The Beautiful Day

the simplest pleasure is getting high
in the afternoon with 2 fertile women:
i take the peacock feathers (they have eyes
in them) & pass them along the small
of H's back. she says, 'o, i can't even feel
them. they seem to float.

the shadows in the room have such a weight.
they seem to float / a weight down the lids.
my weight of emotion rises slyly against L's thigh
as a thin wave of shadows breaks over us.
(the sound, from the roof, of thursday
turning over)

just how thick is love & what
does it weigh? less than a feather?

& does it have eyes?
the second beautiful day

I was, then, 2 men,
then, not quite a man
& showed myself to
both girls, d & j
each
sd they saw me (it was you
i saw, ab)
from their bed
& in a different door
d thought, that was no shadow
i saw move. j saw a light
clear thru me
but they kept it secret
& talked abt children

so I knocked!
& that they cdnt ignore
he's here sd d
as she opened the door
for me

& goddamn it was weird in there!
all their girls hangups grey
floating arnd the white walls
like food in the air. like

I was stumbling arnd in yr 2
dreams, I told them
not a pleasant place
at all
the beautiful day, III

the red air made such a light in the window
you'd've thought from the outside the
building was burning

as love ignites the air. as the skin shines

as my fingers caught in your shorthair. my tongue
was a bleeding fish

& my dick was a fish

that's why i say to you imagine the page is an obscene house i invite you to

the beautiful day, IV

up & down, in & out, round &

which way do you go, hugo
& how do you know?

from the window i watch you turn
& go. it is snowing.

you are so white you vanish into the ground

up & down. the softest ice in town.
the beautiful day, V

he went
to the window.
it folded & shrank.

quietly, & without warning
them, night leaked into the
room, into the 'idea' of the group.

how easy it is to lie
to you. what a soft
lie your silence is,

she moved closer
to the window, night
shifted & sank.

came down from the sky &
settled
- on my eye. this
is what snow
does. there
you go, an object
of snow
the day
melts into water.
The Beautiful Day VII

the wild man broke into the room where she cringed like a child in a corner. 'the crew' was also there, bravely watching, their faces sopping up the air. he screamed, "say one word & die!!" his hand crushed her two lips together to assure she didn't. her scream went back in. then, when all was moss & fresh linen he licked the blood from her lips.

-- a.b. spellman
LES ENFANTS DU PARADIS

hills that were green
wear grey, what
else in stone but
the strain; and no song
to penetrate.
:what relation has
managed to relate
itself/today:
and your mind
what's been done, there, lately

our mime has white face
but no flower, a girl
pulls forward and wld touch
project- then quick.

audience,
a swelling cafe, and
as a finale
the deliberate surge
of a /festive/ crowd
acutely mental

she relates and the strain
is like stone.

the image flashes
then seems to linger
as if by magic
it had been truth.

--Joe Early
COMMENTS ON MONTAGE

(For refs see Eisenstein's FILM FORM)

I.

Using the concept of cinematic montage as a poetic mechanics, it is possible to infer the following as suggested techniques:

1. Basic reconstruction of the event or action in montage fragments: both single words and more complex word/combination/images.
2. Final reconstruction by means of the collision of images and the conflict of their different and separate elements.
3. Determination of the basic images by "free accumulation of associative matter"(SE). That is, a controlled (edited) complex of ideas, words, images: none of which is particularly related to another, except in that COLLISION is possible, thereby producing montage and the intellectual whole of the poem.

Chinese ideograms are formed from 2 or more "purely depictive hieroglyphs" (SE).

"A very important aspect of the poetic form was the way in which words were constructed by setting two separate images side by side, which together suggested a third." And "In spite of the concreteness of the individual images, the total effect of the poetry is extremely abstract, removed from the particular accidents of time and place." Nicholson in FIREFLY IN THE NIGHT: A Study of Ancient Mexican Poetry and Symbolism.

II.

Assuming that the poet is concerned with reconstructing (Kelly says "transforming" - there is a distinction) an event, personality, graphic image, aural experience or any combination of these, he will "verbalize that consciousness (as distinct from his original experience of it) ... offer pictures to represent thoughts." (Ciardi).

The poet must obviously exercise the same control over the images that a film editor does over separate lengths of film, composing a sequence or scene. He must edit: select what comes automatically or sub-consciously in reference to the subject at hand and arrange it in some hyper-conscious order. (The pure automatic poetry of the Surrealists is generally unacceptable as true creativity. The advantage to it, and to any cultivated sense of the automatic, is the vivid, startling imagery which often may result: but without adequate controls?"

If the poetic reconstruction is made with fragments from consciousness (indeed, sub-consciousness) and the fragments combined into a montage, the montage will gain complexity with each new "sequence" in collision with the last and the next, and the poem will be one purely of images. (Kelly makes somewhat the same point).

The poem resulting from this construction can be narrative or descriptive in form, or can be ONLY a montage, one highly complex whole, as free from considerations of time and space as its images are.
III.

Direct verbalization of words and images evoked by the experience provoking the poem does not preclude CONTROL. Assuming the innate control when the poem is initially set down, the first revision controls the image material by line-construction, punctuation, etc.

Delineation and Structure of Lines: the line is a complex image, not a single one. It can exist also as a single image, but that image must bounce off the preceding image (line) dynamically.

Punctuation: or the lack of it, plus the separation of lines into verses gives the poem certain linguistic properties and heightens the image material. The poet's personal language characteristics should dictate not only the shape of the line-image but the tone (texture) of the punctuation.

Technical Devices: alliteration, assonance, consonance, rime etc used as taste and intuition dictate.

Other Controls: intuition will offer better choices of words, simple images, will point out the necessity to expand or condense. It is the final governing control.

IV.

Kelly says "transformation" and I use the word "reconstruction" in much the same context. I believe that transformation is the RESULT of the poem, obvious to the reader, but not the only consideration of the poet with his material.

That which caused the poem is fragmented in the mind into images. The fragments are reconstructed by means of a montage, thus effecting the transformation.

1. Cause ("inspiration" event etc)
2. Fragmentation (over a period of time)
3. Reconstruction (with image-fragments)
4. Revision (of 1st draft and succeeding drafts)
5. Finished poem - new experience - transformation - new reality

--David Ossman

ALTAR

She sits that
morning star upon my
lowest window pane proud
as would any Venus
The birds, meanwhile,
are making busy with
their chirps of
hosannas
such consideration for the
on-coming light.

--Steve Jonas
Crouching in my arms against this old army shirt, breathing the tin taste of my day's sweat, she says nothing and concerns herself with her precarious balance, the tightwire she walks from fleshcage to fleshcage.

This is her scene, and it is quite right among the bongos sounding through the wall,

John the Lush pounding badiffs on a borrowed drum, splintered, frenetic, out on the slippery edge of dementia,

And up the airshaft sounding the toilet-edge vomit of a nameless drunk, Gallo tokay, you can puke all day, tired past dismay.

This is her scene, this quiet crouch within bad sounds, surrounded by her ten cent shoes and her yesterday's pants and her just-in-case jar of peanut butter, this crouch against my shirt with her nose in my sweat.

She is nervous on three bennies and has tentative soft fantasies about spocks and she will stay a little while if I don't hold her too tightly.

I have lived like a priest in this bare room three months and to have her here, a sad tired robin, well, I feel honored and a little incredulous.

Orange lipstick on my pillowcase and the smell of her in my beard are enough to make me hum in private, a luxury of long ago.

And if the poem fails it is not because her smile is not beautiful to touch.
MEMO FOR COFFEEHOUSE PSYCHOLOGISTS

so then
if you insist
excavate me

you will certainly find your
seven buried cities
each with its evidences
its broken pot which
correlates with others and helps
to trace some bronze age caravan route

seven buried cities
each with its charred temple doorsill
its shinbone of priam
its mummied child

then sift the dirt with trowels for
the casual daily clamsells
of a less sophisticated time
just above the basalt bedrock

attack even that rock
out into it with jackhammers
if you insist but
now proceed at your peril

for at the very bottom there is a
grotto
where water drips
and nothing on its walls but a few
drawings
and it is
very
very
cold
down
there

--John Thomas
The Turn of the Wheel

"The next turn of the wheel, what do you think about the next turn of the wheel?"
-Charles Olson
from his poem, in Neon Obit

Every May the American Legion carnival came to town. One evening I went by myself. I had been to baseball practice and my glove stuck out of the back pocket of my levis. I wandered up and down the midway looking at the ferris wheel and the spinning number wheels and the prizes, listening to the noise and looking at local girls. I played the penny toss and lost, I drank pop and wondered what to do with myself. I didn't know any of the kids there, so around nine, as it had gotten dark, I decided to go home.

Halfway, I missed the familiar bulk of the glove against my ass, and, with sinking heart I touched my back pocket. The glove was gone.

It was a Rawlings trapper model, dark brown, almost black. It was heavy and stiff, waiting to be broken in. When Uncle Essex had given it to me I had quietly looked it over and that spring I began to try and play first instead of the outfield. It was no go. Right away something happened. It was as if something in my hand like the dark ball glove became mine to handle. Something dark in my hand meant a kind of resistance which related to my loneliness; it meant a vision of other guys who played first base, elegantly better than myself, and it meant I was somehow supposed to assume a look I didn't feel was mine. I was an outfielder. I imagined myself playing infield, maybe even shortstop. But not first. Shortstop was a tense, charged place which I had always wanted to bring into action, my action. My style. That was it. The oblique and powerful personality who played first base was glamorous, but not me. As happy as I had been to get the glove, even with its first feel, I had been numbed by the apprehension of first base. I had wanted the glove because my daydreams were me: backhanding a liner, stepping on first and firing the ball to second for the doubleplay.

But with the first baseman's glove in my hands, the Christmas tree in front of me and Uncle Essex standing by the revolving bookcase, my heart froze because I was not first baseman and because I had badly needed a fielder's glove.

I went back. I walked through the mobbed carnival-street and asked older people, other kids and men in charge of the booths who angrily said "Hell no, kid." They hadn't seen it, those men. In spite of my own vociferousness, my yearly hatred sprang into new fierceness: they were loud-mouthed jerks; spin that wheel you jerk and shout numbers and tell everybody what you don't know.

The glove wasn't under the bushes or by the street. Another kid had it now. I didn't know what to do.

On the way home it began to drizzle. I went down the street and my back ached with regret. If I had only told Uncle Essex: "I can't use it, I'm a lousy first baseman," he would have known; I could have kept it, traded it or given it to someone I knew. Now my use of the glove was completely gone. Into some other kid's hand. The unspoken generosity and
trust, the precious love that had, in my uncle's way, gone into such a
glove! To simply drop and lose, for anybody to find at a carnival, was
the severest irresponsibility: a carelessness coming from fear and ner-
vous loneliness, hatred of what I had to accept, envy of other ballplay-
ers and a knowing what I could get by with, and as I went up the walk
to the front door, I opened the old scar for the first time, and the
claw of my ancient self came out into the daylight of my consciousness
and swiftly gouged my safekeeping. Then it slid back under. Poised for
the next time: I had lost a resistance that had darkness in it, lost
something that had made change and willpower necessary. The resistance
wasn't lost forever, and since then my several selves have watched and
waited, each time have clawed and hurt, killed, created and made strong
— strong! The constant guard: strong for the fearful time when the loss
might not be accidental, but a constructed purpose.

-- Fielding Dawson

NOTICES

First two books from Trobar Press:
Rochelle Owens. NOT BE ESSENCE THAT CANNOT BE
Paul Blackburn. THE NETS. each $1.00

New mags finally out:
DAMASCUS ROAD, a twice-a-year shot from Allentown, Pa., edited
by Charles Hanna. $1.00
THE OUTSIDER, out of New Orleans, edited by John Edgar Hebb. $1
OUTBURST 1, editor Tom Raworth, Mss. to Basement/ 157 Amhurst
Road/ London E. 8, England. 60¢
RENAISSANCE, eds John Bryan & Michael O'Donoghue. Mss. to 1301
Rhode Island St. San Francisco, Calif. 75¢

Charles Olson's MAXIMUS FROM DOGTOOTH, I (Auerhahn Press, $2.00) is
also out.

All the above can be obtained from the Phoenix Bookshop / 18 Cornelia
Street / New York 14, New York.

Shortly expected:
The JOURNAL FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL BEINGS, edited by McClure,
Meltzer & Perlinghetti. Published by City Lights.

Allen Ginsberg's EMPTY MIRROR & LeRoi Jones' PREFACE TO A TWENTY
VOLUME SUICIDE NOTE, both to be published by Corinth Books,
32 West 8th Street, NYC.

With this issue, the Bear goes back on a twice-a-month schedule (we
hope). We are, as ever, in need of funds.