POEM TO H.P. LOVECRAFT

OCCULT NIGHT: arranging sticks & cards,
dusting bowls & globes with phoenix feathers,
clearing table space for oaken racks & yes!

THE FULL MOON - precise, clear,
details of each crater, empty basin, all
illuminated with powerful Moon Energy
(-It lights itself; she says,
holding up the candle to an ancient map of stars.)

LIGHT thru colored glass tarred into brass

Scales to hinge, equate; perfumes
of herbs turned to spirits; vapors
shadow the walls

MUSIC: mammoth calliope, 'Medieval
musak piped thru flutes, trilled by
the Axe Man's ghost (his bloody grin!);
his fingertips wash bloodstreaks over
the mirror. Eya God!
Wind dominates with horrid screech, reaching, extracting nerve fluid in marrow & 0 dead trees collapse, scatter dust against walls; crush glass sprays against face mask, punctures the mouth's roof & 0 the owls have turned into tigers & stalk the scent left by Love!

* * *

GRUMBUHG, Cursed Fiend, finds him a furry being to sup on! weeds do sprout & shoot out of his toothy mouth! EXOBYRE, Incast Mad Shape, does dance in Fire, expires, peels, decomposes; does rise to sing, scream & bury - again! again! again!

ARVAT, the Knower, weaves a hut of ice around him with fingers swift as fishfins & with Mystic Spear, diverts snowfall, forms it into a Sphere, packs it into a Dome. & the Dome is magic, & in this Dome, Arvat, the Knower, doth live & break bread with the Fox.

GROK, the Golem, formed from dung, cragged by heat, tragic mesa, is allowed one song each million years. His hand - a single finger of his hand - takes one century to unbend & point deadcenter to the dot between your eyes!

THE ROSE! she says - The Rose! & grinds unripe green from bulb to make markings for her mouth, lines around her eyes. She is the Golem's Bride & she does dance with him at Festivals of Alph & Parades of Beth & she will bear him, from his stone seed, gargoyles to perch on claw trees.

* * *

Angel's rump, propped
before the Camera, aims
contracts a fart
shooting rainbows
into ether, mists
(ribbons) of dream
slide to the earth.

* * *

Crack between Yin & Yang - there!
(look closely) an Eye,
suspended, watches & will be known.

* * *
THE STRUGGLE / POEMS FOR THE MUSE

1

That age is known is known in your face.
The way your ladylike grace breaks down.
You stumble when you wan to dance &
wheeze when you would laugh.

Soon it will be fall again.
How many falls have held you together
with poems written or leaves, stuffed
into your head, incinerated there?

Fall
Winter

Winter in your womb old lady.
You feel that you're pregnant
& place my ear against
your softening belly.
I hear icicles
melt & crack there.

2

When you're drunk you sing
a song about Aunt Rhody.

She only had one feather
she only had one feather
she only had one feather
stickin' in her head!

sticks in my brain which is your invention.

3

How many lands have we gone to together sleeping in all
kinds of odd beds, breakfasting at noon, sipping
sour thick sweet brandied watered-down coffee in bed,
looking out the window on the view?

There must be a view in each room we sleep in,
you said when we lived in a Brooklyn flat. Kids
playing stickball in the street. Mozart on W.Q.X.R.
Arranging your stationery into neat piles, dipping
an Ink-O-Graph pen into a copper inkstand

4

Well, old lady
you're getting older & your breath stinks.
Sometimes your dentures drop on my tongue &
scare the holy hell out of me!
You burp in sleep & mumble.
Your hair's beginning to go
all over the pillows, the sheets.

YOU SQUINT
WHEN YOU READ
MY POEMS!
The Truth I think about is not
an accurate Vision, yet
who said truth is clean like wire?

The burden's my own brain,
a feather in my tophat. Still,
I must acknowledge
comicstrips.

My grip on the East,
all things Oriental, was
grease on a fish fin.
It is so in Haiku tongue:-

To grab is to hold air.
To know is to be air. But

the Japs didn't beat me out of bliss.
I did
& in turn, felt bliss anyway.

I talk, yodel, construe & construct
structures of arrows that direct the eyes Up
& direct the eyes Down.
Effective tomorrow:
new constants, new precepts.
Pingpong balls
are the secret inner essence of
all meaning & motion. But

the Japs didn't beat me out satori.
I did
& was turned out despite me & my
inward worm-digging intents.

The Truth I think about is best unknown to me.
Who said Truth is what a poem shapes?
He lied (Let me at him!)
& in lying, shaped
a feather for the little kid
something to tickle his wee feet with.

Defenseless in laughter, it is that same
delicate moment of shutting. Vulnerable,
this is how I know truth.

* * *

-- David Meltzer
After

Catching you
with light,
unloaded fingers.
making like
catching balloons, it's like
catching balloons
and being lifted.
The feet are doing the walking.

You know now
what it's like
inside
like a rain
of blue pine needles
constantly.

Overture

It is always morning, the beginning of it
when I start to think

and I am ready to say,
to catch down
what my eyes
have turned around in: fine grooves
on the inside
of a dynamo, twisting wires,
throats flutter within
that permanent blue dawn, the birds...
I have a teacup on the stone windowledge,
there, I can make it,
a castle.
Ah, people are around
are busy crossing
each other
with
their noises. "time to go to work"
Mornings

Ah, to take
a photograph
of everything in the morning!

The blue light,
suggest the haze
by its graininess,
this and the birds
cawing.
the still streets
without all that's 'ready to roll'
and come,
the shot already thrown.
Forget about that.

The kitchen window. The quiet
where I begin to learn
to hear.

The fake tile
on the roofs... all around me,
very perceivable
without the
Ignition,
the people
from the other planet, they must be,
settled, alien, eyeless, possessed.

The pink tile,
the early blue
blinds, through
which
the light comes.
I see.
The morning coming.
I build on it.
A morning with the
taste of tart apple.

Illumine/ignite,
the blue,
the trees even,
their green
with that blue
through which the bakery comes
on the right, out of the night.
Food is expected. The parking
lot begins to fill,
like the hospital.
I'm ready to take
a photograph of it all.
I'm ready to take
a photograph of it all.

Alone,
and I talk about it.

--Mike Strong
Footnote To A Pretentious Book

Who am I to love
so deeply? As against
a heavy darkness, pressed
against my eyes. Wetting
my face, a constant trembling
rain.

A long life, to you. My friend. I
tell that to myself, slowly, sucking
my lip. A silence of motives/ empties
the day of meaning. What is intimate
enough? What is beautiful?

It is slow unto meaning for
any life. If I am an animal, there
is proof of my living. The fawns
and calves
of my age. But it is steel that falls
as a thin mist into my consciousness. As a fine
ugly spray, I have made
some futile ethic
with.

"Changed my life"? As the dead man
pacing at the edge of the sea. As
the lips, closed
for so long, at the sight
of motionless
birds.
There is no one to entrust with
meaning. (These sails go by, these small
deadly animals).

And meaning? These words?
Were there some blue expanse
of world. Some other
flesh, resting
at the roof
of the world...
you could say of me,
that I was truly
simple minded.

--LeRoi Jones
In the Face of a Chinese View of the City

on what grounds shall we criticize the City Manager?
or the D P W? as easily as we do
the Superintendent of Schools for the texts
he buys? for the snow left on the streets
so a car slows and a boy has a broken
side? for the insufficient time the City Clerk
spends on the earlier records of the City
even if like dog-licenses, and births and marriages,
he is up-to-date on the latest news
of the suit-clubs and the bowling leagues?

Business is obviously
cant and social life almost entirely
liberal but public office, as forever,
remains distinct and moral or the life
of the individual dwindles into
stink: a man in his own kitchen boiling
paregoric is he then and there on an open line
to the police, and invadable as such, by what
term? Cant mores praise accomplishment
obvious competence clear management of
$5,000,000 a year receipts for ex-
penditures leaves open what judgment
if the color of the lights on the Main
Street turn the lips of women blue
and all days are cheery too
with the smiles of windows,
in the middle of the night,
washing clothes?

The few,
and the masses, as though they constituted
possible public life - while those who lead them
are as cherry-red after golf or shoveling
their own front walks as Santy Clauses hung from silver wires
fat or lean dirty or clean, the differences
of Santy Clauses not by any tally measure for what is what
the single probity public figure better be
what had he better be?

--Charles Olson
January 5, 1962

RANDOM THOUGHTS ABOUT RECENT PLAYS, ON AND OFF BROADWAY

Some time ago the Floating Bear asked me to review "The Apple," which, as everybody must know by now, is Jack Gelber's second play. Well, I still haven't seen it; I hate going to the theatre alone and, rather surpris-ingly, haven't been able to entice anybody into the Living Theatre with me, (Gelber has been oversold, so maybe my friends' apathy isn't so surprising.) "Write a theatre chronicle then," Di Prima suggested, "you've been going to a lot of plays lately." An unpromising idea, I thought; lucky girl, she doesn't know what she's been spared by having to spend so much getting out The Bear.

Let's begin uptown, with the bona fide Broadway theatre. (This part of my report will be misleading because I've seen only three Broadway plays so far this season, and each had something to recommend it.) "A Man for All Seasons," the Sir Thomas More story, isn't half bad if you don't mind neat, slick playwriting which tries to pass itself off as more adventurous than it actually is. Though not a very deep play, it manages to be quite moving, and its polished performance is a relief from the overintense, usually inept acting off Broadway. If you can afford it, go; my ticket was a Christmas present.... "The Caretaker" didn't make much sense to me but it held me, from start to finish, and that's saying a lot these days. On the surface it's a tight work, distinguished by clever Beckett-Ionesco dialogue: actually it's a diffuse work which shoots off in a number of directions and never settles on a theme or point of view. The acting is first-rate, and you can see this one for a dollar (second balcony).... "The Night of the Iguana" is somewhat of a paradox in the Tennessee Williams canon: less gripping than his play before last, "Sweet Bird of Youth," and even on the dull side, it's at the same time a better and certainly more serious work.
His writing has become terribly plain, without his characteristic lyrical and pseudo-lyrical flights which resulted, respectively, in effective theatre and in shoddy theatricalism. He now seems less interested in shocking his audience. This is admirable, I guess, but his sensibility, his ideas, his themes just aren't interesting enough. He also seems concerned about God in this one, and that doesn't bode too well for his future plays.

Uptown (off-Broadway): The Phoenix Theatre's "Androcles and the Lion" was one of the worst productions I've ever seen, easily as dismal as their productions of Chekhov and Pirandello six or seven years ago. Just how the Phoenix has managed to survive remains a mystery. Their current play, a new one, is a fairly effective item called "Who'll Save the Ploughboy?" It was written by a TV writer and shows it: it would have been better, and seemed less contrived, on the home screen -- on, say, Playhouse 90, if that's still going. As it is, the playwright had to pad considerably to make it a full evening.... "Shadow of Heroes" was about the Hungarian Revolution. It was admired by Jerry Tallmer, which is tantamount to saying that it was intense, corny and politically on the side of the angels. "Moving" was one of the words the Village Voice critic used in describing this heavily documented mess: yeah, about as moving as reading the front page of the Times.... Enough, too much, has been said about Arnold Weinstein's "Fortuna." It was disappointing but it wasn't as bad as the critics claimed. The Weinstein-John Gruen musical, "The Undercover Lover," which I saw last summer in tryout, would have fared much better, it has wit and point of view, and I hope somebody produces it soon.... Arrabal's "The Automobile Graveyard" is all about a hip Christ figure, and as loathsome as anything within recent memory. Its good production didn't disguise its dullness and pretentiousness; and I don't care if Arrabal was a kid when he wrote it.

Downtown: This is where serious, offbeat, experimental things are supposed to happen, but with rare exceptions that's not true. The exception this season was Beckett's "Happy Days," a truly beautiful and moving work. Possibly its failure at the box office explains why off-Broadway producers are so unadventurous, I saw some other shows downtown, but believe me they're not worth going into. (Syntomatic of the kind of junk you run into below 14th Street: a musical called "Sing Nuss!" An updated version of the Helen of Troy story, it consisted of nothing but bad puns and could not remotely be regarded as a comment on its source or on contemporary society.)

But things are looking up. The Living Theatre has promised us another Brecht play, "Man is Man," and with the Nelp-Cohn combine planning an evening of one-acters by Weinstein, Koch and O'Hara -- and they're going to attempt a run! Then, over at the Cherry Lane, a month-long "Theatre of the Absurd" repertory opens February 11th. Such disparate writers as Koch, Genet and Albee are lumped together. Absurd is the word all right, but who cares? One program has Koch's "Bertha" coupled with Beckett's "Endgame," and that alone justifies the venture.

Next time around it'll be "The Apple," maybe.

-- Joseph LeSueur
Statement for James Goldsworthy

1. modes of apprehension (root: to seize): art, science, language, myth.

2. no-grasping, no-art, no-science, no-language, no-myth, getting along, everything exactly itself. magic inevitability (that is, no event avoidable).

3. events: 'special' (music, dance, theater...) / arranged events / whip-poor-wills and fireflies.

4. nothing-special. sounds (no-music), sights (no-painting, no-sculpture, no-dance...), onions, coffee, gasoline, sassafras, tight shoes, stomach-ache

5. urinating, spitting, arranging events, brushing teeth, seeing shadows, drinking water, heaving stones over telephone wires, reading a book, hearing tree-sounds, shaving...

6. word-games, and chess, dice, (dominances in between).

7. playing. playing cards. playing piano. playing dead.

8. "Ask me if I'm a frog."
   "Are you a frog?"
   "Yes. Now ask me if I'm a cow."
   "Are you a cow?"
   "Naw. I'm a frog."

--George Brecht
7.11.60

Rejoinder: Concerning the reviews by Miss Zazeela and Mr. Marlowe in FB 16

Alan Marlowe's review of the Judson Poet's Theatre production of Apollinaire's Breasts of Tiresias and Joel Oppenheimer's The Great American Desert, was uncommonly slight and uninformative. Mr. Marlowe says, "...but who cares. I liked it."

We do not need anyone's simple opinion, though, to be sure, all reviews are, to a certain extent, opinion: but a reviewer, or critic, who will not, or cannot, supply us with some kind of objective incision into the piece he is reviewing is simply a politician. What are your standards of excellence, Mr. Marlowe? Why should we take your word? Is the Bear spawning another Howard Taubman?

Miss Zazeela's review of the Guggenheim show, although it was much more informative, made itself impossible to believe or even re-read because of its insufferable pomposity. Who is Miss Zazeela? One hopes she is a painter? One hopes she is not, to use her own sneered imprecise correlative, "second rate". One also wonders, while reading her muddy adjectival prose, what she means by "uninteresting"...also what were and are the "two or three ideas"..."everyone was working out of". Who is "everyone"? And is the statement, "Motherwell peeking over his wife's shoulder", a social or aesthetic observation?

If Mr. Marlowe is the new Howard Taubman, surely Miss Zazeela is a beatnik John Canaday.

--John King, Toronto
Consumer's Guide

Lester Young & the Kansas City 5 w/ Buck Clayton, Jo Jones, Dickie Wells, Joe Bushkin, Walter Page (Commodore 300.04) (On Sale at $2.00) (1938 Pres)

Accent on Tenor - Lucky Thompson w/ Osie Johnson, Oscar Pettiford, Billy Taylor, &c. (Urania 1206) (On sale at $2.00) (Beautiful Lucky Thompson)

Lester Young "The President Plays" w/ Oscar Peterson Trio (Verve 8144) (On Sale at $1.97). (Pres in the 50's)

Thelonius Monk w/ John Coltrane (Jazzland 46) (1957 5Spot tapes) (The "Classic" Post-Bop Group)

Blues and the Abstract Truth - Cliver Nelson, Eric Dolphy, Bill Evans, Paul Chambers, Roy Haynes & big band. (Impulse 5) (large scale a.m.t)

*****

The Life and Opinions of T.E. Hulme by Alun R. Jones (Beacon) (Remained at $1.95) (Orderly biography w/ whole chunks of Hulme "talking")

Speculations by T.E. Hulme (paper) (Harvest Books $1.45) (The "philosophical" reflections plus the poems)

*****

The Commanders w/ John Wayne, Ina Balin, Stuart Whitman, Lee Marvin (Don't know the director, but this film is at least as funny as Beat the Devil, probably funnier. As if Marcel Carne collaborated w/ Robert Aldridge and John Ford over drinks. There is a 20 minute sequence w/ Lee Marvin and John Wayne that will incense Laurel and Hardy fans. It uses all their old stuff, i.e., serious slapstick, stylized cruelty, &c. The first five minutes of the film are 1930's drawing room "in" talk about Freud, western style. The heroine says to the sub-hero (Whitman) "Men and women all over the world say to each other, I Love You, when all they mean is I Desire You." Also, a great Cocteau sequence where we watch a man strangling to death over John Wayne's shoulder while he is exchanging pleasantries w/ the heroine. Find it and see it!

--Frank Buck