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The Strayed Reveller, No. 1

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MAR 26 1969



The
Strayed
Reveller

Billie's Monday

Blind on Billie's Monday
after a dark driven rain
has blackened the leaves.

A blue jay sways
in the spruce stained wind
and slowly fades into Cheyenne.

Such quick dwindlings
of the sun's red domain
bring the candle closer,

And I can clearly see
that she was lovely in her file,
beside a row of roses
and angels draped in redwings.

She was deer-quick and wild,
and misty as silver Angelina
lying in the lowlands at dawn.

Could it be she sees in mudmaking rain
my bone salt breaking
and dying for her light?

For she shined in rain
like a naked pear that hangs
in the orchards of the starving.

Whose ghost is this then
tiptoeing on tin
like lost mice creeping over ice?

Blind on Billie's Monday,
a bullet rain descending.
She comes but never speaks
in watersoaked sketches unending.

Lady Angelina

Someone is sneaking there
between death's trombone
and the mockingbird dawn.

The night rushes its tongue
down black sheets
where Lady Angelina sleeps.

With a purr she frees
her sleepy breath
on catsilk meadows.

Someone is listening there
down red roads
where the dust floods.

Someone there is planting seeds
on night fields of the Lady's breast
that burst like white music
out of the death trombone.

And someone there
is not even waiting
for the frost to shine and steam
at the second coming of the dawn.

It's Kinda Hard to Eat with Your Fingers

Is there any light inside the womb?

There is after birth.

Sudden departure from reality changing,

Stimulation awakening, spasm breathing,

prenatal meaning.

Six pounds three ounces wrapped in
swaddling cloth nine o'clock feeding. She's

a real screamer, has her father's eyes

Plucked out no doubt judging his demeanor

Loud Noisepain imprinting brain

Scream ceasing sterilized bottle

Elementary hygiene R.N. training fondle

Mother surrogate off at five o'clock

Bokanovsky production assembly

Classical cultural conditioning

Technical toilet training

Pavlovian patterning

Directing dualism

Good and evilism

I don't see why we can't just condition it

Kinda hard to eat with your fingers, isn't it?

Not Pure Skin, Reckoning (June 5, 1968)

Illusions will destroy art before it can
itch the wind.

Being at the present a first-person illusion
I slang puberty of a beautiful-thing-going,
and shark thoughts that try
to force their ways into my navel memories.

(I am death crying to remember
the umbilical experience.)

I live the grand openings by pulling the sink
stopper

and watching stubs of beard drain down.

Soap is abrasive to fertility;
we fine our reasons to rinse and to shine
the flesh with colognes of ideologies,
as though to respect olfactory passages
for our introspective loans.

A campus formality whispers of decorating
holly trees with uprooted fire
hydrants:

man is runner or a fully clothed swimmer

for propositions

where belt buckles rust and bra straps agree.

Call in the children from playing

love in the summer lawn sprinklers.

Must teach them about disguised remorse,

which is the barrier to making love.

Laughter turns into a glassy commodity

edges and being

aware of fragile sacredness.

There is a flood, if being naked is worth it

I won't bend reality myself, but let the sun--

I am not pure skin

but also that fruit of stars which have roots

in formats of creation,

then no one has been making a game

out of the conjugation of hope--

a welcome mat, nothing fragile,

but all the "pardon me's" keep wiping off

feet on it.

If I unverbalyze a sin I have unexperience,

if I experience something getting worn out

I think it's our soles of eulogies.

THE DARKNESS WITHIN

Houston: July, 1972

At six o'clock, two hours after we had come on duty, I sat down on the railing by the gate my men and I were assigned to guard. Behind me, on the other side of the hurricane fence, the crowd was beginning to gather. I turned and watched them. I had seen it all before: the multi-colored garbs, the long hair, the N.L.F. flag, the black flag of anarchy, the signs like DOWN WITH THE FAT GREEK and NIXON SOLD US AN EDSEL.

A few local policemen, in groups of twos and threes, wandered through the crowd. They would be relieved of duty at six o'clock, so they were, I imagined, trying to get in their last licks. When they were gone, only federal troops would remain.

I watched the cops and hippies, wondering which I despised more.

Then two squat officers came by. I looked at their name tags: Smith and Gutierrez. No doubt Gutierrez's ancestors had helped turn the rack during the Inquisition. And Smith? A hundred and ten years ago some of his kinsmen had probably been guards at the Andersonville prisoner-of-war camp. I decided that, of the two, I despised the cops more, not because they were really worse but because they were so lacking in originality.

The minister, Shulman, that I'd met the first day of the convention came through the gate. He was one of the new breed of clergymen who were more interested in demonstrating than preaching, more apt to be in a coffee house than visiting the sick. He thought that equality was something that you got in school by seating black and white children as arbitrarily as one shook salt and pepper on eggs. He spoke of education with reverence--

as if it could cure human misery as easily as penicillin knocks out gonorrhoea.

"Hello, Curt," he said. His voice was husky from all the shouting he had done into the bullhorns the night before. He and other men of "reason and decency" (whatever those words had come to mean) had made countless pleas for sanity when everyone knew it was to be a night of bayonets and rifle butts, of bricks and bags of excrement.

"Hi, Shulman," I said, wishing he would pass without bemoaning what writers called "the seige of the Astrodome."

"Last night," he moaned, clasping his hands in a gesture of helplessness.

"Tonight might be worse."

"Oh God, no," he said, almost a supplication. He sat down on the railing beside me and put his head in his hands. "I'll admit this," he said, his voice levelling, "you soldiers weren't like the cops. They're. . ."

"We're professionals," I said. "Disinterested."

Perhaps he thought I was boasting. "You'll probably lose control and go insane, too."

"I doubt that," I answered. "We're not here to whip asses."

He looked at me, the brown eyes trying to penetrate. "You're different, Curt," he said. "You're the only soldier or cop I've met who has any warmth or decency--who hasn't had a completely dark heart."

I unbuttoned my shirt and looked inside at my chest. The clean T-shirt moved faintly over my heart. "Just checking," I said, and grinned at him. "You're right. My heart's not very dark."

"Right. And that's what makes your being here so tragic." I stared at him, uncomprehending. "You see, Curt," he explained, "man is basically good." I heard laughter behind me, but when I turned I could not tell its source. "But," he went on, "he is ever prone

to brutality, to abasement." I nodded in agreement, remembering things. "And your being here as a soldier makes your fall into savagery almost inevitable."

"That's true," I said, "but if I fall, at least I have reached some height to fall from. At least I'm aware of--how did your pal Bobby Kennedy say it--'the darker impulses of the spirit'. That's more than you can say for lard-assed cops and flower children."

"You're excusing anything you might do, then." He rose to leave, slightly angry too.

"No I'm not," I said. "I told you once we're not here because we like all this."

"Why are you here then?" he asked and walked away.

The only enjoyable thing about the convention was the writers I saw come through the entrance my platoon guarded. One day, in the space of five minutes, I had seen Gore Vidal and John Hersey, and following them, Norman Mailer, a button on his lapel reading DICK IS A FOUR LETTER WORD.

Earlier in that afternoon Terry Southern sat down beside me, probably to get a caricature of a young hawk. He didn't get it. We talked about Texas--he was born in Alvarado--, the possibility of Nixon dumping Agnew, and the absurdity of the convention.

A half hour after Shulman left, I glanced behind me and saw Southern again. He scowled and had a gauze bandage taped to his forehead and a limp from the night before.

"T. Southern," I said, trying to be friendly, "Have you noticed any elements of absurdity?"

He looked at me scornfully. "Everywhere, Herr Hauptmann," he said.

I bristled and blocked him from coming through the gate. "What's that crack sup-

posed to mean?" I said.

His mustache twitched. "Well now, Tex," he said, faking a drawl, "it means whatever you and you-all's storm troopers want it to mean."

I scratched my fingernail across the checkered butt of the pistol in my holster. "Did anyone ever tell you you're a lousy writer?" I said.

"Well now, Mr. Lieutenant Morrow," he drawled, reading my name tag, "I'll sure consider your opinion when I get my next royalty check. Now will you kindly get your khaki ass out of my way?"

"Sure," I said, wanting to end the scene, too, "anything you say, Mr. Buckley."

His face reddened. "Your kind won't be here five years from now, pig," he said. He sauntered away, smirking.

"Southern," I hollered at his back, "you need a good ghost writer."

He turned, jerked up his hand in the ancient gesture, and snarled a brusque imperative.

Near dusk I saw a couple coming arm-in-arm toward me. Her blonde hair bounced up and down as she helped him along. Something burned and hurt far down in me as I looked at her, so chic and vibrant. As they neared, I saw him move his hand from her waist onto that firm butt. Obeying some dark urge, I closed the gate. They stopped a few paces in front of me and stared; he, drunkenly and she with open petulance.

"What's the big deal, Soldier boy Brown?" he said.

"It's Lieutenant Morrow," I answered. I looked at her, again the hurt. "Your friend's a little polluted, isn't he?" I asked her.

"Oh, dammit," she snapped, and shook that long platinum hair. "The lengths you people will go to to intimidate the press."

"The press?" I could see their cards on their lapels, but the desire to push it, to

have as they say, a "confrontation" was too powerful.

"We're reporters for Happening." He goosed her.

"Sure," I sneered, "I'm Ernie Hemingway of the Kansas City Star."

"Come on, fella," he said, "let us through. We've got a swingin' night ahead of us." He winked at me.

I wanted them out of sight. I opened the gate. "Have fun then," I said as they passed.

"More fun than you'll be having, you ball-less mercenary," she called over her shoulder.

After a while my face stopped smarting, and my stomach ceased churning. I tried to remember how the critic said it reviewing Mailer's book Why Are We in Vietnam? "Sexual frustration crystallizes into murderous impulse." I thought of Brian.

Brian had a myriad of girls in college, but during our senior year he'd fallen in with a Dallas oilman's daughter, a black-haired beauty with green eyes. One Sunday she'd flown from Dallas to Atlanta, rented a car, and driven down to Fort Benning. That afternoon I saw them leave the post heading for a deserted road or some motel.

I was shaving that night when Brian strolled into the bathroom. His mouth was smeared with pink lipstick. He grinned first at his handsome face in the mirror and then at me. "Hot little girl," he said.

"How do you manage it?" I asked.

He laughed. "'None but the brave deserve the fair.' You got to be brave, Curt. Fortunately, I am."

The next day I broke Brian's jaw.

We were in the sawdust pit, practicing handling a rifle in hand-to-hand combat. Brian and Mosconi, a spindly New Yorker, put on the headgear and padding, took the four-foot parry sticks and squared off. Still

strong despite all the life that had flowed out of him the day before, Brian gave Mosconi a solid drubbing.

The pit officer, Sergeant Andrews, spat, rearranged his beret, and barked, "Get in there with him, Morrow. Maybe you can take him."

I took him. After a minute of listless sparring, I brought the right end of my stick over his, whacking it solidly on his nose, drawing blood. He wobbled and dropped his guard. Before Andrews could stop me, I hit him again as hard as I could, this time on the side of his jaw. He spun around and fell on his face, unconscious.

Andrews began screaming, cursing me, bellowing for a stretcher. Five minutes later I watched them carry the brave man, the impeccable lady's man, away.

The next day Andrews, who must have known that I purposely maimed Brian, took the role of his avenger, and gave me a beating in the same pit where I'd had my greatest moment. In the twenty minutes he was able to hit me low twice and pound my kidneys frightfully. The next morning I watched the bloody flecks hitting the bottom of the urinal, feeling the ache go all through my lower back and insides. But I could only smile when I thought of how that girl in the swank Dallas apartment must have looked when she learned that her brave, handsome hero lay in traction in the Fort Benning hospital.

"Lieutenant Morrow," the voice said, bringing me back from my dark memories. Captain Sutter and Peters, my black first sergeant, stood in front of me. Sutter pointed to the fence fifty yards away. "Now we know they are going to climb over that outer barricade," he said. I could see them milling there now. "You and your men are to station yourselves on the outside of this fence," he said, rapping it with his swagger stick. "You are not to let any unauthorized person inside. Pass these orders on to your men and take your posts."

We saluted. He took a few steps, turned and said in his best military voice, "Lieutenant, your men are not to fix bayonets. Any unnecessary force will be frowned upon. Restraint is the order of the day."

I sat back down. It was completely dark now. Searchlights mounted on jeeps began to crisscross at random with alternating moments of painful light and comforting darkness. I wanted to do all my thinking first before the fighting afterward--the soldier's art. I stood, walked through the gate, and signalled for my men to follow me. As we filed through, the throng began to chant, "Pigs must go, pigs must go."

"Gather around me," I said, standing in front of them with my back to the mob.

"Goddamn, Lieutenant," Snipes, the half-wit cracker chirped, "This here is worse than Vietnam. Over there you can shoot the enemy."

"Our orders are simple, men," I said, looking into their faces. "We are to prevent anyone from coming through that gate. Do not fix bayonets. Are there any questions?"

There were none. They started taking their places. "Just a minute," I said.

"There's something I want to say to you."

They huddled in front of me again. "We've been in real fights far worse than this, times when we could not afford to hold ourselves back." I was disgusting myself and them too.

I dropped the buddy-buddy routine, and the words I wanted came. "Just remember this," I said. "The whole world is watching us tonight. And if we lose control and go ape, we'll be exactly what they saw we are--pigs."

As if cued by my words, the chant grew louder, "Pigs must go, Pigs Must Go!"

I felt calm, empty of hate or fear. "We're soldiers," I said, "Let's keep cool and--"

It hit me at the base of the neck like a jellyfish, splattering my back and neck.

I wheeled, still calm, and looked to see

who had thrown it. The musky odor of urine filled the air.

"There he goes," Peters said.

"Let us go get that bastard," one of my men said.

"Yeah, we'll get him for you, Lieutenant," Peters said, motioning to a couple of men, one of whom had already unslung his rifle.

"No," I said. "Let him go." He stepped into one of the criss-crossing beams of light, and I saw him plainly. He was wearing a ratty tuxedo and a coonskin cap. As he neared the crowd, he began to waddle like a penguin, holding up his hands in the victory sign, drawing cheers. My shirt was plastered to my back, and my whole skin was beginning to itch and smart.

I turned to face the men. But I could not remember what I was saying; all my well-planned words had left me.

"Fix Bayonets," I said. "You may need them."

"But Sutter said--"

"I'm your commander." The urine had seeped down my sides and was soaking my underwear. The heat rash around my waistband seemed on fire.

"Lieutenant," Peters said, "you haven't told us what to do if things get really rough."

"Do what you have to do," I said. I had the feeling that in the last few moments I had fallen from some great height. "You know what that rifle butt is for. Break a few jaws if you have to. Take your posts."

The men began to spread out in a line. My chest and stomach were wet and stinging now, too. I ripped open the buttons, touched the urine-darkened T-shirt, and smiled at the foulness inside.

The Revolution in Sexual Morality

In discussions of contemporary society a common argument is over the "moral revolution," specifically, whether or not such a phenomenon is occurring. For constructive argument, a working definition of "moral revolution" is essential. "Revolution" is commonly agreed to mean "drastic change," but the meaning of moral is not so easily agreed upon. When the average person speaks of morality, he usually means sexual morality, the standards of right and wrong dealing with sex. However, a distinction must be made between standards and actions. Sexual conduct has not changed since earliest times but moral standards have fluctuated; the same actions are condoned or condemned according to the standard in use. In the present generation, moral standards show a drastic change leading me to agree with Howard Moody, that, "We are. . . in the midst of. . . a moral . . . revolution."

The moral revolution can be seen most easily when standards are examined using the "new morality" concept of Bishop James Pike, an Episcopal clergyman from California. Pike contrasts the attitudes of the present generation of parents to those of their children and feels the differences so great he uses separate terms. The older generation morality he calls "legalism," meaning a strict set of absolute rules of sexual conduct not to be violated, while the new morality of the young is designated "situation ethics," a flexible code in which each situation is evaluated by whether it shows love for the other person. (Pike uses love as synonymous with concern.) This drastic change in the method of evaluation has brought about a like change in standards, a moral revolution, exemplified by a discussion between an adult friend and me.

In the course of discussion, we examined one of Pike's propositions dealing with extra-marital sex relations. During World War II, a Jewish woman was confined in a concentration camp, separated from her husband and children who had escaped Germany. She preserved her life and was later able to leave because she consented to have sex relations with a guard in return for protection. She had a child of this union and the two were reunited with her husband and family after her release. Pike asks if the family should accept the wife and illegitimate child. My adult friend, being a legalist, was skeptical because, according to his rigid code, that extra-marital sex was wrong no matter what the end. I, believing in situation ethics, concluded that the family and husband should readily accept her. Her actions were prompted by concern for her family which needed a wife and mother; she loved enough to sacrifice her "virtue." Our conclusions are opposite, a complete reversal from one generation to another, and clearly a revolutionary one.

We also discussed homosexuality as portrayed in the movie, "The Fox." The movie deals with the homosexual relationship between two young women living alone in the Canadian wilderness and its destruction at the hands of a man. In the process one young woman is killed. My adult friend again resorted to legalism to condemn the actions of the young women and at least partially condone the man's actions with reservations as to his part in the death of the one girl. I disagreed; the women had a relationship of love and concern which the man destroyed because of his sexual interest in one of them. Thus, though their conduct violated legalistic codes, I felt the girls were morally right and the man wrong. When sexual standards differ so markedly in a single generation, there is certainly a moral revolution.

One may well ask, "What consequences will this moral revolution have in society?" It must certainly bring a change from the present, since change is the essence of revolution. A field where great change will occur is that of "vice" laws, those specifically covering sexual crimes. These laws generally mete out disproportionately stiff penalties, some for only minor offenses. Laws, by nature, are legalistic and not flexible. Therefore, in the future, we shall probably see the repeal of many laws as actions become more permissible. The recent furor over harsh laws dealing with homosexuality in New York and other states shows a liberal trend in law. There have also been investigations of such laws as one Massachusetts statute making it possible to send minor girls to a reformatory for being under "bad influence," a charge usually of no more than having undesirable friends. If these trends continue, and, in the light of the moral revolution, it is probable they will, we may indeed see the only illegal sex act as one in which consent is not mutual.

This change is a part of a larger change which will be perhaps the most sweeping, the changing to more liberal sexual attitudes by the popular mind. The majority of persons in the future will be much more free and tolerant in sexual action. As has been happening, for example in the Masters and Johnson research on sexual response, sex will no longer be a taboo subject for research or, more important, for public discussion. Gradually, along with the laws, general attitudes in the majority of people will change. Persons may not even feel distaste for homosexuals or other so-called "sex criminals" and these people may even be accepted. The most important change in attitude will be the new perspective the revolutionary moralist acquires of sex. Sex will be looked on as only a part of life, an enjoyable one, but not so dis-

proportionately important as it now seems. Sex will no longer hold the influence it does in parents pushing children to be sexually mature, for example. Man may probably discover that there are at least several more things in life as interesting as sex, and this, in the light of today's beginning revolution, may be its most revolutionary accomplishment.

Couldn't we?

go

in our gypsy costumes
without thinking about
day after today

go

with music in our souls
and freedom in our minds
together with rhythm
triplets - against one
we multiply the beat
with great strides traveling.

-Song Without Music-

-The Gift of Man-

From day on day, to year on year

Our lives we live upon this fruitful earth.

Though to history short, it is far from mere,

But rich in lore profound and wide in girth.

How this be so, a life so rich,

Endowed upon the species man,

Is a question with an answer of such wondrous
pitch.

That we ourselves must strain to scarcely scan.

For the blessed God who gave life unto us all

Instilled into our very minds the sight of all
creation--

A mighty inner eye that can see no outer wall,

And thus emotion or truth can naught ration.

Oh, blessed is this deepest marrow of our minds:

The inherent recess in which all true insight
resides!

It pierces all nebulous ignorance, and here one

finds

The earthly muses, which to all puzzles are un-
failing guides.

No beauty, no love, no emotion, in earth or
heaven

Is too cloaked for the ingrained sense to see;
All that we may see, smell, taste, hear and
delve in--

Our spirit in may gallop, to think and to be free.

Glorious is this feeling--the sense of inner
thought!

All nature--all fields, all oceans, and trees and
lakes

Are open to us like the book of life from which
which we may be taught:

Of the thesaurus of nature's world and the
meaning of its make.

Yet the fowl, fish, and beasts of the earth have
not this wondrous gift,

For a gift it was, from beloved God to man.

Let us not refuse it all and pass it by so swift,
But rather seek and behold all wonders, as it was

His plan

The fragile ancient

bows

her head--

A lewd remark

colours

her

cheeks

With the memory of lust.

The Etching

The centaur glistens wet against the light,

A ghostly bas-relief in glass;

What might his beauty be

were he brought forth from stone,

And was his creator not refined

to the point of delicacy.

The Small Faces - Ogden's Nut Gone Flake

On their latest album, Ogden's Nut Gone Flake, the Small Faces show themselves to be an extremely versatile group. From the cover of this "One Pound Box" of sound enclosed in its own clear plastic baggie, to the contents of the album, this record is thoroughly unique. Highlights of Side One are "The Song of a Baker", the story of a man who seems to identify with Alice B. Toklas, and "Lazy Sunday Afternoon", which offers a remedy for those Sunday afternoon doldrums. Side Two of the album is devoted to an amazing journey of the mind. Just sit back and let Happiness Stan take you with him on his fantastic trip. You will meet the Fly and Mad John, who help Stan along the way. Mad John will even impart to you "the philosophy of life unto itself," which is indeed a choice bit of information. Turn on a friend to Ogden's Nut Gone Flake! The chances are, if they enjoy tales of the Tolkien variety they will appreciate this album.

stanyan street and other sorrows (a review)

"The children are playing king of the mountain
on the picnic table.
We are starving for a ritual
but let them play
for we cannot go back. . ."

Joe Secrest

The trouble with Rod McKuen's poetry is that it offers us no ritual, no intuitive insight into life. In this respect, McKuen is not a poet, but a diarist. Like the song "Honey", McKuen's verse depends on a stock response to more or less stock situation: We see the Lonely Wanderer with his collar turned against the wind so many times that we begin to wonder when he will become boring; certainly before the eighty odd pages of Stanyan Street and Other Sorrows are finished.

...when you straddle a machine
you should be prepared to die
when the machine dies under you.

I hope he was.

from "Richard Farina" by Rod
McKuen

As a songwriter, McKuen understands that surface emotions usually play the best. His poems are not cold products, but his own sorrows convey the impression of "business as usual"; as long as his sensibility is bruised, he might as well cash in on it. He has sold himself in this thin little book, and his stunted perceptions fit well between its narrow blue covers, because, in spite of all his tear stained proclamations, stated awkwardly.

Often the reader is left with only a meager figurative impression of what has happened, marred by plodding, prosaic statement:

...When you sit
or stand
or talk
or walk
or look around
or smile
you look like a little girl
but you feel like a woman.

from "Child" by Rod McKuen

LIKE MOST POETS
WHO DON'T HAVE MUCH
TO SAY
MCKUEN TAKES
AN AWFUL LONG TIME
TO
SAY
IT.

On records, with the voice to give inflection to each passage and with histrionic musical backing, McKuen's work passes for fairly credible (if adolescent) testimony. On paper, his work seems one dimensional; he conveys a certain morbid curiosity and little regard for emotional compression or imaginative word pictures. Without depth, he can only pander or play sin-song word games that parody themselves:

The leave ever
the last bus leading
I take the seat by the window
weary already of the journey back to camp.
from "Monterrey 10/11/53" by Rod McKuen

Hemingway would have been proud of this kind of journalism--a simple recording of events without amplification or insight.

One poem in particular illustrates the
maudlin banality of which McKuen is capable--

THOUGHTS ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

There ought to be capital punishment for
cars
that run over rabbits and drive into dogs
and drive into dogs
and commit the unspeakable, unpardonable
crime
of killing a kitty cat still in his prime...
(by Rod McKuen)

He can't even speak for the simplest animal in
his zoo: himself. Even kitty cats are more
complex.

Chekhov's Cherry

SFA dramatists will present "The Cherry Orchard" March 5-8 and 12-15 at the Little Theater. The cast, directed by Dr. Heino, includes Wanda Dysell, Sylvia Segura, Griff Humphreys, Larry Hedge, Jane Ulrich, and Ronnie Doyle.

In the original production of the play by the Moscow Art Theatre, Chekhov's wife Olga Knipper wrote. . . "was difficult, almost agonising. . . The producers and the author could not understand each and come to an agreement. . . . Nemorivich--Danchevo and Alexeyev. . . see in my play something I have not written . . . [Chekhov wrote]. . . Is it my Cherry Orchard? . . . They either make me a cry-baby or a bore. . . They invent something about me out of their own heads . . . something I never thought of or dreamed about. This is beginning to make me angry."

REVIEW OF OTHELLO

One of the greatest Shakespearean works is the tragedy Othello, and without doubt one of the most tragic presentations was the National Shakespeare Company's production of Othello in Houston's Music Hall, January 28. Whether the result of tour-fatigue or a sparse and unreceptive audience, the entire company seemed exhausted. The labored sluggish tempo, reflected in careless actions and forced emotional displays, raised the possibility of Othello's dying not by his own hand but from old age.

Although reviews listed Clark Morgan as Othello, he amazingly resembled Sidney Poitier, and this time everyone knew who was coming to dinner. The awkward movements and garbled speech of Othello were sadly evident by the end of Act I, and the Moor faithfully got worse through Acts II, III, and IV (presented as one section). Finally Othello, with remarkable consistency, magnificently botched the death

scenes of Act V, climaxed by an almost comic suicide.

Although several passages were adapted to more contemporary dialogue, Othello and Iago successfully managed to abort their enunciation so well that most of their speeches were incoherent. But in the shadow of Othello's stumblings, Don Plumley presented Iago in a most competent fashion. The only criticism of Plumley is perhaps the overplaying of Iago, creating from Shakespeare's conniving crook a sophisticated clinical psychologist.

The stage freeze was one of the more successful aspects of the stage direction. For each of Iago's soliloquies, a freeze was incorporated on the entire stage and a green spotlight followed Iago's meanderings about the stage. Although this O'Neill device proved effective for some time, by the fifth act the green light and flute--drum background began to resemble the Thursday afternoon Children's Theatre. This and several of the players' clumsy attempts to freeze their movements proved (for those whose willing efforts to suspend disbelief were consistently thwarted) two of the evening's high points.

Katherine McGrath as Desdemona offered the best performance, capturing the innocence and devotion of the fair Desdemona with grace and adroitness, but the overpowering clumsiness of Othello often ruined her performance as well as those of other innocent victims.

Even so, the audience cannot claim it was not forewarned. A twenty minute delay in starting time and an absence of program credits should have let us know what we were in for. To the fairest of minds, plausible rationalization of the insipid presentation is difficult. Not unlike Desdemona's pleas for mercy, no doubt many of the audience raised petitions; however, Othello and company bravely plodded to the bitter end.

13th CONFESSION

When the flesh insurrects

beyond interrogation,

and the mind lapses

in decomposition,

and the soul babbles

justifications of abortion--

then,

I will need you.

Then I will deserve

your nodulose flesh

your ulcered

womb will be what I desire;

your noxious breath

will haunt my sacs

and I will ride the loins

(the glorious,

resplendent,

magnificent loins)

until the seed is powerless

until the seed is powerless--

then from the abyss a catholic sigh,

"take me Home, please.

I've had enough".

4 PART HARMONY

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest by Ken Kesey
Viking Press, \$1.65, 311 pages.

". . . one flew east, one flew west, One flew over the cuckoo's nest," so goes the children's folk rhyme. Written in four part harmony, Nest shows not just what a mental hospital is like, but also what it would be like to be a patient in such an institution. The book is as imaginative as the character, Bromden, called "Chief Broom," who really isn't deaf and dumb; it's just that everyone thinks he is.

The story revolves around one ward's adventure and changes after Red McMurphy arrives. The change McMurphy brings about is evident from the time he arrives at the ward:

"Well, say, here we go, I brought along my own deck, just in case, has something in it other than face cards--and check the pictures, huh? Every one different. Fifty-two positions. Cheswick is pop-eyed already, and what he sees on those cards don't help his condition."

until the end of the book when he sneaks two girls into the ward one night, breaks into the alcohol cabinet and has a party.

Chief Broom has the universal feeling that there is a plot to overthrow the world, and on some nights he watches them take the burnt transistors out of people and replace them so that they, "the combine," can maintain control, but Broom is too smart for the combine, and they haven't wired him yet.

From the monopoly game with hotels on the railroads and hallucinations on Boardwalk to the great fishing expedition, Kesey keeps you involved in the story and identified with the characters.

Happy,

He canters

with the easy elegance

of a prince's racehorse--

one who always

wore the circlet of victory.

Happy,

He canters,

yet there is a hesitance

to his grace--

for once he faltered,

and well he remembers

the taste of the absinthe toast.

Bare Facts on a Nude Review

The University of Texas was the recent scene of crisis and turmoil. Students were engaged in producing a play which contained female characters nude from the waist up. Eyebrows were raised and several prominent citizens of Austin confronted the administration with their objections.

A first may have been set as U.T.'s President sided with the students and decreed the show would go on.

Later distraught citizens said they had really objected to the political implications of the play, Up The Revolution. The students decided, however, to put on their clothes.

The show will go on. Those of you with vivid imaginations may disrobe some of the characters, but all the nudes have gone home.

Nude Body Politic

Topless performances in Up The Revolution have been blanketed. The play disturbed Austin citizens with its political overtones but U.T.'s President sided with the students. When the play reopened, the players were fully clothed, but the politically charged dialogue was left intact. The Theatre of the New Left had learned another lesson in mixed media--skin can distract the Establishment long enough to deliver the political punchline.

If college presidents can be outflanked in ideological warfare, imagine the mind of Dean Average: "These people are merely naked, they haven't even stormed my office or muttered a single obscenity. Here is a chance to sound liberal--allow a little nudity now, prevent trouble later." --unless he is an autocrat to begin with, and flinches at the thought of a politically active student body.

(With nothing more for deans to worry about than whether to allow slacks in the dorm living rooms), political conflict, "naked warfare," can be carried on with the most elemental weapon--the bod. Congratulations, U.T., don't get cold feet now!

JOE SEBERT/not pure skin, reckoning
PATE WARNER/the darkness within
JAMES WILLIAMS/the sexual revolution
B.L./godwin's waf
ROBERT HUMPHREY/song without words
F.B./the tragic moment/the wachung/happy
NANCY BOWLING/the shell faces
ROBERT HUMPHREY/duchov's nest
DAVID LEWIS/poetry review/steven sizer
GARY SELMAN/obekov's cherty
CHARLES GUMBERT/othello
LEO RUDOLPH/commission
GARY SELMAN/pare facts
DAVID LEWIS/body politic

empirement for responsible for censorship
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typist: susan rellig
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poems, essays, reviews, artwork needed

The stayed review

March 1989

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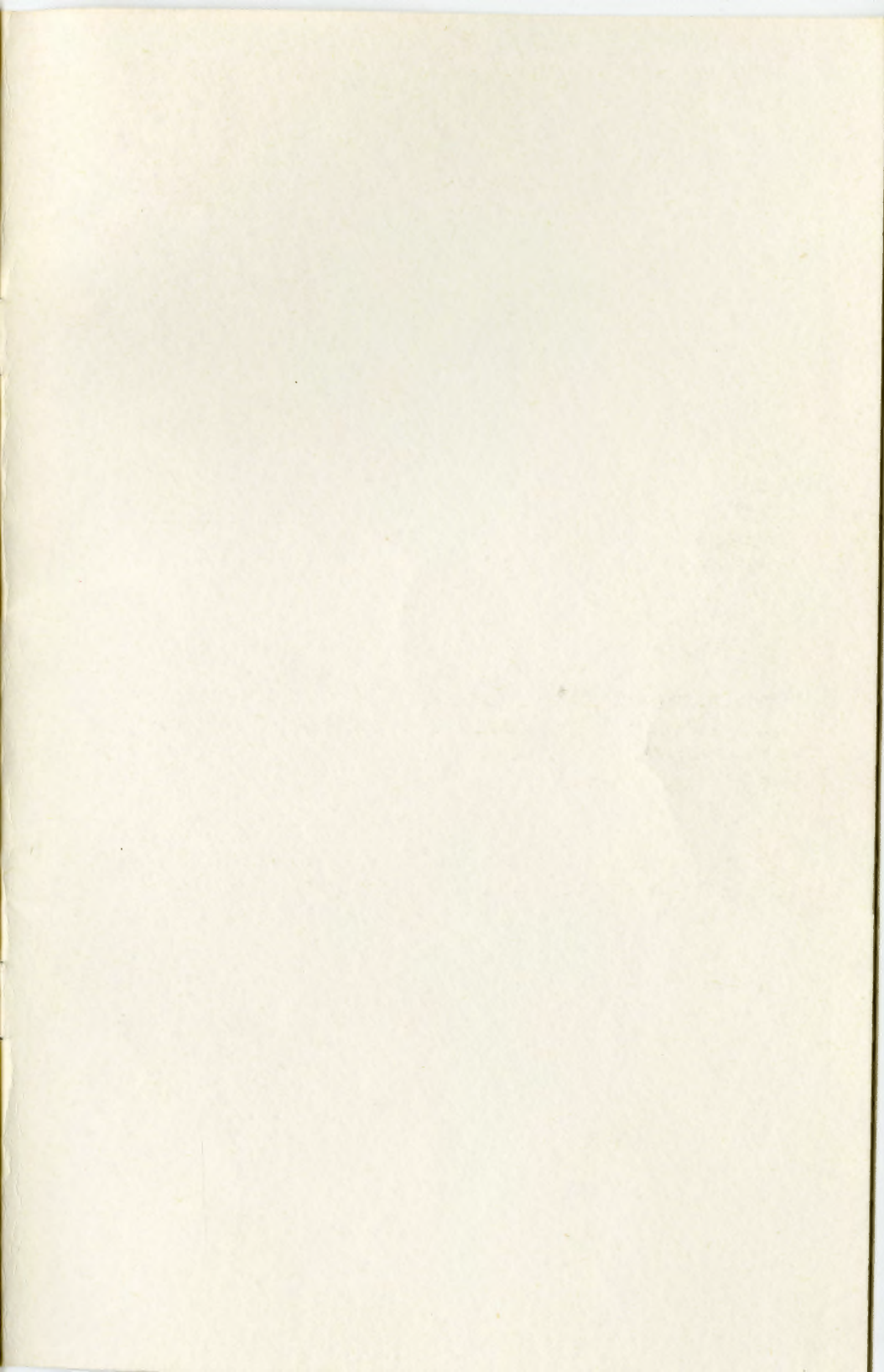
JACK BARTLETT/cover/lady angeline/billie's
monday
JOHN BACHO/it's kinda hard to eat with your
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JOE SECREST/not pure skin, reckoning
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t h e s t r a y e d r e v e l l e r

march 1969



"ONLY ONE WAY TO GET THIS NAVEL CLEAN, MISTER!"