poor world, were pleased to roll through the unimaginable depths of space, the greatest and wisest of planets, hear my supplication! Know that a monster has risen from the vaults beneath Derd and craves power on this world, which is thine alone!"

Minutes of silence passed so that Opojollac dared glance toward Hakkthu. Then he threw himself supine again, for he had glimpsed a gigantic rusted mouth yawning above him through the dust. For a moment only the dust whispered, then a voice like the grinding of ponderous gears boomed out above Opojollac.

"It was well done to bring this intelligence to Hakkthu. Listen well to our command. We, the Globes, had the labyrinth beneath the pyramids constructed to pen the avatar of Azathoth who lurks below. Yet we knew that he who festers there must one day learn the labyrinth, though it were the work of aeons and emerge to bring chaos to Tond. Thus we caused a further protection to be constructed. Go now to the vaults, touching the walls at the span of your arm, and a light will guard you and protect you. Above the pit in the deepest vault, a lever stands from the wall which touched, contains once more the avatar of Azathoth. Go now, and fear not."

When Opojollac raised his head again, only the dust rolled; and so he made his way back across the dimming waste to Derd. The silence of the desert lay upon the city, and Opojollac encountered no citizen in the streets. The entrances of the hives and mansions stood unguarded, and Opojollac saw that his city had been abandoned.

As a wind from the desert sang thinly in the shells which roofed his palace, Opojollac cursed the traitorous citizens and thought to flee. Then a vision mocked him of his palace ruined and inhabited by the creatures of the surrounding waste. An entrance to the vaults gaped close by. Opojollac strode to it and, stretching forth an unsteady hand, touched the wall within the entrance. As he did so, a line of light sprang forth beneath his fingers and sped along the wall into darkness. It was a warm light, like the glow of fires at midnight in the desert; and so Opojollac gave himself into its protection and passed into the vaults.

For hours, it seemed, he walked. The walls were pocked like ancient flesh, down which black sweat rolled. At times the floor descended sharply, and he slid beyond the path of the light beneath the low looming roof of black stone. Often the passage broadened into a junction whose limits the light could not distinguish, where the shadows crowded and nodded toward him as the luminous path rushed on. Once, far down a transverse passage, he saw a great flat stain amid which seemed to glimmer the face of a criminal he had consigned to the vaults. Sometimes the light threaded the eyes of cadavers standing like grim servitors in niches; sometimes it startled clusters of round pale shapes which withdrew hastily into the walls; sometimes it leapt across the mouths of other passages, faintly illuminating dank choked depths and Opojollac, panicking, fled in its wake.

Long after Opojollac had ceased to count the branching passages, he halted at a junction. But for the stumbling of his feet, there was silence in the vaults; yet for a moment he was sure that he had heard, filtering distorted down the corridors at whose rendezvous he stood, a long stertorous hollow inhalation. His whole body pumped like a stranded fish in fear. The sound was not repeated, however, and after a while he hurried in pursuit of the guiding tip of light.

Minutes later he heard the sound again, breathing down an unlighted corridor on his left. Now it was louder and Opojollac stared in terror into the indistinguishable depths, where condensation dripped unseen from the ceiling. Once again he hastened in the path of the light, which curved ever beyond his vision. Vertigo spun within him; he felt that he was running into a spiral of claustrophobic stone, like the interior of a gigantic subterranean shell. He ran, his head swimming, and all at once light burst intensified upon his eyes. He had reached the centre of the labyrinth.

Beyond the termination of the corridor, the light had encircled a domed chamber. A mixture of dust and moisture coursed down the walls and drops hung trembling beneath the dome. Within the loop of light lay a circular well, its rim cracked and encrusted with mud, and beyond the well, opposite the entrance in which stood Opojollac, a rusty lever protruded from the wall.

After hesitating, Opojollac entered the chamber. The path around the rim was more than wide enough to permit him to gain the lever, yet he could not bring himself to look down into the well. Indeed, his eyes half-closed protectively as he came within reach of the lever and dragged it down.

For a moment there came no sound, nor any indication that the lever had done its work. Then, from far down the well, rose a vast bubbling breath.

Opojollac looked down. Deep in the grey encrusted well a figure stood. In the dim light he took it to be a colossal version of the image which guarded the entrance to the vaults, a limbless trunk on which was set a flat head like a reptile's whose stretched mouth smiled senselessly. Beads of mud trickled over its face, and cobwebs hung from its lips. Opojollac peered closer, distinguishing that globes of dull moisture had fallen on the eyelids of the image. Then he saw that this was not so: that the eyes had opened and were glaring up at him.

He cried out in horror and, pressing his hands against the wall behind him, began to edge back toward the entrance. As he did so he saw grey buds form at the shoulders of the shape in the well. While he was yet some paces from the entrance, the buds bloated and long knobbed fingers sprang from them. As Opojollac reached the passage, huge unequal hands broke free of the shoulders and rose toward him through the well on boneless arms.

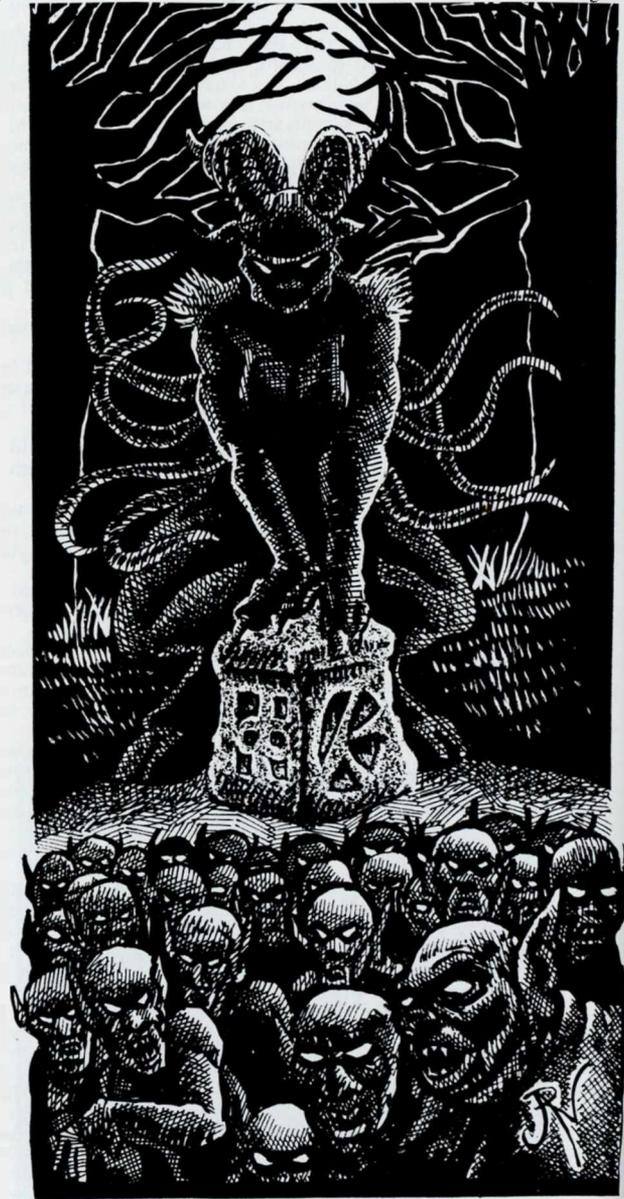
Shrieking, stumbling, falling against the walls, Opojollac fled the vaults. He emerged from the central spiral and blundered onward, drawn outward by the unwavering light. No sounds pursued him but in parallel corridors he glimpsed dim grey forms which seemed to match his pace.

Eventually he halted, choking. From the junction at which he stood, several passages plunged into subterranean blackness; but the thread of light was there to guide him. He leaned against a wall to allow himself to cohere and his mirrors rattled dully about him. Then, in the dim corridor opposite him, he saw a movement like the swift unfurling of a pale fungus. He turned to flee and in the passage from which he had recently emerged he saw the light extinguished and a grey scabbling hand reach forth for him. As he backed away, the hand traced the line of light into the junction and doused it like slime. Opojollac's being was turned inside out, for he glimpsed the two hands groping through the junction with no body intervening, and their arms stretched back into darkness; but he cried out and fled.

At last he fell out into the city of Derd. For a moment he turned to his palace; then he began to run toward the desert through the twilight green-tinged streets. But he perceived that some odd quality was shared by the light and by the silence; and, gazing upward, he saw the cause. The Globes of Hakkthu had not betrayed their trust. The action of the lever had indeed contained the avatar of Azathoth; for a great translucent dome covered the entire city of Derd.

Opojollac beat on the dome with his fists, crying out curses against his people, against the Globes of Hakkthu, against the abomination from the vaults. But the dome did not respond to his pleas; and while he yet threw his body against the translucent surface, two vast unequal shadows of hands rose up against the dome and descended toward him.

Such is the tale which the Globes of Hakkthu, to whom the protection of the planet Tond was entrusted, are wont to intone at the nadir of the night.



Legends

BY DARRELL SCHWEITZER

As usual, I was nervous when Joe called me into the office. I knew he had an assignment for me, and I was sure that this time it would be something really wild. MYSTIC SCIENCE QUARTERLY, which he edits and I write for, is what they call an "occult" magazine these days. We specialize in strange happenings, be they real or imaginary, and in the case of a shortage of authentic ones, it is up to me to come up with something to fill pages. So I am constantly travelling about, looking for the eighth wonder of the world, or at least a facsimile thereof good enough to get 75¢ out of the prospective buyer.

I guess I shouldn't complain, considering how things are in the publishing business these days. After the TRIBUNE went under it was welfare checks for me unless I found another job in a big fat hurry, and this was all there was so I took it. And I can't say it doesn't get interesting at times.

Joe Wells, senior editor, publisher, circulation manager, and 50% of the general staff of MSQ, leaned forward on his desk, like he had just discovered something very important. I groaned inwardly, fully expecting to see the Philosopher's Stone plunked down on the blotter or a map guiding the owner to the Fountain of Youth unrolled before me. But as it turned out, it wasn't anything that simple.

He was silent and gave me a long stare. Sometimes I think he should be a movie director: this is done solely to maintain suspense. He carefully removed an envelope from his jacket pocket and fished out the contents. It was a small newspaper clipping.

"Read it," he snapped in his best Humphrey Bogart voice. "That's your assignment."

The clipping was from a local newspaper of a small town in Ireland. Written in a semi-humorous style, it told of the "little people" seen by several residents of the area scampering about an abandoned coal mine. Obviously the news writer didn't take it very seriously. Neither did I for that matter.

I raised my eyebrows in question.

He continued. "I want you to go and investigate. Get all the pictures you can."

I said nothing for a minute, then I protested. "Oh come on now! I'm willing to believe in UFO's, ESPers, poltergeists, voodoo, zombies, Atlantis and most anything else. But leprecauns? Don't you think we ought to draw a line somewhere?"

"Do you want your paycheck next month?"

I nodded, acknowledging defeat.

"Well then, it's all settled!" he piped cheerfully. "Better go home now and pack your bags. I've made a reservation for you on the first plane tomorrow morning."

"And look for leprecauns?"

"Look, Fred, you don't have to get me a live specimen or anything. Just something to go on."

That sounded familiar. For Joe Wells "something to go on" means nothing in particular. A few pictures and whispered rumors, something to give us a tenuous basis for a partially stretched-out and partially fabricated story. Remember that flying saucer bit we ran a few issues back? He made that one up out of thin air. He simply told me to get a UFO in two days so we could make the deadline, and, since there weren't any Martians in the immediate neighborhood just then, I photographed an airport beacon reflected off a low cloud-cover. This sort of looked like a glowing disc as it was, and when printed out of focus on cheap pulp paper it became the anti-gravity powered spacecraft in which two beings from Altair had dropped in to deliver an important message to the government via the local milkman. The contents of the communication were hushed up, of course, which was why you never read about it in the bigtime magazines.

So when I was told to get "something to go on" I was rather relieved. Maybe I could make a vacation out of it.

"By the way," Joe announced as I turned to leave. "Bill Porter will meet you in Dublin and assist you on this little safari. Remember him? He's working for us again. Now we have three people on the staff of this magazine!"

I took the 6:30 AM plane to Dublin. Tourist rates, of course. Remember, MSQ is a low budget publication. I guess I should have been glad I didn't have to ride in the baggage compartment.

Porter met me at the airport as I checked out my luggage. We had lunch and discussed new and old business. He told me about his last assignment. Pretty routine, he had to admit. He'd been looking in on the excavation of Vlad Drakula's castle in Wallachia, and talking to a couple of local cronies with vivid imaginations, who claimed that the place actually was inhabited by vampires. One went so far as to say that she had seen an Englishman, whose description pretty well fitted the one of Bram Stoker which Bill had supplied visit the place in the 1890's. This and a few pictures of graveyards and castles was air mailed back to Joe. We both got a good laugh when we thought of what he would undoubtedly do with it.

Hoping to get business out of the way as quickly as possible, we rented a car and drove out to the place mentioned in the clipping. It wasn't a very big place, just about thirty houses, a gas station and a couple of stores, surrounded by farms. Overlooking all this was a thousand foot peak, leveled off at the top, more like an over-sized boulder than a real mountain. In this was the opening to an abandoned coal mine, abandoned, we were told, because the amateur geologist who had started it found a few surface deposits and hoped to strike it

rich, coal being so scarce in Ireland. Unfortunately, the surface deposits were nothing more than just that, and coal was indeed scarce inside the mine. The investor bankrupt, the mine closed down. No one ever went there anymore, because it was undoubtedly unsafe by now. At least that's what they told us.

I was all in favor of climbing up immediately and getting this thing over with, for it was a dreary, damp day and the town looked rather dull and I didn't want to waste any more time than necessary. But Bill pointed out that we should be consistent with the original reports and photograph the cave at night, since the leprecauns were only supposed to come out in the dark.

We went to the general store, a sort of combination grocery, barber shop, hardware and newstand, to buy some flashlights and perhaps to pick up a few usable comments from the locals. At first, the owner gave us an attempt at an "are you serious" type laugh, then he gave us a very adamant and *serious* warning not to go near the place, especially at night. This, I thought, is better than I expected. But the guy wouldn't let us use his name in the story.

It was windy and cold when we arrived at the mine. The sun had long since dropped below the horizon, and all the fog had cleared up, so we had a star-filled, moonless sky above us as we climbed the steep path.

At the entrance I turned on my flashlight, and as Porter did the same I noticed he had a pistol protruding from his coat-pocket.

"What's that for?"

"Haven't you got any sense of drama, Fred? I'd have thought you'd been with MSQ long enough to learn touches like that. We'll photograph each other diligently exploring the mine, complete with the pistol so that it'll look more dangerous and exciting to the person browsing thru the magazine on the stands."

It was exceedingly damp inside, so much so that I was soon soaked to the skin by the water dripping down from above. The passage twisted crazily and narrowed slightly as we progressed. Every so often one of us would snap a picture and the place would be filled with light. There was one disturbing thing I noticed during this. The mine was filled with coal. The walls of the tunnel were solid with it. It must have been the biggest such deposit in all Ireland. Somebody *could* have made a fortune off it.

I was thinking of how to integrate that fact into the story as we went along. When there were no flashbulbs going I could see little but Bill's light ahead of me. Suddenly he stopped.

"Fred! Look at this!"

I rushed forward and looked. I must say I was somewhat unnerved by what I saw.

Carvings. Minute figures and letters engraved in the coal, so tiny and complex that I don't think any human hand could have made them. And all were within *ten inches* of the floor!

This suddenly ceased to be funny. It was no longer another routine hoax assignment. This was, to some extent at least, *real*! We must have used up a roll of film on the things, then we proceeded onward.

We found plenty of carvings but no trace of their makers. All this time the tunnel was going slowly lower, down into the heart of the mountain. I don't know how long we walked, but it seemed like hours. I remember trying to liven things up with some wisecrack to the effect that we surely were at least half way to Hell already.

We kept closer together after our first find, and when he stopped the second time I collided with him before I realized it.

"Will you get a load of that . . ." There was what I think was genuine awe in his voice.

We were standing in the opening of a large chamber, roughly rectangular, about twenty feet or so long and half that wide. It was just high enough for the average person to walk in without stooping. Its wet black walls were jagged with many cracks, and there was a large boulder in the far corner. And on the floor . . .

Bones! Human bones! I'm sure of it. They were strewn haphazardly about, and many of them were cracked open, *the marrow removed*! Most of the skulls were smashed.

Some of them were very old and brittle, but some seemed quite fresh. They seemed to have been gnawed on as if by an immense dog.

I began to feel sick.

Cautiously we entered the cave, taking care to avoid stepping on any of the grisly litter.

Behind us there was a shuffling sound. And chanting . . .

"Quadu Azo San!" shouted thousands of faint, inhuman voices, coming from the direction of the mine entrance.

They were approaching rapidly, and rather than dash out of the chamber and down the darkened and steep tunnel at the other end, we hid behind the boulder.

Suddenly the passageway outside was lit by hundreds of tiny torches. And the bearers of those torches defied belief! *Little men!* Thousands of them, swarming over the cave floor in a ghastly procession, bearing a great burden of - my stomach turned when I saw what they were carrying - human flesh! Severed and dripping hands and arms, legs, unidentifiable chunks of muscle and bone, and at the end of the swarm the head, its two sightless eyes rolling about aimlessly . . .

There was an acrid, stifling odor in the air. By the torchlight I could see that they were preparing little heaps of incense, lighting it and giving off tiny puffs of smoke.

They placed their burden in a pile in the center of the room, while several individuals, dressed gaudily in what must have been scraps torn from human clothing came forward and waved their arms over the bloody mass, chanting, chanting, chanting -

The Elder Sign

BY AL ATTANASIO

My throat felt like parchment. I coughed. And for a moment all motion seemed suspended . . . We had been discovered.

I shouted to Porter and we burst forward from our hiding place, kicking and stomping as many of the horrid creatures as we could, making our way toward the exit.

I heard my companion cry out, and whirled and caught a volley of tiny arrows fired by the murderous imps.

Cursing, Bill drew his gun and fired.

There was a loud report, and suddenly the whole mine seemed to tremble. I heard something snap and then the air was filled with dust and it was raining boulders. I remember running and running, desperately, as far and as fast as I could go. I looked back once to see Porter staggering under the shower of stones before I was knocked senseless.

I awoke in total darkness, lying face down in a puddle and spitting out mud.

Something prodded my stomach - from underneath. One of the things was in there with me! Hastily I seized and crushed it to a pulp. I kept squeezing and squeezing . . . Its blood flowed out between my fingers.

I tried to sit up but hit my head on the ceiling, which was now about two feet from the floor. I felt around for my flashlight, but found only the pistol, its barrel bent weirdly out of shape.

"Bill? Are you there? Can you hear me?" I was answered by a weak gasp followed by a spasm of watery coughing. I crawled in the direction from which it had come, bruising myself on the boulders as I did.

"Are there any - any of them in here?" he wheezed.

"One, but I killed it. How are you?" I tried to sound cheerful but made a pretty poor show of it.

"I'm hurt bad. So bad I can't feel a thing." His words came slowly. "I - I can hardly breathe."

I felt his chest and my worst fears were confirmed. His ribcage was shattered and his left lung collapsed.

"Don't talk," I said. "Save your strength."

"It doesn't matter now. I'm done for. I can tell . . ."

"Goddamit! Shut up!"

"I've got to tell you something." His voice was just a faint croak now.

"Why do you think I was sent here, huh? Because I've heard of things like this before. Rumors, legends, in different parts of Europe. I was supposed to use it to make the story sound good. But it's not like that now - it's so goddam *real*. I - I!" He coughed up a mouthful of blood. "It's -" His whole body began to tremble violently. He seized my coat and pulled desperately with all his strength. Then he went limp.

"Bill! What about it! Bill! For God's Sake, answer me!"

Water dripped somewhere.

Totally sickened and weak beyond words I fell back and wept like a child. What had he been trying to tell me? Did he know the meaning of the horrible things we had seen? Was it a sacrifice of some kind? If so, then to *what*? Or perhaps a meal . . .

A sound came from somewhere far off. Somewhere *beneath*. Then another. Rocks tumbling, as if a heavy sack was being dragged along the tunnel on the opposite side of the room we had been in. It seemed that something was coming up a curved path, from the very heart of the Earth, passing under me, then coming up through that passageway on the other end of the chamber. It was coming into that room of horror, just a few scant yards from where I lay buried! *It was there now!* The thing that received the offerings, summoned up from god knows what depths by the chanting and the incense. A strange thought came to me. Perhaps the thing simply knew it was feeding time . . .

It was very close, ponderously and slowly moving about. It must have been huge. I heard a slurping and crunching sound as it began to feed.

Insanely I crawled over to the wall which separated me from it. It was close enough to *touch* if there hadn't been that barrier of debris there. Then, to my ultimate horror, it stopped eating.

It seemed to sense my presence!

There was a scraping sound, as it came over toward me. I was too petrified to do anything until it emitted a vast, and utterly blood-curdling, *roar*.

The air began to grow very hot. Acrid fumes made my eyes water. I gasped for breath. The numerous puddles of water began to boil. It was trying to get at me. It must have been quite a while since the last time it had tasted living human flesh . . .

The last thing I remember was the sound of small droplets of molten rock, striking the ground and hissing.

A light somewhere. Footsteps. Voices.

The sounds of boulders moving and men grunting under their weight. A shaft of cool air struck me on the face and roused me.

Hands lifting.

"Are they all right?" someone asked stupidly.

It was the villagers. They'd come searching for us after they'd heard the mine cave in and unknowingly frightened away the horror that dwelt there.

The authorities were told only that William Porter was killed in an accident while exploring an old mine. They never would have believed the truth anyway. Besides, I didn't care to - I didn't dare to - attract the attention of the world to this place. Some things are better left unknown.

I never did return to New York, and I don't believe Wells at MSQ ever got his story. I've been wandering about Europe ever since, working odd jobs, biding my time, trying to forget.

I sometimes wonder what will happen when the monster, sealed in its mine, finds that it is no longer being fed regularly and kept satisfied by the little people. It must be hungry by now. Starving, in fact. Inevitably, somehow, it will make its way to the surface.

Then there will be nothing anyone can do to stop it.

Talbot stands on the foredeck of the riverboat, the sun pouring about him yellow as wine. His lean angular figure is silhouetted against the gauzy blue of the sky, his lonely eyes sifting out a safe course down the winding river. His flesh, stretched over his high, rugged bones, seamed at his brow, is as firm and clean as wood, stained richly tan with the climate's rigor.

Below, stepping out of the shadows, Winslow, short and bulky, appears. "We're within a mile of where the aerial shots say it should be," he says.

"I know," Talbot answers without removing his gaze from the river. "Look."

The landscape is rotating as the boat glides through a bend. An arm of jungle recedes to reveal a tall dark tower jutting from midstream. Both men shield their eyes with their hands to get a better view, but it is not until their boat has drawn up almost alongside of it that its details are visible.

Winslow lumbers up onto the foredeck and stands beside Talbot. "My God, it's huge," he says.

Talbot frowns into the sunlight. "And ancient - look at the density of the growth on that stone."

In the strong sunlight, it looks like a seven-storey spire, but as the ship navigates around it and the shadows shift, its true nature becomes apparent. It's really a helix, a delicately constructed stone ribbon that winds itself straight up like a spiral stairwell into the sky.

"So that's it," a voice says, high and excited. "No wonder they couldn't make heads or tails out of it from the sky." It's Simeon, the expedition's commander and a chief physicist from the Clinic. His thick raven-hair, a constant nuisance to his bright glassy eyes, is restrained now by a scarlet headband. "Talbot, have the navigator bring us in close enough to throw over grappling lines. I want to board it."

Talbot walks off to the steering-cabin, leaving Simeon leaning over the wooden rail, a rapt expression coloring his usually featureless face.

"Look at that, Winslow. It's beautifully symmetric - just beautifully symmetric."

Winslow nods. "Yes, but who could have built anything like that? And why here of all places? That's certainly not the work of any jungle tribe!"

"I'll say not," Simeon mutters. "The precision of it is breathtaking!"

The rhythmic chop-chop of the engines stops, fading into the undulant lapping of water against the hull. There are several loud metallic cries as the grappling lines are heaved onto the stone, and then Talbot, holding secure one of the lines, calls up to them, "We're ready to go over, Simeon!"

"I'm coming!" Simeon shouts, scampering down the ladder, leading Winslow.

In a moment all three men have shimmied over the ropes to the stone spiral, and Winslow is addressing Talbot contemptuously with his eyes. "Why did you bring *that* along?" he asks, indicating Talbot's .357 *Magnum*.

"There may be lizards," he answers indifferently.

Winslow shrugs, his dark eyes betraying his despire. "God, Talbot, we haven't seen lizards in four days. We're far enough north, and you know it," he says, adding with a sardonic chuckle, "I just think you've got security problems."

Talbot turns to find Simeon, but the older man has already begun to follow the incline of the spiral and is beyond the first curve.

"As a psychiatrist I'd think you'd be the most stable of all of us," Winslow baits.

Talbot slows to permit Winslow to come alongside of him. "What has that to do with anything?"

Winslow jerks his jaw forward to conceal the contempt that he feels for Talbot. "Look, since the dreams began we've all been feeling edgy, but I don't believe - I mean, I really don't think we have to arm ourselves. You're acting like a fool toting that thing around."

Talbot's mouth snaps shut; he looks suddenly irritated. "Listen, Winslow," he says, his voice hollow and dark with foreboding. "I was the one who brought the dreams to everyone's attention. You're all so god-damn lighthouse on that ship, no one would ever have found out they were having the same dreams if I hadn't told you. Well, let me tell you something else: I *know* what's been causing those dreams, and maybe that's reason enough to carry this." He slaps the holster of his gun.

"I thought you said the dreams were caused by heat-stroke and the stress of work," Winslow says defensively.

"I lied."

They emerge from the shadow side of the spiral and the heavy sunlight beats down across the parabolic sweep of the tower. Winslow in a sudden explosion of emotion grabs Talbot's arm and forces him against the stone wall. "Tell me, Talbot! What *do* they mean? Why is sleep such a nightmare? Tell me!"

"Control yourself, Winslow!" Talbot barks back, forcing himself free of the heavy man's grip. "You're the one whose acting like a fool."

"God damn it! Stop being so esoteric. Tell me!"

Talbot stops walking and turns to face Winslow. "All right. I'll tell you. You're going to see for yourself in a few minutes anyway," he says, gesturing with his arm deprecatingly. The heat is a tenable weight on the back of his neck, and he backs up against the wall to avoid it. "In our dreams - what is there?"

"Tell me, Talbot. Don't play teacher." Winslow feels his scorn edging swiftly into rage, aware that Talbot is toying with him and enjoying it. Only the cold memory of three weeks of nightmare helps to abate his ire.

"In our dreams there is only landscape," Talbot says, his seamed, dark

face emotionless. "Except for one figure: the native dwarf. We've all seen him in our dreams, that horrible little tribesman with the insane grin. Everything else is just river and sun, jungle and sun. And that imp, that bent pretense of humanity is not a Jungian shadow-figure, is not an archetype, is not a libidinal character - he's real, Winslow! As real as either of us. And he's here!"

Winslow is gnawing at his lower lip furiously, sweat glistening from the folds in his chunky face, his mind racing to make sense of what Talbot is saying. "What do they mean? How do you know?"

"I know because I've analyzed by hypnosis the dreams of most of the crew. I know that the dreams are originating not from the cerebral cortex but from a portion of the brain which is known to be extremely active during the experience of psi phenomena, especially in cases of communication by ESP. And I know, too, that you didn't dream anything last night. Nobody did. There was no reason to, for, you see, Winslow, the purpose of those dreams is over: we're here. We've reached this tower."

"You're nuts, Talbot!"

"Winslow! Talbot! Come here!" Simeon's excited voice calls.

The two men race up the spiral and presently reach the top where Simeon is bent over something carved into the stone. Drawing up behind him they see that it is a large ideogram in the shape of a five-pointed star with indecipherable writing scrawled into the stone around it.

"I don't know what it is," Simeon is saying, "but it's been executed with an accuracy possible only with sophisticated machinery. Look at the precision of it!"

"I know what it is," Talbot says, his eyes dimming momentarily, as the file cards of his memory rattle back to a manuscript he had studied more than ten years ago - but the image is there, and it is clear. "Similar sigils were found in the Pacific expeditions over a decade ago. They were near the New Islands, the R'lyeh archipelago, I believe. It's an Elder Sign."

"And what the hell is that?" Winslow asks with scorn.

"It's tradition goes back to before the Final War," Talbot replies. "Most of the manuscripts, ancient even then, were destroyed in the nuclear holocaust. What little information remains indicates that there was a relationship between the Elder Sign and still extant entities whose origins predate Man by millions of years. That's all I know."

"Do you mean to say," Simeon begins with a trace of scepticism, "that this tower predates Man?"

"Precisely that."

"That's ridiculous," Winslow says. "Before the Final War this was a major river, it would have been known - unless..."

"Unless, like the New Islands, the holocaust was responsible for resalvaging this from oblivion," Talbot finishes.

"It looks to me as if it might be a door," Simeon says, crouching over the ideogram and running his fingers along a barely perceptible crack that outlines its periphery.

"Don't try to open it," Talbot warns. "We have no real idea of the purpose of the Sign, and I think further investigation..."

Talbot is cut short by a high-pitched scream. Winslow who drops back behind the other two men. On his face lies blackness.

Even before turning to see what horror has gripped Winslow, Talbot experiences that absurd, expansive feeling of nightmare coursing through him. The impulse comes to him clairvoyantly. In this second, accentuated by the sounds of Winslow's helpless sobs, an abrupt and overwhelming change occurs, so swiftly that Talbot, despite his expectations, has no time to analyze, no time to think. And standing there on the path they had taken is the squat, bent dwarf, his dark native features leering madly.

Responding instinctively, Talbot retreats several paces and collides with Winslow. Simultaneously he feels the back of his neck, under the skin, tingling with a prickly cold, and suddenly the front of his head just above his eyes becomes numb. There are several quick bursts of brilliance in his head, so striking that his vision is momentarily impaired, and then there is the voice, as if the sunlight sings: *I am not old, yet I am ageless. Do not fear me, I am the product of a recent mutation, yet I am the pelagic memories of countless mutations, for I am matter prompted into consciousness by radiation from the uterine sin. I am a muted native child whose brain stem has exploded into cortical awareness, and I am you, and I am your dim ancestors, and I am an anemone basking in the primal sea, and I am the forged chains of proteins, and I am the energies of the nucleus, and I am photons murmuring. It has been so very long. You cannot imagine. But now let me sing to you and show you...*

Winslow snaps Talbot's *Magnum* from its holster and, aiming wildly, empties the gun at the dwarf. Two of the bullets catch their target, one slamming into the imp's swollen head, the other shattering his breast. The dwarf is flung backwards, his arms flailing the air as he cascades down the spiral ramp.

Winslow drops the *Magnum* and falls to his knees, weeping foolishly to himself. Talbot, gradually becoming aware of what has transpired, feels fury blossoming in his chest. Still hearing the echoes of the gunshots running into the jungle, his hands begin to tremble uncontrollably, and then he hurls himself at Winslow, bowling him over and pummeling him with his fists.

"You idiot! You idiot!" he yells. "You idiot! Do you know what you've done? You've killed God!"

Throwing his full weight against Talbot, Simeon forces the lean man to the ground and slaps him furiously several times before Talbot stops struggling. It is only a few moments before several crewmen, alerted by the gunshots, arrive and, subduing Talbot, remove him to the ship.

The whole of this scene is empty, lulling shipdeck and distant stars. Alone in the foreground, leaning heavily on the foredeck rail, is Talbot, his face a congregation of shadows. In the background, toward the bend of stairs which leads to the steering-cabin, approaches the smaller figure of Simeon. Accompanying him is a faint vapor of incense.

"I've thought about your account of the incident yesterday," Simeon says drawing up to the rail beside Talbot. "If I hadn't had those dreams myself, and if I hadn't seen that dwarfed native myself, I doubt that I'd be able to believe what you've told me. Now, though, I'm left with no choice but to believe."

There is a long silence during which both men just stare blankly into the darkness. Finally, "Do you believe there might be life out there, on one of those stars?" Talbot asks.

"It's more than probable," Simeon answers.

There is another long silence, until Simeon says, "For what it's worth, Winslow apologizes."

Talbot laughs a hideous laugh.

"Look, stop torturing yourself," Simeon says. "Yes, it's too bad Winslow lost his head, but then that's partially your fault. If you had told us when you knew that there was more to our dreams than we were aware of, Winslow might have been prepared for what happened. But why didn't you tell us?"

"I don't know," he says after a few minutes. "I guess I didn't really believe, myself. I could have been wrong - it was such a fantastic idea."

Simeon punctuates another lengthy silence. "There were no dreams again last night - I don't suppose there will be any more."

Simeon fingers the woodgrain of the rail reflectively for a while, and then he retreats to his cabin. Talbot remains staring into the darkness for over an hour before he pushes himself away from the rail.

False dawn is graying one end of the river as Talbot pulls himself up onto the stone spiral. Behind him the ship is almost entirely dark except for a dim light off the stern. He walks up the curved ramp entirely in the dark, running one hand along the crusted wall. At the top he looks lazily at the horizon: nothing but black jungle for miles where once the countless lights of a boundless metropolis paled the stars. Now the only light is the stars. A true canopy of time.

Talbot walks to the center of the small plateau and stoops to his knees, feeling in the dark until he finds the Elder Sign. His long fingers run gently over it, feeling the coarse texture of the rock, of time, again. And he is aware of its enormous age, feeling distinctly the millions of years since it was robbed from the earth and moulded into what it is. And he feels, too, the intense purpose that it must possess, the absolute function that it has served these aeons, if not actively then simply by its passivity. Waiting.

Involuntarily, Talbot moves his fingers into the crevices of the Sign, pushing along its sides, feeling the separate identity of the grain of the rock and the terrible purpose of the Sign itself. Closing his eyes, he allows his fingers to communicate to him the message that is there, that has probed down endless corridors from the first portals of the world.

And the rock moves.

Soundlessly the Sign stands up on its end, and a large hole, reaching into the spiral tower, is revealed. Instantly, as if a line of communication has been established, the sky opens up with sound, and for Talbot the stars become myriad pulses of energy showering down about him.

Like a crashing wave, its crest so long that it stretches beyond the horizons, it falls upon him, throwing him to his back with its impact, an enormous convergence of time and purpose. Talbot lies prone, staring up into the massive spinwheel of nebulae, endless galaxies careening madly, vast expanses of singing gas, and beyond all of it, beyond all the clamor and all the confusion of being, lies the great nothing: the Abyss. And it is to there that the relentless ebb of the crushing wave pulls Talbot, dragging him steadily towards a concourse of time. As he feels it pulling him, Talbot is conscious of his body falling away, of the black jungle fading, of the young earth arcing past the sun, and of the majestic current sweeping him out through the cosmos, past the huge red sphere of Betelgeuse where ancient voices sing, traversing with him the Milky Way and out into the wide gulf which leads him past the island galaxies in an accelerating leap. The enormous continuum of the current sweeps him onward, beyond the great time-song until it is to him but a thin archaic voice, and he is swept beyond reason but willingly, down the widening arc of the stream of infinity.

Just after dawn Simeon climbs the spiral tower, seeking Talbot. He finds him stretched out before the raised Elder Sign, his face flaccid in death. The dawn wind is warm, promising another day of impassive heat, and he opens two buttons on his shirt.

After a few minutes of staring at the body, Simeon picks it up, straining under the weight, and forces it down the hole created by the raised Sign. The body falls longer than Simeon thinks it should have before the sound of collision and its accompanying echoes are heard. There is silence as Simeon gazes down into the blackness, thinking, as he will do through the coming years, of Talbot and the dreams of gargantuan cities dripping with ichor, where the geometries were never quite right.



Dull Scavengers Wax Crafty

by William Scott Home

Tottering to balance both torches, Osarsif stumbled down the slick steps to the cellar. The instructions he feared bungling nibbled at his brain like a desperate rat, so carefully memorised that he could hear his own footsteps echoing in the sinus upstairs from his palate, his way so certain in their fluorescent glare as to render the snapping pitchpines superfluous. The cellar was narrow, close, and moist with depth. On one wall a scab of hastily crude masonry disfigured the classical courses of stone which caged him; there, where tongues of mortar, squeezed out by suffocating stone, licked the beaded air, a dozen stones sprinkled with narrow perforations peeped the fresher shield of interdiction.

Osarsif strained to slip one torch into a bracket set high in the older, settled stones opposite this seal. In its cat-striped light he bent over the new wall, scrutinising with ears pricked, blinking eyes sweat-stung; one of the perforated stones was unmortared and sprouted a silver eye already gone black. Wheezing, he rolled a freshly-built frame of boughs from the foot of the steps into place beneath this stone and dropped the torch into it.

He took a silver hook from its peg and inserted its crook into the embedded eye. The fluted flame scrambled around it, and the grinding of the stone behind, as he tugged, dissolved in its crackling; with all his panting strength he could only angle it side to side until it began to crawl viscously out of the wall.

Pausing for breath with the stone halfway drawn, he realised that when it finally slid clear he would not be able to hold it. He had been allowed no assistance and granted no alternatives; the procedure had been dictated, the slightest deviation warned against. Two details flickered underscored in his mind, however, and - as nearly as he could determine anything - he determined to observe those.

He hauled again; the grating grew less painful, the movement greasier. Nearing freedom the stone tilted downward until the whole flame of the torch bushed around it. Nonplussed for two score heartbeats (a short time under the circumstances), he picked the other torch from its bracket and clasped it so close to his gravelly chest that his hair hissed, then pulled again. His knees emptied as the stone slipped from its niche and tumbled. Faster than the youth he had never been, he plunged the flames into the orifice left while its ponderous stopper settled through green-sapped squeals and splinters to the floor, his ears telling him that time, galvanised, was already boning the house.

Clinging to the other flame's buoy he tried to prize up the heavy stone but could not manage the leverage. Finally he wedged the other torch between block and wall and hedged it with the hook, so that it still patted the wall's yawn, and groped up the spongy steps by memory and touch.

He came out in the courtyard and bolted the cellar door. It was mid-morning but heavy vines woven over the garden filtered the sun; light, in the house of Ttimi Hor Zer, was everywhere restrained. Next to the master's prontistry was a baroque contrivance - a spiral horn, of over Osarsif's height, fixed to a bronze wheel married to sonorous chains, which heliotropically followed the horarial sweep by means of some hidden clatter, abnegating not only its blessing but much of its illumination upon the house.

The garden, which had never accommodated other than the herbs and anomalies the philosopher required in his studies, was going enthusiastically rank. Osarsif moved through the house checking the bars and seals of doors and windows, coming finally to the front door where the retainers and their skimpy bundles vegetated.

All of them were worn, wrinkled, dredged of strength - even *her* whose gathered lips were like a black rose, seared from the inner combustion of sensuousness stifled in that anaesthetic house; her bottled love had soured, lost its bouquet; she was no more a smear on his dried memory than the others who stood stiff and unfeeling as unwrapped mummies.

This was the reward of service in the house of Ttimi Hor Zer, doctor of the mantic sciences, even to those who had known nothing near the weight of forty inundations Osarsif carried. At his nod, without a word, they filed out the door. Only the last, Semsemu, although as empty as the rest, paused and turned. He was holding nothing at all.

"Is one decade here enough to strip a man of all his belongings?" Osarsif rattled.

"Except for the six needles embedded in my heart."

"Was it so many?" (said as if he were hearing of a melon harvest.)

"You didn't think it worthwhile to palp anyone else's luggage."

"I have an idea that no one would carry from this house anything not his own."

"Not even that. The touch of the lattenware alone would rot the flesh from any normal finger. I'm going to stand right outside until I breathe every last cup of this burrow's miasm out of my body."

There was still a pigmy jet of fire in his throat. Semsemu had rarely slaved in menial service; earlier, as a kitchen boy, he had fathered a strange monster on one of the maids; though both she and it had died at birth, Ttimi Hor Zer had forcibly kept him in his service and busy with a succession of purchased girls hoping for another; but each year added perfectly ordinary and healthy children to the household, which the resigned master, before finally terminating his experiment, made eventual use of one way or another in the course of his work. But in the process Semsemu had been allowed the humanity of lust, hope, love, rage and sorrow. It had made a freak of him.

Where the rainbow mirror behind the other's eyes had worn away altogether so that they concentrated, absorbed, on the blank theatre within, his orbits were still stuffed with soft onions.

"Not long ago a goodbye on Hor Zer's threshold would have been unimaginable," Osarsif mused.

"Living here followed on my last goodbye."

Semsemu's going sucked the last vibration from the house. Osarsif's one small sack was left forlorn. Shouldering it, he passed out, locked the door and turned off in his own direction as the others separated. He was wondering whether anyone in Mesurwo would even remember his name or his family, and, more practically, whether he would recognise the village itself or any of the landmarks on the way. Although it was only two days' journey, he had not been there for twenty inundations.

With his last obligation jangling at his belt it struck him suddenly that after sunset he would be able to wear his own life again, and he turned for a last look at the consumer of his days.

It was a rambling, unremarkable house overshadowed by beefwood trees. The baked walls were knitted with vines which had never been caught bearing flowers but cradled crescents of dust whisked up from the streets. He recalled that, on his first coming, there had been many houses hemming their overlord's; now all were out of sight and ragged weeds had taken the lots. Though a village of some hundreds surrounded and supported the philosopher, no one was in sight. Had there been, the figure would have made a careful, silent circuit around his flowing personal plot.

Osarsif walked out under a gigantic and violent sky dry as a disc of mercury. The fields were listless; the wind, scything their black dun grasses, could barely ripple his dust-weighted aba. Before twilight he came to the river's fork and turned at the inn, already battenning for the night.

Seeing the innkeeper in the gate he loosened the black sporran as he went. "In the name of the master, on whom be peace, peace," he rasped; "At some time to come one Uothohahp of Swafat, whom you knew, will be passing through, and by order of your master you will give him -"

"Give him yourself," he answered. "He's inside."

Osarsif stared like a kicked pig. By instruction and repetition his path of action had been scored into his heart, and the eventuality of incompatible circumstances had been dismissed with the disregard integral to a man who claimed to direct stars. Now violence was done to his susceptible substance.

Though the innkeeper was busy he gestured Osarsif to the vat and gave him a cup of water. Then he indicated a lamplit door and padded back to his gate.

His pack heavier, Osarsif stumbled to the door. The windows were already barred and the lamps lighted; patchouli had been dropped into the oil, but the inn odour was territorial. Though the room was stark it was the establishment's best.

His domed head and chest bare, black skin luminous as rats' teeth in starlight, Uothohahp sat behind the table - a massive ember smouldering with blood, a man whose basalt features and flint irides were ribbed with the confidence of strength. A ferocity sib to neither lust nor hunger had moulded his face.

Shocked to palsy, Osarsif hesitated.

"A mission of welcome so taken aback? I might almost think I was unexpected. Surprise is a luxury most veterans of your lord's service could not afford... unless you bring offerings of sudden fealty?"

Under the battering eyes Osarsif's brain felt like fresh almond-sugar being kneaded. Conventionalities were snuffed. "It is my painful - our lord is dead. In accord with his final command I bring you the keys."

As he passed the clanking sack over, a heavy hand swept out and flicked it to the tabletop without a blink.

"And was it your master's intention to wait for the happenstance of my passing before I heard of my fortunate inheritance? Was he above sending some word - indifferent to my ending my days in ignorance and ignominy?"

"I understood," Osarsif breathed weakly. "that word was already sent."

"Was it, indeed?" Uothohahp came forward roaring. "Because I woke in the open one morning and found by the pool's lustre a moonspot in my forehead? Because I knew that, if the old heka-mumbler was risking the minor crime of smiting with the moon, he must have seized some article that was mine and recalled the theft of an old belt by the well in Sitkhar sixty days before? With the cold black liquor of hate dripping on the doorstep day in and day out, was I to wait for parchment-scribbles or sugared salivations when I could hear death whetting its blade on dotage? Ha!" The special contempt of triumph heated his breath. "So tell me - how long had the creature been trying to get something of mine?"

"The master dispatched messengers and retrievers known only to himself. Who could say from where or to what end the oddments brought him came or were to be put?"

"You can, that's who, as much as I," Uothohahp belched back. "You know whether some old leather belt was brought him which woke the satisfied contentment of accomplished malignity." The chatoyant eyes bored their way into Osarsif's like dowser's rods, probing for the pockets of truth secreted somewhere in his head. The coaching rodent was scarcely able to hold its own.

"Over the years -" he mumbled, "- as the strange men who had word of his discovery came to speak with him - although he always refused to see

them - he learned of your wanderings and occupations so regularly that at any moment he knew exactly where you might be found."

"Though he chose not to summon me." Uothohahp spat, though his fingers were drumming on the table. "And in all that time he recruited no other to the same pivotal task in which I - failed him?"

"No. He trusted neither man nor daemon, kept a tight hood wrapped over his head against all eyes."

"Apparently that episode revealed to the polymath something about mankind of which his skulls had been ignorant - they whose society is so stable." Uothohahp bellowed catechistic mockery. "Go on."

"From what provenance I couldn't say the belt came at last. Of course he had been wasting over the years, balked of his soul's one desire, but when he received that leather strip . . . it was as though some crucial strut had been fitted into his lifeprint. He ceased struggling to cling to his breath, gave his instructions and collapsed."

"The instructions being - ?"

Osarsif was now helpless. Having rationed allotments of strength for each stage of the last gruesome task, he had neglected to save any by for emergencies such as this, never anticipating implementation as a mynah to this usurper's inquisition. Statements he had given no thought to making were being prized right off his tongue.

"To seal him in his tomb with that leather strip in his hand, remain the time and then close the house, leaving you the keys."

"Then what happened to the servants?"

"Servants? They were all dismissed. He required them to keep the house forty days or until you came, and upon dispatch of the keys to go. They have gone and, having brought the keys, I return to my village. Mesurwo, to keep my peace."

Uothohahp watched the door as if expecting someone else. "So he thought I would not choose to occupy his rooms, eh? Did my father's blood castigate his veins any less in that syrupy air? Did he expect me to creep from hut to hut sounding out a grudging inheritance? Even if he doesn't lurk behind the door with daggers in his hand or fascination in his eyes, is his presence any fiercer there than imprinting the dust of his fields, igniting the motes of his granaries, patina-grasping the jewels in his foxhole-troves?"

"A doctor of the mantic sciences of the skill that was T'imi Hor Zer's laid unprotestingly in his grave with a scrap of my clothing? The man was awash with senility. The very fact that he waited so long to undertake anything so easily done a thousand times before shows as much. A synecdochal practitioner alone could have reached me more incisively than that. I knew his will weakened with his flesh: I would never have guessed he had decomposed so badly outside his tomb! - since men of power rarely do within it. You would almost make me think - " his stare was a thrust of hot brands into Osarsif's eyes - "that his power was as brittle as a shrivelled flower. So what have you omitted telling me?"

Osarsif cringed. This was not bravado; this domineering man was no less a familiar of the fire-born than his master had been. In his dynamism Hor Zer would have recognised a kinship he had dismissed from the knot of blood.

"Nothing."

Uothohahp snorted. "So you'll go off to writhe in your sleep for the rest of your days. Did he give you anything to live on? Of course not. Who knows you now in Mesurwo? An old swayback like you will starve in a month unless you beg."

"You'll go back and open up the house for me for a time. I need someone who knows the place."

"But he promised - "

"Promised you death. I'll give you a living. I don't practise slavery for life or time; you can go when you decide to, but for a few dodads at least you'll stand by me at the house."

Osarsif could never have lifted his bundle now. He waited for six more eyes to open in his captor's forehead.

"And lest your fears dissuade you, you grimy old shoat, I should tell you that I am no more that snivelling nosedrip you recall than the old narcolept who sent children scrabbling around the country to steal my underwear was the same intimate of star-powers who ensorcelled you! Yes, these days if you saw that serpentine rope slithering over the floor you'd watch it coil up him and snap his withered neck!" he heaved out great chunks of laughter.

In the latter days of Hor Zer's work one of Sensemu's children had been fascinated to such an extent that the doctor was able to lift off his head as smoothly as from a wet clay image. The body had been exenterated as it stood and Osarsif called in to stand by with a torch while the mad girl Notna had blown a centipede of music out of a skirling reed. After stuffing the body into a furnace, Osarsif had walked back through in time to see the rope of viscera tingle, writhe, and crawl over the floor, finally twist itself into a figure - a hieroglyph in growing flesh - which was the ultima needed by Hor Zer to consummate his work. That act of consummation, a few days later, had been the occasion of Uothohahp's fevered flight from the house.

That Uothohahp had been afraid and that he had fled in fear of more than life Osarsif knew beyond doubting. Whether he returned nursing any relic of this fear could not be said, but it was evident that he felt the experience and craft won in the intervening actions equated him with his uncle and that he intended to contend with whatever vengeance lurked.

Osarsif doubted it would be much contest. He had caught an amber glitter in the old lord's eyes at their terminal flutter.

They fell silent as dinner was brought in. Uothohahp was indulging himself in a kid scythed in its mother's milk, with leeks, cress and trefoil; in dates and exotic fruits crystallised - limes, grenadillas, honeydew, bael - and a fruity woodruff-scented wine. He fell to immediately but looked up after a

time as Osarsif was rummaging in his own meagre pack for a sack of dry teff cakes and some smoked bichir. As the menial settled to his crude fare dressed in the appetising aroma of his master's meal, Uothohahp, crudding as though some bitter herb had been slipped him on the sly, growled, "Eat that garbage outside."

Thawing out next morning from the sleep he had only wished for, Osarsif creaked up off the doormat after his new master's ungentle rousing and, dribbling some lukewarm tea down his throat, came out to the road. Uothohahp was too wise to travel in affluence. He was unimpressively dressed in a much-beaten mantle of coarse grey cotton and cheap linen headcloth with unadorned band; a heavy utilitarian belt with a pretorial dirk argued against interference. He swung a heavy staff and with it regularly tapped the rear of a rachitic youngster staggering along under his bundle. "Picked him up along the road just out of Tmutarenkt," he nodded. "Won't last much longer at the rate his knees knock."

Osarsif wondered if he would himself. Retracing his path to encystment, his feet found slivers of pain on the same road which had sped them the day before.

Uothohahp looked around broadly as they went and asked about the few changes visible but, since Osarsif's mutters were ambivalent even when forthcoming, he launched into a reminiscent monologue which, for the first time since his much scrawnier legs had made spokes down that same road, enlightened Osarsif a little on the incident.

"Had his phenomenal discovery been all," Uothohahp boomed, "it would have been epochal. But Hor Zer was a titan among the ambitious - and without pause to codify or embellish it he moved directly to exploit it, apply it, grasp at the diadem of the universe. If I balked him in that, it was out of pure self-preservation and not jealousy, for I believe no created thing would have been immune to the force he would have evoked."

"We know, some of us, of a wisdom where the drumming sits; we spill it over a wheel of skill for a tithe of its potential; but he would have unleashed it in consuming flood, passed from empery to apotheosis."

"Of course, it would not have been the first time, but when or where in time has it been to any man's benefit? The free flux of unimpeded will through the flesh and mind of anything once man, the capacity to flex matter into fresh figures unprocessed yet by the Ordinator themselves, is the genesis of holocaust on earth - and the revelation, I fancy, that the world is a mad-apple to the touch of the mighty. When a brain becomes the seat of a sun, throwing out auroras of impossible colour, the earth heaves to readjust its harmonics: stones hatch and lotus sing. For such dislocations in the only order we know we have just one mortal word: madness, beyond measure . . ."

The relish with which he tasted the words before expelling them belied his oath of abhorrence. The madness of man is the majesty of mages; and for so difficult and dangerous a trophy Uothohahp clearly had never surrendered search.

When they paused at the village's edge a few ragged children stared at them in uncharacteristic silence, backing off from Uothohahp's indifferent glance. "Empty out your bundle and go into the phrontistery. Carry back everything stored there." He tossed him the keys.

"All the books and skulls?"

"Leave the skulls. Just the books and amulets."

"That will take several trips."

"Then don't delay the first one!" His sandalled foot narrowly missed Osarsif's hips.

Stupefaction did not hold Osarsif (yet there he saw defined the penalty he earned, unlike the heart-sucking stare of his former master who, whenever he erred, wordlessly swathed him in the restless drowse of uncertainty) but bent under an empty sack heavier than a carcase plodded back to the house, seeking as always words appropriate to curse fate without leaving himself open to retribution.

It was mid-afternoon. The vicinity of the house was, as usual, deserted. He clasped the rattle to the keys as he opened the door: a small chill ruffled his neck as he entered, and he gathered up his mantle from the clinging emptiness. He shuffled through the o-ing hall, across the courtyard to that isolated structure - a cone-crowned cube - where Hor Zer had studied and stacked his materia. It was long locked and sealed, and the key was not one that he had ever had charge of; but he found it at last and trepidantly forced the swollen black door inward.





He was greeted by a ghost. A wraith of vetiver proceeded distinctly from the musty darkness, tickled his nostrils and passed out to mystify the courtyard air. It was the scent which had swathed his master wherever he walked; Osarsif waited to make sure no lavatic flesh or razor stare would follow.

He already understood Uothohahp's ploy: if he returned alive, violating, as he would, the master's explicit instructions (lock up, deliver keys, go home, never return), then whatever viciousness had been prepared lurked in no immediate or vigilant form. His worn flesh, which had met so few uses in its time, was bait cast into the tempting obscurity.

He opened a shutter to let in a trickle of dirty light: the room was naked of sentience. It was small and crudely furnished. In neat rows on the walls of shelves the orpiment skulls of many years' residence returned his stare, seed-pearls of eternity, each distinct as a gong tone. Other shelves bore books, tablets, worn parchments: there were a few models, bones, enigmatic machines, blank phenological globes - goetical talismans, whose use, unknown to Osarsif, had been superseded by more byzantine but less corporeal implements once Hor Zer had renounced paraphernalia and all its quirks: there were his padded chair, ink pots, brushes, calipers: the single table which held them was planted on a trapdoor through which he earlier crawled down to the farflung slime he commuted with, though later he needed not leave his chair to do so.

Tfimi Hor Zer had not studied his books, but his skulls. Skulls had been his tutors and confidantes, more lovingly contemplated than any whose soft upholstery was still fastened. A skull's smile is a scribble of satiety, the crenelated smirk of fallibility shed, a sneer of absoluteness which declares misery as ephemeral as man's brain and name. Where a man's eyes drink - and at times, as witness young girls, regurgitate - light, skulls suck darkness through their cobweb lids and fountain it out into the day. On the shedding and assuming of one coat of dust after another body is forgotten, indistinguishable among so many layers, so they philosophise less than they irrigate philosophy.

Breaking his gaze abruptly Osarsif realised how easily one fell under their fascination and how a man in such company dispensed with the hesitations of the flesh. For some reason it had been Hor Zer's practice to smash the cups of the orbits, so that in most the cranial grotto imbibed the viewer. Each had stared long into the hagsseed's phosphorescent eyes and now projected his evil into any brain of suitably hostile warmth in which to gestate.

He swept the rubbish off the desk into his bag. Dried cobra eyes - numb clots of curdled sleep - scattered over the sea otter's violet-tinted bones, living pentagrams dredged from lightless abysses in the distant seas, now cold and crusted (as always Osarsif took great pains to avoid touching one): lightning bones and ambergris lumps, harlequin opals and bloodstones, carved morion and polished obsidian, a single drab glossopetra, its green-black dullness incongruous against the silver of its opulent mount - Hor Zer had once muttered that it was a fragment of the soul-heavy moon itself. His fingers cringed from the surfaces pocked by the corrosion of his overlord's claws.

He hurried to finish; a few of the thinner books filled the sack. A rustle outside startled him but seemed to be only the coupling of leaves on the courtyard flags: still, as he went out the door he was tossed a cometary glance by a fleeing rat.

Shivering, he locked the phrontistery door and trooped out, securing the street door again from habit.

Tapping his staff, Uothohahp sat waiting at the village line. The children were gone, sound tucked away.

"It will take three trips at least to bring the books," Osarsif said as Uothohahp ran disinterested fingers through the wreck of Hor Zer's voracity. "Never mind," he answered. "This tells me enough. We'll go in together."

He rose and swung along easily; Osarsif, stunned, was slower to follow. At least Uothohahp could not be charged with subtlety, though how this might, in the end, save him Osarsif could not picture. He did notice that his new lord's hands gripped the staff so tightly that the nails blanched and that he turned with some unnecessary violence to his boy. Evidently the road had joggled all he had to say out of him.

There was an explosion in the beefwood branches over his head: Uothohahp reared, lifting his staff. It was only a roused coneychuck flying for quietude, but it was an arrow of revelation to Osarsif.

He unlocked the door again and from habit stepped back for the master, who flatly gestured him in while his eyes ran like roaches over lintel, posts, floor, walls, ceiling. But when Osarsif, shrugging, stepped inside, he followed. Reaching to close the door Osarsif's shoulder was nearly dislocated by the master's staff. "Leave it open, you fool." The decussate-legged boy staggered in and heaved his load down on the floor: again Uothohahp leapt.

This obsession tracked him into the garden, where he stopped electrified at each squeak of dust and buzzing leaf, his eyes flitting everywhere. He turned with a start when he first tugged the phrontistery door handle, the stoicism rinsed from his face. Pushing past to unlock it, Osarsif saw, indeed, the face of an uncertain man, a man more comfortable with walls and rows than intercourse with depths and distances. Still, it was not that the power had ebbed; only Uothohahp could conceive what he faced.

They stepped into the moted silence. "You sure the old badger didn't die in here?" Uothohahp growled, shoving himself brusquely back into dimension. "There's a cow's load more dust here than forty days' desertion could precipitate."

"The master spent little time here after that memorable day."

"He gave up his studies, then?"

"I think rather that he changed their subject."

"Tfimi Hor Zer studied not skulls, you ichneumon, but destiny! No, he never changed the subject, but he must have lost sight of the means." Uothohahp picked up a skull and rotated it slowly in his free hand. "That analogy you have often heard comparing steam, water and ice to the prenatal, incarnate and dead persona is more illustrative than you think. When the prenatal first settles into the warm vehicle of its powers, it moulds the matter even as the Flesh's clumsiness imposes its strictures in return. The writing of the fates, the Ordinators' signatures upon men, the message that the prenatals carry in from that unreachable world of theirs, is in fact inscribed in our world . . . in the waxy suture-lines of the bones the bulging brain moulds. No man has ever doubted the significance of this script any more than he ever possessed the ability to read it . . . this was Hor Zer's challenge then. That it was indeed the writing of the gods, through their anonymous amanuenses, and far more relevant to man than, say, the abstract glyphs of the stars - which, for all we know, may have been intended for the leviathans of the sea rather than ourselves - Hor Zer had proved, and to its unravelling he set himself.

"His skull's sentences contain a man's secret destiny, his personal words of power, the true document of his origin and means. It is useless to himself, being masked by the flesh and hair which cloak him, but Hor Zer began by compiling a grammar of skulls of men notably good or notoriously evil, whose lives' configurations were not macerated by time, if quite hulled of flesh. By predictable means he amassed this collection and confronted these arsenical lesson-slates until his calcified stare, gorged on months, whittled away the patina of obscurity and evoked a tongue, not from the eroded jaws, but between the still sharp-toothed junction of frontal and parietal, temporal and occipital, until the ragged undulations waved into the semblance of captured speech as surely as ink across papyrus."

Though he had lived with his master's fixation, Osarsif had never known its object. He remembered the hour in which a withered watapamma blossom on the back of one hand had been matched in a gust of breeze by its twin a year junior which had just then fallen - that hour had been the end of the vigil. Then Hor Zer had sent for Uothohahp and made ready.

"That diversion with the dancing intestines was to clarify by returning to the light a squiggle subtracted from the half-crushed skull of a long dead archimage, which completed the syllabary of his understanding. Tfimi Hor Zer, your master and mine, rose up the first man issued of flesh to read the script the gods write over the brains of men. Where a soul less juggernautical - mine, for instance - would have there felt his life an upheaval of history, he moved immediately to further his achievement - to unravel the hekau and apophthegms of his own destiny while brain still ordered hand and to realise them in the flesh."

Osarsif remembered the long, tense preparations, during which this same human monolith had quivered and stuttered: the compounding and infusion of drugs, and assiduous practice in near-caric detachment on the philosopher's part - since only passionate men make a learning out of pain - the special inks mixed, the stylus, calipers, pantograph, an untouched phenological globe duplicating the lord's own, all crafted under strict direction. Then Uothohahp was set to the task of stripping the integument from Hor Zer's rigid head. Throughout the operation the old man sat soundlessly as his disciple's awls shaved away the paisley cap of skin and flesh. Osarsif stood by to sponge up the bursting blood, his gorge educated by many years' familiarity with such performances, usually upon less constrained and permissive flesh.

Laved as much in Uothohahp's rendered brine as in well-water, the bare white skull was wiped clean at last, and the master's closed eyes relaxed with satisfaction. It was enlightening that he so readily presupposed honesty on the part of the gods. Uothohahp had settled down with calipers, pantograph and stylus to transcribe the suture-glyphs of his skull for Hor Zer's self-perusal.

Osarsif did not wait for Uothohahp to continue, for here reminiscence ended. Himself adjured to leave as his utility was done, he had gone out to wash the red tatters in the fountain. No more than a soss of heartbeats later, Uothohahp had burst out of the phrontistery, pupils careening against his brows, tore through the garden to the door. The fresh globe arched through the air behind him, cast with surprising accuracy by so feeble an arm, and splintered between his maximised feet at the doorstep. He had never returned.

Osarsif did not have to be told that this callow nephew, anxious for some weapon against the relentless mage, had misrepresented the lines in such a way as to frustrate T'fimi Hor Zer's chief aim, probably without doing himself any benefit. He could not have tricked the doctor; this man, who had impelled himself wholly into the essence of the superhuman language, would have recognised the first wrong stroke as it was penned before him.

Emboldened by this recollection Osarsif murmured, "And did you never succeed in making skulls talk?"

"There is no such simple criterion of capacity," Uothohahp for once was too intent to show vexation, "and what he may achieve who mimics stone for a year is obviously impossible for acquaintances of the winds. Nevertheless, the elements of that superior wisdom which is gramary are no less my possession than my ears -

The skulls were whispering. As the knitting of night leaves swirled the air, half a dozen of them rocked with a rustling, slithering pulse; peering into the nares of the nearest, Osarsif found the black recess breasted with pustules of red murder. Uothohahp froze with arm outstretched as rats flowed out of the unsealed sockets and foramina or bobbed up through a pair of malclad jaws - though the suddenness of their appearance did not bind the men to cataloguing the means - and, skulls somersaulting in their wake, pounced from the shelves onto them. It was a viciously purposeful, chillingly sentient, hypnotically silent attack. With no hesitation the dishevelled animals' teeth began lacing long ribbons of flesh from the mens' legs, grasping for holds in their cotton chimeres, tripping up their sandalstraps.

Uothohahp leapt through the door and with a heave vaulted to the shoulders of the knock-kneed boy who was thoughtlessly facing the other way. Poling with his heavy staff, he was able not only to keep the dazed boy from falling but even to begin boating him toward the outer door while one contingent ran to mince his stringy ankles.

Uothohahp's howl of affront woke Osarsif less than the sudden insistence of the rats' sewer-honed fangs. Marvelling at the tonic a mere siege of teeth supplied to tired old muscles, he made a celerous rush out toward the same door when the rest of them turned jointly from the bandied boy and charged him, not half way across the courtyard.

For the second marvel of the morning he took a plunge into the air and accepted the lower branch of a well-grown sycamore, dangling just above the leaping, snapping rats. One had retained a hold on his robe as he swung over the rest, but it seemed unable to claw upward, until he began moving hand over hand along the branch toward a neighbouring, and much less promising, beefwood tree.

The pack below him scattered toward each of the trees he had some prospect of reaching until only two or three remained below, puppetstrung. A pair were coming determinedly out his own airborne crutch and the others scaling every arboreal prospect, when the yammering crooked body of Uothohahp's servant - who had collapsed under his master just before they reached the door - came skating across the floor and into the midst of the floor-wardens, while his bowler straightened and bounded out the door. Osarsif dropped to the flags and with legs unilinear charged for the blind patch. The rats rained heavily from the trunks and their tiny teeth, crackling like knucklebones, were wearing through his feet as he shot through the door and started for the road. Uothohahp's flailing rod hammered stars into his skull and half-turned him toward the river without quibble; despite their quadrupedal advantage the attackers seemed unable to scout the hot brilliance and shot off tangential and indecisive.

By the time they reached the riverfront the pursuers had fallen off, just as the few other persons visible had disappeared rapidly into their shelters. Wading into the water Osarsif pulled himself into a small coracle, to be tumbled out bodily as Uothohahp followed with vigour. Soaked through, he hoisted himself aboard again and collapsed.



Sopping up the wounds on his forearms and shoulders as well as his copiously bleeding ankles, he turned perplexed to his master. "Why didn't you salt them with spells?"

"You damned idiot! You still don't know what a wizard works with?" He brought his little toe level with the base of Osarsif's skull, and, without a kick this time, broke a spark and a wave of pain through Osarsif's writhing body.

"Now tell me at once - is T'fimi Hor Zer unquestionably dead?"

"There is no chance of doubt," Osarsif moaned.

"Then to what do we owe the antipathy of those lowly scavengers? Even if they could not ascertain whether or not that jerky of yours still sizzled, your sprint surely afforded judgment. They were never generated from skulls which sat so long fleshless, unless from clots of dust - and I could more readily expect the rotting meat in your own steaming cavern to brew one, and dare it to gnaw out through your nose.

"Why did they settle on you rather than me? They scarcely heeded the boy beneath me when they could have brought us down. They could have pinched out my neckstraws at the first leap; the only saving grace seemed that each had just one objective, pursued its course ignoring more easily attained breaches - until they abandoned it all to hound you. Why? Why? Why?" Each interrogation was prodded into his ribs.

"I know nothing of the motivations of rats. They have never been absent from the house, but this is the first instance of their taking umbrage to anyone's coming into it." Comparatively mildly bitten, Osarsif considered their company preferable to the present.

"Fool spirit moulds fool flesh. You are the key, Osarsif - " Uothohahp glowered through his unfelt wounds, " - and I will turn you until the lock yields, or you snap. Now get us to the other bank."

Scarcely able to nod his head and stupefied that the would-be master did not even realise he had answered his own question, Osarsif struggled with the belching mud for the pole to put the boat to better use than its grubby owner could have found. The river was at mid-spread, the opposite shore a heavy blur of greenery, unoccupied and unfarmed. After much struggling on his part - Uothohahp sat, mouth in hand, involved with the dwindling village - they reached the far shore, beached the coracle and set up a shelter of sorts. The light of a small fire disclosed the satisfying evidence that Uothohahp was ill at ease. The flies syphoned off his blood in unheeded clouds, but the faintest of the crew of rustlings thronging a riverbank woke him to notice. Did he, too, envision an armada of tree fern bark launched by gritty rodents piloting by the the Doom Star?

T'fimi Hor Zer had had a lustful passion for knowledge, and its delicate distillate he applied as often, and as subtly, as was suited to his needs. But Uothohahp had never understood - and like any knowledgeable and powerful man Hor Zer had never explained - that power was in fact the oil squeezed out of understanding. Impatiently he attempted to extract the essence without gathering the blossom and, only since the scalding rebound of his one foolish attempt to gain the upper hand, had he turned his incautious energies to such gleaming. Osarsif, watching, suspected that he still harboured attenuated doubts about the inextricable unity of knowledge and power but had learned, if not everything, at least care and the assay of pretence.

Despite his stomach's growling Osarsif sank to sleep. Almost the next moment Uothohahp rapped him with a fist, and he unrolled slowly, his bones creaking, to find the sky's white corolla turning up over the river. He understood why phlegmatic terrapins in the damp mud had grown shells - converted to rock among stones.

"Take off your mantle."

He blinked, drew it off. Uothohahp folded it and poled the coracle off into the filling mists the sun was flushing up from the water.

Meagre body shivering in the morning chill, Osarsif began moving to get warm. Shuttles of sunlight marked the boundary of a parklike zone; an ani's croak grated the fibrous air; bows of metallic green butterflies laced the graceful trunks together; sharp red fruits hung from the canopy like petrified flames. These tesserae of light and sound in their unfamiliar newness and harmony burst upon him like jewels. Childlike he scampered through the meadow, pouring over individual leaves whose three pigments fermented deliriously in deep grasses, the aromatic flag the orris root waved, the dewdrop ribbon of lark's song. Pulling urgently at memories of his forgotten childhood, he was able to recognise the wild waterleaf and orach, fireweed shoots, asparagus, and toothworts, stuffing himself with them. That hideous prospect the fiend had sketched more fiery than the toothworts - of his hapless return to his own village - was as meaningless as the mist. A new world of silkiness, the provision of kindly gods whose existence had been withheld from him was waiting his freedom to wander without obligation to go or cease, to take up a thread from among the thousand intricate webs and follow it to his nectary of content.

By mid-afternoon he had woven, as well as his gnarled hands could muster, an osier fish-weir of sorts and had roasted several binnee. His stomach appeased, his brain quieted, his tremours vanquished, he settled back in a cocoon of sunlight.

But as the sun began to sulk he heard the whispering coracle pumping carefully back across the rising waters, its attendant haze now a cloud of mosquitos.

Uothohahp climbed out and limped painfully to the shelter. Fresh blood smeared ankles, where the previous days' wounds gawked at him still, and up the hem of his muddy aba. His face was mottled but the eyes betrayed nothing. Osarsif, sighing, gestured to the vegetable scraps and fish bones, but Uothohahp dismissed them. Such denial nourished a lean hope that he might be about to undertake the endura. Osarsif retrieved his clothing from the other's hand - crumpled and dustier, but unharmed - and wrapped up against the flies and darkness.

As soon as Uothohahp kicked him into waking the next morning, he realised his brief glimpse of paradise had been lidded.

"What is the occupation of that creaking contraption in the courtyard?"

"I don't know how it runs. It countermands the sun."

"So I deduce. Therefore if it were put out of commission, the ability of certain events to transpire during daylight would be altogether abnegated." Osarsif considered this a telling philosophical point. "Well, then, get up and go do it!"

Osarsif swallowed stones. Just as they stepped into the boat, Uothohahp stripped off his own mantle. "Put this on and give me yours."

He slumped. "Why don't you stab me here and be done with it?"

"Because your blood is more marketable warm than cold and I can't manage two things at once. You demonstrate once again the wisdom of fate in apportioning to servility only those minds indifferent to all logic and observation. Who was it that the rats chased to the virtual ignoring of myself? Which smell are they sensitised towards? - since rats, like dogs, rely exclusively on the olfactory capacity. This is a temporary means of averting your difficulties. A more permanent is to get at that machine and wreck it while daylight lasts. Remember how they scattered in the light? After that, they'll be at our mercy."

His heart entangled in his bowels, Osarsif shuddered, heaved mildly and submitted. The fresh blood still oozed from yesterday's wounds on Uothohahp's ankles, but if he affected to notice he would earn another reprimand with the cudgel. He did not doubt that he was dispatched to a monstrous death merely to give occupancy of the house back to its rightful owner but doubted he could build another house just to compensate for it. As the morning chill curdled, they again put behind them the river's cuirass of safety.

Except for a handful of mongrels baring cornhusk-coloured teeth, the village was still inanimate. It was no longer coincidental that no one was in sight; such desertion was unparalleled. The lands and produce belonged to Tifimi Hor Zer, and it was much more desirable that his heir should surprise them labouring than lazing and that the spectacle they were affording should draw attention on account of its sheer prodigiousness. But his people possessed the harsh learning of experience. Passing through the clustered hovels Osarsif felt shards of slatted stares flying at him from every chink. The village was a carapace of eyes.

They wound through weeds toward the master's house; the door was partly open. The rats might then leap from any quarter.

"You sit here and watch the door. Watch also the shadow of this tree. When its top reaches the stone at your feet, walk in at once to the brass wheel and knock the horn loose and do as much damage as you can to the mechanism with those stones. Do it with expedition and do not fail the appointed time. Do you hear me?"

"And if I am not able to reach it?"

"You have no worries. The entire situation is in my hands. Follow orders as I give them and victory is ours." With this brotherly annexation he stared Osarsif full face; it was as though a thumb pressed each eyeball. He recovered to see Uothohahp walking off through the beefwoods, his mantle - Osarsif's mantle - flapping around his leaking ankles.

He made a numb effort to enjoy the mellifluous sunlight which, he felt, would be the last ever to warm him. When the shadow struck he rose automatically and proceeded to the front door, pushed it wide and padded brittly across the floor. The future was gone; the dully clanging machine stood athwart that butterfly-empty path like a tombstone. For a moment - seeing no skeleton which might have propped a twisted boy - he wondered if one victim at least might have made an escape. But sight of the square block where the steps of his days would end restored his balance.

STUDZINSKI



He had never before approached it closely and did not know who (if indeed anything material) maintained it nor anything of its structure; so he had no particular design in mind beyond clouting it from various angles with the stones dangling in his fists.

The fiercely dense mat of vines hung lower over the gauzed garden; a new abundance of gloom consorted around the catahelic horn. Seeing how formidable indeed the bony helix was, he stood wondering where in the web of that sturdy craftsmanship to score his first barbarian bat when filaments of fear sprouted up under his face's skin, bottling his eyes.

Still, when he spun, to find the rats which had crept from the crevices mustered in stations along his fuzzy shadow - ears, throat, wrists, and ankles, they stood still in orderly array, whiskers ticking and scarlet venom ballooning from their eyes, a saraband of suckling shadows.

Their restraint refined the waterdrop torture. Osarsif's overstrung nerves broke and he heaved both stones at the waiting column. Before they struck the pack was on him, wasting no time nipping his calves but springing up his clothing, determinedly, towards his throat and wrists. Few bothered with his calloused feet.

Dancing lunatically he knew that this time they had succeeded - he could never shake or pluck them off before half had put in the decisive bite. But before the first shriek of his blunted life could split his lips, a barrel of laughter coopered him and someone opened the spigot of the night. The day went out. He was wrapped in a darkness of thick stuff constricted to the volume of his body - and theirs. The rats, undamaged but terrified to frenzy, bristled into a scissoring mania. Over unprotected face, chest, arms, groin, legs, as he rolled, crushed beneath him and ripping in return, freed briefly above and manipulating jaws in random, opportune mutilation, scrawling his eye, furrowing his flesh à la carbonado, he and his assassins were rolled into a tight helpless bale in which finally none of them could breathe or struggle further.

He felt their mouths relax, their teeth retract, as his own lungs glowed before bursting into flame. The midnight in which he was buried with the vermin that had killed him was nattered by the laughter of sardonic glacial gods. His heart paused, a frozen pendulum; he was caught up in a whirlwind - for the final translation? He hoped it would be quick; his pain was undimmed and each centrifugal whirl only flung it more intensely to his extremities.

Then dim light broke above - except it was below - him; the darkness fell away with concussion, his head striking a lattice of bones. The rainbow whorls bubbling in his eyes might have been proof of paradise had it not been for the ember nuzzle of brimstone all over his skin. He still could not breathe, but into his lungs now poured not desert sand but dense white fumes etching their parched walls. He struggled considering why a life blameless of sins or crimes, if for lack of opportunity - even the opportunity to want them - had to end in an agony of punishment.

He woke no wiser. The smoke, though stubborn in his nose and throat, was slowly diluting; choking he restored some life to his chest. His wounds had coagulated; all the blood which had met the air lay blackening on his skin, clothes and flagstones. One of his eyes, tattooed by tooth and claw, would never sip sunlight again, and had he not long ago been reduced to a clot of impotence would have lamented the loss of that erotic consolation.

Uothohahp, disrobed, stood a little distance off, clumsy wooden cage and heavy black sack tossed aside, the fire of green wood and straw guttering out. Its smoke disgorged now through the same hole in the matted vines which evidenced the enthusiasm with which he had broken through to conclude his design.

Bridging two crusted brazier-stands was a long skewer on which four-teen grey rats, alive and writhing, were impaled through the belly.

Uothohahp was reading calmly from a book, the beak restored to his eyes. Osarsif groaned as he recovered and struggled to sit up; without turning, his captor began to speak. "It is in the Paraphrase of Zakaba'a, and what his text can not reveal to me you shall supply." Through the swinging phrontistery door Osarsif saw a mountain of delicate books scattered open, their accordion folds - staircases to strange worlds - twisted and tearing, systemic secrets fissioning.

"For the philosopher's flesh incubates its impacted hungers and concerns long after its breath reverts to the winds and its soul to the moon; but the persona of the man of superior wisdom shifts not helpless as in the common flesh. May it well be said that a charnel rejoices where no sorcerer is housed; for the venom and malignity that festers in his flesh fats and instructs the utter worm that gluts, and the hordes it generates come wise, calculating, and swollen in power and intent . . . You have doubtless heard it all before but were too dense to listen. Half the answer is there; the other will not be found in any script but the master's own . . . and as he could not read what he wished to read, I find that he refused to write what I wish he had written . . . at least on the usual medium. This leave only one prospect . . ."

Seizing Osarsif's collar he pulled him upright and snarled, "Where is his tomb?"

Shaking groggily, Osarsif could not resist the avalanche. He was hurried along on feet still shod with nails, the thews that drove him inside Uothohahp's throat and eyes; somehow he was drawn to the vaults, which Uothohahp scarcely remembered. Hustling down the steps Osarsif had thought never to touch again, they found the torch long since ash tiding across the cellar floor. Uothohahp thrust his lamp into the aperture. The smell was too much; Osarsif gave way. But afterward Uothohahp brought his face up to the hole to plumb the crypt lit with its timid flame.

The mangled thing inside was coated with rat droppings as was the floor of the crypt and the much-nibbled leather strap. Only a thin crisp of carbonised skin over bones and frayed bows of gristle at the joints remained. With a chuckle Uothohahp grasped and brought out the easily detached skull, its crust of features only partly eradicated. Perhaps nothing yet transpired was as monstrous as the trace of calm on the vestige of its face.

A convulsory roach veered out of the brainpan and ran up his arm before he could knock it off. On the floor it waited, gumming its mud-drop eyes on him, as he brought his foot down ever more slowly with an inquisitor's deliberation.

"This tells me much. When did he die?"

Osarsif's tongue was accustomed now to being jerked by gutstrings from the pitch-glossed eyes.

"As I said, we sealed him -"

"I didn't ask when you buried him - I asked when he died."

"We interred at such time as his orders dictated. I could see no breath and he had ceased moving many days. None dared touch him. Who could say he was not dead?"

"A blind mute. Go on."

"We laid him on the stones as he specified, bricked up the vault until only the one was left." Running hands over it, Uothohahp nodded. "Nevertheless you did put it in place - but without mortar." "Yes." "When was it removed?"

"By me - just before abandoning the house."

The glare prodded him on. "And in between?"

"... Ask the rat who served the time."

"What character demarked it?"

"None that I know. It was a gravid female from a wild colony he had trapped only a few moons earlier."

"Where?"

"In the necropolis."

"Ah, indeed. An undescribed but most individual breed... So you sealed into a ventilated tomb a breathing man, however debilitate... interred him alive with the gluttony of a dozen rats!"

Osarsif closed his eyes. "Such was his will."

"Brilliant. I underestimated him, of course. Even when I realised he overshadowed me in your brain. At first, I admit, I thought perhaps he had trained a corps of rats, as some do dogs or meerkats, to watch over his house. But when on my solitary foray I watched them accost and then - as if schooled - turn over, explore and finally dismiss your mantle, I realised there was more than inculcated craft. There was an inherent, perhaps ptomatogene, insistence, a conscious directive. Yet only the brainless believe that rats sprout out of corpsefat: worms, yes, but not rats. I thought accident had led them to forage in his tomb.

"Yes, expecting childish mumbblings over pinned images of those so easily countered reflexes of a magnetised corpse. I find instead his vengeful brain waiting, fragmented but still mobile, homicidal, his power, wisdom and emotions intact. So here I have his skull, and upstairs - his brain! Both the script and the reading, which could not be his, are mine!"

"That roach who unfleecing watched me crush him was a hapless vagrant nourished on a mere shred of the same fodder - a morsel of hatred, no doubt. But the rats - born of a mother nourished on the accumulated spirit piece by piece - weaned and fattened on the oil tintured with venom, vindiction and occult sagacity - what ultimate atrocity was to put a final to his magery, executed by a concert of scampering fangs? Not that it matters now -"

Skull in hand he charged back up the steps, leaving Osarsif to struggle out of the odorous pit himself. By the time he too had reached the top, Uothohahp was apostrophising the rats, which harked comprehending.

"No lack of ingenuity on your part, my lord, I grant, but you have outfoxed yourself with a vengeance! - to undergo such hideous and unnecessary pain in order to animate your petty spite still further, to push your urge for primacy postmortal - for here you find yourself at my mercy which, assuredly, you never were nor could be in your body, even dead."

Although he kept waving the mage's skull before them, he exposed only the tooth-fringed face and kept the braincase concealed by a flap of skin. "Even now some concatenation of memories might raise the ability to focus your power through those lines if I revealed them; your technique shall pass to me before I too read, and reading, understand - and understanding - command, metamorphose and transmute!" He belled gigantic, with fervour, the polydactyl shadows shrank from him.

Hopeful of sneaking past him and out of the house for ever, Osarsif was limping carefully around the garden's sash when Uothohahp saw him and flung him a torch.

"Here, Night settles. Light the flambeaux and set up an altar."

For a moment his eyes rested freely on Uothohahp's, which glided indifferently. With much searching he was able to find a modicum of gleaming stones, phials of gums and cruses of oil, silver plates and the rest, thinking of his master (whose eyes pricked him each time he passed the skewered rats) and his contempt for the conjuror's paraphernalia: he who sat alone, shrouded in shade in converse with lips of concrete shadow, and moved fire in the sky or tides beneath the earth, had in all his days passed only one piece of advice to the outer world - that those in the bosom of exalted wisdom would be known by their precept: power is production.

And this man had made a fool of death.

He could sympathise with the rats - obedient scavengers made by thoughtful deities to cleanse the earth of the abomination of decay - whose paralysis intimated an acceptance of death like his own, trapped in the cave of roses. Though their own incisions still smarted in his body, these were nothing more than the grating of one tool upon another. Their stratagem had been as vain as his eye's extinction.

Uothohahp gave no more orders but Osarsif, with long unaccustomed hands, prepared him for the process. He smeared hieroglyphics over his torso with silver-glance, and through the long grumbles of gargling languages he struck the sonorous plates and threw bittersweet leaves and gums on the fire, recalling a series of similar operations each indistinguishable from the other, not one of which had failed to ladle some gross rapture of the sun's sweetness out of the black eggs behind time. In the raining susurrus of the final vocable he automatically raised his head to view the visitation.

Though only one brazier burned, the entire floor spit the reflection of red fire. The figures were multiple-edged, as though his eyes were visored with raindrops: black particles like efts flickering in stagnant water circulated through the air. All of this, he knew, was the aura of intent. But the inner earthquake he had never failed to experience when his silent master, sitting immobile and unattended in the dark, made some slight adjustment in creation, did not rock him. He opened his eyes wide and peered through the wilfulness.

Uothohahp lifted the skewer off its stands and passed it through the hovenia-reeking flame. Sloughing off words he unthreaded the first rat and bit away its head, chewed it steadily, the splintering of its bones picking at the walls. He ate through the body like a fig and unswerving devoured each rat in turn, bones, hair, teeth and tail. Each, extended, faced the guillotine of his mouth with *rigor fasciatus*, flexing only when the midspine was severed in one last grasp for positivity.

Bite by bite they joined him, became blood of his blood and flesh of his flesh, until the last was swallowed, and Uothohahp began wolfing down the minuscules of Hor Zer's skull. Osarsif put his head down and folded up his consciousness.

He woke to a tremour, realised that potency was manifest. The massive creature emerging from stupefaction as a rogue crocodile rises from the slime had a face Osarsif might have seen before only had he lifted his head in the open some starless night and found it looking down with moons of eyes under wrinkles of lightning, smoking with swallowed distance. His ears pounded, the creaking walls bulged.

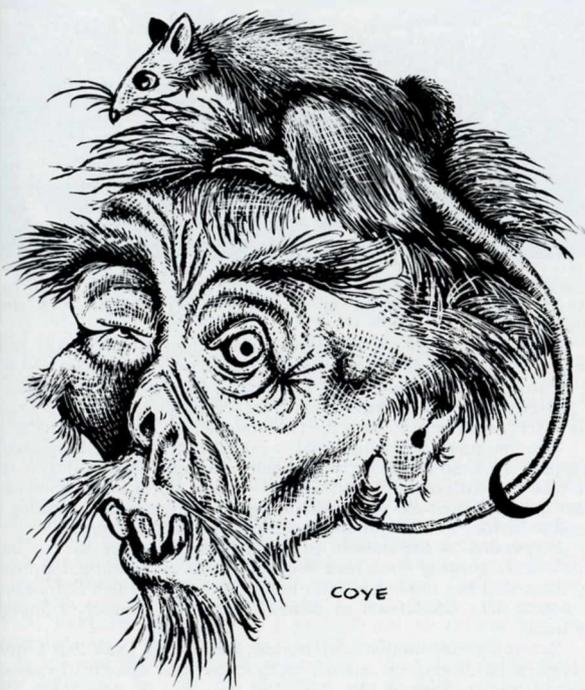
Osarsif's skin shifted alive on his body. He meant to squeak "I call your lordship to account -" but was inaudible to those graven ears. He was alone like a louse on a piece of the hinder universe.

Slowly the face rose to look at him. His eyes dropped first; memory disbarred an antidote. A volcano of will was trembling proemial to an outburst of cosmic crime.

He was lost. The laugh that came battering out of those cyclonic lips flattened him against the wall and swept him upward; stuck like a swatted fly, nailed by shards of buttressed sound, he hung in helpless vertigo while the pinioning laughter rose to incandescent heights, until it rattled back and forth through his head like needles, a strident scream.

It was a scream, the virtue boiled out of it. It stretched like a gluey band from one corner of the nervous walls to another: Osarsif felt himself slipping, clenched his jaw, slumped suddenly to the floor.

Uothohahp's whole body had become alive with loathing, pimpled cusps of self-hatred. He writhed and twisted, contorting spine gelatinous, thews knotting beneath his skin in unison, pulling themselves apart. With a single spasm his thumbs gouged out both eyeballs, ripped open his cheeks from mouth to jaw-joint, while his teeth tore into his wrists. His veins tumesced lumpily; even as the blood spurted his mouth tore at his own tetanic calves, his navel; the scarlet spray, as he wheeled, blazoned a ragged lemniscate on the floor. Reeling spasmodically to the corner where Osarsif sprawled stricken, the duplicicide too collapsed, one bleeding hand slapping his servant's stricken face and shielding it from the pitiless dwindling light.



The Eater of the Dead

BY GEORGE T. WETZEL

"... The face of the Great Sphinx at Gizeh is both a riddle and the soul of con-burdened Egypt. Were its features, as we see them now, mutilated so by superstitious arabs and gnawed at by Time; or had it been deliverately carved that way by the ancients, and why?"

"Only after I had looked at it often enough did I penetrate to the hideous truth; for the gruesomely broken nose was the clue. It was the face of a mummified corpse"

- "Journal of Stephen Vierne"

I was never a superstitious man. Death to me was but another biological aspect of the human body - that of chemical decomposition. Ghosts of the dead were, to my mind, the hallucination of a guilt-ridden conscience. So in my cynical but unsuspecting materialism, I robbed modern graves of the fresh dead for rings and jewelry and sold their bodies - if very fresh - or their acid-reduced skeletons to more callous, unquestioning anatomical schools and medical equipment supply houses.

When punitive laws were passed - forced by public outrage over a series of blatantly bungled but unprosecuted body-snatching, I began to look for safer but equally lucrative fields. It was during the furore over the discovered body-snatching that an anonymous letter (written, I suspected, by such a "resurrectionist") wryly asked the editor of one crusading newspaper if all archaeologists were not equally criminal, for did they not rob the ancient tombs and graves of Mesoamerica, Persia, Crete, Egypt, etc. of their interred dead!

There was my new enterprise - suggested unintentionally in that letter. The robbing of ancient tombs - whether under the excuse of science or not - was not imperiled by legal action of the deceased's survivors, for such survivors were many centuries dead themselves at the closest.

But I still found an obstacle, even though small. No matter what the modern nation with aged burials, the authorities wanted the archaeologists to cut them in on most, if not all, of the loot and finally passed restrictive laws that all such discovered plunder was governmental antiquities and could not be removed from their country. But this was not publicly "offensive" (as modern grave robbing was) as I could, if caught, claim it had been committed in the name of "science". It was easy in those distant days, then, to laugh at my cleverness. I decided to form a "business company" to seek ancient artifacts; and since Egyptian items always fetched the best price, her hoary aged tombs would be my objective.

To steal Egyptian artifacts, I naively began with a survey of the most obvious spot: the known necropolis of thousands of years, the Valley of the Kings, the very plethora of interments there made my fingers itch. But in the course of seeking information on that area, I was completely discouraged to learn that between the tomb-robbing scandals of antiquity and the digging by modern day archaeologists, the site had been pretty well picked clean. The few discovered and unopened tombs of recent times were protected by armed guards of the Egyptian Department of Antiquities.

My researches next brought me details of frustrated efforts of scientists to find the unexcavated mortuary temple below the pyramid at Dashur, and a second account of the mute and mysterious pyramid of El Kuleh at Luxor which likewise had defied all attempts to locate its entrance. Both structures were certain to contain untouched treasure. But their proximity to urban centers ruled against rifling them - even if I could find ingress where other using the most technical sophistications (including even a magnetron) had miserably failed.

While in the Cairo Museum, I stumbled by accident across a very old and a very evil book an arab wrote of his travels in the Egyptian and Arabian deserts - in the Dark Ages. And I read that which proposed a third, though very speculative, possibility, even though that arab was considered (by occultists only, I should admit) as an accepted though infamous authority on certain other eldritch matters.

This authority had heard around desert campfires a weird belief and had verified it himself, he claimed: The desert people had since time immemorial observed that tracks of carrion-eating jackals would be found circling, as if inquisitively following a scent, some spot in the Lybian desert beneath which ancient, rock-hewn sepulchers were hidden.

Having decided not only "where" but "how" I would seek ancient burials, I turned to the problems of obtaining at least two co-partners possessing specialized talents the project called for. Because of his knowledge of ancient art objects as well as of more modern ones of Medieval and Reformation periods, I recruited Karpis, a dishonest dealer in art frauds and copies, living on the Bosphorus. He would examine whatever we dug up, advising what was worth the most for our limited means of return transport across the desert to the Mediterranean Sea.

His nationality had long been a mystery to me despite his habitual fez, implying Turkish or Lebanese ancestry; once I had heard him referred to as "Karpoulis", a Greek sounding name. He accepted my offer on one odd condition: that he be allowed to carry away, besides his own share of the plunder, 15 or 20 pounds of earth from whatever ancient burial we discovered.

The other partner was a professional killer with a thirst for anonymity to the extent of requesting we call him by the racial designation of "Dago". Because of his obvious Mafia connections, he was able to interest a certain international "business" organization to buy whatever we came away with.

He was a typical Sicilian as most Mafioso are, being dark or olive complexion, indicating that mixture of barbaric African negro blood with Southern Italians, which supposedly accounts for the brutal execution-type murders they commit.

My two "business partners" met me in Abu Roash in the north where the pyramids start: from there we traveled southward by bus, following the continuous line of pyramids - which the arabs with keen perception call the "mountains of pharaoh" - till we reached Lisht where this artificial mountain range ends and the real mountains of Libya begins. In Lisht the four Bedouins I had hired through a Cairo agency were waiting, and I told them they were to dig for an archaeological expedition in the Lybian desert.

We left that day and soon were passing the Valley of the Kings, that grim mortuary of the pharaohs, remote in its awesome desolation and maggoty with archaeologists' exploratory burrows; and then we entered the Lybian wastes.

After a few days of aimless wandering and growing restiveness of the others, I came across the tracks of a jackal and, after directing that we trail after them, saw my partners glance at each other. The tracks proceeded for a whole day in random fashion. The next morning we resumed tracking, I alone surveying the signs of the animal's frequent pausing to sniff at sun-scorched sands and halting once where it uncovered a desiccated bone fragment.

Near sunset, when I could sense a mutiny building up, the tracks veered towards a sunken depression in the hot sands where the animal had walked the vast circumference first, then criss-crossed and retraced it in apparently erratic fashion but which I knew was due to frustration.

"Here we dig", I informed my two partners and turning to the four Bedouins, repeated the statement, adding orders to pitch our camp about fifty feet away.

Dago, having watched overcuriously for several days my minute study of the jackal spoor, could contain his perplexity no longer and insisted on an explanation.

"Because," I said, "those desert scavengers always know where there's been an ancient burial". He was incredulous.

The Bedouins began scraping up sand with small wicker baskets; in an hour they excitedly brought to me clay chips mixed with the sand, the inevitable proof of underground quarrying and a tomb. We all pitched in then and before long uncovered the camouflaged entrance which our crowbars forced open. Within it a passage indistinctly slanted downwards; out of it there came an exhalation of a noxious odor which I found disagreeable but by which all the others hardly appeared to be affected.

The slanting passage ended in a vast hypostyle hall of a mortuary temple whose colossal pillars carved with evilly obscene hieroglyphics were lit up sinisterly by our flashlights and whose remoter reaches were obscured in crazily distorted shadows. But I was not interested in exploring that, only the mummy boxes. The result - if I interpreted the signs before me and correctly correlated them with my reading - was one of several known mass re-burials of the noble dead by the Saites of the 26th Dynasty, to thwart ancient tomb robbers who had already produced a scandal in Ramses IX's reign.

There seemed to be no elaborate death traps set to guard this sepulcher, as I cautiously entered the hypostyle hall: instead the ancient priests had sought to discourage and frighten away would-be tomb robbers with a dreadful curse written in hieroglyphics atop one wall. Beneath it the warning was duplicated in a fresco of the Hall of Judgment where the soul of the intruder was weighed in the scales of Osiris.

But it was the abomination, waiting to render the sentence of Osiris' judgment, that temporarily made me ill at ease, though I am not a superstitious individual: a creature that must have been more a symbolic representation of the underworld than an actual entity, for no such biological grotesque could ever have existed; a winged, composite abnormality: a gargoyle of ancient Khen; a repellent crocodile-headed hideousness with the trunk of a lion and the talons of a bird: the ghoulish Ammit, Eater of the Dead.

But Egyptian curses were nothing new. What afterwards befell the openers of King Tutankhamen's tomb was hardly more than superstitious coincidence. Besides I had rifled many a modern grave without ill effect or being followed by curses or hauntings.

As I started to collect jeweled trinkets I noticed there was a scene carved on the nearest sarcophagus which Dago studied with such an intent air of fascination that I looked too. It was a macabre scene of priestly embalmers wearing the ritualistic masks of Anubis (the jackal-headed god of their profession) while they bent over a corpse whose body organs were being removed and placed in the canopic jars behind them. In his brutish ignorance he thought it a sadistic scene of a torture-murder, saying as much to me. I shrugged: there was no point in educating a person with such atrophied humanity.

We pried the lid off this sarcophagus, then lifted out the lacquered mummy box. As we pried it open, my nostrils were assailed by the invisible cloud of aromatic balms and spices and natron that spewed forth: that, and a faint, putrescent stench of dried blood from several thousand years. I remarked on this latter stench only to have the two companions look at me oddly.

The mummy wrapping held a significant brownish discoloration. Unwrapping the head revealed the pharaoh had died a violent death: one side of the face had suffered a terrible wound - a dry, fibrous ruin tenuously held together by the cobweb of a tomb spider. I could recall nothing in the incomplete History of Manetho of this obscure Pharaoh Rekhmes.

I ascended to the outside to forestall any entrance by our Bedouins who now were growing concerned because we had not returned immediately: telling them that the tomb was full of mephitic vapors which Europeans could resist better than inhabitants of desert climes like themselves appeared to satisfy them.

Returning then to that subterranean void of old, I saw that Karpis, who had commenced digging up charnel earth as per our agreement ceased in his labors and was spellbound like Dago had been but by something different. From behind I could see him gaping at a six-foot idol on whose base was the hieroglyphy for Setekh. I saw him attempt several sketches of the god, tearing up one after another as the anomalous features eluded his pencil. His

predicament was understandable as Setekh, the strangest of all the ancient Egyptian gods, had the head of an animal puzzling and unidentifiable to modern zoologists.

Concentrating only on the most priceless of the smaller items and totally eschewing anything taking up excessive knapsack space, our endeavor for this initial stage was over. We would return later. We began pulling down our tents.

I thought nothing of it when Dago asked two of the Bedouins into the tomb to help him with something; Karpis and I were too busy packing the stolen treasures. When he reappeared, alone, and requested the remaining Bedouins to come also. I decided it was unusual - as did one of them who nervously doubted the reputed mephitic vapors were gone - and I dropped my work and hurried down into the excavation. Halfway within the underground passage, I bumped into Dago and angrily demanded an explanation.

"Dead men tell no tales." He drew his finger across his throat, smiling. "It wasn't necessary! There was another way to handle them." I was enraged at his arrogant presumption. "Even after we replace the surface sand, this area will now become too conspicuous by a horde of jackals drawn from miles around by the scent of fresh death. The desert arabs will notice; then no more private treasure house."

On the way to the sea Dago deliberately kept attempting to disclose the unpleasant details of the four bedouins' deaths. Before I finally had to threaten him to make him shut up, he had got as far as revealing that each man died dissimilarly, boasting as a bully does that to use the same method in each case would have been lacking in professional finesse and imagination. I have seen this morbid "pride" in other Mafia killers in the Roaring 1920s, who also indifferently talked of each "hit" being novel and inventive.



An arabian fishing boat ferried us from Egypt's delta region northward into the Aegan Sea; and we were shortly making a landfall of the little Grecian island on which we must await the buyer of our goods. I saw as we neared what appeared to be the cindery excrement of an ancient, drowned volcano, with gloomy cypress trees and funeral-like ruins on its hills etched against the sunset. The scene was like a melancholy evocation of a locality seen in a dream... hauntingly reminiscent of a macabre landscape painted by Arnold Becklin of the grim Ponzianne Islands in the Tyrrhenian Sea. We landed and rented rooms in the taverna.

That evening Dago went to bed early, complaining of an obscure fever; while I shared a bottle of the queerly resin-flavored wine of Greece with the tavern keeper. Karpis went out, carrying a small canvas bag, mumbling something about rambling among the ancient burial ruins on the hillside.

It could have been an hour later that Dago strayed down, not to partake of the wine, but to lament of dreams induced by his fever. One of them was a nightmarish experience in which Anubis-masked Egyptian priests bent over him with curious surgical instruments in their hands - the same scene as carved on Rekhmes' sarcophagus. I decided not to inform him that the priestly-embalmers de-viscerated a corpse with such instruments.

In the morning I was awakened out of a deep sleep not by the light of day nor birdsongs but by an exotically spiced odor, unidentifiable but maddeningly familiar. As I drowsily opened my eyes, I grumbled, "Who is burning that damn incense?"

I got up, dressed and poked around in the deserted downstairs. The smell, even though faint, not only filled the atmosphere, it literally permeated the whole house. Presently Karpis and the taverna keeper were astir in their rooms; the odor began to dissipate with the rising of a sea breeze filtering through a just-opened window or door.

Dago had not yet come down to breakfast, so in view of his fever, we apprehensively went upstairs. In the hallway near his door lingered only a trace of that spicy, natron-like scented air. Within his tightly shut room it was overpowering; and it became increasingly perplexing to me that Karpis and the taverna keeper did not remark about it. But Karpis was staring at our late partner whose eyes were fixed glassily on some unspeakable horror.

"He died of the fever", opined Karpis; the taverna keeper nodded assent.

While they dug a grave, I contrived, unsuccessfully, to get into Dago's room - but it was locked now - to examine the dead man's chest and abdomen to nullify a disturbing idea I had.

That same day a millionaire's yacht anchored off the island; Karpis boarded her and exchanged our plunder for money, without incident. As they steamed off, I pondered on what sort of return voyage they would have with that cargo. For I was thinking of another ship and another cargo years ago, of the strange shipwreck off the Spanish coast and how everything was lost, including Pharaoh Menkure's mummy box which they were carrying.

Karpis and I separated after that, I returning to Europe and he presumably back to that habitation of his on the Bosphorus. Some months later I was surprised to receive a large envelope from that area. Inside was a brief note from a local coroner, informing me Karpis had committed suicide and had left a sealed letter with my name and address on it which the coroner had enclosed. I tore open the second envelope and read: -

I never told you the purpose for which I carried away charnel clay from that Egyptian burial place. You suspected, rightly so, that I also dug earth from an Aegan tomb the night Dago died; but you never knew I have for years obtained grave earth from centuried sepulchres like Mitla in Mexico, Celtic long burrows in Ireland - the list is long.

But I always sculptured my bogus ancient figurines from the very native earth their culture springs from, thus doubly outwitting the so-called art experts.

On returning here to the Bosphorus I began modeling a copy of that Setekh image in that tomb and, acting on an aberrant impulse, began mixing with its charnel clay other clays and earths from ancient graves all over the world.

The last few nights while I worked on the figurine there would come from its mouth a soft whisper as of a zephyr; a whisper that swelled until it spoke like a multitude of dead voices in strange tongues... ghosts.

What does it mean - these haunting voices that flow nightly from the lips of that half-made shape? Their tone is accusatory.

I sit now with a gun for protection - against what I don't know... a judgment is coming... perhaps there is an escape....

- Karpis

As I have often said I am coarse fibred where the so-called supernatural is concerned. But the slow accumulation of preternatural hints in this whole Egyptian venture reached a climax with Karpis' letter (which I purposefully refrain from commenting upon) and caused such a reaction that I sought to hide in pursuits and thoughts of dull mediocrity and grey prosaicism, anything sterily unimaginative or drearily humdrum. But it was no use.

In the beginning my nightmares were not of visions but of odors and foetors. Nightly I would sink into dreamless sleep but with a conscious awareness of a musty, ancient dust and bat dung; sometimes the nightmare was of a different odor - the putrescent stench as of a charnel house.

Imperceptibly, these nightmares were replaced by dreams of many dim-litten places and a compulsion to crawl worm-like ever upward, companioned by a shadowy presence which instructed me in certain awesome deeds.

While some of these dreams were agonizingly recurrent, there were others that were episodic, mercifully never repeated. Like the one of the horror that found my dream-self more frightening than I found it. Only a fragment comes to memory, of some greyish underground room with a gothic rib-vault ceiling. In a wall niche squatted a stony, dwarf simulacrum, the wings on its shoulders hunched around and folded to conceal its head and face, as if in slumber. At some slight sound I made, its stony wings trembled into life, exposing a face not to be described. It flew off into the gloom uttering a weird, squeaking cry.

Disturbed as I was by these dreams, there was one worse matter. I began to find in the mornings, occasionally, dried mud upon my bedclothes and my pajamas and dirt under my fingernails. The suspicion I was sleepwalking during these nightmares insinuated itself. And then came that appalling terminal revelation, when dreaming of a subterranean region, I awoke in the dawn - not in my bed but crawling upward from a tunneled grave.

Some blind nemesis or ancient curse (it matters little which any more) has visited a terrible poetic justice or judgment upon me. These many years before I had been a modern ghoul, robbing graves for jewelry or medical specimens. A ghoul in the ancient sense I had become now: a necrophagi, an Eater of the Dead, and my mentor - Ammit, scavenger of Nilotic catacombs.

What the Moon Brings

by George Melzel

I would never have become a specialist in oriental languages (and thus never had the strange experience to be related) if it had not been for certain family heirlooms - souvenirs of my dad's navy service in the China Seas in 1905. These souvenirs up to twenty years ago reposed on the family mantelpiece, where even as a small boy I never tired of minutely scrutinizing them and wondering what stories were behind them.

On opposite sides of the mantel stood the twobrown, age stained vases, each made of entire hollow bambo tree trunk, filigreed with bearded Chinese figures standing within a delicately carved, columned portice. My dad called each a representation of the "Goddess of Evil"; and a superstitious older brother years later, having received them as a legacy, declared them "bad luck" and passed them to me.

Sitting somewhere near one of the vases was a small Buddha of tarnished brass which my dad often said would have cost him his life if a Chinaman saw it. (He would tell simultaneously of a Buddhist temple he had visited after climbing an enormous rock cut staircase; and I suspect now he had stolen the idol from there). The third item was a blackened, brass Chinese pipe with a large detachable mouth piece (for the owner) and two smaller ones (for guests). It always reeked faintly of an odd odour that in retrospect I feel was due to opium. And one more was a fairly bright brassy bowl with Chinese engraving on the outside circumference which served to hold dad's pipe or tobacco ashes.

All these objects now sit atop my bookcase, having been passed on to me. But there is one more which I acquired myself recently: an amulet with Tibetan-Sanskrit writing on it, which I keep locked away and dare only look at in the dark of the moon.

I was sitting one summer evening in my little study in Calcutta, contemplating all these family heirlooms while I wrestled with a philological problem, when there came a soft tapping on the glass of the opened balcony door. As I glanced up a burnoose-garbed man came in, and, fearing a bandit, I reached on the desk for some weapon.

"May I see you? I have something to show you." The voice was apologetic and familiar, but the little of the face visible was that of a stranger, an incredibly aged man.

I recognized the voice as belonging to a vagabond, named Haldane, a European whom I first saw about a year ago, who surprised me by his affecting the garb of a nomadic Kirghiz: wearing a pointed cap bordered with lambskin, a heavy fur coat despite the heat of the day and boots. He made a precarious living by wandering in the short summer months across the deserts and steppes of Central Asia looking for old Mongolian manuscripts in the ruins of monasteries, or buying them from livestock breeders or former Buddhist monks, for high re-sale to bibliophiles and scholars (like myself). Always he required I translate some portion of what he offered for sale to see if I gave him a fair price of its worth. This is what I thought his intentions were now.

I protested as he boldly drew the curtain, arguing that it would block circulation of the sultry atmosphere.

Again he apologized "I know. But I have an aversion to moonlight which will soon be shining through this window."

The dark shade of the lamp threw a cone of light upon the desk, leaving the rest of the study in shadow. The visitor withdrew into this concealing darkness and removed from around his neck what appeared to be a Mongol coin with a golden chain running through a square hole in its center. I saw a second time the shocking physical change in this man as a withered hand came into the light with the coin. Was it leprosy or the premature aging from opium addiction?

As the object was thrust into my palm I experienced a light but unpleasant tingling as of an electric current flowing from it. I winced and dropped it hurriedly upon the desk. At the same time I noted a terrific pull of my watch towards it, indicating it was of some paramagnetic alloy.

Despite the magnifying glass the carving on the coin seemed to shift in focus as if in some infinitesimal motion. The brief words were in Tibetan-Sanskrit. Because of the odd blurring, I did not make a complete translation, just the sense: the amulet - for its inscription now proved it was not a coin - reputedly drew some mystic influence from moonlight which it passed on to the wearer: there was a warning restriction on when not to wear it - during the time of the full and waning moon - and something else undecipherable. I laid it down until my eyes might recover from the curious fatigue gazing at it had induced.

"What does it say?"

"It would suggest that in Central Asia moon worship instead of fire worship was the Mongol's religion. Where did you get it?"

"The lost tomb of Genghis Khan".

I was startled and unbelieving.

"If I know no other name in Uighur-Mongolian script, I do know that one - you have identified it for me on a number of manuscripts sold you ... I was resting at a lamaist monastery when a caravan entered at dawn to wait as do all Gobi travelers for the fiery sun to set before continuing. Among them was Sing Lee, a Chinese Mohammedan.

"At first his manner held that subtle arrogance most of his race have for Occidentals: his face a typical, emotionless oriental mask, in which a nuance of racial hatred might slyly peek out if you caught him off guard. However, his aloofness vanished, to be replaced by another mask: an inscrutable smile and a talkative sociability.

"I had just rolled up my sleeves to wash the desert dust from my face and arms, exposing my tattooed right forearm."

Haldane paused, and, rolling up the right sleeve of his burnoose, displayed on that terrible withered flesh a tattoo consisting of a black cat, skull and cross-bones and the numeral thirteen, all intertwined in an arabesque fashion; bordering it was an ugly knife wound, recently healed. Then rolling down his sleeve, Haldane resumed his story.

"He muttered excitedly and touched and traced out with his forefinger my tattoo. Then realizing his breach of etiquette, he bowed and meekly begged my pardon, and excusing himself profusely asked me to wait, as he would be right back to show me something.

"From the bottom of a saddle bag he withdrew a number of odds and ends, including a meat cleaver and a parcel wrapped within a piece of soiled yellow silk. Unwrapping it with great care, he revealed the worm-eaten leather covers of what he called his 'picture book', which he insisted on showing me. The extremely thin pages were water-stained, a few charred and all dirt-encrusted, and had the most peculiar feel to their texture. Red and blue were the only colors used. The line drawings were part bawdy, part naturalistic (animals, birds, etc.), and some were obscurely reminiscent of a carnival. With a shock of revulsion I realized I was looking at pieces of tattooed human skin.

"He seemed interested in my affairs, asking me innumerable questions and cautioning me not to continue to be a solitary traveler - with a broad hint I accept him as a temporary companion for mutual protection. When I told him that I might leave there in any direction on my search, he gave that inscrutable smile and said there were possibilities in some ruins half a night's journey away. When I asked him for directions, he stated it would be impossible for me to find as the way wound through an ancient gully with many branches, only one leading to the ruins, the others meandering enough to lose the uninitiated. But as a favor in return for my pardoning his recent breach of etiquette, he insisted on guiding me there.

"At sunset we left the monastery, riding across a chill, windy desert. Shortly afterwards we entered the gully and found it as circuitous and confusing as he described, so that I was glad I had not tried it alone. From time to time he would stop and examine the gravelly bottom for certain signs; finally he pointed a passage out and we climbed up where we had a clear view of the night sky, and after orienting himself by some starry configuration, he lead the way. 'Karakhota,' he smiled, pointing ahead.

"Looming up was the dead city, its silhouette nebulous, for the moon had not risen; but as I got closer its roofs shone pale with the reflected phosphorescent fire of the Milky Way overhead; its graceful minarets and domes, filigreed mosques and curved-roof pagodas resembling a piece of polished, antique Chinese ivory inlay, somnolently serene under the stars; and I could not understand why that Chinese Mohammedan had called so picturesque a ruin as Karakhota, 'black city'.

"Our horses became unmanagable, whining and shivering with fear the closer we got; so that finally near a ruined building we tethered them and finished our approach on foot. Sing Lee slipped the meat cleaver into his belt, and broadly grinning explained, 'Mebbe lobber there'.

"There were now unseen but familiar soft stirrings in the debris around us that the lizards, insects and other desert life make when they awake at nightfall; but these stirrings stopped at our approach and resumed after we passed.

"I browsed among the Islamic architecture which was of red sandstone and beautiful veined marble, some outer walls being inlaid with colored stones in Arabic letter patterns, and scanned the Chinese architecture with its ubiquitous dragon motif. Despite these evidences of beauty there was a subtle uneasiness I felt; it was unrelated to any definite impression, so that I resolved irrationally not to view in daylight whatever the merciful night now hid. And because of this, I decided to make a hurried search for loot, to be able to leave before dawn.

"In the center of that crumbling city, I found a mausoleum in the Chinese pagoda style, its sealed portal bearing unexplainable scratch marks. Over the lintel were inscriptions in Arabic, Chinese and Uighur-Mongol, none of which I could read, except one name in the latter language: 'Genghis Khan'. Had I stumbled by accident across his lost and elusive tomb?

"You know the story of his death and how as the funeral procession moved northward to the Onon River, the escort slaughtered every living thing encountered, whether man or beast, bird or reptile, almost as if they desired that no word of their line of march should be repeated; but rather than conceal their passage, this slaughter served to publicize it for hundreds of years.

"And because of this there were some who said the Onon River burial place was but a final stratagem and wish of the Khan's, so that even in death, he could outwit his enemies who might wish to despoil his grave and commit indignities upon his corpse: that while this funeral procession proceeded on its ghastly way, another secretly carried his corpse deep into the Gobi desert.

"Some had mistakenly since looked for it in the Ordus region in the great bend of the Hwang Ho. But here it was in Karakhota, in an obscure corner of the Gobi.

"In nervous haste I scooped away with my hands the sand blocking the lower part of the panel, and, using the cudgel I always carry for protection, forced open the protesting door. By now I had forgotten about my companion, so intense were my emotions, and was never aware for some time of his presence or absence.

"The mausoleum was a shadowy, brooding place, completely bare, except for a stone sarcophagus in the center of the floor and directly under the domed roof through whose windows penetrated the ghostly light of the Milky Way. It was surprising there were no treasures, no Russian golden samovars, no rich Manchu tapestry, no hand-carved Persian chessmen, no colorful Azerbaijan icon, nothing; not even any of the Khan's banners and battle-standards about which the old chronicles related unbelievable inhuman sacrifices.

"I strained and pushed the sarcophagus lid half-way off to see a tenebrous space, within which lay a grinning skeleton amid a litter of sand - around its neck an amulet, in its bony fingers a scimitar.

"As I reached for the trinket, I froze. In life the Khan had been not just a cruel man but an evil man as well. Around many a nomad campfire in Central Asia there still were whispers: of a dark pilgrimage he made to a forbidden plateau in mountainous Tibet, of his aberrant behaviour during the time of a full moon, and of his dabbling in astrology's darker side.

"Angry at my superstitious lapse I roughly jerked the golden chain of the amulet, rattling the spinal column and skull of the Khan, then retrieved the jeweled scimitar.

"To my ears there came a renewed stirring in remote sandy streets, as of a multitude of wiggling, slithering forms. In panic Sing Lee lapsed into a Chinese dialect mostly unknown to me, so that all I could understand was that our noisy blunderings had irritated some inhabitants in the ruins which I thought he characterized as a vast snake den; and he suggested more by pantomime than words that we should climb to the safety of the roofs, where I suppose we would wait for the false dawn which would send the sand vipers scurrying back to their lairs ahead of the fiery sun. So up we went.

"Against the yellowish orb of the just-rising full moon was the silhouette of minarets and domes, mosques and pagodas, the mingled architecture of Islam and China - the cultural plunder of the Khan's 'Golden Horde'. A moving blob of darkness marred the sky-line, a distortion as if caused by temperature inversion. But there came another and another until the city's silhouette became insubstantial from this flux of movement.

"Straining my eyes I was aghast to see crawling and creeping and fumbling over the majolica-tiled roofs towards us a horde of gaunt, shriveled, wasted figures, attired in a variety of rotting fur garments and cotton togs - whose styles implied the wearers once were Turks, Tartars, Uighurs, Uzbeks, Mongols.

"They came without the howling or gibbering a predatory horde, whether man or animal, always make hunting the hunted; they came in utter silence. But it was their expressionless, obscenely yellowish Mongolian features and dull, jaundiced yellow eyes that caused me to shiver; for their ghastly pigmentation proclaimed them to be the grisly 'Golden Horde' that inhabits the caves and ruins of nocturnal Gobi, the necrophagus blight of the great stony desert whom I thought a myth. What I had taken for the stirrings of sand vipers had been the obscene gathering of these loathsome things for a 'feast'.

"Muckahi!" cursed the Chinaman, pointing.

"Over the cornice of our roof came first one hand, then the other, preparatory to hoisting their owner up. It was the long, curved, yellow fingernails that sent a chill down my spine.

"I hacked off one with the Khan's scimitar but no blood or ichor flowed: in revulsion, I dropped the blade and fled. Once in our frenzied dash across those time-rotted roofs, I slipped and lost my balance on the polished tiles and would have fallen into the street below, but the Chinaman grabbed me at great risk of falling with me - which should have made me wonder then.

"In fact he exercised the greatest solicitude for my welfare, even to the point of aiding me to mount, though his own life was equally in danger, and selflessly rode behind me to act as a rearguard. Why one was needed where those sluggish horrors in the rear were concerned, I don't know, for our horses covered many miles before he shouted to me to slow down.

"We rode at a trot, Sing Lee immersed in enigmatical silence and I nodding exhaustively from the strain. I must have fallen asleep with my eyes open because the borderline between drowsy consciousness and strange grandiose dreams merged into one another imperceptibly. In my dreams I was frightened by an abnormal hyperacuity of all my senses and terrified that it presaged some neural affliction. Following it came a tremendous increase of my powers of thought and logic and concentration as if my brain capacity had expanded a thousand-fold: questions that once vexed me were now effortless knowledge; encyclopedic vistas crossed my mental eye.

"I remember how during this mental peak my thought wandered to, among other things, the historical controversy of why Genghis Khan was so invincible. And in a flash I had the answer, simplicity itself: tactical mobility - the mounted Mongol bowman versus the unmounted European bowman. I suspected the amulet then, instinctively suspected it had something to do with Genghis Khan's military genius, and that it would also influence any possessor to heights of mental brilliance.

"Something, either another dream or extra-sensory perception, occurred now and I was in the Chinaman's mind and saw him watching me furtively and knew he was not a dilettante of the grotesque so much as he was a grim sort of collector! I awoke in a nightmare sweat.

"And under that waning moon there came other phenomenal ideas but now in my conscious mind. I toyed with trivia like why the Chinese sometimes call the desert, Han-hai (the 'dry sea'), speculating alternately because of a race memory of a paleozoic inland sea and sometimes ascribing it to the wave-like furrows in the dunes made by the wind. And I caught myself gazing at the rippled sand patterns with the same kind of vacant fascination that an opium eater finds in staring narcotized at ordinary objects. Then for a while I sank into a dreamless sleep.

"I was aroused by a painful sensation as of cold fire, an icy consuming flame in my flesh where the moonlight bathed it; the skin tissue looked deteriorated. That fantastic insight I seemed cursed with seized from memory old lines written by the poet Drummond of Hawthornden,

... all beneath the moon decays ...

and I shuddered, for I saw my body literally wasting away in magical sympathy with the wasting moon. There was a roaring of blood in my ears and this time I plunged into a final oblivion, watched by the sphinx-like Sing Lee.

"When I returned to my senses it was in the dark of the moon. A sympathetic Moslem was bathing my head with a wet cloth. At my feet Sing

Lee lay dead. The Moslem had found us locked in a death struggle, one of my hands around the Chinaman's throat, the other gripping the one clutching the meat cleaver. To the Moslem it looked like a case of robber and victim; I never told him what I thought."

Haldane's story seemed to me to be compounded of fantasy and paranoia; I simply blurted it out. "You certainly don't believe moonlight has a supernatural effect on you?"

"I do not. I am a materialist. What others call supernatural, to me is mechanistic. When the moon is full, there are some who go mad from its rays - have not electrophysiologists measured a coincidence: the heightened brainwaves of asylum inmates with the moon's increase? It is often said the line between genius and madness is hair-thin. If the moon brings lunacy, might it also bring genius? Yet whichever the moon brings, I fear it".

He sat meditating on his own words for some minutes. Then with quiet finality, he said as he got up, "I must destroy that amulet - throw it into the Ganges".

And he had picked up the amulet before I could reach it. I tried to bar his way but with the strength of madness he brushed me aside and stumbled fully into the moon's greenish beams as he lunged against the balcony door. He visibly aged decades in seconds: the bony hand that had pushed me aside was now a skeletal claw; his face the color of algae slime; the skin around the teeth shrunk to a grin of death; and what was left of the desiccated horror collapsed under a wrinkled garment. Beyond the skeletal fingers lay the amulet, reflecting the moonlight. And echoing nightmarishly in my mind was the poetic fragment from Drummond, like some hideous epitaph:

... all beneath the moon decays ...



TOTEM

by John Jacob

I was returning by train from eight months' long field work among the Tsimshian Indians of northwest California. Extended fellowships from several foundations had allowed me to continue my anthropological study of the religious norms of the model Athapaskan-speaking peoples of northern California. I was prepared to return to my home - a secluded house in the San Bernardino Mountains - when a telegram reached me at a hotel in Porterville, near the Tule River Indian Reservation. It was from one of my graduate students at the University of California at San Diego where I was a professor in anthropology and folklore.

Dr. Forrest: Stay in Porterville. Bringing important information for you personally. Details later.

- Linda Lightfoot

It was certainly a strange request. Linda was one of my erstwhile students and ardently supported my theories concerning migration of folk-belief. My present concern was for the exchange between the advanced Athapaskan-speaking peoples of upper California and such primitive tribes as the Yuma Indians of the Mohave Desert. Linda herself was an Indian and had grown up on the Agua Caliente Indian Reservation, very near to my mountain home. Ever since she had come to the University, she had been particularly evasive about her tribal origin. I had assumed she was a Jicarilla Apache, since she lived with a Jicarilla tribe while on the reservation.

I was in no particular hurry to get home. As a matter of fact, a little rest would probably have been just what I needed while spring lasted. Months of compiling notes and transcribing tapes in the heat of the summer didn't look very favorable after spending eight months with the Tsimshians, following them in their seasonal, shifting search for food. Since Linda was coming up in person, I left my gear in my room in Porterville and went into the nearby reservation to visit the Tule River Indians. A day or so doing what I like best could hardly be considered work, so I spent a relaxing day on the reservation, discussing my theories with the resident ethnographer.

When I returned late that night I found Linda waiting in my room. How she managed to wheedle the key out of the young porter wasn't difficult to understand. She had all the beauty of the American Indian and all the enthusiasm of someone just beginning a great adventure. When I first received her telegram I had considered her request strange because she was rarely interested in field work. It wasn't hard to divine why, since she had spent most of her life on a reservation. But the details she had promised me awaited, and I had hardly walked in the door before I received them.

"Hello, Linda. How's the University treating you?" I took off my jacket and brushed dust off my pants before sitting down in a chair across the room.

"I'm really glad you got my message. Dr. Forrest. I know I wasn't too specific but I was in a rush collecting equipment, and I didn't want you going home before I had a chance to tell you what I found out." By now Linda was nervously bouncing her legs on the bed, and I couldn't help but look on with a trace of amusement. She had never done *real* field work before, but she had put what she called her "equipment" in a corner of the room and was wearing her oldest levis and a work shirt. Still, I had never seen Linda so nervous or excited. I decided to listen respectfully until her "important" information emerged out of her excited thoughts.

For the next hour I listened first with respect, then with curiosity, and finally with eagerness as she told her unusual story. She related her return to her reservation for a visit during the spring break. There she had taken up residence in a house owned by her elder kinswomen. They had been reluctant to admit her to their dwelling at first but finally agreed to let her stay for a few days. At this point her story took on real interest for me, for I know that only on rare occasions will the elders of an Apache tribe admit younger Indians into their dwellings. The elders of Apache tribes have never established a gerontocracy - absolute rule by old tribal members - but the elders of both sexes are recognized by other Indians to possess the power of shamanism and are considered guardians of tribal history.

As she talked, Linda grew progressively more excited. In spite of her buoyant enthusiasm, she seemed to be under a great strain in telling me this. I thought more than once that I glimpsed a look of fear in her eye or heard an almost inaudible faltering in her voice.

She had been on the reservation only two days when the elders warned her to leave for her own good. Strangely, it wasn't an order they issued but rather a pitying, sympathetic plea.

"I probably should have taken the hint that I just wasn't wanted around there. But their insistence just provoked my own stubbornness, so I stayed. The next night I learned why they had wanted me to go.

"I had settled for the night in the upper loft of the house, which two old women had vacated when I arrived. There were now six sleeping below me. That night the dogs were unusually restless for some reason and kept me up. Very early the next morning I heard whispers and soft movements below me. I crept to the edge of the loft and looked down. Below me all six women were standing around several totemic figures."

Here I took a start: an Indian never gave oblation or prayed to more than her tribe's individual totem. More than one totem in an elder's lodge was sacrilege. If Linda had reported two totems, I would have assumed she saw two figures of the same totem, one of which had appeared to take on a different

form in the darkness. But she was not mistaken about the number of totems she had seen.

"I must have watched for more than an hour. At least six totems were propitiated. The old women usually spoke in Jicarilla, and I recognized at least three of the totems as Apache, including the familiar Jicarilla and Chiricahua totems. But at one point the six of them spoke together in Navaho and in several languages or dialects I had never heard before and could not identify. Some of the figures were familiar - the snake totem, for instance. Others were alien to me; they did not correspond to any tribe or band in the world which I've studied.

"It was their last propitiatory rite which has brought me here, Doctor. It was that which fascinated me. The women spoke before a figure I could not see because of the shadows cast by their bodies in the moonlight. They spoke a Navaho dialect. I could only recognize it by a few syllables. But they continually spoke the name 'Tsa-kiute' as they propitiated the gods through the totem. Then it was over. The Indian elders began moving the totems, and I went back to my pallet for fear of being seen. Morning came and I descended my ladder to the smell of frying cornbread. None of the women paid me any attention, but as usual, their faces betrayed nothing."

As Linda spoke she became nervous, almost apprehensive. I saw at once why she had wired me to wait for her. She wanted to discuss these strange totemic rites. I could anticipate the questions she later asked me: why were the maternal elders of the Jicarilla Apaches propitiating other tribal gods? Why were these rites done at night and in secrecy when they were usually performed at a public festival of life, with the paternal elders assisting? I never anticipated what she said next.

"I took a jeep back to the University and went to the Anthropology Library. I searched among Navaho dictionaries, Jicarilla dictionaries, Chiricahua dictionaries - case studies you've done of the Modocs, almost everything pertaining to dialects of existing California tribes. I stayed at the Library through the night - I guess I slept sometime - and continued looking the next day. You know what I was looking for, of course. It was that word - 'Tsa-kiute.' I tried all possible ways of spelling patterned on the elders' pronunciation but nothing worked. I finally was about to give up my search for what I was sure had to be a tribal name or totem name I had never encountered before, until I leafed through some of Professor Kraeber's unfinished compilations of the tribal dialects of exterminated California Indians. And I found the name! It was where I should have looked all along, under Navaho-language related dialects of ancient tribes of California. I found the word listed in the final pages of Kraeber's ANCIENT DIALECTS."

I remembered that that was the manuscript Professor Kraeber had been researching immediately before he died. We had retained it in the Library in case the work was ever adopted by another ethnographer, but most of my colleagues considered the work, in its present form, almost worthless.

"Well, if it was the name of a tribe or band, wasn't it listed as merely meaning 'the people,' as almost all primitive tribal and band names do?" I asked, hoping to calm her down a little. Not only was she getting too excited for her own good, but her excitement was starting to get to me as well.

"No, that's just it! It is the name of a band, a band that was supposedly exterminated by 1800 in smallpox and measles epidemics. But the name doesn't mean 'the people'; it means 'the half-sons!'"

Never had a tribe or band named themselves so peculiarly. Names other than "the people" or "we, the chosen ones" were not common, but they existed. None to my knowledge, however, was so ambiguous, so elusive and curious.

"You know, Linda, that name is awfully reminiscent of several other tribal names - not to speak of the hundreds of band names we have never recorded. Maybe you got it confused with Kwakiutl, Kuku, or even Kiowa. They all sound practically alike to the untrained ear."

Linda was off the bed and pacing. "You really think I have an untrained ear? You must have forgotten I grew up at Agua Caliente, and since then I've studied anthropology continuously for almost five years. No! I think Kraeber was right. And I think, judging from those totemic ceremonies, every one of which was spoken in supplication to *existing* totems of *existing* tribes, that this tribe still exists. And I think Kraeber has shown me where to find it." Her dark eyes flashed at me as she stopped at the tiny window and looked out.

I had never seen her so troubled - or so dedicated toward a single project. She had always been a good student, and a friend as well. However, she had been secretive toward me as well as her classmates at times. I often suspected it had something to do with her birth. One of my colleagues had gone so far as to suggest that she was no Apache at all, that the absence of high cheek-bones and her height suggested that she was almost completely white. I disagreed but I had thought about it more often than I like to admit. She had dark eyes, a svelte figure, and very dark, straight hair, but she avoided discussing Agua Caliente as much as possible. When one of our research fellows wanted to do field work among the Jicarillas, she would answer none of his questions and he was finally forced to do his background research on the reservation itself.

She shook her hair back and the moon lit up her eye as I studied her profile. I made the sudden decision to help her with whatever she was after. Perhaps this would draw her out of her shell, perhaps this would finally make her happy. But I knew if I offered to aid her too quickly she would be suspicious of my motives. She didn't want anyone exploiting her for her knowledge of Indian life; she wanted to make her *own* contribution to anthropology.

Matter-of-factly, I said, "O.K., where do you think this 'lost tribe' is?" She jumped back onto the bed, folding her legs under her. A secret gleam appeared in her eye. "I don't know exactly, but Kraeber had the co-ordinates marked: 39 degrees north, 121 degrees west."

"Of course, that's just approximate," she hastened to add as I forced myself to look doubtful. "But I think they must have lived on the Feather River. My theory is that they were either cut off by some natural disaster, such as a flood, or they moved off onto a tributary which is dry at its source but somehow still active at the point of the Indians' camp."

I had to admit that her theory was an impressive one. I had never been in the Feather River area and those coordinates included an awful lot of land; but a systematic search around the uninhabited Feather River area *could* turn up some surprising discoveries.

"All right, Linda. I'll go along with you. What do you want me to do?" At that the gleam turned to a look of open happiness. "Well, I know you have to be back to compile your work and then to teach again. But can you authorize this trip I'm taking as requisite for my graduate work? Then I can stay out of school without worrying about it. And - well, I know this is an awful lot to ask, Dr. Forrest - but can you give me lessons or something, beyond what I've learned in class, about actual field work? Give me some hints on what to do?"

"I'll do it on one condition. You have to promise to write me every week and tell me how you're doing. I'd be in pretty hot water if I let you wander around out in the desert by yourself. In fact, the only reason I'm considering it is that you've been around Indians all your life - and because I'm going to make sure you don't make the trip alone."

Linda quickly agreed to my condition and we made plans to begin early the next morning.

The first thing I did was to go over her gear with her. I threw away most of the canned goods she had brought and gave her dehydrated food from my own surplus equipment. I gave her a pack frame and substituted a sleeping bag for her blankets. I stored most of her underwear and a lot of her clothes in my bags for her to pick up when she returned. I gave her propane cartridges with a lamp. And I gave her a gun.

For the next two days we intermittently discussed the realities of field work. I reviewed her working knowledge of Navaho, which wasn't very great. I hoped that would be compensated for by her knowledge of Apache tongues. We also discussed her theory. We scoured minute maps of the region she planned to enter and I gave her my suggestions. Finally, I wired ahead to Chico, near the Feather River, and arranged for an Indian guide to help her.

Four days after I had received her wire we both stood on the railroad platform waiting for trains traveling in opposite directions. Mine would carry me through to San Diego; hers stopped at Chico. If Linda was one thing, it was tenacious. Up to the last minute before I helped her board she was rattling off phrases in dialectical Navaho. She wouldn't take any money from me. I knew, but I also knew even if she did stumble upon the "lost tribe" she would need more money for traveling than she had. I gave it to her the only way she'd take it.

"You know, Linda, most students who do field work get stipends or scholarships for semesters off," I said as off-handedly as possible as she settled in her seat.

This day, the day the trip was to begin, she was cheerful. "I know, but they usually give a little more notice, don't they?" she laughed.

"Well, this is a special case. I'm going to give you some money - pardon me, *loan* you some money - and here's my address. Don't forget your promise." With that I left.

She watched me from the window of the coach until the train was far out of sight across the flat, brown earth. I turned around and picked up my pack and headed for the hotel. I had lied to her: my train didn't leave until tomorrow.

II

True to form, Linda's first letter came about twelve days after I had returned home. It was very enthusiastic and helped greatly in allaying whatever latent fears I had felt about the venture.

April 26

Dear Dr. Forrest,

I certainly hope that this reaches you when it's required to. My guide, Sam, and I are resting tonight on the north bank of the Feather. I want to thank you for that equipment! If I had taken those cans of food I would never have even gotten this far from Chico. I guess you know Sam is part Cherokee. He's helped me a lot (including carrying this letter); we've had fresh meat brought down by his rifle almost every night now. I've had no occasion to use the gun *you* gave me, Doctor, but there are cougars in the area and I'm glad to have it, especially when Sam is away from camp at night.

I've had no convincing evidence of the Tsa-kiute being near, but Sam managed to get me into a nearby Modoc matrilineal band's camp, and I spoke pidgin Navaho with them, after following the traditional period of silence you advised me on. One old woman rambled on about a tribe of "totem-eating" (that's the only way I could translate the word) Indians who had recently come out of the hills; before I could adequately question her she was hustled away. The headwoman of the band said she was insane in old age, but I'm not so sure.

Tomorrow we continue upstream; we may cross the Feather to the northern side and look for signs of life. I'll report from there.

Peace,
Linda

Her letters continued to come about once a week, still enthusiastic, but with little news to report. I thought the time out in the country would be good for her in any case, and I knew Sam to be a good guide. Somehow he managed

to get Linda's letters to me, no matter how far into the country they had traveled. As often as not, they were close to a cabin, or a ranch or someone who had contact with the outside.

Then June 1st I received a hastily-scrawled letter.

May 19

Dear Dr. Forrest,

I don't have much time to talk to you this time - much though I enjoy it. It's good to "talk" to someone besides Sam these days.

I think we've found it! Sam picked up fresh spoor of a small tribe of Indians. I can tell by their tracks. The tracks headed upstream, but through the rushing middle fork. We had avoided it, thinking the most arid area would harbor the Tsa-kiute. We're going up the fork now.

Till later,
Linda

I didn't hear a word for three weeks after that. To tell the truth, I was very busily ensconced in the correlation of my field work with that of the European aboriginal expert Professor Evans. My data on the Tsimshian was not important only in itself, but the implications of basic purviews of religion and ritual throughout the world pointed to one primal model. It was my primary task to track down that model and its geographic origin, if any. But Linda's letters usually took my mind off such serious matters. I like to think she was experiencing some adventure in her first field work, particularly since it was among peoples and terrain she knew and liked.

Her letter of the 25th propelled me into the most serious considerations of man's origins and ancestors that I ever dared to imagine. No longer could I take her work lightly; compared to my own work, what she had found and was reporting could have upset the entire field of science, had I allowed anyone else to see the letters. To this day I am glad I have kept them concealed.

June 25

Dear Dr. Forrest,

You won't believe it, but we've done it! We've contacted the Tsa-kiute! We traveled until we lost the spoor, then continued upriver until the river gave out. Even Sam had never seen the country beyond. We traveled for weeks in the dusty bed of the river, noting occasional wet spots in the sand. We dug into several and came up with dirty but drinkable water twice. We criss-crossed the banks as they narrowed and occasionally came across old footprints. We were low on water, digging water-roots when we could find them and chewing on them to conserve water.

Nine days ago I went ahead as Sam filled the waterbag from a hole we scooped up. I crossed the southern fork, passed through a black ravine the sun couldn't touch because of its precipitous sides, and stumbled into a desert arroyo. In front of me, not three hundred yards away, stood a village of mud huts - entirely empty. I ran forward, shouting for Sam, thinking he was close, but before I could reach the huts the arroyo came alive with people - men, women, a few children. There were perhaps forty naked Indians in all. Their appearance shocked me. If they were indeed Indians, I guessed at first, none of them could be full-bloods. They were tall, much unlike the desert Yumans who occupied almost identical terrain. Their cheek-bones were not high. Their eyes were black, as were their heads of hair. The hair rose on my head as I took them in: they seemed completely unsurprised by my entrance. And yet, Doctor, I'm *sure* they weren't trailing us. Sam would have guessed it. I walked forward slowly, speaking "Tsa-kiute" to the man who appeared to be the leader. I came face-to-face with him; he said nothing. After a moment he stepped aside, and an old woman came forward. She repeated "Tsa-kiute," pointing to herself and her people. And then I collapsed from lack of water and excitement.

I must have been delirious for two days - don't worry, Doctor, I'm quite well now. Sam found us a few hours later. Since Sam has been here, he has been very uncooperative. He hardly speaks to me now. He sits in the hut we were given, clutching his rifle. He positively refuses to help with my work! I'm afraid he will scare these Indians from answering my questions. He may have done so with the men. None of them will talk to me. I talk pidgin Navaho dialect and a little pidgin Chiricahua with the women.

These Indians are nearer the starvation line than even the desert Yumans. They never complain of hunger or thirst, but they stolidly grub after all manner of insects and snakes. I've offered them some of my food, but the women refuse it smiling, saying it will "poison" them.

If I didn't know I could find them again, I'd send you right away. But when my work is done - for this summer - maybe we can return together and do more work.

The women are calling me - today I am entitled to visit their "cave of ritual" - a half-underground (kiva-like) structure dug into the dark ravine's side. Only women are allowed in. I've tried to get a look inside since I came here.

Sam will get this letter out somehow. He only stays because of me, I know. I'll try to convince him to leave. The people are, after all, entirely harmless. They're so concerned with food-gathering they could hardly be dangerous.

I'll write as soon as I can. I've asked the women about their name, Tsa-kiute, but they only smile.

Linda

I didn't know then - as I sat reading her letter - what staggering implications Linda's find would have for me and - perhaps - for all mankind. I did know that I didn't like her tone or Sam's peculiar behavior. It was as though she had been somehow *charmed* by the women she found. And while I knew that Sam would not leave her, I wondered at what went on when Sam wandered out of the bush to send Linda's letters on. How they were transported I will never know. I never could find anyone to whom Sam gave Linda's letters.

I constantly thought of chartering a plane and flying to Chico in an attempt to find Linda. I had the foreboding feeling that all was not as it should have been. An anthropological find of this magnitude should have buoyed my spirits; instead, Linda's description of peculiar events kept me on edge.

Her next letter came in July.

July 2

Dear Dr. Forrest,

My findings have been so marvelous but confusing. You would not believe what I have seen had you been here yourself and I cannot reveal all that I have learned; the elders say it is forbidden. The cave of ritual contains the totems, totems such as have never been described in anthropology before. The Tsa-kiute propitiate a *half-sheep, half-woman* totem. And it's nothing like the sheep totem of the White Mountain Apache. It is the first instance I've heard of a totem being inedible. The totems are huge: the central figure is almost six feet tall and intricately carved out of some chalky substance I have yet to identify. The smaller totems are carved in absolute detail, *and they all differ* in some small way. It is as though each one is characteristic of a unique entity. The women have told me of their yearly rites; they will commence in a little less than a month, if the correlation between their lunar calendar and our solar calendar is correct. Not only have they allowed me to observe the rites, but to take place as well! The Tsa-kiute are absolutely unique and -

They're coming for me to begin the initiatory rites.

LL

I was repulsed and struck with awe at the same time. A band of Indians who propitiated a half-human totem was unthinkable! It raised terrible doubts in my mind. I remembered some of the books I had read of "cults," not bands who worshipped such creatures. The graphic accounts of Michelet's SATANISM AND WITCHCRAFT filled me with horror. Furthermore, Linda was not acting herself at all. Her fingers wrote her words with the passion of one who has been swept up in some wild and terrible fascination with unknown practices and rites. Her mind cloaked her fascinations in educated language, but I knew she had to be out of there quickly or be entirely swept away by the Tsa-kiute ceremonies.

I arranged for a charter flight to Chico and telephoned ahead for maps and camping equipment. I hurried through my final essay for the University's Ethnological Services Library and was ready to leave within four days. That was when I received Linda's last letter.

July 5

Dr. Forrest,

I haven't much time now before the rites of increase. I've learned that the women plan on bringing the totem and the woman into unity. The women have told me that *the Tsa-kiute totem is the primal totem of all men*, that it exists in seclusion in all the remote areas of the world. This totem, Doctor, is the key to Man's origin! The annual rite will be performed early and I must be ready. Wish me luck - the very beginning of life is about to be dramatized for my eyes, and my eyes only. I participate in the rites -

The letter was cut off. Linda had neither finished her sentence nor signed it, even with so little as her initials. What she spoke of made me deadly afraid. The rites of increase are rare - though they exist among the Australian aborigines - and are designed to insure the band's fertility. Once a year, the band *eats the flesh of their own totem!*

A day later I was in Chico. I set out toward the middle fork of the Feather River without a guide and with little equipment. I had a gun, gasoline lamp (propane being unavailable in Chico), sleeping bag, medicines, and provisions for a week, no more. I knew I had to be lucky but my success depended upon luck from the outset.

I traveled nights as much as I could. The river dried up and I found the tiny spoor of Sam and Linda, usually visible only near a waterhole or a clump of water-roots. As I searched in the dark and in the blazing sun, I tried to control my thoughts. My imagination ran wild in speculation and in dread knowledge of terrible primal practices, but the horrors I conjured up were pale compared to what I found. It was only later, after I had found them, that I remembered what Linda had said: that the Tsa-kiute totem "... exists in seclusion in all the remote areas of the world." Only then did I curse Man himself and all his hideous sciences; only then did the implications of what I found in that hidden arroyo get through to me. Only later was I sane enough to burn my books and notes and resign from the University, forever distrusting myself, forever staring at the men and women around me with revulsion, lest some characteristic from our communal past rear up its horrible head.

For on the morning of the fifth day I found the black ravine. The sun passed to the north, never penetrating the floor of the dark cavern. I stumbled from the pit into the sunlight and was blinded. I staggered forward a few feet and tripped. As my tears washed the dirt out of my eyes, I looked behind me and saw Sam.

He was sitting with his back against a boulder. It had been his out-thrust legs that I had tripped over. His rifle was wedged in his hands, and his eyes stared straight ahead with a look of incomprehension, a look almost of madness. He had been dead for a day at the most. He had no wounds. I guessed he must have died of a stroke. In a moment I would begin to understand the fear that had killed him.

Twenty yards or so to his left lay the naked body of a young Indian woman. Beyond that I saw a few apparently abandoned thatch huts and to their right a cave partially dug into the rock. I left Sam where he was along with my pack, which I had dropped. I advanced toward the body sprawled on its back with my gun drawn. The woman was in her early twenties, I guessed, and had obviously been shot by Sam. A hollow point bullet had entered her stomach and exploded as it passed through her back. I examined her features: she was tall for an Indian and had no recognizable cheek-bones. She had black eyes and almost brown hair. I guessed from Linda's description that she was indeed a "Tsa-kiute."

I left her body where it lay and advanced toward the huts. I fought down my fears, hoping Linda would be alive somewhere, not daring to guess what had forced Sam to shoot down the young woman or to place himself and his gun in what appeared to be the only exit from the arroyo. I entered the first hut. Like the others, which I entered one after another, it was empty except for a few primitive utensils. The camp seemed empty. I steeled my nerves and advanced upon the kiva-like structure Linda had mentioned, not daring to cry out for fear of receiving no answer. Until I received such a negative response, I would not give up hope that Linda was still alive.

The kiva could be reached only by descent by ladder. I stood in the cave for a few seconds, acclimating my eyes, and descended, trying to peer into the gloom while holding onto the ladder with one hand. My gun-hand swept the walls of the interior. As I dropped from the last rung onto the cool earth I swung around, but there was no sign of life. Instead there was a smoldering fire and dozens of tiny totems upon clay shelves against the walls. These were the totems Linda had mentioned. I looked them over, noting their individual etchings. I picked one up, noting the sheep's body with human torso. It was only when I fingered the hair on the totem that I shrank from it with revulsion. It consisted of strands of long, straight black hair. I dropped it and moved back. Then, with a curiosity born of science, I moved closer and peered through the dim light at the other figures. *Each had an individual face etched in, and each was affixed with human hair*, mostly black, some almost brown. As I turned toward the fire, one caught the corner of my eye. *It had the same color hair - and by god! the same face - of the dead girl outside.* And in that same instant of hesitation and horror, I saw that scraps of clothing were causing the fire to smolder. I walked across that unholy kiva toward the fire, and as I walked closer and closer I saw what was burning. It was the remnants of an old pair of levis and a faded blue work shirt, still propped upon - yes, I dare say it - *the charred remains of the six-foot totem.*

I dropped the gun, scrambled the ladder and rushed into the blazing heat. I must have screamed her name for hours, or so it seemed. I sank to my knees, sobbing; then and only then did I notice the faint red trail leading toward a tiny clump of piñon trees on one side of the arroyo. I ran ahead, following the dry path, until I found the body in the shade of the trees.

And it was then that I fully understood. I finally understood the totems, the rites of increase, the name "Tsa-kiute," the reference to an attempt to bring totem and man into unity. The one terrible thought that impressed itself forever upon my mind before I felt a roar of rage, pain, and fear rise from my bowels to my lips; before I ran for my pack and emptied gasoline upon the kiva and the huts; before I ran from the flaming holocaust behind me through the ravine, up the dry fork of the river and into Chico; before I forced myself into hermitage deep within the San Bernardino Mountains, was etched into my mind in Linda Lightfoot's own handwriting: "... *the Tsa-kiute totem is the primal totem of all men...*"

Linda's body lay face up. Mercifully for me, her eyes were closed in death. Her left breast had been punctured by a tiny hole, and as I turned the body to one side I saw that the flesh of her back had been exploded by a bullet. A small trickle of dried blood ran down her naked torso to her waist, and there - by god, there! - her human form ended. *Below her waist she had the body of a flaccid female sheep.*

Down to the Sea

BY BILL WALLACE

Somewhere close the water must be. I can hear waves breaking on a beach. What am I doing by the water? It's so black. The party, Jack. It was so good. What am I doing here? He said. That's why I'm here. It was good, but what he said. Sandy here. I can sit. Too much to drink, but it was so good. I'm alone. "Somebody help me."

Out in the dark water of the lagoon something heard her cry out and moved wetly up onto the sandy shore. She lay unconscious not a dozen yards from where the waves broke. It dragged its bulk slowly along the sand until it stood over her.

After it finished it crawled back into the sea. To wait.

Seascope #1. The muscles knot on his arms as he pulls the net, heavy with its living load, into the boat. It is a good catch. Shrimping is a good way for a man to make a living on the Gulf Coast. During the right seasons of the year one can make a fortune if luck is with him. Best of all it gives a man a chance to be alone; just himself and the beautiful Gulf that stretches like some great aqueous desert as far as the eye can see.

Nathan Cadwell seems very much at home on the water, far more so than in the company of the townspeople. He knows that the other citizens regard him with something between disgust and contempt. These feelings are not eased by the fact that he has incredible luck in his chosen profession. Even when the other inhabitants of Stoneville Pass bring up empty nets, Nat's fortune holds.

Item: Stoneville Pass, on the lower Texas Gulf Coast, was a typical shrimping town. Most of the inhabitants lived by provision of the sea, but the sea could be a cruel provider, hurling huge storms without warning onto the coast. It was rare for the people of Stoneville Pass to have any omen to foretell the coming of a hurricane. Unlike the larger ports of Galveston and Corpus Christi to the north, no ships sought sanctuary in their tiny harbor in their mad dash to make port before the storm struck. Any hurricane was accompanied by a great loss of life. But the village endured.

Even when its inhabitants did not. Henry Stewart leaned over the bar of The Barnacle well on his way to glorious intoxication. *It wasn't fair. It ain't even worth gain' out anymore. Just more disappointments. A man couldn't make enough to get by on. There was just enough for liquor.*

Behind the bar, standing like some incredible sculpture of a classical New England seaman, was old Jenkins. Unmoving, as though he had been there in stone for centuries, the bartender stood and regarded Henry. In actuality he was an old New England seaman of indeterminate age, whose reasons for coming to the wild Texas Gulf were lost in years and wooden silence. Accustomed to his role as a sounding board for the tales and troubles of the Stoneville Pass men, he wondered if Henry would even notice if he spoke. His reflections were broken by Henry's outraged tones. "Snot fair. Damn Cadwell catchin' a full load while we starve. Damn near a fish himself with those eyes, and I swear t'God he's got webs between his fingers." Nodding in sympathy at Henry's words, the bartender found his thoughts running into the past, into his own years on the sea. He thinks of a particular crewman named Marsh.

Seascope #2. The water droplets like jewels on the rough cords of his net, Cadwell bends to his work willingly. His mouth is fixed in a tight grin, partly the result of his squint against the glare of the sun, partly a result of pleasure in his work. Among the shrimp are many small fish. Most of the shrimpers feed them to the gulls which circle constantly over the boats but Nat Cadwell is careful to return each one to its native sea. He takes pleasure in watching the perch, the puffers, the tiny flounder, and even the transparent squid slide back beneath the plastic surface of their firmament. The sorting done the shrimp are consigned to the hold.

In Stoneville Doctor Sanderson dreams of the past.

At a ranch house near town a mad woman sits staring at the sea and thinking of her husband who has been gone for years.

In The Barnacle the men are gathering, having returned in early afternoon from a task which used to take them all day. There is not much point in staying out all day. There are no shrimp to be had. Henry Stewart, drunk enough to be standing on a chair preaching, is saying that somethin' oughtta be done, by God. Cadwell ain't natural. The year is 1899 and if any of them want to see the new century they'd better, by God, do something.

Jenkins is not behind the bar. He is in the back room drinking to drown bad memories.

It is late afternoon.

Seascope #3. Sculpture in sky with clouds, in the water with gently swelling waves. Eyes at ocean level watch young Nat Cadwell as he drags his snare of rope from the sea for the final time. The sinking sun casts the boat's shadow, long and green, on the rolling waves. The eyes do not judge but were they to, they would find Nat Cadwell a particularly unattractive specimen of man. Were the owner of the eyes able to enquire of Nat it would learn of a boyhood spent in tearful fleeing from the jeers and cries of school-mates, of life with a mother gone mad, and of years spent without a father. It would be aware the entire time of a soul which had somehow endured his ordained hell and

made peace with a world he did not fit into, a soul which had sought the majestic loneliness of the sea for a companion. Unsympathetic, but not jeering. Uncaring, but not laughing. The sun sinks lower and Nathan Cadwell steers his small boat for shore.

Three minds dwell in the past. Dr. Sanderson, awakened from his dream, thinks to its source and looks at the book of Indian lore he had been reading before his nap. Near town Melissa Cadwell sits in the crumbling building which had belonged to her father and thinks of her husband Jack. In the back room of a waterfront bar, lying on dirty sheets, an old seaman named Jenkins thinks of a younger seaman named Jenkins and of a man named Marsh, whom he had killed fifty some years before.

Henry Stewart comes into the room on his way to the outhouse and finds the old man. "Well, Jenkins, tastin' your own poison, huh?"

The old seaman's pride takes over and he draws himself up as he says, "Hank Stewart, if ye'd seen what I seen in my younger days on the ocean, ye'd have slit yer throat long ago."

"And just what was it ye seen that was so terrible, Mr. Jenkins?"

Henry Stewart leaves with a chill from the old man's words. He walks out of the bar, past the outhouse and down to the docks.

And what if I was fancy with words, the way Doctor Sanderson is. He knows too. He delivered the child. If I could talk like the doctor and tell you how it really was with Jeremiah Marsh, hell, if I could tell you even halfway how it felt knowin' that the man you were bunkin' with weren't human. Knowin' that he prayed to slimy, crawlin' things down under the sea. What did he call that idol he carried with 'im? Heathen devil. Claimed he was from New England but we all knew that he weren't no legitimate son of Obed Marsh. He was a bastard son of the old Cap'n and some islander. We had a fella on the boat who'd seen him around the docks on Ponape. Said a lot of the islanders had the same look about 'em. It's a damn shame, Hank Stewart, that I can't tell ye half of what I felt and knew, knew down deep, about Marsh. Was it any wonder that I pushed him overboard? I didn't tell ye I killed 'im, did I? And I didn't tell ye that every night for a month after that, anytime I'd stand night watch, that I'd hear him callin' my name out off the port side. Dark nights, and cold water, and my name ringin' out clear in the silence. Times I'd even swear that I seen his face starin' in at me with those fishy eyes. No, Hank Stewart, I ain't told ye the half of it, and damn yer guts for makin' me remember.

And another piece of a puzzle, Melissa Cadwell, walks from the door of the farm house down to the shore. She imagines that she sees her husband Jack walking from the green sea up onto the beach.

Henry Stewart walks into a shack built out on a pier at the docks.

I recollect the name of that idol now. Funny how I can't forget things like that.

Many miles away and several years past Jack Cadwell dies of wounds received in a knife fight in Corpus Christi. He is found lying face down in Laguna Madre.

Item: Laguna Madre is a hundred mile long body of salt water stretching between Brownsville and Corpus Christi Bay. It lies between the mainland of Texas and the various islands in the Gulf. On these islands were founded Texas' major ports as well as many small fishing towns. The lagoon itself is a focal point of many Indian legends.

Nat Cadwell ties his boat to its mooring and walks into the shack owned by Joe Lyman, a bait wholesaler. For seven years Lyman has bought Nat's catch and resold it in Galveston or Corpus Christi for a nice profit. Lately, with the poor shrimping yields, he has practically relied on Nat for his livelihood.

"I'm sorry, Nat. I can't buy your shrimp."

"Why?" the young man swallows hard. "I mean, you've always bought 'em before."

"I got all I need. I'm real sorry."

Nat leaves the shack. Outside Henry Stewart is waiting for him. "What's the matter. Fishy? Can't sell your shrimp?"

Understanding grows in Nathan Cadwell. He looks at Henry Stewart with eyes that, although threatening, have the look of one who knows their place in the pecking order of the town. For one moment he thinks of lashing out at his tormenter, then shrugs and says, "Not this time, Hank."

Inside the shack Lyman looks out, a little ashamed of what he has done. But he has to live in this town, and Henry and the other shrimpers are his friends. And Nat? Nat doesn't have any friends.

It is almost sundown.

Seascope #4. A shore scene. A woman lies thirty feet from a rotting farm house, face down. The salty waters of Laguna Madre have risen around her. She is dead, and the mother lagoon is just beginning to rock her gently back and forth.

Another figure comes into view. It is Nat Cadwell. He bends down over the form of his mother, ascertains her death, and walks slowly toward the rotting farm house to change clothes so that he can carry her into town. There is no trace of sorrow on his face.

Dr. Sanderson sits at supper alone. The book of Indian legends lies open across the room. He feels the pressure of its words even at this distance. He guesses that he's always known, but seeing the legend in print destroys much of his protective layer of doubt.

I recall that its name was Dagon.

In *The Barnacle* Henry Stewart tells the other men of his victory over Nat Cadwell. He does not tell them the story that Jenkins told him. He can still feel the chill that the old man's words brought to his spine.

Prayin' to them damned slugs down under the sea.

Nathan Cadwell walks into town carrying the limp and salt-soaked body of his mother. He does not mind the slight weight. It is not far into town. He decides that Dr. Sanderson's house is the best place to take her.

I had to kill 'im. Hell, he'd had his way the damn things would've ruled the earth. But it keeps comin' to me. What if he ain't dead? What if he only went down to join them that he talked about as bein' down in the deep, swimmin' through sunken cities and worshipping that damned Dagon. If he ain't dead I figure I'll hear from him before I die.

Dr. Sanderson rises from his meal to answer the door. He finds Nat Cadwell with a waterlogged corpse in his arms. The boy seems to be very calm.

At *The Barnacle* the men are drinking when Joe Lyman comes in. "Old Cadwell just came back into town. He was carryin' his mother's body. I guess she was dead."

"Where'd he take her?"

"Looked like he was headin' for Doc Sanderson's house."

In the back Jenkins hears the doctor's name and takes another drink.

"Come in, Nat. Come in." This is not what the doctor wants to say. He wants to close the door and say, *no, you can't bring her in here. Not her.* But the concealment of his feelings for over twenty years stops him. That and something else; a knowledge that he has never shared with another soul.

The book of Indian lore lies open on the table.

At *The Barnacle* the men return to their bottles. It is a rare occasion for Jenkins to open the bar to them, and these are not the types of men who would turn down free liquor.

A word on a written page stands out as Nat Cadwell glances down at an open book. **SOMETHING MOVES INSIDE OF HIM.** After a moment the motion stops and he says, "I brought her to you, doctor, since you've taken care of her most of her life. See that she gets the best treatment, wontya?" It was a strange word.

"Sure, Nat, I'll take care of her. What are you going to do now? That house out there is going to be lonely." He stopped. *Shut up, fool. It sounds almost like you are offering to let him stay here. Christ.*

Nat smiles at the doctor's abrupt stop. *Has he heard the thought? No, that's crazy. Not even him.* "I'll find a place to stay, Doctor. For right now the house'll do fine. Take care of her. I gotta go." And he walked into the night.

The word was *Kathob*.

Seascope #5. Another shore scene. Nat Cadwell looks out at the black Gulf, watching the moonlight gather on the white, foamy crests of the breakers and spill like molten silver over their rolling surfaces. **AND SOMETHING MOVES INSIDE OF HIM.** Stronger and longer this time. It is almost as though, with the passing of the one tie between himself and Stoneville, the one tie to the land, he belongs wholly to the sea. The movement stops after a time and he turns with eyes grown dull to return to his empty house on the island's lagoon shore.

Damn near asleep. Wish that buncha wharf scum would shut up in there and let me. Wish I was drunk enough not to dream. I know I'll see that damn frog face again, like it looked just before I pushed 'im, like I've dreamed it a hundred times. First time I seen Cadwell up close I thought it was old Marsh come to get me for sure.

The Doctor is reading his book again, marking passages with a pencil this time. *I thought I'd die when Cadwell looked at that book. Lord. The expression on his face. I wonder how much he knows.* Open beside him is a book on legends of Massachusetts. It is careful in its insinuations, naming no people or places, but the dark hints he has gleaned from it have made him wish often that he lived away from the sea. His attempt to lose himself in his study of these legends is a failure. He is thinking of something else.

Back in the bar the men laugh about how they've, by God, fixed Nat Cadwell, and just let him try'n' sell his shrimp while everyone else is starvin'. Henry Stewart closes his eyes and sees pictures on the backs of his eyelids. He sees a young Nathan Cadwell running along a beach, pursued by boys who throw shells at him and call stinging insults across the salt air. He sees that the face of the boy who leads the pack is his own. *It's getting late, he thinks, and I've had a lot to drink today.*

Sleep. God, I wish they'd shut up in there. Must be nearly nine o'clock. Did they say that Meliss Cadwell's dead? Strange to think that she's the same gal that old Jack got into trouble. No wonder he run off when he seen what he'd sired. Anybody would've. And then her half mad.

What was the name of that town Jeremiah Marsh said he come from? C'mon, memory. You ain't never failed me for the details 'bout him before.

Seascope #6. Viewed through the deteriorating window of a cabin the nighttime sea makes an incredible sight. Its gentle sounds soothe the young man who stares at its dark, tranquil surface. The serenity of the lagoon is a sharp contrast to the pounding rhythms of the Gulf. None of the pull that he felt while facing the open sea is present here. All is peaceful and quiet, the gentle wave

sounds of the lagoon rocking him to sleep.

Something comes out of the water.

It's too incredible. I just cannot believe it. Even with the evidence of these books I won't accept it. We stand on the verge of the twentieth century and I'm giving credence to something that belongs to the savage past. I don't care what these books say, or what I thought twenty three years ago. Nat Cadwell is a man, not something born of the sea.

Then he thinks of the wet corpse lying on a table in his office.

In *The Barnacle* one man stands. "Good night, boys. It's been fun, but I gotta get home to the woman."

"She oughta be used to it by now, Tom."

"She is, but she raises holy Hell everytime I come in late."

"Y'know, Hank, he's got a point. I got a feelin' that we all get a good night's sleep tonight, get up early tomorrow, our luck's gonna change. I think I'll be headin' home too."

"You boys go on. I'll stay here and make sure that everything gets locked up. Jenkins' too drunk to do it hisself."

"You don't fool us, Hank. You just want to take home some samples." They all laugh, but there is still a chill in Hank that he wants to rid himself of.

I remember it was somethin' like Portsmouth, but it wasn't Portsmouth. Someplace I'd never heard of. Damn my memory. I'm either gettin' old or gettin' sleepy. Can't be gettin' drunk. That ain't that much liquor. Henry's comin' back in. Come to think of it I can't hear that bunch anymore. Guess the party's over. Eyes closed.

"You awake, old man?"

I'm asleep. Go away. I don't wanna talk no more.

"Old fool's drunk himself to sleep."

SOMETHING BIG IS MOVING IN NAT CADWELL. Something that wants out. He walks out of the house and down towards the water. Something waits for him.

He had read books where death restored all the beauty of its prime to a body. He had read a lot of books. Not one of them had prepared him for this. He had not noticed the body when Nat had carried it in, taking care never to look directly at it. Melissa Cadwell lies, half covered, on the table in Dr. Sanderson's office. Her skin is the pale blue-white of a fish's belly and her eyelids do not quite cover the protruding orbs. The body is puffy and here and there are small tears in the flesh where sand crabs have done their grisly work. Except for these imperfections she looks more like her son than she ever has in life.

Strange to think that I almost married her. That was before she claimed it was Jack Cadwell who had gotten her in trouble. Jack claimed it wasn't his doing, but her pa would have no part of his story. After that night that she went off into the dunes with Jack, and was found unconscious on the beach, he was determined that they marry. A lot of good it did.

Tears worked their way down the doctor's face.

Old fool's gone to sleep. Think I'll take a ride out into the lagoon tonight and finish this bottle. I need to think. There ain't nothing like a quiet body of water and a good bottle to help a man think.

"You'll never be lonely again. Never. For twenty-four years we've been



waiting for you to join us. You have never been with your own kind. Come and join us now."

How he understood the ghastly thing that stood before him he did not know. Nor did he know why he regarded it as being anything but ghastly. That word in Doctor Sanderson's book. He asked the question that he so needed the answer to. "You are?"

"Your father. That is all you need to know."

Nat Cadwell walked beside his father into the black waters of the mother lagoon.

Sleep. Damn. First it was the noise keepin' me awake, now it's the quiet. A man can hear too much when it's quiet. I remember what it was like hearin' my name called out on the ocean.

In his boat on the lagoon Henry Stewart is very nearly asleep. Something breaks water to his starboard side. He stirs and leans forward. *Jesus God. It's Cadwell, swimmin' naked out here. But those other things. I . . .*

A day's worth of whiskey empties into the lagoon. Henry Stewart hangs limply over the side of his boat. The things have disappeared.

IT'S BEAUTIFUL JUST AS I KNEW IT HAD TO BE. IF I'D ONLY KNOWN THAT IT WAS SO SIMPLE FOR ME. I KNEW THAT I WASN'T A PART OF THE LIFE I'D BEEN LEADING. THAT'S WHY I NEVER CARED FOR MY MOTHER. THIS IS MY TRUE MOTHER, AND EVEN THIS INCREDIBLE CREATURE WHO IS MY FATHER PALES BESIDE HE WHO IS FATHER TO US ALL.

Melissa. What did happen that night on the beach? How did I lose you? What sort of thing crawled out of that cursed lagoon and found you senseless on the beach?

Sleep.

Damned monsters. Cadwell is a sea thing. I saw him and those. Sea slugs. Squirming things with toothless sucking mouths. At the docks. How? Gotta tell someone. Shapeless, slimy things and things like fish with legs. Someone. The tentacles. No. Doc Sanderson's light is on. God help. Gotta tell the doctor. Cadwell with those. Jelly and bubbles and. No.

IT'S ALL SO BEAUTIFUL.

Who at the door? At this time of night? Wipe those tears away. You've kept up appearances for twenty years. Wouldn't do. "Hank, what brings you here this



time of night?"

"Doc, I gotta tell. God, what old Jenkins told me and what I seen. Help me, Doc. Cadwell."

"Cadwell?"

"Not just Cadwell, Doc. It's the whole damn ocean. We never were meant . . ."

"Easy, Hank. This will help you relax."

Henry sleeps minutes after the doctor gives him an injection.

TOMORROW I'LL GO BACK TO TOWN ONE LAST TIME. DOCTOR SANDERSON WAS MY ONLY FRIEND. HE MUST HAVE KNOWN, BUT HE NEVER BETRAYED ME. THAT WORD IN THAT BOOK. I'LL PAY HIM FOR MOTHER'S FUNERAL.

Sleep. And night closed its black cotton arms around him.

"Wake up, Hank. It's morning."

"Morning? Jesus, my wife'll be worried sick."

"I went over and told her you were staying here. I told her you had a little too much." Hank does not hear what Doctor Sanderson is saying. Memory of the night before has returned.

"Doc, I gotta tell you."

"I got most of it last night, Hank." The doctor's voice is weary. *If you only knew how it was, Hank. Alone here with you and, and Melissa, listening to you talk of things that have no right to exist. If you knew.* "It fits very well with a lot that I already knew."

"You know about Cadwell?"

Morning. Damn my old soul for yesterday. I gave away a fortune. Damn them old memories. Damn Henry Stewart and damn Nathan Cadwell. And damn, no, I don't have to damn old Jeremiah Marsh. He's damned already.

THE WORLD DOWN HERE IS SO BEAUTIFUL. I CAN'T WAIT TO TELL DOCTOR SANDERSON.

"Have you ever heard of a thing called Kathob, Hank?"

"Sounds like something you'd find under a rotting stump."

"You may not be too far from wrong."

Least I can remember the name of that town now. It was Innsmouth.

SO BEAUTIFUL

He tells him of the legends. The Karankawas knew of them, the things that lived in Laguna Madre, hiding under the tranquil waters. Things that were like men, but like fish and frogs and seals too. Things that belonged on the shores of some planet less sane than ours. The Karankawas were called dog lovers, but it was not dogs that they loved. The sea things bred with certain members of the tribe and led them on a downhill pathway into cannibalism and degeneracy. History records that the Karankawas smelled like dead fish and attributes this to the peculiar mosquito repellent they used. In many cases this may have been the cause, but more than one tribesman had cause to smell like a foul thing from the ocean.

I'VE GOT TO TELL HIM, TRY TO, IN SOME SMALL WAY, THANK HIM FOR SHIELDING ME OVER THE YEARS UNTIL I COULD GROW INTO MY DESTINY. IA, DAGON.

Yep, it was Innsmouth. I recall him sayin' how his daddy, Obed Marsh, near owned the town and how he was gonna go home and claim his birthright and live like a king. Reckon any kingin' old Jeremiah's gonna do will be done at the side of Davy Jones.

"These things in the lagoon aren't the only ones either." And the doctor tells the fisherman of the New England version of the Kathobs. He tells him of the rumors that there is a town in Massachusetts whose people have bred with the creatures for nearly half of a century, that there are many people in this town who are only half-human. He tells him that both legends record that the half-breeds look very nearly human at first but, as they grow older, gradually take on the appearance of their aquatic parent, until they go to live forever in the sea and worship a strange, dark deity.

I'M ALMOST TO THE BEACH NOW. I WONDER IF THE DOCTOR WILL BE PLEASED.

"And Nat Cadwell is one of these half-humans, Hank. The first one in this part of the world in at least a hundred years."

"But his daddy. My old man knew Jack Cadwell like his own brother."

"Jack Cadwell was not that boy's father. The town doctor learns a lot in a place like this. I was young then. Nathan couldn't have been more than the fifteenth or sixteenth child I'd delivered. I talked to Jack a lot. I had a sort of personal interest in the case. Jack claimed he'd never touched Melissa. I believe him."

"There was a big party out at Melissa's dad's place one night. She'd had a lot to drink and went out into the dunes with Jack. They had a fight and he went back into town to get drunk. She stayed out in the dunes and made her way down to the lagoon beach where she fell asleep. Whatever gave her that child crawled up out of the lagoon like a stinking worm and . . ." The doctor's voice had risen steadily in pitch and it broke as it reached the last word.

"Jesus, and we been lettin' something like that live with us this long. I'm gonna get some boys together and see if we can fix that damned sea thing." Behind the words is a fear, a fear of dark caves down under the ocean and of the nameless, formless things that dwell in them. Of slimy things in old ship wrecks and of things that it is madness to even look upon. Of the sea.

Doctor Sanderson wanted to stop Hank. He really did. That was why he stood silent as the fisherman stormed out of his office. That was why he watched as the man stopped anyone he could find on the streets and assembled a mob. That was why he walked into the office room next door and carefully measured out a fatal dosage of belladonna and killed himself beside the already deteriorating corpse of Melissa Cadwell.

I'VE GOT TO TELL THE DOCTOR.

Behind his bar the incredible carved figurehead of Jenkins watches Hank gather his forces outside. He has already been into The Barnacle recruiting and Jenkins almost went with him, but the thoughts of another voice calling out over the waves, of another batrachian face haunting his sleep, stayed him. He merely watches as Hank gathers the men who have not gone shrimping or fishing, men who only needed a small excuse to destroy the man they all feel to be different, a man who is vaguely a menace. Hank is convincing with a conviction born of fear.

THIS HOUSE. I'VE LIVED HERE MY WHOLE LIFE AND I'VE LOOKED OUT THAT WINDOW AT THE SEA. THE BEAUTIFUL SEA. THERE ARE NO REGRETS AT LEAVING THIS PLACE, THIS LAND. THE CORALS AND THE CARVED TOWERS, AND ALL OF MY BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE. OUR KING WITH HIS CROWN OF SHINING KELPS. IA, KING JEREMIAH.

"We'll kill that damned salamander."

When they hear that voice calling their names at night they'll regret.
"We'll burn his house, and we'll burn him."

SO BEAUTIFUL.

They met halfway between town and the house. His pleading did no good. His first night under the waves had changed him a great deal. Changes which would have taken years on land had taken only that one night in the sea. It made it much easier for the crowd to do their work. His last thoughts were a regret that he had not made it to the Doctor, and a deep longing for the green paradise of the lagoon. The townspeople left rather quickly after they had finished.

Underneath the sea there is movement. Things move and speak among themselves, and there is an agreement.

Alone in his living room Hank Stewart sits quietly. He has not shrimped in almost a year. Ever since one night on the lagoon he cannot bear the idea of venturing out onto the sea. He thinks of nothing in particular, worries vaguely about a rumored storm, wishes he was very drunk, and dozes off to dream of caverns and shapeless monsters.

Seascape #7. The sea rolls ominously and oily. The men of Stoneville Pass have just returned from a very unsuccessful day's work. Almost a year has passed since Nathan Cadwell's death and this has been the first poor yield of the season. Someone observes that there is a very bad storm coming. Someone agrees with him. The sea rolls oily and ominously.

Joe Lyman worries about the weather. The way the sky and sea look he is worried about a drop in his bait sales. The men from the boats say hello to him as they go to their respective homes leaving him alone on the docks. He never hears the things that come out of the water.

Alone in The Barnacle the carved wooden Jenkins blinks, polishes a glass, and wishes that someone would come in and buy a drink. He does not like the way the wind is beginning to howl nor the way the sky is ashen gray. He thinks that he hears footsteps outside coming from the direction of the docks. He thinks they sound familiar. He is right.

Item: The worst recorded disaster in the history of the United States took place in 1900 on the Texas Gulf Coast. Dubbed the Galveston Hurricane, this disaster took the form of a monstrous storm which leveled a good portion of the coastal habitations. Some 6,000 persons lost their lives in the Galveston area alone.

Lost amidst the numerous tales of disaster and terror is the inexplicable destruction, down to its last man and woman, of the small town of Stoneville Pass, far to the south of the storm's center.

THE DREAMER'S KNELL

The dreamer's eyes are closed: about him press
Vague visions of another world - a world
Whose night-enshrouded towers are upward hurled
To skies whose black unholy loveliness
Reflects the mood of fate whose soft caress
Lingers on his fevered brow and cheek. Pearled
Shadows flit across those star-dimmed eyes. Curled
Within those arms he knows life's emptiness.

The dreamer's dead: his soul, that mantic pearl
Lit for an instant in time's depthless well,
Soars through worlds where black abysses unfurl,
Where there is no heaven, no flaming hell.
And yet ere lost in blank eternity,
He finds the clue to death's futility.

WHO IS GRANDPA THEOBOLD?

By Robert E. Howard

Cities brooding beneath the seas
Yield their chalcedon and gold;
Ruthless hands the treasures seize,
Rending the ages' mysteries,
But who is Grandpa Theobold?

Secret of the eternal Sphinx
Is a story worn and old,
Like a tale too often told;
All the ancient unknown shrinks -
But who is Grandpa Theobold?

Fingers turn the hidden Keys,
Looting wealth from lair and hold;
Cast what shapes in what dim mold?
Question now the Eternities.
But who is Grandpa Theobold?

Prince, before you snare the stars,
Speak, before the sun grows cold,
Scowling through the morning bars,
Who is Grandpa Theobold?

NOTES: In an undated letter to Tevis Clyde Smith, Robert E. Howard wrote: "This morning I took out a big registered envelope (sic)...from a gentleman named Barlow...He enclosed a 115 page ms. which he said Lovecraft had instructed him to forward. It's the antarctic story which Farnsworth rejected, and which Lovecraft promised to let me read in the original. On the title page was written in pencil:

'Schedule of Circulation'
'Augustus Derletus to Donald Vandreius
Melmoth the Wanderer to Klarkash-ton
Klarkash-ton to B'ra-Dwi-yhah'
Bernardus Diverius to Grandpa Theobold'

Which of course are August Derleth, Donald Wandrei, Clark Ashton Smith, and Bernard Dwyer; but who is Grandpa Theobold?"

Grandpa Theobold - actually Theobald, Howard having misread the "a" for an "o" - was, of course, Lovecraft, who often signed his letters as Grandpa Theobald, and had used the pen name Lewis Theobald, Jr. on some amateur press work. Howard put his query into verse form, as set forth above.

- Glenn Lord



CONTRIBUTORS NOTES

Meade & Penny Frierson - Editors and Publishers - We thought of this book in 1970 in correspondence with Dave Cockrum, Robert Kline and other artists and two HPL fans - the concept being to publish new illustrations of HPL's stories and to make available some long out of print material concerning HPL. Nothing much was done until we wrote to Herb Arnold and Stu Schiff about June, 1971. The gestation of the ensuing 9 months has borne fruit; we have no regrets, despite the many pains (in time and finances) of the labor.

Meade has written a magazine about science fiction on radio, articles on the sources of the EC science fiction stories, two poems in THE ARKHAM COLLECTOR (hereinafter "TAC") and numerous as-yet-unpublished stories and poems of sf and HPLish horror. In the dreamworld he masquerades as a corporate attorney in the second largest law firm in Alabama and president of a fledgling organization to keep southern sf&f fandom in contact - S.F.C. Penny reads voraciously, raises kids, and participates in the Southern Fandom Press Alliance, mimeographing an amateur journal along with Meade's Huitloxopetl. We plan to attend several sf&f conventions this year, beef up our mimeographed output and contribute to any other enterprising HPL publishers whatever we can. HPL Cult forever! (Oh yes, we support R.A. Lafferty for a Hugo.)

S. Herbert Arnold (1949 -) - Associate Ed. - Art. Born in Kansas City, Kansas and raised there except for a stay in Colorado; B.A. in Fine Arts in 1971 from City Art Institute and School of Design. Arnold's artwork has appeared in fanzines, notably FANTAGOR (published by his friend and neighbor Richard V. Corben) and ANOMALY as well as on dustjackets for Arkham House's DARK THINGS and THE CALLER OF THE BLACK. His favorite interests next to art include ancient history and mythology, art history, classical music, making amateur films and writing stories. He lists as favorites among the old masters Michaelangelo, Titian, Delacroix, Courbet and Manet and among illustrators, Maxfield Parrish, Hannes Bok, Virgil Finlay, Richard Corben and George Barr. Of Arnold's art at a recent exhibition in K.C. it was said: "Arnold's technique and realism are handled quite well, although he needs more color work; he succeeds in conveying an image that speaks of reality and yet is unreal...however, his unusual taste for ghouls and monsters for canvas is a dubious question of taste." Pfaugh...we think that it is in perfect taste and needless to say, Herb has made this publication with his superb collection of artwork as well as his fiction, counsel, and help in contacting contributors such as Richard Corben and Gary Myers among others. His letters of encouragement have been invaluable spurs in getting this publication done as well as we could.

Stuart D. Schiff - Associate Editor - Articles - "Now a senior at the Columbia Univ. School of Dental & Oral Surgery, Stuart received his B.A. from Ivy League rival, Cornell. An Arkham House dealer in his spare-time, the 24 hour day doesn't seem long enough for him to fit in his studies, parttime job, collecting, dealing, fiancée, pussycat and voluminous correspondence. His collecting does not stop with Lovecraftiana though and other circles of the world of sf&f feel his collector's grasp. He owns a complete set of Arkham House books and major collections of the works of Ray Bradbury, Robert Chambers, David Keller and Clark Ashton Smith. His art collection contains originals by Virgil Finlay, Hannes Bok, Frank R. Paul, Edd Cartier, Kelly Freas, Jeff Jones, Herb Arnold, Richard Powers and Lee Brown Coye. His current projects include learning to play bridge, speed reading, chinese cooking and squash. His perseverance and dedication to the present task of spreading HPL to the world is only fleetingly set back by his infamously indecipherable handwriting that would make HPL proud. Believe it or not, he (shades of HPL) just won an ice-cream eating contest held at Columbia." Needless to say, beyond his articles and loan of originals by Coye and Scott, his solicitation of contributions from Bloch, Price, de la Ree and others make him an invaluable part of the editorial team.

Alfred A. Attanasio - Al presently resides in Philadelphia, where he is writing weird and other fiction. He is co-editor of TAMLACHT (see p. 143) and we hope that he will continue his tales in the HPLish vein.

Robert Bloch - Hardly necessary to introduce this author of hundreds of stories and scores of books since he started at age 18; he was a correspondent of HPL, engaged in the famous "battle" in WEIRD TALES with HPL where they killed each other off in successive tales. Teleplays, PLAYBOY pieces and an active output display his talent for mystery, humor and horror.

Joseph Payne Brennan - of New Haven, Conn., author of Slime (WT, March, 1953) and other stories in WT and elsewhere, latest being Monton in January, 1972 issue of ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE. A collection of stories is scheduled by Arkham House: STORIES OF DARKNESS AND DREAD. He publishes MACABRE magazine. His weird poetry has appeared in many places including TAC.

Roger Bryant - This HPL scholar is fairly new to the scene but nonetheless his fresh angles on the Necronomicon and other HPL associational subjects have provided interesting reading in TAMLACHT and NYCTALOPS. We trust that his contributions to divers aspects of the field of the macabre will continue.

J. Ramsey Campbell - A Liverpoolian who was early influenced by HPL, his first collection of stories, THE INHABITANT OF THE LAKE & OTHERS (Arkham House 1964) was produced at age 18 and involves a setting of the Severn Valley at Brichester for the Mythos. DEMONS BY DAYLIGHT is forthcoming from A.H. in the near future. He broadcasts as a film critic for the BBC (some of his tales are also broadcast) and has been published in Italian, Spanish, French and Dutch. His contribution to HPL, A Madness from the Vaults, was originally to have been reprinted from a fanzine, doubt, but Ramsey so revised it that it has but 40 words left of the original and an entirely new direction and concept. He is interested in joining with other Mythos writers to compile a memorial volume of tales to dedicate to Derleth.

Richard Corben - A late but welcome addition, Mr. Corben's graphics, both in animation and in underground comics as well as his own publication, FANTAGOR (write your dealer today for one if you are at all interested in the graphic arts) place him among the best illustrators, but he is more than technically competent: the social commentary in his underground press works may be easily and unreservedly predicted to be classics of our times. We regret being unable to reproduce the paintings which he sent but hope they will be displayed at some conventions for the benefit of Lovecraftians in attendance.

Lee Brown Coye - Mr. Coye's works appeared in pulps such as WEIRD TALES as well as Arkham House books, culminating in 3 TALES OF TERROR with interior as well as cover artwork. We are indebted to Stuart Schiff for his loan of the illustrations to accompany Dull Scavengers Wax Crafty, to which story they seemed most appropriate.

Wm. L. Crawford - as indicated by his article he is the publisher of numerous fantasy works and WITCH-CRAFT & SORCERY. He co-sponsored the HPLish event of 1971, the W&S-Con in October, which we regret missing.

Walter DeBill - Born 1939, grad school drop out in organic chemistry, employed as clerk in U.S. Civil Service. Main hobby is astronomy because "I take writing too seriously to call it a hobby. As someone else put it, 'It's what I do with my life.'" His verse has appeared in TAC, NYCTALOPS, and Ballantine's THE SPAWN OF CTHULHU; short stories are to appear in TAC, WEIRDBOOK, NYCTALOPS and an affiliated one-shot, THROUGH THE DARK GATEWAY.

L. Sprague DeCamp - he needs no introduction to sf&f fans. He currently has 4 books in press - GREAT CITI-ES OF THE ANCIENT WORLD (Doubleday); DARWIN AND HIS GREAT DISCOVERY (juvenile, MacMillan); THE FALLIBLE FIEND (fantasy novel, NAL) and PHANTOMS & FANCIES (poetry, Mirage Press). He is currently translating Cyrano de Bergerac's Voyage Dans la Lune for an historical anthology of sf&f for classroom use.

Gerry de la Ree - A reporter and dealer in sf&f publications, his catalog is available from 7 Cedarwood Lane, Saddle River, N.J. 07458. His collection of sf&f art and literature are a wonder to behold and of the lore and history of fandom, delightful.

R. Alain Everts - recently changed his name from Kirsch. He has researched HPL extensively, having contacted all of Lovecraft's surviving friends and correspondents over the last several years. His forthcoming publications concerning HPL should be of the greatest interest to fans. We were hoping for an account he prepared of HPL's last days but went to press before it was received.



Stephen E. Fabian - "I live and work in Vermont. I am by profession an electronics engineer employed by a somewhat 'small' company involved in the aerospace industry. I am usually busy with the design and manufacture of engine power measuring devices.

"Art and imaginative literature have been a source of fascination and enjoyment for me as long as I can remember. The artwork of Virgil Finlay, Hannes Bok, Lawrence and Cartier inspired me to try my hand at drawing. I sent my first efforts to a fanzine, TWILIGHT ZINE, back in 1966-67. Encouraged by several other faneditors, my wife and two sons, I continue to learn to draw and paint...Last year (1970) I received my first pro assignment to do illustrations for WITCHCRAFT & SORCERY.

"The road between that first Sunday afternoon fun-with-a-pencil hour and my first pro assignment is paved with fanzines. I am therefore immensely grateful that the world of fandom exists, that it provides the media for would-be artists like me to work in & develop, and that it provides the important ingredients: criticism and encouragement.

"This memorial fan publication dedicated to HPL is doubly meaningful to me. I have enjoyed reading and collecting Lovecraft as published by Arkham House over the years, and I'm pleased to be a part of this project." Steve was nominated for a Hugo in 1971 for his sf&f artwork, and he definitely deserves the recognition for he is a masterful artist.

Virgil Finlay - Mrs. Beverly S. Finlay, his widow, was kind enough to grant us permission to reprint some of the Master's works - from my personal collection and that of Steve Leventhal. Gerry de la Ree might be written to inquire if any more Finlay originals are being offered for sale through him by the estate.

Clay Fourrier - of Shreveport, La., Clay's one of the artists whose work has appeared in fanzines and the Warren publications. He is at present undecided about pursuing art further but we certainly can't understand why he should have any doubts.

Dany Frolich - "I am most emphatically a commercial artist, not by design but rather by circumstance. I am a scenic artist, designer and illustrator for the largest Mardi Gras company in the country. The foregoing fact is irrelevant unless you know what Mardi Gras is about and for those who don't, suffice it to say that it is fantasy. I work surrounded by paper dragons and cardboard clowns. [Gee, me too] All of it has a definite effect on my personal work and has allowed me to exist totally involved with irrational worlds and characters. I find that I am not nor likely to be influenced by other artists...my professional work allows me this isolation; Mardi Gras is not a world of reality. I am not that involved with Mardi Gras as an industry; my involvement is rather with the need for having such an institution, the need for fantasy in us all - the radical on the ramparts and the accountant at the desk. My work is my involvement, my fantasy. Each piece becomes a photograph souvenir of an experience I never had but do have - it's irrelevant whether my work is liked by another or not, it's my fantasy and relevant only in its creation. This is my biography subject to change at any given time." Dany's work has been published throughout the entire spectrum of fandom and has continued to improve, notably his paintings.

W. Paul Ganley - ed/pub of WEIRDBOOK - 37, married, 3 cats, chairman of a small physics department at Wilson College til summer of 1972. He published a fanzine, FAN-FARE, in 1950-54. In the 1950's he was half of SSR PUBLICATIONS which put forth several significant publications on HPL and swords-and-sorcery. He has edited the AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PHYSICS for several years and writes quite a bit of fiction primarily for his own amusement. Pseudonyms are as popular with Paul as with HPL and we persuaded him by the hardest to make "Walter Quednau" the writer of the postscript instead of the author of the story.

Jim Garrison - a "fan artist", Jim tried his hand for us on an HPL poem called "Halloween in a Suburb," (p.80), with a result that has a definite flavor of WT.

Mark Gelotte - Mark's a college freshman in Houston, majoring in commercial art. His work has appeared in the last 3 years in numerous fan publications - GRAN FALLOON, GORE CREATURES, SPACE & TIME, TAMLACHT 12, ENERGUMEN, CITADEL with more due to be published. We trust that these endeavors will continue.

William Guy - Bill is an ardent HPL supporter from Mississippi, where he is active in the sf&f organization, STAR & SWORD. His wife, Debbie, at the college bookshop has been serving us as an unpaid HPL booster par excellence.

Ralph Wollstonecraft Hedge - is a pseudonym but not of Ron Goulart.

Richard Heffern - wrote to us from Berkeley with a poem which was initially blank verse but revised on request into rhyme. Generally folks were quite good about revisions to the editorial format, either working on it themselves or more often allowing us to tamper.

William Scott Home - "Born in Missouri, raised in Colorado, deglutinized in Minnesota, reconstituted in Alaska, educated in New Mexico, humanised in British Honduras, waterlogged in Dominica, petrified in the British Virgin Islands, resuscitated once again in British Honduras which has become my permanent home. Constant weird writer from aet. 10; the writings are many, the publications few (for some reason). Numerous mishaps from Alaska to Peru, despite which continue reading, writing, learning, breathing and other futile pursuits. Biologist by vocation (i.e., a man who studies books about life), archaeologist and spelunker by inclination, lunatic by fate." Scott Home is a star about to go nova in the heavens of the macabre. We are totally captivated by his convoluted constrictor-like language which wraps around itself and the reader with highly pleasing results.

Robert E. Howard - Glenn Lord is Mr. Howard's literary executor and graciously responded to an early solicitation for aid.

John Jacob - born 1950 in Chicago and won his first poetry contest in 1966; since then his poetry has appeared in 50 national newspapers, magazines and anthologies. "I have edited or helped edit a number of periodicals of the arts including the present magazine of poetry, MOJO NAVIGATOR(E). I also edit and publish books of poetry under the famed Cat's Pajamas Press imprint. I've had two poetry leaflets printed and my first book, RAZOR & CUT, is now being printed by Ghost Dance Press. Of the 5 Cthulhu Mythos-based stories I've written, 4 have been printed or accepted for publication in magazines ranging in scope from COMIC COURRIER to NYCTALOPS. I've also written numerous book reviews and essays...my plans for the future include a pilgrimage to Irem, the City of the Pillars."

Tim Kirk - This California artist is talented and prolific and has generously contributed to every fan undertaking I know about (thus topping Bill Rotsler who would not contribute to this undertaking). He has excellent work in the HPL vein in NYCTALOPS (#5 has a bacover portrait of August Derleth which is beautiful) and TAMLACHT 12.

Robert Kline - I interested Bob in HPL in 1969 while he was with the Service in Virginia and actively producing for numerous amateur graphics publications. When he moved to Calif. and was reported by Jan Strnad in ANOMALY 3 as "out of fandom" while working for Disney, I assumed that we would not have any contribution I had heard he was working on - the cover offers attractive proof that I was wrong.



Edward S. Lauterbach - An Associate Prof of English at Purdue Univ., his work has appeared in THE BAKER STREET JOURNAL and THE PONTINE DOSSIER. He is a frequent contributor to THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE.

Fritz Leiber - see p. 18

Frank Belknap Long - In addition to the information developed in the interview, the following items are of interest: Mr. Long's short stories now number over 300; he lectures on topics of sf&f, ESP and HPL; forthcoming novels include gothic works as well as SF; His story, Guest in the House, was produced on TV while others have been dramatized on radio. For a fuller picture, don't miss the interview at pp.7-11.

Brian Lumley: "Date of Birth, December 2, 1937, just 9 months after HPL died - but don't worry about it, I have no faith in the supernatch or reincarnation (and if I had then I'd expect my tales to sell a damn sight better!). Married since age 20 to a wonderful girl called Gail; three kids - and a budgie, Socrates (I would have called him Cthulhu but he can't get his beak around that). Scribbled a couple of awful stories at age 9 or 10 - burned same at age 11. Then read Bloch's Notebook Found in a Deserted House; the Mythos has fascinated me ever since and I still think that story is one of the best Mythos tales. Started drawing for SF fanzines at 16-17; it was a fad that lasted a couple of years. Age 21 joined the Army into the Corps of Royal Military Police - been with 'em since. In 1963 went to Cyprus and there picked up a paperback, CRY HORROR, with HPL - ye gods, I was back to the Mythos. I wrote to Derleth, sent two tales off and both were accepted for TALES OF THE CTHULHU MYTHOS. Derleth mentioned shorter stuff for TAC. Sent Cyprus Shell, Billy's Oak, Item of Supporting Evidence, all published. Finally, enough stories for my own collection THE CALLER OF THE BLACK (expected from Arkham House momentarily). Mother Love came out in the second issue of WITCHCRAFT & SORCERY. Too, an influential gent in England wrote asking for reprint of Sister City for BEST HORROR STORIES NO. 1. Wrote novel, BENEATH THE MOORS in 1970, accepted by Arkham House, wrote novel, THE BURROWERS BENEATH in 1971, and in process, THE HOUSE OF CTHULHU - would you believe, Mythos-Swords & Sorcery?" Yes, from you, Brian, we would believe anything exciting and readable.

John L. McInnis - Assistant Prof. at Northeast La. University getting his PhD from L.S.U. while studying Lovecraft's work as a part of American literature.

Ron Miller - Ron has been in fandom and working as a commercial artist for about 5 years. He is chief illustrator for Artpac, Inc., an advertising art & design studio. Another two-year old convert to HPL, he was introduced not by paperbacks but the rare THE OUTSIDER & OTHERS. He is interested in further opportunities for macabre illustration and his interest lies more in the horror and outre than the Mythos - in his words, "I am more interested in decaying Arkham than dark Yuggoth." Some of the illustrations herein have been published before in GRANFALOON but I don't know which.

Harry O. Morris, Jr. - "I publish NYCTALOPS, have had art in one or two other zines and am working as a beginning printer." (See NYCTALOPS on p. 143).

Gary Myers - "I am a second-year art student (toward a B.A. and a teaching credential) at the Univ. of Redlands in Calif. I have sold several (sold as distinguished from published - by one) short stories to TAC, all of which are in the same series of pastiches as Zhosph (p.98). The first of these was reprinted last year in Lin Carter's Ballantine anthology, NEW WORLDS FOR OLD. Projects in the works are THE HOUSE OF THE WORM, an (unfinished) collection of Lovecraft/Dunsany pastiches for Arkham House; and an (idea for a) non-Lovecraftian, albeit macabre, novel which may or may not be written...My painting is of the same spirit as my fiction and occasionally betrays an interest in Dali and Bosch." As in Herb Arnold's case, we are torn between exhorting his graphic or literary works.

E. Hoffman Price - Orientalist and astrologer, WEIRD TALES and journalistic writer, Mr. Price is certainly well known enough to pass on with only brief mention of his San Francisco residence and current nonfiction book in process set there, FOREIGN DEVIL IN CHINATOWN.

Joseph F. Pumilia - "Though working now as an ace reporter on a newspaper in a small, eldritch town 80 miles from Houston, Texas, I live a secret life as a writer of Sf and weird tales. I have managed to sell some of these, none of which have seen print yet. I first came across HPL in THE BEST SUPERNATURAL STOR-

IES and from then on I was hooked. In recent times paperback editions of the Old Gentleman's works have sparked my wild imagination, thrilled me, entrapped me, and influenced me greatly. The Houston SF Society, prodded by Bill Wallace and myself, have held special meetings to commemorate HPL's birthday, where his stories were read in a proper setting. It is now impossible for me to visit some eerie place or crumbling ruin without wondering how it might figure in a Mythos story or what HPL would have done with it. I have lately been exploring areas of the Mythos hitherto untapped and the further I go in these blasphemous researches, the more I realize why they have been previously shunned."

John Adkins Richardson - Professor of Art & Design at the University of Southern Illinois, John finds himself in considerable demand in graphics fandom; of recent note are the cover of RBCC 88, The Hunting of the Snark and Maxor (the originals of which John is selling at \$20 and \$35 per page respectively - inquire c/o Faculty of Art & Design, So. Ill. Univ., Edwardsville, Ill. 62025). His Call of Cthulhu painting on page 67 is likewise for sale at the best offer over \$125 made to him.

Jerry Saunders - "I have lived in Newton, N.C. almost all my life. Ill health has temporarily interrupted my college career at midpoint; I am now studying (mostly English literature) and writing at home. Dark Providence is my second published story; while attending Gardner-Webb College, a weird short story called Tascom's Wife was published in the college literary magazine. I hope to become a professional writer." We share this hope and think it is likely.

Darrell Schweitzer - between 1968 and his 20th birthday (which is still in futuro) Darrell has had published or accepted for publication 62 stories, 30 poems, 53 book reviews and 40 articles and columns. He publishes a fanzine called PROCRASTINATION going into its 10th issue with a Ray Bradbury article. His tales are Dunsanian rather than Lovecraftian and Don Keller's PHANTASMICOM has published most of these; a special zine by the same publisher is anticipated called HOWLE LOND. WEIRDBOOK and DBJ have carried his macabre poetry and WB will publish a story in its 6th issue. He expresses the hope of using Dunsany's techniques as a starting point for something of his own rather than pastiches.

Mike Scott - (see also COLLECTOR'S BULLETIN on p.143) Mike has been a fan since 1969 and has contributed generously to fan projects. Several pieces are forthcoming in NYCTALOPS.

John P. Sellers III - a senior at Auburn (Ala) high school where he moved from L.A. last year, John is active in the literary club and literary magazine. His other interests are old radio shows, books (mostly fantasy and horror) and various other forms of escape. His aspirations are to continue writing and return to California. We are pleased to present his first published story and poem.

J. Vernon Shea - He is one of the original members of the so-called Lovecraft Circle, corresponding with HPL from 1931 almost to his death in 1937, excerpts of this correspondence having already appeared in SELECTED LETTERS III (Arkham House 1971).

Shea's father was a professional photographer and magician, numbering among his friends Harry Houdini. He contributed to occult magazines and introduced WEIRD TALES to his young son. Shea wrote his first fantasy story at 14, his first SF at 17. He is the editor of STRANGE DESIRES (Lion Books 1954) and STRANGE BARRIERS (Lion 1955, reprinted as IN BLACK & WHITE, Pyramid 1970). His stories are in Arkham House's ON THE EDGE and TALES OF THE CTHULHU MYTHOS, as well as the late MAGAZINE OF HORROR and others. His article, H.P. LOVECRAFT: THE HOUSE AND THE SHADOWS (F&SF, May, 1966) should be read. Shea is "currently employed as a lab tech in Cleveland, is an inveterate letter writer, amateur song writer and film, play and bridge buff."

Walter Shedlofsky - "Initial publication occurred in Arkham House's FIRE AND SLEET AND CANDLELIGHT, which was followed by contributions to WORD WAYS, TAC, HOWARD COLLECTOR and others. Recently published, his THE FANTASTIC ACROS contains many of these and may be obtained by sending \$2 to its author, P.O. Box 553, St. Louis, Mo. 63188. He also has been commended for his WINDS OF FREEDOM, a booklet containing a number of pieces dedicated to the spirit of freedom. Mr. Shedlofsky is married, has 4 children and one grandchild, is employed by the U.S. Army Aviation System Command, and is a Retired Reserve Warrant Officer."

Dave Studzinski - penned a drawing on the bottom of an order and we enjoyed it so we asked for more. He supplied a number which we liked but space requirements permitted only a few. We hope other fan publishers will seek him out for contributions.

Robert C. Sudol - Born of Polish lineage in 1954, Bob confesses an obsession with HPL but admits "though I shall try with inspired soul to follow in his noble footsteps, I know that in the art of weaving a tale of the macabre he will always be greater than I...If my aspirations are fulfilled, I shall bring his masterpieces to the most rich and dramatic medium of the cinema, as I shall hopefully attend U.S.C. this September and strive to my ultimate ability to perfect cinematic technique - so that as Lovecraft is the master of the outre in print, I shall be Horror's master on film. ... Until 2 years ago when I fatefully read my first HPL horror tale, The Horror at Red Hook, I never truly knew the supreme satiation of hellish delights - now the weird beauty and splendour of the Eldritch and the Unknown eternally haunt me while the sheer awe and ultra-cosmic wonder of the outre confirm me forever its loyal disciple." We present Bob's first published fiction.



John T. Swanson II - Born 1949; B.S. in Art Ed. from So. Conn. State College and presently works in G. Fox & Co. advertising department in Hartford. He is an admirer of Magrite, Dali and Beardsley in art and Bradbury, Dickens, Matheson, CAS, HPL and Derleth in lit. An accomplished college actor, he played Dracula for a community theatre group recently, writes songs, plays guitar and sings in a rock band called Ground.

Denis Tiani - one of the best fantasy fan illustrators around, Denis hails from Michigan and has been recently active in contributing to DBJ and NYCTALOPS. His illustrations of Dick Tierney's fungoid poem cycle in NYCTALOPS 6 is anxiously awaited.

Richard L. Tierney - "I first came across HPL in the Wise & Frazer anthology when I was in the sixth grade (20 years ago) but it wasn't until 2 years later when I read The Shadow Out of Time in Wollheim's NOVELS OF SCIENCE anthology that I really became hooked. After that, he rapidly became my favorite author. I've had a scattering of poems in MACABRE, AMRA, NYCTALOPS, TAC and HOWARD COLLECTOR and should have a story coming in a future issue of WITCHCRAFT & SORCERY."

James Wade - Wade has published fantasy material in PAN BOOK OF HORROR #1, NEW WRITINGS IN THE SUPERNATURAL (Sphere), DARK THINGS (Arkham House), TALES OF THE CTHULHU MYTHOS (Arkham House and Beagle Books), TAC, PONTINE DOSSIER, ROHMER REVIEW, MACHEN SOCIETY OCCASIONAL, SHADOWS, WEIRDBOOK and his own books, published in Korea, ONE MAN'S KOREA and EARLY VOYAGERS: COLLECTED POEMS (U.S. distributor - Steve Leventhal's Haunted Bookshop).

Born in Granite City, Ill., Jan. 5, 1930, he is a composer whose grand opera, THE MARTYRED, based on the novel by Richard E. Kim, has been published, premiered and commercially recorded in Seoul, where he has lived for the past dozen years with his wife and family. His musical compositions for orchestra, chorus, chamber groups and voices have been performed in the U.S., Europe, Asia, Australia and Mexico. His many articles on general subjects have appeared in such periodicals as THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE, LONDON TIMES, VARIETY, NATIONAL REVIEW and many others. His wife's unfortunate illness brought him to the States at time of publication whence he is currently in transit back to Korea after a successful operation.

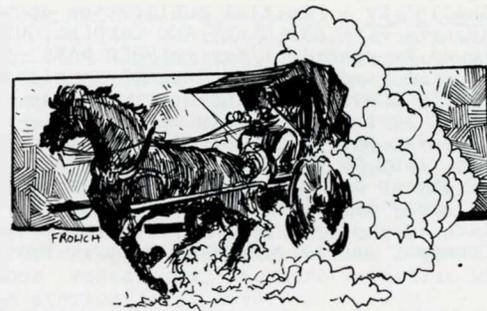
Bill Wallace - (see also MATHOM 6 on p.143) - Bill's in college in Houston and "perverted" the local sf club to a publication in honor of HPL. He is a devout fan and collector and, we think, an exciting writer (see pp. 131 et seq.)

Donald Walsh Jr. - He is a native New Orleanian, private investigator and professional photographer. His first sf story appeared in 1967 and his debut in the Mythos is as stated in his article. He is active in the Science Fiction Writers Of America as southern regional chairman and as head of the annual Nebula Awards Banquet in New Orleans. Current projects other than the Mythos fiction stated in the article include a sword and sorcery novel based on the ninjitsu cult of "invisible assassins" in feudal Japan and a collection, coedited with James Sallis, of the short fiction of Rosel George Brown, the late La. SF writer.

Manly Wade Wellman - another WEIRD TALES vet, Manly is known for his Arkham House book, WHO FEARS THE DEVIL?, recent adaptations on NIGHT GALLERY, a film in process, classics from F&SF like Vandy, Vandy and The Little Black Train. Mr. Wellman deserves to be the subject of a tribute magazine himself during his lifetime.

George T. Wetzel - born in Baltimore, MD in 1921 Mr. Wetzel's interest in writing, particularly stories with interesting characters, blossomed at an early age and soon he was also engaged in literary sleuthing (e.g., HPL's amateur press association appearances) and real-life sleuthing (e.g., forgotten tunnels

in South Baltimore). He was actively published in fandom 1950-54 until censure for his Deep South views destroyed his incentive to write. As revealed in his article, he feels August Derleth expropriated his later Lovecraftian researches and diverted credit for the major bibliographic work from him. In 1970 due to personal circumstances and impetus provided by Paul Ganley, he once again turned to fiction and has many pending writing projects including the Oyster wars of the Chesapeake Bay, a confederate POW camp in the North, sleuthing re the Lincoln murder mystery in addition to the supernatural horror tales of the type found in this magazine. We hope that past differences can be laid aside and that Mr. Wetzel finds his deserved place in fandom and the publishing world.



Colin Wilson - (see also page 22) - This writer's PHILOSOPHER'S STONE is a fascinating speculation on the Cthulhu Mythos and is a must for every HPL fan. His other recent books concerning murders and murderers of which the excerpted ORDER OF ASSASSINS is the latest are intellectually stimulating in the highest degree. Though opposed to reprints, your editors felt that this magazine/book could not be produced as a tribute to HPL without reflecting in some small way their interest in Mr. Wilson and his particular appeal, and value, to the HPL student.

Due to limitations of space this issue was not able to contain the following highly interesting and recommended material because if included the reader would have to pay too much for the issue and the artists and publishers would not be benefiting any more than at present (which is negative or at a maximum, zero) so in order not to unjustly enrich the typesetter and printer, you are referred elsewhere for:

Ken Faig - A grad student at Brown Univ., Mr. Faig has been a most prolific producer of Lovecraftian research in recent times. His work in MIRAGE, DBJ, NYCTALOPS, TAMLACHT are all highly recommended to the HPL student. He proffered us a gigantic article on Lovecraft as a revisionist detailing the work done by Lovecraft for other writers of the weird and otherwise. It is a fascinating and revealing account which we hope to read soon in another journal.

John Pocsik - part of Kansas City's monopoly on talent (along with Herb Arnold, Rich Corben, and many more) John's work has appeared in Arkham House as well as fanzines and he favors Robert E. Howard and violence above the outre. We have seen a novel of sword & sorcery (working title: WHEN THE JEWEL GOD RETURNS) and considered The Dark Hunt (or The Hunter in the Dark) for inclusion in the magazine but it was long and regretably John had other plans for it. We hope that his fantasy writing will continue.

David Kraft - from blue-litten North Dakota Mr. Kraft submitted an excellent story, Hanna, involving a proposed Yaweh Mythos rather than that of Cthulhu. Its relation to HPL was tenuous but we trust the story will appear elsewhere in the near future for it was very well written and interesting.

E. Paul Berglund - The fiction editor of NYCTALOPS, an Army Sergeant in the Far East and compiler of the ultimate listing of Cthulhu Mythos tales (soon to be published, we understand), Paul's very long The Feaster from the Stars could not be included, although we urge him to publish it in the forthcoming volumes of fiction from Harry Morris' Silver Scarab Press.

Gahan Wilson - Mr. Wilson most courteously and with sincere regret declined to be included because of his long-standing firm policy against contributing to non-commercial press publications but admitted that his PLAYBOY cartoons are definitely HPL inspired and that he is one of HPL's greatest admirers.

Were this magazine/book double its actual length, in addition to the material above, we would have presented fiction by Dana Frieze, a long story by James Wade, a short story by the redoubtable Wm. Scott Home, art by Dave Cockrum, Jaxon, Steve Riley, and Dave Karbonik, articles by Bill Trennick, Howard Duerr, Emil Petaja, William Fulwiler, Ben Indick and numerous others who were too late or too long for this. But it was with the best interests of our readers in mind in keeping the cost down that we were forced to find a cut-off point which regretably excluded the foregoing. Our deepest thanks to each and every one, included or not, for their time, effort and interest.

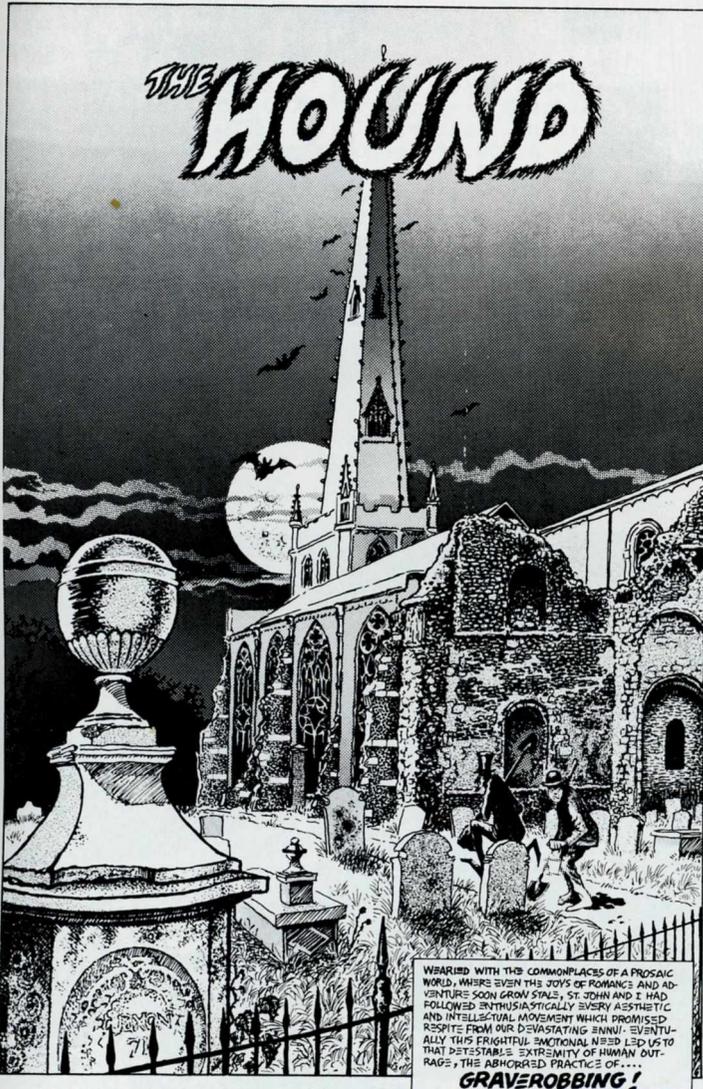


SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Editors regret that a special advertisement concerning a new "underground" comic book illustrating HPL's tales such as *Cool Air*, *The Hound* and *Pickman's Model* did not arrive by press time. *Rip Off Press* in California will publish one or two issues, according to current plans. Copies should be available by the summer from the local dealers or the publishers. We fully support this effort to produce the works of Lovecraft in the various media.

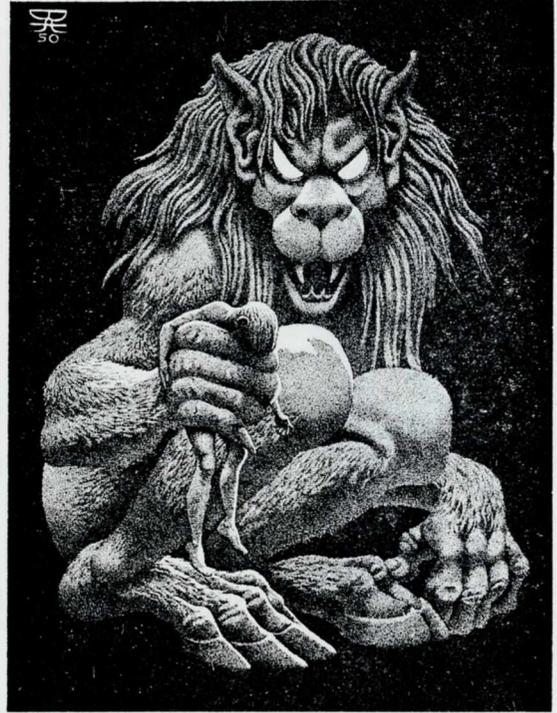
Also the Editors are most anxious to obtain information concerning the suspense radio program circa 1945 starring Ronald Coleman which presented *The Dunwich Horror* (possibly under the title of "The Dunwich Murder"); we are interested in purchasing a copy of this show, on record or tape, and of the special repeat performance in the late fifties which some recall as being broadcast around Halloween.

This publication is a one-time-only tribute; however, as stated on page 2 there will be an "HPL Supplement", mimeographed approximately six months after publication which will contain letters of comment received by the Editors concerning the magazine and other items of interest concerning HPL, other projects, etc. This will be mailed to all contributors and persons who provide a letter of comment of substantial length or merit and it may also be purchased by any interested persons at 50¢ per copy.



WEARIED WITH THE COMMONPLACES OF A PROSAIC WORLD, WHERE EVEN THE JOYS OF ROMANCE AND ADVENTURE SOON GROW STALE, ST. JOHN AND I HAD FOLLOWED ENTUSIASTICALLY EVERY AESTHETIC AND INTELLECTUAL MOVEMENT WHICH PROMISED RESpite FROM OUR DEVASTATING BURNING. EVENTUALLY THIS FRIGHTFUL EMOTIONAL NEEDED LED US TO THAT DETESTABLE EXTREMITY OF HUMAN OUTRAGE, THE ABHORRED PRACTICE OF...

GRAVEROBBING!



HANNES BOK AND HPL
By Emil Petaja

(Received on the way to the printer and bumping my further fictional contribution to this effort was the Bok illustration of *Pickman's Model* presented above and the following notes from a correspondent of both Bok and HPL)

The great horror tales master died a couple of years before Hannes Bok's work began to appear in *WEIRD TALES* and elsewhere, but I believe that had HPL been able to see his work he would have enthusiastically approved. I do know that Hannes admired HPL very much, although (unlike myself) he was not a correspondent of Lovecraft's. Incidentally, in several letters to me Lovecraft mentioned his own choice for a favorite young artist of his time, whom he himself would most like to see illustrate his work: Howard Wandrei. While much of Wandrei's best work, I understand, has never been published, it ought to be for it is really fine.

Hannes wrote me of his enthusiasm in being chosen to illustrate *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*, *Fungi from Yuggoth* (*WEIRD TALES*) as well as *The Outsider*, *Pickman's Model* (*FAMOUS FANTASTIC MYSTERIES*) and *The Cats of Ulthar* (*FANTASTIC NOVELS*). Hannes complained sometimes that some of the pulps he was commissioned to illustrate were so unimaginative and run-of-the-mill that they bored him and gave him nothing to sink his teeth into. Not so Lovecraft! It must be mentioned that Bok created some really striking horrors in the Lovecraft mode for other writers who borrowed the HPL style from time to time. Notable among these is *The Sandwin Compact*, by August Derleth (*WEIRD TALES*, November, 1940).

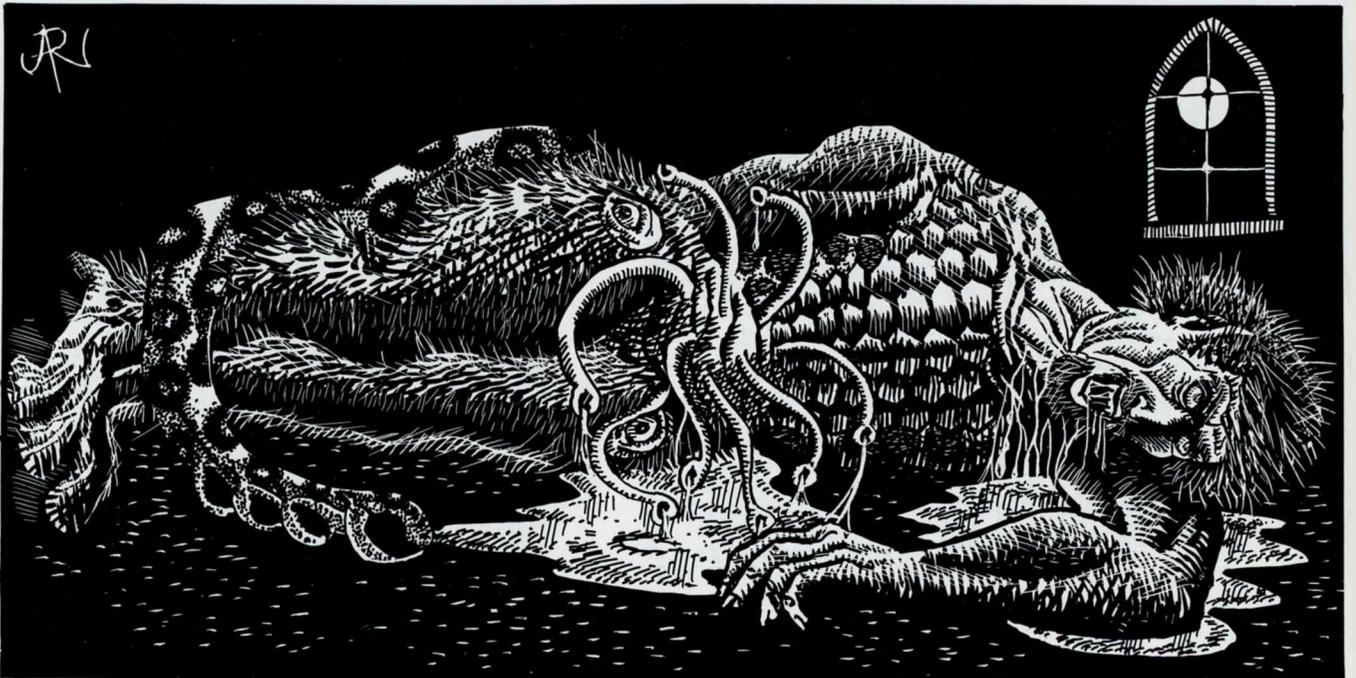
ARKHAM EPISODE

I saw the shape
which slithered from the reef -
a grey abomination
beyond my groping words,
beyond belief.

Terror took me;
down Arkham's ancient streets
I turned and ran -
and then I saw the shapes of grey
. . . on every hand!

- Joseph Payne Brennan

GALLERY



SURVEY OF CURRENT PUBLICATIONS IN THE FIELD OF THE
MACABRE WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON H. P. LOVECRAFT

WEIRDBOOK (Ed/pub W. Paul Ganley, P.O. Box 601, Chambersburg, Pa. 17201. All issues are in print and available at \$3 for the five to date. #5 is offset, 32 pages, 75 cents single copy. 10 pieces of short fiction including work by Gerry Page (W&S editor), David R. Bunch, Eddy C. Bertin and others; 9 poems; artwork by Denis Tiani, Dany Frolich, Frank Bambara and others. Highly recommended. Order back issues & clean out Paul's attic so he can move this summer. Mention this magazine, HPL, when ordering new subscriptions at the same rate, that is, #6-#10 are \$3. The next issue #6 may be doubled up 6-7 but 6 will definitely contain two hitherto unpublished long short stories, one by H. Warner Munn and the other by Robert E. Howard, plus Scott Home, Darrell Schweitzer and much more.

WITCHCRAFT & SORCERY (Ed Gerald W. Page; pubbed by Fantasy Publishing Company, 1855 W. Main St., Alhambra, Calif 91801). 60 cents per copy - 6 issues for \$3. Number 7 is the latest, 32 pp, excellent art by Wrightson, Jones, Fabian, Berry and others. Long fiction by editor, one short story, assorted features. Next issue will feature E.C. Tubb, Emil Petaja and E. Hoffman Price and unpublished cover art by the late Hannes Bok. This is the only commercial publication in the field of supernatural horror and deserves the support of everyone.

MIRAGE 10 (Ed/pub Jack L. Chalker, 5111 Liberty Hts Ave., Baltimore MD 21207). Primarily a Clark Ashton Smith memorial issue of an irregular publication. 82 pp., mimeographed beautifully. \$1.00. A glossary of the Lovecraft Circle by Ken Faig, Emil Petaja on CAS, letters of CAS to George Sterling, and other interesting nonHPL material. Recommended. Write also for the other publications of Mirage Press - limited edition, collectors items of the future.

BIBLIOTHECA: H.P. LOVECRAFT (Ed/pub David A. Sutton, 66 Watford Rd., Kings Norton, Birmingham, B 30 1 PD, England). Limited edition of 100 - 41 pages, \$1.25. Write Harry Morris (see NYCTALOPS below) as U.S. agent. Contains Eddy Bertin's chronological checklist of HPL stories and novels, additions to the "Chalker Index"; E.P. Berglund's chronological listing of the Cthulhu Mythos stories; addenda to "H.P. Lovecraft: The Books" by Berglund; artwork from Lovecraft stories. An aid to the HPL scholar. May be sold out.

SHADOW (Ed/pub David Sutton, address next above). A regular publication of review and commentary on the fantasy literature and arts fields. \$1 for 2; \$2 for 4. Number 14 was 41 pp, mimeographed with art, article by James Wade, many reviews.

TAMLACHT 12 (Ed/pub Victor Boruta, 11 W. Linden Ave., Linden, N.J. 07036). 60 cents - regular subs are 4/\$1. This special issue of a regular "occultzine" contains "Fungi", a Lovecraftian tale by co-editor Al Attanasio; The Lovecraftian works of Colin Wilson by Eddy C. Bertin; Notes on an Entity by Robert Bloch; Necronomicon by Rogert Bryant; a "must-have" article on Lovecraft's Providence by Ken Faig, beautifully illo'd by Tim Kirk; The Commonplace Book by John Jacob, and a glossary from Unknown Kadath by Harry Morris. Highly recommended - 32 pp.

MOONBROTH (Ed Dale C. Donaldson, pub: Malvern Enterprises, P.O. Box C, Bellevue, Wash 98009). Looseleaf, one-side only - may not have any backissues available. #4 was 24 pages - 4 weird tales, several full page illos. Issues are \$1 each, published irregularly - whenever there are enough subscriptions for the issue.

IS # 4 (Ed/pub Tom Collins, 4305 Balcones Drive, Austin, TX 78731) 82 pp, offset, for \$3. Dedicated to August Derleth with articles by Forry Ackerman, Jacques Bergier, Robert Bloch, Ray Bradbury, Lin Carter, Avram Davidson, Fritz Leiber, F.B. Long, Robert Lowndes, Roderic Meng, Larry Niven and a host of others. For another \$6 you can "gamble" that this extremely capable editor will be able to continue to produce (when he returns from frigid Alaska) high quality material which is a credit to the world of fandom, by ordering the next four issues of the publication. The next issue is to feature Nobel-prizewinner Edward Lear, Chip Delaney, Ike Asimov, R.A. Lafferty and Brian Lumley so far. Not particularly for macabre fans like IS 4 is, but recommended for fans in general and students of amateur journalism.

MATHOM 6 (Eds Joe Pumilia and Bill Wallace -inquiries to Joe at Box KK, Brenham TX 77833) - due in October of 1971, it's had its problems but is worth waiting for because of Larry Niven, E. Hoffman Price, some good satire, weird art. Price was 60 cents, may be different - write first.

AMBROSIA (Ed/pub Allen D. Gullette, 904 Allen Road, Nashville Tenn 37214) is in process of preparation; as to contributions and purchases, please inquire.

THE DARK BROTHERHOOD - organization for fans of the Arkham House writers, not just Lovecraft. Write to George Record, P.O. Box 426, Denver, Colo.

NYCTALOPS (ed/pub Harry O. Morris, Jr., 500 Wellesley S.E., Albuquerque, N.M. 87106) Latest issue was #5, 60 pp beautifully mimeo'd. All past issues (probably o.p. - inquire) have been extremely interesting and helpful to the HPL fan - topical reviews, indexes, etc. The last price was 50 cents per issue but it's best to inquire. Fiction editor is Paul Berglund and the Silver Scarab Press is planning an all-fiction publication - THROUGH THE DARK GATEWAY. Details from Harry including address for contributions. Issue 6 is due out shortly and sounds excellent. Highly recommended.

COLLECTORS BULLETIN 13 - due out in April/May, 1972; 25 cents or 6/\$1 sub. Ed/pub is Mike Scott, Box 2043, Alhambra, Calif. 91803. Will feature articles reprinted from Francis Laney's legendary THE ACOLYTE; reproductions of Finlay's dj for THE OUTSIDER & OTHERS; Alva Rogers' Lovecraftian artwork, and more art by Schermeister, Docherty, Riley, Morris and others. More of an HPLish nature is expected. The latest issue (#12) feature's Ben Indick's article on David H. Keller, Tom Cockcroft's Elliot Dold art index, reviews of recent bibliographic projects by fans, reviews of fanzines, large ad section and lettercol.

We apologize to any publishers whose works should have been included in this listing but were not, for these are the only publications we have seen.

