I am a tattered poem in spanking book
With jaded look and twisted look of nuance
To pull you down.
The hand that moves the pen is not my own;
The eyes that read these words are not your own;
The witch with shattered crystal shatters time.
And I am never alone.
(And does the cover protect the page)
As the frail, pale body of yearning skin
Begets the worm that slyly grins?

Essence, Volume XI is dedicated
With love and affection
To John Wrebach
And to death,
Who may or may not be the same thing.
PART I

The winter festival has come—
Send food and Celebrate! . . .

When I was born
the world
had just turned warm
and I think
that I wanted it to stay that way forever.

I was soft
and I wanted to hide
in a thicket of blueberry bushes
and feel the edge
of warm wind
blowing my fur.

Not really winter and just before spring
I wanted to run down green
pathways
and listen:
the roaring rain
the splashing fire . . .

Standing solidly
and his hair shining
in sunlight.
The hunter
destroying new growing twigs
of the blueberry bush
cutting through green pathways
not seeing
the bleeding trees.

The hunter
running through sunshine.
I cringed upon the forest-earth
I saw him:
The hunter in light
and much too beautiful.

His hand warm upon my shoulder
A surge of
blind playful life
And we were mates
to the forest
and the forest forever . . .

PART II

Of the forest
to the forest
and the forest forever
I followed water sounds
beneath the branches
of the
storm-blown tree
where buds
were blowing
springtime.

"I wish I were a rabbit,"
I told him,
"to play
through the blueberry bush . . ."

He laughed
and said he hunts rabbits.
I did not hear
the water sound
in heat
of summer.
I could not trace
parched grasses
back to green.
Love dripped away
in blood
and blood congealed . . .

"I'll cut
into the center vein
and scream
my way into life!
Branches will bleed for me,
sap flow awhile, then dry in sunlight
. . but not one tiny cell
will open
as each moment
passes into summer's heat."

I look
to autumn
when leaves, already dead
will loosen
and wither in joy
to quietness
of frost,
and footprints
where no rabbits
play
by frozen
into snow.

Tracy Greth
NIGHT AND FOG

So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

F. Scott Fitzgerald

The sea is full tonight; it brushes against the shore with a cry that echoes throughout eternity. The sky, pink with the dust of ash and shreds of sea. A sea of human voices calling, calling into the long night of the world.

Eusthete paused and looked at the page once more. Aside from a few ink blots he liked it so far. These damn cheap pens were too hard to write with. He sat on a stone below Barbara Herman looking内容阅读部分...

"Hey, Herman, it's time to turn over." Thank you, I almost forgot." When I remitted she would never remember to turn and tomorrow she would look like an idiot on one side only.

I want to be a part of these voices, I want to be somebody. I want to be a part of it all. I want to conform. Just a piece of the general action, no more. With someone I can hold and say she is mine. Explicit my personality. Or do I? I've had to change my personality and that would be a pain in the ass.

He added the final stroke with an emphatic stroke of the pen.

"How is it going, Eusthete?" Herman stuck over brushing the hair from her eyes as the wind continued to blow it back again.
Tracks roll east and west, voices of our solidarity. A tired state rolls through our town ignoring the news signs flashing to attract his attention. A car stops at the 7-Eleven. Behind them the faded paint of the USS Stark sign a tired Oldsmobile fades support. The bank clock ticks off yet another minute. It is two-thirty-four a.m. A weary tracker, swinging through a broadside lane, slips into a lower gear—safely climb up college hill. My eyes follow his red lights until they dim.

Enthustle sat finishing in a chair by the window of his apartment. From its windows he had a clear view over much of the old town and the sea. The tide was coming in and the first waves were crashing upon the seawall. Soon they would spill over it into the street. Herman was boiling a few hot dogs and frying eggs to go with them. The heat from the stove was intense and her face was damp from the fire.

"Barbara, what do you think of all this? Does it make any sense or am I going crazy. I don't know her. How can I ever get that across to both you and her?"

"She seemed to match every description in your work. She knows the same things you do."

"She called colicky, then saw her face and came to him. He held her hand and she gazed down contented. "It's really not true just to keep on writing and ignore her. What connection does she have with art?"

"She is sending, she is not going to cause you any physical harm. I still think she's after money."

"That's why I was so shaky at first. He looked outside. Janet and Beth were moving away, up front street toward the town. Barbara sat. "Oh shit, I left the eggs and dogs loose."

"She raised up by now the eggs were cinders.

"That's ok Herman. I can afford to buy us some hamburgers upstairs."

"But it only happened in the split second. I saw you and them together. And just as fast it vanished. I don't know why, sort of an unconscious reflex. I've often thought that there is a definite difference between the world where we believe we live in and the actual world."

"But you mean you wanted that to happen. All that?" she asked. "I certainly hope you didn't."

"But I was afraid that something like that would happen and seeing you with those guys just picked that part of my mind. For the moment imagination became much more than reality. To me you really were doing Jan and I are both content, I hope. I folded together on her couch. Mystic blues from the radio like angel cries. Her painting in finished and her eyes move from the painting in front to the window, then to the quiet street. But not each other."

"The painting is a smoke portrait of Janet in front of her dressing table, from the rear. The eye shifts quickly to the eyes, the facial point of the painting. They are blank. The lips compress into what is almost a kiss—revealing the young girl sucking her thumbs, unhappy with her future."

"Tonight her hands pinch my cheeks and we stare finally at each other; scowling,(fouting."

"Once in a dream a Buddha winked or some kind of Asian deity. (He was Chinese—blond, yellow skin), came to me in a dream."

Barbara was undergarms but the bartenders had not bothered to take this into notice. They passed the time and then went home and bed. Janet was at their door. She and Beth sat on the steps talking to each other.

"Hello Chris, you're coming home earlier than usual these days. Can't wait to hit that bed."

Barbara said loudly, "Just what do you want. I think you're becoming quite a bore. What do you hope to accomplish?"

"Beth looked at her, a light in her eyes. Janet spoke quickly.

"It's just something, I merely want to announce that I can't be disallowed. I won't be like yesterday's news. I exist. I want to be confirmed as real. Chris and I once existed together."

"And what you said? That's just trying to deny your existence."

"Yes, something, Beth suggested to Chris. "After all it's your problem."

"Pursing carefully to find the right words Chris said, "I'm sorry. I can't. I don't know what to say anymore. I can't seem to convince you that I don't know you. Didn't know you, now or in the past."

"He said all this in a rush."

"Quite a few. Each word seemed to cut her to pieces. Her lips parted stuttering in quick bursts. She turned toward the house. The answer is in your novel, Chris. Think back through the lines again and the girl you describe. The answer is there as I told you before."

"The girl in the story is part of a lot of girls I once knew a long time ago. She is not one girl. I repeat, not one. She is an illusion."

"Janet's face seemed to blur. "You called her Janet and described her—me so well."

"It was an accident, purely unintended."

"Beth got up and started wandering aimlessly in circles around the trio."

"When all of this is said and done, Winter has come again. Snow covers the gay grass, I think of what he has been and what he will be. I think of Beth, of Janet and even of the many others. All if them fill my mind."

"So if I stop writing she won't know anymore about me, then she'll go away from us and we can get back to calm living... that's what I get for trying to live like in my writings. Christ I could use a cigarette, why can't I get to sleep?"

"Christopher, honey."

"Yeah, Swamp, I want to go to sleep."

"OK, I'll come silently."

"It raised the next day and they stayed inside watching the rain pour down the windows. He wrote and Barb sewed some clothes. Jan and Beth drove by early in the afternoon, passing only to beep and wave. Enthusiastic tried to ignore them. He asked miserably. A little later, several nights after the rain abated, and they decided to walk upstairs for a coffee or a beer."

"Barbara crossed her legs and released her grasp on his leg, sat back in an intelligent position ready to comprehend everything. You were pretty excited about something that day."

"He took an old notebook from a shelf, crammed with old papers, and began to read: A week or so after I began going with her I came into the high school to meet Barb one afternoon. She wasn't in the cashier or at the information desk, as I talked with a couple of the kids for a snort. Any day. She was at the swimming pool."

"The pool had an exit door to the main hall, leading to the stairs, so I went in that way. The water looked good but I knew it wasn't safe and disinfected. The tiles felt cool, sheltered by the dark hallway."

"She was sitting by the balcony rail to musing terms with the current White "hang up" with Black sexuality may send a stamped self-addressed envelope to ESSENCE, 323 Deodart Hall, KSC, Kinston, NC 53140, and you'll be sent the unfolding paragraph."

"God, how vulgar."

"She grinned. Abnormal in it, she put her hands to her face. "How could you even write such a thing?"

"Wait for the climax, no pan intended."

"What next?"

"She saw me."

"He read. "Hi Chris; she called with a big grin and left them, kissing me hello. Let me get dressed, oh I got you all set. Her wetface soaked my desert boots. She said she was sorry, said goodbye to her friends and we walked arm in arm into the black tunnel to the hall. I slapped her backside and she squeezed in delight, I could see her clean white teeth."

"This is the nightmare. All that in just a moment's flash."

"It all happened in the split second I saw you and them together. And just as fast it vanished. I don't know why, sort of an unconscious reflex. I've often thought that there is a definite difference between the world where we believe we live in and the actual world. You mean you wanted that to happen. All that?" she asked. "I certainly hope you didn't."

"But I was afraid that something like that would happen and seeing you with those guys just picked that part of my mind. For the moment imagination became much more than reality. To me you really were doing..."
But most of all I think of Valerie. The love we once knew, the innocence that was.
I think of the past and all. Of the nights we tried to die; of what we never found.
I think of Valerie and our dreams.

Polling out a cigarette, Chris cast an anxious eye on Barbara, who sat down now, watching him.

"I might as well admit it. Most of it is an illusion. Winter dreams of what never was. A wish, not a reality." He paused and gave Beth and Janet a narrow stare. And you know that very well. As you must have learned by now.

A fog began to roll in from the water. Barbara enjoyed watching the mist gobble up the bushes until they didn’t exist to the world. She looked back quickly at Janet’s next words.

"I’m not sure, I’m confused. I want to go and I want to stay. Let’s see some of the others Beth." She stuttered. "We may be, we may be back. I hope we are. It would have been very nice if you knew me.

They raised up. Chris did not move, he felt Bach grip his arm. Janet took a step, two steps toward Chris and then shook her head. "No, no, but it must—it can’t be." Beth called out for her half hidden in the fog.

Janet stared hard at Chris for almost a minute. Still staring, she backed into the snowing fogy. Five then ten steps and the two were gone.

The wandering wind robbed the wheat, flattening it against the easy hill. The breeze was warm, not at all unsettling although I heard I was naked. It ruffled my hair, tearing the strands out of place. The wind was at our left as we walked diagonally toward the crest. Then I noticed the girl by my side. She was shorter than I and she too was naked. Immediately I felt the cold-blast current hardening my insides and the dank feel of sweat. She looked up at me and down, tracing my skin with her eyes; wriggling her finger in my palm. The rushing stopped and I was seized with warmth, softenning and swirling.

We moved up the hill the mucky grass melting beneath our toes.

We were searching for an end to a problem. We’d know it when we found it. She said with a darting grin, impish auburn hair covering the nape of her neck. Kim smiled and her arms became gleaming with daughter of sweat. Crouching the rise, we saw three boys. We stopped and Kim engaged them in conversation as to the whereabouts of our object.

The sun rose higher, casting the sky into mellow materials for our shapes to mould and we sighed. The three left, casting conscious looks at Kim. We sat down to take a rest. I reached over and began stroking her breasts to a fine point. She giggled then pulled my hand away with one hand and slapped my backside with the other. "We have work to do," and started along the path again. Smooth stones rubbed my feet and Kim stabbed her toe, cursing loudly as she did once at the Jersey at St. Mike’s.

We came to a house and I paused to examine its stalls. Kim cried for me to hurry. I recalled she was someone’s gal friend and looked back to the house. Kim walked, nervous cheeks to the wind, away.

Much later the same night Enbrittle and Barbara walked down by the sea wall, now embrowned in fog.

"It’s really funny the way she just walked away.

"Yeah."

They moved along hand in hand toward the little rock of land. Kicking a stone, almost skipping in the larry glow of the streetlamps.

"I think I’ll let off writing for a week or two. Let my mind clear. I think I am too close to my material now; images keep crowding my mind."

"Perhaps that it true in more ways than one." Barbara pulled her coat about her neck. The sea was high and the tide was in. A wave or two crashed on the wall barely missing them as they walked.

"Let’s go into Boston tomorrow and just stroll around, Chris. There is a new movie opening that I would like to see. We can eat a nice dinner and then go to the nine o’clock show."

"That sounds fine to me. Let’s leave about noon. You know, Herman, occasionally the simple joy of you astounds me."

She reached up and kissed him lightly. They stepped and turned toward home. "Was it all just winter dreams, Enbrittie?"

"Most of it. Little points of truth here and there. He hung his head admitting it to himself.

"Jenat was so very pretty, so very beautiful." She intoned.

"Yes she was, wasn’t she. It would have been so nice, so good."

They gazed into the fog toward the mouth of the harbor. The night was very quiet and they listened intently, to the voices sighing—sighing to a wall at times, etheeral throughout the over-silent sea. Home.

John Weberbach

Through the frosted glass
The white eye of night
Shines lace
Into our hands grasp.

Kristie Creole

escaping the clouds
the moon watches me hiding
so frightened of life.

Marti Rose

WESTERN FRONT

And, in the isolation of the sky,
At evening, casual flocks of pigeons make
Ambiguous selections or they sink
Downward to darker, or extended wings.

Wallace Stevens
Two people are speaking. They are Robert Silverberg, Dean of Northern State College, and his secretary, Barbara Herman. Perhaps speaking is not a proper term for Silverberg, whose face is often seen in the pages of a novel. He has a habit of pausing in the middle of a sentence, and the conversation is about twenty years old, and wears a yellow shirt. His legs are propped on the table, and his leg is swinging in a pale blue suit and a paisley tie. He wears white shoes. Outside the scene is gray-blue, whipped by the wind. It is also far away. The building they are in is a house overlooking the sea, and the salt air of the ocean is refreshing. 

SILVERBERG: What is your home like, please? BARBARA: A very modest 34. (She hedges just a bit at her home.) SILVERBERG: Do you feel alone at night? BARBARA: No, not at all. I have my reading and my warm fire and shower in the afternoon when Chavis is asleep. 

(Silverberg looks at the woman close with a ravening tongue. Long ago he had wet dreams over a girl much like Barbara. Then there was a career and a marriage and to consider.) SILVERBERG: Do you know what this is? BARBARA: Yes, a cigar I believe. Although it might be a phallic symbol. Are you into Freud? Older people are very much concerned with the Viennese School. SILVERBERG: Yes, it is a cigar. Now I will light it and smoke until it is down to its rotten core. Just like humanity. BARBARA: Are you into drugs? SILVERBERG: Humility is so much like this cigar, when all is said, when only a fire to lead onto the final consummation. (Barbara smiles at this minor philosophy and stretches her legs, crossing them.) SILVERBERG: Yes, a phallic symbol. I, we all, need a phallic symbol to clutch at. Do you know what I am speaking of? BARBARA: Perhaps, perhaps. The sea. We also need the sea. SILVERBERG: Yes the sea with its unknown riches. The last frontier of earth for man. BARBARA: I could just stay for hours some nights at the waves breaking upon the sands. SILVERBERG: But you must not try to stare alone, is that what you are trying to tell me? Did you ever consider, oh, what is the phrase for it ... make it--on the beach? And did the sands wash down the canopy of your body, slip and crawl into such crevices? Did, did it hurt? Only later, and the waves never stopped breaking or crashing. Do you know that surface was covered by the wave of ninth wave. It is supposed to be the basis of the law of each wave in each series. 

SILVERBERG: It seems to be a little warm in here. Let me see if I can count the waves. We should have a pair of binoculars though. 

BARBARA: I have only a lot of work to do Mr. Silverberg and only a short time to do it in. 

SILVERBERG: Yes, yes you must. Your need to get out in the fresh air and feel the vitality strike deep in your pits. 

BARBARA: Yes, oh yes. To think that some women never shave their armpits--so sensible. Well run along now. By the by, I was considered quite a few years back, though you may not believe it. Now I merely wonder what Freud would make of the practice of putting old steel rods in charge of such young hard men. Oh the shame of it all. 

SILVERBERG: Probably not a thing. Perhaps not, oh if I was thirty again I could . . . (His forehead twitches at the thought. Even Barbara leans forward in expectation.) SILVERBERG: Yes, now I know what I would do. I would make love to you Barbara. I would make love to you, like a bridge. 

Bill Chavis brought three beers to the narrow table where he sat with Chris Auker and Vincent Verite. Bill saluted and twisted his way past the usual Friday night crowd in Mattie's Sail Left Taver. Verite was illustrating a point with his hands when Chavis finally reached their table.

Five tables occupied the walls at Mattie's. The fivefacet between the tables and the bar were usually solid with people, even bottled on the cowgirl salad on the door. The rustic atmosphere of Mattie's drew tourists during the summer and almost all the residents of the little town the remainder of the year. The three considered themselves lucky to have a table at all. Verite narrowly avoided spilling the beer with his gestures. He scooped a beer into his hand and waved his hand at the camera. "This guy was great. He kept shooting, but it wasn't in any language, and the other guys both nodded and the understood everything. The first guy kept gesturing with his hands and I tightened my camera. That's the kind of thing I want to capture. Life, business." He gestured meaningfully and Verite and Chavis opposite with a single accusing finger. "But the place was, Western Front, 1917--leads itself so well to an attempt to say a few words about our contemporary commerce.

Verite sat back and tilted his head in a pose that suited him well. Auker had a small hawk-like face and dressed in a serious mode, conservative yet striking. He cultivated a beard. His most prominent feature was a piercing stare with his eyeballs small in pure white sockets. "The real life of the trenches through the eyes of a single soldier is what we must strive for. Effects will speak for themselves. We have only to present a picture and the audience will understand for their own mess. Verite came right back in contradictions of Auker's thought. By Chavis interjected his first comment. "Chekhov said that." "The artist merely presents the facts, his editor must judge for himself. "Oh." "The three cautiously sipped their beer. Money was a precious resource in their slow drinking. Film is not cheap." "Verite, the first war is the primary influence upon the twentieth century. We couldn't have it. You can't just do a documentary, that's been done too many times before." "I've got this old guy--Dana Coughlin--a veteran of the war, no less, to give me a tour of the camp. Can I take a photo a straightforward approach?" "But the importance of the war." "Verite spoke with a passion for the cinema which went deep. Chavis spoke more quietly. "Well if the war is such a primary force as you say, Auker ..." "It is it. It is." "Verite ignored him, lit a cigarette, sipped his beer and continued." "If it is, why don't we do it as a comedy?" "Auker and Verite looked at him aghast. "Huh?" "On the order of ... Dr. Strange-love." "Verite passed down the bar and zoomed in on the cute female bartender. She smiled as she smiled. He handed back to the table focusing snow on his companions. "I don't know anymore man."
Even when there was no attack the weekly casualties usually termed "wastage" ran about 2000 men.

Only when the Germans became desperate and attacked did the stalemate end. With the added advantage of one million new Americans the Allied Generals could and did counterattack all the German lines.

These uprisings aside let us join Barbara and Chavin enjoying a bowl of succulent clam chowder at the Nautilus Dining Room, discussing Chavin's plans for a comic treatment of the late 1914-18 unpleasantness.

"You have, of course, considered the morality concerned with such a light treatment of such a subject?" She said with a trace of distaste.

"Yes, yes, you are misinterpreting the use of the word comic. I mean it more in the sense of the absurd. The utter stupidity of the useless affair the generals calling for new attacks. All those dead for naught." He paused and spooned a clam from the white broth. "This is a fine soup." Barbara said something, nervously shrugging her shoulders in an eloquent gesture of both of woman and coquette. She called out for another drink.

Chavin was saying "I think we could perhaps dress the Huns in white, the French in yellow and the Brits in blue with skull-caps. Some kind of distinction anyway. Auer is fanatical in his determination to make his own statement."

"That seems to me an admirable gesture." As she talked her eyes came to light in almost an admiration for Auer. All that knew Barbara spoke of her fine eyes, easily her finest trait. They radiated her personally exposing her contemptuality.

"Anyway, tomorrow we will begin to shoot the modern day segment of the film. Something to do with a maniac tendancy in our society. I'm not quite sure. This is all Auer's script and he claims it will be the

keynote of the entire film." He slowly nodded his head in an affirmation of what he had said.

There was a few moments of silence while the waitress brought fresh drinks to their table and they finished the last of the soup.

She waited, flushed with her meal and the expectancy of Chavin's next words. No doubt she disagreed with many of Chavin's ideas, although she appreciated his mind. Too many of her past lovers had been only physical. She shouldered to even recall them. And now going to bed with Chavin served to remind her of the inconsistency of love and sex. Only when they lay back panting with exhaustion did she finally find the release in character she sought for herself. Penetration of more than body came with coitus she believed.

Chavin relaxed, secure in the knowledge he had found an admirable mate who had no desire to finalize their relationship in a

marriage that could possibly destroy both.

And how was your work today? Did old Silverheels lay after your charms again?"

"More silly questions?"

She sighed. "He is such a scary old man. I feel like I should go to bed with him just to reassure him."

"Of what?"

"His manhood, silly. He was most likely a good man a long time ago. It would reassure him too."

"He probably couldn't get it up anymore." Chavin said with a slight smile. Barbara responded with distance as if to say "how vulgar" but she did not speak.

Chavin called for the check. It was nearing one and Barbara must return to work.

"Shall I see you tonight?" She asked.

"Yes, probably around nine. I want to work on my script the rest of the day."

"Then," She gave him a pleasant peck on the cheek and walked off with nary a glance backward.

He moved in the opposite direction. Along the strand moving with falling sun. Inland breezes toward the rising land. Barren, frigid, twisting a silent shriek.

The camera is moving down a busy shopping street toward an intersection. We are apparently in the midst of the business district of a medium large city. There is quite a few pedestrians on the streets. It is any major shopping district during the early afternoon hours on a weekday. The sun is shining although it is probably early spring for most are warmly dressed.

This whole scene should not run any longer than 15-20 seconds and filmed as from a passing car.

A shot from the balcony of a tall building. We are quite high and can now see in four directions. From the intersection the camera pans up the street to the building opposite us and then up its height until it settles on four workmen playing cards on the rooftop of the building.

FIRST WORKMAN: I'll bid twenty five and you'd better believe it.

SECOND WORKMAN: (It is too far to determine any facial expression) Christ, he did it again. How does he get those hands.

THIRD WORKMAN: Are you gonna bid or bitch?

We can hear but not see them clearly until the camera zooms in on their game and then we can distinctly see one man lay down four aces. He grins (he is more of a mower), as he does, crooked men appear on the screen. They center on his chest. A rifle shot and he falls. The crooks shift to the next man.

low, sloping hill. Machine guns rattle and they fall in the same straight line. On the soundtrack we hear patriotic music.

CUT TO

A shot of the landmarks cemetery, a long line of crosses and a few grieving tourists.

CUT TO

View behind a parked car looking up at the snipers position. Panning right we see five police, crouching and shooting back at the snipers. One points to the doorway in front of us and three run for its shelter. They run to it and we see them go inside.

CUT TO

A sweating man and woman making love noisently. On the soundtrack we hear rifle shots.

CUT TO

A man shooting at targets.

The man falls from the woman and she lightly smokes his chest, an enigmatic smile on her face.
The film lacks any sense of coherency, it is a mishmash of intercuts. In a word-kitch. In two words—bullshit.

Auster's already piercing stare grew wider and wilder, until his brown eyes were surrounded by a globe of white. "That is a gross insult. I refuse to allow you to comment upon a piece of art in that manner."

Verite jumped out of one to the other in rapid succession. Auster had hit his feet in one smooth motion. He was upon Chavin gripping Chavin's lapels and they fell to the floor wrestling and thwomping punches.

Verite did nothing. He simply held upon a medium closeup of the scuffle until they came back to their feet standing at arm's length. Screaming.

"Impedick!"

"Philistine!"

"Amateur author!"

"Defecatory dog in a manger!"

"Cutie!"

"Sperm of a swine!"

"Critic!"

And they were into the fight again. First Auster, then Chavin would gain the top and throw a punch only to be wrapped by the other's grasp.

"The role of the camera is to fasten the author's personality upon celluloid."

"Para-semantic would be Freudian ax."

"The lens is but a vision of the world through a narrow aperture."

"That is no American Dream Dilemma."

Then: more fists, gutteral shouts—hoarse cries as Verite in ma-pshooting now, finally the two are tired. They swing with no force to their punches, continuing only through an inability to cease. They collapse and in one final exchange:

"Those who can't do, criticize."

"The most incompetent speak the loudest of all."

"I will tell the truth, my world vision through the lens, not a side view but a true artist...?"

Both get up slowly and return to their seats sheepishly.

Verite calls out for three drinks. It is late in the twilight of a winter's day. Although the warmth is unusual for the season the evening chill is setting in. An old man sits back on his bench watching the ripple of the waters and the coming American Night drooping on the small sea-town town.

Dana smoothes the crease of his too-many times washed pants and chuckles at the memory of the film he has just seen. He had paid no mind to the cinematic criticism the trio had leveled on it. They don't know, he thinks. Through a filmy haze of years he remembered the warm drinks of matinees in bright fresh green uniforms against the brown French Plains, how they cheered.

The people in the villages, thin and pale focused four years of war. And the proud, strong, young Americans—so much like the vanished French youths who chanted 'sur le Rhone' in the last summer in 1914. And the terrible days when he first knew he had no right arm. How he wanted to die. The fine things 'Blackjack' had told them in the yard to lift their spirits. His aim is on the road, we have made the world safe for democracy. The glorious entry of Wilson into Versailles and the vision of the coming of a new world.

All this faded into the corridors of the wind and field. A film on the Western Front, ha, they couldn't do it. It took a special kind of man. Someone with something to fight for.

And of the other wars. One against star-vation in the thirties and then Hitler in the forties. But they were nothing. It all went back to 1919 and a cool day in the fall. A girl waved, so much like one who waited for his return.

Until he returned; so far at sea, lost, shorn, abridged.

Robert Silverwell left his afternoon post by the girls dormitory, so many young girls. All so nice.

Silverwell passed Dana on his bench. They nodded to each other.

"How do, Mr. Silverwell, getting a bit brisk."

"Afternoon Dana. Yes it is at that. Round to get colder tonight."

John Wreisbech

Drama

Kalman Morris

Kahanov
HICKORY DICKORY DOCK

Prelude
In the beginning, in the end, and at all points in between there is always the word. It is not necessarily noun or even exclusive, but concepts, serving as definitions, paradigms or impetus to any one of those events whose sequence is our own. And when we give an label to an event we invariably define ourselves as our participation in it. One becomes progenitor of his own sentence and, simultaneously, morpheme of another. But once decided on the word what to do with it? The catalyst revealed he must now explain the equation. And the equation is this:

The Theme
There is a word for it all. This word, I believe, is isometric. One simply sits riveted in a chair, staring steadily at his typewriter for hours on end as if he were a paralytic and it comes, the word that is. The machinations begin linking, nay, coupling man and machine and the line bio-chemical gears seek out from the ganglia of nerve ends the proper keys, and the phonemes begin to arrange themselves. The linear discoveries of this flat landscape make themselves known, and through the collectivity of their knowledge we advanced. Second variables, double-talk, the jabberwockian rhythm of this tongue square root of all the sounds squeezed, spatted or spewed forth from the mouth. Even the gibe of clockwork clocks. The word remains the same. Isometric.

It is said that an animal approaches an object with a brain unable to comprehend it spatially. Instead it encounters a series of two-dimensional surfaces, forgetting the former as it views the next, so that the object’s form as seen from any angle is the reality. If one was to plot the object on paper showing its front, top and side, with the front occupying the upper left and serving as fulcrum for the other two, he would have what is called an isometric drawing. As we examine the different views of the drawing we are able to reduce our perceptions to those of the animal. But if we consider the drawing as a whole, and view all of the views simultaneously, we can increase our own time-space relationships. It follows, then, that the trap focused by God, the object, and ourselves is in direct proportion to that comprised of man, object, and environment. Our hierarchy is one of perception, and the isometric embodies symbolically, the ways in which we may encounter environment. It also presents the question of just how are we to arrange what we encounter in a meaningful system. The final irony may well be that there is no priority whatsoever to objects or events and, ultimately, no meaning either. If such is the case the animal is supreme (for it is free from these delusions); there is no God in the western traditions, and use of the isometric are all fools.

I have just finished an isometric drawing of a mousetrap. It is the epitome of functional simplicity: frontal, planeometric, clear and exact in its sparse elements, form totally subversive to purpose. The architectural antithesis of any clockwise clock, with its inlays and broc-a-brac. It carries out its function with the same precise economy: the mouse moves or prolfs at the bait and, in so doing triggers the spring which snaps its neck. The only superfluous movement being the muscular contractions of the dead mouse. There have been instances, however, where the mouse has either been exceptionally small or has positioned itself on the trap before going after the bait. In which case the spring comes down behind the neck; and although the back is broken death is not instantaneous, and there may be thrashing and squalling for hours. Such incidents are the exceptions. One simply finds the trap full, empties the mouse into the garbage, sterilizes the spring with a match and, having baited it again, cocks the trigger. But what happens before the trap is brought into play? With my drawing before me, and using it as the vehicle, I have attempted to follow his perceptions, if any, of the trap itself. We may immediately discard the top view since the mouse and trap both are on the same plane. This leaves the front and side views, and variations of them since it would be rare, indeed, if the mouse were to advance towards the trap in a path perpendicular to the front and parallel to sides or vice versa. By the same reasoning we have no real reason to believe that the trap lays its plane at the exact eye level of the mouse. The inference of all this, obviously, is that the mouse perceives, at a given moment, neither top, front, nor side, but rather a combination of the three. And, if our assumptions as to its special perception are correct, this combination is constantly shifting, but remains the same to the mouse since he has no memory of any shape other than the one before him. If I am to exhaust all the possibilities, we may be sure that it never sees the bottom unless it somehow overturns the trap.

I make these rather extensive observations in an attempt to compact all of the nuances and ramifications of a specific event and, in so doing, obtain total comprehension of it. A direct path from the isometric, which I have chosen as central to any investigation, to any point along a sequence which is infinite. (Which one assumes in such a stance is finite since it may be grasped.) It would be mine to undertake complete realization of infinite mutability.

It is, finally, an effort to cease self-definition in relation to all of one’s stances and positions and attempts to delineate one’s essence in relation to an absolute. I recall Buddha’s sermon in which he stated that if one truly understood a flower, he would comprehend the universe. I have chosen the isometric since it is my conviction that it is of immediate relevance and, therefore, a vital port. I may as well have chosen the clock, but was apprehensive of starting with anything as complex as time itself. The cuckoo, by the way, has chimed six times.

The similarities of the blueprint to the isometric may take our study a little further along towards our not mundane goal of realization of our cosmic identity. Consider, if you will, how it (the blueprint) exists, unique among all things, in that its potentiality is almost always totally affirmed. What a feat! It stands unrivaled in its perfection, ultimate in its freedom, for it among all things truly becomes what it is. Now the subtle distinction which allows this differentiates the isometric from the blueprint is one only of time. Blueprint before the fact and isometric after. The divine plan brought forth from the ephemeral, and the reading of that made real. R.C. and A.D. the old and new testaments of man. For is it not the old that we encounter the cosmic foundations which culminate in Christ? And is not the new merely the parable of that perfection? Through this analogy we may see still another reason for my selection of port.

To sustain the laborious effort of a mind deliberating upon itself and its environment is difficult enough, without the subsequent demands of transmuting this effort into a coherent and readable prose. The whole process is doubly confounded if, as is herein the case, one cannot type. The consequences of such an inability are, in effect, the flow of inherent truths (uncovered is in the dark primal regions of the id) immediately beyond the consciousness and out of reach while one fumbles, futilely, in a desperate attempt to locate the right keys. One could, I admit, do his composing in longhand, but does not the mystique create at its instrument? Indeed the demands of the technico-structure may well dictate conceptions by type? Given ample time one could play the most complex of works. Although, in such a situation, the emphasis would be so dominant on the actual doing of the thing that it would be achieved at the total expense of meter or melody. I am now tempted to site that most clasped of all hypothetical situations wherein: if an infinite number of monkeys beat the keys of
though it were an omnipresent trinity, but her\textit{\footnote{Idiocy which we may attach to a given event is, to no small part, due to the peculiarities of that time/place relationship in which the event took place and, correspondingly, those occurring during one encounter with it. The pre and post of our time/place continuum are often illusory in their contrasts in the sense that it is as if night had changed into day, or day into night, and their alterations performed without the greys of dusk or dawn. Indeed these changes are sometimes so startling and rapid that one is left with the image of a sun-dial in which the dial has been replaced with a kaleidoscope of color and the hand that hins it falsely helved to either side where the sun slowly dies the face of the dial and waits for the libration of the light which brings it into the night. Time past, present and future plotless, recorded and projected over the continuous flux that is history, with which it is synonymous. A fake trinity at best, for if we examine it closely we find time past is no more than an instructional still-born serving, as it does, perpetually deceived, time future constantly an oaray at the point of conception; and time present a device of rare animosity fluctuating eternally between the two. For time is the great thief, robbing Peter (the future) to pay Paul (the past) but merely to foster the lie of the present which, in turn disorients almost simultaneously with its appearance and is lost forever to us. In regions of fantasy the air may be charged with the concurrent existences of the three faces of time as steadfastly increasing in speed. I am not fond of this task in the least. Suffice to say it is some odyssey we are unavoidable and leave it at that. When one discovers that there is simply nothing he can do about certain things it is sometimes easier.}}

\textbf{AN INTERlude}

It was not long after moving into this apartment that late one Thursday night I was awoken from my sleep as the clock squeaked forth the second in a series of five abrasive creaks, each more prominent than the one before it. But the wooden washboard of the hound the only sound to be heard. Out in the kitchen something was aching to be chanted in amongst the garbage. Since obtaining my own home and furnishing it with foods from this vault; and since I moved in with not only roommates, but also a wife, I have consequently acquired a certain domestic fluidity which, although far from being abundant is, nonetheless, a vast improvement over my previous lack of it. The machinations of marriage necessity dictates, resolve themselves in compromise or more exactly, in a mutually composed set of priorities and tasks. It soon became evident that it was incumbent upon me to carry the garbage out to its pick-up place, thus establishing the first link in the chain of garbage. I would carry the garbage out into that broad-shouldered network of bicycles, trucks and engines who, in turn, transport it all to the local incinerators. And all for two dollars a month. As for my part in the purification pageant I may honestly say that the garbage is carried out more efficiently than it ever was. And for one whose services were volunteered for him, I think that is sufficient. So between the hours of ten and midnight you were to look over from the rear alley that runs parallel to our street, and with it the boundaries of our yard, odds are favorable that you will see me on my way either to or from the domicile of both. Rather you will hear me slumping through the darkness past the rear hedges of a barn now horse for bats, weeps, field mice and stray animals, struggling against a surging nausea precipitated by the refuse which is being pressed forth just beneath my mouth, and the constant sound of the water draining off from a creaked trunk of tum and noodles. (The tum was so bad had the milk, pepper and jockey shells, that I realized that I had forgotten to take out the garbage. The notion to redress solely for removing one or quite likely a bag of refuse could have found approval only in the mind of a fanatic. But somehow the idea of leaving it there until morning was a vaguely annoying one. The question of what to do was soon being rendered moot by the good humor which the evening had left me with. I and I was not on the verge of either.) So it was put into the refrigerator for left-overs but was never used, and finally for gotten. I rediscovered one day giving off an odor not quite like that of a dead pet which in its pure essence is devoid of all the contaminating odors of a closed car for the month of August.) The smell of garbage struggling invincibly increases as the liquid begins to ooze into my hands and legs, and to make mischief. The garbage is put on the table and it slowly gives way. The whole process requires about five minutes, the time being performed to a record which is sound became utterly despair. There still remain for me few things more idiosyncratic than dragging a mass of garbage and equip-ment out into some field in order to take one's meal amid a flurry of flies, mosquitoes, gnats, wasps, ants and the like. Correspond-ingly I was not about to encourage their presence in my kitchen. But the noise which "woke me this morning was not one be- longing to any insect, be he of the air, water or land."

It was a sporadic, scratching sound that brought my wife and I to our senses; and knowing the resolution with which even the most insignificant of bugs leaves me, you can imagine my disgust when I realized that not only was there a rodent in the next room, but it was right above my head. I was a little startled. So I said to my wife, "I'm not going out there alone." And so we, the both of us, (marriage being a part of the family) stilled into our robes and crept towards the scraping which immediately stopped as I turned on the light. Then I made my way cautiously towards the table making a low, barely audible growl intended to make the mouse aware of my position, so that he decided to Bolt he would do so in the opposite direction. When I had made myself comfortable at the table I found that it was resting on one of the chairs that came with it, forming one of those charming delights which are invariably more amusing as pictured in the catalogue, and picked it up into the garbage. Without any qualms about it with saucers thus: "Oh, you big bug", and, "Do you want money to hold your head?" It occurred to the fact that she was watching the work of a strategist. I might also add that the three hew pigs, one of them, shot was the fact that the rodent, friend of the rest of the men, are rather familial. Even those charming squirrels to which people show delight in giving pennies carry diseases with them. She would have found it a source of great annoyance if I had had; it would have had to rush off to the emergency ward for a tetanus shot at five a.m. However, there was no mouse to be found in the garbage. I was correct in assuming it safe to remove the table. Even the smile of one whose theories have been proven in fact, I was in the process of dis- mind when the noise started up again. Laughing merrily my wife pointed to an envelope and said, "The poor thing's got himself trapped." As was indeed the case; although it is still an enigma to me why it wanted in the bag, or how it got there. The cause was too obvious, as was the cure. My wife ran upstairs to get a needle and thread. While I was desperately trying to come across a funny newspaper story to read, I did no more than mutter, "Oo look how tiny he is," and to the mouse itself, "Aren't you a little cute?", until the vermin scaled the
"PUBLIC SALE OF TOOLS, HOUSEHOLD GOODS AND VALUABLE ANTIQUES"

October noon.
Damp ground
The sun disappeared.
Lightheartedly, they stepped on the grass
As if it were the freshly sodded grave
No.
The bodies have long since been taken
From the house
And dropped beneath the sod
Beneath the frost line.
Then they pressed and pulled
Felt and fumbled
Slowly and in rushing
And took their places on the grass.
They shifted their weight
From foot to foot
And moved closer
To the pickings
And waited.

Friends call up at night
And say “I miss you.”
“I miss you too,” I say
Able stable friend
How can you be lonely
“Come on Saturday,” he says
But the emptiness is not the same
As on the phone
Next time
I will say “I miss you”
Hang up the phone
And leave
Not waiting for Saturday

Muddy shoes climbed on top
Of a battered stool.
Which sank into the ground,
Protecting him from the cold
That poured upward
From below
And outward from the empty doors
And silent chimney;
“Terms cash; pay the clerk inside.”
They shifted closer
To the back of the yard
To the male materialized
In wood and iron.
Steel.
Now down the sides
Around
Under the clothes line
Where both were realized
In mattress and mobcap
Then closer to the female
Fused in clay and linen
Silver.
From the porch the last piece
Found a new hand
A second hand
A third.
The gestures and shouts are gone
And the quiet whispers
And the clerk inside.
The ground is colder now.
A few fragments remain
Unwanted reminders
A house divided
Scattereth.
Stands
Like a hollow monument to life
While nothingness creeps across
The trampled grass.

Sandra Shelly

MEMORIAL FOR A GREY DAY

Today it rained.
I opened my eyes to Illinois skies
And saw the great grey expanse,
Torn and bleating.
I settled shivering in my damp skin
Dissolute in December and lost amid
Lofty presences.
Between our progress are vacant lots
And faded clothes.
Matted as grass or straw.
Numb upon the still soil.
And my soul is being smothered
In the great wet cloth of Chicago.

R. Gibb

BERKS COUNTY

Autumnal shadow shows are among us
As we move to rendezvous amid the leaves,
Flocked green and fallen as seed.
From a cantilevered wound, thrice denied,
I have sung through colder and sought shelter
Beneath these limbs.
In greener days I have persisted towards October
To prevail over brother and fly, leaf
And the long slow tempo of Nature’s final Waltz.
The flies are dancing downwards to smoke
Of signal fires, and collecting on windowills.
To stir to warmth and settle again.
A fortnight in autumn we shall wear masks
And dance.

R. Gibb

THE OUTER BANKS

He came groaning down around the sea.
Torn to tide among the dunes
He fought the maze of nautiluss
Riddled past pine and the dark sandhills.
The ache that moves beyond the nerve
Moved the man along the shore.
Among the folds of rigid forms
Of help gone dry and brittle shell.
The squid’s propulsion sought the shore
And found the sand to die upon.
Nothing is left to want.
The trace of movement,
The music of crabs.

R. Gibb
Three shadows
on a narrow staircase
Climbing up
Going up
to find a warm welcome
from cold night
Three figures
escape a sweeping rain
Two sleep
One is yet awake
and will not sleep
Tonight

Morning is tomorrow
but from this night
knows no distinction
Three figures
came up the stairs
but only one
descends
Into the street
and the night
the shadow stumbles
Fog and mist fill alley
and soft rain
falls noiselessly

Alone, indifferent
the shadow is a statue
and watches

Night sounds
pierce the darkness
to reach a distant ear
Rain-wet streets
reflect the filtered light
from street lamps

No stars
only a deep gray shroud
and no moon
Now a mind wanders
and the body moves
but need not
Behind closed doors
are sheltered minds
and sleeping people

Outside, wandering
a restless spirit
wonders at the world
Dead leaves in the gutter
accept the wetness
of the night storm

The shadow moves
and is enveloped
by a hungry night
A cemetery
accepts the wrath
of a wrathful night
No lovers tonight
will lie down
amidst this death
No one will come
to pierce
the persisting peace and gloom
Tonight

Rhythmic rain
is now the only sound
for the shadow

Alone
The shadow shares
this night
with no one

It is cold and wet
and almost lonely
in the spring.

Too cold
and too wet
and now too lonely

The shadow is gone
and no one here
has seen him leave.

The shadow retreats
but the lone sound
is patterned rain
A warm body
is now an enemy
Tonight

There is now the sound
of hard breathing
close behind the rain
The shadow rests
invisible
in the corners
avoiding the street light
Wet nights are cruel
to shadows
out alone

Now this shadow
seeks the shadows
but finds them breathing

The ghost retreats
and tears are tears
and tears are rain
Close and silent
the night grows old
and the rain stops
The night smells clean

and there is no sound
only loneliness
The day will break
with no sun
only gloom
Our shadow returns
and climbs the stairs
alone.
The two with him
are still sleeping
and the room grows light

Daniel K. White

ALL THE FAMILIAR FACES

three flights of stairs (at least 45 steps)
a decrepit railing along the way
avoid the fallen plaster
a hand in empty pocket (except for key)
open the door quickly (limits the creaking)
hand goes for light switch
eyes close at sudden brightness
close the window (dust is stirring too much)
untie shoelaces (silent prayer they don't break)
hang sweated shirt outside
hand brushes through gray hair
open frayed belt (needs another hole)
meeting him again tonight (almost everynight)
doesn't greet me with a smile anymore
over by the washbowl he waits
i have to wash (walking makes me sweaty)
five steps to the bowl (seems like more)
stand tall so he can see all of you
he also needs a shave

Don't say a word (tired of excuses)
making fun again (minces my every move)
especially the long face
he looks tired
midnight starts the day (rather sleep at night)
should i apologize (i owe him at least that)
would be kind of trivial
if i'd laugh he'd laugh back
bad actor though (we both know that)
a question mark surrounded by glass
fears of approaching destruction
tomorrows being tossed like stones
and the question mark might shatter

Kalman Morris

making fun again (minces my every move)
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Robert Ruhe
THE TREE

Oscar Wharton was a curious sight to watch as he shuffled down the street in that quaint half-gait of his that is so rightfully reserved for the aged. His pallid countenance continually wore an expression of indifference, almost aloofness, as if his spirit couldn’t be troubled with such mundane matters as the secular. But in truth, Oscar’s spirit was much troubled, for he was that rare specimen of a human being who dared to look at his soul, and the blackness that he saw springing from that well of life would, at times, cause his tempestuous spirit to roar with anguish, which he strangely bore alone. So it becomes apparent that it wasn’t really justifiable to depict Oscar’s soul as predominantly aloof for, in fact, it was the outward expression of a man who was making every concerted effort inside to quell this restless, mendacious spirit which possessed him. He was alone. Alone in his horribly acute self-perception. Alone in the material world.

Oscar’s excursion carried him to city park as he was wont to do at this time of day. After a careful scrutiny of the several vacant park benches, for he had a distinct aversion to sitting among the pigeons droppings, he seated himself and contemplated the decaying elm that immediately affronted him. "You, old wizened elm, you have stood starkly for many decades silently observing the folies of mankind of which, I am loath to admit, I eagerly was a part. But, to what avail, I shall surely die just the same and all my strivings, baneful hopes, unresolved fours will die with me. I have affected no one or no thing, which is the source of my constant anguish. And now, now it’s too late, for my spirit and appendages are as cumbersome to me as your withering limbs are to you. I had lived in bliss, Tree. Lived in the uppermost realm of the superficiality of this world. But then, by a strange quirk of Fate (for I cannot bear the responsibility), I was compelled to look at my soul and was driven off of my cloud."

With this, the old man rose and approached the tree, noticeably distressed and trembling. In sudden desperation he chanced his lists and vehemently, in utter defiance, shook them at the tree tops crying: "Give me peace! I demand of you! Give me peace! Return me to my former disposition for I’m locked in my soul!"

Quivering, the old man fell to his knees, shoulders slouched and head bowed. His dirty brown felt hat fell before him, upturned in the pile of dead leaves. Drunken, the old man abjectly fell to the base of the once stately elm. His prostrate form lay unmoving. The following day, found among the coroner’s reports, was listed the name:

Oscar Wharton
Age 87
121 Sheredin Drive
No surviving relatives
Probable cause of demise:
Death by Alienation

Gary W. Rubright

But—
I did have a poem
and I cried it away
alone
on the moist earth
of a field
running and burs scratching my ankles
my poem
into
trepid salt water.
I held a daffodil in my hand
squeezed the stem
heard it crunch—
break.
You too can
break stress
touch velvet petals
or
crumble dead yellowness
in your fingers—
So what can I have to say
about daffodils?
Spin words until they pour over into music!
Record
my breathing
and every new breath
makes
glorious growth.

Tracy Greth

But
there
is no growing,
maybe the sun’s in today.
just paper tears
no better
than salt water
drifting on wind
that happened to pass
the courtyard window.
rustling little tears
for children
to walk through
to hear them crunch
to laugh and play
and throw dead leaves
into the air
of springtime.
Three,
origin from a same,
trunk place.
One but a shadow,
too soon arrived at what old men fear.
Sunlit days,
golden hills,
he, I, together,
searching.
I for games,
he for . . .
Long talks about soft things
that cry in the night,
about hard things that—
took him from soft things . . . . forever.

Another, like a dream,
visited but never known.
Never reached,
ever touched,
gone
but to return,
to leave again.

The third?
ever himself, but lost
in what he never had.
Days spent
feeling
reaching
crying out
for
forever.

Mike Cawthray