NOONDAY 1

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Edited by Cecil Hemley

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WILLIAM EARLE

Notes on the Death of Culture

I IN GENERAL

The culture of the western world has for some time been under diagnosis as though it were a patient sick with an unknown disease. The doctors are agreed only on this: the illness is acute. They differ on when it began, and how long the patient may be expected to live; they differ on how radical the cure must be. But, for a long time, no one has been very happy with it. Hegel, Marx, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Matthew Arnold, Spengler, Eliot, Jaspers, Marcel, to name a few, all find something radically wrong. Some, like Hegel, had the sense of living at the end of a great period, a twilight in which they could reflect on the work of the day. Others, like Marx, thought they could perceive the cause in socio-economic factors which were correctable by revolution. Kierkegaard and Nietzsche saw the sickness in religious terms; Kierkegaard in the progressive loss of individuality, inwardness, and passion; Nietzsche saw it in the "herd-men," the "nay-sayers," and prophesied something beyond man, superman, who could at last affirm himself and life. But all the doctors feel that something is *finished.*

The subject is, of course, vast, and no one can hope to see more than can be seen through a tiny crack. Each must make his own diagnosis from his own peculiar standpoint, and that is what I shall try here. There can be no harm in looking once

again at what passes for culture, estimating it, and pronouncing our own death sentence. My purpose, however, is not altogether negative; for although culture may be dead, the human spirit is not. If it is not altogether futile to dream, perhaps something better can be hoped for. At the end, then, I shall express my private dreams.

What, then, is culture ideally, and why is western culture dead? It is clear at the start that we are not talking about culture as a leisure time activity, as entertainment alone; nor simply as that part of the communal work which never earns its own pay and must therefore be supported by tax-exempt donations. Nor is it an affair of snobs. Nor exclusively of universities. Nor of impresarios. There can be no question of isolating it on one page of the newspaper, or of escaping it altogether. For culture in its deepest sense is the whole life of the human spirit in communities. There is no sense, therefore, in seeing culture as only one part of that total life; or rather, when it appears in that light, something is radically wrong with the culture in that community.

Human culture, of course, is not something which has its own independent existence. It is not a rock-formation which requires little or no attention, which simply *is*. It is a product of the human spirit, and that particular sort of product which is never finally produced; that is, culture is nothing but the *life* of human beings, and for culture to be alive means that actual human beings live in it. Culture, then, is that medium which the human spirit creates for its own life; looked at objectively it is found in the works of the spirit, in language, customs, institutions, as well as buildings, monuments, works of art, and symbols; but subjectively, all of these must be lived in. The accumulation of unread books may be important to a statistician, but those works have not entered into culture until they are read.

The human spirit, then, cannot take itself for granted. It may be found in all men and at all times but what is then

found is nothing but potential spirit. For its *life*, it must act; and its action is its life within culture. And so while the planets need not give themselves the slightest trouble over their movement, the spirit must; it is alive only when it is creating its own life. That life is not automatic, nor instinctual; it must be created by the spirit itself. Hence, since the spirit is alive only when it is creating itself, the very life of the spirit is dependent upon its *concern*. Its concern is precisely for itself, for its life, for that life is only possible as a free effort. Concern is one fundamental feature of the spirit, but it should be noted in addition that the concern in question is conscious though not necessarily self-conscious. The spirit *is* nothing but consciousness, its life is conscious, and let it have what subconscious bases and memories it does have, it invariably must *seek* consciousness. It seeks to become lucid about what it itself is and what other things are. *Lucidity*, then, is a second mark of the spirit.

And finally, since the human spirit is inevitably in individuals, the life of the individual must *manifest* itself to others. In culture, each participates in the whole by encountering the expressions of others, and expressing or manifesting itself. Thus, the individual can emerge out of the limitations of his own privacy. In short, the life of the human spirit has three notable aspects: it lives only through its concern with itself, it lives or seeks to live on the plane of lucidity, and it expresses itself in objective works. Now these three features are nothing but functions; functioning together, they create culture. But when they take on a pseudo-life of their own, and desire to become distinct activities, professionalized, and definable in themselves, we arrive at the contemporary scene: *concern* becomes the special province of "religion"; *lucidity* becomes the special province of "science" and "philosophy"; *expression* becomes the specialty of the "arts." And, in a nutshell, this is our own diagnosis. What now passes for "philosophy" is not and does not aspire to be a lucidity of the spirit. It is "technical," that is, pure knowledge devoid of any interest in the concerns of the spirit.

What passes for religion is an "ultimate concern" which is not and cannot be made lucid by philosophy or science. And what passes for art, is something thought to be pure expression, with no content, and above all no "message." The net result is that in aspiring toward absolute purity, toward independence, and toward the technical, these activities which might be the supreme expressions of the human spirit have achieved absolute triviality. They are, in our diagnosis, one and all *dead*. Worse, they are on the verge of becoming ridiculous. But before continuing with these bitter reflections, I should add that while I see little or nothing in the contemporary scene worth imitating or continuing, it would be both fatuous and ungrateful to ignore the genius which has gone into making it. Our criticisms are compatible with honor to the great; the creators of contemporary culture had very good reasons for what they did. But we must question whether those reasons are still valid, and whether we wish to continue in the same direction. And it should also be emphasized that there can be no question of imitating some past. If the present is not worth imitating, the past cannot be imitated. The truth is that no living spirit can imitate at all. We must not dream then of some "neo-," but rather of something genuinely new.

Meanwhile, there may still be a question in some reader's mind whether these noble activities are really dead. Perhaps the corpse still twitches. And so let us take a look at the contemporary philosopher, as he sees himself, and pronounce our judgment. And, sad as the picture is, as a professional philosopher I must include myself in the picture I am drawing; but my intent is neither confession nor accusation, but I hope, diagnosis.

II THE TECHNICAL PHILOSOPHER

Here I must beg leave to inform the general reader about technical philosophy, since he could not possibly know what it is unless he engaged in it. He most certainly will know the names of contemporary painters and composers; but will he know the name of a single technical philosopher? But this is more or less as it should be, as I shall presently demonstrate. Now, is the philosophy of the technical philosopher quite dead? Someone who could not read might gather that philosophy had never been more active. The number of articles published in our technical journals is staggering; no one could possibly read them all, or remember a single one. These articles, and not books, are our special product. Professional philosophers are men who belong to professional associations, subscribe to professional journals, write these articles, reprints of which they pay for and send to friends, and who earn their living by teaching young men to do the same: write articles and teach young men to do the same. Altogether then we constitute a new phenomenon, the professionalization of wisdom. Let us take a closer look then at the Technical Philosopher.

First of all, his most characteristic temperamental trait is his extraordinary sensitivity to a certain criticism: that of being "edifying." In our inner professional circles, a more pointed sneer could hardly be found than that a work is edifying and suffused with uplift. Such a comment has almost the force of revoking a philosopher's Ph.D.; the accused winces inwardly and can only clear his name by writing not one but several articles for the *Journal of Symbolic Logic*. These articles, however, need not actually be read by his colleagues; everyone knows in advance that there could be nothing edifying in the pages of the *Journal of Symbolic Logic*.

The criticism of edification or uplift is particularly cutting since it touches upon the intent of the philosopher; no one

can be edifying unless he intends to be; and it is this intent which represents a disloyalty to all the values of Technical Philosophy. There is another criticism, not quite so devastating since it does not concern itself with one's intent, but only with the worthlessness of one's accomplishment: and that is "muddleheadedness." In the view of Technical Philosophy, all traditional philosophy was muddleheaded, had no idea of what it was doing, and did even that badly. Muddleheadedness is almost a style of thinking, the old style, and is exactly what might be expected of a philosopher who intended to be edifying. For the most part, one need only read the titles of the classics in philosophy to perceive the muddleheadedness from which they sprang. Sometimes the very face of the philosopher is enough; a muddleheaded philosopher will have a softer face, there will be less aggressiveness in it, and sometimes a trace of serenity.

What, positively, does the new Technical Philosopher desire to be? Well, of course, technical, that is, scientific above all. He wishes to regard himself as a philosophical worker, or even "researcher"; his work is thought of as a "research project," and if he can concoct a "cooperative research project," he will have no difficulty whatsoever in getting a grant from a foundation. Can not many think better than one? Has not cooperation proved beneficial in the sciences? If the Technical Philosopher did not retain some faded memory of his tradition, he would be delighted to teach his classes in a white laboratory coat; instead he carries a briefcase.

His inquiries, investigations, and research will be embodied in a "monograph," a short paper with the "problem" clearly stated at the beginning, and at the end a summary of the "results." The monograph must also refer to the other "literature" on the subject. The Technical Philosopher thus is short-winded; he has an instinctive distaste for the sprawling works of the nineteenth century, when philosophers sometimes

sought a larger view of things. One of the most influential of the new philosophers was Ludwig Wittgenstein, whose books were composed of separated pithy sentences and paragraphs, each of which is numbered for easy reference. This unfortunate man did not live to see his work undone; for now each sentence is being reinflated back into an article for the journal, *Mind*. Close to the fear of being edifying is that of being a windbag. The Technical Philosopher feels that everything can be said quickly and to the point. At the meetings of his professional associations, papers are limited to twenty minutes. The president alone can speak at greater length, but since he speaks after dinner, he is obliged to devote a third of his time to telling jokes. And here I must add my own note of approval; when we have nothing to say, surely twenty minutes is not too short a time in which to say it.

The new style of Technical Philosophy is remarkable since it expresses something about the philosophy itself. The style tends toward the telegraphic code. One reason for this is that the paper must be capable of being read during office hours, and make no demands upon the week ends. Technical Philosophy, the reader must understand, is simply one sort of work for which one is paid. It should have no resonance beyond those hours. When carried to ideal perfection, it is expressed in some form of artificial symbolism, which takes years of training to read with any ease. The Technical Philosopher has always envied the mathematician, with his proofs and symbols. And he has always had a fear of natural or ordinary language. Ordinary language is so obscure; words come dripping out of a sea of feelings and related meanings, and are logically unmanageable. Therefore we have devised a new language, symbolic logic, which begins with marks having no meaning at all; whatever meaning they acquire is given to them by other marks, which serve as their definitions. Now everything should be clear, and to some extent it is; but unfortunately the language

is so impoverished that nothing of any importance can be said in it, and so artificial in form that error is perhaps more frequent in it than in our mother tongue.

One of the most desirable features of symbolic logic in the eyes of Technical Philosophers is its impersonality. It states the pure core of the argument with no emotional nonsense. The writer is invisible behind his symbols, although some who wish to be extraordinarily sensitive profess to be able still to detect personality now in terms of the "elegance" of the proof. But I do not know if this contention has ever been thoroughly tested. The Technical Philosopher detests "style," for he sees it as expressing personal attitudes, and what difference can they make? Style in an argument is as disturbing and inappropriate as perfume or sweat on the eyepiece of a telescope. The Technical Philosopher desires to *be* impersonal, to write impersonally, and to disappear entirely into his analyses. And to a surprising degree he succeeds, for, to be frank, there isn't much to disappear.

Now these various stylistic features of Technical Philosophy are not accidental peculiarities. They all flow, as I see it, from the substance of the philosophy itself. And so perhaps it is time to look at it. Professor Morton White characterizes our age as the age of "analysis"; and this is exact, unfortunately. The general reader may be tempted to confuse "analysis" with "psycho-analysis"; and that would be a mistake. What the philosopher "analyzes" today is not the psyche, but rather words, phrases, sentences, arguments, which purport to say something meaningful or true. The Technical Philosopher finds everything said more or less confused and unclear. And if you are not initially confused, there is no one like a good analyst to demonstrate the confusion which lurks in the most innocent phrase; and there is no question whatsoever the Technical Philosopher can exhibit confusions which would have confused no one.

Technical Philosophy then is "analysis." But what is analy-

sis? There is no problem here; to analyze anything is to break it down, to dissolve it into its components, to reduce it from its initial totality into its ingredient parts. Then the parts are reassembled back into the whole, and lo! now, for the first time, we "understand" what that whole was. But in all of this, two aspects hit the eye. The first is the assumption that language is not clear in its first usage. It must be *made clear* by the analysis. The second is the fervent assumption that the philosopher himself is entitled only to analyze; that is, his work consists of tearing apart intellectually phrases others have put together. He analyzes syntheses but he makes no synthesis himself. Let us examine more closely both of these assumptions.

The first assumption that language is not clear in its direct employment has the consequence that only the analytical philosopher knows the clear meaning of what others are saying. But, then, if their initial language was unclear in the first place, how could the analytical philosopher know whether his analysis was right or wrong? And so we find in *Mind*, a leading magazine for such discussions, articles written about articles written themselves about articles, all agitating the question whether an analysis really gives us the original meaning. Now if the original meaning was clear itself, what *need* for the analysis; and if it was not clear how could one *verify* the analysis? But the New Philosophers somehow succeed in *making* original utterances unclear in order to clear them up. This activity itself breaks down into two schools; one finds that all ordinary language is obscure, and can only be made clear by translating it into some artificial symbolism. These philosophers are called "ideal language men." A second school is anti-philosophical, and finds that all *philosophic* problems are generated by misunderstanding ordinary language. They "clarify" traditional philosophic problems by showing that there was no genuine problem, only a misuse or misunderstanding of ordinary language. These philosophers are called "ordinary

language men." Now the result of both schools is that the new philosopher need know in his professional capacity *absolutely nothing* except how *words* are used. For all Technical Philosophers feel that there are but two matters of concern to knowledge. There are the "facts," and there is the question of how to express these facts clearly. The Technical Philosopher prohibits himself professionally from arguing "facts." All facts are to be drawn from the "sciences," which is another department of the university. And so he has nothing to do but analyze *language,* in a professional indifference to facts. Most of "analysis" then consists of analyzing the language other and more traditional philosophers have used. Here there are no facts.

Now the second aspect of the whole matter is that the Technical Philosopher makes no syntheses himself, ie., he has nothing to say. This, of course, takes its toll on our mood. For as Technical Philosophers, we can never really say anything new by ourselves. Others have to say it first, and then we *analyze* what they have said. This means we can never speak first, and must wait for somebody else to provide a sentence or phrase which can then be analyzed. And too often it turns out that there is nothing to analyze. The first sentence was perfectly clear to all present except ourselves; and so our analyses have only the function of demonstrating the obvious or explaining the joke. Hence our bad temper. Further, our entire attitude toward sentences is *hostile;* we live in the mood of the hunter stalking the big kill, the phrase which is ambiguous or which contains, in the words of Gilbert Ryle, a "howler." This analytic hostility is, obviously, incompatible with love, with serenity, and with any comprehension of those meanings and subtleties which presuppose sympathy and love for their very sense. No wonder our brows are furrowed, our eyes narrow and glittering, our lips thin and compressed and already twisting into a smile of derision before the sentence is finished; we have detected a howler! The old style of serene sage has definitely disappeared from the scene. The ethic of the New

Philosopher was expressed by Morris Cohen in his famous reply to the question why he was always critical: "It is enough to clean the Augean stables." But then the question remains as to the definition of dirt; precisely what is to be cleaned out? The New Philosopher wishes to clean out everything except what the scientists say or what he supposes "common sense" to be. But there is a vast agreement that traditional philosophy is the very ordure which logical, scientific, and clear-headed thinking must flush away as speedily as possible. The British technical philosophers especially trust something they call "common sense"; their American counterparts dote on "science." But in all cases, the content of philosophy is not supplied by philosophy; Technical Philosophy has no content of its own. It is rather a gigantic hose designed to flush the stables of traditional philosophy. Or perhaps a flame thrower, turned not only on filth and confusion, but also stables, horses, and finally the flame-thrower himself. The Technical Philosopher is the point of pure negativity, an eye which would like to see pure light but cannot because of visible things. It is this final phase which is the death of philosophy as well as a darkening of the lucidity possible to the spirit. Philosophy has at last achieved the pure heights of having no content, nothing to say, and nothing to do except analyze the confusions in what others say into an unintelligible jargon of its own.

To ask a Technical Philosopher for his vision of the world is to throw him into the worst of embarrassments. It is hopelessly to misunderstand what philosophy now is. The philosopher's answer will not try to supply that vision, or even recognize its absence; rather it will analyze the meaning of your question in order to show that it really has no meaning at all. It is left for others to supply the vision.

In summary then, the Technical Philosopher analogizes himself to the scientist. He wishes to be brief, technical in style and subject matter, impersonal, unemotional, and unedifying. He does not expect the layman to understand what he says,

and would be slightly embarrassed if the layman did. He has nothing positive to offer, no vision of life or the world, no summary attitude or total view. His positive activity is to analyze statements made by others, but never in his professional role to make such original statements himself. He assumes that somehow or other the accumulation of these technical analyses in the library adds up to something of value. The New Philosopher does not wish to speak of matters of human concern. He only wishes to be clear about little things. He does not believe in his heart that one can be clear about big things, or that philosophy should address itself to human concern. One of the classical works most in disrepute today is Boethius' *Consolations of Philosophy*. The Technical Philosopher knows analysis will bring no consolation. He is not the pompous philosopher of the old style; rather he regards himself as a technician who "does philosophy" more or less in his office during school hours. Week ends are another matter, a vacation from philosophy.

Now this was not always so. For the longest stretch of its history, philosophy was, embarrassing as it is to Technical Philosophy, concerned precisely with large visions and the edifying. That is, it was concerned with the human situation and what was to be done about it. For traditional philosophy, as well as for religion, man was regarded as a suffering animal, not merely suffering in life from correctable ills, but suffering from life, from the intrinsic and inevitable ills. Philosophy did not specifically address itself to the particular evils in life, such as sickness, poverty, war, and tyranny. The point of view of philosophy was that even if all these were corrected, we should still be suffering spirits. In short, man seeks some way of saving the meaning of his life in spite of his death, in spite of his guilt, pain, and misery. Philosophy then had its own proper mode of salvation, which was not to live an imaginary life in some beyond, nor systematically to blind oneself to the necessary pain of living, but to comprehend the *meaning* of these

things. Philosophy has always been in a more or less gnostic tradition, by which man could save something from the wreck of his life by comprehending it. The mode of salvation offered by philosophy was called *wisdom*, and philosophy is named after its love. By wisdom alone can men rise above dumb and meaningless suffering to a comprehension of its meaning, and that comprehension was the comprehension of something eternal and blessed. Now, all of this is edifying, of course, and moves within the circle of ethical, religious, and esthetic categories. The various "answers" to the question of the "meaning" of life given in philosophy center on the notion of truth; and philosophizing implies as its necessary pre-condition as well as aim, an alteration in *attitude* toward life. And this is the pure edification worked by truth. The formulations of the end or meaning are various: "spectator of all time and existence," "the flight of the alone to the Alone," the "intellectual love of God," "*amor fati*," "participation in the Absolute Idea," etc. They are not so various, however, but what they do not express a common meaning, the sense that human life culminates ideally in a lucidity about itself and its highest concerns. Wisdom was never merely a doctrine, although it had its doctrines. It was rather a pursuit of that height of soul from which the last truth could be seen. Now obviously such matters are not fit topics for Ph.D. dissertations, class-room examinations, or "technical analyses." For it is not open to anyone equipped with nothing but the criteria of logic to comprehend the sense of philosophy; in addition, the "analyst" must have a trace of the love of wisdom himself. And so it is not surprising that Technical Philosophers find in traditional philosophy with its flights and soarings, its edification and enthusiasm, nothing but a muddle of banality and mystification. The ambiguities of traditional philosophy are maddening to the new philosophical specialists; but perhaps it was precisely these against whom the ancient doctrine wished to protect itself. How indeed can the same ultimate things be said to young and old

alike, to wise and foolish? Better to speak in enigmas which in their very strangeness might suggest a meaning different from that which meets the hasty eye.

Technical Philosophy steers clear of wisdom. Or worse, it is convinced that there isn't any, or if there is, it isn't the philosopher's business. And so the "muddled problems" of traditional philosophy are translated into clear ones, into problems which can be solved by technical means, by objective action rather than any inner transformation. The suffering of life is thus "analyzed" into a series of correctable ills. If it is disease you mean, then medicine will find the answer. If poverty, then social and economic measures are indicated. If ignorance, then more schooling. John Stuart Mill thought that these summed up human misery, and the remarkable thing in such an analysis is that not one requires for its solution an inner philosophic transformation of attitude toward life. One need only remain exactly as one is, see things exactly as they are now, and work out the answer upon which everyone can agree. The fact that no philosopher ever regarded his philosophy as a spurious medicine, economics, or schooling gave him no pause. They must have been muddled about their own real intent. And what is left over after all the medicine, wealth, and education have had their chance to work? A few minor matters such as death, guilt, and the meaninglessness which is always ready to rise up in even the happiest. And suppose disease, poverty, and ignorance could *eventually* be eliminated, as everyone must hope, what is to be done now when they are not?

Technical Philosophers are silent on these matters, or vaguely embarrassed. They have nothing to say. They have no vision, want none, and more or less identify philosophic vision with hallucination. As for "changes of attitudes," if these have any importance at all, there are experts for them too. The psychoanalyst is in best repute, but the flabbier Technical Philosophers feel that this is what the preacher might be for, with his tired old platitudes. In any event pure knowledge has

nothing to do here; it seeks absolute purity, absolute independence, and absolute irrelevance to anything anyone might conceivably be interested in. Thus has a noble discipline committed suicide.

III AND ART AND RELIGION

Philosophy as wisdom has been dying a long time; but what about art and religion? When we think of the images it once gave of the mystery of human life: Oedipus, Antigone, Medea, Hamlet, Lear, Faust, Ahab; or the gods, heroes, and horsemen of the Parthenon; the faces of Rembrandt, the crucifixions of Grünewald, El Greco. . . . And what were these but the human spirit seeking and giving expression to its ultimate clarity about its ultimate concerns? Here there was no question of "pure composition," of "pure expression," or even of the purely "esthetic." They are least of all "sensuous surfaces." The truth of the matter is that while these mysterious images are typically regarded as "art," they are just as much wisdom and religion. Now, the complaint is not that art today is "not as great" as it once was. It is true that it is not; but such judgments remain vacuous unless the question is transposed from the level of accusation to that of principle. There can be no question but that the human spirit potentially has the same eternal depths as always. If its results are incomparably more trivial, it is not due to lack of genius; but it may be due to certain directions taken individually and culturally, to certain *ideals* now dominant, which require examination in art as they do in philosophy. Is it accidental that the most creative painter in our day no longer seeks to give an image of the human reality, but contents himself with images of its distortion; and that when he is moved to express what he sees of life it comes out as the melodramatic slaughterhouse of Guernica? Or is it accidental that this passes for his "human concern," his "in-

sight" into the human reality? But since when has wisdom resided in an intensity of outrage over physical destruction? If we should finally lose our minds over malice, cruelty, and destruction would that be the ultimate achievement of insight and wisdom? The perception of evil some time ago was regarded as the bare *beginning of the problem.*

But then the contemporary arts are not noted for their images of the human reality. In place of such muddles, we find the ideal of "pure expression." The arts must free themselves from foreign emotions, associations, content, "reality," and become what? The purely optical, auditory, verbal? An entertainment for the senses? In literature it used to be Mallarmé, Gertrude Stein, and the puns of Joyce. But we needn't limit ourselves to the passé. The same phenomenon occurs whenever literature aspires toward pure style or whenever we see the emergence of the "professional writer." Professional artists of whatever sort are those whose profession is measured by skill in the manipulation of their respective media. The writer is measured by his ability to use words; but words, unfortunately, are symbols of something which is not words. That of which they are symbols is, of course, their content, but content for the professional is a matter of indifference. As a painter, he can equally well do a wine bottle, a scrap of newspaper, or the human face. And so indeed he can so long as the human face is seen as a composition of "lines and planes," since it has this and this alone in common with everything visible. And, so long as we are interested only in compositions of lines and planes, light and shadow, we may as well suppress the human face altogether; it is but a "literary association," or a "photographic" residue; pure creation will create with nothing but color and shape, and all it will create will be color and shape. The writer similarly will be able to write equally well about anything. His prose or poetry will be judged on its own merits; and what are these merits when we have abstracted from their reference to what lies out beyond

them? Nothing is left but their "rhythm," "organization," "color," "originality of expression," "style," in short, everything but their truth and content. It is as if one were to judge a dinner exclusively by the plates on which it was served.

And since it is not possible to remove all reference to the human reality, there will be a trace of interest left in the content, that is, in what is exhibited of the human spirit. But since there is now no communal religion or philosophy which might extend the private sensibility of the writer, he must, if he is honest, fall back on his private imagination and feelings; and here we see again and again the impoverishment which the purely private brings. The honest feelings which the artist finally discovers within himself insofar as he rejects what light philosophy and religion might ideally offer, are not higher or more sincere or deeper truths; most frequently they reduce themselves to our old friend, sex.

Without extending the discussion endlessly, the same phenomena can be indicated in the other arts. Music in its turn also desires to be pure music, pure composition, to have nothing to do with "emotion," which is always "extra-musical." When emotion is mentioned, the opponents of it point to the most flagrant examples of Tchaikovsky; is that what is wanted? Or perhaps program music, where the title and accompanying notes *tell* the listener what to feel? And since no one could argue for any such thing, the conclusion is drawn that emotion as such is foreign to music, or music has its own pure emotions. Now the composer is thought of as a species of engineer either tailoring his composition to one record side, to an accompanying film or, if these frankly external limits are abandoned, and he is a pure composer, then the "composition itself" dictates its own form. But, of course, notes and scales do not and can not dictate what is done with them, any more than words can dictate what is said with them. At best they set certain negative limits. The result is that "pure composition" is a radical absurdity, and as meaningless a phrase as "pure

expression." The only practical result of such slogans and phrases is to divert the attention of the composer from the significance that emotion *musically expressed* might have, from the possible depths of emotion, to a pursuit of "pure" music, or compositions which are as devoid of feeling as possible; this leaves us on the one hand with paper compositions, supposed to be deep because nothing whatsoever can be felt through what is heard and where the chief delights derive from conceptual patterns emerging from a study of the score, or on the other hand, the delights of purely *aural* contrasts, music which is little but orchestration, a composition of timbres, rhythms, and sudden dynamic shifts, an art of concocting thrills for the ear or tests for high-fidelity phonographs.

In our critical mood, we may as well look at what religion has become. Some men still take it seriously, bringing themselves to believe it still retains some trace of something or other of concern. But it can hardly be what is contemporary in contemporary religion which could command the slightest allegiance. For now we find the spectacle of a spiritual concern also trying to become a pure activity, and achieving little but absurdity. On the one hand, we find the universalistic tendency where each sect, confession, or denomination has lost confidence in its distinctive creed, and realizing that it is but one *mode* of religion, ashamed of its particularity, desires to become *religion as such*. "True" religion then from this standpoint is simply "having religion," a religion which is indifferently Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, as well as Ethical Culture, Unitarianism, Christian Science and, so as to be utterly free of "prejudice," Atheism as well. Or, on the other hand, sensing the absurdity of trying to speak a language which isn't any particular language, religion reverts to its ancient roots and becomes conservative, fundamentalistic, the religion of "our fathers," a religion of absolute faith in a Founder, Book, Church, or Tradition. Within this second tendency, enmeshed as it is with dogmas, beliefs, customs, and words of

two or three thousand years ago, or the synthetic concoctions of yesterday, incapable of winnowing the wheat from the chaff for fear of dissolving into an indeterminate religiosity, a peculiar doctrine emerges, that of "two truths." For now the critical examination of "human" reason is feared; there is the *sacred* truth, which must be believed in, assented to, to which one must be "committed," versus a "secular" truth which is but practical, merely scientific, and of course merely human and relative. The former is holy, and touches everything essential; the latter is useful, but subject to suspension by the higher, sacred truth. One *believes* in sacred truth; one *proves and demonstrates* secular truth. Everyone has seen the result of this particular predicament. Fundamentalistic religions pass imperceptibly and without the possibility of self-correction into the blindest of superstitions, the chief pattern of which is to see spiritual truths only as "miracles" in nature. Such a religion, since it cannot employ the demonstrable insights of reason except at its peril, has at its command no instrument whatsoever by which to distinguish the authentically spiritual from the childishly superstitious. Men are thought of as the "children" of God or, worse, of other men denominated "priests." If religion can use reason only to dissolve into a general religiosity, when it dismisses reason it tends to freeze into that impotence of the spirit called "committment," or "faith." The meaning of symbols is identified with the symbol itself, and the more preposterous the result the more intensely it must be "believed." Religion too in its contemporary forms is as dead as philosophy and art; for just as nothing is so characteristic of the contemporary philosophic mind as its indifference to the spirit, nothing is so characteristic of the contemporary religious mind as its indifference to both art and philosophy, and the resulting engorgement of an indigestible mass of unclarified and unclarifiable "beliefs." What else could result from an attitude where reason is regarded as "merely human" or relative, and inferior to the authentic voice of God

himself who must lack reason, and art is regarded as pious decor, at best capable of depicting allegorically stories and commitments fixed in advance and without the contribution of art? When will religion regard the contempt of reason and of art as *blasphemous?*

In sum, then, contemporary western culture in its most characteristic manifestations presents us with the spectacle of various functions of the spirit seeking to become autonomous activities, technical, professional, and separated from one another. The whole spirit is to be found in none of these activities, and eventually everyone at last becomes *bored* with them. There is, of course, a superficial activity in all three, and the statistics reveal an "increased interest" in them in the United States; but what figures could be more ambiguous in their meaning? For our part we find nothing significant or particularly valuable in frenetic efforts which express a distracted and bewildered spirit. In fact, it probably is the case that the more the spirit tries to divide itself, the more active it must become, the more frenzied, until it sinks at last into paralysis.

Now, to revert to our first considerations, the death of explicit culture has most important consequences. If the human spirit must live in the medium of culture which it creates for itself, when that medium no longer can command honest allegiance, the spirit reverts into its own dark potential nothingness. If the spirit finds nothing of its genuine concern clarified and articulated in philosophy, what can it do but shun reason as such, look upon it as merely verbal, irrelevant, and logic chopping? When philosophy disappears as an effective clarification of ultimate human concerns, religion becomes anti-philosophical, and sinks into blind commitment; and art reverts to pure expression, which means either an expression of the sensuous or the inexpressive as such. In the absence of philosophy, the individual human spirit sinks back into

a reliance upon the senses and the individual sciences for its light. When reason goes out, the senses and technical know-how are always ready to take over; they at least can operate without the effort at self-creation. When religion becomes preposterous, the honest spirit finds its concern in the instinctual and the appetites. They too need no effort to sustain them, and can provide a facsimile of life. When art no longer presents us with the image of the spirit, the spirit sinks back into the unexpressed; art becomes mere art, and expression or objectification is regarded as trivial. The inner life of the spirit is thought to be higher than its overt expressed life; and that inner life, distrusting expression as falsification, becomes mute and eventually shrinks to nothing. When culture becomes inauthentic the spirit reverts to the irrational, instinctual, dark and mute; this is as close to death as the spirit can come.

IV SOME DREAMS

Providing there is any truth in all of this, the next question is what is to be done? But before exploring our dreams, we should be well aware of our limits. A living and authentic culture is not the product of individuals nor can it be planned in advance, particularly on the basis of a dead culture; nor when it emerges, will it take any form necessarily recognizable to us today. There can be no question therefore of dictating where the free and concerned human spirit shall go. Nor of offering concrete suggestions, or attempting to create a new culture tomorrow. But perhaps it is not wholly foolish if we let our dreams wander a bit to explore at least some *directions*, counter to those embodied in our present culture. For while the communal spirit does not operate and should not operate by technical planning, neither is it an instinctual growth like that of coral colonies. It is in the last analysis *consciousness*. And consciousness has the distinctive property of wish-

ing to envisage its end, of taking thought of its goal while it acts. It is precisely the intent of contemporary culture which we find empty; it does admirably what it sets out to do, but is its aim anything of value?

The first remark then is negative. There is nothing viable in the present tendency toward the professionalization and isolation of spiritual functions. They dry up and become meaningless motions. Science in some of its problems can and must be specialized. But philosophy, religion, and art are not activities directed to specific finite aims but rather expressions of what is or should be a whole spirit. They are nothing but various functions of what is itself one. But this negative remark is insufficient.

Is the solution then to be found in an increasingly popular suggestion among educators, that these disciplines must be added to one another? But how can disciplines which are *set up* as separate be fructified by addition? Joint courses or combined curricula are mere shams if what are joined are themselves unjoinable. And, in addition, what profit is contemporary art to derive from contemporary philosophy or religion? None as I see it. And so with the other combinations of these disciplines. The matter lies deeper than this, and life is not generated by the addition of dead ingredients.

Nor is anything to be sought in revivals of the past, as I mentioned earlier. To revive the past is impossible and undesirable; even if it could be "revived," it carries within itself its own dialectic; we should be reverting to a simpler and happier age only to run through the course of history a second time, with minor variants. In short, there was an inner reason for our present predicament; the disease is not to be cured by reverting to an earlier phase. But more importantly, no living spirit can *imitate* anything; its life is precisely its creativity. Hence everything properly called "neo-," "neo-conservatism," "neo-liberalism," "neo-thomism," "neo-realism," "neo-symbol-

ism," "neo-primitivism," or "neo-whateverism" must be excluded from our attention.

But similarly, merely to notice the schizophrenia in the modern spirit is negative and insufficient. Nor will the "interrelation" of functions themselves be any new direction. To relate three functions of the spirit to one another may be a necessary condition for health but the substance is still lacking from our analysis just as it is from contemporary culture itself. If the functions can be defined as *concern*, *clarity*, and *expression*, joining them together still omits any mention of their proper reality: *what* is it that is to be clarified, with which the human spirit is concerned, and which must be expressed? What is the substance of the human spirit? Can the question of culture receive any answer whatsoever which ignores this most difficult of all questions? And while it is true obviously that the spirit *can* take an interest in *anything whatsoever*, still those casual and miscellaneous interests can not define its ultimate intent.

Now it is precisely this living substance which must be *created*. But, certain *general* things might be said in advance. For what could the substance be but the life of the spirit itself? In short, the human spirit is and must be concerned with itself and its life. Now this formula may seem too anthropocentric until it is realized that when the spirit is concerned with its own life it is also concerned with the *absolute context* of that life. There is no such thing as "merely human" life; life is precisely human to the extent that it seeks to relate itself to that which is not merely human but to what it can honestly regard as *ultimate*. And so the human spirit is concerned with its relation to what it sees as ultimate. And what if it sees nothing as ultimate? Then also *that* is its ultimate vision, and constitutes the absolute sense it makes of its life. Thus, with Hegel, it can be said that the human spirit is precisely that effort to clarify and express its ultimate concern, which concern

is precisely the sense it can make of itself. And therefore human culture is an attempt to make *sense* out of its concrete historical life, a sense which is lucid, ultimate, and expressed. Now the sense need not be and never is in any great culture a flattering of our desires or a consolation for whining, meanings which are sought only in the decay of culture. But ultimate sense it must be, if philosophy, religion, and art, and with them individual human lives, are not to relapse into the senseless.

My dream then is for a culture which again seeks to make ultimate sense out of the human spirit and its concern with an ultimate context. This would imply a philosophy which gave less attention to symbolic reformulations and would-be "technical problems" such as the problem of induction, the external world, other minds, sense-data, etc., but sought to clarify the concerns of the spirit. It would imply a religious sense which did not despise reason or did not harden itself within a commitment but could see the spirit in what it now regards as the "secular." And finally an art which expressed not expression itself but the image of the human spirit. Each of these functions can make indispensable contributions; but only when each works with its eyes on the others and also on their common substantial aim.

And it is here we must stop; for it is precisely the *content* of this new substance which can not be anticipated. It is exactly this future sense of reality which must be created, and created from deeper dimensions of the spirit than the current professionalized activities now envisage. In a word, the task as it appears now is for culture to create a new sense of reality within which we can live without either pretense or suffocation.

JOHN MOFFITT

The Apple

This was the apple that Eve offered him
With casual grace—so delicately hung
Amid small leaves before she gathered it
From the contorted limb
And smiled on it her enigmatic smile,
Looking at it in silence as if it were
Something apart, something to marvel at—
And so gave over to his tentative hand,
Turning his innocence by this short act
Into confusion, teaching him henceforth
To employ the solace of a stunted tree
That yielded inconclusiveness for shade,
Rather than yonder one
Whose shadow was all light, and under which
Unknowing he enjoyed perpetual birth:
This was the apple, ripe for his desire,
This that he absently received of her
As if bemused, and bit into, and saw
All things disfigured that were whole before,
And wandered out unblest from paradise
Across his fate, the prisoner of a whim,
Weighted beyond his time,

And doomed to blame and celebrate her choice
Through dusty spans of unrevealing years
Till, minded to redeem that first offense,
He should consume it whole and find once more
The naked stuff of his old innocence,
Locked at the apple's core.

LOUISE TOWNSEND NICHOLL

Tempo

Time is in every creature, nothing else
Imbues the being as this common pulse:
Comfort, oh, comfort for the body rocked
Within the rondure of the world's one clock,
Time silently perceptible as pace
Which gives the earth-entrusted spirit peace.

Increasingly the creature is aware
Of the companion current always near,
The underlying waters on whose tide
Is borne and balanced that strange fortitude
Which dwells embodied and with every sense
Knows time's own tempo as its circumstance.

ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER

A Tale of Two Liars

A lie can only thrive on truth; lies, heaped one upon another, lack substance. Let me tell you how I manipulated two liars by pulling the strings, making them dance to my tune.

The woman of the pair, Glicka Genendel, arrived in Janov several weeks before Passover, claiming to be the widow of the Zosmir rabbi; she was childless, she said, and anxious to remarry. She was not required to participate first in the leverate marriage ceremony, she explained, since her husband had been an only son. She was settling in Janov because a soothsayer had prophesied that she would meet a mate in this town. She boasted that her late husband had studied the Talmud with her, and, to prove it, she sprinkled her conversation with quotations. She was a source of constant wonder to the townspeople. True, she was no beauty. Her nose sloped like a ram's horn, but she did have a pleasantly pale complexion, and large, dark eyes; in addition, her chin was pointed and her tongue glib. There was a bounce to her walk, and she scattered witticisms wherever she went.

No matter what occurred, she could remember a similar experience; for every sorrow, she offered comfort, for every illness, a remedy. She was dazzling in her high-buttoned shoes, woolen dress, fringed silk shawl, and head-band festooned

with precious gems. There was slush on the ground, and so she skipped nimbly from stone to stone and plank to plank, holding her skirt daintily in one hand, and her satchel in the other. She brought joy wherever she went, although she did solicit donations, but the donations were not for herself, God forbid. What she got, she turned over to brides and indigent mothers-to-be. Because she was such a doer of good deeds, she boarded at the inn free of charge. The guests enjoyed her quips and yarns, and, you may be sure, the innkeeper lost nothing by the arrangement.

She was immediately showered with proposals, and she accepted them all. In almost no time, the town's widowers and divorcees were at each other's throats, each determined to have this remarkable "catch" for himself. Meanwhile, she ran up bills for dresses and underclothing, and dined well on roast squab and egg-noodles. She was also active in community affairs, helping in the preparation of the mill for Passover, examining the sheaves of Paschal wheat, assisting in the baking of the matzoths, joking with the bakers as they kneaded, rolled, perforated, poured, and cut. She even went to the rabbi so that the ceremony of selling the leavened bread which she had left behind in Zosmir could be performed. The rabbi's wife invited Glicka Genendel to the Seder. She came adorned in a white satin gown and heavy with jewelry, and chanted the Haggadah as fluently as any man. Her coquetry made the rabbi's daughters and daughters-in-law jealous. The widows and divorcees of Janov were simply consumed with rage. It seemed as if this crafty woman would snare for herself the wealthiest widower in town, and, without as much as a by-your-leave, become the richest matron in Janov. But it was I, the Arch-Devil, who saw to it that she was supplied with a mate.

He showed up in Janov during Passover, arriving in an ornate *britska* which had been hired for the occasion. His story was that he had come from Palestine to solicit charity,

and he, like Glicka, had also recently lost his spouse. His trunk was banded with brass; he smoked a hookah, and the bag in which he carried his prayer shawl was made of leather. He put on two sets of phylacteries when he prayed, and his conversation was sprinkled with Aramaic. His name was Reb Yomtov, he said. He was a tall, thin man, with a pointed beard, and though he dressed like any other townsman in caftan, fur cap, breeches, and high hose, his swarthy face and burning eyes brought to mind a Sephardic Jew from Yemen or Persia. He insisted that he had seen with his own eyes Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat, and that the splinters he sold at six farthings a piece had been carved from one of its planks. He also had in his possession coins over which Yehudah the Chassid had cast a spell, along with a sack of chalky earth from Rachel's grave. This sack, apparently, had no bottom as it never grew empty.

He too put up at the inn, and soon he and Glicka Genendel were friends, to their mutual delight. When they traced back their ancestry, they discovered that they were distant relatives, both descended from some saint or other. They would chat with each other and plot deep into the night. Glicka Genendel hinted that she found Reb Yomtov attractive. She didn't have to spell it out for him—they understood each other.

Those two were in a hurry. That is—I, Sammael, spurred them on. So the Articles of Engagement were drawn up, and after the prospective bride had signed, her husband-to-be gave as his gifts an engagement ring and a necklace of pearls. He had received them, he said, from his first wife who had been an heiress in Baghdad. In return, Glicka Genendel presented to her betrothed a sapphire-studded cover for the Sabbath loaf which she had inherited from her late father, the famous philanthropist.

Then, just at the end of Passover, there was a great to-do in town. One of the very substantial citizens, a Reb Kathriel Abba, complained to the rabbi that Glicka Genendel was

engaged to him and that he had given her thirty gulden for a trousseau.

The widow was enraged at these allegations.

"It's just spite," she said, "because I wouldn't sin with him."

She demanded that her slanderer pay her thirty gulden as restitution. But Reb Kathriel Abba stood by the truth of his accusation, and offered to take an oath before the Holy Scroll. Glicka Genendel was just as determined to defend her statement in front of the Black Candles. However an epidemic was raging in the town at the time and the women were fearful that all this oath-taking would end up costing them the lives of their children, and so the rabbi finally ruled that Glicka was obviously a good woman and he commanded that Reb Kathriel Abba apologize and pay the settlement.

Immediately after that, a beggar arrived from Zosmir and surprised everyone by explaining that the late rabbi's wife could not be visiting in Janov, since she was in Zosmir, God be praised, with her husband who was not the least bit dead. There was great excitement and the townspeople rushed to the inn to punish the fraudulent widow for her infamous lie. She was not at all upset and merely explained that she had said "Kosmir," not "Zosmir." Once more all was well, and the preparations for the wedding continued. The wedding had been set for the thirty-third day of the Feast of Omer.

But there was one additional incident before the wedding. For one reason or another, Glicka Genendel thought it wise to consult a goldsmith about the pearls which Reb Yomtov had given her. The jeweler weighed and examined the pearls and declared them to be paste. The wedding was off, Glicka Genendel announced, and informed the bridegroom to that effect. He speedily rose to his own defense; in the first place, the jeweler was incompetent; there couldn't be any doubt of that since he Reb Yomtov had personally paid ninety-five drachmas for the pearls in Stamboul; in the second place,

immediately after the ceremony, God willing, he would replace the counterfeits with the genuine article, and finally he wanted to point out, just in passing, that the cover Glicka Genendel had given him was not embroidered with sapphires, but with beads, and beads, mind you, that sold for three groshen a dozen in the market. Therefore the two liars were quits, and with their differences patched up, stood under the marriage canopy together.

However, later that night, the delegate from the Holy Land discovered that he had not married a spring chicken. She took off her wig, releasing a mass of gray hair. A hag stood before him, and he ransacked his brain to find a solution. But since he was a professional he didn't show his irritation. Nevertheless, Glicka Genendel was taking no chances; to make sure of her husband's love, she fashioned a love charm. She plucked hair from a private place and wove it around the button of her dear one's dressing gown; in addition, she washed her breasts in water which she then poured into a potion for him to drink. As she went about performing this significant business, she sang:

As a tree has its shadow,
Let me have my love.
As wax melts in a fire,
Let him burn to my touch.
Now and forever,
In me be his trust,
Trapped in desire
Until all turn to dust.
Amen. Selah.

"Is there any reason why we should stay in Janov?" Reb Yomtov asked when the seven days of nuptial benediction

were over. "I would prefer to return to Jerusalem. After all we have a fine house waiting for us near the Wailing Wall. But first I must visit a few towns in Poland to make collections. There are my yeshiva students to think of and then also funds are required to erect a House of Prayer on the grave of Reb Simon Bar Johai. The last is a very expensive project and will require a good deal of money."

"What towns will you visit? And how long will you be away?" Glicka Genendel asked.

"I intend to stop off at Lemberg, Brod, and some of the other towns in their immediate vicinity. I should be back by midsummer, God willing. We should be in Jerusalem in time to celebrate the High Holy days."

"That's fine," she said. "I'll use the time to visit the graves of my dear ones and to say goodbye to my relatives in Kalish. God speed, and don't forget the way home."

They embraced warmly, and she presented him with some preserves and cookies, and a jar of chicken fat. She also gave him an amulet to protect him from highwaymen, and he set off on his journey.

When he arrived at the River San he halted, turned his carriage around, and drove off on the Lublin road. His destination was Piask, a small town on the outskirts of Lublin. The inhabitants of Piask had a fine reputation. It was said that you did not put on a prayer shawl there, if you didn't want your phylacteries stolen; the point being that in Piask you dared not cover your eyes even that long. Well, it was in that splendid place that the legate sought out the assistant rabbi and had the scribe write out a Bill of Divorcement for Glicka Genendel. He then sent the papers by messenger to Janov. The whole thing cost Reb Yomtov five gulden, but he considered it money well spent.

This done, Reb Yomtov rode into Lublin and preached at the famous Marshall Synagogue. He had a tongue of silver, and chose a Lithuanian accent for his sermon. Beyond the

Cossack Steppes and the land of the Tartars, he explained, dwelt the last of the Chazars. This ancient people were cave-dwellers, fought with bow and arrow, sacrificed in the Biblical manner, and spoke Hebrew. He had in his possession a letter from their chieftain, Yedidi Ben Achitov, a grandson of the Chazar king, and he exhibited a parchment scroll which bore the name of many witnesses. These distant Jews who were waging such a stubborn war against the enemies of Israel and who were the only ones who knew the secret road to the river Sambation, were in dire need of funds, he pointed out, and he went through the crowd collecting money for them.

As he circulated among the people, he was approached by a blond-haired young man who asked him his name.

"Solomon Simeon," Reb Yomtov replied, merely lying out of habit.

The young man wished to know where he was staying, and when he heard that it was at the inn, he shook his head.

"Such a needless expense," he said. "And why associate with riff-raff? I have a large house, God be praised. In it there is a guest room and holy books to spare. I am at business all day, and I have no children (may you be spared my fate) so you won't be disturbed. My wife would be honored to have a scholar in the house, and my mother-in-law, who is visiting us, is a learned woman, and a matchmaker in the bargain. Should you need a wife, she will find you one, and a real catch, I can assure you."

"Alas, I am a widower," the spurious Reb Solomon Simeon said, putting on a glum expression, "but I cannot think of marriage at this time. My dear wife was a true-grandchild of Rabbi Sabbatai Kohen, and though she is gone three years now, I cannot forget her." And Reb Yomtov continued to sigh mournfully.

"Who are we to question the wisdom of the Almighty?" the

young man asked. "It is written in the Talmud that one must not grieve too long."

On their way to the young man's house, the two carried on a lively discussion concerning the Torah, with occasional digressions to more worldly matters. The young man was amazed at his guest's knowledge and intellect.

As he mounted the steps of the young man's house, Reb Yomtov was almost overcome by the odors he smelled. His mouth watered. Fowl was being roasted, cabbage boiled. "Praised be His name," he thought to himself, "Lublin looks like it will be very satisfactory. If his wife wants a learned man, she will certainly have one. And who can tell, I may be strong enough to produce a miracle, and they may yet have a son and heir. Nor if a rich bride becomes available, will I turn her down either."

The door swung open, admitting Reb Yomtov to a kitchen whose walls were covered with copper pans. An oil lamp hung from the ceiling. In the room were two women, the lady of the house and a servant girl; they stood at the stove in which a goose was being roasted. The young man introduced his guest (it was obvious that he was proud to have brought home such a man) and his wife smiled warmly at Reb Yomtov.

"My husband does not praise everyone so highly," she said. "You must be a very unusual man. It is good to have you here. My mother is in the dining room, and will make you welcome. Should you want anything, don't hesitate to let her know."

Reb Yomtov thanked his hostess, and walked in the direction she had indicated, but his host lingered for a moment in the kitchen, no doubt anxious to amplify further on what a distinguished visitor they were entertaining.

Piously Reb Yomtov kissed the *mezuzah*, and opened the door to the adjoining room. What lay beyond was even better than what had gone before. The room which he was entering

was most elegantly furnished. But then he stopped. What was this he saw? His heart dropped, and words failed him. No, it couldn't be; he was dreaming. He was seeing a mirage. No, it was witchcraft. For there stood his former bride, his Janov sweetheart. There could be no doubt about it. This was Glicka Genendel.

"Yes, it is me," she said, and once more he heard that familiar shrewish voice.

"What are you doing here?" he asked. "You said you were going to Kalish."

"I have come to visit my daughter."

"Your daughter! You told me you had no children."

"I thought you were on your way to Lemberg," she said. "Didn't you get the divorce papers?"

"What divorce papers?"

"Those I sent by messenger."

"I tell you I've received nothing. May all my bad dreams be visited on your head."

Reb Yomtov saw how things were: he had fallen into a trap; there was no means of escape. His host would enter at any moment, and he would be exposed.

"I have been guilty of a great foolishness," he said, summoning up all of his courage. "These people are under the impression that I am a traveler just returned from the land of the Chazars. It's to your interest to protect me. You don't want to have me driven out of town and remain a deserted wife forever. Don't say anything, and I swear by my beard and earlocks that I'll make it worthwhile for you."

Glicka Genendel had a good many abusive things that she was longing to say, but just then her son-in-law entered. He was beaming.

"We have a most distinguished guest in the house," he said. "This is Reb Solomon Simeon of Lithuania. He has just returned from a visit to the Chazars, who, as you know, live very close to the Lost Ten Tribes." And to Reb Yomtov he ex-

plained, "My mother-in-law is to depart shortly for the Holy Land. She is married to a Reb Yomtov, a delegate from Jerusalem and a descendant of the house of David. Possibly you've heard of him?"

"I most certainly have," Reb Yomtov said.

By this time, Glicka Genendel had recovered her composure sufficiently to say, "Do be seated, Reb Solomon Simeon, and tell us all about the Lost Ten Tribes? Did you actually see the River Sambation hurling stones? Were you able to cross over safely and meet the king?"

But the moment her son-in-law left the room, she was on her feet hissing, "Well, what about it, Reb Solomon Simeon? Where is my payment?"

Before he had a chance to say anything, she grabbed him by his lapels and thrust her hand into the inside pocket of his coat. There she found a pouch of ducats, and it took only a very few seconds for her to transfer them to her stocking. For good measure, she pulled a handful of hair from his beard.

"I'm going to teach you a lesson," she said. "Don't think that you're going to get away from here in one piece. Your descendants to the tenth generation will beware of being such an outrageous liar." And she spat in his face. He took out his handkerchief and wiped himself off. Then the lady of the house and the servant girl came in and set the table for supper. In honor of the visitor, the host descended to the wine cellar to fetch a bottle of dry wine.

III

After supper, Glicka Genendel made up a bed for the guest.

"Now get in there," she said, "and I don't want you to do so much as stir a whisker. After the others are asleep, I'll be back for a little chat."

And to prevent him from escaping she impounded his overcoat, cap, and shoes. Reb Yomtov said his prayers and went

to bed. He lay there trying to think of some way out of his predicament; and it was at this point that I, the Evil One, materialized.

"Why hang around here like a trussed calf awaiting the slaughterer?" I said. "Open the window and run."

"Just how am I to manage that," he asked, "with no clothes or shoes?"

"It's warm enough outside," I told him. "You're not going to get sick. Just find your way to Piask, and once there, you'll make out all right. Anything is better than remaining with this termagant."

As usual he heeded my counsel. He rose from the bed, threw open the window, and began the descent. I saw to it, however, that there was an obstacle in his path, and he lost his footing and fell, spraining his ankle. For a moment he lay on the ground unconscious. But I revived him.

He forced himself to his feet. It was a very dark night. Barefoot, half-naked, limping, he started off down the Piask road.

While this was going on, Glicka Genendel was occupied otherwise. She could hear the snores of her daughter and son-in-law coming from their bedroom, and so she got up, put on her wrapper, and tiptoed to the chamber of her best beloved. To her astonishment she saw that the bed was unoccupied and the window open. Before she could scream, however, I appeared to her.

"Now what's the sense of that?" I asked her. "It's not a crime for a man to get out of bed, is it? He hasn't stolen anything. The fact is it's you who've done the stealing, and if he's caught, he'll tell about the money you took from him. You're the one who'll suffer."

"Well, what shall I do?" she asked me.

"Don't you see? Steal your daughter's jewel box; then begin to yell. If he's apprehended he'll be the one who's thrown in jail. That way your revenge is certain."

The idea appealed to her and she took my advice. A few

shrieks and she had awakened the household. Right away it was discovered that the jewelry was missing, and the ensuing din brought in the neighbors. A posse of men, equipped with lanterns and cudgels, took off after the thief.

I saw that the noble young altruist was quite shaken by what his guest had done, and so I took the opportunity to taunt him.

"You see what happens when you bring a guest home," I pointed out.

"So long as I live there'll be no more poor strangers in this house," he promised.

By this time the posse was busy searching the streets for the fugitive. They were joined by the night watch and the magistrate's constables. It wasn't very difficult to hunt down Reb Yomtov, lame and half-clothed as he was. They found him seated under a balcony, futilely attempting to set his dislocated ankle. Immediately they began to beat him with their clubs despite his protestations of innocence.

"Of course," they laughed, "innocent men always leave a house by the window in the middle of the night."

His hostess followed, screaming invectives at every step. "Thief! Murderer! Criminal! My jewels! My jewels!"

He kept repeating that he knew nothing about the robbery, but to no avail. The guards threw him into a cell and wrote down the names of the witnesses.

Glicka Genendel returned to bed. It was sweet to lie under the warm comforter while one's enemy rotted in jail. She thanked God for the favor he had bestowed upon her, and promised to donate eighteen groshen to charity. All the running about had exhausted her, and she longed for sleep, but I came to her and would not permit her to rest.

"Why such great elation?" I inquired. "Yes, he's in jail all right, but now you won't get a divorce from him. He'll tell everyone whose husband he is, and you and your whole family will be disgraced."

"What should I do?" she asked.

"He sent you a divorce by a messenger to Janov. Go to Janov and get the papers. First of all, you'll be rid of him. Secondly, if you're not here, you can't be called as a witness. And if you're not at the trial, who will believe his story? When the excitement is over, you can return."

My argument convinced her, and the very next morning she arose at sunrise, and explained to her daughter that she was off to Warsaw to meet her husband, Reb Yomtov. Her daughter was still in a state of shock and so did not put up much resistance. Actually Glicka Genendel wanted to put back the jewelry she had stolen from her daughter, but I talked her out of it.

"What's the rush?" I asked. "If the jewels are found, they'll let the liar out, and who's that going to harm, but you? Let him stay behind bars. He'll learn that one doesn't trifle with such a fine, upstanding woman as you."

So to make a long story short, Glicka Genendel set out for Janov, with the intention of either meeting the messenger there in person, or at least getting some clue as to his whereabouts. When she walked into the market place, everyone stared at her. They all knew about the messenger and the divorce papers. She sought out the rabbi and the rabbi's wife snubbed her; his daughter, who was the one who let her in, did not bid her welcome, nor ask her to sit down. But, at any rate, the rabbi gave her the facts: a messenger had come to Janov to present her with divorce papers, but not being able to locate her in town, had left. He remembered that the messenger was named Leib and that he came from Piask. Leib, he recalled, had yellow hair and a red beard. When Glicka Genendel heard this, she immediately engaged a carriage to take her to Piask. There was no point in staying in Janov any longer as the townspeople avoided her.

Reb Yomtov was still in jail. He sat surrounded by thieves

and murderers. Vermin-infested rags were his only clothing Twice daily he fed on bread and water.

And then, at length, the day of his trial rolled round, and he stood before the judge, who turned out to be an irascible man who was hard of hearing.

"Well, what about the jewels?" the judge growled. "Did you steal them?"

Reb Yomtov pleaded not guilty. He was no thief.

"All right, you're no thief. But why did you run out of the house in the middle of the night?"

"I was running away from my wife," Reb Yomtov explained.

"What wife?" the judge asked angrily.

Patiently Reb Yomtov began his elucidation: The mother-in-law of the man at whose house he had been staying was none other than his, Reb Yomtov's wife, but the judge did not allow him to proceed further.

"That's a fine story," he shouted. "You certainly are a brazen-faced liar."

Nevertheless, he did send for Glicka Genendel. Since she had already left town, her daughter came in her place, and testified that it was quite true that her mother was married, but that it was to a highly respectable man from Jerusalem, the famous scholar Reb Yomtov. As a matter of fact, she was even then on her way to meet him.

The prisoner lowered his eyes and cried out, "I am Reb Yomtov."

"You Reb Yomtov," the woman shouted. "Everyone knows you are Reb Solomon Simeon." And she began to curse him with the choicest oaths at her command.

"The farce is over," the judge said sternly. "We have enough scoundrels here already. We don't need any foreign importations." And he decreed that the prisoner be given twenty-five lashes, and then hanged.

It did not take long for the Jews of Lublin to hear of the

decree; one of their own, and a scholar at that, was to be hanged, and immediately they sent a delegation to intercede with the governor in the prisoner's behalf. But this time they could accomplish nothing.

"Why are you Jews always so anxious to buy back your criminals?" the governor asked. "We know how to deal with ours, but you let yours off scot free. No wonder there are so many crooks among you." And he had the delegation chased off by dogs, and Reb Yomtov remained in jail.

He lay in his cell, chained hand and foot, awaiting execution. As he tossed about on his bundle of straw, mice darted out from chinks in the wall, and gnawed at his limbs. He cursed them and sent them scurrying back to cover. Outside the sun shone, but in his dungeon all was black as night. His situation, he saw, was comparable to that of the Prophet Jonah when he had been deep inside the stomach of the whale. He opened his lips to pray, but I, Satan the Destroyer, came to him and said, "Are you stupid enough to still believe in the power of prayer? Remember how the Jews prayed during the Black Plague, and, nevertheless, how they perished like flies? And what about the thousands the Cossacks butchered? There was enough prayer, wasn't there, when Chmielnicki came? How were those prayers answered? Children were buried alive, chaste wives raped—and later their bellies ripped open and cats sewed inside. Why should God bother with your prayers? He neither hears nor sees. There is no judge. There is no judgment."

This is the way I spoke to him, after the fashion of the philosophers, and shortly his lips had lost their inclination to pray.

"How can I save myself?" he asked. "What is your advice?"

"Become a convert," I told him. "Let the priests sprinkle a little holy water over you. That way you can stay alive and have revenge in the bargain. You do want to revenge yourself, don't you, on your enemies? And who are your enemies but the

Jews, the Jews who are quite willing to see you hang because of the lies that a Jewess has invented to destroy you?"

He listened carefully to these words of wisdom and when the turnkey brought him his food, told him that he had a desire to be converted. This news was brought to the priests, and a monk was dispatched to interview the prisoner.

"What is your motive in wanting to become a Christian?" the monk inquired. "Is it merely to save your skin? Or has Jesus Christ entered your heart?"

It had happened while he was asleep, Reb Yomtov explained. His grandfather had come to him in a vision. Jesus, the saintly man had told him, was among the most exalted in Heaven, and sat with the Patriarchs in Paradise. No sooner did Reb Yomtov's words reach the bishop, than the prisoner was taken out of his cell, and washed and combed. Dressed in clean raiment, he was put in the company of a friar who instructed him in the catechism; and while he learned of the significance of the host and the cross, he dined on delicious food. What is more, the best families in the neighborhood came to visit him. Then, at last, he was led at the head of a procession, to the monastery and converted to Christianity. Now he was certain that his troubles were over, and that he would shortly be a free man, but instead he was led back to his cell.

"When one is sentenced to death," the priest told him, "there's no way out. But don't be sorrowful; you will go with a clean soul into the next world."

Now Reb Yomtov realized that he had cut himself off from all of his worlds. His sorrow was so extreme that he lost his power of speech and spoke not one word as the hangman tightened the noose around his neck.

IV

On her way from Janov to Piask, Glicka Genendel stopped to visit a relative. She spent the Sabbath and Pentecost in the small village in which this relative lived. As she helped her hostess decorate the windows for the holiday, she munched on butter-cookies. And then the day after Pentecost she resumed her journey to Piask.

Of course, it never entered her mind that she was already a widow. Nor did it occur to her, you may be sure, that she was walking into a trap, a trap that I had baited. She traveled leisurely, stopping at all the inns on the way, stuffing herself with egg-cookies and brandy. She did not forget the coachman, but bought him egg-cookies and brandy as well, and to show his gratitude, he arranged a comfortable seat for her in the wagon, and helped her to mount and alight. He looked her over lecherously, but she couldn't bring herself to lie with so low a fellow.

The weather was mild. The fields were green with wheat. Storks circled overhead; frogs croaked, crickets chirped; butterflies were everywhere. At night as the wagon rolled through the deep forest, Glicka Genendel stretched herself out on the matting like a queen, and loosened her blouse, and permitted the soft breezes to cool her skin. She was well along in years, but her body had resisted old age, and passion still burnt in her as brightly as ever. Already she was making plans to get a new husband.

Then early one morning she arrived in Piask, just as the merchants were opening their shops. The grass was still wet with dew. Troops of barefoot girls, carrying ropes and baskets, were on their way into the forest to gather firewood and mushrooms. Glicka Genendel sought out the assistant rabbi and asked him what he knew of her divorce. He received her cordially, explaining that the Bill of Divorcement had been

drawn up by him personally and signed in his presence. The papers were now in the hands of Leib the coachman. When Glicka Genendel suggested that the beadle be sent to fetch the man, the assistant rabbi made a counter proposal.

"Why don't you go to his house yourself?" he said. "Then you can settle the whole thing with him personally."

So Glicka Genendel went to Leib's house which was a hut that squatted on a hilltop behind the slaughterhouses. The roof of the building was made of rotting straw, and the windows were covered with cow-bladders instead of glass. Although it was summer, the earth around the house was wet and slimy, but this did not bother the ragged, half-naked children who were entertaining themselves there with worn-out brooms and poultry feathers. Scrawny goats, as grimy as pigs, scurried about this way and that.

Leib the coachman had neither wife nor children. He was a short, broad-shouldered man, with large hands and feet; there was a growth on his forehead and his beard was a fiery red. He was dressed in a short jacket and straw shoes; on his head he wore the lining of a cap which could not quite conceal his bristling tufts of yellow hair.

The sight of him repelled Glicka Genendel, but, nevertheless, she said, "Are you Leib?"

"Well, we can be sure of one thing, you're not Leib," he answered insolently.

"Do you have the divorce papers?"

"What business is that of yours?" he wanted to know.

"I am Glicka Genendel. The divorce was drawn up for me."

"That's your story," he said. "How do I know you're telling me the truth? I don't see your name written on your forehead."

Glicka Genendel realized that this was going to be a difficult man to deal with, and she asked, "What's the matter? Are you after money?—Don't worry I'll give you a handsome tip."

"Come back tonight," he said.

And when she inquired why that was necessary, he told her that one of his horses was dying, and he couldn't bear any further conversation. He conducted her into an alleyway. There lay an emaciated nag with a mangy skin, foam frothing from its mouth, its stomach rising and falling like a bellows. Droves of flies buzzed around the dying creature, and overhead were circling crows, cawing as they waited.

"Very well, I'll come back this evening," Glicka Genendel said, now thoroughly disgusted. And her high buttoned shoes moved as fast as she could make them go, taking her away from the ruin and poverty.

It just happened that the night before the Piask thieves had been out on business; they had invaded Lenchic with carts and covered wagons, and had emptied the stores. It had been the evening before market day and so there had been more than enough goods to take. But this rich haul had not been sufficient to satisfy the raiders; they had also broken into the church and had divested it of its gold chains, crowns, plates, and jewels. The holy statues had been left naked. Then they had beaten a hasty retreat homewards, and, as a matter of fact, the horse that Glicka Genendel had seen expiring had been a casualty of the expedition; it had been whipped so mercilessly during the withdrawal that it had collapsed as soon as the robbers had reached home.

Of course, Glicka Genendel knew nothing of this. She went to an inn and ordered a roast chicken. To get the sight of the dying horse out of her mind, she drank a pint of mead. Inevitably, she made friends with all the male guests, inquiring of each his name, home town, and business in this vicinity. Inevitably also, she spoke of her background: her noble descent, her knowledge of Hebrew, her wealth, her jewels, her skill at cooking, sewing, and crocheting. Then when dinner was finished she went to her room and took a nap.

She awoke to find that the sun was setting and that the cows were being driven home from pasture. From the chimneys of

the village smoke was issuing as the housewives prepared the evening meal.

Once more Glicka Genendel took the path that led to Leib's. When she entered the house she left behind the purple dusk, and found herself in a night that was almost as black as the inside of a chimney. There was only one small candle burning—inside of a shard. She could just make out Leib who sat astride an inverted bucket. He was mending a saddle. Leib was not a thief himself; he just drove for the thieves.

Glicka Genendel began to talk business immediately, and he took up his old complaint. "How do I know that it's your divorce?"

"Here take these two gulden and stop this nonsense," she said.

"It's not a question of money," he grumbled.

"What's eating you, anyway?" she wanted to know.

He hesitated for a moment.

"I am a man too," he said, "not a dog. I like the same things everyone else does." And he winked lecherously and pointed toward a bench-bed heaped with straw. Glicka Genendel was almost overcome with disgust, but I, the Prince of Darkness, hastened to whisper in her ear, "It doesn't pay to haggle with such an ignoramus."

She begged him to give her the divorce papers first. It was merely a question of lessening the sin. Didn't he see that it would be better for all concerned if he went to bed with a divorcee rather than a married woman? But he was too shrewd for that.

"Oh, no," he said, "as soon as I serve you with the papers, you'll change your mind."

He bolted the door and put out the candle. She wanted to scream but I muffled her voice. Oddly enough she was only half afraid; the other half of her was alive with lust. Leib pulled her down onto the straw; he stank of leather and horses. She lay there in silence and astonishment.

That such a thing should happen to me! she marvelled to herself.

She did not know that it was I, the Arch-Fiend, who stoked her blood and muddled her reason. Outside destruction already lay in wait for her.

Suddenly there was the sound of horsemen. The door was splintered open as if by a hurricane, and dragoons and guardsmen, carrying torches, burst into the room. All this happened so quickly that the adulterers did not even get a chance to stop what they were doing. Glicka Genendel screamed and fainted.

This foray had been led by the Lenchic squire himself who came with his troops to punish the thieves. His men broke into the homes of all known criminals. An informer accompanied the platoon. Leib wilted at the first blow and confessed that he was a driver for the gang. Two soldiers hustled him out, but before they left one of them asked Glicka Genendel, "Well, whore, who are you?"

And he ordered that she be searched.

Of course, she protested that she knew nothing of the sacking of Lenchic, but the informer said, "Don't listen to that tart!" He thrust his hand inside her bosom and drew out a treasure trove: her daughter's jewelry and Reb Yomtov's pouch of gold. Under the glow of the torches, the ducats, diamonds, sapphires, and rubies gleamed wickedly. Now Glicka Genendel could not doubt that misfortune had overtaken her, and she threw herself at the squire's feet, begging for mercy. But despite her entreaties she was clapped into irons and taken along with the other thieves to Lenchic.

At her trial, she swore that the jewels were her own. But the rings did not fit her fingers, nor the bracelets her wrists. She was asked how much money was in the pouch, but she did not know because Reb Yomtov had coins from Turkey in his hoard. When the prosecutor wanted to know where she had obtained the ducats, she replied, "From my husband."

"And where is your husband?"

"In Lublin," she blurted out in her confusion, "in prison."

"The husband is a jailbird," the prosecutor said. "And she is a whore. The jewelry is obviously not hers, and she doesn't even know how much money is in her possession. Is there any doubt about the conclusion?"

Everyone agreed that there was not.

Now Glicka Genendel saw that her chances were indeed slim, and it occurred to her that her only hope was to announce that she had a daughter and son-in-law in Lublin, and that the jewelry belonged to her daughter. But I said to her, "First of all, no one's going to believe you. And suppose they do, look what happens. They fetch your daughter here and she finds out that not only have you stolen her jewelry, but also that you've fornicated with that scab-head like a common harlot. The disgrace will kill her, and so you'll have your punishment anyway. Incidentally, Reb Yomtov will be released, and believe me, he'll find your situation amusing. No, better keep quiet. Rather perish than yield to your enemies."

And although my advice led to the abyss, she did not object, for it is well known that my people are vain and will lay down their lives for their vanity. For what is the pursuit of pleasure but pride and delusion?

So Glicka Genendel was sentenced to the gallows.

The night before the execution I came to her and urged her to become a convert, just as I had in the case of the late, unlamented Reb Yomtov, but she said, "Is it any greater honor to have a convert for a mother than a prostitute? No, I'll go to my death a good Jewess."

Don't think I didn't do my best! I pleaded with her over and over again, but, as it is written: A female has nine measures of stubbornness.

The following day, a gallows was erected in Lenchic. When the town's Jews learned that a daughter of Israel was to be hanged, they became frantic and petitioned the Squire. But a

church had been pillaged, and he would not grant mercy. And so from the surrounding areas the peasants and gentry drove in, converging on the place of execution in coaches and wagons. Hog-butchers hawked salamis. Beer and whiskey were guzzled.

A darkness fell upon the Jews, and they closed their shutters at mid-day. Just before the execution, there was a near-riot among the peasants as to who would stand closest to the gallows in order to get a piece of the rope for a good luck charm.

First they hanged the thieves, Leib the coachman among them. Then Glicka Genendel was led up the steps. Before the hood was placed over her head, they asked her if she had a final request, and she begged that the rabbi be summoned to hear her confession. He came, and she told him the true story. It was probably the first time in her life she had ever told the truth. The rabbi recited the Confession for her and promised her Paradise.

It seems, however, that the Lenchic rabbi had little influence in Heaven because before Glicka Genendel and Reb Yomtov were admitted to Paradise, they had to atone for every last sin. No allowances are made up there for anything.

When I told this story to Lilith, she found it very amusing and decided to see these two sinners in Gehenna. I flew with her to purgatory and showed her how they hung suspended by their tongues, which is the prescribed punishment for liars.

Under their feet were braziers of burning hot coals. Devils flogged their bodies with fiery rods. I called out to the sinners, "Now, tell me whom did you fool with those lies? Well, you have only yourselves to thank. Your lips spun the thread, and your mouths wove the net. But be of good cheer. Your stay in Gehenna lasts only for twelve months, including Sabbaths and holidays."

Translated from the Yiddish
by Joseph Singer and
Cecil Hemley

HELEN NEVILLE

Evenings at Carquethuit

In the belly of the tiger
I forgot the rose.

In the buzz of summer
I could not hear the snow.

Eternity rocked
in Time's tictoc.

Clock, tiger, sound
circled me round and round.

But when a yellow sky
claimed the still tree,
and plunged the hillside in
a sleep of silent green;

What did they leave behind?
Whose name upon the wind?
Whose face, before they drowned?

KARL JASPERS

The Individual and the Collectivity

Can individualism survive in mass culture? Is it possible for the individual to assert himself in a collectivized society?

To answer this troubling question requires, first of all, clarification of the antithesis between the individual and the collectivity. Man is always both—he is an individual, and, as such, he is a member of the whole. Individuality presupposes a human environment, and this, in turn, presupposes a group. Neither the whole—whether we call it community, society, or collectivity—nor the individual can exist *per se*. For man cannot be reduced to a mere function of some antlike state conceived of as a self-contained whole, reproducing itself without history; nor does he live in isolation. Without the traditions that are communicated to him by others, the newly born infant would never become human. While all animals mature spontaneously on the basis of their inherited biological characteristics, each successive generation repeating identical cycles, the human child develops through education within a historically changing framework. Children born dumb and deaf were in former times regarded as feebleminded; once a sign language was invented, however, and they were taught to use it, by this means gaining access to the body of human tradition, they were able to develop into complete human beings.

Now, the basic fact about human existence, which distinguishes man from all other animals, is that the relation between individual and collectivity is never constant nor definitive. This accounts for the phenomenon of human history. What man produces in individual works, and through the organized efforts of society, is, unlike his biological inheritance, always fragile, and subject to destruction. The different forms of community he constructs are always inadequate: man is always dissatisfied, obliged to move on. Modern technology intensifies this need. As man transforms nature by his inventions, increasing his mastery over it, he increasingly realizes the impermanence of the human environment he has created.

This need to keep moving, which modern man has most markedly become conscious of, constantly seeking to improve his lot, to increase his power, to extend the boundaries of his world, at the same time terrifies him. He resists the imperious necessity, he strives for permanence. The pre-technological ages gave effective expression to this human striving for permanence. In the Chinese world, man felt himself to be at one with the eternal order of things, the Tao, regarding every deviation from it as a passing disturbance, and human life as the eternal reproduction of the eternal identity. In Plato's world of ideas, the permanent forms and relations were conceived of as an eternal realm untouched by Change. Change was conceived of as purposeless and meaningless in itself, acquiring a degree of reality only by participation in eternal Ideas. The universal reason of the Stoics was the eternal and immutable necessity that governed the world process. In Christianity, the world was valued only as a stepping stone to the Kingdom of Heaven, as a testing ground for the human soul; the world itself was merely a transitional stage between the Creation and the Fall, on the one hand, and the end of the world, the resurrection of the dead, and the Last Judgment, on the other. The world, in this view, did not evolve.

To us, these older conceptions appear unreal. Today the

basic unity they postulated between the individual and his collectivity has become far more questionable, subject to incomparably greater strains than ever before, because of the rapid transformations of human existence brought about by the growing technological mastery over nature. The future consequences of this development are incalculable.

For, as a result of technological progress, the human community has assumed a new form. The old homogeneous, unified community has broken up. This is what sociologists mean when they contrast community with society. "Community" is a historical concept. Each separate community is unique, rooted in an unfathomable past that has determined it, and that has been handed down through oral teaching, books, usages, customs, habits, and, above all, through the institutions of the family and religion. Community is something that grows, that cannot be planned; it may be preserved, but it cannot be created. "Society," defined as a technological collectivity, lives in the moment; it is not rooted in history, having no past; it is transferable at will, can be reproduced, can be charted, is the product of planning, and can be created. "Society" can replace any individual with any other, without changing its own character; it treats man as a means, as a part, as a function. It has no future, save that of quantitative increase, improvements in the machinery, replacements of men and materials which have worn out with use.

Today the traditional community and the technological society are often regarded as mutually exclusive. But traditional repetition and rational change, technological conformism and planned improvements, have always figured in human life. These two aspects must balance each other; and disturbance of their balance is dangerous even to the aspect that has become preponderant. Exclusive reliance on conformism and tradition leads to loss of the practical sense, helplessness in the face of nature, impotence. Exclusive reliance on planning leads to a tremendous increase in power, but also to extinction of the

type of man for whom this power was meaningful. Whenever man, living in a traditional community, feels helpless in his misery and exhausted by his labors, he turns enthusiastically to the promises of technology, seeing at first only freedom in the mechanized collectivity. But when man feels crushed by this mechanized collectivity, he longs for a community of the traditional kind.

In brief: the life of man is subject to a double polarity, that between the individual and the collectivity, and, within the collectivity, between traditional community and technologically planned society.

Man's inner being is enriched as the substance present in the community grows fuller; the creative individual is representative of this substance, recognizing himself in its echo. But man's power increases with the mastery over nature achieved by the planned co-operation of all through technological production. Man's inner being can influence the world only through this power; this power has meaning and can gratify only through his inner being.

Today, the prevalent tendency is to subordinate everything to the technological apparatus. This is not the place for a detailed discussion of what distinguishes modern technology from all previous technologies. We shall merely state that it is something absolutely new in history, realized only in the course of the last two centuries, at first slowly, and then, for the past hundred years, more rapidly, and over the past few generations with dizzying speed. It is the principal reason for the present conflict between the individual and the community, between community and society.

Carried to the extreme, this development eliminates the community altogether in favor of the soulless machine. The rich spiritual community has been reduced to the workings of a machine, in which man is as replaceable as a spare part, and expendable as such. Loss of self and loss of community go hand in hand, where the technological apparatus produces

simultaneously an inexorable external order and complete inner chaos.

This is particularly apparent in extreme situations. On the one hand, slave laborers in concentration camps are reduced to the inhuman status of mere tools. On the other hand, the leisure that has come about through shorter working hours bewilders modern man; communal traditions having been destroyed, he can no longer be himself, and hence is at a loss what to do with his freedom. His problem is solved only through the collective organization of leisure time. Having escaped the labor machine, he is conscripted by the pleasure machine.

Of course, the present situation is not always so extreme; we are merely charting trends. In actuality, man is always more than what we know of him. And this "more" is not a dark ground, not an obscure unconscious; it is our freedom, the most luminous part of ourselves, even though our knowledge of it is not objective. We can influence our fate.

Knowledge of ourselves when it is identified with knowledge of nature, tends to direct our actions in relation to ourselves from some imaginary point beyond ourselves, according to a supposed knowledge of what must necessarily happen. In actual fact, this means that we are no longer required to act—in the true sense of the word—that we renounce acting, that we free ourselves from freedom in the name of a supposed necessity.

When we conceive ourselves as the instruments of this necessity, we feel omnipotent; as its objects, we are impotent. Our relative insights into the technological and other developments that undermine the state, the family, and political freedom, and threaten the individual, serve only to supply arguments for despair, to paralyze in advance all possible initiative, and to make us sacrifice ourselves to the allegedly inevitable.

Some seek comfort in modern myths, which glorify the terror and make it attractive. We are told that technology will lead to

the development of a new man. This new man is not an individual, but a type; skillful and sure as to his function; obedient, because he has not the will to exist on his own; superior to everything personal, converting into a source of strength the very fact that he can be replaced with others. He loathes solitude, lives in a glass house, possesses no place exclusively his, is always available, always active; although he is lost when alone or left to himself, he is indestructible because there are always others to take his place. In this view individuality has become a ridiculously old-fashioned idea. Existence as a type gives strength, contentment, and a sense of accomplishment. There are other modern myths which interpret the sacrifice of individuality as a great moral exploit, for example, the myth of continuous historical progress, of its inexorable necessity, according to which the individual can find happiness only in sacrificing himself to it, because such sacrifice alone gives meaning to life. The individual has no value save as the servant of history; those who resist its progress are destroyed as incurably sick. This historical progress can be seen in terms of economic development toward universal order, or as racial evolution toward a healthy, ideal race, or as the growth of a nation whose interest is the absolute yardstick, and whose goal is to become a chosen people assimilating and ruling over all others.

Every man must reach a decision with regard to such myths —this is the great decision. These myths are false, without the reality of transcendence will-o-the-wisps that lead to man's destruction, both physical and spiritual. They conceal reality, they give rise to transient, seemingly powerful totalitarian states that in actuality dissolve into nothingness. These myths are false because they exclude what is most important for man's self-realization: clear thinking, rational verification, a responsible insight into the future. People who hold to such myths terrify us. They do not really see; their eyes are empty when they cast their piercing glances at us; they are not present in actuality. It is not they who speak out of their mouths, it is some

alien force. Theirs is the violence of the unquestioning, theirs the smile of the indifferent. The comradeship to which they appeal is impersonal and utterly unreliable. In terror they follow the line blindly—whatever has been ordered from above—or out of conformism do and think, that which all seem to be doing and thinking.

As intellectual constructions, these myths are easily exploded. But as expressions of a way of life, they require an existential decision. Some feel immediately that to accept them is to embark upon an evil course; others are swept up by them. The individual must decide whether he wants to sacrifice himself or be himself. The conflict is at first spiritual, then it is transferred to the realm of physical violence, becoming a struggle for survival. The proponents of these myths are determined in advance to resort to brute force.

On one side stands the world that completely absorbs the individual in the collectivity, subjecting him to total planning, a pseudo-scientific myth. On the other side, stands the world whose course cannot be foreseen in advance, and hence cannot be controlled by total planning. In it the individual is theoretically free to develop spontaneously, and it depends on the initiative of the individual—of rare, intelligent, reliable, responsible men who, precisely because the political freedom of all is the goal, find the opportunity to act.

Although the pressure of the majority can exert great influence on the course of events, the action of a few men is always decisive. The possibilities open to an individual in a leading position are not to be ignored. He may determine whether it is to be war or peace in the course of history, but only if he carries out the will of the masses—although it is he who makes them conscious of their will.

The same is true in the sphere of everyday life. Formerly, certain social classes constituted the elite; today, we have only self-chosen elites of individuals. For example all are free to find meaning in marriage and family life, to uphold the values of

loyalty, responsibility, and happiness of the home—despite statistics telling us of the disintegration of the family. When the Kinsey report shows that in America seventy-five per cent of all males desire extra-marital intercourse, and fifty per cent actually practise it, the statistics do not express a norm nor do they record what is "natural" for man.

The voice of the majority in political plebiscites is not the voice of God, but a momentary expression of the popular will, one that may later be corrected. The hallmark of democracy is respect for minorities. Often the best are in the minority. Minorities have always served as models for others by virtue of their higher standards. Men who do what is right and who are just, exert an influence all the greater the less they try to be influential.

That is why, in our age when the old polarities between the individual and society, community and collectivity are being eroded, we pin our hope on the individual. Only the individual can reconstruct the true community which may one day spiritualize the world of technology.

It is not true that the individual has disappeared or that he must perish under conditions of terror. It has been proved that in the totalitarian countries, some individuals have succeeded in fashioning an inner armor, that they have not succumbed to the deceptions, that they judge resolutely though secretly, refusing to believe in the false gods.

But even then the individual remains himself only among others. In the collectivity that has degenerated into a machine of terror, he can once again become the source of true community. In his predicament, he realizes the truth of Nietzsche's saying: Truth begins in dialogue. This is no longer a conflict between parties, which have become abstractions, but between meaning and meaninglessness. The individual is today charged with an extraordinary task; men pregnant with the future, who sense the eternity of truth in their own being, are today to be found only in the most secret places.

The threat of total destruction casts its shadow over every human problem. The end of the world, which Jesus and the early Christians mistakenly looked forward to, has today become a real possibility of mankind's self-destruction—though this time not the end of the universe is meant, but only the end of life on earth. It is as though man's technological instruments had got out of hand. The present advances of technology recall its beginnings in the discovery of fire. But the destructiveness of fire is limited; atomic energy threatens total destruction.

To this situation some react heedlessly, as though it did not concern them. Others confine themselves to wails and lamentation. No doubt it is important that treaties should be concluded and arrangements made to avert the extremity of evil. But all this will be of no avail if there are no men responsibly controlling the course of events.

If all, or some, or a few exemplary individuals fail to influence the course of events, the end will certainly come within a few decades. But if the individual asserts himself, we may hope that with the help of a reborn community, we will successfully avert the destruction of mankind. But this is possible, perhaps, only if we change politically and morally to the scale of a complete change of heart.

Translated from the German
by Norbert Guterman

ROBERT CASSELL

The Bird

Then was my albatross
That salient flight inscrutable
Poised on currents beyond control.
Now unseen except in habitation
Of its name stirring where I am
That hermits me at every turn
In hells exclusive to my place,
It had not come down
Upon the deep-accented voices
Calling death upon our name.
Death a Sabbath word we wore black
To speak, shadows me, echoes me
In the very word unspoken, probes
Where I cannot touch or reach,
But am; and keeps my distance
To itself, and stifles speech.

Inescapable as air the albatross
Hangs everywhere, is everywhere
A guidepost in all directions
Or a voice crying "There!"
Or a letter in the morning mail

Edged in black, and simplified,
Slick, commemorative of loss
For which I am obliged, indebted
To the scaffold of my wit
Lest the guillotine of my word
Reply at once and be too definite.

The sling-shot child I was had bagged
A parrot in that green ammonia summer
When Father's parrot held its tongue
And somersaulted from the perch:
But not for him, not for Father either
Did I play David, or Goliath rather.
The pebble was sharp, I was inclined
To give it life where death might be
As if, for that, a bird were seen
Within the birdcage of the mind.

Now as then the albatross
To reverence me abides at once
On every side, swifter than
A camera's eye to catch the pose
Of all of us befriending parrots
That gossip in a cage.
Being so, why not perfect
A pure unconfederate dialect
That parrots cannot learn?
Outwit the bird, the bane
Immoderate, drag it from the sky?
Be Yea and Nay as Sunday is?
And play the Bible for a game?

The sling-shot's gone. The air
Stirs. A pebble glitters in my eye.

ERNST JUENGER

(THREE PIECES)

The Hippopotamus

I had been called to the town of Preston to give my medical testimony in Court in a matter of guardianship. As I immediately realized, it was one of those cases where medical skill is powerless and the prognosis is already enclosed in the diagnosis like an irrevocable verdict: it was concerned with the manifestation of a mental disorder not infrequently observed in patients between forty and fifty, the first indication of which is a specific impediment of speech. This is a deadly symptom.

In the given circumstances, I did not need much time to accomplish my mission, and since the mail-coach did not leave until the following noon, I found myself exiled for an entire day in the unfamiliar town. Situations of this kind have always suited me, since my thoughts never move more freely than in the hustle and bustle of a seaport where a foreign crowd circles around me like busy ants. This lucid mood takes on a particularly definite form when I cannot understand the native language. Therefore, during my stay in India with Wellesley, I often spent weeks given up to this heightened contemplation. This state perhaps arises because we are then to a higher degree dependent upon our eyes, and see life with more clarity as a spectacle. Human activities appear to us as on a stage, at once simplified and deepened. These scenes have a glowing trans-

parency, and the most trivial occurrences take on a spiritual force, as if it were no longer a question of trade and traffic, but of magical transactions. The world becomes more weightless and more lucid and we ourselves move more boldly and freely in it, like invisible beings. Thus, in the tumult of Eastern bazaars, people and objects often appeared to me as though illuminated by sparkling torches, and suffused with red.

Absorbed in these memories, I wandered without a destination through the streets and squares until the hour when mists began to rise from the sea. When we have once lived life to the full we are forever immune to spleen and tedium. Memory protects us against the assaults of time like a talisman. So the hours flowed by as in a dream, until the street lamps were lit. And since I like to assure myself of the remembrance of such days by a memento, I turned into the street of the antiquarians, where one can find furniture, paintings, and rare porcelain, as well as inexpensive curiosity shops where strange objects sleep in the dust—the sort of things sailors bring home from their voyages: dried prickly globe-fish, foreign weapons, and the inevitable little ship mounted in a bottle.

I was all the more surprised when I discovered, in one of the narrow shop windows, instead of the usual fusty articles, a charming watercolor, hung in a reddish-brown mahogany frame. On its wide, lightly yellowed border was an engraved inscription, floating above etched clouds, which I made out to be a dedication by the artist to Lord Barrymore—to conclude from the date, presumably the Barrymore who had early ruined himself as a companion at the orgies of the Prince Regent. The painting showed a farm in Pomerania, a small establishment in the midst of rich green meadows. The farmhouse was shown in profile; its flat thatched gable roof sloped on the side of the living quarters almost to the ground, while on the other side it was raised, like the flap at the entrance of a tent. On this side the gable barely covered a barn full of hay from which a hippopotamus was eating as from an open rack. The composi-

tion of the small farmhouse with the colossal animal would certainly have startled the spectator, had not the meadows been so far-ranging, so that a row of ancient oaks, bordering them, was seen in a slightly shortened perspective. Seen with a painter's eye, this green expanse counter-balanced the slate-gray bulk of the animal, and it seemed even logically appropriate to see such a powerful eater in the midst of those rich pastures.

Since such fantasies have always pleased me more than the usual prints of races and fox hunts, I entered the shop. The place seemed to be fairly new, since the room was cluttered with many still unopened boxes. On one of these, which was shaped like a human figure, sat the antiquarian in an oddly whimsical costume for a man of his profession. My entry interrupted him in his study of an engraving, whose signature he was examining through a round glass, circled in silver. To tell the truth, I was scarcely surprised when, on mentioning the watercolor, he greeted me by my name, which enjoys a certain reputation in the Kingdoms. Even his request that I follow him into his private rooms seemed to me purely a sign of customary politeness.

On the other hand, it seemed strange to me to see, as soon as we had stepped through a red curtain, two liveried footmen, who were standing in waiting attention in front of an open fireplace. We had entered a kind of anteroom, in which a ladder and other tools, of the kind decorators use when furnishing houses, stood about. A red cord, probably for the chandelier, hung from the ceiling. And even the work of the mason did not appear to be finished, since through a half-open cellar door I saw mortar and trowel in a wooden hod.

Yet it was not so much the unusual element in the circumstances that made me suspicious of the adventure, as my definite instinct for such matters, which rarely deceives me. If an attack is being prepared on a person, a fluid spins itself out like a thread between those concerned, which no one who, like my-

self, has been a guest in the palaces of Asiatic princes, or who has negotiated in sumptuous tents, set up between two armies ready for combat, can fail to recognize. In later years, after I had completed my studies and was dealing with the insane, I had sufficient opportunity of training this gift, since in these cases even the acutest observation frequently fails if not supported by a kind of intuition.

In similar situations I have always thought it well-advised to link one action with another lightly, and to avoid any hesitation or any gap into which some unforseen incident might rush; for I have often noticed that an unforced, natural behavior makes us invulnerable to the lower forces. I did not hesitate, therefore, to follow the antiquarian who, pushing aside a second curtain, opened a folding door behind it, and then withdrew with a deep bow.

The room into which he had ushered me proved to be a salon in the taste of the last century, lit by many candles and mirrors. An extremely beautiful Watteau hung above the chimney piece. In the middle of the room and in front of the painting I saw a lady who, as in a puppet show, beckoned me to come nearer. As the quietly-burning candles lit the room almost without casting shadows, I recognized her at once as the distinguished woman who had been surrounded for a long time by a web of rumors, and whose fate later occupied the interest of the world. Having earlier recognized the livery, I thought it proper to make a bow as is customary in the castles of kings. The Princess thanked me and invited me to sit down opposite her at a table, whose top was a mirror, oval and painted with brightly colored flowers.

In spite of the dubious circumstances of my introduction, while we studied one another in silence for several moments, I could not resist my passion for physiognomy—a passion I have developed while working on my book on the facial play of the insane and which is often annoying to me and seems slightly ridiculous as well. I frequently indulge this propensity during

my long nightly wanderings in the East End, where thousands of faces glide past me as in a kaleidoscope, and this interest has endowed me with an embarrassing clairvoyance, which enables me, to a certain extent, to divine the source of eccentricity. This gift is all the more embarrassing since, at variance with our times, I see in the normal the greatness by which man is permanently united to the Divine. Unfortunately, as a medical man, I often feel as I once felt in the forests of Bengal, where I saw, with a sensation of fear, the forms of life smothered by their own exuberance. In the same way, it seems to me, the profusion of symptoms separates us from patients like an impenetrable thicket: we know too little of health and too much of diseases.

In this case even a less sensitive observer probably would have grasped the incipient disorder. But experience confirms the fact that a long period of time often passes before one can realize the entire extent of any illness. This is particularly the case when the ideas are logically coherent—often acutely intelligent—although they are dominated by delusion—like a boat which takes its course toward the breakers while keeping to all the rules of navigation. When, moreover, the patient is of high rank, criticism for the most part operates cautiously. For this reason the person of power has the advantage over the common man, in that he is permitted for a longer time to persist in his madness.

I consider the practice of some astrologers, who investigate a certain similarity to animals, a good expedient for physiognomic comprehension. I found, here, a distinctive similarity to a snake, so pronounced indeed that, faced with it, I felt the same curiosity as when I once encountered, in the garden of my summer-house, the great Naja, considered the Queen of Snakes. This facial type usually appears in human beings when a certain weakness of the maxillary region is combined with pronounced cheekbones—a combination which can be not infrequently observed in very old families. Added to this in this

case in an almost frightening way, was the swaying movement of the neck and the fixed but watchful look of the large eyes.

I was no less struck by another characteristic in this face, to which I have given the name "the scorch," in my physiognomic nomenclature. One comes upon this expression in beings in whom the light of life is intensified to a flame, as can be observed in vice or also in adversity; at its most violent, however, in the combination of the two. From this kind of face one can draw conclusions concerning periods of violent jealousy or rejected love. It is to be found mainly in women, at a time when approaching age is beginning to cast a shadow on their lives.

If I have described the circumstances at perhaps too great length, I should like to plead as an excuse the fact that our silence lasted for some time. And my comments express well enough the feelings which move me in such situations. My thoughts then arrange themselves one after another like strokes in a chime of bells, and yet each is enveloped in a vibrating personal aura. Also, I must admit that, while deciphering this face, I very nearly forgot the strangeness of my position. I always considered it a part of the "high hunting" to observe closely and to turn my glance to the undefined and unshaped factors which move in flashes at the bottom of the crater. As I could do this, I had, in this case, solved the problem before a single word was spoken.

At last the woman opposite me gave a high and studied laugh: "You must admit, Doctor, that I know the bait for catching rare specimens of fish."

"And it is a pleasure, Your Highness—nothing would have attracted me with greater certainty than this watercolor. And since that is so, I may presume that my presence here in Preston as a consultant in Court also has its secret preliminary history?"

"I see that people are right in praising your acumen; you too enjoy a reputation for having had unusual teachers. Precisely for that reason I have arranged for this meeting. I need your help as a doctor in an extremely difficult matter."

"My professional skill will be at your disposal. But would it not have been much simpler to request my services at my house on Russell Square, rather than in this almost magical manner?"

"Certainly not. For more than one reason it would be extremely dangerous, if we should be seen together. And other matters of so much importance are involved that one scarcely dares to confide them to the air. Listen."

At this moment, when she was leaning forward to reach my ear, I felt that the time had come to give the affair the intended turn which my security demanded. I therefore took the liberty of placing my hand on the arm of this still beautiful woman—an arm barely covered by the sleeve of pale-red gauze which harmonized perfectly with an amazing robe of pearl-gray Utrecht velvet.

"Your Highness will forgive my interruption, but the consultation began when I entered this room. I may probably assume that you think of revealing to me one of those secrets reserved for the great of this earth, a secret the knowledge of which cannot be kept limited enough. Fortunately, a cure does not demand this sort of insight. And the remedies which are available to us, are of a kind which makes the report of the patient a source of only secondary importance; there are even cases where we give absolution without previous confession. May I therefore ask Your Highness to restrict herself to that part of the matter which is suitable for the physician—this would also precipitate the choice of remedies."

As I said this, I noticed the face of the Princess slowly lighten. This is the effect, indeed, which a doctor, if he deserves the name, has to produce above all and essentially. The first healing power he dispenses should be hidden in his voice itself. Nowadays, when one begins in medicine, as in the field of mechanics, by treating the separate parts, the primary elements are easily forgotten and one cannot blame ordinary people for having absolute confidence in their quacks and herb-witches.

As for the present case, I was far from believing that in our day things happen as they once did in Danish castles, since even the time of the Iron Mask is long since over. However, we are living in an era when the works of Scott are read greedily, and people have a peculiar taste for restaging history. Even today accidents happen—the person who is killed in a duel is as dead, in our day, as formerly, although the spirit of chivalry has long vanished. But above all, I had here come upon something, the knowledge or rather the articulate expression of which I wished to avoid, as it was steeped in the violent and compelling flames of madness. In such circumstances danger is never far off, especially if the person is in a position to exercise power. I also felt a menace in the almost supernatural manner of my having been summoned here, and found reasons enough to behave with reserve. In countries where innumerable rooms, both in public and private buildings, can be entered only in danger of one's life, one gets a good training in prudence.

After my patient had listened to me attentively and, as I have said, with growing amusement, I watched her pacing up and down the room with a thoughtful air for some time, while the swaying movement of her head transmitted itself very gracefully to her body. At last she pulled the silk bell-rope next to the door. The young antiquarian appeared, to whom she gave some instructions in a low voice, of which I only caught the Italian word *presto*. Immediately afterwards I heard a noise in the anteroom. She then returned to our mirror-table, and now it was she who placed her hand on my arm.

"Under these circumstances, sir, the service you might render me is more important than I thought. What I have to tell you is quickly spoken, although to tell even this little is painful for me. But since one also exposes oneself physically to the doctor—"

"Speak without reserve, Madam."

"Very well. After that—incident which I hinted at before, some unforseen disturbances developed, which, at first, did not

worry me much, but which have later worried me to an increasing degree. For some time now I have had the feeling of being on a ship which is rapidly sinking. Doctor, I have moments when everything begins to flicker, and if anyone can help me, it is you."

"I suppose you are also not quite satisfied with your nightly sleep."

"I admit I am very dissatisfied, but do not believe me to be over-anxious. Even at fourteen I enjoyed the freedom of delightful night hours spent with forbidden books written in the manner of Lucian, and even the specter of Duncan would not frighten me. But there are things more evil, occurrences of a mechanical kind, so to speak, as though an automaton had begun to whir."

"Do you feel that people in your *entourage* have already noticed these crises?"

"I should not think so. I can always pretend migraine. But during every conversation, at every reception, I imagine myself moving about in rooms filled with gunpowder, where sparks are being thrown off, and this comes upon me all the more violently the more select the company. Then again, everything has that added flavor of ridicule which pervades our lives like an unpleasant spice, and it is just this which often fills me with a ferocious anger. When I first thought of the—incident, it was not more than a memory among other memories, like a certain fish that rises now and then to the surface. Perhaps it was just because I had tried to suppress this special memory, that its emergence has begun to bewilder me. I have noticed that a kind of monologue invariably accompanies these efforts—at first single words, then sentences, and at last outbursts of a blazing, shouting fury. At the same time I am seized by a craving to use obscene words—more obscene than anything ever heard among fishwives or in Newgate before the executions. Yes, I have discovered in myself a talent for formulating curses, which are unknown even in the gutters, as if still undis-

covered sources of filth were discharging themselves into my being—"

"Continue, Madam."

"It also appears to me that these masses dam up in me, as against a mill-dam. I therefore seize every opportunity of getting rid of this burden by rapping out curses. I also write them in letters, which I afterwards burn. Yet, on days when court etiquette forces me to appear in public from morning to night, I feel a kind of lava swelling up in me. Then, a short time ago, on the night of the first of May, there was a frightful outburst, during which I felt a stranger to myself. At midnight I saw myself floating in front of the great mirror in my dressing room, a candle in my hand, foaming at the mouth, my hair standing up horribly around my head. Since that moment I have the impression of having acquired a particularly penetrating eye. In faces and voices I perceive baseness, and every polite word, every courtly gesture appears to me as a too perfunctory feint, a too carelessly coated lie, hiding secret connivance. This disproportion becomes all the more conspicuous the more dazzling the display of court dresses and uniforms. When the ambassadors present distinguished foreigners, or at gala dinner parties, I feel a wild desire to tear off my clothes and to propose a toast which bares the entrails of the earth. But this alone is not what alarms me, Doctor, for even as a child, holding a precious glass in my hand, I was seized by the desire to fling it to the floor, and I never climbed a cliff or tower without hearing an inner voice urging me to jump down. But beyond this there is still something else, something outside myself which plays with me, like a cat with a mouse. It is not my thoughts which make me shudder, but I ask you: what shall I do when something gets hold of me again as on that night?"

After I had listened to her story, which was slightly more circumstantial, we relapsed into silence. For a long time I contemplated the priceless pearls, scattered on the carpet, for the Princess, speaking of her paroxysm, had grasped her necklace and

torn its thread. Before one single pearl of such magnitude can be captured in the Maledive or Bahrein Islands, two diver-slaves waste away with consumption, and a swordfish has skewered a third.

Certainly, it was not the question she had put to me which occupied my mind. In most cases, doctor and patient are worried by very different things; for example, when I treated my friend Wallmoden for his abscess, he worried mainly about his complexion, which he found to be slightly yellow. This fact, which I have often noticed, seems to me to be very characteristic of human beings: that they realize a threat to their minds only at the point when they feel their will impaired. To the doctor, on the other hand, it scarcely makes any difference whether the delusion is concealed in the sick person, or whether he believes himself driven from the outside. One symptom as well as the other will be cured by going to the roots. But theoretically, the particular moment when our will seems to desert us remains of the first importance, since our mental power has its voluntary and involuntary tract very similar to that of the muscles, and he who knows the rules according to which both interplay like tides of the sun and moon, has reached a degree of knowledge which we cannot but dream of. In intimate contact with men who control their breath and their heartbeat and whose skin cannot be scorched by fire, I learned more than in Hunter's anatomical theater, and there I learned a great deal. On such experiences are based those spontaneous cures of epilepsy and other diseases which established my reputation, the simple secret of which consists in playing into the hands of the patient the control of certain parts of his vegetative system.

It is therefore understandable that symptoms, which I had often enough watched vanishing like smoke under the juggling of dervishes, saffron-habited mendicant friars, or pungently smelling Capuchins, would not astonish me. Cures of this kind are in line with the practices of goat-bearded priesthoods,

whose "mysteries" have edified the minds of simple people and their womenfolk from times immemorial. But apart from the fact that the disorder in question is evident to me both in nature and origin, I am not without experience in its treatment, since this very disorder belongs in some measure to the stock of our national ills. Its *motif* therefore looms up in my mind every time I take night walks, crossing over from the palaces of the west side of the city to those quarters where misery and greed circle around the sinister anti-pole of power. This is the double play which also echoes in our poetry, where the spirit is reflected as in a black and a silver mirror. It is therefore not surprising that we hear a note of this theme in the confusion of the single individual, and the initiated know about the secret festivals, recalling the *lupercalia* of the Italian faun, where circles of our society indulge in their orgies. Far from approving such scenes, of which Carlton Hause is the sad example, I nevertheless owe to them many insights, since they, too, show the strange interplay of grandeur and debasement. Thus it seems to me as if the reversed image of virtue were reflected in excess as in a mirror—I mean of that inner detachment which gives us the legitimate power to govern nations. Often, looking down at the dark waters from the old London Bridge, whose high arches of gray stone are firmly anchored in the flood, I feel a breath of pride and greatness brushing my temples. A shuddering sense of awe overcomes me, and I sometimes fling a copper penny into the nocturnal, flickering depths.

But I do not wish to disgress. Suffering often projects itself into the physical organism like a stigma, and it is not the physician who has the last word. Still, I recognized the situation in which I found myself, and I was able to do what was expected of me. I therefore gave my instructions.

"I am honored, Your Highness, that I can render you a service. Above all, I advise you to move without delay to Cheltenham; it is fortunate that the bathing-season there has not yet

started. There you will spend your days in the observance of a strict regimen, both alone and in company. Reject the impulses to soliloquy, but without strain. If the compulsion becomes too strong, recite in a moderately loud voice the *Euphony* which I shall write down for you. Should you find yourself in company, I request you to recite it mentally, while touching your necklace with your hand. During this period you should substitute for your pearls a necklace of the kernels of the Indian water nut. However, I do not believe that those attacks will return if Your Highness will take the pastilles I am prescribing. They put a kind of curb on the tongue and they also contain an added drug that will give you deeper sleep. I recommend to you most particularly the use of sandalwood sticks, burnt during the night in earthen saucers and lavishly distributed, during the day, in fireplaces. All necessary prescriptions I shall leave, written in code, in my small laboratory in the pharmacy of Mr. Morrison, who takes care of it. I shall also give you a daily journal, such as one keeps in religious orders for a particular examination of conscience, and which I prescribe as a kind of spiritual mirror for patients who live at a considerable distance from me. If you follow these counsels I can promise you that your troubled state of mind will disappear within a month. Finally, I should consider it useful if Your Highness would engage one of our simpler country parsons as secretary. Among them excellent characters may be found, who can well compete with antiquarians."

After I had explained my prescriptions in detail, the Princess rose and gave me permission to withdraw. It almost seemed to me as if she had guessed more than I intended, for to my surprise she returned my parting words with an old-fashioned, courtly curtsey, one hand and one knee touching the floor. It was, perhaps, only the gesture which her pride commanded. While paying this compliment she gathered up from the floor the solitaire-pearl of her necklace—a pure sphere as large as a

marble cherry and with a magnificent play of colors. In this way I became the possessor of a jewel whose perfection even Lord Clive's loot cannot claim to surpass.

As the antiquarian showed me out, I noticed that the anteroom had already been dismantled. The hearth was cold, the cellar-door locked, the ladder and the cord for the chandelier were gone, and the footmen were no longer leaning against the fireplace. The room was as empty as a stage after the play is finished. It is not the encounter with the peculiar which again and again surprises me, in my profession. It seems to me much stranger that any madness finds as many helpers as it wishes. Since in spite of this, our old world imperturbably pursues its course, I cannot doubt that it is regulated according to a Sublime Design.

Not only does the royal pearl remind me of the fogs of Preston, when I examine it at night by the light of a good candle. For, about six weeks later, a large, flat box was delivered to my town-house. I found in it, carefully packed, the water-color of the Pomeranian farmhouse. I hung it by a solid red cord, not exactly over my work table, but at a little distance, above the fireplace. Many times I observe one of my guests studying it closely, finally turning away as if his eyes had deceived him. Among these guests is my friend Wallmoden, who, it is true, has become slightly scrupulous since his illness. For that reason I do not usually contradict him in his opinion that the painting as a work of art belongs in the category of the bizarre. I also need not confess that the dissonances of our beautiful world have often lured me, like barred portals, to the higher circles of its harmony, and that I have considered danger a not too costly toll to pay for the journey.

Frutti di Mare

NAPLES

I have settled down here for some weeks as *dottore pescatore*, as people like to call the zoologists who work in the rooms of of the Aquarium. It is a cool cloister-like place, where day and night fresh- and salt-water gushes into the large glass tanks, in the midst of a park which runs along the edge of the sea. From my worktable the eye is refreshed by the view of the Castell dell'Ovo, built in the water as a stronghold by the Hohenstaufen. Further away, in the middle of the Bay, one sees the lovely island of Capri, its shape rather like an elongated vineyard-snail, where Tiberius once resided with his catamites.

A good many of my favorite figures have lived in Naples, among them men as different as Roger, the Norman, the Abbé Galiani, and King Murat, who wore his decorations as a target for sharpshooters; and also Froehlich, whose *Forty Years in the Life of a Dead Man* is one of our most entertaining memoirs. The excellent Burgundian De Brosse and the Chevalier de Seingalt as well knew stories to tell about pleasurable hours spent here.

My attention is centered on a small octopus called *Loligo media*, which delights me freshly every morning by the beauty of its swan song, composed of a fluctuating scale of brown, yellow, violet, and purple tones. I adore, in particular, its deli-

cate manner of turning pale—a nervous pliancy, by which it leads up to new and fabulous surprises. All too soon, however, this splendor falls a prey to death. It fades like flaming-red clouds dissolving in vapors, and only the deep-green-golden rings which enamel its great eyes remain faintly luminous like rainbows. On this body, less than a foot long, life plays its full melody as on a charmed instrument; it overwhelms it with its abundance, then deserts it like a cruel lover. Of all that brilliance only a pale shadow remains, like the burnt-out shell of golden fireworks.

This creature, incidentally, ranks high in the gastronomy of this country, like its brother, the big *calmar*, and its cousins, the long-armed *octopus* and the *sepia*, which is iridescent like mother-of-pearl. In order to find out everything possible about it, I had it served to me at dinner, grilled in the gourmet manner and served with white Capri wine. It appeared on a large platter, transformed into circular pieces, delicately browned in butter, the ten-armed head lying on one side like the closed blossom of a waterlily or the fragment of a mythological figurine. My previous suspicion was confirmed: the hidden harmony, inherent in all qualities of a created being, was revealed to the sense of taste as well; and even blindfold, I could have classified within the zoological system the provenance of this choice morsel with fair accuracy. It was neither crab nor fish; it could have been clam or snail; but it was endowed with a distinctly pronounced trait, the mark of an ancient family. This taste should certainly not be wanting in the *bouillabaisse*, the thick soup of Marseille, wherein the best of the Mediterranean sea-fruits are combined in a bouquet, spiced with saffron.

Every afternoon an attendant collects call slips on which we have written down what "material" we want to examine. Behind these dry words are hidden many delicate marvels, since behind the mask of the Latin terms for genus and species one can indulge oneself in extravagant delights. I do not know if the kind Professor Dohrn would be happy to discover that a

parasite has invaded the cells of his scientific hive. The simple contemplation of forms of life affords us such pleasure that the hours fly along like minutes. And our discerning mind penetrates into regions where luxuriance almost frightens us; it is like a traveler lost among archipelagos, from which no compass can guide him back.

This writing of request slips has also a fascination similar to that felt by children who write lists before Christmas and confide to them their wishful dreams. The steam launch of the Institute leaves before daybreak and during the morning hours the catch is brought in to our worktables in glass vessels or shallow dishes. The marine life, drifting in the water, has been caught in very fine gauze nets; it is the elemental matter of the waters of the Bay, which resembles a gigantic, abundant tureen: a world of glassy filaments, minuscule rods, and globules. Dragnets with strong braces have raked the carpets of algae and are bulging with the multiple organisms which make love and hunt among themselves on these colorful meadows. And there is always something exceptional in the haul, something one sees for the first time, like the glittering ornament which crowns the Christmas tree—a scarlet-red *annelid*, wriggling like a dragon on Chinese porcelain; a saffron-yellow, particularly fragile *crinoid* with its halo of feathery rays; a small transparent crab which lives in a tiny gelatinous cask; the girdle-of-venus, in whose crystalline body a green-purple fiery spark oscillates, or a "mermaids' purse," in whose interior one can observe the breathing embryo slumbering as upon a pillow of glassy horn.

For eyes accustomed to the more subdued light of the North, the secrets a southern sea guards have an inexhaustible fascination. The colors of land animals also increase in richness and variety in warmer climes; they become more dazzling, more metallic, more provocative. But only the sea confers on its inhabitants that graceful elegance, these soft nuances, that iridescent and fluctuating glaze of rare glass, the wondrous

fragility and spirituality of the ephemeral. These colors have a dreamlike quality and belong rather to the night than to the day; they need for their protection the dark blue deep. Sometimes they make one think of certain orchids, like the *Stanhopea*, especially when saturated violet and deep-red spots seem to be burned into a flesh whose texture is that of fine porcelain—white, rose, or yellow. But even the orchids seek out the uniform, dark-green, steaming night of the densest forests. It is strange that this brilliance animates precisely the most tenuous, the most watery forms of life and that it also flashes forth from the most precious, the most vulnerable organ of the human body—the eye.

A laboratory like ours here, in which life is assembled in many forms, strongly evokes a comparison with the workshop of a clockmaker, where the long and the short hands move over a hundred painted clockfaces. The eye perceives an extremely ingenious structure, no matter what wheelwork it rests upon—the umbrella of the *medusa* which opens and shuts in rhythm with its breathing, or the tiny bubbles in the body of an unicellular animal which pulsates in time with the heartbeat.

Each of these pendulums, whether its movement is long or short, swings from the fixed point which is the center of all time. One has, therefore, a sense of security, when surrounded by the sound of the clocks of life, and I share the taste of the Prince de Ligne, that lovable cavalier and fighter of noble blood, who built his chateaux, on whose roofs the flight of doves congregated, in the midst of large pleasure-grounds with bosquets full of birds' nests, pastures crowded with life, parterres swarming with bees and butterflies, and ponds, whose mirror-like surfaces constantly trembled with the splashing of fat, lively carps.

To live thus, surrounded by the symbols of life as by sentinels, can truly be called—living.

The Color Red

We have good reason to be cautious with the color red. In the smoothly flowing stream of life it only rarely shows itself, but it blazes up in moments of tension. It intimates things that should be hidden or protected, particularly fire, sex, and blood. When, therefore, red appears unexpectedly, we are put on guard, as at the sight of the red flags which bar the approach to quarries and rifle ranges. This color indicates the proximity of danger: the tail- and signal lights of our vehicles are red. This indication applies especially to the danger of fire: fire-alarm boxes and fire extinguishers are painted red, as well as the motor trucks for transportation of inflammable liquids or high explosives. As the need for combustibles and propellents increases, the world covers itself with a network of blazing-red kiosks, and this spectacle alone would reveal to a stranger that he has entered explosive landscapes, in an age where Uranus' reign begins.

The strange duplicity which animates the world of symbols gives the color an effect both menacing and attractive. This manifests itself very beautifully in the red berries with which the hunter rigs up the snares and nooses for catching birds. In choleric animals like the turkey and the bull, the fascination of red is conspicuous in its most provoking aspect—its power to

dazzle. There are also human temperaments that are affected, almost to vertigo, by a fiery red, such as that of certain species of tulips.

The acutely appealing effect of the color red makes it particularly suitable for the marking of objects, intended to be within easy reach. Here, too, the element of danger usually plays a part, as in the case of first-aid kits, life belts or emergency brakes. Sometimes this element of urgency has an abstract character, as in the little red labels which the postoffice affixes to special delivery letters.

The double characteristic of menace and solicitation, attached to this color, shows itself very clearly when sexual relationships are involved. Then we find a disquieting scale, ranging from the lurid, almost palpable gleam of the lamp which lights up the entrance to a house of ill repute, to the crude and shameless flesh color of the carpets and draperies in the vestibules of great gambling casinos and pleasure haunts.

In the red of lips, of nostrils, and of fingernails the color of the inner skin reveals itself. In the same way we imagine the lining of garments as red, and it pleases us when their ground-color appears through the slits of the outer material or on reverse. This is the meaning of red facings, brims, pipings and buttonholes and of all red undergarments; in Europe even the inner parts of the bedding under the coverings are red. This idea extends also to the interior of rooms and houses, but with a special relation to magnificence. Rooms of state are entered through red curtains, and at receptions red carpets are unrolled up to the ramp. *Etuis* and other jewel-boxes are by preference lined with red silk.

Among the other colors it is yellow which intensifies the excitement emanating from red; the combination of red and yellow in a pattern evokes disagreeable and painful sensations. The effect of black combined with red is still more forbidding, while green generally tempers it. A green background may even add a somewhat gay quality, as when green sward sets off

the red cloth of hunting coats; but even here the association with blood is not lacking. Gray, too, has a subduing influence; but if red is contrasted with white as in the juxtaposition of rouge and powder, of wound and bandage, of blood on snow, the aspect of blood is strongly underlined. Pomp and power are emphasized by combinations of scarlet and gold. An admixture of white gives red a nuance of gentle charm; one of black, a note of pride and melancholy. A sanguine empty-mindedness is attendant on the pure scarlet tones: like the spectacle of fireworks or of waterfalls they make the spirit captive to movement. The ambition to grow black flowers from which the last traces of red is distilled by cultivation, is a curious one. It is the Philosophers' Stone in the field of horticulture. It is true that every branch of science must needs be hostile to red.

In any case it requires courage to wear red, and for that reason it is a color which generally appears as if it had become visible inadvertently, as in slits or through rents, or in the case of a disarranged seam. The person who wears red openly and largely displayed is the possessor of power over life and death, as in the case of high judges, princes, and commanders; as well as the executioner, to whom the victim is surrendered. To him a black coat is appropriate, and its red lining shows only at the instant when he strikes.

The red flag of rebellion indicates the hidden side, or the elementary material of order. It is, therefore, not an emblem in the proper sense; but its color appears in the flames of conflagrations and streams of spilled blood—everywhere when the woven fabric tears apart. There are times when the red primary matter wells up as from hidden springs and craters and seems intent on inundating the world. But then it recedes, consuming itself—surviving only in the Caesarean toga.

Translated from the German
by Louise Bogan and
Elizabeth Mayer

HAROLD KAPLAN

The Origin of Anger

The horse of rage rides this fever
In my head and my bones twist
In the thunder of that day
Leveled in my father's fist.

I am drawn to his fire
Of revenges and he, the raider,
Has scattered into winds the blond season's
Pursuer, my softlipped persuader,

For whose sensual miracle I renounced
And let go the bracelets of his pride
And ran from the origin of anger
And broke from the iron of his side,

And let go to summer in a freedom
Of suns stripped to the weathering hill,
And danced in the liberation of wine
Flowering from revolts of will,

Until reversal of passion pulled
Him up to point at my squalor,

And sick in that summer strength, I fell
To his reasons and his cold valor,

And born again in his threats,
Reconstructed in his eye, I stand
On that moldering ground,
Hammered to his heavy skeleton hand.

MAY SWENSON

The Crossing

With stealthy whistle of wing
the hawk crossed over
the very air I breathed,
and sank in some cover.

Through water where I drank,
the deer stepped slow
without chinking a stone,
and slid into shadow.

The mountain's body ahead,
the same heaving ground
I walked, hurried up
and out, away, and around

to where the distance stood.
That could not flee or hide.
It filled me. I filled it
and was satisfied.

NATHALIE SARRAUTE

The Age of Suspicion

One of the most persistent attitudes of contemporary critics in the field of the novel is to pretend, like the good pedagogues that they are, to be unaware that anything has been happening. They seize upon every opportunity to proclaim, as though announcing a fundamental truth, that the novel, unless they are very much mistaken, is and always will be first and foremost, "a story in which characters move and have their being," and no novelist, they say, is worthy of the name unless he is able to "believe in" his characters, which is what makes it possible for him to "infuse life" into them and give them "fictional relief." These same critics continue to lavish compliments on novelists who, like Balzac or Flaubert, succeed in making their hero "stand out," thus adding one more "unforgettable" figure to the unforgettable figures with which so many famous novelists have already peopled our world.

But however "temptingly" they may dangle before young writers the mirage of exquisite rewards that are supposed to await those whose faith is greatest, however sternly they may add threat to promise, warning novelists that, if they aren't careful, their best armed rival, the cinema, will one day wrest the scepter from their unworthy hands, it is of no avail. Neither

reproach nor encouragement is able to revivify a faith that is waning.

And, according to all appearances, not only has the novelist practically ceased to believe in his characters, but the reader, too, is unable to believe in them; with the result that the characters, having lost the two-fold support that the novelist's and the reader's faith afforded them, and which permitted them to stand upright with the burden of the entire story resting on their broad shoulders, may now be seen to vacillate and fall apart.

Since the happy days of Eugénie Grandet when, at the height of his power, the character occupied the place of honor between reader and novelist, the object of their common devotion (like the Saints between the donors in primitive paintings), he has continued to lose, one after the other, his attributes and prerogatives. At that time he was richly endowed with every asset, the recipient of every attention, and he lacked for nothing, from the silver buckles on his breeches to the veined wart on the end of his nose. Since then, he has lost everything; his body, his face, his clothes, his ancestors, his carefully built house, filled from cellar to garret with a variety of objects, down to the tiniest gew-gaw; his sources of income and his estates. Particularly, however, has he lost that most precious of all possessions, his personality—which belonged to him alone—and frequently, even his name.

Today, a constantly rising tide has been flooding us with literary works that still claim to be novels and in which a being devoid of outline, indefinable, intangible and invisible, an anonymous "I," who is at once all and nothing, and who as often as not is but the reflection of the author himself, has usurped the role of the hero, occupying the place of honor. The other characters, being deprived of their own existence, are reduced to the status of visions, dreams, nightmares, illusions, reflections, quiddities, or dependents of this all-powerful "I."

Our minds might be set at rest, if we could impute this

method of procedure to an egocentricity peculiar to adolescence, or to the timidity and inexperience of the beginner. As it happens, however, this youthful malady has attacked some of the most important works of our time (from *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* and *Paludes*, to the *Miracles de la Rose*, not to mention *Black Spring*, *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*, *Le Voyage au Bout de la Nuit* and *La Nausée*); in other words, works in which the authors have given immediate proof of very evident mastery and rare forcefulness.

What is revealed, in fact, by the present evolution of the character in fiction is just the opposite of regression to an infantile state. It shows, on the part of both author and reader, an unusually sophisticated state of mind.

For not only are they both wary of the character, but through him, they are wary of each other. He had been their meeting-ground, the solid base from which they could take off in a common effort toward new experiments and new discoveries. He has now become the converging point of their mutual distrust, the devastated ground on which they confront each other. And if we examine his present situation, we are tempted to conclude that it furnishes a perfect illustration of Stendhal's statement that "the genius of suspicion has appeared on the scene." We have now entered upon an age of suspicion.

To begin with, today's reader is suspicious of what the author's imagination has to offer him. "There is nobody left," M. Jacques Tournier complains, "who is willing to admit that he invents. The only thing that matters is the document, which must be precise, dated, proven, authentic. Works of the imagination are banned, because they are invented . . . [The public], in order to believe what it is told, must be convinced that it is not being 'taken in.' All that counts now is the "true fact. . . ."*

But M. Tournier should not be so bitter. This predilection for "true facts" which, at heart, we all share, does not indicate

* La Table Ronde, Paris, January, 1948, p. 145.

a timorous, sedate mind, forever ready to crush under the weight of "sound reality" all daring experiment, all impulse toward evasion; quite the contrary. We must do the reader the justice to admit that he needs little coaxing to follow the writer along new paths. He has never really balked before the perspective of effort, and when he agreed to examine with minute attention each detail of Père Grandet's dress and each object in his house, or to evaluate his poplar trees and vineyards and supervise his stockmarket transactions, it was not out of a need to cuddle down snugly in the nest of a familiar world, the contours of which inspired confidence. He knew well where he was being taken. Also, that it would not be plain sailing.

Something unwonted, even violent, lay beneath these everyday appearances. Every gesture of the character was a reminder of some aspect of this fact, and the most insignificant bauble reflected some facet of it. It was this that had to be brought out and explored to the very limit, investigated in its most secret recesses. Here was a compact, absolutely fresh subject matter that required effort and fanned the passion for experimental research. Consciousness of this effort and of the validity of this research justified the cocksureness with which the author, indifferent as to whether or not he was trying the reader's patience, forced him to participate in prying housewifely inspections, to make computations that would do honor to a bank clerk or appraisals worthy of an auctioneer. It also justified the reader's tractability. They both realised that here—and nowhere else—was to be found what, at the time, was their chief concern; as inseparable from the object as the color yellow from the lemon in a Chardin canvas—or, in a Veronese, the color blue from the sky. Just as the color yellow *was* the lemon and the color blue the sky, so that they were inconceivable one without the other, avarice *was* Père Grandet; it was his entire substance, it filled him to the very brim and, at the same time, owed its own form and vigor to him.

The stronger the framework, the better constructed and more

richly ornamented the object, the richer and more delicately shaded was the subject matter.

Is it any fault of the reader it, since then, this same subject matter has taken on the mushy consistency and general insipidness of over-chewed food, and the object containing it the flat appearance of painted scenery?

The sense of life to which, in the long run, all art harks back (the "intensity of life" that undoubtedly, as Gide says, "is what gives things their value"), has deserted these erstwhile promising forms and betaken itself elsewhere. By virtue of the ceaseless movement which tends to bring it ever nearer to the mobile point where, at a given moment, experiment and the peak of effort meet, it has broken through the earlier novel form and forsaken, one by one, all the old, useless accessories. Today, warts and waistcoats, characters and plots may offer the most infinite variety without revealing anything other than a reality, the slightest particle of which we are familiar with already, from having been over and over it, in every direction. Instead of inciting the reader, as in Balzac's time, to attain to a truth whose conquest denotes hard-won struggle, all these accessories now appear to him to constitute but a dangerous concession to his inclination toward laziness—as well as to that of the author—or to his fear of change. The swiftest glance about him, the most fleeting contact, tells him more than all these external appearances, the sole aim of which is to give a semblance of likelihood to the characters. He has only to dip into the huge stock, which as a result of his own experience is constantly being added to, in order to compensate for what is lacking in these tiresome descriptions.

As regards the character, he realizes that it is nothing other than a crude label which he himself makes use of, without real conviction and by way of convenience, for the purpose of orienting, very approximately, his own behavior. So he is wary of the abrupt, spectacular type of action that model the characters with a few resounding whacks; he is also wary of

plot, which winds itself around the character like wrappings, giving it, along with an appearance of cohesiveness and life, mummy-like stiffness.

In fact, M. Tournier is right; the reader has grown wary of practically everything. The reason being that for some time now, he has been learning about too many things, and he is unable to forget entirely all he has learned.

What he has learned is a matter of such common knowledge that there is no need to go into it here. He has made the acquaintance of Joyce, Proust, and Freud; the trickle, imperceptible from without, of the interior monologue; the infinitely profusive growth of the psychological world and the vast, as yet almost unexplored, regions of the unconscious. He has watched the water-tight partitions that used to separate the characters from each other, give way, and the hero become an arbitrary limitation, a conventional figure cut from the common woof that each of us contains in its entirety, and which captures and holds fast within its meshes, the entire universe. Like the surgeon who eyes the exact spot on which his greatest effort is to be concentrated, isolating it from the rest of the sleeping body, he has been led to center all his attention and curiosity on some new psychological state, forgetting meanwhile the motionless character who serves as a chance prop for this state. He has seen time cease to be the swift stream that carried the plot forward, and become a stagnant pool at the bottom of which a slow, subtle decomposition is in progress; he has seen our actions lose their usual motives and accepted meanings, he has witnessed the appearance of hitherto unknown sentiments and seen those that were most familiar change both in aspect and name.

He has, in fact, learned so much and learned it so well, that he has begun to doubt whether the novelist's artificially constructed object is capable of secreting the wealth of the real object. And since writers of the objective school insist that it is useless to attempt to reproduce the infinite complexity of

life, and that it is up to the reader to draw on his own resources, using the instruments of investigation he already possesses to wrest its mystery from the impenetrable object they present to him, he prefers to confine his efforts to certainties, and goes in for facts. The "bit of real life" has an indubitable advantage over the invented tale. To begin with, that of being true, which is the source of its strength of conviction and forcefulness, of its noble indifference to ridicule and bad taste, as also of a certain quiet daring, a certain off-handedness that allows it to break through the confining limitation in which a regard for likelihood imprisons the boldest of novelists, and to extend far afield the frontiers of reality. It allows us to attain to unknown regions into which no writer would have dared venture and brings us, with one leap, to the edge of the "abyss."

Where is the invented story that could compete with that of Gide's *Séquestrée de Poitiers,* or with those of Concentration Camps, or the Battle of Stalingrad? And how many novels, how many character situations and plots would be needed to furnish the reader with a subject matter equal in richness and subtlety to that offered for our curiosity and reflection by almost any well-constructed monograph?

It is, therefore, for very wholesome reasons that today's reader prefers accounts of actual experiences (or at least having the reassuring appearance of such) to the novel. Nor, as might be supposed, does the recent vogue of what, in France, is referred to as the "American" novel give the lie to the preference. On the contrary, it confirms it. This particular literature which, for the very reasons just mentioned, is looked down upon by many cultivated American readers, by transporting the French reader into a foreign universe in which he had no foothold, lulled his wariness, aroused in him the kind of credulous curiosity that travel books inspire, and gave him a delightful impression of escape into an unknown world. Now that he has more or less assimilated these exotic foods—which, despite

their richness and variety, turned out to be much less tonic than had been supposed—the French reader, as well, is no longer interested.

It goes without saying that all these attitudes with regard to the novel are all the more familiar to the author who, being himself a reader, and often a very perceptive one, has also experienced them.

With the result that when he starts to tell a story and says to himself that he must make up his mind to write down for the mocking eyes of the reader, "The Marquise went out at five o'clock,"* he hesitates, he hasn't the heart, he simply can't bring himself to do it.

And if, after taking his courage in hand, he decides not to give the Marquise the considerate attention demanded by tradition, to write only of what interests him today, he realizes that the impersonal tone, which was so well adapted to the needs of the old-style novel, is not suitable for conveying the complex, tenuous states that he is attempting to portray; the fact being, that these states resemble certain phenomena of modern physics which are so delicate and minute that even a ray of light falling on them disturbs and deforms them. The result is that whenever the novelist seeks to describe them without revealing his own presence, he seems to hear the reader, like a child whose mother is reading him his first story, stop and ask: "Who said that?"

A story told in the first person satisfies the legitimate curiosity of the reader and allays the no less legitimate scruples of the author. In addition, it has the appearance, at least, of real experience and authenticity, which impresses the reader and dispels his mistrust.

For nobody today is entirely misled by the convenient procedure that consists for the novelist, in parsimoniously apportioning out bits of himself, which he invests with a certain

* Phrase quoted by Paul Valery in explanation of the fact he could not bring himself to undertake a novel.

likelihood by dividing them, necessarily somewhat at random (if they have been taken from a cross-section performed at a certain depth, they are identical with everyone) among his characters. By a process of decortication, the reader then removes these bits and places them, as in a game of lotto, in corresponding compartments he has discovered in himself.

Today, everybody is well aware, without being told, that *"la Bovary c'est moi."* * And since the important thing now, rather than to extend indefinitely the list of literary types, is to show the co-existence of contradictory emotions and to reproduce as closely as possible the wealth and complexity of the world of the psyche, the writer, in all honesty, writes about himself.

But that is not all. However strange it may seem, this same writer, who is awed by the reader's growing perspicacity and wariness, is, himself, becoming more and more wary of the reader.

For even the most experienced reader, if left to his own devices, tends to create types; he simply can't resist it.

He does it, in fact—in the same way as the novelist, once he has begun to relax—without even noticing that he is doing it, for the convenience of everyday life and as a result of long practice. Like Pavlov's dog, in whom the tinkle of a bell stimulates the secretion of saliva, he creates characters at the slightest possible suggestion and, as in the game of "statues," each one he touches turns to stone; they merely serve to swell in his memory the vast collection of inanimate figures which, day in, day out, he is constantly adding to and which, since he first learned to read, has been regularly growing as a result of the countless novels he has absorbed.

But, as has already been demonstrated, the character as conceived of in the old-style novel (along with the entire old-style mechanism that was used to make him stand out) does not succeed in containing the psychological reality of today.

* From Flaubert's correspondence.

Instead of revealing it—as used to be the case—he makes it disappear.

So that, as a result of an evolution similar to that in painting—albeit far less bold, less rapid, and interrupted by long pauses and retreats—the psychological element, like the pictorial element, is beginning to free itself imperceptibly from the object of which it was an integral part. It is tending to become self-sufficient and, in so far as possible, to do without exterior support. The novelist's entire experimental effort is concentrated on this one point, as is also the reader's entire effort of attention.

The reader, therefore, must be kept from trying to do two things at one time. And since what the characters gain in the way of facile vitality and plausibility, the psychological states for which they serve as props lose in fundamental truth, he must be kept from allowing his attention to wander or be absorbed by the characters. For this, he must be deprived as much as possible of all indications which, in spite of himself, and as a result of a natural leaning, he seizes upon in order to create illusions.

This is why the character today is reduced to a shadow of his former self. Only reluctantly does the novelist endow him with attributes that could make him too easily distinguishable; his physical aspect, gestures, actions, sensations, everyday emotions, studied and understood for so long, which contribute to giving him, at the cost of so little effort, an appearance of life, and present such a convenient hold for the reader.* Even a name, which is an absolutely necessary feature of his accoutrement, is a source of embarrassment to the novelist. Gide avoids use of the patronymic for his characters, for the reason that it risks situating them at once in a world too similar to

* "Not once," wrote Proust, "does one of my characters shut a window, wash his hands, put on his overcoat, pronounce a phrase of introduction. If there is anything at all new about the book, this would be it! . . ." (Letter to Robert Dreyfus).

that of the reader, and his preference is given to unusual forenames. Kafka's hero has for his entire name an initial only (that of Kafka himself); Joyce designates by the initials, H.C.E., of multiple interpretations, the protean hero of *Finnegans Wake;* and it would be most unfair to Faulkner's bold and very worthwhile experiments, which are so revealing of the problem of the present-day novelist, if we were to attribute to a perverse and childish desire to mystify the reader the method used by him in *The Sound and the Fury* which consists in giving the same forename to two different characters.* This forename, which he shunts back and forth from one character to the other, under the annoyed eye of the reader, like a lump of sugar under the nose of a dog, forces the reader to be constantly on the alert. Instead of letting himself be guided by the signposts with which everyday custom flatters his laziness and haste, he is obliged, in order to identify the characters, to recognise them at once, like the author himself, from the inside, and thanks to indications that are only revealed to him if, having renounced his love of comfort, he is willing to plunge into them as deeply as the author, whose vision he makes his own.

Indeed, the whole problem is here; to dispossess the reader and entice him, at all costs, into the author's territory. To achieve this, the device that consists in referring to the leading character as "I" constitutes a means that is both efficacious and simple and, doubtless for this reason, is frequently employed.

Suddenly the reader is on the inside, exactly where the author is, at a depth where nothing remains of the convenient landmarks with which he constructs the characters. He is immersed and held under the surface until the end, in a substance as anonymous as blood, a magma without name or contours. If he succeeds in finding his way, it is thanks to stakes

* Quentin is the forename of both uncle and the niece; Caddy of the mother and daughter.

that the author has planted for purposes of his own orientation. No reminiscences of the reader's world, no conventional concern for cohesion or likelihood, distracts his attention or curbs his effort. Like the author, the only barriers he encounters are those that are either inherent to all experiment of this kind, or are peculiar to the author's vision.

As for the secondary characters, they are deprived of all autonomous existence and reduced to mere excrescences, quiddities, experiments, or dreams of the "I," with whom the author identifies himself. At the same time, this "I," not being the novelist, need not be concerned with creating a universe in which the reader will feel too much at home, nor with giving to the characters the proportions and dimensions required to confer upon them their rather dangerous relief. His obsessed, maniacal eye may seize upon them at will, abandon them, stretch them in a single direction, compress or reduce them to dust, in order to force them to surrender the new reality he is striving to find.

In the same way, the modern painter—and in this connection, it might be said that, since impressionism, all pictures have been painted in the first person—wrests the object from the universe of the spectator and deforms it in order to isolate its pictorial content.

Thus, in a movement analagous to that of painting, the novel, which only a stubborn adherence to obsolete techniques places in the position of a minor art, pursues with means that are uniquely its own, a path which can only be its own; it leaves to the other arts—and, in particular, to the cinema—everything that doesn't actually belong to it. In the same way that photography occupies and fructifies the fields abandoned by painting, the cinema garners and perfects what is left it by the novel.

The reader, instead of demanding of the novel what every good novel has more than often refused him, i.e., light enter-

tainment, can satisfy at the cinema, without effort and without needless loss of time, his taste for "live" characters and stories.

However, if we are to judge by certain recent endeavors, the cinema, like the novel, having become an object of suspicion, is now also threatened. Otherwise, how may we explain the uneasiness which, after that of the novelist, is now being evidenced by certain "advanced" directors who, because they feel obliged to make films in the first person, have introduced the eye witness and the voice of a narrator?

As for the novel, before it has even exhausted all the advantages offered by the story told in the first person, or reached the end of the blind alley into which all technique necessarily leads, it has grown impatient and, in order to emerge from its present difficulties, is looking around for other ways out; hence the new form of the novel, entirely centered around the historical event.

If this latter experiment differs from the preceding one—especially in that it tends less to carry out deep-seated exploration of the psychological life, at certain limited points, than to capture this life, with its infinite shimmer and shadings, on a vast scale—it nevertheless corresponds to the same considerations. It is also a product of this age of suspicion. Hence, its documentary nature; its subject matter, a great, anonymous mass, the common background against which all the characters are silhouetted; its characters, stripped of an existence of their own, dependencies, facets, reflections of the event which lights up, deforms, passes over and abandons them; its disdain for novelistic action and plot; its time element no longer that of the earlier novel.

Suspicion, which is by way of destroying the character and the entire outmoded mechanism that guaranteed its force, is one of the morbid reactions by which an organism defends itself and seeks another equilibrium. It forces the novelist to

fulfil what Toynbee, recalling Flaubert's teaching, has called "his deepest obligation; that of discovering what is new," and keeps him from committing "his most serious crime: that of repeating the discoveries of his predecessors."

Translated from the French
by Marie Jolas

IRENE ORGEL

Alcyone's Song

> *When Ceyx was drowned in a shipwreck, he appeared to his wife, Alcyone, in a dream to tell her of his misfortune. Through the pity of the gods, they were both changed into sea gulls. No parting followed them in their new-found form as birds. They mate, have young, and in the winter season for seven days of calm—the halcyon days—Alcyone broods over her nest on the surface of the waters while the sea-waves are calm.*
>
> (Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book 11)

As a girl
With my head on your heartbeat
I rose and fell like a gull.

In the harbor of your heartbeat
I rocked, a halcyon housewife who knew no storm.
What does metamorphosis matter?
Nothing can change but the form.
I was a weed-worn widow not for long,
Wet as the wave with weeping.
The wave is our world wafting us, and our home.

Mortality is a masquerade.
In Momus' cave, the diabolic and the dream
Mingle. I dreamed that you said you had died.
Your hair was heavy with weed.
I spoke with a beak,
And I rose and I fell with the foam.
But nothing has changed but the form.

URSULE MOLINARO

The Rat

I got to know Elisa Conti very well, too well for my liking. And it all happened because I'm so polite. One afternoon when I was late for class, the seat next to Elisa gaped in awkward emptiness, as though she had been quarantined. I sat down beside her. I'm still sorry.

Elisa was enormous. Her bare right arm lay alongside mine like a misplaced thigh. Her small black eyes gleamed like upholsterer's buttons buried in pillows of pink fat.

She had no friends among us. Her scornful superiority—even more than her bulk—kept us all at an awed distance. She seldom smiled, and when she did, it was exclusively for the professors who treated her almost with reverence. Her erudition was remarkable, as remarkable as her parents' social position. At an age when most students count their subway tokens, hoping for the end of the month and a check from home, Elisa had her own bankers, a car with a chauffeur, and an incredibly high opinion of herself.

I could hardly believe my ears when she proposed—with a disdainful pout—to have a cup of tea with me after class. I had planned to study that afternoon. It was close to the midterm exams and I didn't feel overly sure of myself, but I couldn't use that as an excuse with Elisa who apparently never

studied, just knew everything naturally. Besides, I didn't have the heart to rebuff her first friendly gesture. I immediately told myself that we had all misjudged her; that her brusk manners were nothing but the defense mechanism of a timid, unhappy girl, painfully aware of her ugliness.

Suddenly I longed to be good and kind, to lead her out of this self-imposed isolation by my friendship, to help her forget how fat she was. I accepted her invitation almost eagerly.

Elisa told the chauffeur to await her further orders at home and steered me, on foot, to a dingy tearoom a few blocks away. I wondered why she'd chosen this sticky little place which could hardly be in keeping with a rich girl's habits, but then I thought that she was probably just being tactful, trying to stoop to my level.

Cakes and candy had never tempted me, I told Elisa before we ordered. I said I'd just have a tea with lemon.

Her button eyes flashed with sudden hatred. "Yes, of course. *Two* teas with lemon," she said to the waiter and stared through me into the ugly space around us.

The waiter returned with our tea. I poured hers, just to have something to do. She thanked me with an icy nod and continued to stare.

I offered her a cigarette. She shook her head. We were both staring now.

"You don't understand either. You're just as thick-skinned as the rest of them," Elisa burst out in a wet voice.

I looked at her. Two large tears were slowly rolling down her plump pink cheeks.

"I'm ill, desperately ill. For over six years now, the world's most famous specialists have been puzzling over my case. They weigh me morning and night, and take my blood pressure, and if I lose an ounce, they scold me and tell me that I'll die. Oh, if you only knew . . ."

"You'd be a great beauty, by Oriental standards," I clumsily tried to console her.

"I used to be a beauty here, too," she snapped. "But what good is the past . . . or the Orient, for that matter. If you were as intelligent as you are tactless, perhaps you might let me finish without constantly interrupting. Other people's miseries always make pleasant listening."

I said nothing. I didn't dare protest. Everything I said seemed to irritate her.

"It all started during the war," Elisa continued. "I was studying in London at the time. My parents begged me to come home, or at least to go to Switzerland. But I wouldn't. Their placid comfort was not for me. I wanted to be strong, to put myself to the test. I was writing poetry then, and I felt that war-time England would be my school of austerity. My life had been too easy. It showed in my verse.

"My parents didn't object to my writing. It wasn't that. On the contrary, they published every silly line I wrote, although I told them that I wasn't ready. But it flattered them and I was much appreciated within a certain circle of society . . . people you probably wouldn't know.

"Well, I went on living my austere existence in Britain. I had money, of course, but the black market was against my principles. I preferred to suffer with the people, like the people, all the more because I was a 'foreigner,' because I didn't really have to. I was more patriotic than the natives, you see. I starved myself. And this is the result. I ruined my health, my looks, everything!"

I shivered with sympathy as I wondered about this mysterious illness which puzzled the world's greatest specialists.

Elisa dug an outrageously perfumed handkerchief out of her bag and vigorously blew her nose. For the first time I noticed her hands: they were tiny and helplessly touching, like humming birds in the rain.

I swallowed not to sob with tenderness when she showed me a photograph. A lovely oval face smiled out from under greasy fingerprints and traces of chocolate.

"This is how I looked before my illness," Elisa continued in a voice rasping with self-mockery. "I was beautiful, they used to tell me. You can't imagine how many love letters that face used to get. Stacks of them. Regular fan mail. I was the diaphanous poetesse, the evasive nymph, a silvery cobweb of mystery. My romantic admirers were more lyrical than my poems. And even women wrote, telling me how boyish and frail I was, and how talented.

"Since my illness, of course, my poetry no longer interests anybody. True, I haven't written as much. The treatment takes all my time. But what I have written is far superior to the amiable drivel my dear parents enjoyed so much. Today, of course, they won't publish me. They don't like the truth, particularly *my* truth!"

"Are you sure the specialists are right about your case?" I asked, choking with eagerness to help. "I can't understand why they don't let you diet, carefully of course, but . . ."

"You can't understand; you can't understand! Of course you can't. Neither can I. And they don't either! Diet! You fool!" yelled Elisa, bouncing to her feet like a rubber ball and storming out of the shop. She didn't look back at me. She even forgot to pay our bill which the waiter hurriedly presented to me.

I went straight home and got into bed. I was too upset to study now. About an hour later the door bell rang. Elisa's chauffeur was there with a letter. Cap in hand he waited for my reply. I tore open the envelope: a five-dollar bill fell out.

"Here's my reply!" I screamed and threw the money at the chauffeur. "Tell your mistress she tipped the wrong person."

I went back to bed, sweating with rage. What a fool I'd been to waste my friendship and my whole afternoon on a fat, insolent girl who only wanted to humiliate me! I gaped at the insult, sat up in bed and swore half-aloud to myself: Ah, if Caesar could only have known this monstrosity with thighs for arms, he'd never have wanted fat men about him. Of

course Elisa was a woman, at least supposedly, although her sexuality had been buried with her charm under layers of pink lard. She had about as much sex appeal as a steamroller.

Something within me—perhaps my badly bruised self-respect —still tried to excuse her conduct as that of a very sick girl, suffering to the point of insanity. But what right had she to humiliate *me* just because she hated *herself?*

An hour later, the chauffeur returned, this time with an armful of gardenias and a long letter of excuses. Once more, Elisa Conti explained her tragic illness and the inhuman treatment of the specialists who forced her to stuff down food against her will.

I was only too eager to accept her excuses. I asked the chauffeur to wait, dressed hastily and rushed to her, my heart once more brimming over with tenderness and pity.

I couldn't tell whether she had expected my visit. I found her huddled and sobbing on a huge Renaissance bed, wearing a magnificent Chinese robe.

We looked at each other in embarrassment, and just to say something I told her how much I admired her kimono.

She tore it off, standing up in the middle of the bed on two unsteady, sausage-balloon legs. I averted my face from a quivering tower of flesh and walked over to the window.

"You don't have to be so modest for other people," Elisa mocked in my back. "You may turn around now. I have finished." And with a rude gesture she threw the kimono into my arms. "Here! It'll look much better on you anyway!"

I hesitated, not knowing how to interpret this brutal present. Was it meant as another insult, or was it just a timid person's awkward generosity?

I decided in favor of the timidity . . . and the robe.

Indeed, as soon as Elisa saw me hesitate she seemed all ready to start sobbing again, and begged me not to refuse this small token of her grateful friendship.

"When you're as ugly as I am," she added, "sympathy has to be paid for, just like everything else."

My pride rose into my mouth with a bitter taste. But I swallowed it and smiled an encouraging denial of her ugliness while I hastily slipped into the robe. I was certain now that Elisa was out of her mind, but I thought that surely it couldn't be impossible to cure her, that her insanity would decrease with her weight. I decided to ask my own doctor about her case, secretly, of course.

The evening dragged, filled with bored silences and embarrassment. Elisa read me her poems, bound in pretentious yellow calf. They were disappointingly banal, cleverly rhymed platitudes. I had to make a sincere effort of hypocrisy to praise them.

Elisa squatted in the middle of her huge bed. She was now wrapped in wine-red velvet and smiled, like a buddha without serenity, a thin-lipped, superior smile.

"Of course," she smiled, "most people love this rhymed rubbish. But my one good poem, the only one that has any literary merit at all, was written since my illness . . . and that one has never been published. My dear parents are horrified at the very idea. It is too true for them, much too true to please their dainty little brains. It's a ballad. I would read it to you, but . . . no, I have already shown you too much of myself.

"I must rest now. Good night."

I walked all the way home, the kimono over my arm. At my door stood Elisa's chauffeur with a letter.

Suddenly I had the impulse to run, to leave town, to go far away, anywhere to escape Elisa. If only I had!

I climbed the stairs to my apartment as though persecuted or drunk and threw myself down on the bed without opening the letter. But my conscience—as my tiredness before—worked for Elisa.

On the table, the envelope shone, white and commanding. Finally, I could bear it no longer, got up, switched on the light and opened it. Elisa had sent me her poem, a ballad, entitled THE RAT.

The rat ate incessantly. It couldn't stop eating, thought of nothing but eating. Panting with anxious greed, it devoured all with trembling jaws. It finally devoured itself, beginning with its front paws.

Across the page, Elisa had scrawled in red pencil: "Now do you understand, my naïve, sympathetic friend? Specialists! Indeed!"

It took me hours to go to sleep, and when I finally did, I had a food nightmare. Under a beach umbrella of wine-red velvet squatted an obese pink rat, wearing lace and embroidery and a plumed cap. All around it, food was spread out in endless variety: sweets; and cakes; and piles of cheese; and giant roasts. Holding up its front paws like a squirrel, the rat nibbled nervously until dawn.

The next day I skipped class. I stayed home all week, listening to every step outside in the hall, my heart pounding when someone stopped in front of my door. But nobody rang my bell.

On Monday afternoon I finally went back to school. I waited outside in the corridor, hoping to see the professor arrive and to slip in unnoticed, protected by his back. But the professor politely stepped aside to let me pass, and the whole class looked up at me. Elisa Conti fixed me with shiny rodent eyes.

Another week went by. In vain I expected to be persecuted. Elisa seemed indifferent. She had resumed her air of detached superiority. Her confidences were forgotten. But I could not forget.

I thought of her constantly. I thought of her so much that the idea of food began to obsess me. I had never liked sweets. Now, suddenly, I felt strangely drawn to the windows of

pastry and candy shops. Several times I had visions of roasts, spinning on a skewer. I even thought I smelled a faint odor of garlic.

At table I was afraid to eat, but in between meals I began to munch crackers, cookies, ice cream and candy bars, furtively, as though I were committing some forbidden, shameful act.

I weighed myself every day, in a drugstore at the corner of my street. Unfortunately, the candy counter was right next to the scale. I swore a solemn oath never to let myself go over 130 pounds . . . 135 pounds . . . 138.

I allowed myself a margin up to 140 pounds, promising that I'd starve rather than put on another ounce. 141 pounds. Old ladies began telling me how healthy I looked. I loathed them.

Suddenly, one day, I had the impression that Elisa Conti was getting thinner. It was on the day of my 142 pounds, but that day I thought that it must be her dress, a beltless black sheath with long sleeves, very straight and simple. A few days later, a light blouse and a skirt gave me the same impression. Then somebody said to me: "Have you noticed? Elisa Conti is slimming down. She's getting almost pretty, don't you think?"

I looked at Elisa and noticed that she had been looking at me. She quickly turned her head away, but I caught her smile, amused, tenderly ironic and triumphant.

That same evening her chauffeur brought me an enormous bonbonniere. A helpless rage shook me. I wanted to send it back to her, but I couldn't. I could hardly wait for the chauffeur to go. Standing right there in my narrow hall, I gobbled down chocolate after chocolate, with trembling jaws, until I had finished the whole, gigantic box.

ARTHUR GREGOR

Schwanengesang

I

Humble, in pose like the willow
at the water's edge, the willow
bending low; shy, unobtrusive;
in mist, or at the points in time
when extreme contrasts meet,
when merging cancels difference out,
hardly perceptibly there: a swan;

glides by in trembling elusiveness,
behind the screen of change—
an idea no one has ever seen—
to hearts straining for a silent
song is subtly evident
like the slightest wind
responded to by mostly little things:

leaves on the ground,
leaves of another season,
some tiny flies that lift
or crawl, a long neglected bit
of paper note, a footprint
losing contour in the dust.

II

Nearby, another swan. The song
of the first rests on everything
surrounding him and is not heard,
but of the sound of the other
there can be no mistake:

It is the cry that gives
the unheard song its own
characteristic note, and draws
toward a common center those
that heed what it implies,
attracts such little things
that once were part of bloom,
of hope, of moving toward,
each once involved
in becoming whole and being real,
which was the state of each,
of which, in the case of man,
he is convinced without much thought,
until, torn, all turn obedient
in disguising nothing
in their much lesser form.

III

Two swans, one like the willow bent,
trembling for all this greater force,
the other's neck crying upward like a horn,—
both equally entwined in mist,
each expressing differently
the one condition basic to them both:

each lives; each flames; each gesture dies
in an instant less than time;
their perfection, the total form of each,
caught only by the barest wind,
that air in which all die,

that air in which the pose of each
is transformed to accord
with standards of the invisible,
the changeless wing adorned
by all these changing things:
the swan's gesture; the swan's cry.

GEORGE REAVEY

A Note on Boris Pasternak

Boris Pasternak's poetry and prose have long been appreciated and admired by the discriminating few. In a sense, Pasternak has always been a poet's poet, working uncompromisingly in the realm of pure sensibility. But this domain, though it may appear hermetic, has its own powers of wider impact and ramification in time. In a revolutionary world of pressure, necessity and expediency, Pasternak's moral position, though precarious, has grown stronger rather than weaker. And the publication in English of his controversial novel, *Dr. Zhivago*, will certainly attract the attention of a wider public to his work. In the meantime, we are fortunate in having a hitherto unpublished prose text of Pasternak's, his *The Last Summer* (A *Tale*), which was not included in the *The Collected Prose Works*, published in London (1945).

Boris Pasternak was born in 1890. His father, Leonid Pasternak, was a celebrated painter and academician, who, among other subjects, painted a portrait of Rilke in Moscow and who eventually died in Oxford in 1945. Pasternak's mother was a distinguished devotee of music and the piano, and this musical background had a deep influence on the poet's life and work. Philosophy and, of course, literature were the poet's other main interests, and in his poetry as well as in his prose we

catch many glimpses of his highly developed cultural background.

Boris Pasternak's literary beginnings immediately preceded the First World War. The age of the great nineteenth century Russian novelists had been succeeded in the 1900's by a period of lyrical sensibility and experimentation. A new nervous energy, compounded of haste, hope and foreboding, was in the air. Fresh attitudes, movements and slogans—Symbolism, Acmeism, Futurism, Imagism—jostled each other and gave the first seventeen years of the century the atmosphere of a seething intellectual cauldron. In the midst of this spiritual unrest, on the eve of 1914 and 1917, Pasternak made his debut with two volumes of poetry, *Twin in the Clouds* (1912-14) and *Above The Barriers* (1914-16). Like Mayakovsky, whom Pasternak considered to be *the* dramatic and romantic voice of his generation (*vide: Safe Conduct*), Pasternak belonged to that generation of the 1890's which followed closely on the heels of the Symbolist generation of the 1880's—Blok, Biely and Bryusov. The younger and less mystical generation made itself felt round 1912, the year also of the Russian Futurism Manifesto. While Mayakovsky rushed into the streets and where angels fear to tread, Pasternak created a more secluded, but no less mad and mobile garden of musical plants. When his next two volumes, *My Sister, Life* (1922) and *Themes and Variations* (1923), appeared, Pasternak was finally recognized as a poet of subtle and purely lyrical sensibility. A poet, too, of dynamic verbs and striking imagery. In the 1920's, Pasternak consolidated his reputation, and this period culminated with the publication, in 1932, of *New Birth* and *Spectorsky*. The moral and political atmosphere of the 1930's was hardly propitious for pure lyricism, and it is therefore sad, but not surprising, to find Pasternak's lyrical voice muted except, at second hand, in translations from the German, Georgian, and English (Shakespeare's sonnets and tragedies). During the war the lyrical note was revived, and Pasternak published two

volumes, *Early Trains* (1943) and *Spacious Earth* (1945). In a poem, "The Thrushes," Pasternak restated his position as a pure poet. The Zhadanov curtain of 1946 again blocked Pasternak from sight, and therefore it is all the more exciting to have, in 1958, a full-bodied novel from him. But the problem since the 1930's has not been so much the lack of Pasternak's work as the fact that it seldom got into print. Even *Dr. Zhivago* is being published in the West against the official protests of the Soviet government.

A word must also be said about Pasternak's prose. Pasternak has also been writing prose since about 1914. What has been published so far is not great in bulk and, with the exception of the story here printed and the *Dr. Zhivago* novel, it was all included in the English edition of *The Collected Prose Works*. The first Russian edition of Pasternak's stories appeared in 1925. It included *The Childhood of Luvers* (1918), a sensitive and poetic study of the childhood years of a young girl, and *Il Tratto di Apelle* (1915), a subtle reconstruction of a romance in Italy, involving Heine. In 1931, Pasternak published *Safe Conduct*, a short poetic autobiography, which was also very much concerned with his contemporary, Mayakovsky, who committed suicide in 1930. *Safe Conduct* was soon after attacked for its "idealism" and banned: it has not since been reprinted in the Soviet Union.

The Last Summer was originally entitled *A Tale* and was published in 1934. Earlier versions of it had appeared in 1922. It is largely autobiographical in content and, in tone and style, very like *The Childhood of Luvers* and *Safe Conduct*. In the winter of 1916, the central character, Serezha, arrives to stay with his married sister, Natasha Kalyazin. Soon after his arrival, tired from a long journey, he falls asleep. He awakes later in the evening to meet his brother-in-law and to have supper. But while asleep, Serezha had experienced a sort of autobiographical dream sequence, in which the past is evoked —in particular the recent, but already so remote past of the

summer of 1914, the last summer of peace before the encroaching years of hate began to do their work. Pasternak's prose style has all the sensitivity and mingled concreteness and abstraction of his poetry. He astonishes us at every turn by arresting images which only a poet could have conceived. He imparts a newfelt vitality, inwardly recreated, to what might otherwise be merely commonplace scenes. Whether it is a street, a factory, a mansion, a park or even the weather, the object of metaphorical contemplation is somehow strangely and hauntingly personified in the most inimitable Pasternakian manner.

BORIS PASTERNAK

The Last Summer

". . . that last summer when life still appeared to pay heed to individuals and when it was easier and more natural to love than to hate."

I

At the beginning of 1916, Serezha came to stay with his sister, Natasha, in Solihamsk. For the past ten years the scattered fragments of this tale have kept coming into my mind, and in the early days of the Revolution some portions of it found their way into print.

But the reader had better forget about these earlier versions or he will become confused as to what fate in the final count befell which character. I have changed the names of a number of these characters; as to the fates themselves, I shall leave them as I had found them in those years in the snow under the trees; and there will be no difference of opinion between my novel in verse, *Spectorsky*,* which I wrote at a later date, and this prose offering: the life in both of them is the same.

To be exact, Serezha arrived not in Solihamsk, but in Ousolie. Ousolie glowed, a white pile, on the opposite bank of the river; and from the factory shore, from the kitchen of the freshly painted doctor's apartment, one could easily grasp on the very first day of arrival what Ousolie stood for, why and for what reason. The sheer commercial masonry of the official buildings glimmered and grazed, widely dispersed by the sapping victuals of satiety, the powder of plenty. Reducing

* *Spectorsky*—a narrative poem published in 1932.

to neat squares this spectacle on the other bank—the handiwork of Ivan the Terrible and the Stroganovs, the doctor's window shone brightly as though the fresh oil paint had been mixed and, in bags of creamy scum, spread over the wood especially in honor of that distant perspective. However, that's the way it was—the scant cracked palisades of the counting-house district could contribute nothing.

In the bushes, to assist the ravens, a thaw was picking and pecking. Solitary sounds swam in the water of black puddles under the snow. The whistling of a shunted locomotive on the Veretie alternated with the shouts of playing children. The thud and hack of hatchets from the nearest construction plant prevented one from listening to the vague organ-like shuffling of the distant factory. This could be more easily imagined—suggested by the sight of its five smoking caps—than actually heard. Horses neighed, dogs barked. The abruptly interrupted crowing of a raucous cockerel quivered like a tiny splinter on a thread. And from a distant tributary where, from under the snowdrifts bristled the drowsy moustaches of interwoven willow-bushes, came the provocative staccato beat of a dynamo. The sounds were scant, and seemed drunken, because they rolled in grooves. The silences of the wintry plain unfolded triumphantly and merrily in between them. Somewhere in the vicinity and, according to local tradition, almost in the neighboring village were concealed the foothills of the Urals. The plain had concealed them, like deserters.

Serezha bumped into his sister, Natasha, as she was about to leave the house on some household chore. Behind her stood a long-faced girl in an unevenly fastened short fur-lined coat. Natasha threw her provision bag down on the window sill and, while brother and sister embraced and chattered, the girl, snatching up Serezha's suitcase, dashed like a whirlwind, in her loose shuffling felt boots, into the interior of the apartment, just managing at full tilt, and like a craning speeding hoop, to avoid crashing into the dining-room table. Very soon,

beneath a shower of questions, Serezha began awkwardly and unaccustomedly to wash away with Kazan soap the grimy traces of his sleepless last forty-eight hours; and, as he stood there with a towel over his shoulder, his sister noticed that he had grown taller and thinner. Then he shaved. Kalyazin, the brother-in-law, was away at work and his razor with all its accessories, which Natasha fetched from the bedroom, rather daunted Serezha. The bright dining room benevolently smelled of sausage. The fists of the thirteen-branched palm tree pressed against the black lacquer of the piano and the brass glare of the screwed-on candlesticks threatened, with its weight, to break the panel. Catching Serezha's glance, which slipped over the milky toilet tones of the oilcloth, Natasha said: "We inherited that from our predecessor. The furnishing is all official." Then, hesitating, she added: "I'm terribly interested in what you will think of the children. You know them only from photographs."

The children were expected back from their walk any minute.

Serezha settled down to tea and, submitting to Natasha, explained to her that the very unexpectedness of his mother's death had shaken him badly. Rather he had been terrified that she would die the previous summer when, as he put it, she was really at death's door.

"Of course, just before your exams. They wrote me about it," Natasha interposed.

"Ah, yes!" he picked up, almost choking. "Indeed, I did sit for the examinations! What it cost me to go through with it, for the University had been blotted out as with a rag."

Continuing to knead the gummy pulp of the calatch and sipping from his glass, he related how he had begun his preparations in the spring, shortly after Natasha's Moscow visit, but had to give them up: his mother's illness, the trip to Petersburg and much else (here he again went over the list). But then, a month before the winter session, he pulled him-

self together, and the regular distractions, which were an ingrained habit since childhood, were the hardest of all to overcome. He felt offended that in the words "one talent in the hand is worth ten in the bush" his sister had failed to recognize the proverb which his deceased father had put into circulation among the family with special reference to him.

"So, what then?" Natasha asked, hastening to cover up the awkwardness.

"How—what then? I forced the pace day and night, and that's all." And he tried to convince her that no delight was equal to such a race, which he incidentally defined as *the exaltation of misplaced leisure.* According to him, only this mental sport had helped him to master his inborn temptations, the chief of which was music, shelved since then. And to prevent his sister interjecting anything, he informed her rapidly and without any apparent transition that Moscow had been in the heat of a building boom when the war broke out and that the work had at first been continued, but at present the construction had been stopped with the result that many houses would never be completed.

"Why never?" she protested. "Don't you hope for an end to it?"

But he kept silent, assuming that here, as everywhere else, talk of war, that is, of a total inability to conceive peace, would be a frequent topic, and that Kalyazin very likely was the chief spouter in this domain.

Suddenly Natasha was forcibly struck by the unhealthy anticipation with which Serezha ever more frequently and successfully had begun to ward off her curiosity. But she also realized that he was exhausted and, unconsciously straying from her mind-reading, suggested that he undress and go to sleep. But there was an unexpected interruption. The front door bell tinkled faintly. Assuming it was the children, Serezha made a move to follow his sister, but, waving him away and muttering something, Natasha vanished into the bedroom.

Serezha walked to the window and, placing his hands behind his back, stared into space.

In his state of exalted vagueness, he failed to catch the fury that was unleashed next door. Using every ounce of energy as she held the receiver, Natasha hammered some sort of pleasantries into those same spaces that spread before her brother. In the direction of the endless paling, which stretched at the far end of the village, a man was walking away with measured, heavy step, a man notable only for the fact that there was not a soul near him and that no one crossed his path. Mechanically observing the departing figure, Serezha saw in his mind's eye a wooded section of the recently constructed railway. He saw the station, the empty buffet improvised from a board propped on trestles, the hills beyond the semaphor and the passengers, strolling, running madly and shoving, on that snow-heaped mound that divided the chilly railway carriages from the hot pies. By this time, the striding man had passed the paling and, turning behind it, vanished from sight.

In the meantime, changes had been going on in the bedroom. The screaming over the telephone had ceased. Coughing in a relieved way, Natasha inquired when her blouse would be ready and explained how it should be sewn.

"Did you guess?" she asked, entering and catching her brother's attentive scrutiny. "That was Lemokh. He came here on factory business and will spend the evening with us."

"What Lemokh? Why do you scream?" Serezha interrupted her in a low voice. "You could have warned him. When you let yourself go verbally as if you were alone in the apartment, and a man is working next door, he is naturally upset. You should have warned him that you would have the seamstress with you."

At first the misunderstanding increased in stature, but was then fully resolved. It turned out that no one else had been in the bedroom; and that, when Natasha had been cut off from her even more distant connection, she had continued

talking with the telephone operator, who had severed the connection and who was sitting in a distant office at the other end of the village.

"A charming girl," Natasha added. "She sews too: her salary's too small. She will also come. But that's uncertain, for she has a visitor from the front."

"Do you know," Serezha unexpectedly declared, "I think I'll really lie down."

"That's good," his sister quickly agreed and led him into the room which had been prepared for him on the receipt of his letter. "It's amazing they discharged you," she remarked on the way, glancing sideways at her brother, "for you're not limping at all."

"Yes, just imagine it, and without any complications, unanimously. What are you doing?" he cried out, noticing that his sister was about to spread some sheets and was pulling off the bed cover. "Leave it. I'll lie down as I am. It's not necessary."

"Well, as you wish." She yielded and, glancing round the room like a housewife, said on the threshold: "Sleep your fill and don't be embarrassed. I'll see to it that they don't make noise; if you oversleep we'll dine without you and your meal will be warmed up later. But that you should have forgotten Lemokh, is unpardonable; he is a very very interesting man, a worthy one, and he has referred to you very warmly and correctly."

"But what am I to do?" Serezha pleaded. "I have never seen him, and I've just heard of him for the first time."

He thought that even the door closed after his sister in a reproachful way.

He undid his suspenders and, sitting down on the bed, began to unlace his boots.

Serezha's train had also brought to Verctie a sailor on shore leave from the torpedo boat, *Novik*. His name was Fardybassov. From the station he had carried his small trunk direct to

the office, kissed a woman relative of his who was employed there and at once, crushing the ice and splashing water, strode with long steps towards the Mechanical Workshop. Here, his arrival created a sensation. However, failing to discover in the crowd pressing round him the man he was seeking and learning that Otrygayev was now working in one of the new and recently constructed workshops, he set off at the same pace toward the Second Auxiliary, which he soon discovered behind the storehouse fences, at the fork of the narrow guage railway. This latter crawled like a nasty little hem along the edge of a steep slope and frightened one by its obvious defencelessness, for on the forest verge a sentinel armed with a rifle paced up and down. Abandoning the road, Fardybassov ran down the field, scurrying from hillock to hillock and disappearing in stagnant ditches of summer provenance. Then he climbed the height, where stood the wooden barracks which differed from an ordinary shed only because it frequently threw puffs of steam, like snowballs, at the silence reigning here.

"Otryganiev!" The sailor on leave grunted, after running up the steps and banging the door post with the palm of his hand. "Otryganiev!" he grunted again into the depths of the structure where several peasants were dragging some sacks from place to place where raged and roared a formidable motor which, its fly-wheel seemingly immobilized by its lightning flight, was only protected from the open fields, as with a chair cover, by these deal planks. Beneath it, the mad lever of the connecting rod ground its pistons and squatted, sank through the floor and jerked back its sprained leg, terrorizing the whole of this structure with its St. Vitus's dance.

"What juice are you pumping here?" the new arrival asked at once by way of greeting of a lame sluggard, who rose up in the doorway after hobbling forward from the machine on a withered leg.

"Yeremka!" This type had just time to fire back when he was at once seized by an attack of bitter, large-crumbed,

mahorka coughing. "Chloroform," he pronounced in a voice drink-sodden to the point of tuberculosis, and then merely waved his hand as he experienced a renewed paroxysm of rattling in his throat.

"Tar-mixers, that's what you are!" the sailor exclaimed affectionately, waiting for the attack to die away.

But it never came to an end because, at this moment, two of the Tartars, detaching themselves from the rest, quickly climbed up a wall ladder and, from above, began to pour lime into the mixer, which produced an incredible din and wrapped the interior in white curling, sundering dust. In this cloud, Fardybassov began to yell that his time had been devoured, his days counted, he said—and thereupon began to urge his friend to do that, for the sake of which he had made his way here through the open country from the station, namely, to go hunting for the whole period of his leave.

After a certain lapse of time, spent in affectionate jeering at the apprentices, those who had been exempted from military service, and the factories engaged in war work, Fardybassov, when finally about to leave, related how not so long ago, just before Christmas, he had been blown up on a German minefield one night when sailing out of the Finnish Gulf; but all this was lies and sheer bravado to do with personalities, for Fardybassov was on board the *Novik*, whereas it was another torpedo boat of the flotilla that had trained its guns, dug the deep, and gone down, winding round itself a watery noose of savage depth and tightness.

Dusk was falling, there was frost in the air, and water was being carried into the kitchen. Children came in and were shooed away. Now and then, Natasha would steal to the door. But Serezha could not sleep: he only pretended to be asleep. Outside, the whole house was moving through the twilight into the evening. To the material sing-song of the floors and its buckets, Serezha was thinking how unrecognizable everything would become in the light when all this potter was

over. He would feel as if he arrived a second time and, that was important, well rested into the bargain. And the foretaste of novelty, which the lamps had already to some extent created, seethed and rumbled, passing from incarnation to incarnation. By means of children's voices it inquired where uncle was and when he would depart again, and, taught to glare terrifyingly, it very emotionally chided the quite guiltless Mashka. To a swarm of maternal admonitions, it darted about amid the vapour of soup, flapping its wings at aprons and plates. No resistance availed, when they once more wrapped it up painstakingly and irritably, and began to lead it out for a new promenade, hurrying it from the hall so as not to let in the chill. And not so soon, much later that evening, it became incarnation in Kalyazin's bass irruption and that of his cane and his deep galoshes which, despite his ten married years, had never surrendered to any instruction.

To induce sleep, Serezha obstinately tried to picture some summer noon, the first that might turn up. He knew that, if such an image manifested itself and he could arrest it, the vision would seal his eyes and rush snoringly to his feet and brain. But he lay there, for a long time already holding the spectacle of hot July right in front of his nose, like a book, and sleep still declined to visit him. It so happened that the summer of 1914 had crept up and upset all calculations. It was impossible to gaze upon that summer, sucking in with clouded eyes its soporific clarity, but instead, one was obliged to think, passing from one remembrance to another. The same cause will part us for a long time from this apartment in Ousolie.

It was from Ousolie that Natasha had received her commissions and with that list, made illegible by minute jottings and frequent erasures, scoured Moscow on her arrival in the spring of 1913. She had then stopped at Serezha's; but now by the smell of the construction timber, by the hum of the surrounding calm and by the condition of the roads in the village, he imagined that he could see the very persons whom his

sister had then obliged, when she absented herself for whole days from her room on Kislovka street. The factory staff lived in real amity as one family. Her trip in 1913 had even been officially sanctioned, the husband's mission having been entrusted to the wife. All this nonsense was made possible only because all the links in that abstract chain, which ended in travelling expenses, were human beings, generated without exception by those crowded conditions in which, as on a tiny island, they had to huddle with their diverse literacy in the midst of three thousand miles of epidemic snows. Profiting by the occasion, the management even invested Natasha with certain powers of negotiation to clarify certain trifling, easily executed but by mail insoluble matters; and this was the reason why Natasha had to frequent the Ilyinka, explaining these visitations in a very ambiguous manner. She enclosed these promenades in emphatically comic quotation marks, letting it be understood at the same time that these quotation marks enclosed matters of "ministerial importance." But in her free time, and especially in the evening, she visited her own and her husband's Moscow friends. With them she went to theaters and concerts. As she did in the case of her visits to the Ilyinka office, she gave these amusements the appearance of business, but such as did not admit of quotation marks. That was because an important past bound her to the people with whom she now shared her visits, the Art Theatre and the Korsh Theatre. This past, available at will to enthusiastic interpretations with each new sifting of old times, now remained the only evidence of their former relationship. They all met, strongly welded by its remoteness, for they were now practising different professions, some as doctors, others as engineers, and others again as lawyers. Those, who had failed to renew their temporarily interrupted studies, worked in the offices of *The Russian News*. They all had families, and all, with the exception of those who had gone into literature, had children. But they all, of course, resembled each other and lived, not in a

hive, but scattered among different streets; and, when visiting one of them, Natasha walked from the Kislovskaya to the tram stop on the Vosdvizhenka, but, when on the way to another, she walked along the Gazetnaya, the Kamergersky and so forth, crossing streets each more crooked, sinewy and more rag-market than the other.

It must be said that, except for one occasion in Georgievsky street, where she had to call on friends before attending a benefit concert at which the works of Chekhov were to be recited and singers would appear, there had been no talk of the past during this trip of Natasha's. And even on this occasion, just as soon as Natasha had begun to indulge her memories after finding in her friend's toilette case a red tie of the period of "Women's Higher Education" just as her friend, whom she had been urging to hurry, had finished dressing, and, turning their back on the mirror where the resurrected images had begun to float, all three of them, including her friend's husband, rolled out into the green, glassy-chill air of a spring evening. They did not refer to the past, because they believed in their heart that the Revolution would come again. By virtue of a self-deception permissible in our day too, they imagined that the Revolution would be staged again, like a once temporarily suspended and later revived drama with fixed rôles, that is, with all of them playing their old parts. This illusion was all the more natural that, believing deeply in the populist nature of their ideals, they all held the opinion that it was necessary to test their conviction on the living folk. And becoming convinced of this, as a result of the complete and, to a certain extent, everyday oddity of the Revolution as it affected the broad average Russian outlook, they could justly be puzzled as to where they might recruit fresh amateurs and devotees for such an isolated and subtle undertaking.

Like all of them, Natasha believed that the most demanding cause of her youth had merely been postponed and that, when the hour would strike, it would not pass her by. This belief

explained all the faults of Natasha's character. It explained her self-assurance, which was softened only by her complete ignorance of her defect. It also explained those traits of Natasha's aimless righteousness and all-forgiving understanding, which inwardly illuminated her with an inexhaustible light and which yet did not correspond with anything in particular.

Her sisterly intuition told her that something was happening to Serezha. She was aware of everything, beginning with the name of Serezha's flame, Olga, and ending with the fact that the latter was happily married to an engineer. She did not ask her brother any questions. Acting thus from conventional discretion, she, like a luminary ascribed it to her special attribute of caste. She did not question Serezha, but, breathing the awareness that his story depended on that thoughtful and sensitive principle which she herself personified, she waited for him to break his silence and to open his heart to her of his own accord. She laid claim to his sudden confession, awaiting it with professional impatience; and who will laugh at her if he take into account that her brother's story had in it all the elements of free love, dramatic clash with the conventional bonds of matrimony, and the right of a strong healthy feeling and, Heavens, almost the whole of Leonid Andreyev. In the meantime, bridled banality affected Serezha more violently than unbridled and sparking stupidity. And when once he could not contain himself, his sister interpreted his evasiveness in her own way and, from his reluctant omissions, deduced that everything had gone wrong between the lovers. Then her feeling of competence only grew stronger because now, to above attractive inventory, was added the necessary, in her view, element of drama. For, however remote her brother might have been to her as a result of having been born five years and some months later than her generation, she still had eyes, and she perceived, and was not mistaken, that Serezha had no inherent propensity for folly and mischief. And only

the word "drama," which Natasha spread among her acquaintances, was not taken from her brother's dictionary.

II

A great many things suddenly fell behind Serezha when, after he had successfully passed his last exam, he sallied into the street as if capless, and, deafened by all that had happened, excitedly looked round him. A youthful izvoschik, whose raised boot had parted his caftan, was sitting sideways in the driver's seat, glancing an inch or two under his horse and wholly surrendering himself to the oblivious clarity of the March air, as he waited indifferently for a summons from any quarter of the spacious square. Blindly copying his free and easy attitude, the grey piebald mare stood blinking in the shafts as if it had been bodily carried there and harnessed under the shaft-bow by the very rumble of the cobbled streets. Everything in the vicinity imitated the horse and driver. Studded with clean cobbles, the bulging pavement resembled a crested document bordered with flower beds and streetlamps. The houses stood raised in a vacant eve-of-spring vigil as on a resilient base of four rubber tyres. Serezha looked round. Behind a railing, a ponderous door hung festively and canicularly on one of the greyest and most dilapidated of façades—a door which had just slammed upon twelve years of school. At that very moment it had been immured—forever. Serezha walked home. A bachelor sundown of pinching chill unexpectedly broke upon Nikitskaya street. The stone became covered with frosty purple. Serezha felt too shy to glance at the passersby. All that had happened to him was written on his face, and his leaping smile, as large as all of Moscow life at this hour, dominated his features.

Next day he called on one of his friends who, because he

taught in a girls' gymnasium, knew what was going on in the others. That winter he had mentioned to Serezha the possibility of a post in the spring in a private gymnasium on Basmannaya street, a post that would become available on the retirement of a teacher of literature and psychology.

Serezha could not bear school literature or psychology. Besides, he knew that he could never teach in a girls' gymnasium because he would become too steamed up among the girls without any rhyme or reason. But, exhausted finally by all the excitement of the exams, he was now relaxing, that is, he allowed the days and the hours to shift him about at will. It was as though someone had broken a jar of pussy-willow jam and, wallowing with all the town in the bitter-furred buds, he gave himself up to the sway of their tough, leaden folds. In this mood, he wandered into one of the cross-streets of Plyuschikha where his teacher friend lodged in one of the roominghouses.

The rooms had barricaded themselves from the rest of the world with a vast coaching yard. A file of empty cabs ascended toward the evening sky along the backbone of some fabled and only just cooled vertebrate. Here, more strongly than in the street, could be felt the presence of a fresh expanse, naked and heartaching, and there was much dung and hay. There was in particular a great deal of that sweet greyness, on the waves of which Serezha had drifted here. And just as he had been swept into rooms of smoky chatter, propped from the outside by a three-armed streetlamp, so he was also rushed in the following day's twilight to the Basmannaya street and into a leaden conversation with the lady Principal, beneath which bristled the branchy croaking of a big neglected garden, full of confidential feminine silvery-mouse and, in places, already raked earth.

Then suddenly, though it was difficult to say in whose honor, along one of those leaden turnings of the past week, he found himself living in a mansion, tutor to the son of

the Fresteln family, and here he remained, shaking the lead from his feet. And that was not surprising. He was given board and lodging and, besides, a salary twice as large as gymnasium teacher's, a vast room with three windows next door to the classroom and the free use of his leisure when not busy with his pupil. He was given everything except the cloth mill of the Frestelns, for never in his life before had he found it so easy, in a soft hat (he had been given a large advance), after his tea and books, to descend from the marble halls straight into the newbaked heat of the sunny street which, with its parallel sidewalks, hurried slopingly toward the square lying in hiding round the corner. It was in the Samotekh district and, despite the unfrequented character of the neighborhood, Serezha had two encounters during his first walk. The first was with a young man, who was walking on the opposite side and who had been present on that memorable evening at Baltz's. There were two brothers there, the eldest an engineer, and the younger had told him that, on finishing the Commercial school, he must do his army service, but he was not sure whether to volunteer or wait for his call up. Now he was wearing a volunteer's uniform, and the fact that he was in uniform embarrassed Serezha so much that he merely nodded to him without stopping or crossing the street. Nor did the volunteer stop either, because he had sensed Serezha's embarrassment from across the street. Moreover, Serezha did not know the brothers' family name, for they had not been introduced, and he only remembered the eldest as a very self-assured and probably successful man, and the younger as more reserved and far more sympathetic.

The other encounter occurred on the same side of the street. He bumped into a stout good natured man, an editor of one of the Petersburg journals. His name was Kovalenko. He knew Serezha's works and approved of them; and, besides, he intended with Serezha's help, and that of several other previously admired eccentrics, to renew his early literary efforts.

About this pumping of energies and other such nonsense, he always spoke with an unchanging smile. This smile was beyond measure characteristic of him, because he everywhere seemed to see comic situations, and his irony served to protect him from them. Avoiding Serezha's polite inquiries, he asked him what he was now doing, but, with the Fresteln mansion on the tip of his tongue, Serezha just bit in time and, lying quickly just in case, replied that he was engaged on a new story. And as Kovalenko would certainly have asked about its theme, he at once began to compose it in his mind.

But Kovalenko failed to make this inquiry and, instead, arranged to meet Serezha in a month's time on his next trip to Moscow and, without stopping and while mumbling something about some friends in whose half-empty apartment he was staying, quickly wrote down their address on a piece of paper. Serezha took it without glancing at it and, folding it in four, thrust it into his waistcoat pocket. The ironic smile with which Kovalenko had done all this did not say anything to him because it was inseparable from Kovalenko.

Taking leave of his well-wisher, Serezha returned to the mansion by a roundabout way so as not to have to walk beside the man with whom he had ended the conversation on such a final and natural note. Moreover, he was amazed at the whirl that swept through his head. He failed to notice that it was not the wind, but the continuation of his imaginary story, which concluded with the gradual fading away of the encounter and all that had happened. Nor did he realize that theme was his own thought-evoking impressionability; and his emotions had been also stirred by the fact that everything round him was so wonderful and that he had been so successful in his exams, his job and everything else in the world.

His tutorship in the Fresteln family coincided with a series of changes in the household. Some of the changes had taken place before Serezha arrived, others were still due to occur. Shortly before, the couple had brought their quarrelling to a final

issue and had taken up residence on different floors of the mansion. Mr. Fresteln occupied half of the ground floor, across the entrance hall to the right of the nursery and Serezha's quarters. Mrs. Fresteln spread herself over the entire top floor where, besides her three rooms and the drawing room as well, there were also a large ballroom with a Pompeian atrium and windows to both sides, and a dining room with an adjacent serving room.

Spring was early that year, and the noondays were warm and appetizing. At full steam, spring was forging ahead of the calendar and inciting for some time already to summer preparations. The Frestelns had an estate in the Tula province. Although up to the present the town mansion had been only draughty from the airing being given to the trunks and suitcases on warm mornings, now the front door was already admitting ladies, the mothers of families, who had some hope of being invited to stay in the country. The elderly planners were greeted like dear corpses miraculously restored to the bosom of the family, while with fresh candidates they discussed both stone wings and timber cottages and, on taking leave of them in the vestibule, insisted upon the special qualities of the Alexinsky air, which was remarkably nourishing, and the beauties of the Oka landscape, which could never be praised enough. And all this was true.

In the courtyard carpets were being beaten, and clouds in tallow lumps hung over the garden, and puffs of irritating dust, settling on a greasy sky, seemed to infect the air with imminent thunderstorms. But from the way in which the caretaker, all covered in carpet dirt as with a network of hair, looked up at the sky, it was evident that there would be no rain. Lavrenty, the footman, in a lustring jacket instead of tails, and with a beater under his arm, passed through the vestibule into the yard. And watching all this, breathing in the odor of naphtaline and catching snatches of ladies' talk, Serezha could not help feeling that the mansion was already dressed for the journey and would at any moment dive underneath a tent of tremblingly moist,

sultry-laurel birch-trees. In addition to all this, Mrs. Fresteln's companion, without referring as yet to her dismissal, was preparing to go elsewhere and, seeking a new situation, absented herself even on working days. Her name was Anna Arild Tornskyold, but in the household, for the sake of brevity, she was called Mrs. Arild. She was Danish, and always dressed in black, and it was depressing and strange to observe her in situations to which her duties exposed her.

She held herself precisely thus, in a spirit of oppressive isolation, crossing the hall diagonally with large strides and wearing a wide skirt, her hair done in a high knot, and, like an accomplice, she always smiled sympathetically at Serezha.

Thus, imperceptibly arrived the day when, adored by his pupil and on the friendliest of terms with the Frestelns—with regard to whom it was impossible to decide who was more considerate because, for, replacing in this way their broken ties, they indulged in faultfinding in front of Serezha—with a book in his hand and leaving his charge chasing a cat in the yard, Serezha walked from the yard into the garden. The garden paths were littered with fallen lilac and only two or three bushes in the shade still bloomed to the end. Under these lilac bushes, with her elbows on the table and her head bent sideways, Mrs. Arild was sitting and busily writing. A branch of ashy tedrahedrals, swaying slightly under its lilac load, tried in vain to peep over the writer's head at what she was writing. The writer blocked both the letter and correspondent from the whole world with the broad, thrice-wound knot of her light chestnut-fair hair. On the table mingled with some knitting lay a batch of opened letters. Across the sky swam slight clouds the color of lilac and the note paper. The sky itself, the color of grey steel, cooled them. Catching the sound of steps, Mrs. Arild first of all carefully blotted her letter, and then calmly raised her head. An iron garden chair stood next to her bench. Serezha dropped

into it and, between them, the following conversation took place in German:

"I know Chekhov and Dostoyevsky," Mrs. Arild began, winding her arms round the back of the bench and looking straight at Serezha, "and I've been in Russia only five months. You're worse than the French. To believe in a woman's existence, you have to attribute to her some unpleasant secret. As though, in the lawful light she were something colorless like boiled water. But when she throws an obscene shadow on a screen, then it's another matter: you have no quarrel over that silhouette and think it beyond price. I have not seen the Russian countryside yet. But, in the cities, your weakness for shady alleys proves that you are not living your own life, and that each of you, in his own way, is straining to live a foreign life. It's not like that in Denmark. Wait, I haven't finished. . . ."

Here she turned away from Serezha and, observing a pile of fallen lilac on her letter, painstakingly blew it off. After a second, overcoming the pause, she continued:

"Last spring, in March, I lost my husband. He died a young man. He was only thirty-two. He was a clergyman."

"But let me say," Serezha interrupted her as he had planned, although he now wished to say something quite different, "I have read Ibsen, but I did not understand you. You are in error. It's unjust to judge a whole country from the example of one house."

"Ah, so that's what you mean? You refer to the Frestelns? You must have a nice opinion of me. I am further from such mistakes than you, and I'll prove it to you at once. Did you guess that they were Jews and that they are concealing it from us?"

"What nonsense! Where did you hear that?"

"That's how observant you are. But I am convinced of it. And perhaps that is why I hate them so invincibly. But don't digress so much," she began with renewed heat without giving Serezha time to state that, on his father's side, this, so hateful to her,

blood flowed in his own veins, whereas there was no odor of it in the mansion; but instead of this, and according to his original plan, he managed to interject that all her ideas about sensuality were sheer Tolstoy, that is, the most Russian of all that deserved that name.

"That's not the point," she cut in impatiently, hastening to break up the dispute and quickly moving to the edge of the bench nearer to Serezha. "Listen!" she exclaimed vehemently, taking him by the hand. "Your duty is to look after Harry, but I am sure that you are not obliged to wash him in the morning. Nor has it been suggested that you should massage the old man every day."

This was so unexpected that Serezha dropped her hands.

"In Berlin this winter not a word was said about this." She continued, "I went to the Hotel Adlon to discuss terms. I was to be employed as Mrs. Fresteln's companion and not as her chambermaid, isn't that so? Here I am before you—a sane, reasonable person, you'll agree? Don't speak yet. The post was in a far land, in a strange country. And I agreed. Do you see how I was tricked? I don't know how Mrs. Fresteln attracted me. I didn't size her up at first. And then all this developed, on the other side of the frontier, beyond Verzhbolov. . . . No, wait, I haven't finished. I had brought my husband to Berlin for an operation. He died in my arms, and I buried him there. I have no relatives. That's a lie. Yes, I have one, but another time about that. I was in a frightful state and without any means. And then suddenly there was this post. I read about it in a paper. And just accidentally, if you only knew!"

She moved to the middle of the bench, making a vague gesture with her hand at Serezha.

Mrs. Fresteln passed through the glass gallery joining the kitchen to the mansion. The housekeeper followed her. Serezha at once repented that he had wrongly interpreted Mrs. Arild's movement. She had no intention of hiding from anyone. On

the contrary, having renewed the conversation with unnatural haste, she raised her voice and introduced into it a note of ironical disdain. But Mrs. Fresteln did not hear her.

"You dine upstairs with her and Harry, and with the guests when they come. With my own ears I heard them say, in reply to your perplexity as to why I was not present at table, that I was ill. And it is true that I often suffer from migraine. But, do you remember the day when, after the dessert, you were fooling about with Harry—please, don't nod so gaily!—the point is not that you have not forgotten about it, but that, when you ran into the serving room, I almost died of shame. They explained to you that I myself had preferred to dine in a corner behind the door with the housekeeper ('she really prefers that'). But that's a trifle. Every morning I am obliged to attend to that quivering 'treasure,' like a child, in the bath, wrap sheets round her and then, to the point of my exhaustion, to rub her with cloths, brushes and pumice stone, and I don't know what else. And I can't tell you everything," she unexpectedly concluded in a low voice and, taking a second breath as after a race, she wiped her scarlet face and turned it toward him.

Serezha remained silent and, from his martyred look, she guessed how deeply it had all affected him.

"Don't comfort me," she begged, rising from the bench. "But that is not what I wanted to say. I am reluctant to talk German. The minute you will really deserve my confidence, I shall treat you differently. No, not in the Danish way. *We shall be friends, I'm sure.*" *

Having failed to warn her that he understood English, but had forgotten to speak the little he knew, Serezha again answered in a way he did not intend, saying *gut* rather than *well*. But Mrs. Arild, continuing in English, reminded him warmly and plainly (later translating this more coldly into German) that he should not forget what she had told him about the

* In English in the original text.

screens and the shady alleys. That she was a Nordic and a religious woman who could not tolerate licence. That this was both a request and a warning, and that he should bear this in mind.

III

The weather was stifling. Serezha, with the aid of a grammar, was refreshing his scant and neglected study of English. At dinner time, he and Harry used to go upstairs to the ballroom where they fooled about while waiting for Mrs. Fresteln to appear. Then they would follow her into the dining room. Mrs. Arild would often arrive in the ballroom five or ten minutes before Mrs. Fresteln; and Serezha would talk loudly with the Danish woman until the lady of the house emerged and then he would part from her with obvious regret. The procession of three, headed by Mrs. Fresteln, would then proceed to the dining room and, the nearer they got to the door, the more the lady's companion was washed away to the left. Thus their ways parted.

For some time, Mrs. Fresteln had been obliged to put up with the obstinacy with which Serezha insisted on referring to the main dining room as the "serving room," and to the room next door, where they carved the chickens and served the ice cream, as the "dining room." But she had grown to expect certain peculiarities from him, for she regarded him as an eccentric even though she did not always understand his jokes. She trusted the tutor and was not disappointed. He had no grudge against her even now, just as he bore no grudge against anyone. In a human being he could only hate an antagonist, that is, a scornfully provoking and easy victory over life that had avoided all its most difficult and valuable elements. But the people, who could personify this possibility, were very rare.

After dinner, whole trays of smashed and broken harmonies slid downstairs. They rolled down and splintered in unexpected

bursts, more rude and remarkable than any waiter's awkwardness. In between these turbulent falls, spread miles of carpeted silence. That was Arild upstairs, behind pairs of padded and tightly shut doors, playing Schuman and Chopin on the grand piano. At such moments, more involuntarily than usual, one had a desire to stare out of the window. But no changes were observable there: the sky did not move or shimmer. It continued to stand, like a sultry pillar, upon its fixed principle of rainlessness, while for forty miles round, beneath it, splashed a dead sea of dust, like a sacrificial fire simultaneously set alight from several ends by carters on the site of five goods stations and in the center of a brick desert beyond the Chinese wall of the city.

Everything went out of order. The Frestelns stayed on in town, and Mrs. Arild stayed too much in the mansion. But suddenly fate justified everything just when the incomprehensibility of their delayed departure had begun to surprise everyone. Harry fell ill with measles, and the move to the country estate was postponed until his recovery. The sandy whirlwinds did not diminish, rain was not in sight, and gradually all became accustomed to this. It even began to seem as if they were living always the same week-in-week-out stagnating day—a day which had not been hauled away in time to the police station. So this day increased in strength and bullied everyone. And no, in the street, every dog knew it. And but for the nights, which still breathed some spectral variety, one would have run for witnesses and sealed up the withered calendar.

The streets resembled wandering poppy beds with travelling plants. Dazed ashgrey shadows moved, with drooping heads, along softened footways. Only once, on a Sunday, did Serezha and Mrs. Arild have energy enough, after putting their heads in a washbasin, to burst out of town. They drove to Sokolniki. However, here likewise the same fiery air hovered above the ponds, with this difference, that, while in the town, the sultriness was not observable to the eye, here it was visible. A layer

of mingled dust, mist and locomotive smoke, hung, like an office ruler, across the black wood and, of course, this efficient spectre was far more frightening than the simple sultriness of the streets.

Nevertheless, this layer hung at such a distance from the water that the boats could freely slip beneath it; but, when the squealing young ladies changed from the stern to the oars, their young men, as they rose to let them by, caught their caps on this meaty scum. On the bank of the pond the sunset fumed, hissing sourly. Its purple resembled a lump of pig iron, heated white-hot and drowned in a bog. From the same bank, a slippery plaintively-resonant roar of frogs swam in bursting bubbles.

In the meantime, twilight was falling. Mrs. Arild chattered in English, and Serezha made timely responses. Ever more quickly they wound their way through the labyrinth, which brought them back to their starting point and which, at the same time, was the shortest cut to the turnpike where the trams stopped. They differed sharply from the rest of the strollers. Of all the couples crowding the wood, this particular couple reacted with most anxiety to the fall of night, and tried to escape from it as if night were right on their heels. When they glanced back, they seemed to measure the speed of its pursuit. In front of them, on all the paths they trod, there sprang up, like a solid forest, something in the nature of the presence of an elder. This transformed them into children. They now seized each other's hands, now dropped them in confusion. At times they lost the conviction of their own voice. It seemed as if they were being thrown now into a loud whisper, now into a far off, space-cracked shout. In reality, nothing of the sort was observable: they pronounced their words normally. At times Anna grew lighter and more transparent than a tulip petal, while Serezha experienced a chest-heat like that of lamp glass. She saw how he struggled against the hot sooty draught to prevent it from pulling her away. Silently they stared at each other, and then painfully they tore apart as one might a living creature, this dual smile dis-

torted by a prayer for mercy. Here, too, Serezha heard the words to which he had long ago submitted.

Ever more quickly they wound through the labyrinth of ingenious paths and yet, at the same time, came nearer the turnpike, from where already sounded the muffled ringing of trams, which were escaping from the empty carts galloping in full pursuit after them the whole length of the Stronmynka. The jingling tram cords did a precise jig in the illuminated glass. From them, as from a well, a cool breath was wafted. Very soon the extreme and dustiest section of the wood stepped off in clogs from the ground on to stone pavement. They had entered the town.

"How great and indelible man's humiliation must have been," Serezha thought, "that, having identified in advance all accidents with the past, he has grown to demand an earth, fundamentally new and in no way resembling that on which he has been so hurt or defeated!"

In those days the idea of wealth began to preoccupy him for the first time. He was overpowered by the immediate necessity of procuring it. He would have given his mythical fortune to Arild and begged her to distribute it more widely, all of it—to women. He himself would have named several recipients. It would have been a fortune of millions, and those selected to receive some of the millions would have passed the wealth to new recipients, who, in their turn, would have continued the good work of distribution.

Harry was already convalescing, but Mrs. Fresteln still remained at his side. A bed was still being made up for her in the classroom. Serezha was now in the habit of leaving the house in the evening and returning only at dawn. In the next room Mrs. Fresteln kept turning in bed and coughing, and in every way let it be known that she was aware of his late hours. If she had asked him where he had come from, he would have

told her without reflecting all the places where he had been. She sensed this and, guarding against the seriousness with which he would have replied and which she would have had to swallow as her duty, left him in peace. He returned from his absences with the same remote light in his eyes as from the outing to Sokolniki.

One after another, several women on different nights had swum to the street surface, raised by chance and attraction from non-existence. Three new tales of women took their place beside the story of Arild. It would be difficult to determine why these confessions had poured in upon Serezha. He did not go to confess these women, judging that to be beneath him. As if to explain the unaccountable trust which drew them toward him, one of them told him that he was in some way like them.

This was said by the most hardened and powdered of them, the most promiscuous of them all, who to the end of her days was on most familiar terms with every one, who urged on the isvochik with unprintable plaints about "feeling cold" and who, by all the thrusts of her hoarse beauty, levelled everything she touched. Her little room on the second floor of a sagging, ill-smelling five-windowed house in no way differed in appearance from any of the poorer middle-class lodgings. Her walls were hung with cheap linens to which were pinned photographs and paper-flowers. Between the windows, with its wings brushing both window sills, stood a folding table. Opposite, close to a partition that failed to reach the ceiling, stood an iron bed. And yet, for all its resemblance to a human dwelling, this place was its complete contradiction.

The rugs, when spread under the guest's feet with a rare show of obeisance, invited him not to stand on ceremony with the woman of the house and appeared ready themselves to set the example of how to treat her. A stranger's sense was their only master. Everything in the room existed wide open, profluently, as in a flood. Even the windows seemed turned not outwardly, but inwardly from the outside. Washed by public notoriety as

by an inundation, the household things, without respect and in disorder, floated upon the broad name of Sashka.

But neither did Sashka pay any tribute to them. Everything she undertook, she did in motion, like a big swell and in the same way, without rise or fall. Approximately in the same way as, all the time, she threw out her resilient arms while undressing and talking all the time, so, afterwards at dawn, conversing and pressing with her belly against the wing of the table and knocking over the empty bottles, she gulped down her own and Serezha's dregs. And approximately in the same way and to the same degree, while standing in a nightshirt with her back to Serezha and answering him over her shoulder, she quite shamelessly and unashamedly made water in the tin basin, which the same old woman as had let them in had carried into the room. Not one of her movements could be foretold, and her cracked speech rose and fell at the bidding of the same hot jerky snore that knocked aside her locks and burnt in her quick hands. Her answer to fate lay in the very smoothness of her nimble movements. All human naturalness, weeping and proclaiming its shame, was hoisted here, as on a rack, to the height of a misery observable from every side. It became the duty of the surroundings, when viewed from this level, to be inspired on the spot, and from the stir of one's own excitement one could detect how unanimously, in all haste, the universal expanses were being ringed with salvation posts. More pungently than all pungencies, it smelled here of the signal pungency of Christianity.

At the night's end, an invisible nudge from the outside made the partition shake. Her "man" had stumbled into the entrance hall. His nose for a stranger's presence, which was his most assured income, did not betray him even when blind drunk. Stepping softly in his high boots, he collapsed behind the nearby partition as soon as he entered and, speechless, soon ceased to exist. His quiet couch probably stood back to back with the professional bed. Very likely it was an old chest.

Hardly had he begun to snore when a rat struck at him from below with its quick, greedy chisel. But silence drifted over again. The snoring suddenly ceased; the rat grew alert; and the familiar draught ran through the room. Things on nails and clay recognized their master. The thief behind the partition was capable of everything they did not dare. Serezha jumped on the floor.

"Where are you going? He'll kill you!" Sashka croaked with her whole inside and, crawling on the bed, hung on to his sleeve. "To break a heart's no joke, but if you go—I'll get beat up."

But Serezha himself did not know where he was rushing. In any case, his was not the jealousy Sashka had fancied, though it invaded his heart no less passionately. And if any moving bait to make a horse run has ever been cast in front of man to outweigh his reason and ensure his eternal motion, that bait must be this instinct. It was this jealousy that sometimes makes us jealous of woman or life to the point of death, as of a mysterious rival, and compels us to strive to be free to have the liberty to free her of whom we are jealous. And here, of course, was the same pungent smell.

It was still very early. On the opposite side, one could already guess at the folding sheets of the triple iron sections of the wide granary doorways. The dusty windows showed grey, filled to a quarter with round cobbles. The dawn lay on the Tverskoy-Yamskoy, as on a weighing machine, and the air looked like chaff that was constantly being split away by it. Sashka sat at the table. A blessed drowsiness made her dizzy and bore her along, like water. She chattered without stopping, and her talk resembled a healthy drowsing animal.

"Ah, Guilty Ivanovna!" Serezha quietly repeated without listening to his own words.

He was sitting on the window sill. People were already walking the streets.

"You're no medic," Sashka was saying, her side pressed

against a board. She either slumped down with her cheek pillowed in her elbow or, straightening her arm, examined it slowly from the side, from the shoulder to the wrist, as though it were no arm but, rather, a long road or her very life, which she alone could see.— "No, you're no medic," she continued. "Medics are different. I can tell them—even from behind, by their tail. You're a teacher, that's sure? Well, that's it. I'm frightened to death of catching 'the cold.' You're no medic, I can tell. Listen, you aren't a Tartar, are you? Well, you must come to see me. Come in the daytime. You won't lose the address, will you?"

They were chatting in low tones. Sashka was either convulsed in fits of provocative bead-like laughter or overcome with spasms of yawning during which she also scratched herself. Insatiable like a child and as though recovering her lost dignity, she enjoyed this still hour which also made Serezha feel more human.

In the midst of their chatter, Serezha, having called Poland the Kingdom of Poland, and boastfully nodded in the direction of the wall where in a shining nest of other such photographs hung the glossy scarecrow of an amiable non-commissioned officer, thus revealed her earliest and most precious memory—the first cause no doubt of all that had followed. It was to him that her plump, outstretched arm, now lost in space, seemed to lead. But, perhaps, it was not to him. Suddenly the dawn flared, like dry hay, and, like dry hay, burnt itself out at once. Flies started to crawl upon the bulging bubbly windowpanes. The streetlamps and the mists exchanged beastly yawns. Kindling and scattering sparks, the day got down to business. Serezha felt that he had never loved anyone as much as Sashka; and then, in his mind's eye, he saw—winding further away toward the cemeteries—the roadway spotted with the blood of slaughtered cattle; and the cobbles on that roadway were larger and more spaced out as they were at the city gates. Breaking away and departing, breaking away and departing—goods wagons, empty or filled with cattle, glided smoothly across this roadway. Then

something like a crash occurred: the wagons stopped moving, and from the background rose a severed section of the street. Those were the unloaded flat-wagons moving at the same pace, linked together, but now blocked from sight by the dense wall of people and carts at the crossing. Here was a world of nettles and chickweed, and of the smell of field mice but for the smoke. And here, too, was snivelling Sashka, playfully cajoling him with the humor of a six-year-old. Finally, last of all, and in a terrible puffing frenzy—as though questioning the bystanders whether they had seen the wagons go by—a black perspiring locomotive hurried past—backwards, backwards. Then the barrier was raised, the street flashed forward like an arrow and now, cutting into each other from the opposite direction, the loaded carts and human calculations would start advancing. And then, right in the middle of the roadway, the smoke of the locomotive let heavily drop the warm stomach of the monster, the fibrous thrice-tied sack—that same smoke on which the poorer folk of the suburbs nourish themselves as from a siphon. And Sashka stopped talking and watched how frightening this smoke could be amid the tea and colonial goods, the sale of cigars and tobacco, and sheet iron, and the policemen, while somewhere at that time a book was being written about her eyes and heels, entitled *The Childhood of a Woman*. There was a smell of oats on the road which the sun, to the point of making one's head ache, had stamped in horse urine. So then, in the end, (he thought, foreseeing her future) catching the "cold" she so dreaded, losing her eyes and heels, her nose and her reason, she will run in for a moment, before retiring to the hospital, and also the grave, to get the book which, as she had been told, had already described all this, every aspect of it, and it was only too true: she had lived like a fool and, like a fool, she would die. She could no longer walk the streets: she was rounded up with others by the cops, such the outcome of her carelessness. She had been deceived and, idiot, she had caught it. How stupid could she be! That might have been all, but her name was not

Russian and she was in a strange town. And there was the cop with his cloth-bound, braided notebook, jotting her down to be read. And so (the momentary pressure of a foul rotting dog) they put the lid on her. The cops looked a little more human as they escorted these fire-armed wenches, while the noble public held its tongue on a safety catch.

"What's going on in your head?" Sashka asked. "Look at some of the other women. Don't stare at me: I'm a lady compared with them. Now don't worry about the hour or anything. Maybe, you'll say, people are asleep now. A lot you understand about us! Oh, you make me laugh, you'll kill me, ha-ha-ha! Come here in the daytime. Never mind *him*. Don't be scared of him, he's meek, if you don't rub him the wrong way. He'll go out when you come in; or he'll be just sleeping, as you can see, and you couldn't wake him if you tried. Why he's upset you, I don't understand. It would be a wonder if he turned nasty. Others have come and have taken no offence. Well-born gents like you. Well, I'm near ready, just got to powder myself and I mustn't forget my bag. Here, hold it. Well, let's go. I'll walk with you as far as the Sadovaya. I'll not be lonely on my way back, that I know. Day or night, you've only to wink an eye—they just swim, just swim, into your arms. You're not going my way? Well, all right, goodbye then, and don't forget. I'll go alone, that'll draw the stallions. You won't lose my address, will you?"

The streets on an empty stomach were impetuously straight and surly. A lewd dove-colored howl of emptiness still swept their transient, unpeopled length. Infrequently, one encountered some lean lonely cannibal. Far off, on the roadway, a galloping cab horse of good breed pounded in one place with its puffed out pigeon's breast. Serezha strode towards Samoteki and, within half-a-mile of the Triumphal Arch, imagined someone on the sidewalk whistling after Sashka and her slowing down, as she debated whether the man would cross the street or she

should do so. Though the day had barely begun, tangled threads of sultry heat, as nightmarish as crumbs in the beard of a corpse, hung already in the turmoil of the poplar leaves. And Serezha felt feverish.

IV

He must make a fortune at once. But, of course, not by work. Wages were no victory, and there was no freedom without victory. And, if possible, without public notoriety, without the admixture of legend. In Galilee, too, the event had been local: it had begun at home, spread to the street and, finally, ended in the world. His fortune would be millions; and, if such a whirlwind should sweep over a woman's hands, catching up with even one of the Tverskoy-Yamskoy women, it would renew the universe. And there lay the need—in an earth made new from its foundations.

"The chief things," Serezha said to himself, "is not that they should undress, but rather dress themselves; the chief thing is not that they should get money, but that they should distribute it. But, until my plan is fulfilled," he cautioned himself (there was no plan really), I must get hold of another type of money, some two hundred or even a hundred-and-fifty roubles." (Here Nyura Rumina rose in his consciousness: Sashka and Anna Arild Torskyold were not far behind either). These were small sums of quite a different significance. As a temporary measure, he might accept such sums even from an honest source. "Ah, Raskolnikov, Raskolnikov!" Serezha muttered. "But what had the old pawnbroker to do with it? The old pawnbroker—that was just another Sashka in her old age . . . But the problem was—how to get those few hundred even from an honest source? He was already two months overdrawn with the Frestelns, and had nothing left to sell."

It was an early June day. They were already taking Harry

out for walks. In the mansion preparations were already being made for the summer holidays. Mrs. Arild was often away on her affairs, which Harry's illness had interrupted. Then she was offered a post with an army family in the Poltava government.

"*Not Suvoroff—the other,*" * Arild explained in a full voice on the stairs, too lazy to mount for the letters. "*I forget always.*"*

And Serezha reeled off a whole list of generals, from Kutuzov to Kuropatkin, before it turned out to be Skobeleff. "*Awful! I cannot repeat. How would you pronounce it?*"*

The terms of her new situation were profitable, but once again, for the second time now, she had to put off her decision. And this is why. She had hardly received the offer, when she fell ill; and the severity of her illness made everyone conclude that she had caught it from Harry. In the meantime, a temperature as high as in measles, which had put her to bed that very evening and which exceeded 104°, fell precipitously next morning to below 100°. All this proved a mystery which the doctor failed to solve, but it left the poor girl very weak. Now the effects of the attack began to wear off, and the mansion was again shaken once or twice by the thunders of *Aufschwaung*, as in the days when Serezha had not even dreamt of Raskolnikov's dilemmas.

That morning, Mrs. Frestein took Harry to visit some friends in Klyasma, intending to spend the night there if the weather permitted and the opportunity presented itself. Mr. Frestein had likewise departed. Half of the day passed as though the Frestelns were still at home. Lavrenty, to oblige, had offered to serve Serezha's meal downstairs, but he preferred not to change the established routine of the servants and, without noticing it, dined upstairs at the exact hour and even in his appointed place, second to the right.

It was five in the afternoon, and the Frestelns were still

* In English in the original text.

away. Serezha thought, in turn, of the millions and the two hundred roubles, and, thus engrossed, paced the room. Then suddenly he experienced a moment of such acute awareness that, forgetting everything else, he froze to the spot and became vaguely alert. But he could detect absolutely nothing. Only the room, flooded with sunshine, seemed barer and more spacious than before. He could resume his interrupted preoccupation. Yet, he did not. He had no ideas left, and had forgotten the subject of his reflections. Then, hastily, he began to grope for at least one verbal concept, for the brain as a whole responds to the meaning of things, just as it does to one's own name, and, awakening from lethargy, renews its service with that lesson which it had temporarily denied us. However, this quest led to nothing. It merely increased his vagueness. Only extraneous things pushed their way into his mind.

He suddenly recalled his spring encounter with Kovalenko. And again the falsely promised, non-existent story swam into his conviction as something complete and already composed, and he almost cried out when he realized that here, indeed, was a possible source of money—not the inherited kind but an honest hundred or two—and, realizing all this and drawing the curtain of the middle window to shade the table, he sat down without much reflection to write a letter to the editor. He successfully negotiated the introduction and the initial polite phrases. What he would have done when it came to the substance was destined to remain an absolute mystery. For, at that moment, the same strange feeling alerted him. Now he had time to analyze it. The feeling was that of an engulfing emptiness, nostalgic and prolonged. The sensation had to do with the house. It declared the house uninhabited at that moment, that is, empty of any living thing except Serezha and his preoccupations. "And Torskyold?" he asked, and then remembered that she had not been seen in the house since the previous evening. He noisily pushed his chair aside. Leaving

open behind him the doors of the classroom and the nursery, and some other doors, he ran in to the vestibule. In the space beyond the sagging door leading into the yard, the white heat of five-o'clock-afternoon scorched like sand. Looking from above, it appeared to him even more mysterious and sarcophagal.

"How careless of them!" he thought, passing from chamber to chamber (he did not know everything). "All the windows open, and no one in the house or in the yard. The house could be entered and no one would say no But why am I so vague? Anything might happen while I'm rumbling round." He ran back, dashed down the stairs and ran out of the side door as if the house were on fire. And, as if in answer to a fire alarm, the doors of the servants' quarters banged in the depths of the yard.

"Yegor," Serezha yelled in a voice not his own at a man who came running to meet him, a man who was chewing a last morsel and wiping his moustache and lips with the edge of an apron, "tell me, I'd be greatly obliged, how can I find the Frenchwoman? (he did not have the gumption to call her "Frenchie" as the servants very precisely called the Danish woman and all her predecessors). Be quick, please, Margarita Ottopovna asked me this morning to give her a message and I've only just remembered."

"The window over there!" The caretaker gruffly gulped as he hurriedly finished swallowing. Then, raising his arm and shaking his freed throat, he began chattering in a different vein as to how he could find the place, staring the while not straight at Serezha, but aside at a neighboring estate.

A wall of this humble three-storied building of white-washed brick, which was joined at an angle to the mansion and which was rented from the Frestelns as a hostelry, had been opened to suit the need of the owners and to give admittance from the

ground floor of the mansion through a corridor skirting the children's quarters. In this narrow space, separated from the hostelry by a blind wall, there was just a room on each floor. The lodger's window was located on the third floor. "Where did all this happen before?" Serezha wondered as he tramped along the sloping boards of the corridor. He was on the point of remembering, but refrained from probing further because, at that very moment, he came upon a spiral staircase hanging in front of him like an iron snail. Embracing him in its twist, it arrested his rush and made him take breath. But his heart was still beating fast when, spiraling to the end, it brought him straight to the numbered door. Serezha knocked without getting an answer. He pushed the door rather violently, and it crashed against the inner wall without evoking a protest. This sound, more eloquently than anything else, told Serezha that there was nobody in the room. He sighed, turned and, bending, gripped the spiral rail, but, remembering the door he had left open, returned to shut it. The door had swung open to the right, and that was where the handle was, but Serezha instead threw a furtive glance to the left and was dumbfounded.

There, on a knitted bedcover, her high heels pointing straight at the intruder, in a smooth black skirt and sprawled athwart the bed like a corpse, festive and stiff, Mrs. Arild lay face down. Her hair looked black, her face bloodless. "Anna, what's the matter with you?" Serezha burst out and choked on a flood of air that gushed in the wake of that exclamation.

He threw himself toward the bed and dropped on his knees before her. With one hand he raised Arild's head and, with the other, began feverishly and awkwardly to grope for her pulse. He pressed the icy sinews of her wrist this way and that without finding the pulse . . . "Lord, O Lord!" sounded in his ears and chest louder than the beat of horses' hooves whilst, staring at the dazzling pallor of her large lifeless eyes, he seemed to be falling somewhere impetuously and endlessly, pulled down by the dead weight of her head. He was choking

and on the point of fainting himself. But suddenly she recovered consciousness.

"*You friend,*" she muttered vaguely, opening her eyes.

The gift of speech was restored not only to human beings. Everything in the room began to talk. The room was filled with noise as though full of children. The first thing Serezha did was to jump from the floor and shut the door. "Ah, ah!" he said, foolishly repeating these monosyllables as he aimlessly tramped the room, now rushing toward the window, now toward the dressing table. Although the room, which gave north, swam in lilac shadows, one could clearly distinguish the labels of the medicines in any corner, and there was not the slightest need, while searching among the phials and bottles, to carry each one separately to the window light. He did it only to give an outlet to his joy which required a noisy expression. Arild had already regained full consciousness, and obeyed his injunctions only to please him. To please him, she consented to smell the English salts, and the acid ammonia penetrated her as immediately as it would any normal person. Her tear-stained face was wrinkled with surprise, her eyebrows arched at an angle, and she pushed away Serezha's hand with renewed energy. He also made her take some Valerian drops. As she drained the water, her teeth knocked against the brim of the glass, and she gasped as children do when they fully express their satisfied need.

"Well, what's with our friends? Have they returned or are they still away?" she enquired, setting the glass on the table and licking her lips; and then, propping the pillow to sit up more comfortably, she asked what time it was.

"I don't know," Serezha replied. "It's probably near five."

"The clock's on the dressing table. Look, please," she said, adding in a tone of surprise, "I don't understand how you can be so vague. You can't miss the clock. And that photograph is Arild. The year before he died."

"A wonderful forehead."

"Yes, isn't that so?"

"And what a fine man! What an astonishing face. It's ten to five."

"And now please give me the plaid—there it is on the trunk. . . . Thank you, thank you, that's fine. . . . I'd better lie for a while."

Serezha, with an effort, swung open the resisting window. The room swam more speciously as if a bell had been tolled. The heavy scent of yellow dandelions, the grassy tenacious odor of red snapdragons invaded the room. The confused screech of starlings darted to the ceiling.

"Here, put this on your forehead," Serezha suggested, handing Arild a towel soaked in eau de cologne. . . . "Well, how do you feel now?"

"Oh beyond compare. Can't you see?"

He suddenly felt that he would not have the strength to leave her. And therefore he said:

"I'll go in a moment. But you can't stay like this. You might have another attack. You should unbutton your neck and loosen your corset laces. Can you manage that yourself? There is no one else in the house."

"*You'll not dare . . .*"

"You misunderstand me. There is no one I can send to you. I said, didn't I, that I would go," he interrupted quietly and, dropping his head, slowly, without turning, walked to the door.

She called him on the threshold. He looked back. Propping herself on her elbow, she was holding out her other hand. He approached the foot of the bed.

"*Come near, I did not wish to offend you.*"

He went round the bed and sat down on the floor with his feet under him. His pose promised a long and unconstrained chat. But he was so excited, he could not utter a word. And there was nothing to talk about. He was happy not to be under the spiral staircase, but close to her without having to take leave

of her at once. She was about to break the oppressive and slightly comic silence. Then he quickly got on his knees, pressed his crossed hands against the edge of the featherbed, and let his head fall upon them. His shoulder blades began to move evenly and rhythmically. He was either crying or laughing, but that was still not clear.

"What is it, what is it! I did not expect that. Stop, aren't you ashamed!" she kept repeating rapidly when his noiseless gasps turned into unrestrained sobs.

However (and she knew this) her words of comfort only encouraged his tears and, stroking his head, she connived at new floods of them. He did not restrain himself. Resistance would only have led to a stoppage, but there was a large accumulated charge which he wanted to release as quickly as possible. Oh how glad he was that all those Sokolniki and Tverskoy-Yamskoys, and all the days and nights of the last two weeks had not stood their ground, but had started moving at last and travelling! He wept as though it was they, and not he, who were being torn. And they really were being whirled away, like logs on a swollen river. He wept as if expecting some purgation from the storm which had suddenly burst as from a cloud, from all his worries about the millions. It was as though he expected these tears to influence the further course of his daily life.

Suddenly he raised his head. She saw his face, washed by a mist and, as it were, drifting into it. In a state of some command, like a guardian over himself, he uttered several words, but they were wrapped in the same frowning and remote mist.

"Anna," he said quietly, "do not be hasty in your refusal, I implore. I ask your hand. I know it's not the way to say this, but how can I express it better? Be my wife," he went on even more quietly and firmly, quivering inwardly from the unbearable freshness in which this word was bathed that he had just used for the first time in his life and that was as large as life itself.

And pausing for a moment to control the smile, which he *had scooped up from some* particular depth, he frowned and added even more quietly and firmly than before:

"Only don't laugh, I beg you. That would lower you."

He stood up and walked aside. Arild quickly sat up, her feet dangling from the bed. She was inwardly in such a turmoil that, though it was all in order, her dress appeared crumpled and her hair unkempt.

"My dear, my dear, how can you!" she kept saying, trying at each word to rise, but forgetting to do so, and, at each word, spreading her arms in surprise like a guilty person. "You've gone mad. You have no pity. I was unconscious. I am just opening my eyes—do you hear what I am saying? I can barely move them, do you understand that? And suddenly to ask me such a question, so bluntly! And don't laugh either. Ah, how you agitate me!" she exclaimed in another tone, as though in parenthesis or to herself, and, finding her feet, she quickly ran with this exclamation, as with a gift, to the dressing table, behind which he stood sullenly listening to her, his elbow against the wood, his chin on the palm of his hand.

Gripping with both hands the edge, and her whole body expressive of portentous conclusions, she continued, splashing him with the light of a gradually overpowering agitation:

"I expected this, it was in the air. I cannot answer you. The answer is in yourself. Perhaps, this will come true one day. And how I would like it to be so! Because . . . because I am not indifferent to you. You, of course, guessed that? No? Is that true? Tell me—didn't you really? How strange. But it's all the same. Well, anyhow, I want you to know it." She faltered and paused for a moment. "But I have been observing you all the time. There is something wrong with you. And do you know, now, at this very moment, there is more of it in you than the situation warrants. Ah, my dear, one does not propose like this. It's not just a matter of convention. But enough of that. Listen, answer me one question sincerely as you would

your sister. Tell me: is there any shame on your conscience? O don't be frightened, for God's sake! Doesn't an unfulfilled promise or a neglected duty leave its mark? But, of course, of course, I assumed it myself. All this is so unlike you. You need not answer—I know: nothing that is not human can be part of you for long . . . But," she drawled thoughtfully, sketching something indefinitely empty in the air with her hand, while her voice sounded weary and hoarse, "but there are things larger than us. Tell me, don't you have something like that inside you? That is a frightening thing in life. It would scare me like a strange presence."

Though she did not stop talking at once, she added nothing more substantial. The yard was empty as before, and the adjacent buildings looked moribund. As before, the starlings swept over them. The end of the day flamed like a mythical battle. The starlings drifted forward like a cloud of slowly quivering arrows and then, suddenly reversing their sharp heads, rushed back, screeching. Everything was as before. But the room had grown somewhat darker.

Serezha was silent because he was uncertain of being able to control his voice if he broke the silence. At every attempt to speak, his chin drooped and trembled. He was ashamed to weep alone for his own private reasons, without being able to disburden them on the Moscow countryside. His silence caused Anna extreme annoyance. She was even more dissatisfied with herself. The important thing was that she was agreeable to everything even though her words did not manifest this.

Everything seemed to be slipping nastily through her hands and through no fault of her own. As always on such occasions, she thought of herself as a soulless doll and, blaming herself, was ashamed to indulge in the cold rhetoric that her answers were supposed to contain. Thus, to correct this imaginary sin, and convinced that everything would now take a different turn, she said in a voice that echoed the whole of that evening,

that is, in a voice that had developed an affinity with Serezha's:

"I don't know whether you understood me. I replied by agreeing with you. I am prepared to wait as long as necessary. But, first of all, you must put yourself in order—you whom I know so little and who probably know yourself only too well. I don't know what I am saying. Those hints sprang up against my will. To guess or surmise—that is your business. Then there is this also: expectation does not come easily to me. But enough of this now or we shall wear each other out."

"Now listen. If you care for me even half as much . . . But what are you doing, well, it wasn't necessary, I beg of you, you will destroy everything . . . Well, thank you."

"You wanted to say something," he reminded her quietly.

"Yes, of course, I haven't forgotten. I wanted to ask you to go downstairs. Yes, really, listen to me. Go to your room, wash your face, take a walk. You must calm yourself. You don't think so? Well, all right then. Then let me ask you another favor, my poor dear. Go to your room all the same and do wash yourself. You can't appear in public with such a face. Then wait for me; I'll call for you and we'll go for a walk together. And stop shaking your head. It upsets me to look at you. It's pure self-suggestion. Say something, try—you must trust me."

Again the empty expanse of the harvested field rumbled beneath him, and again he remembered the Institute courtyard. Again the thoughts evoked by remembrance rushed on in a feverish mechanical series which had no connection with him. He found himself again in the sun-flooded room, which was too spacious and which therefore produced the impression of being uninhabited. In his absence, the light had shifted. The curtain of the middle window no longer shaded the table. It was the same light, yellow and slanting, the activity of which continued high round the corner, and, probably, dropped thickening violet shadows on the bed and the dressing table stacked with phials. In Serezha's presence, the deepening lilac tones in

Arild's room still knew some measure and behaved nobly enough, but how they would speed up without him, and how autocratically and triumphantly, profiting by his departure, the starlings would assault her. He still had time to avert this violation and to catch up with the vanishing past; it was not too late to begin all over again and bring it to a different conclusion; it was all still possible, but very soon it would not be feasible. Why had he heeded her and left her alone? "All right. Let us suppose;" he responded at the same time, out of that heated Anna series, to other feverish-mechanical thoughts that, unconnectedly, rushed past him. He pulled open the middle-half curtain and drew the end one, which made the light shift and bury the table in shadow so that now, instead of the table, the neighboring room loomed more brightly, every wall of it, including the very end one; and that was the room through which Anna had to pass in order to reach him. The door of it was wide open. In his preoccupation, he had forgotten to wash his face.

"Well, and Maria. Let's consider her case. Maria has no needs. Maria is immortal. Maria is not a woman," he thought, standing with his back to the table, leaning against the edge, his arms crossed. In his mind's eye, with revolting automatism, flashed the empty Institute premises, echoing steps, the unforgotten declarations of the previous summer, and Maria's uncollected bags. The loaded baskets flashed before him like abstract concepts, the suitcases with their straps and strings could have served as premises for a syllogism. He suffered from these cold images as from a hurricane of festive spirituality, as from a flood of enlightened meaninglessness. Bending his head and crossing his arms, he waited for Anna in a state of irritation and longing, ready to rush to her and seek refuge from this nasty surge of obsessions. "Well, so it was a failure. Godspeed then. While you were trifling and trifling, another got away with it, leaving no trace. Well, God be with him. I don't know him, and I don't want to know him. What if there's no news and no trace. Well, supposing it is like that. Well, that's just fine."

While he was bandying prickly comments with his past, the pleats of his jacket slid to and fro on a sheet of writing paper, the upper part of which had been scribbled on, but two thirds of which were blank. He was aware of this, but the letter to Kovalenko also belonged to that extraneous series against which he was tilting.

Suddenly, for the first time in the past year, he realized that he himself had helped Ilyina to clear the apartment and depart abroad. Baltz was a scoundrel (he called him that inwardly). Then at once he felt certain that he had guessed right. His heart contracted. He was cut to the quick, not so much by the rivalry of last year as by the fact that, in Anna's hour, he could still be interested in something which had no connection with Anna and which had acquired an inadmissible and, for her, offensive vitality. But, with like abruptness, he realized that outside interference might also threaten him this summer unless he became more collected and positive.

He came to some decision and, turning on his heels, scrutinized the room and the table as if seeing them for the first time. The strips of sunset budded with sap and gathered their final crimson. In a couple of places the air had been sawn in two, and glowing shavings fell from the ceiling to the floor. The far end of the room seemed plunged in gloom. Serezha placed a packet of stationery near at hand, and then switched on the electric light. While thus preoccupied, he had completely forgotten his promise to take a stroll with Anna.

"I intend to marry," he wrote to Kovalenko, "and am in desperate need of money. The story, which I told you about, I am now rewriting as a play . . . The play will be in verse."

And he began to expound the plot of the story.

"Once upon a time, in the real conditions of our present Russian life, which are depicted so as to give them a wider significance, in the milieu of the leading men of affairs of one of the capitals, a rumor is born, grows and is enriched by all sorts of detail. It is transmitted orally without being checked in the news-

papers because it is an illegal matter and in accordance with the recently revised legal code, it has become a criminal matter. It would seem that a man has come on the scene—a man eager to sell himself as a chattel at an auction to the highest bidder—and that the significance and profit of this transaction would become apparent at the auction. There seems to be an element of Wilde in this, or something having to do with women—and the buzz of this, though no attempt is made to establish the man's whereabouts, makes the rounds among the young merchants of the sort who model the furnishings of their houses on stage designs and who load their conversation with terms culled from Hindoo spiritual lore. On the appointed day—for the news of the place and the day of the sale had incredibly reached everyone's ears—everyone goes out of town, afraid of having had their legs pulled and of being made a laughing stock. But curiosity wins and, besides, it is June, and the weather is simply wonderful. It all takes place in a cottage: the cottage is new and no one has ever been there before. There is a crowd of people, all of the same set: heirs to big fortunes, philosophers, megalomaniacs, collectors, judicious amateurs. Rows of chairs, a platform with a grand piano, its lid propped open, and a small table nearby with a mallet on it. Several three-sectioned windows. At last the man appears . . . He is still very young. Naturally there is some difficulty over the name and, indeed, how can one name a man who is aspiring to become a symbol? However, there is a variety of symbols and, since a name must be found for him, let us for the time being label him algebraically—Mr. Y, let us say. It immediately becomes apparent that there will be no fireworks, no circus smell, no Cagliostro, nothing of *The Egyptian* (even) *Nights*, and that the man was born serious and not without a purpose. It is evidently no joke; the gathering will be exposed to something within their everyday experience, without digressions or fancies, and that they cannot get out of it. And therefore, with all the simplicity of prose, Mr. Y was greeted with applause. He announced that

whoever would make the largest offer for him would acquire the power of life and death over him. That he would take twenty-four hours to dispose of his gain as he had planned, leaving nothing for himself, after which he would begin his complete and incontestable bondage, the duration of which he now entrusted into the hands of his future master, for the latter would not only have the power to use him as he wished, but also to kill him if it so pleased him. He had prepared, he said, a spurious note about his suicide, which would whitewash the murderer in advance. He was also ready to draw up, when required, any further document intending to cover with his good will anything that might happen to him. 'And now,' Mr. Y announced, 'I shall play and read to you. I shall play something unforeseen, that is, impromptu, but the reading will be from a text of my own.' Then a new person walked across the platform and sat down at the table. It was a friend of Mr. Y's. As distinct from his other friends who had bidden him farewell that morning, this particular friend, at Y's request, had remained at his side. This friend loved him no less than his other friends, but, as distinct from them, he did not lose his composure because he did not believe in the realization of Y's whim. He was an officer of the Treasury and an executive of standing. So Y had let him act as auctioneer during this transaction, to which he, the last remaining friend, attached no value. He had remained to help him realize the whim, in whose accomplishment he did not believe, and then, in conclusion, to toast his friend on a long journey according to all the rules of auctioneering art. Then it began to rain. . . ."

"Then it began to rain," Serezha scribbled on the edge of the eighth page and then transferred his writing from letter paper to quarto. It was a first draft of the kind a man writes only once or twice in a lifetime, taking all night at a sitting. Such drafts inevitably abound in water as an element, foreordained by its very nature to incarnate unvaried and persistently powerful movements. Nothing except the most general idea,

unformulated as yet, and devoid of vital detail, settles in the writing of such initial evening outbursts; and the only remarkable feature of such writing is the natural way in which the idea is born out of the circumstances of experience.

The rain was the first detail in the sketch to stop Serezha. He transferred this detail from an octavo to a quarto sized sheet, and began to amend and erase in an attempt to arrive at the desired effect. In places, he penned words that did not exist in the language. He allowed them to stay temporarily on the paper in the hope that they might, later, guide him through more immediate torrents of rain water into colloquial speech, formed from the intercourse of enthusiasm and usage. He believed that these runnels, recognized and accepted by all, would flow into his memory, and his anticipated enthusiasm for them dimmed his eyes with tears as with a pair of incorrectly fitted spectacles.

If he had not been sitting, like every writer, at an angle to the table, with his back to both the entrances into the room, or if he had turned his head for a moment to the right, he would have died from fright. Anna stood in the doorway. She vanished not at once. Retiring a step or two from the threshold, she lingered in sight and close proximity just as long as she judged it necessary to keep a balance between faith and superstition. She did not wish to tempt fate either by deliberate delay or blind haste. She was dressed in her outdoor clothes. In her hand she held a tightly furled umbrella because, in the interval, she had not severed her connection with the outside world and had a window in her room. Moreover, when she was about to descend to see Serezha, she very sensibly glanced at the barometer, which indicated stormy weather. Forming, like a cloud, behind Serezha's back, she, though dressed all in black, glittered whitely and smokily in a sunset beam of dazzling intensity, which beat from beneath the grey and lilac storm cloud hanging over the gardens of the adjacent street. The torrents of light dissolved Anna as well as the parquet floor, which curled corrosively beneath her like vapor. From two or three movements

made by Serezha, Anna, as in the Game of Kings,* deduced from his delirium her own incorrigible nature. After seeing him move the cushion of his hand across his eye, she turned away, gathered her skirt and, crouching as she walked, in a few long and powerful strides tiptoed out of the classroom. Once in the corridor, she increased her pace a little and dropped her skirt, doing all this while still biting her lips and as noiselessly as before.

To refuse had involved no labor. Everything happened naturally. The shifting sky already occupied her window to its full width. It was clear from the purple layers of the sky that one would never arrive undrenched at the nearest corner. Anna felt she must urgently undertake something so as not to remain alone with that fresh and rapidly suppurating nostalgia. The mere notion of being left alone all night in her quarters made her turn icy with horror. What would become of her if she had another attack? Running through the yard into the street, she hired a cab with its hood already raised. She drove to Chernyshevsky street, where an English friend of hers lived, hoping that the storm would continue to rage and make it impossible for her to return home, and that her friend would be obliged to put her up for the night.

". . . So it began to rain outside the cottage," Serezha scribbled. "And this is what took place in front of the windows. The ancient birch trees set their leaves free in whole swarms and waved them a ceremonious farewell from the hillock. In the meantime, fresh flurries of leaves, becoming entangled in their hair, whirled away and thinned out in white gusts. Having waved them on and lost them from sight, the birches swung toward the cottage. Darkness fell, and, just before the first clap of thunder pealed, Mr. Y began to play on the grand piano inside.

"For his theme, Mr. Y picked the nocturnal sky as it looks

* A card game in which the winner has the right to ride round the room astride the losers.

when it emerges from the bathhouse, clad in the kashmir down of clouds, in the vitriol-and-laudanum vapor of the wind-blown forest, with a strong rush of stars washed clean to their last chink and looking larger. The glitter of these drops, which can never be detached from space however much they may try to break away, was already strung above the music-loud forest. Now, running his fingers along the keyboard, Mr. Y abandoned and then resumed the theme, surrendered it to oblivion and imposed it on the memory. The windowpanes are flattened torrents of mercurial chill; with armfuls of enormous air, the birch trees move before the windows and everywhere litter showers on them and on the tufted water spouts, while the music weighs out bows to right and left, and always promises us something on the way.

"And what is so extraordinary, every time anyone attempted to doubt the honesty of his statement, the player splashed the doubter with some unexpected miracle of sound. It is the miracle of his own voice, that is, the miracle of their tomorrow's way of feeling and remembering. The force of this miracle is such that, joking, it can cleave the basin of the piano and, at the same instant, crush the bones of the trading class and the Vienna chairs; and this miracle scatters fast silver speech and sounds all the quieter, the more frequently and rapidly it returns.

"He read in exactly the same way. He expressed himself thus: I shall read you so many passages of blank verse, so many columns of rhymed quatrains. And again, each time anyone thought it a matter of indifference whether this carpet lier should stretch his head or feet toward the Pole, descriptions and similes of prodigious magnetic sensitivity manifested themselves. Those were images or miracles of the word, that is, examples of complete and arrowlike submission to the earth. That was the direction which their future morality, their bent for truth, would follow tomorrow.

"But how agonizingly this man appeared to experience all

this. It was as if someone kept showing him the earth and then hiding it in his sleeve, and interpreted living beauty as a limiting distinction between existence and non-existence. His novelty consisted in this, that he grasped and raised to a poetic symptom this contrast, which was conceivable only for an instant. But how could he have grasped these appearances and disappearances? Was it not the voice of mankind that had told him of an earth flitting in a succession of generations?

"All this was, fully and without cuts, unapplied art; from the whispering frontiers, it talks of infinities; everything was born of the richest, bottomlessly sincere, terrestrial poverty. He interspersed his reading with playing: he heard the rustle of French phrases; and he was enveloped in scent. In low tones, he was requested to forget about everything else and to continue only the piece he was performing and not to interrupt it—and this was not what he wanted.

"Then he rose and addressed them, saying that their love touched him, but that they did not love him enough. Otherwise, they would have remembered that they were at an auction and why he had brought them together. He said that he could not reveal his plans to them, for they would intervene again as had occurred so many times, and suggested another solution and another form of aid, possibly even a more generous one, but necessarily an incomplete one and not the kind his heart had prompted. That he had no relevance to that vast pattern in which man is printed. That he must exchange himself, and they must help him in this. They might think his project a lamentable fantasy. But they must either hear him entirely or not at all. If they heard him, then let them blindly submit to him. He resumed his playing and reading, in the intervals, numerals crackled, work was found for his friend's idle hands and throat; and then, after twenty minutes of mad fever, the very heat of glycerine hoarseness, and on the ultimate crest of unexampled perspiration, he fell to the lot of one of the most sincere amateurs, a person of the strictest principles

and a renowned philanthropist. But it was not at once, not that very evening, that this man allowed him the taste of freedom. . . ."

Needless to say, this is not an original of Serezha's draft. He himself did not complete it. His mind retained much that did not get on paper. He was just pondering a scene of city riots when Mrs. Fresteln, drenched to the skin and furious, burst into the room, dragging after her the reluctant Harry, who was evidently ashamed of the imminent scandal.

Serezha, in his plot, had assumed that, on the third day, let us say, after the transaction, a conversation of major importance and perspicuity would take place between the philanthropist and his chattel. He had conceived that, having lodged Mr. Y separately and having exhausted him by over-luxurious treatment, and himself—by worry, the rich patron could no longer bear the boredom and would call on Mr. Y with the request that, since he was at a loss how to employ him worthily, he depart to the four corners of the world. This Mr. Y would refuse to do. On the night of this conversation news would be brought to the country of the riots that had just occurred in the city and which had begun with acts of violence in the very neighborhood where Mr. Y had thrown away his millions. This news would discourage both of them: Mr. Y in particular because, in the acts of violence that had gained such wide notoriety, he would detect a return to the past, whereas he had hoped for an enigmatic renewal, that is, a complete and irreversible renaissance. Only then would he have consented to depart. . . .

"No, it's unbelievable, I almost broke my umbrella!" Mrs. Fresteln exclaimed. "*Je l'admets à l'égard des domestiques, mais qu'en ai-je a penser si* . . . But, heavens, what's the matter

with you, Harry? Are you sick? I'm a fine one. Let me look at you for a minute. Harry, you must go to bed immediately, immediately! You will rub him down with vodka, Varya, and we'll talk tomorrow. There's no point in sniffling now, you should have thought of it before. Go now, Harry. The heels, that's important, the heels, and also rub his chest with turpentine. Tomorrow there will be affection for everyone; for you and for Lavrenty Nikitich, but Mrs. Arild will have to give an account of herself."

"What's she done?" Serezha asked.

"At last! I didn't want to mention it in their presence, I didn't notice anything at first. Don't be angry. Are you having any unpleasantness? Anything to do with the family?"

"Excuse me all the same, but how has the Missis displeased you?"

"What Missis? I don't understand anything. How you're blushing. Aha, so that's it. So, so. Well, all right. So that's it—regarding my lodger. She hasn't been home since the morning. She left the premises like the rest of the servants. But the others at least thought better of it in the evening. . . ."

"And Mrs. Arild?"

"But that's not decent. How do I know where Mrs. Arild is spending the night? *Suis-je sa confidante?* That is why I have stopped in here, my dear Sergey Osipovich. I'd ask you, my darling, to see to it that Harry packs his games and school books tomorrow morning. Let him pack them himself as best he can. Of course you will afterwards rearrange all that without letting on that it was part of your plan. I feel you want to ask me about the linen and the other things? Varya is responsible for all that and it does not concern you. I consider that, where possible, children should be given the illusion of a certain independence. Here even appearances stimulate beneficial habits. In addition, I should like you, in the future, to devote more attention to him. In your place I'd lower the lamp a little. Allow me, well, just like this, don't you think. Isn't it really

better than the way you had it? But I'm afraid of catching cold. We are off the day after tomorrow. Good night!"

One day, in the early days of his acquaintance with Arild, Serezha began discussing Moscow with her and checking her knowledge of that city. Besides the Kremlin, which she had sufficiently examined, she named a few other sections inhabited by her acquaintances. Of those names he now remembered only two: the Sadovaya-Kudryanskaya and Chernyshevsky streets. Discarding the forgotten directions, as though Anna's choice were as limited as his memory, he was now ready to guarantee that Anna was spending the night at Sadovaya. He was convinced of this, because that meant complete frustration. To find her at this hour in such a large street, without the faintest notion where or in whose apartment to seek her, was impossible. Chernyshevsky street was another thing, but it was unlikely that she would be there according to the whole trend of his depression which, like a dog, ran ahead of him on the sidewalk and, struggling to escape, dragged him after it. He would have certainly found her in Chernyshevsky street if only he could have imagined that the living Anna, of her own free will, was indeed in that place where it was merely his desire (and what strong desire!) to situate her. Convinced of failure, he hurried to test with his own eyes this non-destined possibility, because he was in a state when the heart would rather gnaw the hard core of hopelessness than remain inactive.

It was early morning, overcast and chilly. The nocturnal rain had just ceased. At each step the sparkle of the silver-hued poplar trees kindled above the almost black grey of the drenched granite. The dark sky was sprinkled with their whitish leaves as with milk. Their felled leaves speckled the pavement together with soiled scraps of torn receipts. It seemed as if the storm, before departing, had imposed upon these trees an analysis of consequences, and held in their fresh grey hands the whole of that tangled morning so full of surprises.

On Sundays Anna used to attend the service in the Anglican

church. Serezha recalled that she had told him that one of her acquaintances lived somewhere in the vicinity. Accordingly, full of his preoccupations, he placed himself right opposite the church.

He stared vacantly at the open windows of the dormant vicarage, and his heart gulpingly picked on morsels of the scene, greedily gobbling the damp bricks of the buildings and the moist foliage of the trees. His anxious glances likewise crunched the air which, avoiding his lungs, passed softly into some other unknown region of his body.

In order not to attract anyone's suspicion on account of the early hour, Serezha periodically strolled down the full length of the street. Two sounds only disturbed its drowsy quiet: Serezha's footsteps and the throb of some machine in the vicinity. That was the machine in the printing works of *The Russian News*. Serezha felt all bruised inside: he was breathless from the wealth which he should have absorbed, but was hardly able to do.

The force, which had infinitely expanded his sensation, was the actual literal nature of his passion, namely, that quality of it, thanks to which the tongue seethes in images, metaphors and, even more, in enigmatic forms that escaped analysis. Needless to say, the whole street with its unbroken gloom was wholly and roundly identical with Anna. Here Serezha was not alone, and he knew that. And, in truth, who has not experienced this! However, the feeling was more spacious and precise, and here ended any assistance from friends or predecessors. He saw how painful and difficult it was for Anna to be the city morning, how much the superhuman worth of nature cost her. She gloried silently in his presence and did not appeal for his aid. And dying with longing for the real Arild, for all this splendor in its briefest and most precious abstraction, he watched how, swathed in poplars as in ice-packed towels, she was sucked into the clouds and slowly threw back her brick Gothic towers. This

brick of purplish non-Russian baking looked as if it had been imported and, for some reason, from Scotland.

A man in an overcoat and soft felt hat emerged from the newspaper office. Without turning his head, he walked in the direction of Nikitskaya. Not to arouse his suspicion if he should glance back, Serezha crossed from the newspaper sidewalk to the Scottish one and strode in the direction of the Tverskaya. Some twenty paces from the church he saw Arild inside a large-windowed room. At that very moment she had come to the window. When they had recovered from the shock, they began to talk in hushed tones as if in the presence of sleeping folk. This they did because of Anna's friend. Serezha stood in the middle of the sidewalk. It seemed they were talking in whispers so as not to rouse the city.

"I heard someone walking up and down the street for a long time, someone that could not sleep," Anna told him. "And then I suddenly thought it might be you! Why didn't you come near the house at once?"

The carriage corridor swayed from side to side. It looked endless. The passengers were asleep behind the ranks of lacquered, firmly shut doors. Soft springs deadened the rumbling of the carriage. It resembled a luxuriously beaten up, cast-iron featherbed.

The fluttering edges of the featherbeds gave most pleasure and, reminiscent somehow of paschal egg-rolling, a rotund chief-conductor rolled down the corridor in boots and wide breeches, in a round cap and with a whistle on a strap. He was hot in his winter uniform, and, to comfort himself, readjusted on the way his strict pince-nez. It surprised one by its minuteness amid the large beads of sweat that dotted his whole face and made it resemble a slice of Swiss cheese. If he had observed Serezha's pose in a compartment of another class, he would have surely nudged him or, in some other manner, roused him from obliv-

ion. Serezha was drowsing with his elbows against the edge of the lowered window. He drowsed and woke, yawned, admired the landscape, and rubbed his eyes. He put his head out of the window and bawled melodies which Arild had once played, and no one heard his bellowing. Whenever the train came out of a curve into the straight, a solid immobile current of air captured the corridor. Having run and panted their fill, the wild doors of the carriage platforms and the toilets stretched out their wings and, to the roar of increasing speed, it was wonderful to feel that one was not so much in a draught as just part of a straining bird with a Schumann aria in one's soul.

It was not the heat alone that drove him out of his compartment. He felt uncomfortable in the company of the Frestelnovs. It required a week or two for their impaired relations to become normal again. He blamed Margarita Ottopovna least of all for their deterioration. He admitted that, even if he were her adopted son, and leniency and indulgence were her chief obligation in regard to him, even then there was some cause for her despair during the recent commotion before their departure.

After the last nocturnal reprimand, it had pleased him to absent himself on the eve of the departure, knowing well what a Sodom was being raised in the household from the very beginning.

"The blinds!" someone would unexpectedly squeal and miraculously materialize himself, like a living person, out of pieces of matting. "Yegor, the blinds! What a chore!"

"What about the blinds?"

"What's that, you fool! Are they to hang there, you think?"

"Will anything happen to them?"

"And did you beat the dust out of them?"

"May the rain drench you, Lavrenty. Leave me alone!"

"Varya, my dear, this is not an outing you know."

. . . But, in the end, the devil take her, that Arild. He was sorry for her, of course: a worthless intriguing woman, but

what was to be done once the scythe had struck stone. But then it would be a different argument, if it came to that, and there was a human way of doing everything. He had seen her off on the 5:45 train from the Bryansk station—and that was all! And he had managed it so that not a soul at home could tell where he had been or what he had lost. On the contrary, everyone would think: there's a real man, a decent self-respecting man. But that was obviously retrogression, for everything now was different. He must shut himself off from that leave-taking and not be embarrassed at their hours-long scrutiny . . . at their curiosity to see whether he was adapting himself and getting accustomed. What was he to do? Would they dismiss him? . . . But how could they dismiss him when there was so much confusion all around and when it was absolutely clear from what had happened that his salary was not just for fun. But then, if you please, a job was no joke either and one must value it. In his justification, it might be said that a new decadent expression had been coined—"to experience." However, to experience or to expose one's secrets to external scrutiny could probably be done in a human way, whereas the next morning one would be face to face with an absolutely unrecognizable and unsuitable man, a very Christ of passivity: if it were seriously proposed, he would drive nails into a box with his head; but, alas, a household required anything but that, and that is not the function of a tutor in a decent family. . . . And now they were travelling. . . . And now they were travelling, and he with them. Why was he with them? And how could he be dismissed?

In Tula they missed their train connection just as their train pulled in at the station and, with horror, they saw their connection train running off at an angle in the direction of Kaluga. That night was horrible . . . But they were rewarded for their ten-hour torment. About an hour ago a long distance express came by and they were now installed in it more comfortably than they could have been in their local night train.

Anton Karlovich and Harry were sleeping, but they will have to be wakened in twenty minutes.

The chief conductor found the carriage to his liking and he kept appearing. The landscape was really remarkable. Take it at this very moment when, frozen at full speed, the noisy, dirty train floated and seemed to repose upon a spaciously spread arch of sheer and blazing sand, while, on the other side of the bank, far beyond the flood waters, on a barely quivering hillock, a large and curly country house seemed to float at rest. When only fifteen miles remained, one might have thought this was Roukhlovo: the white gleams of the manor house and the railings of the park, crumpled by the indentations of the hill, on which it seemed to have been placed, like a necklace that had been unclasped—all this seemed to be an exact copy of what he had been told. The park contained many silver poplar trees. "Dear ones!" Serezha whispered and, closing his eyes, exposed his hair to the gallop of the oncoming wind.

So this was why men had need of the word "happiness." Although they had merely talked, and he had merely shared her worries and had helped her to prepare for the journey . . . although they would experience another, more complete proximity . . . yet they would never be closer than during those unforgettable ten hours. Everything in the world had been understood, nothing more was left to grasp It remained to live, that is, to chop understanding with one's hands and to wallow in it; what remained was to please it, just as it had pleased them, what was spread out all round them with railways lining its face and terms. What happiness!

But how lucky that she had spoken of her family! How easily this might not have happened. Wretches, a lot they understood about what debases or ennobles a family tree. But another time of her unfortunate father (a remarkable case!). Serezha now understood where she had acquired her wide knowledge, which

made her seem twice as old and ten times more austere. That was all inherited. It explained her calm mastery of it all. She had no need to be amazed at herself or to seek loud fame for her gifts. As a young girl, she had had it anyway, and it was indeed widespread.

Her ancestors were of Scottish descent. Mary Stuart had been mentioned in this connection. And now it was impossible not to feel that this name in particular had been missing all morning in the overcast Chernyshevsky street.

But at last the strict chief-conductor nudged the deafened passenger, and warned him and his fellow-travellers that they must descend at the next stop.

This was the way, then, people had moved from place to place that last summer when life still appeared to pay heed to individuals, and when it was easier and more natural to love than to hate.

Serezha stretched himself, fidgeted and began to yawn uncontrollably. Suddenly this stopped. Alertly he raised himself on his elbow and glanced about him soberly and rapidly. The reflection of a streetlamp splashed the floor. "Winter," he thought at once, "and this is my first dream at Natasha's in Ousolie." Fortunately, no one had observed his very animal awakening. And—ah!—there was something else he must not forget. He had dreamt of something formless and, whatever it was, it still made his head ache. More remarkable still, this nonsense had a name when he saw it. "Lemokh," it was called. But what did that mean? One thing was certain: he must get up. His appetite was wolfish, and he hoped he had not overslept the guests.

In a minute he was already drowning in his brother-in-law's frieze and iodine embraces. The latter still held a tin-opener in his fist as he rushed to greet Serezha with his arm fully extended. This, together with the hearing aid protruding from

his pocket like sincerity itself tangibly materialized, somewhat spoiled the sweetness of their embraces. And the opening of the tins could not be renewed with the previous expertise and went lame. Questions, blunt and abrupt, showered across the tins. Serezha stood there, feeling glad and puzzled why one should play the fool when one could be a natural fool without trying. They did not like each other.

On the table stood a neat row of vigorous, well-slept vodka glasses. And a complex assortment of wind and percussion snacks made the eyes beam. Above them, conductor-like, towered black bottles of wine, ready at any moment to crash out and wave on a deafening overture to the accompaniment of all kinds of laughter and puns. The spectacle was all the more impressive because the sale of wine had been prohibited throughout Russia, but the factory evidently lived as an autonomous Republic.

It was already late, and the children could be seen only in bed.

The whole room seemed to swim in brandy. Whether it was the effect of light or the furniture, the floor appeared to have been polished not with wax, but rosin, and his slithering feet felt beneath them not the waxed over splinters, but glued and, as it were, stained hair. All things with facets and any play of light were flooded by the hot yellow of the furnishings ("Karelian birch tree, what are you thinking?" Kalyazin sang lyingly for some reason), as with lemon cordial. Serezha too possessed this quality. According to his calculation, the piercingly lighted house should have looked like a bearish blue-white night of minute proportions, full of camphor balls blown up among the snowdrifts.

"Aha, there's a real frost! I'm glad!" he exclaimed, standing behind the curtain and staring into the darkness.

"I'm . . . yes, it's freezing hard," the brother-in-law grunted, wiping with a handkerchief his sauce-ambered fingers.

"I haven't any snow-boots with me. I forgot to bring them or, rather, to buy them."

"That can be put right. You can get them here. But what are you talking about, pray, so to speak, here man is, so to speak. . . . Nelma's a Siberian fish. And there's also the Maksun. Have you heard of them, brother? No? Well, I knew you'd never heard of them."

Serezha grew more and more lighthearted, and it is difficult to tell what he might not have done. But a vague confused trampling of feet made itself heard in the corridor. There people were taking off their coats. Soon there came into the dining room, all flushed from the frost, Natasha and a girl Serezha did not know and a dry, definite and very alert man, whom Serezha rushed to meet ahead of Kalyazin and whom he greeted effusively, joyfully and almost apprehensively. Then all the gaiety dropped away from him. In the first place, he knew this man and, besides, he was confronting something tall and alien that devalued Serezha from head to foot. It was the personification of the masculine spirit of fact, the most modest and the most terrible of spirits.

"And how's your brother?" Serezha began in confusion and then stopped.

"He's still alive," Lemokh replied. "He's been wounded in the foot. He's convalescing with me. I'll probably be able to fix him up at home. Glad to see you. And how are you, Pavel Pavlovish?"

"Just imagine," Serezha mumbled even more distractedly, "he may have concealed it for military reasons, but no one realized it was the mobilization. Everyone thought it was the manoeuvres. I'm sorry I don't know what they call those training tactics. Anyhow, we all thought it merely exercise. But they were already being driven to the front. In a word, I saw them in July two summers ago. And just think, their detachment was going by in barges and they were moored for the night

near the estate where I was employed as tutor. That was two days before war was declared. We only put two and two together afterwards. Do you understand?"

"Yes, I know about that conversation. His brother told me."

But what Serezha would not admit was that he had failed to ask Lemokh his name the night they met.

Translated from the Russian
by George Reavey

About the Contributors

ROBERT CASSELL, here published for the first time, is on the English faculty of the University of Illinois.

WILLIAM EARLE is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Northwestern, and is currently teaching at Harvard. He is the author of *Objectivity* and the translator into English of *Reason & Existenz* by Karl Jaspers.

ARTHUR GREGOR'S most recent volume of poetry is entitled *Declensions of a Refrain.* His verse has appeared in leading magazines here and abroad.

KARL JASPERS, one of the world's foremost living philosophers, lives in Basle, Switzerland. Professor Jaspers is the founder of Existenz Philosophy, and a number of his works are available in English. NORBERT GUTERMAN, the translator of Professor Jasper's essay, translates from a variety of languages, and has a long list of distinguished works to his credit.

ERNST JUENGER, one of Germany's most prominent writers is known in the United States through the publication of his novel *On the Marble Cliffs.* LOUISE BOGAN is one of America's most distinguished poets. ELIZABETH MAYER is well-known for her translations of W. H. Auden's poetry into German.

HAROLD KAPLAN'S verse has been published in leading magazines in this country. He teaches at Bennington College.

IRENE ORGEL was born in England, and has published short stories on both sides of the Atlantic. Her work has appeared among other places in *Harper's, Mademoiselle, Commentary,* and *The American Scholar.*

JOHN MOFFITT will have a book of verse out this fall. His work has been published in many magazines including *The Atlantic Monthly* and *The New Yorker.*

URSULE MOLINARO writes in both English and French. Two books have been published in France, and she has had stories in *Quixote* and *The Chelsea Review.*

HELEN NEVILLE'S poetry has appeared in *The Nation, The New Republic, Poetry, A Magazine of Verse, The Paris Review,* etc. She was awarded the first prize in the Third Annual Poetry Writing Contest of the Washington Square Writing Center of NYU in 1958. In 1955 she received a Rockefeller Creative Writing Grant.

LOUISE TOWNSEND NICHOLL has had six books of poems published, and a new volume, *The World's One Clock,* will appear this fall with St. Martin's Press. Miss Nicholl was formerly associate editor with E. P. Dutton & Company, and is now an independent editor and literary advisor in New York City.

GEORGE REAVEY who translated Pasternak's *The Last Summer* is a well-known poet and critic. His fifth book of poems, *The Colours of Memory,* was published by Grove Press in 1955. He has also translated many works from the French and Russian.

NATHALIE SARRAUTE is the author of the recently published novel *Portrait of a Man Unknown.* She is one of the most significant of the younger French novelists.

ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER is generally regarded as the greatest living Yiddish writer. His *Gimpel the Fool and Other Stories* and *Satan in Goray* are available in English.

MAY SWENSON lives and writes in New York City and is on the editorial staff of New Directions. Her second book of poems will be published this Fall by Rinehart & Co.