NIGHT SCENES

I.

The moon's up-riding makes a line
flowing out into lion's mane
of traffic, of speeding lights.

And in the nest of neon-glow and shadows
the nets of the city's merchants and magickers
restless move toward deserted streets where morning breaks,
holding back heaviness, emptiness, night
with a hand of light fingers tapping,
obliterating the drift of stars, waiting..

The whale-shark dark with the universe
pushes up a blunt nose of loneliness
against the thin strands, shakes
the all-night glare of the street lamps
so that for a moment terror
touches my heart, our hearts—all hearts
that have come in along these sexual avenues
seeking to release Eros from our mistrust,
our nerves respond to the police cars, cruising,
a part of the old divine threat. How in each
design is still moving. The city roars
and is a lion. But it is a deep element,
a treacherous leviathan.

The moon climbs the scale of souls. 0
to release the first music somewhere again,
for a moment
to touch the design of the first melody!
and
in what tempers restore that current
which forth-flowing goes
a wholeness green lovers know
as each in each a fearful happiness
sees the resolute eye in which
opposites
spring twined forthright.

A light toward the knotted tides of dark,
into the tenderness of the crown, night's dominion,
I saw the Prince of Morning fall,
opening in fucking a door of Eros,

and from the Beast a man that was Day came
shaking my heart like a storm in old trees.

Attendant, the maiden hours dance
with tambourines and tiny bells clustering,
circling to slow down ecstasy.

Time in the folds of their skirts' motion
sways as if from a center
that is female—there being to four o'clock in the morning
breasts, undulating belly, thighs,
a wife we are groomed four,
an inner temple of durations.

The charm dissolves air
And as the morning steals upon the night
(Melting the darkness) so their rising senses
Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle
Their clearer reason, sweet Ariel song the body hears
in the mother-tides of the first magic:

Where the Bee sucks, there, the airy spirit sings, suck I.
Where does the bee sip? harvest what honey
in what beehive?
In a Cowslip's bell, I lie, at the ledge

youth spurts, at the lip the flower
lifts lifewards, at the
four o'clock in the morning, stumbling,
into whose arms, at whose
mouth out of slumber sweetening,
so that I know I am not I
but a spirit of the hour descending into body
whose tongue touches
myrrh of the morgenrot:

as in a cowslip's bell that is a moment comes Ariel
to joy all round—
but we see one lover take his lover in his mouth
leaping; swift flame of
abiding sweetness is in this flesh
..fatigue spreading back, a grand chorale
of who I am, who he is, where we are
in which a thin spire of longing
perishes, this single up-fountain of a
single note around which
the throat shapes ..

III.

La lampe du cœur Breton qui file et bientôt
hoquète à l’approche des parvis,
smokes, raises a music out of the light, a lamp of notes
that runs thru the openings in Paradise.
Flashes seize the eye’s grey, forcing
out of whose pits blackness of sight
montaient vers moi
soulevées par les vapeurs d’un abîme,
figures of women passing thru the strings of the harp of the sun,
fingers that flash chains we are signals
of protest, of assent, of longing, of anger,

O Breton, poet, we too,
where from the muscles of men working in fields we see
--dreams from sleeping mind-- cathedrals rise,
 fume and sing out
the early markets spreading round anthems,
the toros of men and trucks in their own light, steaming,
carrying the produce of paradise to be spread out,
auctioned, priced, carried away, we see
 0, by the raised lamp that surrounds the sleeping men,
heart of the city, circulations of food and rays.
These gates are not breasts or lions of the Queen of Byzantium,
but men working; these grails
have men’s arms and eyes, from which lamps like women fume
at the approach of the Outer Court
in the Produce District, among the trucks,

when I come into whose environs my heart smokes,
La belle la violée la soumise l’accablante
half-raked the men mounting and dismounting,

She is at work in her sleep.
She draws in food from the country around her.
She compels me wandering from Breton and towards him by the
plan of her streets.
She makes a temple of produce, in her rituals of buying
and selling, a place of transport and aromas.
She surrounds her priests and appears through them at the
tips that time has before falling.
Poelagius, Eckhardt, Joachim de Flore, Novalis are arms of
her desire, where she hungers for us and feeds us.

These things translated having lost their savor they had
by her grace, we devour in a savor they have by men’s bodies.

--Robert Duncan
"WE TAKE THE GOLDEN ROAD, TO SAMAR, KANSAS..."

The title means there has been a roadblock put between Occupied America and the sunken land of Frederick Delius. You have to go to the last chorus of his opera Hassan to get the music. If you go to Jacksonville, Florida these days, the joke is on us.

I.e., I missed the dedication of "Delius House," adjacent to Swisher Gymnasium, Jacksonville University, 8:00 p.m., March 3, 1961. "The Delius House has stood for three-quarters of a century at Solano Grove, thirty-five miles south of Jacksonville. Discussion of moving this historic homestead from its beautiful but isolated location on the St. Johns to the Jacksonville University campus first took place between Mrs. Henry L. Richmond and President Franklyn A. Johnson in 1957. However, the University felt unable to administer such an undertaking until this year. Now, thanks to the gift from Mrs. Richmond of the house and funds towards its re-erection, as well as the support of other friends of music, the Delius House will soon be visible to all. Its four rooms and four fireplaces, its two verandas and ornate woodwork, will be completely reconstructed..."

I drove into Jacksonville the night of April 14th from Huntsville, Alabama, "Space Capital of the Universe," according to a billboard on the outskirts of town, donated by Governor Patterson or the local White Citizens Council. (I'm guessing.) I telephoned an old, tired socialist/humanist friend, recently arrived in the city to teach high school physics and chemistry. The school is named after Nathan Bedford Forrest. Remember him? Fusstest with the mostest, etc., and after de Wa he started the KKK. Ah well, it's a terribly modern looking school. So, we agreed to try to find out where poor Delius' house used to live: Picolata, a nineteenth-century English colony on the St. Johns, also notable for its early Spanish Fort and for its mention in the journals of William Bartram. Driving south next morning in the face of weather warnings of squalls and probable tornadoes, we crossed the river at Green Cove, now the home of the mothball fleet, straining at anchor to get to go to Cuba. At that point the St. Johns is, incredibly, four miles wide. Across the bridge, on the east bank, you turn south down a country road and head for Picolata, nine miles. It proved to be a matter of four private homes, one fish camp, an abandoned company store, and a workers' retreat owned by some large trucking firm. The proprietress at the fish camp was Typical Southern Waitress #1 -- fat, peroxided, rednecked and blank. Nothing exuded from her except suspicion, particularly of two strangers who wanted to know about old houses being moved into Jacksonville. So, I knocked on the front door of the local gentry. All four mail boxes on the highway bore the same family name. An elderly woman came to the door, blowzy as the last but 'substantial' in terms of Picolata. Back in the darkened living room an ancient woman was rocking. I again explained our mission. Solano Grove meant nothing, Frederick Delius meant nothing. Her attitude: well, we own most of the land around here and we'd know about anything like that that went on. I insisted, the house had been moved within two months and all authorities spoke of Picolata, including Delius. No, she said -- impossible. If they moved some shack around here all they got was some darky cabin. Chuckle, chuckle, than you, ma'am. We went back up the road towards Jacksonville about three miles to a gas station, thinking some working men might be inside who'd had to do with the transplantation. Again, no luck. The
proprietor knew nothing. He said telephone the forest ranger. The
forest ranger said, oh yes, I've heard there was some foreign music
fellow around here a long time back, but his name was Vernon. I asked
if he recognized the name Delius? No, Vernon was the name of the man
you want. Amen, back to the car.

Determined not to succumb to the collective unconscious quite so simply,
we drove back to Picolata and on south into the oaks and mosses, which
were behaving like a Cocteau wind tunnel in the turbulence before the
storm. Couple of miles down the road I spied a turpentine camp and some
of the hands sitting out in the yard-- a Negro settlement. The crackers
has so benumbed us that I came on very cautiously. Hello, we're looking
for a cabin that got moved into town sometime lately, that used to belong
to a man from England who wrote music. One of the men looked at me
coolly and said, you mean Frederick Delius' plantation, Solano Grove,
it's been moved to the campus of Jacksonville University. I said, gulp,
yes. An older man then said, with equal clarity and poise, it's a shame,
the people that used to come out here from Europe and New York would
be terribly disappointed at what's happened. You know it's only been moved
so they can make some money out of the tourists. Gulp, again. This man
was an autocrat. His features and color suggested a Seminole strain.
The younger man showed what Jelly Roll Morton called the Spanish tinge.
Two other men sitting there were very dark, very simple country people
who said nothing. We talked on for fifteen or twenty minutes about a
variety of things and each of the men employed a rich, exact vocabulary
with a sophistication simply a world apart and ahead of what I had en-
countered earlier from three resident crackers. Yet the senior of the
two spoke of lacking formal education after the third grade. I have no
purpose to turn the search for Delius' plantation into a brief on Crow-
Jimism-- yet, how to deny it is a constant temptation as one lives more
and more in the South. It is no secret where quality lies, and don't
think that certain people don't know this, inside. At any rate, I must
suggest that as the grove workers of 1884-5 were Delius' companions,
whose songs he used in Appalachia, the Florida Suite, etc., it is only
the Negro tenants south of Picolata who reverence his memory and spot
the exploitation of his locales for just what it is. The older man said
as we left, one of the things wrong with this country nowadays is that
all the neighborhoods are being destroyed. They got people on the move,
nobody respects his neighbor anymore. They don't live anywhere steady
so they don't work except for quick money and they'd do anything to get
it, they'd do anything to land to or people. Which is a very culti-
vated remark-- not culture-mongering.

Meantime, Jacksonville University has Delius' Solano Grove. In its set-
ting next to the gymnasium, at the bottom of a hill beside an area like
a football field, it faces southeast towards no water. At Picolata it
gave upon the four-mile-wide St. Johns in the midst of orange trees and
sheltered by a giant live-oak some seven feet thick. "This property was
practically inaccessible as a Shrine," claims the University. By which
it means there isn't a Howard Johnson's within forty-five minutes. Well,
let's get with it. The final chorale of Appalachia should now read:
"O Honey, we are going down the drain pipe in the morning..." Like the
sign says, You Are Now Entering Fabulous Florida.

--Jonathan Williams
the Christian philo
sophist
in the white cold morning
sd:
"even God
(& he, Christian, believed
that entity was
& is
an entity)
cannot
open & shut
a door
simultaneously"

the iconoblast
younger & of an older tribe
(& he, not believing)
sd:
"making the natural laws
surely he took consideration
& kept a small secret
of his own"

continuity
continuity
is activity of all activity
opens & closes indiscriminately
all doors unconscused by
direction
(not a place, or movement

2. "we step & do not step
into the same rivers"
sd another lover.

all things become straight lines / the
oneness of them the
allness of them

the flowers are withering / shall they wither?
the leaves are falling / shall they fall?
the clock is moving / shall it move?
the dark is gathering. shall it gather?
everything
a rhythm to it
ends

washing & rewashing
in the water
3. the river was warm, but not warm enough.
the woman was beautiful, but an egyptian.
the child was hidden, but exposed.

the river gave up the child
to the woman
the woman gave up the child
to the king
the king gave up the child
to the wise man
the wise man gave up the child
to the angel
the angel gave up the child
to the people
the people gave up the child
to the mountain
the mountain gave up the child
to the Lord
the Lord gave up the child
to death

to lovers of straight lines
those are straight lines

continuity
continuity
(the action of activity
rhythm
the structure

immersed & not immersed
in the waters
all things & people travel the long roads
from what is known as /
ending

a dimly perceived
infinite extension of the line
THREE PRAYERS

1.  o do not let our children
    as you let us, grow
    without the help of hatred
    do not let the violence of their souls
    destroy their souls
    let them sing it out
    against us?
    what else?

2.  grant that the walls may fall
    catching within their ruin
    all the ones who've lived in sanctuary
    & from their vantage point have
    grabbed us
    pumped into
    our blood
    a hideous drug of their own invention, & forced us to beg them
    to accept us
    while we despised
    them &
    ourselves

    grant that the walls may get them
    as they now have us

3.  a personal prayer / let me have the strength
    to make the scene
    & still not harshly warp
    my true sound

    let me gain power over that power
    that tries to kill me

    loosen the root of death within my head
    & let me get my hands on it, & pull, & pull
THE SWING

up in san francisco, dig, he sd / speaking then

of language
   (a concern that
    occupies cur needs
    currently)

newness
in the word
the structure, like they say
or
in the swing of a line
a sound

using, he sd, the word in sentences
as brake upon the flow of thinking/
   up in san francisco/
   dig/
   you dig?

to shape the swing
to the tongue of a different eye

& i, thinking of the word,
   like,
as used to destroy a reality
within a described scene

   this changed line
of language, swung out
as we do it
lines of thought
unknown
on the other side of the Grass

what might it not do, to verse, to thinking
an attempt, at any rate,
now carried on

--Stuart Perkoff [35]
Sissy Blues

I dreamed last night I was far from harm,
Woke up and found my man in a sissy's arms.

Hello, Central, it's bound to drive me wild,
Can I get that number, or will I have to wait awhile?

Some are young, some are old,
My man says sissy's got good jelly roll.

My man got a sissy, his name is 'Miss Kate',
He shook that thing like jelly on a plate.

Now all the people ask me why I'm all alone,
A sissy shook that thing and took my man from home.

--Gertrude "Ma" Rainey

DECEMBER, 1967

love would not be so simple if there were not chunks of you in the air
or spewed out between the teeth of my favorite conversationalists,
as if yrs was the communal flesh & blood of which we all partook.

we used to carry lumps of sugar in our pockets to feed the horses.
that was on central park south & across from the plaza.
there was more madness in the air then.
the sidewalk is slowly crumbling into diamonds
in the sky over central park a mouth is opening
to take you finally in.

-- Diane Di Prima
JAMES WARING AND DANCE COMPANY

(Fed & Thurs, 24&25 January 1962
The Henry Street Playhouse)

The concert consisted of four dances, and each dance seemingly of groups of solos. That is, Waring seems to work out individual movement, as a fact of itself or space, and then to use them together as a dance. Waring's dances are for individuals, and having the individuals performing them together forces a surprising unity, i.e., imaginary bonds, of performance. It is rather like going to a party where everyone has decided to be interesting for a change.

The dances were: Phrases (1955), a painfully somber exercise. The Satie piano music does not violate the strict blackness of the dance, even though it is essentially lighthearted. This dance was, I think, the most group-like of the program. The first movements of Valda Setterfield and David Gordon, in a series of highly stylized, yet completely banal threadings and re-threadings across the central eye of the audience, was finally so beautifully grotesque as to remind one once and for all that dancing is performed with arms and legs and elbows; starts and stops. The dance reduced most movement to essential bone with flesh, but as objects to be canonized.

Dithyramb (1961) moved into Mr. Waring's more recent work, and the group choreographed feeling of Phrases was almost completely absent. The individual solos or separations balanced admirably, even though the dance was sprinkled with single virtuoso precipices (even stunts). Fred Herko is a particularly adept stunter, and a willing virtuoso. William Davis had a grace that was a happy addition to choreography that is essentially hard and edgy.

Two More Moon Dances (1961) was a hilarious piece. Remy Charlip's costumes were wonderfully absurd, especially Mr. Waring's, which looked as if it had been borrowed from the Wizard of Oz. Valda Setterfield and David Gordon (and Mr. Gordon's painted mustache) nearly walked away with the whole dance, except that Mr. Waring seemed to be everywhere at once, and Yvonne Rainer his persistent accomplice. This dance was the most "theatrical", and for this reason lost a great deal of the "pure dance" quality that most of Mr. Waring's other pieces have. But even the theatricality of this dance was much more sophisticated than the neo- Graham school of television soap operas which seems to persist in most so-called "modern" dance. However Mr. Waring seems to have gotten rid of any Grahamisms, and Moon Dances has no more relation to Miss Graham and her followers than A Cool Million is related to Amerika.

Dromenon (1961), the last dance, was perhaps the most pretentious of the program, but it also was responsible for some unbelievably beautiful dancing by Fred Herko, Yvonne Rainer, and Mr. Waring himself. Toby Armour seemed to possess the most lyric quality of any of the performers. She handles her body like an idea, almost effortlessly. Richard Maxfield's music was quite impressive in this last dance, a piece done with tapes along with live musicians. It was much more
interesting than some of the other strictly taped, music concrete
sounding pieces, or the willful affectation of George Brecht's
breath-like chatter behind Dithyramb. However, the whole story was
Mr. Waring's choreography and performance, as well as the brilliant
performances of his company. It is a shame that we cannot watch
Mr. Waring & Co. perform (or the companies of Merce Cunningham or
Aileen Passloff or Paul Taylor) more often. Once or twice a year is
certainly not enough. Why is it that people like Alwin Nikolais and
his original dixieland jazzband are always around, and really estimable
performers like Mr. Waring and Mr. Cunningham are not able to appear
more often? (A good question, Sam.)

--LeRoi Jones

Dear Floating Bear,

Fred Herko's review of Paul Taylor says: "Love is
ultimately beautiful. Love is interesting. Love is exciting...
Mr. Taylor is not exciting. Mr. Taylor is not interesting. Mr.
Taylor is not ultimately beautiful." Herko is judging Taylor by
an idea. This idea - the idea of love and art and The Unsoiled
Life - is shit. If Taylor fails by that, he's doing fine. Herko
had better watch his language.

Edwin Denby

NOTICES:

Thanks to all the people who helped the Bear buy its own mimeo-
graph machine, especially Peter Hartman, Lita Hornick and
Howard Schulman. *

Reviews appearing in the Floating Bear express (we hope) the
opinion of the reviewer, and often of nobody else, including
the editors.

*Having bought the machine, we now have no money for paper
& stamps....

KULCHUR 5 is out, guest editor J. Oppenheimer.

PAPER BAG PLAYERS are coming to the Living Theatre for Easter.