Lament

I

To begin with, my rising with you near the Deal Apartments; and my heart, always in ferocious projects, worries you. with distances and dark, with the perishing tendrils in your hands still of the absurd, individual gift.

II

But if I tried to grab the child, this moment he becomes me Or to seize you without suffering my eyes in their skinny gaze hold, cover you no more.

III

The afternoon stone. How many, our truest summers gone, the townsmen plundered you selfless, dreamless, on the lopsided shore and you quailed in horror while the bloated gulls beat past the poles
The Bluebird

SWEET ROOM! the wrist is made of strings.
Someone is wiping my legs. The beak is
flicked.

O when will the bluebird sit on my belly?
When his wings are blotched in the knocking
tree? I have concentrated on the bluebird
before.

The Storm

Then who'll starve in the gulf and
who'll be in the skull? Who'll starve??
When the formed flocks rock and cry
Joy! Joy! Who'll be where the storm is
when the hills dissolve??

The moon is creeping, the moon is on
the river, the moon is in our crotch
in the loud car.
Canticle As Grieving

I

Travelling among barriers back toward the demotic home
the faked friends were craning with a paltry song
and they with moonless eyes

moved to such a pitch of secure and routine love
were contained and overjoyed and not a little concerned
with their women at war jarred from rinsed kitchens
like tiny blow-out chandeliers
and, later than lust, a girl in the lilac crib.

Time, and the friends argued into canticle and wit
or someone the singular monster within them
corroded into colour, artlessly rising within them
and they fell, mournfully apart, in their safe grief.

Time, and they assembled in the several homes
each no more a son than what is praised
by parents on balconies waving huge flabby arms
for famous impatient children vanished in ears.

Time, and they moved from the alert gangs
or insincerely surprised
by their own pleasure parties, their own welcome,
instructed as to the occasions of health
in the inoperative season, the long understandable year.
Whisked by medicine and mouths, they traveled shortly again—

II

We work in resurrection to tears.

Responsibilities we understand
the body fitfully performs.

My love, we are not hurt this way, but
only defending ourselves from the heart.

The defense from the friend
is the final retard.
Poem

Even though the flower
in its important tropism
drops the root, and the moon
is rooted into the savage sea
The bath lockers keep screaming
for the carpenter, who finally
hangs the bulwark which serves
as a boundary for this nightmare.
And he is obese, carefully
dragging my hair in his mixture.
Whenever a cop turns around, that
carpenter pulls a flower from my cheek
Which he awards him.
0 if I could dissemble
the rods and cones of a tiny organ
I'd have my flower
Because it is unusual and poisonous
anyway. He's angry at me.
So he drives it back
on the hill.
You can tell that the crab
is really screwed to a grain
in his back and that the rotating
cyst is not mercy.
The lizard rolling toward
you operates the woods
but his tail shrivels and it is
swiftly deposited.
I know who was jockeying
in the moonlight, that time.
This time he can batter me.
I am pulled down.

-- David Shapiro
A Poem, 1961 - 1962

Go down a slope with poetry friends
And turn our heads to the top of the slope
Where the dead leave colored sky before dark
We were became silent for read a winter poem in the sky

I think that poetry exist just into
only the waste land of winter
or the breeding of spring

And now leaves are shiver with cold wind

We ask the way to the sake shop
Tonight we are going to drink in secret for Whitman
For his great brain and for our December 31
To wash the resin away from our tongues and penises
With alcohol.

-- Yu Suwa
The politics of rich painters

is something like the rest
of our doubt, whatever slow thought
comes to rest, beneath the silence
of starving talk.

Just their fingers' prints
staining the cold glass, is sufficient
for commerce, and a proper ruling on
humanity. You know the pity
of democracy, that we must sit here
and listen to how he made his money.
The catalogue of his possible ignorance
roars and extends through the room
like fire. "Love", becomes the pass,
the word taken intimately to combat
all the uses of language. So that learning
itself falls into disrepute.

2.

What they have gathered into themselves
in that short mean trip from mother's iron tit
to those faggot handmaidens of the French whore
who wades slowly in the narrows, waving her burnt out
torch. There are movies, and we have opinions. There are
regions of compromise so attractive, we daily long
to filthy our minds with their fame. And all the songs
of our handsome generation fall clanging like stones
in the empty darkness of their heads. Couples, so beautiful
in the newspapers, marauders of cheap sentiment. So much taste
so little understanding, except some up and coming queer explain
cinema and politics while drowning a cigarette.

3.

They are more ignorant than the poor
tho they pride themselves with that accent. And
move easily in fake robes of egalitarianism. Meaning,
I will fuck you even if you don't like art. And are wounded
that you call their Italian memories petit bourgeois. Whose death
will be Malraux's? Or the names Senghor, Price, Baldwin
whispered across the same dramatic pancakes, to let each eyelash flutter
at the news of their horrible deaths. It is a cheap game
to patronize the dead, unless their deaths be accountable
to your own understanding. Which be nothing nothing
if not bank statements and serene trips to our ominous countryside.
Nothing, if not whining talk about handsome white men. Nothing
if not false glamorous and static. Except, I admit, your lives
are hideously real.
4.

The source of their art crumbles into legitimate history.
The whimpering pigment of a decadent economy, slashed into life
as Yeats' mad girl plummeting over the nut house wall, her broken
knee caps rattling in the weather, reminding us of lands
our antennae do not reach.

And there are people in these savage geographies
use your name in other contexts
think, perhaps, the title of your latest painting
another name for liar.

- LeRoi Jones

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The Curse

Literature's a curse
& poetry's a hearse
I'd rather be a rock
Except I'd lose my cock
Ungrateful to complain
But when you got a brain
It's not enough to know
Sometimes you got to blow
& then you've writ a poem
& find you're not alone
Everything's alive
The whole world's a low dive
Of poor creative types
That paint or sing or write
That river wrote a novel
He lives in a novel
But his soul is pure
The beach is too obscure
Making little sense
It never gets in print
I wish I was a girl
I wouldn't have any morals at all.

- Gary Snyder
The stage has been made to look like a caffé espresso joint, and before the action gets underway an actor goes through the movements of serving coffee to the audience. Is the coffee real? We don't have a chance to find out.

A negro ambles from center-stage and warns us, in a big, over-rehearsed stage voice, that improvisations are about to begin. Improvisations? Hardly. One immediately gets the impression that if one actor misses his cue the entire performance will be thrown off.

The Pirandello illusion-reality bit, then? That is the idea, of course: the spastic isn't really a spastic, the queer is only camping, the man who dies on stage isn't dead at all, and the actors use their own names. But since the writing, such as it is, lacks spontaneity, inspiration and wit, there's no confusion as to what's real and what's make-believe -- it's all trumped up hokum. For, however sloppy the writing is, it is as rigid as William Inge's last well-made play; the actors are just actors, hamstrung by inferior material.

The material I'm referring to is, of course, Jack Gelber's "The Apple" in which he reveals himself as a non-writer whose sense of theatre, as demonstrated in "The Connection," isn't so deft and instinctive as many of us -- at least this reviewer -- had thought. Gelber can best be described as a beat William Saroyan who thinks he's hip but isn't. Everything about his new effort -- I refuse to call it a play -- is execrable: its sadism is gratuitous, its humor is pathetically naive, its viewpoint is non-existent, its lack of form is unjustified.

What exactly happens on stage? Frankly, I can't remember too many details, largely because I was bored to distraction. A few isolated happenings -- and isolated is the word! -- spring to mind: a phony drunk getting up from the audience and stumbling on stage (he's the one who dies but doesn't die later); a man's tooth being extracted; a spastic dancing with a straight guy who's trying to pass himself off as a fairy; an action painting created before our eyes and put up for auction (though at the performance I attended nobody was allowed to buy it); a number of arguments about something-or-other and much senseless violence. And that's about it. There are a lot of dull jokes made, but I can't remember any of them.

Just what Gelber hoped to achieve when he put together this unsuccessful collage would be hard to say -- possibly an experimental or intellectual "hellzappoppin". But he does nothing new in "The Apple," and since it's bereft of ideas it can't even be described as an intellectual exercise.

Let's hope this isn't a sign of things to come at the Living Theatre. In the old days the plays they presented were almost invariably superior to their performances. Will the situation now be reversed? I liked it better the other way.

Joseph LeSueur
as the day
you were born without leaves
without
 stripped barely
distinguishable from other
heathen branches
baptised by understanding the
overfalling showers
falling affectionately
on birches
boughs of
old family trees are
sentimental attachments to
roots joined in soilswollen clusters
of sublimation like
linen hidden
never publicly washed
but bathed in rumours of
closed closets behind
doors fixed and locked
to keep out the
public like rain
endlessly falling in January
when hell even the yellow is an
orange hidden in trees
bathed in smog soaked landscape
ever lasting falling
and rising.

1958
SUR VOICE

Wait, I thought
before you go
I better tell you
this tree out back,
upon whose limbs all winter
cession sat
 & now that it's warm
 & spring is upon us with
too much of everything
it is given to an inordinate amount
of activity
birds come seemingly
 from every direction
to sit upon its branching tips
purring the invisible furriness
I thought it noteworthy
 to make mention of this fact
just prior to your leavetaking
for it seemed to me to be
worthy of your notice.

--Steve Jonas 1961

THE ITALIAN

In L.A.,
in New York.
Out of luck,
out of work.

She let him win the prize
she could feast her eyes
on, then
he went out.

Like a light,
like a candle.
In the oranges,
in the snow.

--George Stanley
IN QUEST OF UGENDUN
(with apologies to Paul Bowles, W.S. Burroughs, Robert Benchley, and romance)

Sluggish river. Impossible heat and clamminess. Bondoo, our regendi, plied his paddle tirelessly, and our small, hollow pisha clove the waters ahead of us, tirelessly. Thank Providence we had a kisha and not the larger, more unwieldy batanna, which, while excellent for use in the headwaters of the Fazool, with its broad belendi and deep green rotze, was next to useless here in the winding saquari.

Look! Up there, circling overhead, a great horned blatzo, known to the natives as a blatzo, in their quaint tongue, known as zumaalisa to the thousands of junkies who tirelessly ply the Fazool year after year in search of ugendun. Bondoo excitedly waved his roogotz in an old tribal exhortation to the gods (Jaga, Retzuu, Blin) to take mercy on us; we learned later that to see a blatzo on the first stage of the journey up the saquari was a certain augury of bad luck, or as the noble Jinju tribe phrases it, badda luck. But we laughed, dragging our feet and hands in the water, and smoking our large clay kizi, filled with pot, or zaza, as the Jinju say.

Ugendun was our goal; Great untouched fields of ugendun, ready for the sharp blades of our bearers’ shivas. Then the long summer of smoking, chewing, sickening, chewing once more, smoking; visions of radiant color appearing and disappearing, depths of knowledge (caranza, the natives call this ugundun-induced "seeing") hitherto unknown to us. But how long were we to wait until our dreams of caranza and sapoli, jujube and gras were reality?

As we sped through the waters I looked around at Edward, my companion, and discovered, to my chagrin, that his place was empty. Bondoo! I screamed, and saw a look of Oriental bizarra cross his tattooed lip. (Bondoo had, I have neglected to say, only one lip, a common occurrence among the Jinju, who chew their lower lips off in the throes of ugundunaraenzo, or chucks, whereas is Edward, I screamed, my had stealing to my short but powerful colt. Kipilip wove in contempt at me as he stopped paddling and filled the small bowl of his kaza, the traditional Jinju pot kizi. All time Massa Edwards he smoka plenty wead an keep him all time hand in saquari. Great horned blatzo, all time cuz if fly fly blatzo, but him swim, he take Edward in water, quick! He dragged deeply on his kaza, holding the ziz dexterously so that the burning zaza would not injure the already-scarred and burned dukes that supported him and his family so precariously.

Take me back, I ordered softly. My dreams of ugundun finished, I sat back sailly in the gotz, hurling my kizi and pot overboard, my heart heavy with the knowledge that Edward would never return to England. In my despair I huri, as we reached the green rotze and wide belendi, my juku, faz, pip-pip, and bog into the swirling karangu; even the quaintly beaded joon fell into despair and joined its brother objects as my sadness vented itself in blanda, the ashe bandara, as a matter of fact, the utmost pitch of bandara here in the tropics. Zaga! Zagade! I wogood over and over again! I didn’t care anymore! Edward was gone and so was the quest for ugendun, and I rolled myself into my woven afartana, lost in the grief that only the saquari can bestow. Never, never would I return! Ciao!

-- Abe Harvard
Dear Editors,

This is an open letter in which I would like to make one comment on the Bear news note about the dance concert held at the Judson Church on July 6. The article makes lively comments on the best of what was presented in this program of young dancers and choreographers, most of whom were members of Robert Dunn's composition class. It quite rightly treated what was presented and did not concern itself with histories, movements, or other dancers that had influenced the performers. However, of late, in dance commentaries dealing with young dancers who are beginning to make it, a lot is said of Yvonne Rainer -- obviously one of the most outstanding of the dancers presented in this program. And she deserves much praise and attention for her work which is consistently interesting. However, I do think one unfairness is being executed in all the attention given to her and the applause for her "originality" of method.

Being a West coaster (from California) I am aware that Miss Rainer's methods of dance composition, while delightful and engaging in the way that she uses them, are not original with her. The idea she uses for constructing dances through an improvisatory and associative manner, using her own voice as an instrument, is a technique which was developed in the Ann Halprin Dance Company (San Francisco, California) and which was really most extensively used and elaborated on by a dancer named Simone Morris. All of Miss Rainer's methods are derived from the dances of Simone Morris.

Now do not get me wrong. I approve of Yvonne Rainer's dancing -- very much. I like it. I admire it. But like any good Californian hate to see credit given where it is not due and of course, feel wretched when it is not given to those who deserve it. I admit that when one starts dealing with the avant garde in any critical fashion, he frequently has a hard time tracking down who did what first and who influenced who. However, because Simone Morris is a dancer with force and extreme originality, yet one who has not performed much on the East coast a critic may not know about her influence and the importance of her techniques in revolutionizing modern dance; but he should.

Maybe, because I think Bear readers are concerned with the arts and what is new, I think that writing this letter is meaningful. Please understand that I am not putting down Yvonne Rainer in any way. She is a splendid dancer. But some of the credits should go to Simone Morris -- her originality and influence on any dancer who ever worked with her.

Diane Wakoski

NOTICES

Please single-space prose mss. submitted to the Bear as it makes it easier to lay out the issue.

Jack Spicer's new book, "The Heads Of The Town Up To The Aether" being published by Auerbach Press / 1334 Franklin / San Francisco Regular edition of 750 copies $3; the limited of no more than 50 copies, signed by author & artist & with a crayola drawing Mr. Spicer, $10.

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