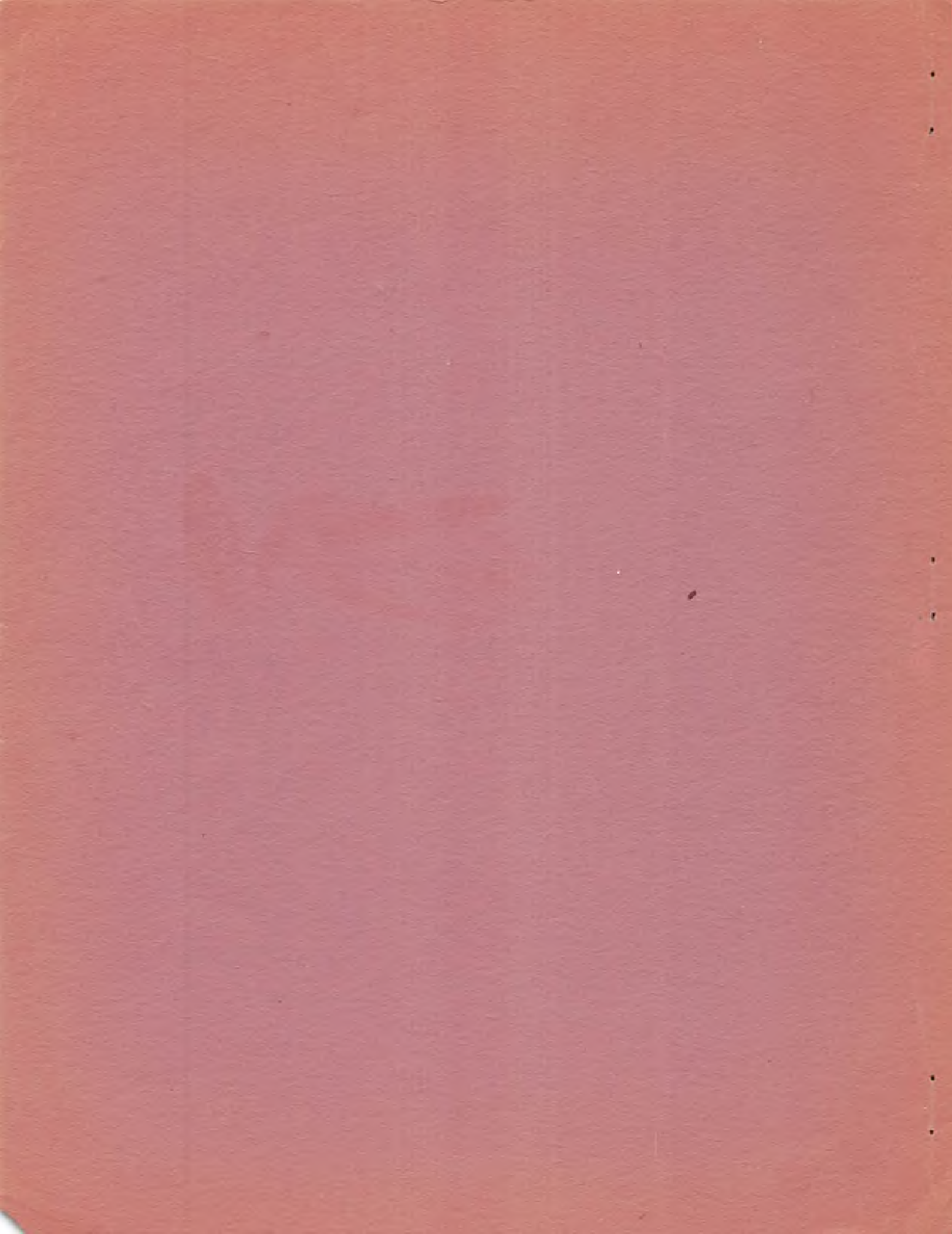


# SKY HOOK

NUMBER 13  
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1952









# SKY HOOK

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A Gafia Press publication.

## TWIPPLEDOP

### DREAM BOOK

I was correcting the dummy of this issue's "Eye to the Past" on a warm Sunday afternoon, reclining on the bed, and I went to sleep. (Gad, this is a candid admission!) I dreamed I was sitting on a bench overlooking a wide hazy lake; a woman came along and, for some reason, gave me a book she was carrying.

I opened it at random and scanned a page, reading a few lines. At that point I woke up. Luckily there was a paper and pencil right at hand and I hastily wrote down what I could remember from the lines I read in my dream: "We went about the jungle, accomplishing hell in every village. Billeted spear soldiers..." And then some impossibly blurred phrases, followed by "grateful neolithics..." Also there was a reference somewhere to 1962.

Was this a prophecy, I wonder?

### FIRST FAULKNER

"Another POWERFUL and PASSIONATE Novel by the Author of SANCTUARY," proclaims the blurb on the new Signet edition of William Faulkner's Soldiers' Pay. Readers who liked powerful and passionate Sanctuary are going to be amazed to read this new paperback.

Soldiers' Pay was Faulkner's first novel and instead of being truthful fiction about the black bottom lands of the deep south, it is badly-imagined romance. Instead of scrupulously - presented geography, sociology, and psychology of Yok-

napatawpha county and its people, the reader is treated to a virtuoso display of fin de siecle Romanticism.

Writing in the mood and style of Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde, and Ernest Dowson, Faulkner fairly wallows in sensuous detail, melancholy futility, and metallic artificiality. As if this wasn't enough, he declares his allegiance to the fin de siecle tradition by sprinkling the book with direct references to its masters and masterworks. "Had Gilligan and Lowe ever seen an Aubrey Beardsley," he writes in one place, "they would have known that Beardsley would have sickened for her: he had drawn her so often dressed in peacock hues, white and slim and depraved among meretricious trees and impossible fountains." "Dancing with you," says one of his characters, "is like a poem by a minor poet named Swinburne." Another character is said to resemble Jurgen.

Faulkner delights in imagery typical of the tradition, too -- references to the classics, where elegance and exoticism intermingle: Cecily is described as "fragile as a Tanagra"; she is a "hamadryad, a slim jeweled one." Jones "could imagine her long subtle legs, like Atalanta's reft of running." Even the blue hyacinths in the garden are "dreaming of Lesbos." The ancient symbols are in full array: the young soldier carries a dried hyacinth bulb to France, and it crumbles to dust in the father's hand just as the young soldier returns home, wounded and dying.



There's an air of Madame Tussaud's about the world in which Soldiers' Pay takes place. The rose tree branches are "heavy and dark as a bronze pedestal"; the rose is crowned with "pale impermanent gold." The tree at the corner of the house has "silver-bellied leaves." The river glints in the setting sun "in a flashing barter of gold for gold." Even the moon is "a coin broken palely near the zenith" and the rain is silver drops. We find ourselves in a world of exquisitely-wrought metallic things.

But like the world of Beardsley or Wilde, this world of Soldiers' Pay is full of sensuous and luscious detail. Faulkner delights in rank, thick odors, especially that of fresh-cut grass. He finds subtly exotic colors everywhere; often they are shades between ordinary greens and blues -- lilac, or "twilight-colored" or "palpable violet." In contrast there is a gleam of white threading through the story, as there is in Pater and Wilde: the color of moonlight and the columns of Greek temples.

The cloying, jeweled circumstance of Soldiers' Pay is illustrated in such a passage as this: "Flowers bloomed like girls ready for a ball, then drooped in languorous fulsome heat like girls after the ball .... Fruit blossoms were gone, pear was forgotten: what were once tall candlesticks, silvery with white bloom, were now tall jade candlesticks of leaves beneath the blue cathedral of sky across which, in hushed processional, went clouds like choir-boys slow and surplined."

Even in Wilde no patches were purple as this, and I wonder how the newsstand trade likes it?

#### WHAT TO DO? WHAT TO DO?

Somebody suggested recently that science fiction is becoming so extensive and expensive a hobby that collectors will soon have to give up completism and make a hard choice. They will have to choose, he said, either to collect the sf magazines or sf books -- and not both. The publishers in each field are much too active for anyone to keep up with them without making it a full-time endeavor.

The thing that puzzles me is, if I'm faced with the choice, which shall I se-

lect? Which, that is, is going to prove the cheaper hobby -- magazine collecting or book collecting? Which costs less, a complete magazine file for the year, or a complete collection of the books published that year? Anybody have some figures?

#### INNOCENT BROAD

"Down, bitch!" he commanded, as his dog bounded across the lawn and leaped around him, yelping a welcome. As he helped his fiancée from the station wagon he became conscious that she was regarding him with round eyes.

"Didn't you ever hear that word before?" he laughed.

"Oh yes," the girl admitted, "but I never heard it applied to a dog before."

#### PLAIN TALK OR PLAIN SENSE?

What responsibility has a writer to make his work fully comprehensible to his audience? I've been brooding about that ever since Marion Bradley and G. M. Carr raised the question in FAPA of obscurity in poetry. Let's grant, but leave aside as beyond the scope of this discussion, the fact that some modern poetry is obscure merely to hide the sad truth that the poet really has nothing to say.

But let's also admit that despite its obscurity much of the poetry of T. S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens, E. E. Cummings -- and Virginia Elish -- has something to say, maybe something important. The question is, should the "message" of their poetry be made so obvious, so instantly comprehensible, that even a stevedore who reads nothing but comic books and beer labels could understand it if he wanted?

Rudolf Flesch, the plain talk advocate, thinks so. He would have us always write in an easy, conversational style, steering clear of abstractions and long words. He thinks it's a good idea to have works of art "skilfully popularized" like pop tunes from a Puccini opera. I think Flesch has some practical suggestions in his books; certainly there's no sense in writing as obscurely and tortuously as Kant, for example. But Flesch would go so far as to make Henry James, Thomas Hardy, and modern poets change their writing styles so as to conform to the "plain talk" formula.



I don't think that's wise. Flesch seems not to realize that language is not a simple utilitarian gadget; much of its richness comes from words that have small practical importance. People use words and people read or listen to words for the sheer pleasure of it, not for the purpose of getting an idea put across in a neat efficient way. Why else would such colorful words as "bamboozle" and "hornswoggle" come into our language?

And Flesch seems not to understand how thoroughly meaning is wed to style. What you say and how you say it are in large measure inseparable. To claim that "When I sit down and think, I remember a lot of things" has the same meaning as "When to the sessions of sweet silent thought/I summon up remembrance of things past" is obviously ridiculous. The meaning may be clearer, but much has been lost or changed so that the two aren't equivalent.

I think the responsibility for clearing up the obscurity in modern poetry lies not so much with the poet as with the culture, and by that I mean the whole complex of western civilization, but mostly the home and school. Somebody once said that to have great poets we must have great audiences, and this means that, instead of the poet descending to the troglodyte level, we must bootstrap the comic-book-reading stevedore up to the poet's level.

Most people, of course, don't want to use their brains when they read, and it will take a lot of education to convince them that it is their responsibility to do so, that they cannot shift the whole blame for obscurity in poetry onto wilfully vague poets. Even Walt Whitman, who desired (in vain) to be the poet of democracy, the poet of the people, saw that the way was definitely not to "write down" to his audience.

"Books are to be called for, and supplied, on the assumption that the process of reading is not a half-sleep, but, in the highest sense, an exercise, a gymnast's struggle; that the reader is to do something for himself, must on the alert, must himself or herself construct indeed the poem, argument, history, metaphysical essay," wrote Whitman in his prose work, Democratic Vistas.

Just because he finds thinking painful, the reader should not expect the writer to tie a brain-lobe behind his back, just to make the whole thing even.

#### MATTER OF PROFOUND IMPORT

With this issue I'm abandoning the practice of giving volume numbers to Sky Hook. Henceforth, whole numbers alone will identify each issue. For the information of bibliographers and checklists (if any), I list below the volume and issue numbers of all Sky Hooks to date. The number at the left is the whole number.

1. Vol. 1, No. 1 - Winter 1948
2. No. 2 - May 1948
3. No. 3 - Summer 1948
4. No. 4 - Autumn 1948
5. Vol. 2, No. 1 - Winter 1948-49
6. No. 2 - Spring 1949
7. No. 3 - Summer 1949
8. No. 4 - Autumn 1949
9. Vol. 3, No. 1 - Winter 1949-50
10. No. 2 - Spring 1951
11. No. 3 - Autumn 1951
12. No. 4 - Winter 1951-2

#### IT'S ROBERTO'S FAULT!

I just read something that scared me worse than the atom on TV: Hollywood has signed Italy's great de Sica for a movie. How can Hollywood use a genius? I think they seduced him just to revenge Ingrid.

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The perfect lady is not the perfect woman.

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#### THE BIG SLEEP DEPARTMENT

"The Big Pahluka has known JC J. C. May for nearly four years, but it was not until the Nolacon that he came out of his sleep and discovered that JC was a fan!"

-- "The Big Pahluka," in TNFF, Oct 51.



# THE SUBCUTANEOUS FAN

THIS WAS MEANT TO BE one of those scholarly, constructive articles that your editor so excels in, but I am beginning to think that he has discovered some important principle of life that has so far eluded me. Redd: do you never find that when you want to look up a reference someone has invariably borrowed the book? It's always happening to me -- people are so dishonest. The worst of it is that I never seem to find anything worth quoting in the books I have of theirs.

The one I was looking for this time was Rachel Ferguson's The Brontes Went To Woolworths. It was to have been the first link in a long chain of speculation about the ways in which the fan mentality expresses itself in the absence of fandom. As far as I remember -- don't bother to correct me if I'm wrong -- Rachel Ferguson and her sisters had invented an elaborate private mythology concerning the Brontes, and lived in it themselves a sort of pseudolife in parallel with their mundane existence. I think the Brontes themselves had one which they shared with Branwell, and I know that lots of other people, like Shelley, also had these private worlds of their own. I was going to argue that this was a manifestation of the sensitive fannish mind.

To me at any rate the main attraction of fandom is this property it has of being a combined mythology and microcosm -- an artificial private world which does actually have a real existence (but not too real), and in which one can enjoy a sort of contemporary reincarnation. (A whole bunch of reincarnations, if you follow Speer's example and split yourself into more than one identity.) At the very least, two lives for the price of one. It could be argued that fandom is not an escapist hobby at all, but almost the reverse -- an overflow outlet for the creative imagination. Fandom is a nocturnal emission. (I put it baldly like that with a view to the remark's immortalization on a Wild Hair type cover.)

However, in the absence of the Ferguson book I'm afraid this article is going to degenerate into a personal reminiscence. I only hope I'm right in assuming I can get away with this sort of stuff in FAPA. Certainly I can't think of any other audience likely to be interested in the rise and fall of sauce bottle fandom.

Sauce bottle fandom flourished in Belfast about 17 years ago and at one time had as many as four members. We met twice a week in a local cafe, and at first we talked only of the usual things students talk about -- art, religion, politics, and other dirty jokes -- but it wasn't long before we invented sauce bottle fandom. We were all the sort of people who read at meals and if there was nothing else to read we would read the labels on the jars and things on the table. We soon found that we all knew by heart the label on a sauce known as "H. P." Not only did this label carry a much greater wordage than any marmalade jar, it was of an immensely higher literary standard. For one thing, part of it was in French, which gave it a tremendous distinction in the eyes of us Francophiles.

The label had three sides. The middle one had a picture of the house of parliament at Westminster, a statement that the sauce was made by Garton and Company, and a description of its constituents -- pure malt vinegar and oriental spices. On the lefthand side was the blurb in French -- "Cette Sauce de premier choix..." -- which we intoned with the solemnity we gave to Baudelaire and Rimbaud. And on the righthand side was a copy of a certificate by two public analysts that they had "regularly taken samples from stock and found the sauce to be in every way pure and wholesome. -- Signed, A. Bostock Hill & William T. Rigby."



It was those names that got us. There seemed to be limitless significance in them. A. Bostock Hill was obviously a short stocky type, stolid and unimaginative, but steady as a rock and honest as the day was long. William T. Rigby, on the other hand, was a wayward genius, brilliant and eccentric and with a streak of the Bohemian artist. In no time at all we had the two characters fitted out with parents, schools, careers, love lives, friends -- an entire world. Every detail was filled in with loving care. Finally we had constructed an entire imaginary universe for Hill and Rigby, with a cast of scores which included virtually every proprietary name in the British bottling, canning, and confectionery industries.

Every change in a proprietary label was the outward sign of some vast drama taking place behind the scenes, and the occasion for long and serious speculation by us. We were, for instance, saddened when the H. P. people suddenly substituted typed signatures of Hill and Rigby for the holographed ones we had known since childhood. It could only mean that poor old Hill was failing. No doubt he had for some time been unable actually to take the samples from stock himself, but his loyal friend Rigby, ever the more dashing of the two, had shown him his results and guided his faltering hand in signing the hallowed document. Then in 1939 two things happened. The war broke out, and the certificate disappeared altogether. The latter could mean only one thing, and sauce bottle fandom came to an end.

By that time the mythos was really immense. We had not only accounted for every idiosyncrasy in proprietary labels, but had incorporated dozens of other odd items that had caught our imagination. Things like an enormous and mysterious unsigned painting of a lady in blue that hung in the attic of my grandmother's old house, several Victorian lithographs of domestic scenes in the downstairs rooms, and a photograph of an unknown Edwardian ancestor whom we christened Wallace Willis. And finally we had integrated the whole thing with another equally massive mythology in a different field, quite incommunicable since it dealt mainly with local placenames and Irish words, and ingenious theories as to whatever happened to the Picts.

Nobody ever got around to writing the whole thing down -- it would have been quite a job -- and I thought it had perished completely until the other day I found among some old papers a draft I had sketched of the main events in the Hill-Rigby story itself. It started off with A. Bostock Hill's childhood, and already one of the two Holy Grails of the saga -- absolutely pure malt vinegar -- was making its appearance. As you probably know, vinegar is made from inferior wines, and in the first chapter, based on one of the Victorian lithos, old Squire Hill is staggering home drunk from his nightly debauch. "'D--n and b---t,' he roared thickly as he reeled up the stairs. Mrs Hill blanched. 'Shut your ears, children,' she murmured, clasping her eldest son in her arms. 'Arbuthnot,' she cried, 'tomorrow you embark on the great sea of life. Swear to me by a mother's love that you will fight this daemon Empire Wine that has enslaved your father, and that you will remember always our family motto SPIRIT VINI RECT.'" \*

In the next chapter Hill goes to boarding school and falls foul of the school bully, Guy Fletcher (Fletcher's Tomato Ketchup) and his toadies Cyril Urney and Sidney Needler. (Urney and Needler were makers of chocolate we thought vastly inferior to Cadbury's.) He is rescued by William Terence Rigby, one of the school bloods, and confides in him his dream of transforming his father's curse into a blessing for

\* Pharmaceutical term for vinegar.

BY WALT WILLIS



all mankind. Later at Oxford, where Rigby is specializing in tropical flora, they meet some of the other characters in the saga -- Wallace Willis, Vladimir Potemkin the mad painter, Richard Cadbury and Sydney Garton. They also spend a holiday at Heidelberg, where they meet Gustav Tobler and Heinrich Heinz. Towards the end of their university life, however, both Hill and Rigby fall in love with Wallace Willis' sister, the mysterious blue lady painted by Potemkin, and Rigby goes East to forget. Worried by reports that he has gone native, Hill presses on with his monumental work.

"The furore which greeted the publication of Pure Malt Vinegar, Its Past, need not be described. The book was at first greeted with derision and obloquoy, but when it was realized that the author had effectively discredited all previous thought on the subject a wave of despair swept the world. Such was the position when Hill produced the second volume, Pure Malt Vinegar, Its Future. It was the young men who first realized the daring scope of Hill's ideas. Absolutely Pure Malt Vinegar, hitherto thought but a vain dream, was possible! In Paris, Montmartre student opinion rallied to the new leader as a result of some anonymous prose poems and manifestos...."

Hill can now afford to organize an expedition to search for Rigby. He enlists the aid of old Professor Heinz ("57 Varieties have I made, and I will no more until Rigby is found make") and with Tobler they set out for the orient. They find Rigby in the heart of the Burmese jungle "writing feverishly on a bamboo table covered with scientific instruments. The piercing gleam in his eye belied the signs of dissipation on his features...." "Your book made a new man of me," he says, "and I have begun my researches again. I don't want to raise false hopes, but I think we have an appointment with Sidney Garton...and I have one of my prose poems ready for Sidney if he cares to use it. 'Cette sauce de premier choix...'"

They all return in triumph to England (except old Professor Heinz who succumbs to malaria with his life's work uncompleted. Or don't you have Heinz's 57 Varieties in the U. S.?) and Garton produces the ultimate sauce. Not without opposition from Fletcher, Crosse, and Blackwell, but the saga ends at one of the "quiet dinners Hill gives regularly to his friends. The genial old man sits at the head of the table, with Rigby, frail but indomitable and with still a youthful gleam in his eye, on his right hand, and Dr Otto Heinz, son of the revered Professor, on his left....The gay conversation rises and falls, stilled only when the butler enters bearing tenderly a priceless cobwebbed bottle of old vintage vinegar."

And to think I might have poured all that energy into fandom instead of a sauce bottle, if I had come across the Belfast SFL in 1935!

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"Geme, plange, moesto more -- "

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FANTASTIC FACTS DEPARTMENT

"Ring Record and Earnings of Joe Louis

Born, May 13, 1914, Lexington, Alabama. Weight, 213½ lbs., height, 6 ft. 2 in."

-- Information Please Almanac, 1949.

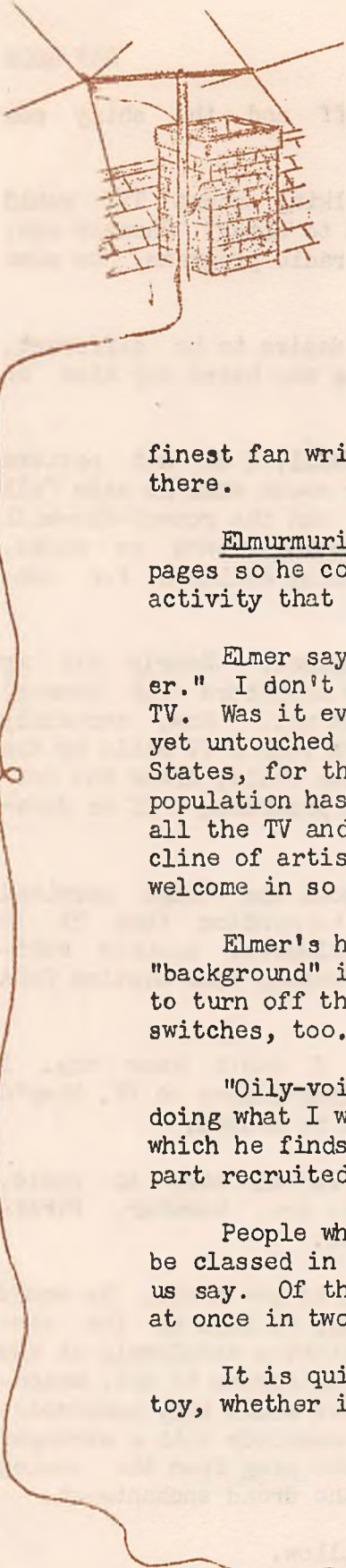
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"Dolorosa Dalarna"

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# BY CHARLES BURBEE



I GOT SOME KICKS out of Elmer Perdue's Elmurmurings, recently postmailed, but then I always enjoy Perdue's writings except when he talks about his job. In fact, one of these days I am going to write an article which will contain examples of what I consider the finest fan writing of all time -- and Elmer Perdue will be represented there.

Elmurmurings had five pages of text s-t-r-e-t-c-h-e-d to use up eight pages so he could claim full activity. But it isn't about foreshortened activity that I intend to write. His comments on TV set me off.

Elmer says, "Conversation was at one time a fine art. It is no longer." I don't think he can blame the decline of conversation as an art on TV. Was it ever an art in this century? Is it an art in the countries as yet untouched by the new medium, or in the TV-less sections of the United States, for that matter? Elmer should know that the vast majority of the population has no parlor conversation anyhow, and wouldn't have, even if all the TV and radio sets were to be scrapped tomorrow. Perhaps the decline of artistic conversation in Elmer's case is due to his not being welcome in so many parlors as he used to be.

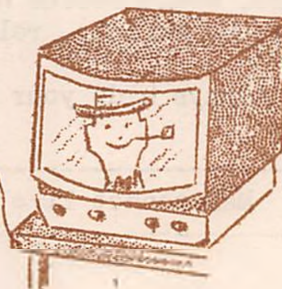
Elmer's habit of leaving the radio turned on "much of the time" as "background" is vastly irritating to many people. Matter of taste. Easy to turn off the radio? It's just as easy to turn off TV sets. They have switches, too.

"Oily-voiced bastard invading my home at my expense, to lure me from doing what I want...." This very charge can be leveled at radio, with which he finds no fault. The "oily-voiced bastards" were for the most part recruited from radio.

People who will not turn off TV sets when guests arrive are boors, to be classed in the same category as people who use radio as background, let us say. Of the five homes I've visited recently, the sets were turned off at once in two, weren't on in the other three.

It is quite natural for people to be temporarily obsessed by a new toy, whether it be an automatic washer, a garbage disposal unit, a mimeo-

SORCERY IN THE



PARLOR



graph, a tape recorder, a TV set. Then the novelty wears off and the shiny new gadget simply becomes another adjunct of graceful living.

If the forty-odd workers in Perdue's office weren't talking about TV, would they be talking about anything else of intellectual interest to Elmer? Chances are, they'd be talking about basketball games, football games, radio programs, or some such ephemera.

I believe Elmer Perdue's attitude is partly due to his desire to be different, and partly to his gradual metamorphosis into a crusty old dog who hates any kind of change because it means another adjustment.

Perdue, Condra, and Bradbury "concur" as TV holdouts? Well, I do not pattern my living habits after these three. I don't know what Elmer means when he says "all the difference in the world between his (Condra's) children and the run-of-the-mill television children." In my opinion, the Condra girls are being raised as snobs. And I don't believe Perdue has much opportunity to observe many children for comparison purposes.

On the other hand, I live in a child-clogged neighborhood. Nearly all my friends have from two to six children. Among our immediate neighbors (12 houses) there are 35 children. Some of these homes have TV, some do not. Now, certainly I'm as intelligent and observant as Elmer Perdue, but I can't tell a TV child by the cut of his jib. Can Elmer? I believe the average intelligent child, after the novelty of TV has worn off grows selective in the choice of his programs. If he doesn't, that's where the parental control comes in.

Elmer was very smug and erudite as he spoke casually about the "high survival value" of "watching anything that moved" but he neglected to mention that it is difficult to hold a small child's attention longer than 15 minutes, another well-known phenomenon. It is this smugness of Elmer's that once caused some oldtime FAPA member to dub him "God's Big Brother Bill."

Certainly there must be a few adults who are TV wacky. I don't know any. I try very hard to steer clear of the weak-minded. If they weren't gone on TV, they'd be just as overboard for something else. TV, like wine, can be abused.

The bulk of TV programming is bad. In this respect it is the same as radio, night club shows, movies -- any entertainment medium. There are, however, first-class shows. Scarce, of course, but quality is always scarce.

Poor old Elmer, terrified of TV. You see, he is afraid to get a set. He would be forced, by the survival instinct of watching moving things, to look at the picture. There he would sit, englamored, witched, entranced, staring mindlessly at the screen. Even when the station went off the air he'd still be forced to sit, watching against his will the shimmer of the rasters. And there he would sit, immovable, unable to drink, to eat, to answer the call of nature, till somebody with a stronger will than he, like his wife, would rescue him by snatching the plug from the socket (because his set would have no switch), releasing him from the dread enchantment.

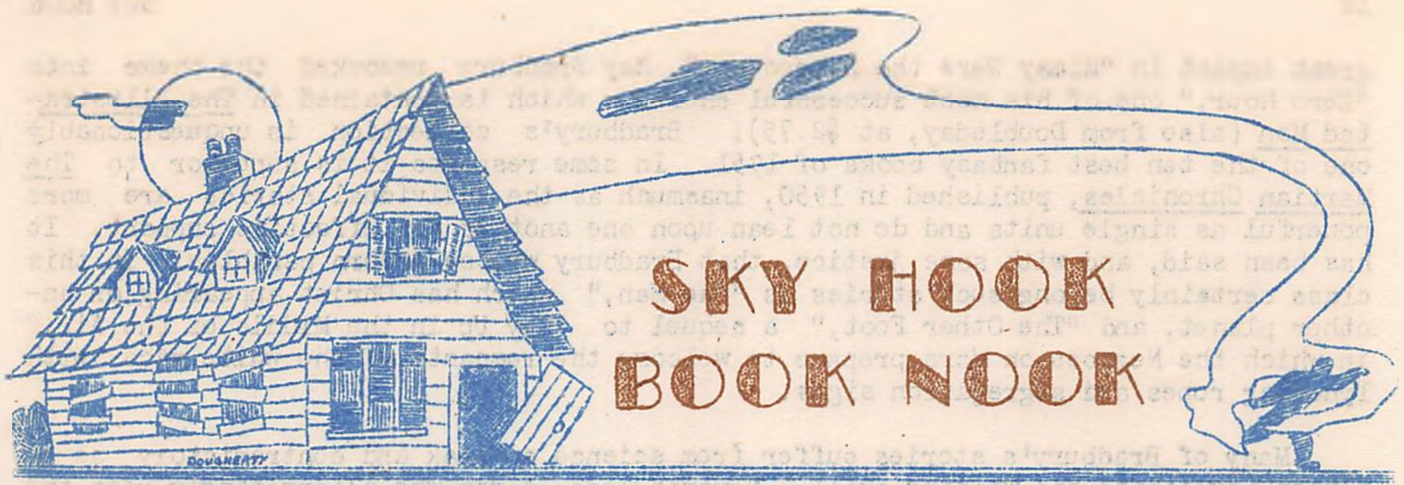
Hell, Elmer, you can always hide your head under the pillow.

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Man cannot live by cake alone.

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## TEN BEST FANTASY BOOKS: 1951

A CONNOISSEUR'S COMPILATION

THERE IS LITTLE QUESTION in my mind that the most important, the most outstanding fantasy volume of 1951 from the standpoint of brilliant writing, well-planned stories, and its influence on past fantasy writing is John Collier's Fancies and Goodnights, published by Doubleday & Co., Inc., at \$4. This volume contains the entire contents of the author's previous collections, Presenting Moonshine and A Touch of Nutmeg, with the exception of a single story from the latter volume, "After the Ball," which some imp of perversity prompted Doubleday to exclude from the collection. In addition there are 17 short stories not previously published in book form. The blurb on the front flap of the dust jacket states that there are 49 tales in the "omnibus," but a personal count reveals a neat, even 50.

Collier writes in the tradition of that master teller of short tales, Saki, but with a deft touch of his own and a penchant for the bizarre and unusual that brands him an original instead of an imitator. He had and still has contemporaries who might be said to belong to the same school of writing. James Gould Cozzens' finely-wrought short novel Castaway, published in 1934, contains the basic premise of a man lost at night in a department store. This was the theme of one of Collier's most successful short stories, "Evening Primrose." Another writer, closer to the tradition, is Martin Armstrong, author of the short story collection General Buntop's Miracle, also published in 1934. The short story "Presence of Mind" in Armstrong's book is a veritable masterpiece of grim humor. Readers wishing to know what the plot is about are referred to H. L. Gold's short story "Day Off" in the November 1939 issue of Unknown, which was powerfully influenced by that yarn. Similarly John Collier is the most important single writer whose method and style shaped the writings in Unknown and Unknown Worlds. Collier is the supreme modern master of the flip, fantastic-humorous short story.

Another of Collier's most successful short stories that has been widely and successfully imitated is "Thus I Refute Beelzy." Henry Kuttner used the theme with

BY SAM MOSKOWITZ



great impact in "Mimsy Were the Borogoves." Ray Bradbury reworked the theme into "Zero Hour," one of his most successful shorts, which is contained in The Illustrated Man (also from Doubleday, at \$2.75). Bradbury's collection is unquestionably one of the ten best fantasy books of 1951. In some respects it is superior to The Martian Chronicles, published in 1950, inasmuch as the individual stories are more powerful as single units and do not lean upon one another for effective support. It has been said, and with some justice, that Bradbury writes modern parables. In this class certainly belong such stories as "The Man," which has Christ appearing on another planet, and "The Other Foot," a sequel to "Way Up in the Middle of the Air," in which the Negroes on Mars prepare to welcome the remnants of the white race with lynching ropes and segregation signs.

Many of Bradbury's stories suffer from science so weak and contradictory as to almost invalidate the writing skill. Nevertheless, a man who alternately uses the techniques of Thomas Wolfe and Ernest Hemingway on science-fictional themes and does it reasonably well is sufficiently different and unique as to make diverting reading. Bradbury has succeeded in defying many of the taboos which limited science-fiction writers in the past and thus has found untouched themes and angles which are excitingly different.

Seeds of Life by John Taine, published by Fantasy Press at \$2.75, brings into book form the novel which many regard as Taine's finest single story and which is an acknowledged masterpiece on the mutant superman theme. Though excessively verbose in some parts and a bit diffuse in plot, its scientific ideas and its delineation of the superman's psychology are so well-wrought as to rank it with Slan, Odd John, The New Adam, Gladiator, and The Hampdenshire Wonder as one of the most important books on the theme.

Grey Lensman by Edward E. Smith Ph.D., published by Fantasy Press at \$3, may raise many eyebrows as a choice for one of the ten best fantasy books of the year, but from the connoisseur's standpoint it definitely belongs there. While it is true that his style lacks much of the sophistication which is the forte of the modern science fiction writer, and while it is true that his methods belong primarily to the realm of the action-adventure story, nevertheless Smith's importance and influence is far in excess of that of many modern writers customarily rated above him in skill. Ignoring completely the importance of his "Skylark" series in the development of science fiction, there is no denying the fact that E. E. Smith not only pointed out but led the way for the moderns. In the "Lensmen" stories he conceived and wrote about the future era when many galaxies would be populated and governed by intergalactic empires and police forces, when many tremendous scientific advances would be taken for granted. These factors are essentially the warp and woof of most modern science fiction, which casually accepts the great scientific advances of tomorrow and starts from there. In the Analytical Laboratory in Astounding Science Fiction during the time it was running as a serial Grey Lensman beat out outstanding stories by Robert A. Heinlein and A. E. van Vogt.

The Blind Spot by Austin Hall and Homer Eon Flint, published by Prime Press at \$3.50, was for decades one of the most legendary of the Munsey Classics. In 1940 Leo Margulies, editorial director of Standard Magazines, contemplated bringing out a series of science fiction books, and the first title scheduled for this never executed project was The Blind Spot. Now Prime Press has put this story between hard covers for the first time in an extremely handsome edition, well-printed on fine paper, well-bound, and beautifully illustrated by six full-page interiors by Hannes Bok. The story is richly and smoothly written and, with allowances for its age, still remains a choice morsel.



The Green Hills of Earth by Robert A. Heinlein, published by Shasta Publishers at \$3, is the second of five books in the "Future History" series. While there is not a single story in this volume that I would underline as a really outstanding example of science fiction -- not even the title story, which in my view would have been more effective as a sea story than as a space story -- this is an effective book. Like the stories in Bradbury's The Martian Chronicles, each unit in The Green Hills of Earth is strengthened by the sum total of the whole.

In writing style Heinlein presents an unusual study. He follows the Hemingway pattern in his studied, matter-of-fact prose and his stark narrative method, but he lacks most of Hemingway's power. He attains his best efforts through understatement and sophisticated asides in dialog. His style is not flexible and he is not, in the matter of style, a versatile writer. In this book his manner is usually well-adapted to the subject matter, and he goes methodically along, making the problems of space travel and colonization of the planets a prosaic business, keeping the emphasis on the reactions of the people involved in this pioneering step. The Green Hills of Earth is a well-done, if rather elementary, bit of science fiction.

Typewriter in the Sky and Fear by L. Ron Hubbard, published by Gnome Press, \$3. The listing of this book rests entirely upon the strength of the latter title, which ironically was added to fill out the book to normal size. The severest criticism of Fear was stated at the time of its magazine appearance in 1940, when it was termed "an absurdly prolonged incident." There is some validity in this claim, for though Hubbard claimed that every syllable was inextricably woven into a pattern and could not be deleted without destroying the effectiveness of the entire work, this reviewer believes that much deletion could have been made with meritorious effect. Despite this, Fear is brilliantly contrived and has one of the most powerful, hard-hitting endings in horror fiction. Along with Final Blackout, this is Hubbard's top effort and it was one of the most outstanding stories ever run by Unknown.

New Tales of Space and Time edited by Raymond J. Healy, published by Henry Holt at \$3.50, is the only anthology I consider worthy of being included as one of the top ten fantasy books of 1951. First, it introduces an idea new to science fiction, an anthology of previously unpublished stories -- though, in a fashion, we get an anthology of new stories every time we purchase Astounding or Galaxy or any other magazine. Second, the editor took advantage of his position to solicit stories that violated ordinary magazine taboos or used unorthodox themes and slants which were not likely to be found in newsstand science fiction magazines. Perhaps you might call many of these stories closer to science-fantasy than to science fiction, but they are a lot of fun and most everyone will enjoy reading them.

Space on My Hands by Fredric Brown, published by Shasta Publishers, \$2.50. Fredric Brown belongs to the farcical school of science fiction writers, which includes such adroit hands as Nelson S. Bond, Lewis Padgett, and Robert Arthur. He takes none of his creations seriously and is out to have a grand time at everyone's expense. He succeeds because he is an extremely competent professional. Though his tales are not classics to ring down the corridors of the ages, you will find he has an original touch. This volume contains the famous "Star Mouse."

The Dark Chateau by Clark Ashton Smith, published by Arkham House, \$2.50. In addition to having written a number of outstanding weird and science fiction tales, Clark Ashton Smith has long been regarded by the critics as a minor poet of some ability, and his poems appear in a number of representative anthologies. Several volumes of his poetry, usually in a macabre vein, have become collector's items of considerable rarity and value. The Dark Chateau is a collection of verse that has never seen hard covers before. Its quality varies in extremes, but there remains no



question that this edition will soon be exhausted, all 500 copies of it, and those who did not bother to purchase it will be sorry. A commendable trend to modify and eliminate the use of coined, rare, and uncommonly seen words is noted in this phase of Clark Ashton Smith's poetry.

This does not exhaust the range of worthwhile items that appeared in 1951. For reading entertainment I recommend Rogue Queen by L. Sprague de Camp and -- of the same type and just about as good -- City in the Sea by Wilson Tucker. The Moon is Hell by John W. Campbell Jr is definitely a collector's "must" and makes good reading. Foundation by Isaac Asimov is the first of a very readable and highly collectable series. The Best Science Fiction Stories: 1951 edited by Bleiler and Dikty is, as in the past, a reasonably good sampling of recent science fiction.

Edmond Hamilton's City at World's End is surprisingly smooth reading. Bullard of the Space Patrol by Malcolm Jameson pays its freight in reading pleasure. The Weapon Shops of Isher is rather smooth and competent van Vogt. In Wine of Wonder, Lilith Lorraine attempts the first volume completely composed of sf poetry.

In non-fiction Willy Ley's revised and enlarged edition of Rockets, Missiles, and Space Travel is unquestionably a cornerstone book and the finest popular book of its type available anywhere in the world. The Nature of the Universe by Fred Hoyle contains an exciting summation of astronomy to date, spiced with original theories that will certainly interest the average science fiction reader. Nothing's Sacred on Sunday by Emile Schumacher, published by Crowell, will prove of considerable interest to those who are curious about A. Merritt as editor of The American Weekly. How he got his job, his editorial methods, the opinions of his subordinates, and interesting touches of his personality are summarized in this book.

To cut this article short, my choices listed here are the ten most important, all factors considered, not the ten easiest to read.

#### NOW THAT LOVE IS OVER

Now that love is over  
And has not ever stood  
In warm, wind-lifted clover,  
Or walked in magic wood,

Now that spring is ended  
Without the cruel seams  
Of parting being mended  
Commensurate with dreams,

She who bore love's token  
So eagerly through snow  
Walks the earth too broken,  
Too reasonless, to know

Why spring commands its closure  
Surely, when the heart  
May have no such composure  
Unless it break apart.

By Edward Weismiller.



EYE TO



THE PAST

THERE'LL BE NO REVIEWS of postmailings to the autumn 1951 mailing (#57) this time, I'm sorry to say. I prematurely stashed away the autumn bundle and it is an incredible job digging it out again. Looking over the list of postmailings in the winter Fantasy Amateur, I remember one comment I wanted to make. Ken Beale in Borogove lamented his failure to get comments on the first issue. If you're fanned for egoboo, Ken, why did you postmail this Borogove -- especially so close upon the next mailing? Some fapans never review postmailings; those that do probably had their review columns all stencilled by the time Borogove came in. No matter how good your fapazine was, your chances of receiving beaucoup comments were almost nil.

Comments on the fifty-eighth FAPA mailing, winter 1951-2:

Lark. The comparatively good results obtained by homemade mimeographs like yours make me wonder if Martin Padway couldn't have revolutionized army routine by building a mimeograph back in 537 A. D.? I imagine the hardest job would have been mixing suitable inks and making the stencil. Does anybody know how old the hekto-graph is? H. G. Wells mentions a "jellygraph" magazine that began in the 1870s. # I note that they've removed the surcharge on postals purchased in quantities of 50 or more. I bought postals a number of times while the law was in effect, but I was careful never to buy more than 49 at once! # I don't altogether blame you for dropping your aSF subscription, but as for your reasons, E. E. Smith hasn't appeared there since early 1948 and probably never will again, and dianetics wasn't given too much space and probably will receive no more. # Virginia's original illustration for "The Water Babies" was too hard to restencil. But she said she liked the Grossman pic I used. # Writing the common noun down in addresses such as 84 Baker avenue isn't especially uncommon. Many newspapers do it, including the authoritative World's Greatest Newspaper.

Phanteur. "What Do You Think?" was an effective presentation, but I don't think that we've a genuine choice between one of the two "cures" and acceptance of our present scientific civilization. The fear of change and of impending doom may be strong, but not strong enough, as yet, to counteract effects of science's gigantic bribe: the gift of material blessings which persuades us to accept all science, including the atomic bomb. # I, for one, am glad that there are millions of Asiatics who will not accept the "methods of Western science." There are, after all, two sides to the question of whether science or "spirit" should dominate when the two doctrines clash, and there is just as much validity, as far as we know, in their attitude as in ours. My money, of course, is on science, but I would hate



to see all mankind risking everything on the one alternative. If our gamble is the wrong one, there should be men of the other tradition to survive and propagate their opposing belief. There won't be, if we succeed in supplanting their doctrine with ours. Let's not put all our eggs in one bomb bay. # I wish I could share your optimism about the future. We're probably on the threshold of making impossible even the long-view optimism of "Adam and No Eve." # "Ego-bosom" is a marvelous word!

Skylark. Your symbolic cover which shows a man sprouting up from Earth toward the stars gives me the shudders. He seems to spring from somewhere behind the iron curtain.

Djinn. I suppose you used the article "Fantasy and Music" mostly because of the first noun in the title. But Harrell's definition of fantasy as "formlessness" and "memory without expression" indicates he's using the word in another sense from ours. I enjoyed this article, however, despite my unfamiliarity with "Walk to the Paradise Gardens." About this matter of experiencing formlessness: is it possible? Utter formlessness could no more be given sensory expression than perfectly empty space, and even if the world, as given, is formless, we must make use of form in order to understand it, much less communicate our experience. Thus even to suggest formlessness must be a challenging task, probably requiring more the use of freer forms than of less form at all. Is this a paradox? The task itself is paradoxical. But the use of unfinished phrases doesn't sound like the answer. There's too great a compulsion to complete unfinished phrases mentally, which, it seems, would spoil the subjective effect of such "fantasy."

Snulbug. 'Sfunny neither Rich nor I noticed the misspelling "Snulnbug" till a number of copies had been run. Naturally, being a perfectionist (so says Burbee) I wanted to rectify the error, but naturally, being sensible, Rich said the hell with it. # Was this a typo: "The four fate symphonies which badly stree the victory through struggle pattern"? # I found Saunders' article very interesting, as I was prepared to do when I noticed (while running these pages off) that he likes Brahms' fourth symphony. That's a favorite of mine, too. # Since you became humor editor of the Minnesota Technolog, I don't know whether to believe what you say or not, but in re your comments on the Gafia Press Style Book, that leaflet didn't reflect my opinion on the fapate's ignorance of spelling, punctuation, etc. It was intended for use by no one but myself, and its only utility to others was, as I suggested, as a model for their own style book. # I'd forgotten these Jack Gaughan sketches, but after seeing them I remember sitting for mine, while leafing a copy of The Fanscient that Grossman gave me to keep me quiet. But what is this? Do I have a double chin? No no! # One person who can say he had more than nine magazines in one mailing is Claude Degler, who had at least 11 mags in a 1943 mailing.

Al La Baboom. Max, your art school instruction has improved your work tremendously. Some of the pix here are excellent, even the male nudes -- though Laocoon, instead of "dignifying pain," has the most supercilious look on his face! Much better are the women, especially the sunbather on page... well, the sunbather. No page numbers. # Most of your comments were very fine, too. I wish you didn't think misspelling is a necessary part of being funny in print. That went out with Artemus Ward.

Horizons. "More To Be Pitied" was interesting, especially for the anecdotes such as the one about the Mennonites who object to keeping statistics on dairy production. As for the Crusade to Clean Up Fandom, a recent issue of Fantasias contained an ad in which somebody crowed, "The crusade to clean up fanzines has been so tremendously successful that we are pleased to announce: WE consider the matter a closed



deal." Ha! # "Mars-Stuff" surprised me. Did your mention of Browning in "More To Be Pitied" inspire you to write this poem? I thought it was competent, with its chief appeal being in content. Anyway, you deserve the laurel leaf for demonstrating proficiency in this neglected field, even if it's merely to inspire other fans to try this type of verse instead of the never-ending lyrics about nostalgia for Earth and other hackneyed, blurry themes. # The main reason why the postal system has been allowed to deteriorate is that people aren't very dependent on the mails for business and personal communication. I can't imagine the cuts in service and increases in rates being tolerated a generation ago, when radio, telephone, and teletype were less in evidence. The postal system was vital in those days; it no longer is. The difficulties you have with parcel post seems to be only a local matter. In general, parcels have been arriving here almost as fast as first class mail. Often I've received a package for FAPA in the same mail as a postcard explaining that the package is being mailed. I've probably put a curse on future parcel post service, though, so you'd better continue mailing Horizons three weeks in advance of the deadline date!

Unasked Opinion. "If it is good poetry, you don't have to ask what it means. If you have to ask -- it isn't good." What do you mean to imply? I see two possibilities: (a) that you believe that understanding poetry is some sort of intuitive rather than intellectual process; or (b) that you contend that the "message" of a poem should be perfectly accessible to our organ of comprehension (whether that is intuitive or intellectual), instead of obscured in symbolism and allusion which we find is beyond our ken. Verily we must understand a poem (or most poems) before we are inclined to put a value upon it, but I disagree that the stratagem of "asking what it means" indicates that a poem "isn't good." Remember that your definition of "goodness" in poetry is subjective and thus everchanging; it forms no solid basis on which to criticize any poem for being too simple or too obscure. For you are constantly changing: you absorb new knowledge, weld fresh insights in every waking moment, and the poem that's too simple is perhaps aimed at you/1922/ and the poem that's too obscure may be aimed at you/1962/. A "bad" poem can become "good" when your knowledge and experience have given you the background to understand it. When you were 12, a line like Whitman's about the grass, "And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves," perhaps meant little or nothing; when you were 20, perhaps you suddenly saw the significance: life rising out of death! And thus "Song of Myself" (or that part of it) became "good." But the accretion of the necessary background with which to cope with a certain poem is a diffuse, often subconscious, process. And the welding of insights occurs only under stimulus. Therefore, "asking what a poem means" is a method whereby this general background can be focused upon a particular situation. Or it is a method whereby your insight-circuit can be triggered to bring forth the "Aha!" of understanding. Either way, "asking what a poem means" is the best way to distinguish the "goodness" of a poem, intuitively or intellectually. # If you are merely declaring against difficult poetry, I wonder if you've thought what would have happened by now to your love of poetry if all verse had been made understandable prima facie? Poetry would have had to be written for children, even morons, and adults, equipped to cope with poems much more complex than "I Have A Little Shadow," would find no poem to which they might respond deeply and freshly. Thank the muse that there are always poems you can grow up to appreciate! # Foo, it seems a small exaggeration to say that my two-and-a-fourth-page article was wasted in "defending" one eight-line poem! Only one paragraph dealt directly with that particular poem; the rest of the article considered the question of understanding poetry in general. Incidentally, I'm amused that the poem I'm supposed to have found it necessary to defend is by a poet you "actually like" -- Emily Dickinson.

Light. "The Propositioner" was frustrating, but amusing. I am happy to note that Gibson's crossword was even more of an abortion than a couple I once constructed.



The Code of Honor. I wonder if the custom of dueling would make people politer, as Heinlein alleged in "Beyond This Horizon"? I should think it would merely cause bullying to be carried on by a different type of person. Ever see Bobby Clark's skit about dueling? He's done it on television a number of times recently.

Choog. "A Young Fan's Diary and Almanac" was amusing. This feature should be continued, unlike Coslet's diary. I mean, his should have been continued, too, but it wasn't for long. # What a fancy heading for "Mailing #57"! Trying to make GMC jealous? # On the fanicknames I'm unable to identify most of them. But the poor man's Redd Boggs -- that's me! # The description of Hoffman Hovel was fascinating, but kind of hard to follow without the aid of a sketch of the floor plan. Gad, what a place! Cap pistols, ouija board, sea shells, figurine of a horse, and life size photo of a disk jockey! In contrast, this room is crowded only with necessary and utilitarian objects -- books, typer, mimeo, wirecorder, etc. Only exception is an empty bottle or two. Your room sounds like one occupied by a genius like Lester del Rey. Do you file your letters by sticking them to the wall with a rebel bayonet? # That was a fine pic separating parts one and two of this issue. The shading was especially well done. # As Elsberry points out, your mental picture of me is quite accurate, because, though I'm not exactly stocky or medium short, at least I don't wear glasses!

Tangent. There are some inaccurate statements in "A Letter from Marion Bradley" but I'm too weary of the hassle to bother documenting corrections. However, the fact that Marion has "detested" Burbee -- and says so in print -- because she read a "mean, libellous, and thoroughly detestable" article by him about an affair she seems to know nothing about doesn't seem to reflect creditably on her, either .... Prejudice of prejudice is still prejudice. # And also obscenity in first class matter is still obscenity. If Marion considers the postal inspector as one who "has the right to make the decision of what shall and shall not go through the mails," it's inconsistent for her to tolerate "nasty" and libelous matter in letters. The PO wouldn't. # Since FAPA is a semi-private group formed for the purpose of cussing and discussing among ourselves, it has almost as well-defined an audience as has a personal letter. I'm sure Marion would have felt stabbed if Lee had turned her letter over to the postal inspector for quoting the stuff that had to be "withheld for obvious reasons" -- after all, the post office is "interested only in enforcing the regulation that no smut or obscenity passes through the mails" -- but she thinks Laney should take it in good grace when she threatens him with the same action. It's sort of like the town gossip who is horrified because Winchell prints scandal in his column but who spreads the latest dirt about her neighbors over the telephone. # The simplest way to avoid reading Laney's "garbage" is to destroy Fan-Dango as soon as you find it in the bundle. # In his article "With Mediocre Mind" Burbee misidentifies MZB's husband as David. I believe that's her child, though I thought he was named Steve. Wonder if he "detests" Burbee by now? # Nice to see "Thoughts While Bandsawing" here, though I'd rather see Fan-Dango in toto again. # Are "bawdy verse and jokes...pretty well universal"? Kenny Gray says the basis of dirty jokes in the Latin countries is the act of elimination instead of the sexual act, which they don't consider funny.

FAPA Potlatch. Though I'm nominally editor-publisher of this magazine, truth to tell I did little what might be termed editing, so I will risk being unethical in order to comment on Art Rapp's criticism of army training camps. As he says, it's probable that soldiers would be tougher and readier for combat if the luxuries were tossed out of training camps. But would they be mentally ready? Remembering my army days, I gravely doubt it. My morale would have been lower than the barbed wire on the infiltration course if they'd prevented me from relaxing with a beer and sandwich after the day was over. An unhappy soldier is no more of an asset than a soft soldier. # As Art says, the average recruit has to cut loose from





mother's apron strings, and as he also says, it's the recruit who gives army towns the reputation for being rowdy and full of uniformed drunks. But he fails to put these two facts together: Going to town and getting soused and shoving guys through windows when they look at you crosseyed is part of the process of severing those second-order umbilical cords. If the army wants self-reliant, normally pugnacious soldiers, the last thing it should do is to separate the UMTees so they "can be excluded from such places as bars."

Stefantasy. Did Bob and Ray acknowledge receipt of the genuine simulated imitation leatherette medal you awarded them? I hope Bob and Ray won't be seduced by Big Advertisers like Henry Morgan was. I've heard their morning five-a-week show and the worst aspect of it is that their satires of radio advertising can't compete with the real thing. They advertise some kind of soap that claims to "shine dishes without washing or wiping." I thought they were kidding but that's a bonafide advertising claim! No doubt you merely bury dirty dishes in a heap of this soap for a while and they come out sparkling clean. Of course the sponsor admits that if dried particles cling to a dish you must loosen it with "a touch of the dish

cloth." But that isn't "washing" dishes -- oh no! # Virginia Blish lent me the early VAPA mailings, including a number of your early issues, and while I think the innards now are just as good as ever, I note a relative lack of ingenuity on your current covers.

Onomatopoesis. All I need now is a wirecoding to explain these punchlines -- like the one the Insurgents provided me with to explain Wild Hair's last cover. One of the few I recognize is "But are flying saucers adult?" which I think was an interlineation in Hurkle or here. I wonder if its enshrinement means that you understand its esoteric significance? To the best of my knowledge nobody else knew what I was talking about -- probably because I stated it so badly. # Good god, do you mean to say Superman escaped from the infernal machine that was supposed to scatter his atoms in space? That was the situation he was in the last time I saw a Superman serial. Apparently he must have outwitted the Atom Man, else they wouldn't have made another movie about him -- unless Clarkent's career (like Sherlock Holmes' and Horatio Hornblower's) isn't being followed chronologically. But I didn't have the will power to read your resume of the current serial. # Well, maybe if Foo is kind I'll escape being a celebrity! 'Twould be bad enough merely discouraging excavations of one's fan-stuff by eager critics and biographers, let alone living down film biogs. Bradbury is lucky that his fanzine was small, empty and very unsuccessful.

Gemini. Aw, Marion, unsquare that jaw (ref. your self-portrait) and smile. You're much more fun to read when you're sweet and reasonable. # "Instalment" and "cigaret" aren't quite in the same category as such shortened forms as "thru" and "thot." The former are good dictionary spellings, though not preferred forms,



while the latter are not yet permissible usages. As I explained in my style book, I don't like to get in the habit of using spellings not in good repute because it is too hard to break the habit when writing elsewhere than in fanzines. # "History is nothing but fable agreed upon" is a good line, if you are careful to distinguish between history as a narrative of events and history as the events which form the subject matter of that narrative. Which definition did you mean? If you meant the second, believing that whether or not the French revolted in July 1830 is a property of our belief that they did or did not, I'd enjoy arguing the point. # Most of the skip-rope rimes are older than you are, but -- according to the newspaper article I consulted -- many of them are still in use around here. # No Freudian symbolism in your dream mythos? Well, you may "call a sword a sword" and mean "sword" consciously, but subconsciously...? # "Postmailings will never be a libel threat." I doubt if the post office takes it upon itself to inspect printed matter for libelous statements. How can the post office know whether a particular statement is libelous or not? Furthermore, mustn't most libel suits be brought by the injured party rather than by the state?

Elfin. I confess that the annotation of the Fantasy Attic has lost most of its interest for me. I didn't read most of this. # Slight error in the blurb about H. G. Wells. His first novel was printed, not written, in 1895. What was "The Crowning Victory" called in book form? Kipps? I haven't yet read it. # Why should the official organ be first in the bundle merely because the contents listing is on its first page? Your SAPS OO has the contents page on the back but appears somewhere in the middle of the bundle.

Wassaw & Ossabaw Backwater Journal. Lee, give us a shorttitle for this if you ever do another issue! # I wonder if eeee knows about Georgie Price, who has a CBS radio show called "Big Time"? This guy sounds like Al Jolson's twin brother and sings the same type songs. "...any admirer would like his favorite writer, singer, artist, actor, or whatnot to go on producing forever...." To bring up the name of H. G. Wells again, I admire his work very much, but I'd be less embarrassed to admit it if he'd stopped writing novels a decade before he did. # V. LeRoy McCain's "reminiscences" about Wastebasket are absolutely astounding. That he could afford no more than a junior Speedoprint mimeograph in August 1950 and only 11 months later "was the only person around with money to swing the deal" on a \$900 linotype is only a minor marvel. The most fascinating thing is that Wastebasket <sup>1/4</sup> was published on a mimeo packed around in the back seat of an automobile! # LeRoy's comments on Platform of the YDC are unfair to Speer. Warner is the only other present member with a comparable record of publishing in and service to FAPA -- and Jack's membership antedates Harry's. "Something of a reputation as an editor and FAPA member" indeed.

Irusaben. I'm not very familiar with "The Mikado," so "The Official Editor" may abound with nuances I fail to perceive, but even without that advantage, I thought your burlesque was tremendous. You shall be suitably rewarded for this fine piece of literature when the honors list is published. # I liked the line about FAPA members "who never would be missed -- in SAPS they'd not be missed"! The last line in the same solo, "Is that emulating idiot, the comic parodist," is not only a subtle touch here, but sounds polysyllabically like W. S. Gilbert. How close does it emulate him? # If Coslet or anyone really wants to "present the customary gifts" of a stack of Clayton Astoundings to me, I'll deign to accept them!

Stars and Bars. "Okeefeenokee" is a new spelling for that swamp. Is legitimate? Leeh says the spelling of "Okefenokee" (used in "Pogo") isn't given in the atlas, and I expect there are other variants, too. The Oconee river is a new one to me, but consulting the gazetteer in the back of Webster's New Collegiate dictionary, I find that it's in central Georgia and joins the Ocmulgee to form the Altamaha ri-



ver. I don't know what happens then; the Altamaha river isn't listed. Anybody who lives by the shores of Lake Winnibigoshish eligible to join the Pogo society? But then I'm not a true-blue Pogo worshipper, so that lets me out. "Pogo" disappeared from the Sunday Tribune and I didn't notice till Elsberry pointed out the fact. # 'Tis unchivalrous and unbecoming of you southern gentlemen, said the fan cynic, to blame Stars and Bars onto a lady. I do not believe, he said, that Lee would launch "into a description of what you see now." I'm sure Lee doesn't use that kind of language.... # The statement that "Any fanzine is simply the reflection of the personality of the editor" tempts me to discuss the subject at length, but I'll just say that it sounds like a particularly uncritical acceptance of the "style is the man" theory. It's not so simple as that.

Revoltin' Development. This is a case in which I wondered how to list the magazine in the OO: by the cover title or the one in the publishing data. # I couldn't make much out of the instructions for building a mimeo. I liked the case histories of Michifandom, though, and was glad to see Ben Singer the hero instead of the fall guy in one of them.

Photon. A project for a service-minded young fan would be to gather up the articles that have appeared in recent years about running a convention and to publish them under one cover. Besides "Point of Order" there were articles by Rothman and Sneary that should be consulted by any prospective convention chairman. I note that, by way of authority, this article was signed by John B ratherm Jack F Speer.

Postmailings will be reviewed nextime.

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"The lone singer wonderful causing tears"

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## CATALOG-TYPE BLOOPER

On the side of a box from Gruning's (South Orange) it says:

### Ingredients

Sugar, Corn Syrup, Creamery Butter, Soya or Peanut Oils, Nuts, Fresh Cream, Evaporated Milk, Honey, Bicarbonate Soda, Molasses, Pectine, Salt, Acetate Soda, Dry Egg Whites, Corn Starch, Yeast Extract, Cocoa Butter, Citric Acid, Tartaric Acid, Natural and Artificial Flavors, U. S. Certified Artificial Colors, Gum Arabic, Cream of Tartar, Preserved Fruit with One-Tenth of One Per Cent Benzoate Soda, Coconut Peanuts, Peanut Butter, Cocoa, Chocolate Coating with Lecithine Added.

Feeling faintly suspicious of those Coconut Peanuts but titillated nonetheless -- it's such a little box -- I open it. And inside the box from Gruning's is one half-pound of salted almonds.

-- VIRGINIA BLISH.

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T. S. Eliot has given us permission to read Shelley again.

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ARTWORK CREDITS. Front cover by Bob Dougherty. Interior illustrations: page 11 by Bob Dougherty, stencilled by Howard Miller; page 15 by Lee Hoffman; page 19 by William Rotsler. The other pix are by Picasso J. Stylusnitcher.



# pro-ophile

LET'S BEGIN THIS TIME with the story that leads off the first issue of a new magazine: Pursuit (Space SF, May 52), in which editor Lester del Rey shows his authors how to write a cover-copper for him. The label I have put to this yarn is psychological action story, and it's one of the few that could qualify, though it is classifiable by SDS as 34.3, along with Heinlein's "Lost Legion" and others. But here is a Gordian twist to the old theme of a man running away from himself -- because the phrase is taken literally. # Allowing the hero to sleep with the heroine in this story is not only a welcome advance toward realism -- maybe Amberism in literature did some good after all if it is leading us away from the genteel heroine who (in Mark Twain's lovely phrase) is "virtuous to the verge of eccentricity" -- but it is also a prophetic indication that del Rey doesn't plan to slant his magazine toward the juvenile audience that one expects to be attracted by a title like Space Science Fiction.

The Smile (Fantastic, Summer 52) is a Bradbury yarn that depends almost wholly on the handling, but even Bradbury couldn't quite do it this time. The trouble is, his irony and pessimism are becoming as conventionalized as the atomageddon theme. # One fact that this story might have made use of is that the Mona Lisa's smile is changeable: mockery, sadness, pride, can be read in it at different times. Maybe it is just the original that has this faculty, and the canvas these people tore up probably wasn't the one from the Louvre, though Bradbury wanted us to think it was! # In Professor Bingo's Snuff (Fantastic, Summer 52) Raymond Chandler reworked the old invisible man plot into an entertaining yarn that wasn't quite routine. I liked the irony here: the fact that Pettigrew could have accomplished the murder just as easily without the aid of invisibility. Extend that fact into a generalization, and you get an Aristotelian view of science: if we used the means at hand instead of relying on super-machines and devices, we might accomplish just as much in the long run. # Incidentally, I wonder if it was accident or design that made this first issue of Fantastic so prickly with fillers that tend to elevate occult science over natural science? # Back to Chandler's story, does anyone know when and where this story first appeared? From internal evidence I'd say it came out sometime during the war.

Full Circle (Fantastic, Summer 52) was not only given away by the illustration but was easily inferred early in the story. And the "surprise" ending was about the only virtue this yarn had. Isn't H. B. Hickey a regular Amz contributor? # The illustrations in this issue were certainly a heterogeneous lot, few of them intrinsically outstanding but all well-reproduced. Have illos that extend across the margin to the very edge of the page (what's the technical term for that, Danner?) ever been used before in sf mags? The extremely clean print and good paper in Fantastic were impressive, a pleasing contrast to the dirty printing job Galaxy has had to submit to of late.

The Desrick on Yondo (F&SF, June 52): "I reckon I got to light out for the territory...." But in contrast with Huck Finn's plain talk, this backwoods dialect seems almost too good to be true. It sounds more quaint than functional, sometimes too literary to be authentic: "a many stars, like little stitches of blazing thread in a black quilt." The simile is appropriate, but I'm not convinced that a backwoodsman would say it. # It's interesting to note that, even in 1952 when more people live in the city than in the country, there's still appeal in the frontier theme of the country man as the child of nature and therefore the hero, and the city man, cultured and in business, as the villain. Whoever has got faith in the backwoodsman as the repository of "real" knowledge (as opposed to the kind in books) should have no fear of atomageddon!



# Quote — Unquote

SHORT TITLE: "QUNQ"

JOE KENNEDY declares: Burbee's piece in FAPA Potlatch was a joy. That Marion Bradley's poem had a quite delightful image, which could've been strengthened if about a third of the words in the poem had been dropped. # Virginia's Suburban Harvest I enjoyed reading. Liked the first poem best. Still recall fondly her translation in VAPA of "Le bruit de cabarets..." by, I think, Verlaine. She's got good control of her stuff — almost too much in a way, for her poems, being filtered too closely through the mind, come out at times rather thin. But I bet these are just minor things, and she is holding her best stuff back from you. And in a later letter Joe handprints: Just two days after I'd dropped you comments on the other fapazines, Sky Hook arrived, buried in the bottom of a box of cookies from my mother. I discovered it when all the cookies were et up -- which, fortunately, didn't take long! # SKHk a delight to read and look at, as always. I left it on the desk in the barracks office, and three or four other guys browsed through it and gleeed hugely over "Not in Sin" -- as I did. # In re your page 5 query as to what pomes readers know by heart, my list would consist of two: "Bright Star, Would I Were Steadfast As Thou Art" and E. E. Cummings' "Buffalo Bill." But I know big hunks out of lots of other things -- if not "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," at least a couple sonnets out of "Sunday Morning." Wait a minute -- extend that list to three. I know by heart Gerard Manley Hopkins' "God's Grandeur," which seems to me as nearly perfect as any that has been written. (Home address: 84 Baker av., Dover, N. J.)

VIRGINIA BLISH writes (in re Suburban Harvest): Well, I don't mind admitting that I was a little wee bit horrified when I saw you had gone ahead and done it. And I'm not, as you suspected, nuts about the title. On the other hand, after I got over the very momentary feeling of -- I don't know what to describe it as resembling: nakedness? sacrilege? -- I was much more pleased than not. # Interesting to note that there wasn't a poem in the lot that hadn't undergone some alteration, however slight, since their first appearance. "A Kind of Permanence" is perhaps the least changed; "High Tea..." is boneyarded altogether -- in fact, I had forgotten it! # You either predicted that I wouldn't like -- or worried in general about -- the proximity of the two poems on the last page. The line in your letter that said "Winter Poem" was followed by "None But the Lonely" turned me pale green. Once I saw it, however, damned if the two subjects didn't have a certain congruence! If only the second were a better poem, to begin with. The difficulty is that neither full clarity of the subject nor full compassion for their predicament comes across in "None But the Lonely." It's a little too smug and too smart. It seems to me that I do know better from experience -- but I don't know all that much better. (Apt 6E, 14-01 Thirty-sixth av., Long Island City 6, N. Y.)

Virginia also noted that "No Royal Road" (retitled "A Kind of King") appeared in Accent, winter 1951; and that "Young Ulysses Yearns at the Park Fence" was published in the same magazine for winter 1952.

LEE HOFFMAN suggests: Let me dig out Sky Hook and waste my comments in a letter instead of saving them for Choog. # What poems do I know by heart? Well, aside from some of my own, Masfield's "Sea Fever," which I learned because I love it, not because I was supposed to. I only learned a few of the many required in school and can only recall snatches of them. The title alone of Wordsworth's "Ode on the Inti-



mations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" was enough of that one for me at the time. Although I remember some burning embers somewhere (maybe they were dying), and someone trailing clouds of glory, then a door closing, I surely don't remember the poem. I'm afraid that in high school I didn't care about poetry enough to bother. I will quote you a phrase I know from a poem I never read (by Robert Browning): "All petals, no prickles, delicious as trickles of wine poured at Masstime." I like the alliteration. That's a bit that Elizabeth quotes in "The Barretts of Wimpole Street," which is how I come to know it. # Your comment on Speer's Platform reminds me that I am now a registered voter. Since I was somewhat late in registering, I just finished my six-months waiting period on Jan. 31st. Now all I have to do is wait for an election. Still I am inclined to agree with you that most people my age (probably me included) are not old enough to vote. Personally I think a comprehensive IQ test would be a better way to determine whether or not a person is fit to vote, than a glance at his birth certificate. # I'm glad to see where you got the stuff for Skip-rope Rimes. I had a vague mental picture of you, with notepad in hand, skipping a slow rope as the turners chanted for you. (101 Wagner street, Savannah, Ga.)

G. M. CARR protests: In your review of Gem Tones this time, you not only missed completely a whole line of reasoning in not one only, but in two separate articles on two separate subjects, and had the further discourtesy of reviewing in detail this mistaken opinion. It was, in effect, as though you put up your own dummy arguments and then proceeded to knock them down again, all the while attributing these foolish ideas to me. I consider this a form of intellectual dishonesty. # I am referring, of course, to your remarks about the "Marriage" articles. Apparently you had not read my reply to Marion [Bradley] very closely, and assumed I was condemning sexual enjoyment. On that basis you presumed to make some very disparaging statements which had no connection with anything I said at all. # Likewise, in the "City" article, there was nothing that I wrote which even mentioned the idea of progress. In fact, if you look again, you will see that word did not occur at all. If that article was a "paean" to anything, it was a "paean" to the status quo, because it was merely a somewhat poetically conceived statement of fact. Also, and this I am sure would have infuriated you beyond measure had someone done it to you, you included several quotations which I did not write, in such a manner as to give the impression that I did and that they supported your condemnation of my article. (5319 Ballard avenue, Seattle 7, Wash.)

Sorry about the uncredited quotation; it was not meant to give the impression that you wrote it. Bernard Shaw was the author -- and, matter of fact, he was arguing against concepts such as yours. The only other non-Carr quote was credited. # I did not assume that you were "condemning sexual enjoyment," but that you were condemning sexual enjoyment as an end in itself. I merely pointed out that you cannot justify such an attitude by appealing to "the processes of nature." # A "poetically conceived statement of fact"? Then how can I be accused of missing the "whole line of reasoning"? # It might be possible to examine the status quo out of its historical context, and thus imply nothing of progress or regress. But you don't attempt to do so. Progress isn't mentioned by name, but what else is implied by such allusions as these: "city more magnificent than Tyre or Sidon"; "carpets more luxurious than any produced by Cathay or Samarkand"; "treasures far more precious and rare than Emperors or potentates could have gathered"; "colors unimagined a generation ago"; "Was Pharaoh transported..."; "Did Hannibal know such power..."; "What king of ancient days had..."; and many other references? My point, which I reiterate, is that an airconditioned rathole is no model of progress. Your article may be a "statement of fact," but it led me to muse that, after all, technical improvement, no matter how wonderful, is not human progress. "A great city is that which has the greatest men and women, / If it be a few ragged huts it is still the greatest city in the whole world." (Note: G. M. Carr did not write that. Whitman did.)









"The change from storm and winter to serene and mild weather, from dark and sluggish hours to bright and elastic ones, is a memorable crisis which all things proclaim. It is seemingly instantaneous at last. Suddenly an influx of light filled my house, though the evening was still at hand, and the clouds of winter still overhung it, and the eaves were dripping with sleety rain. I looked out of the window, and lo! where yesterday was cold gray ice there lay the transparent pond already calm and full of hope as in a summer evening, reflecting a summer evening sky in its bosom, though none was visible overhead, as if it had intelligence from some remote horizon. I heard a robin in the distance, the first I had heard for many a thousand years, methought, whose note I shall not forget for many a thousand more -- the same sweet and powerful song as of yore. O the evening robin, at the end of a New England summer day!"

— Henry David Thoreau,  
Walden.

"About the Maypole now  
Cepheus and Cassiopeia,  
The Swan and Dragon, go,  
With Great and Little Bear.

Hercules tunes his Lyre;  
The choir-boy Twins begin  
To lead the starry choir;  
Bootes' bass joins in.

The clustering stars are white  
As hedges thick with may;  
They'd like a May Queen, but  
Shy Virgo runs away."

-- R. N. Curry,  
"May Evening."

"In order to be happy we require all kinds of supports to our self-esteem. We are human beings, therefore human beings are the purpose of creation. We are Americans, therefore America is God's own country. We are white, and therefore God cursed Ham and his descendants who were black. We are Protestant or Catholic, as the case may be, therefore Catholics or Protestants, as the case may be, are an abomination. We are male, and therefore women are unreasonable; or female, and therefore men are brutes. We are Easterners, and therefore the West is wild and woolly; or Westerners, and therefore the East is effete.... Finally, and above all, we each have one merit which is entirely unique: we are Ourselves. With these comforting reflections we go out to do battle with the world; without them our courage might fail. Without them, as things are, we should feel inferior because we have not learned the sentiment of equality. If we could feel genuinely that we are the equals of our neighbors, neither their betters nor their inferiors, perhaps life would become less of a battle, and we should need less in the way of intoxicating myth to give us patch courage."

-- Bertrand Russell.