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The Pentagram, No. 2

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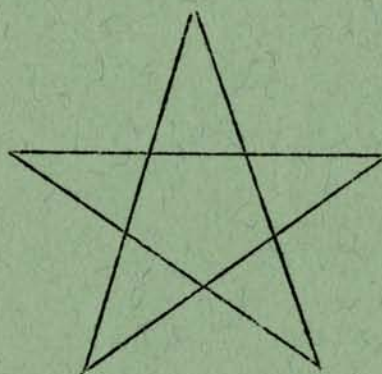
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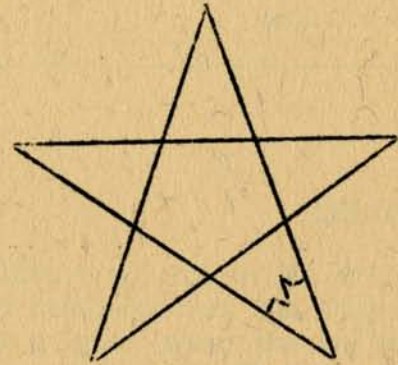
THE



PENTAGRAM

a monthly magazine of poetry, short stories, and essays

With the second issue, the editors wish to thank all those who have contributed to the PENTAGRAM. Student and faculty interest has made this issue possible. Your interest and contributions will make future issues possible. Send your poetry, short stories, and essays to the PENTAGRAM, c/o Jim Harris, 202 Mims, Nacogdoches, Texas.



Bill Armstrong
 Jim R. Harris
 Sonny Hyles
 Gemette McGuire

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Looking Back

CENTENARY

The live oak stands by crumbling ruins
Of bricks and weather-eaten boards.
It smiles and sways keeping watch
On memories of faded lives.

It spreads protective arms above
The shadow of a gallant man
In gray-plumed hat and gleaming sword,
Who rode away and never returned.

It sighs a sigh in recollection
Of kisses shared with a faithless wife
By a seamy, roaming Yankee drummer
And her shame upon remembering.

A hundred years the oak has seen
And scores of lives have been lived out
Beneath its slightly sagging arms.
It tiredly moans a plea for death.
Bill Armstrong

FREEDOM

When death comes calling,
I will be prepared for him.
His messenger comes.

An arrow in flight --
Death is on the wing for me --
The moon, blood-red, dies.

Death is not darkness,
But light brought on by dying.
My light shines tonight.

The bird in the air,
I am lying in my grave.
Which of us is free?

I am the free one,
The "soul," free to play on time's
Eternal playground.

Mike McJilton

A SHORT LYRIC TO SHELLEY

Sea-bound off Italy's coast
You search for intellectual beauty
And find immortality,
Like Prometheus, liver eaten
By vultures, you smile
Your childish smile
And chide them for their madness.
From ancient pyramids,
Perched, you sing of Adonais
And your own oblivion
Beneath sweet waters
That hold and caress you
Like you never were on earth.
Sonny Hyles

EULOGY FOR A WRECKED CAR

With roaring, matched-chrome pipes,
And wicked four-speed shift,
My four-wheeled steed with bright,
White eyes and heart of gleaming steel,
Lay twisted and torn beside the highway.

Torn by a careless master, twisted
By the Hand-of-Fate: a drunk that
Ran a red light, because he could not wait.

They took me to the hospital,
And though I will not die,
I wish my friend a happy time,
At the racetrack in the sky.
Gemetta McGuire

Through Mirrors

LUNCH COUNTER

Dead eyes look
Through cigarette smoke
Into menus,
While calloused hands
Clutch paper bags full
Of precious nothings
From Woolworth's.

Thirsty lips gulp
Weak coffee,
As minutes tick by,
And busses are due.

Housewife destined girls
Spread typewriter hardened fingers
Around lipstick stained water glasses,
Wondering what husbands
The computer selected for them.

Meaningless, exchangeable bands
Of gold shine dully
On tired hands of tired men
Who worry
About a tomorrow,
That is as exchangeable
For today,
As wedding rings are
For freedom.

Suzanne Roberts

EPISTLE TO H. L. HUNT

Within the confines
Of sightless walls
We smoke
And talk of things we'll do
In the morning or sometime
Tomorrow.....
Faceless men and women
Speaking of Sophocles
And
Waiting.
Thickening smoke and minds
Dull senses like too much sex,
And liquor, tasted too much,
Leaves film and that flat taste
That we have grown accustomed to,
Days running into endless nights
And
Never
Ending.
We smoke
And talk
And listen,
Sometimes.

Sonny Hyles

SONG FOR TWO VOICES

I gave you flowers, a year ago
Yes, and I said, "I love You."
Happy times then,
Not like now, when I sit on
A burnished throne and listen
To Shakespeare recorded.
I know! My work.
Talk to me my pet. You are
Grown cold. Your love—
A year ago—
Ravaging, and hungry with desire,
Has grown cold.
I dull and tarnish with boredom.
I know my dear. We die.

Gemette McGuire

" Impressions Following A Wedding"

And thus the season: summation of the year.
 And for all the new life, beginning with hands smelling of a dirty hole,
 Sweet sounds that come,
 "My feet hurt"

It's a marriage of old lovers

Caught up in a sea of cake and well-wishers, ready to leave,
 Ready to begin that good life always wanted.

"Hope to be with you tomorrow"

Everyone has gathered, the old gang, the new gang,
 To look each other over for a sign of change.

"He's always been a loser"

"Doing fine thank you"

It's amazing, their all shadows living in the presence
 Of dead ideas about what is "cool"

For God's sake it's time for an omission of words like that.

Who has lingered all year to now to catch up with himself
 When all the while he hasn't gone anywhere?

Prove it by actions last year. Where were you?

You're right, too many reunions.

The eve of the Eve, and all hurry about to see themselves--
 A reflection of themselves--

Move away dear friend, you touch the soul of all the universe
 Without even knowing it--

You while you dance from New Orleans.

Here it is, straight from the cuff;

The janitor lingered back in the wings while the
 Actors of a different theatre moved about on stage

And as he said it was a gathering of contrasts,

With a flavor touching the

International, interrational? internatural? No, innerruption!

God bless you my son.

We are gathered here

In his sight to join those who have already joined.

Home sweet home...how do I look?

Want to hear the music?

No, I have become philosophical and want to walk.

Will you take...?

I have, I, I do, will, yes.

No!

What happened to the organ?

And no sun, with breakfast.

But roads and cold air,

The fires where they burn trees and make all the land a freeway.

Jim R. Harris

A LITTLE WORLD

He skipped along the crowded sidewalk nimbly avoiding the passing forms of adults. He wove and dived amid them, never once touching even the hems of their dresses or overcoats. Stopping in front of the huge, shiney plate glass window, he saw a little boy looking back at him. Skinny, little sparrow-legs, arms like toothpicks, and a round, distended belly all held together by a pair of giant black eyes returned his gaze. He made a face and was mimed. He showed his white teeth in a great, false grin and it was returned.

The flow of black legs and flapping trouser-cuffs continued past him in the sanctuary of his little island off the sidewalk. He stepped out and was once again caught up in it. Darting easily, he miscalculated and collided with a heavy, dark leg. Looking up five miles he saw the scowling face of a policeman. It was covered with pasty-looking skin the color of a fish's belly, but began to change rapidly to a sunburned white man look. A big white hand reached down at him, but he skipped off with only bull bellows following him.

Some of the legs were white now. A head came forward, on line with his. It was pasty too, but it smiled at him. He grinned back, hopping about it in glee. It hopped back and finally, wistfully left at a stratospheric command. A fuzzy little dog with poppy eyes, on a dangling leash sniffed him. He patted its head and it licked him wetly. The leash jerked and the dog followed it, straining to stay, looking longingly back at him. He turned and headed back to the land of black legs. A frowsy yellow tom cat ran into an alley pursued hotly. It jumped up on a trash can and spit fiercely at him. He backed off and found a pile of newspapers and wrappers that had blown into a niche. Digging around in it he found a shiney piece of tin foil, the only valuable thing in the whole pile. It went into his pocket. With split second timing, he leaped back onto the sidewalk between two pairs of swiftly moving legs and moved in the crowd past the evil-smelling fish market. He stopped and looked into the big, round glazed-over eyes and gaping mouths in fascination. Reaching out he felt the sharp scales and fins. A booming voice drove him back into the moving mass. A broken beer bottle in the gutter gave off reflections like a handful of rubies mixed with the shimmering white of pearly filter tips.

His race stopped suddenly by a big, black hand, which belonged to the voice that scolded:

"What you doin' runnin' like that, boy? You better wake up and watch out. You in the world, not a fairyland!"

Dearth

PROPOSAL

TO THE FATHERS, BEARDED AND GROWN OLD

What should I wear?
 I should dress -- sharp --
 Not too loud -- toned down
 By thoughts of her.
 My hair -- short and ragged--
 Should be combed -- how?
 I'll use my hands to rumple it,
 And look like Robert Frost.
 Should I take my poems
 And impress her with my artistry?
 I should never write
 Another line.
 Should I take candy and flowers?
 Is it proper?
 I've always heard.
 Should I bend my knees
 To this goddess of nothing
 That I adore -- only for her flesh?
 What should I say?

Soft beds and warm blankets.
 Security in softness
 Hard-core pornography
 And hard-nose philosophy.
 Case histories in warmth.
 Some day, when fleecy clouds
 And spirits
 Tell us of the how,
 We will learn.
 Boxed, labeled, and cataloged
 We live out life,
 Sterile.

Sonny Hyles

Should I say

SECOND CHANCE

That I have sat
 And listened with deaf ears,
 To trivial conversations
 Between one-eyed idiots
 Fondling the thoughts
 Of harlots
 Capering between dirty sheets?
 Or!
 Should I say
 That I have sat
 In dark parks
 Watching lovers walk --
 Arm-entwined --
 And stop to kiss --
 Running eager hands
 Over passionate bodies --
 Then run away
 Panting lustily?
 I should cut my throat,
 But who would care?
 Should I walk to her house,
 Or take a cab to impress her?
 It is only two blocks.
 My head aches
 From all my preparations.
 I will take an aspirin,
 And lie down for awhile.
 She will still be there
 Tomorrow.

My soul, a shadow,
 Stalks me until I enter
 The darkness of my
 Own disbelief and kill it;
 Then is reborn by faith's light.
 Mike McJilton

HAIKUS

A coyote howls,
 A raven screams insanely,
 And I mourn love's death.
 But a flake in life's
 Blizzard, I am blown about
 Until death melts me.
 The dew, earth's pearls,
 Sparkle with a luster born
 Of love and sadness.
 The vulture, slowly
 Circling, descends to his
 Meal that death prepared.

Mike McJilton

Gemette McGuire

the PENTAGRAM

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To A Woodland Pond

The rasping quiet of solitude engulfed my woodland cabin.
Moombers crouched in silent shadows waiting to slide
upon me like ivory death.

The lunar magic bore me into the velvet night across
golden grasses to a moist altar.

There: a pond mirrors the distant moon.
Enchantment brought me to my knees before this oval
monument to Heaven.

The huge liquid eye stared accusingly upon me.
My eyes rose in search of lost Faith.

"Shame, ye fallen one of Clouded birth."

"Shame, ye dimmer comet of Heaven melted by Earthly passion."

Lost, Forlorn, and Faithless my doubting eyes were cast
from the lofty Blue to the Staring waters.

Suddenly, a wind wrinkled the silvered surface.

"Strange," I thought, "that God should wink at me."

Charles T. Guy

Mr. Joe Bobb Again: A Rationalization

I am a success! In the last issue of the PENTAGRAM I wrote an emotional
unlogical few comments about Nacogdoches. The article accomplished its
purpose: a few students that would never have touched the magazine read
part of it. The editor of the school paper rose up in arms and wrote
her best editorial of the year in defense of this college town and the
local newspaper (where the school paper is printed). Several students
rushed up to more than one of the editors and expressed opinions
similar to those in the article--the local newspaper is a poor excuse
for what it calls itself, the police have been prejudice, and etc. The
opinions in the article were emotional opinions to be sure. But why
not? Emotion, well emotion is emotion, is emotion. Which means, of
course, that it is difficult for this person to really get socially
or ideologically excited over this town. The article created some
interest. The PENTAGRAM thanks you for that interest.

Joe M. Bobb

Some Day

(scriboler, scriber, scrubber)

There sings a song eternal
Of rushing rivers, satin streams,
Of placid motions -- nature's dream.

The woodlark trills his song of joy,
Accompanied by the rush of winds,
The flicker's rhythmic beat attends.

And I stand lonely looking on,
Knowing the joy of woodland's song
Is turned corrupt by greedy men.

Bill Armstrong

J.J. and Other Men

Discourse

The old man limped slowly
 Down the road
 Followed by a shaggy-
 Haired boy.
 Together,
 They walked along the road
 Watching their feet
 Slap dust-spouts in the sand.
 'Father! Where's Maw?
 "She's dead son. Remember
 "When she died?
 "Where's she now paw? Heaven?
 "She's in the ground son,
 "Covered with moss and dirt,
 "Will she ever come back paw?
 "No son. She's gone forever.
 "I hope I never die paw.
 "I hope you don't either son.
 The old man shook his head sadly,
 And watched the shaggy-haired boy
 Run ahead throwing rocks at birds.
 Gemette McGuire

#22

Yesterday they spoke of rewards
 And intimately they spoke
 Of Dedalus, Barnes, and Prufrock.
 Yesterday we communicated
 With past souls.
 Yesterday they spoke of ethics —
 The good life, a direction —
 While I drank from a full jug.
 Yesterday I went home ready to
 Absorb a sweet few ideas.
 I lunched with Hamlet,
 Dined with a sad Lonigan,
 Drank beer at the Boars Head.
 Today
 Well,
 We have our new critics
 And new twists on old,
 Insignificant ideas.
 Jim Harris

The 97th Lament for Lever Brothers

Wrappers,
 Paper and plastic,
 Yell buy me, buy me.
 Screaming highway signs
 And subtle slick pages
 Coax and plead unignoucnoss
 And we buy and sell
 And lend and lease
 Entranced with it all.
 We, ourselves, wrapped,
 Brooks Brothers special,
 And sold to the
 Highest bidder.
 Constipation glorified
 By prune pushers
 Succumbs.
 The white knight
 Reigns and stifles
 Us with crocodile tears
 And Unbelieveable smiles.
 Sonny Hyles

L.S.D.

Sucking the sugar cube,
 I leap into the monster's mouth
 To see inside myself.
 Outside, I look upon myself
 With scorn, to see the mass
 That shelters me.
 Seeing and feeling unreality,
 My hand reaches to touch infinity,
 But fails.
 Back inside myself,
 The White Owl perches on my head,
 And blesses me.
 Now that I think clearly;
 The only real release from life,
 Is Death.
 Gemette McGuire

NOTES FROM A COUNTRY PARSON

"There are two different relations we can have as individual human beings. We can 'experience' things-- this we do to objects such as rocks and trees. It is largely physical. Or we can have a 'relationship' with persons. Now remember, to experience them is to reduce them to things. But -- to relate oneself with a person is to bind oneself to him in a different way. You see and identify yourself with him. It is somehow to participate in his being. I believe that the essence, the being of a man is Love. I believe that the supreme source of Love is God. The Scripture says: 'God is Love,' and this is what I hold to be true. So -- to participate with a person in Love is to bring God into the relationship. This relationship can only be said to be 'spiritual.' You may not like the word, but there is no other. The word 'mental' is too confining, it restricts itself to your mind, alone -- whereas the word 'spiritual' involves the connotation of a sharing with God, somehow. A sharing of love, perhaps. Yes, that's it exactly, a sharing of Love. Now -- if God is Love and if we can love our fellow men, we are bringing God into our lives as well as theirs. He permeates our whole existence as well as the relationship. Suddenly, in every experience of life, God enters in. Tragic events, disgusting events now have a meaning. God is with us in them. To be sure, we can't know Love, without knowing its negation, which is a lack of it. In the same way, we can't enjoy happiness unless we taste its negation, which is sorrow. We can't appreciate good health, unless we know the burden of ill-health. All these things make sense if God is in our lives. They are bound up in His purposes. Life has no ultimate meaning for us outside of faith in Him, it is only a slow process of daily dying. But if we take what Kierkegaard called the 'leap of faith,' then God makes all the inconsistencies and incongruous situations of life have some meaning for us personally. They are only meaningful to us who are in this relationship with God. We cannot make Him known to anyone else as we know Him, because it isn't Him we know, as a person. We only know Him as we are related to Him and His world. The world is His! It is not basically evil, because it is planned by Him and He created all things good. To turn aside and worship God, Himself -- to draw away from the world, to separate yourself from the world, like a monk, is to undo the plan of God. If we do this we turn Him into a thing and not a being to whom we are related. We become guilty of idolatry. To worship God is to share in Him and to share in His world."

"But how about this experience with God that you speak of?"

"My experience with God has not, nor would it ever be, enough to sustain my life with Him. But -- God used this experience as a revelation of Himself to me, initially. Believe me, I have seen many people who claimed to encounter God, and then saw them drift back to the world of the self. I have even seen men attempt to justify their personal prejudices on the basis of an experience with God. They have limited Him to a transcendent place somewhere away from the world and He never really enters into life here on earth. He has been conveniently filed in a drawer labeled 'heaven.' But for me, as I started to say, my confrontation with the Almighty was only a beginning. The experience as you called it, is not over. It has continued and it will continue forever, I am sure of it. So now I can see God in the world. I can see His face suffering on the Cross, in the tear-filled eyes of a teen-ager who finds herself pregnant. I can see the thorns biting into His head, when I see the sad look of complete submission and the collapse of all

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NOTES (cont.)

human dignity brought about in an old Negro by the hand of his white masters. I see the look of pleading mercy directed to His Father when he said: 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from me,' -- as I see this look on people being slowly eaten up by a cancer. But in all these things -- the joys and the sorrows of life -- I see a little bit of God. And because His Love is in me, I feel His pain as well as His joy. I suffer right along with the Negro, the cancer-patient, and the pregnant teen-ager. I'm no martyr, but somehow I'm a part of all of them. It really hurts me too, because I have turned from His will and presence, and in so doing, have generated the reverse of Love, which is evil. It is a daily struggle for me to stay away from sin, but each day that I do, I tell myself it's worth it. God, yes, it's worth it! The reason I am a man of God is because there is nothing else on this earth worth the effort -- to me. This is why I can smile when people treat me like a member of some third sex; this is why I can stay happy when men cynically address me as 'Reverend'; for one and only one reason -- God lives in me and gives me the strength to attempt to turn all these things into something to benefit Him and His world, which is also mine."

(from incomplete work)

Bill Armstrong

THE LOADED CANVAS AND J. HALL

too often had he dreamed of such experience to really believe that she was laying there on the ground her Negro mother rushing about unhurt and afraid for her only child the car didn't look as if it had been in a crash but the boy paid no attention to that his attention was upon the girl it had been there since he first realized what had happened it was her face that he saw nothing else beyond her face there was only blurred movement she was beautiful she was the most beautiful person he had ever seen and he was transfixed as all men are at the sight of their first lover unable to speak unable to do anything except move toward that thing he must love

the scene arose before him a frame in some slow camera to be caught to be frozen in its place his mind and as if from some elysian field the Negro girl a nymphs face projecting forcefully to the audience of his mind tilted her head to one side looking lovely and unhurt and with that frame a cleansing came washing all his soul all his mind and hands making this the time to run as lovers do to her

...if i should jump...he shuffled his feet looked down at the gathering crowd

he had picked her up and started toward a field next to the car when she first looked at him it was a field of grain and her hand hanging at his side touched his leg and the grain although he ran she felt that this white boy took an hour for each step but his arms felt good about her he placed her on the ground to die and she did while smiling at him

...a bigger splash to make upon her door...and a big black god reached out for him

Jim Harris

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