Oblivion Calling
for Philip Guston

Daily News

There is a man who lives next to me, in this building, and he listens to his radio a good deal.
Not late at night, or continually, but day by day. He listens consistently, at morning, at night; he doesn't listen to much music; he seems to enjoy narration.
He always listens to the news.
At five thirty a station has a fifteen minute newssbreak followed by a weather report; at five forty five another station has a fifteen minute newscast, and at six another station has their news program until six fifteen; then another station has a fifteen minute news analysis. And he listens morning and night, to the news of the day; an analysis by a man with a dramatic name and dramatic voice.
I can't hear what they analyze, or even what news there is.
The muffled voices through the wall are all I hear, except for an occasional footfall and the rare sound of his door, opening and closing as he comes and goes, and late at night, his sleeping voice, crying a long and heartfelt moan, an unintelligible message, for someone.
The Dog-People

There is a young man who lives on the floor below mine; he lives beneath me, in fact.
To discover that he lived beneath me I saw him, once, step out of his door. I said, "If I ever get too noisy, rap on the ceiling." He smiled wanly, and said noise didn't bother him.
One winter night a man had gotten into the building and was screaming and beating on a woman's door. It woke everyone; I heard all the bolts shoot in. I opened the door and stepped out into the hallway, and looked over the banister down to the floor below and I saw a man asleep on the hall floor with his back against a red door. All the doors are red.
I went back inside and got into bed.
Later, in the night, I heard a great bellowing; I was afraid, but I got out of bed and dressed because I felt I had to do something, something, and I went downstairs hearing loud male voices and noises and then a final shout; I turned into view.
It was the young man; his face was raw and blotched and he was outside, on the sidewalk while the housekeeper held the door, and the young man said to two cops, who held the man who had slept by the red door.
"Take him away, he's drunk and obnoxious."
The cops shook the man a little and the young man watched with a raw and twisted smile. I went back up the stairs and into my room; I looked the door wearily and got in bed.
I lay on my back and the large night of the city passed westward and gradually became light and I heard noises of buses and trucks and distant voices. Six to six fifteen to six thirty; I have gotten to know those fifteen minute intervals as the buses come toward my corner.
It was at that time, when I heard the backfire of the bus moving toward me, I clearly saw the gray outline and bulk of city profile out my window, heard the bus coming down 14th Street; I closed my eyes and was almost asleep when I heard a rasping, out my window, a gentle rasping sound, rasping as a slipper, or a glove turning paper. I sat up and listening; it continued. And then, I heard a door slowly open, and I heard a clear voice call into the courtyard, call to someone, and plead, pleading like the dog-people plead, begging and imploring; it was oblivion calling, and pleading, come, aw come on, pleading, craving.
King-of-Crystal

As I went along the corridor of the top floor of this building, the music got louder and louder, and I noticed one of the doors, one of the red doors, was open. I glanced in.

He was in there; old man with child's voice, in his room on his cot, head-facing the door, those rotten teary green eyes of his, settled in their sockets like lime jello behind both sides of his frozen nose above that mouth like a smashed straw; he was bent like an exhausted gargoyle, listening to his screaming radio.

The music blasted through the building, he was slumped in front of the screaming radio on that filthy shelf behind his head, god-like in place, part of the mess and age and gone time, if he moved it would too on his string skid and slip forward while music raged on, until almost obscenely distracted it would stumble and topple off the shelf land face down on his cot, shriek into the mattress until He returned, Stumble, Master, ah King-of-Crystal, return, put back, dear.

-- Fielding Dawson

FOR SYLVIA

it's so simple
standing there
in full view
wearing a slip
& ballet slippers
hair pulled back
to let the summer air
cool her nape
washing the dishes
we just ate from
mumbling a song
her hips swaying
thru the silk
when she bends over
I don't know how
I used to eat alone
A WILD FLOWER

the daisy
the sun
so dependent
darker cored
blazing
white corona
moves
demanding so
little
simply
open
your eye

MY BELOVED/THE BEE TREE/THE WHORE

y they come and go
and come again
some replaced by others
to my beloved/the bee tree/the whore

the bear and the farmer
await their chance
as the bees work
their lust and innocence inseparable
all hunger

-- Tony Weinberger
A GRACE FOR PAINTERS

for Philip Guston

where you are there are chairs, some you can sit in feeling the fibre of the chair itself, some there is

a red throw pillow, it might be uncomfortable, i have been in those situations, it looks lovely, you end up moving it vertically to the side, or discarding it altogether. on some chairs it works.

and my father discussing the possible move to an apartment, what do they need a house, just my father, mother, aunt, says i might want his old easy chair, my mother says it breaks your behind, my father says he might like it nevertheless, a wise man, i haven't had an easy chair in ten years now.

and in the sleeper there is a white streak dimly seen somewhere in the middle of the painting more to the bottom than the top, i said there is hope, and joe: yeah, open it up.

he laughed, the painters, he said, only see the colors.

however, even the alchemist is sitting on a chair, he needs perhaps the steady support in his search for the secret, perhaps we all need that chair bob was talking about, oh no, perhaps we will find out.
a secret semantics of the soul, then,
in which chairs figure as a place you
could sit down, and there is. perhaps,
a hassock in front of each one, for
those with bad legs, the legs go first,
as jiggs with his gout stretches out
his casted leg upon it, the ease is
evident.

and pillows for your head at
night. God give you grace as the
bottle sits upon the table, or the
cup, as the table stands beside the
chair, as all eight legs descend and
rest, firmly, upon the ground we
deal with, as the paintings sit, themselves
upon the canvas there before us.

I have entered into a world where crimson
becomes an entity I believe in.

-- Joel Oppenheimer

"statement" for Paterson Society

a statement of what? stand, perhaps closer or not. however,
perhaps as a lighthouse stands, then, that is, the fixed position,
the stones are built up, the breakwater's out to keep off the waves
might destroy the foundation, there are such, always; the light
keeps going around and around, uncovers, within its field what's
there to be seen; opposition, a flashlight, you're poking around,
that's another way.

what crosses my ears, basically, turns me on, triggered as it were,
a sound, a phrase might do it, pushing into action some response,
which if it makes sense, is a poem.

if it makes sense, i.e., that ought to be part of it, and the care,
that I'm not putting my hands where they can't do anything, and
not laying them on too hard, where they can.

do anything, yes, certainly, at base a craft we all keep learning
about, our tools, all of them, when and how to use them, so natur-
al, you don't even think about it any more.

and if you're lucky, the poem emerges 'like a tulip easter morning'

-- Joel Oppenheimer
What Am I Going To Do after The King and Queen of Nepal

What am I going to do after the King and Queen of Nepal leave the house across the street?
Mahendra and Ratna are eating Kentucky grass soup with the Colonel and his lady while 8 blue-coated cops mind the sidewalk

What am I going to do after they drive away in their Cadillacs and go back to Blair House and compare notes?

They have never read my poem about the Himalayas, they have never been told my Jodphur and pony dream, they don't know what I think about the Communist envoy with bags and bags of yen slapping donkey flanks on the way to Lookout Reach in Highest Oldest Kingdom

Whenever I regard that "Georgian" lintel over there and I'm watching it through my St. John Perse eyes while the white cat called "Duchess" howls at the curb, I think I am about to see the gold coat of Vishnu appear and descend while pellets and pellets of gold fall from his mouth and his ears and his laugh raises a cloud of gold dust and the chauffeurs cough and the cat dies suddenly on the sidewalk from the beautiful poison on her fur and I look in my mirror so that I can see two embroidered descending Vishnus and two queens then

Zoom the motorcade
Zoom King Mahendra Zoom Queen Ratna
Zoom almond sari retinue

However there's a coin left in the gutter escaped by Hindu miracle the newsmen and I'm going to take it to New York to Frank O'Hara who's just written he's low on pocket charms, so I'll meet him at the Seagram Building where we'll crown ourselves with the gold band of a whisky bottle and sit in the bronze wasp shade and tell stories all the rest of the day

-- Barbara Guest
"footnote" to Creeley's Graph

Pound's insistence is rather, is it not, that we need be willing to dissociate ideas? Creeley shifts the center a little by glozing "dissociate" as "separate those living from those dead," though one can admit his definition as a corollary of the original principle, without pretending that it is the whole story. For the sake of clarity, we can go to De Gourmont's basic essay on dissociation, enshrined in 1921 in an "authorized translation" by William Bradley:

"There are two ways of thinking. One can either accept current ideas, just as they are, or undertake, on his own account, new associations or, what is rarer, original dissociations...of ideas (or of images, for the idea is merely a worn-out image)... The intelligence capable of such efforts is, more or less, according to the degree, or according to the abundance and variety of its other gifts, a creative intelligence...."

"The cliche is immediately perceptible. The commonplace very often escapes notice if clothed in an original dress...."

"It was not until fairly late that the Greeks succeeded in separating the idea of woman and that of generation; but they had already dissociated, at a very early date, the idea of generation and that of carnal pleasure." (pp. 3-13 of Allen & Unwin edition of Decadence).

The ellipses that I have permitted myself to join these paragraphs are considerable, and the reader should be referred to the entire essay "The Dissociation of Ideas" before he assumes that my presentation is the whole story. Creeley's graph was an interesting and valuable service, and I hope that he will pardon the inscrutability of a footnote.

-- William McNaughton

NOTICE:
Extra copies of Floating Bear #3, Ed Dorn's The Landscapes Below are available @ 35c.
Yugen 7, Dorn's The Newly Fallen, Oppenheimer's The Dutiful Son are all available from Totem Press, 324 East 14 Street.
The Trembling Lamb has Artaud, Carl Solomon & LeRoi Jones & is distributed by Phoenix Bookshop, 18 Cornelia Street.
The Floating Bear needs money for paper & postage.