

The Catalyst

Literary Supplement

Vol. 3 No. 1

Edited by William Hedrington

Nov 21, 1968

Silver-splotched Virtue & Blooded Apomixis

Concerned neither with destroying the legacy of virtuous Calderwell girls which had been preserved since 1866 when Virginia Stanfield was born and which remained Stanfield until Miles and Morgan Stanfield left no male descendants while their sister who had married Henry Claderwell bore two girls, the first of the Calderwell girls even though Henry was not their father, and three boys, nor with tarnishing the virtue of Anne Calderwell in particular who was the eldest of this generation's Calderwell daughters and therefore the most responsible, he was nevertheless pushed to pursue those goals by his uncle who was a Jacksmith and who told Ben that he too was a Jacksmith, in name and blood. His uncle who was already perverse but who besides that had been sold by Jed Calderwell two half-dead pigs for the price of two live ones and who had seen with his own eyes a bear shot on Calderwell land out of season that his own dogs had run, told him in as many words that he would give him five thousand cash if Anne Calderwell were to become pregnant with Jacksmith blood without becoming a Jacksmith, destroying what Calderwell men lived for first, money was second, the legacy.

So when Ben Jacksmith went to call he was driving his uncle's car with a bottle of his uncle's bourbon whiskey and two paper cups under the front seat and he was wearing a striped suit bought with his uncle's money, not part of the five thousand cash, with a list written by his uncle in the handkerchief pocket telling him where to go and when to do it and how. Jed Calderwell invited him in and offered him a drink of bourbon whiskey and he said yes but Mrs. Calderwell came in and said he shouldn't drink if he was going to drive, should he Jed? but Jed said one wouldn't hurt and then Anne Calderwell came down the stairs. Damn Uncle Jimmy all to hell, this isn't going to be easy, he muttered to himself.

He took her outside and put her in the car pausing around back to spit the taste of her sight out of his mouth; he knew she was going to be ugly but now he was close to her and would inevitably be closer and the thought repulsed him, it made him taste each red pimple and each roll of fat under her chin, made him want to gag at the sight of her. But he went through with it. He drove into town and they saw the movie, they danced and drank in the Blue Lake Lounge, and he drove to his Uncle Jimmy's cow pasture where they drank the bottle and he said, "I only did that because my Uncle Jimmy's paid me five thousand, Jesus Christ you're ugly" but she was drunk too and couldn't hear, she only moaned and pulled her skirt down and he was so sick when he drove away that he missed the sight of his Uncle Jimmy running after the car with his pants half down.

II

"Were you rough with her?" his uncle asked at lunch the next day.

"She wanted me to," he said. "She wanted me to do everything but I got it over quick."

"She better get pregnant."

"She's got my blood in her," he said. "Can't tell if it took. Don't care either."

"Either way I expect I'll be getting a visit from Jed Calderwell. She'll say something sure."

"She liked it though," Ben said. "She liked the whiskey too."

"I didn't think she'd do so easy," Uncle Jimmy said. "Was she good?"

"She's ugly as sin," Ben said.

"Finish your lunch," Uncle Jimmy said. "I'm expecting a visitor."

He was sitting in the sun near the barn watching his cows in the pasture and drinking old-fashioned when Jed Calderwell came. "Your Ben's knocked up my Anne," he said and Ben's Uncle Jimmy said what, are you sure she's pregnant? and he leaned back in his chair looking too relaxed and Jed Calderwell knew right then what had happened and why so he just said they're getting married Saturday. He said to make sure Ben's there because if he isn't he'll find out what'll happen and then he said don't feel bad, you're not losing a nephew, you're gaining a niece so don't feel bad; his Uncle Jimmy knew he knew so he said I don't want any more pigs but Jed refused to be insulted.

"Saturday at one o'clock," he said. "You know what church."

"I'm not going to marry her," Ben said later. "That's final."

"I didn't say you had to marry her," his uncle said slowly. "I just said you got to show up at the church. If you don't the Calderwell boys are apt to shoot you and me both."

"But if I go and don't say the vows they'll shoot me just the same."

"Maybe Anne Calderwell won't show," his uncle said with a grin.

"What're you gonna do?" Ben asked, half-closing his eyes.

"Never mind," his uncle said. "You just do what I tell you."

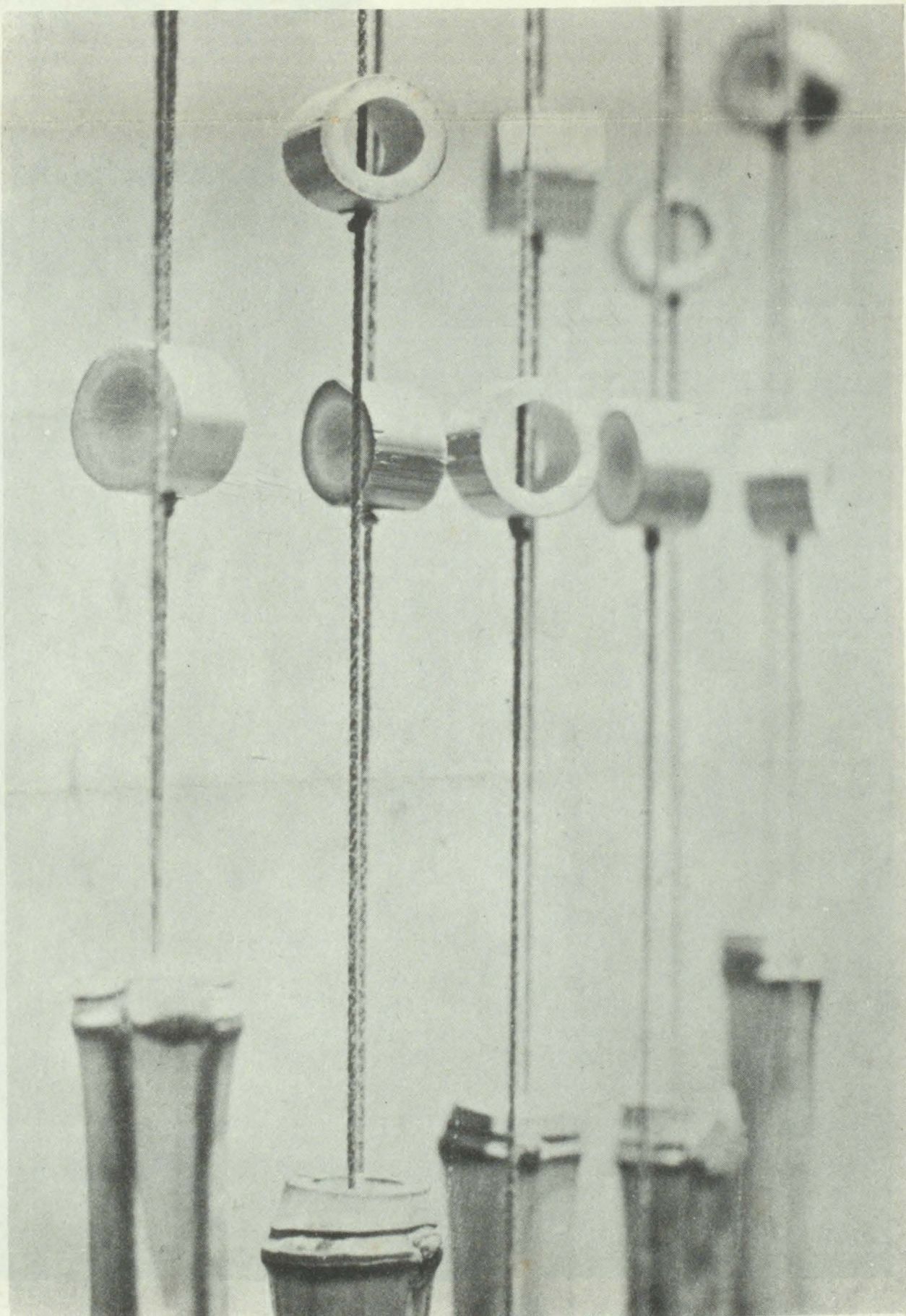
That afternoon his Uncle Jimmy wrote a letter and Ben copied it over in his own hand and signed it and they went to Liz's place in town and his uncle took a picture of him and Jo. Ben enjoyed it.

III

When no Calderwells showed at the church Ben shook Uncle Jimmy's hand; "Your palm's wet," Uncle Jimmy said and Ben said the only part of him that wasn't wet was his throat, and they went to the Blue Lake Lounge to celebrate and to watch the baseball game but then they decided to do something special instead and they couldn't think of anything special except to go to Liz's place but that wasn't too special and besides it was too hot so they went home and found the pigs dead in the driveway. Uncle Jimmy said, "My pigs, goddam," they were lying on the gravel shot through the stomach, their blood soaked between the pebbles, hardened, and blood smell floated quiescently above their bodies, thickening the air, and the air thickened the blood on their wounds. So Uncle Jimmy looked down at the caked blood, at the dead useless pigs that had never been more than half-alive and he said once more. "God-dam," a protest against their hot swollen heads baking in the sun.

(Continued on Page 4)

Photograph by Robert Swartz



Ogunquit

On the Maine-masted shore
Of lobster snares and white-paint sloops,
Slow sea tentacles
Strangle each brown rock.
The gulls, floating and falling,
Mourn the seaweed and ocean corpses-
Shell, feeler, and soft body.
And a blue, brittle-shelled sky
Now closes slowly to the vague, muscular pulse
Of a pale, watery moon.

--AIMEE FISHER

Grandmother

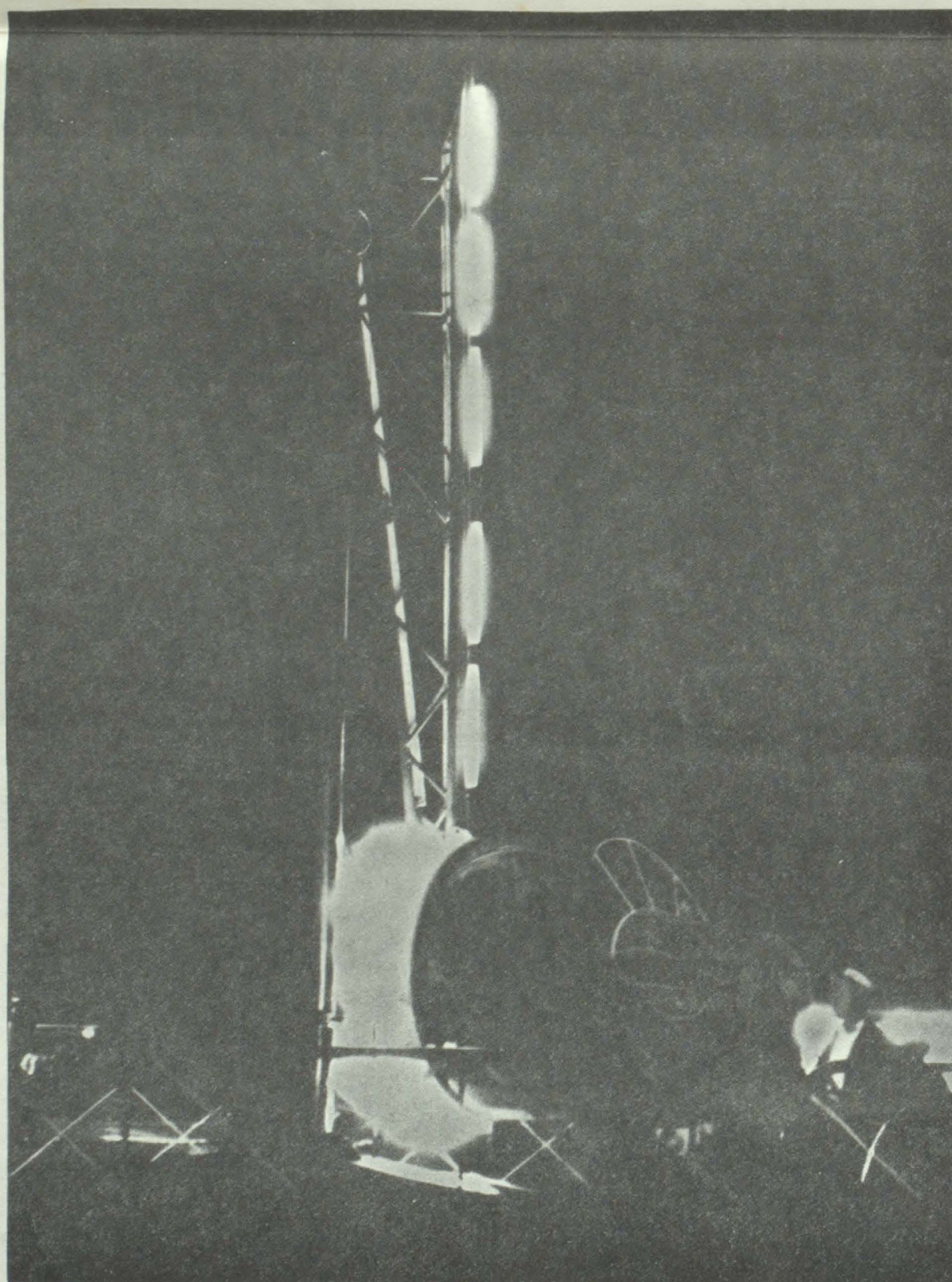
We have forgotten.
Once you held a cricket in your hands
and embroidered your love into pillows.
We have forgotten.
You sway fragile before us,
groping of sightless fish
wounded in caves of sunlight.
No one remembers your body,
arched in a scythe of stars.
Your eyes are vague of light,
whispers of lavender
tremble of moss.
No one feels the ribbons of your veins,
bright in wind and murmuring.
Your mouth is feeble,
stained with rushes,
mutter of frogs.
No one hears the shatter of moonlight
when you smile.
Once you wore your love for a locket
and wove lace into his dreams.
We have forgotten.

--MARY TRIMBLE

Photograph by David Ross



Print by Diana Von Reutter



Sell-out

Colossus of Rhodes: destroyed by earthquake, 224 B. C.
Realized: only recently.

I
Insurance came but once a year,
Just eighty bucks to be secure.
An apple a day kept the doctor away,
And you were mine,
 y~u were mine.
Turning on a human dream,
Dreaming fed on milk and cream,
I acted out a perfect scheme:
(Though there were scars)
(Though there were wars)
I touched the stars!

II
Touched the stars...
Ah, it was I and Dylan Thomas
Stumbling down the rivers of the windfall light,
Sopping our shoes and socks,
And stopping half-way down to take a leak.
Quoth the raven, "Nevertheless."
Quoth the raven, "Neverland."
 I'm Peter Panned.
 We've both been canned.
And she's mine,
 she's still mine,
Spread on bread.

III
Yet, unexpected, perhaps unavoidable,
THE SELLOUT
(in which our hero purchases the only freedom from a
travelling Jewish Britannica salesman at a very
Reasonable price):
Boasting two gold stars
On a perfect spelling paper,
Chrome-plated, brand-name Tin Man of Oz,
Seventh wanderer of the modern world,
King of the Rhodes.

--DAVID ADAMS

Flare

The compressed breath
bound in a tank of oxygen
burst into his face God's Word Flare!
then nothing seeing there.
But, oh, how his face took it,
ingathering all that light,
his eyes used up at once,
his features chopped to scrap,
and all of it an instant Gloria.
Then under the knives and eyes he lay,
lost and found in the light in his face,
while they...
picked out many bits,
left many.
Few of the attendants
thought it was worthwhile.
Even as, in joy, he tried to smile,
they knew what explosion meant,
what really happened that he might not see:
an abrupt, but small,
yet permanent,
increase in entropy.

--WILLIAM HEDRINGTON

Poem 1

There is
-beyond eternity -
A small shack
Deep
in the dark woods
of time.
A gnarled gnome sits
In his dusty, shadowed porch
At the foot of a path
Which winds
slowly, silently
To a waterfall
Which gashes
out of a black cliff----
Roars and thunders
to a turbulent
mile wide lake----
The source of the Styx.
A gnarled gnome
hobbles often
Up a winding path
to catch fish.

--JEFF HERROD

Hymn

I

The Day of the Sun closes behind doors;
Faces chasubled with frowning jowls
Nod ritual greetings. The openness
Inside pushes remembering: Here howls
Of mothers and children, crushed upon floors,

Were left hanging in the morning night.
I touch myself with grief, having felt
The cold sweetness of anointing before.
Here, in these woods, is no laughter dealt
From lip to lip in mythy rite.

The warmth is not mine, nor yours.
The figure whispers over wine the child pours.
And I cannot touch the sun, breathing outdoors.

II

Heads bob and slide, awkward as morning,
Reminiscent of some tremulous obscene dance,
Never touching until the files group by piece.
The day's duties forget the chance
That some, neglected, might be saved, and sing.

The flatness of the ikons shudders the scene
Into angles; Words play-off dull faces
In echoes the coughs cannot snuff out.
The sinner's pride, blatant to Two, erases
Itself by rubbery beads, strung lean.

There is no sun here, I know.
I caught a gasping glimpse at the snow-
White hands of the priest, gesturing no.

III

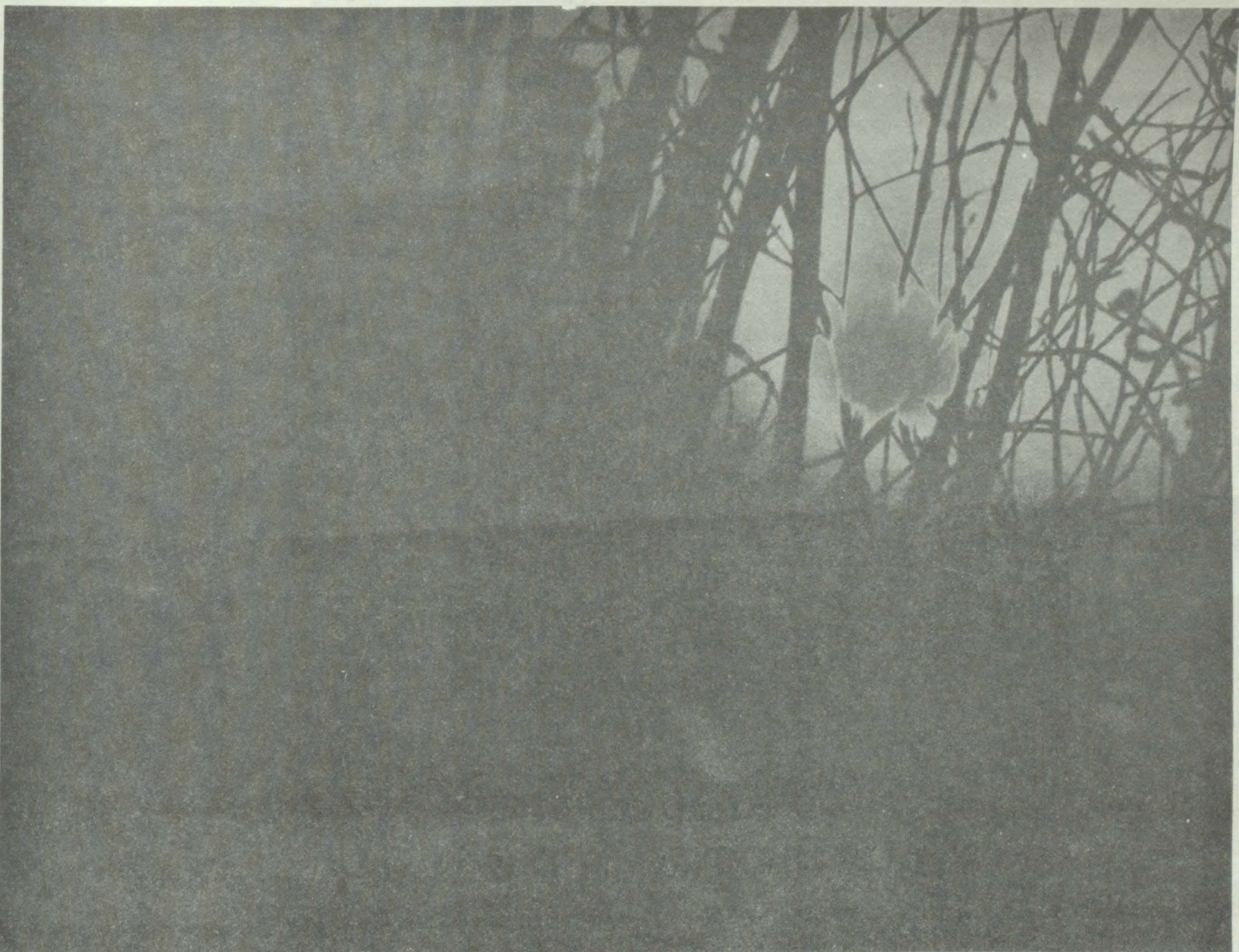
The Body of Christ! it speaks, and
from its hands jewels shine,
polished with blood. A paten
my soul I whisper it is.
The Death of Man dies wearily,
and falls, stained, from its
erection. Dull splinters
are kicked by the dust.
The Words of Men! You have become
that which you signed before.
Now we sit (the sun outside)
and permit your magic to work.

--PAUL ADOMITES



Drawing by Ivan Saxby

Photograph by David Ross





Print by Diana Von Reutter

The Hippie as Pragmatist: Vignettes

Bomb-shelter

Revolution is... a revolving cycle.

Norman O. Brown

The aim of great literature seems to be to create a closed universe or a perfect type. The West, in its great creative works, does not limit itself to retracing the steps of its daily life. It consistently presents magnificent images which inflame its imagination and sets them off, hotfoot, in pursuit of them.

--Albert Camus

(Not to be misunderstood: He with a real hotfoot may be a masochist, a compromiser, a lover or ignorant.)

I

He trained his high power binoculars on the bathing matron, but she was too fast for him and quickly bent over and flashed him a moon. He was sure it was a moon, but all could recall was the guy who was said to have unscrewed his gold belly-button, and it was so mechanical.

"I'm sure it was a moon," he announced to his friends with a gleam in his eye. "And it is June."

But he could tell them no more, and they imagined they understood. It was another dimstore satori.

II

"I am not Superman," admitted Daniel Cohn-Bendit, June 12, 1968. But they knew he was.

"Why I believe your Freudian slip is showing, Mr. C-B," they said rather untactfully.

"Well, I'm sleepy," he shot back, heading for the street and stuffing handfuls of thumbtacks into his pockets to blow the tires when the old Wall-Ass ran over him.

Properly astounded at such fanatic dedication, they all went home to watch commercials, each with the comfort of the omnipresent Clark Kent, always an option.

Virtue

(Continued from Page 1)

"It smells like shet," Ben said, his nephew.

"Quiet, boy." He spat on one of the dead pigs, half-expecting to hear a sizzle, "It's shot in hell," he said, and paced around them in a frenetic rage, walking always faster and faster, swirling through the stale blooded air.

"What're you gonna do?" Ben said.

Uncle Jimmy stopped suddenly. "You can bury the pigs after supper," he said calmly, almost gently. "I'm going to go eat supper."

Before dawn the next morning Uncle Jimmy slid his deer ringle onto the back seat of his car and drove to the edge of the Calderwell fields, grey-brown in the barely light sky, and he loaded the gun and smoked a cigarette, his shoulders shivering in the chilled air. He soughed through the high wet grass, soaking quickly his shoes and pants, to the barn where he creaked the door open and went inside and shone his light on the right back knee of Brown Sugar, Jed Calderwell's prize mare, and he shot the knee point-blank holding his rifle with one hand. "Shoot your mare now, Jed Calderwell," he said to himself, "Shoot your mare like you shot my pigs."

And when he opened the door to the barn full-wide Anne Calderwell was standing in the hay in a yellowed white nightgown looking for all life like a dead arisen ghost, her hair flying in the wind against the background of the purple-red sky and the rising sun, a dead ghost, her face a dank pure white like the belly of a fish, dead, her arms hanging stiffly down holding a shotgun at her hip, death, her bare feet unmoving in a pile of dung, and Jimmy Jacksmith the trespasser had time only to utter a hoarse loud gasp before she pulled the trigger and blew off his right shoulder and half his neck. Anne Calderwell dropped the gun and moaned her mating call to the wind and, trembling and wet, she went back to her cold bed with the warm dung on her feet and Uncle Jimmy's hot blood mixed with the sweet dew on the golden hay.

An eight-pound boy with sparkling light-blue eyes and wispy-thin hair and soft smooth skin the color of pickled pigs' feet was born to Ben and Anne Jacksmith one year to the day after Uncle Jimmy died in his own blood in the stinking barn, dead, dead.

JOHN DOLLAR

III

Psycho-Mouth turned off
The television
And reversed the revolution,
Thought-dream number 15.
The theme was salvation:
"Is it to be resurrection
Or merely re-erection?
The difference (I almost said choice) between penis
and whole body.
Wonder Bread,
Building whole bodies twelve ways.
But is it the same as twelve sheaves or twelve stars
or twelve tribes?
To interpret or leap into the dream,
Flashing, crashing vision
In a dark movie house?
'Man shall not live by bread alone,' says the Anus,
attempting to entice us to gold dubloons and black
beards.
'The Jolly Roger is death--but we cannot die,' claims
the Phallus, attempting to entice us into Piracy
and Souls.
We must of course face up to Feces;
We must of course face up to policemen, diplomats,
governments, churches.
We have been told to make dough, that money is bread.
It is a lie.
Bread is the body. 'This is my body.'
Wonder Bread.
Take, eat."

--DAVID ADAMS

Theater

The tired summer theater in the round
Folds up, closes down,
Packs away its disarray of props--
inflatable, flood-proof rainbow,
washed-out, weepy eyed clouds,
plastic bags of sudden showers.
They rake up the dead confetti leaves
And the withered stacks of playbills,
And lock the make-up box--
one chin of whiskery grass,
and the green lily-pad eyepatch
the pool used to wear.
And even the summer-striped hornets
Seem to have lost their sting.

--AIMEE FISHER

When the clock broke, it was over.
Until its tinny cardiac, we'd managed,
one set against the other, to advance.
I threw it on the cans, north corner.
I stayed for what I think were three more days.
White noise on the radio. No change.
The bulb alone could not make day and night.
When walls became a problem, I got out.
I had to break the door. It is a day.
It still looks like it looked like when it hit.
The sea turned gray and silver as hacked lead.
The sky was sick and blank.
The wind collapsed with sound and then was done.
My face was white and black, my brain a ball of worms.

--WILLIAM HEDRINGTON

Divorce, Easter Sunday

Then, as even now, the light swirling lace
Of her last little girl's Easter was held to dangle
Hot and flickering before him, and he kneeled, then,
To feel her lip tremble, and to hold, that Sunday,
The organdy and ribboned morning of all her girlhood,
while it
Crinkled and melted in his hands.
Oh, then his touch moved backward through his finger-
tips
Like blood flowing warm from that moment, and
He felt the quivering curve of her lip and
Molded it in place as a sculptor, as a lover, might.
This, the touch of her father's mute leaving, was
Flame between them, burning and hollowing her life
Like the morning, and she, the daughter of his mar-
riage,
Squeezed his hand and knew, as now, the hurt that
Burns in daylight and speaks without words. He left her
With his kiss, and holding her charred girlhood
Like a coal, knew once again the flame, like birth, that
Burned in his hand. Then, as forever, they stood
Naked and new in the morning of all her girlhood,
Naked and new in the morning of that Easter, she
With ribbon at her feet, and he the bearer
Of fire, his first-born a girl.

--HUGH PARKER

Print by Rebecca Brandenburg

