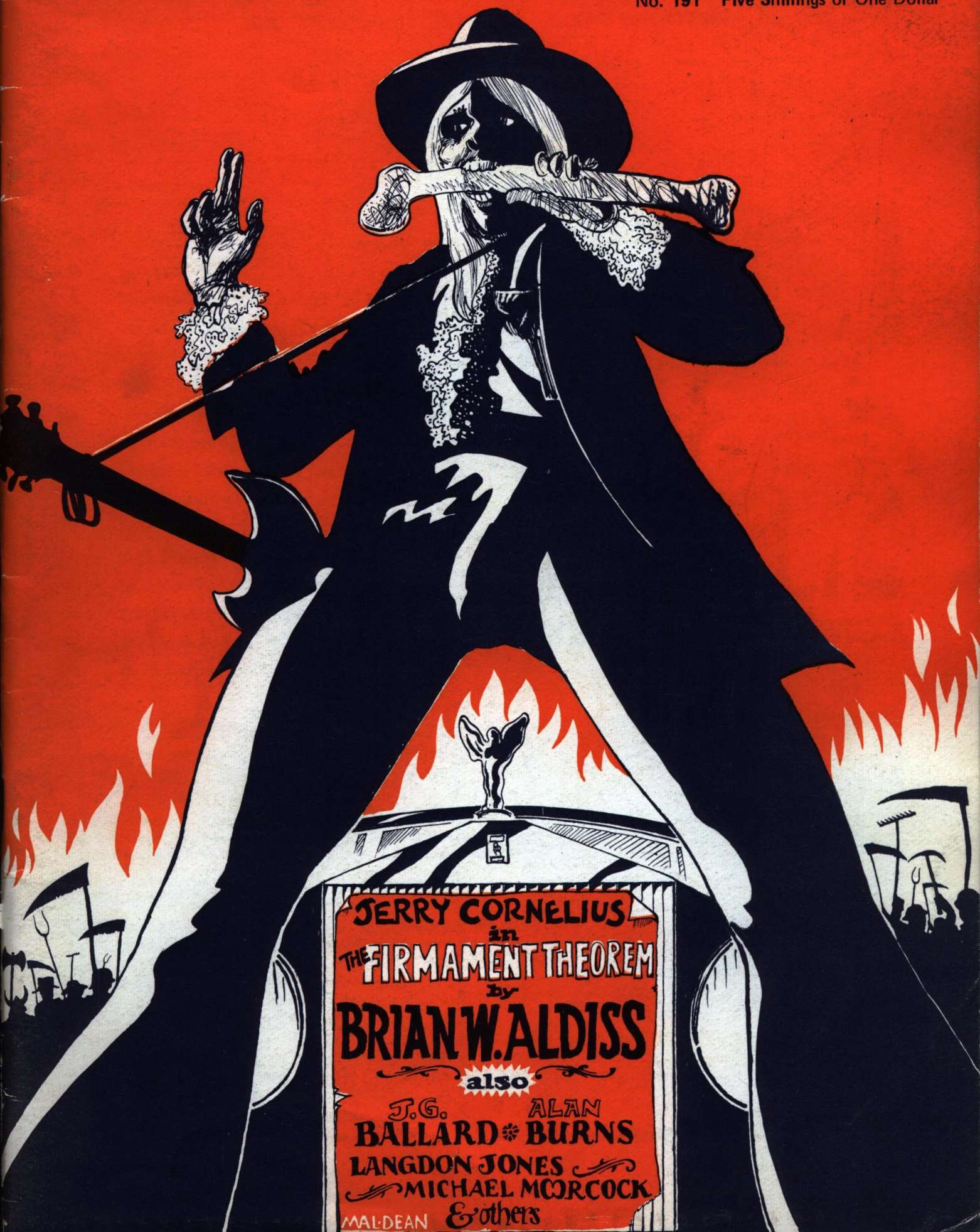


# new worlds

No. 191 Five Shillings or One Dollar



JERRY CORNELIUS  
in  
THE FIRMAMENT THEOREM  
by  
BRIAN W. ALDISS  
also  
J.G. BALLARD \* ALAN BURNS  
LANGDON JONES  
MICHAEL MCCRACKEN  
MALDEAN & others

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# new worlds

Number 191

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### Cover by Malcolm Dean

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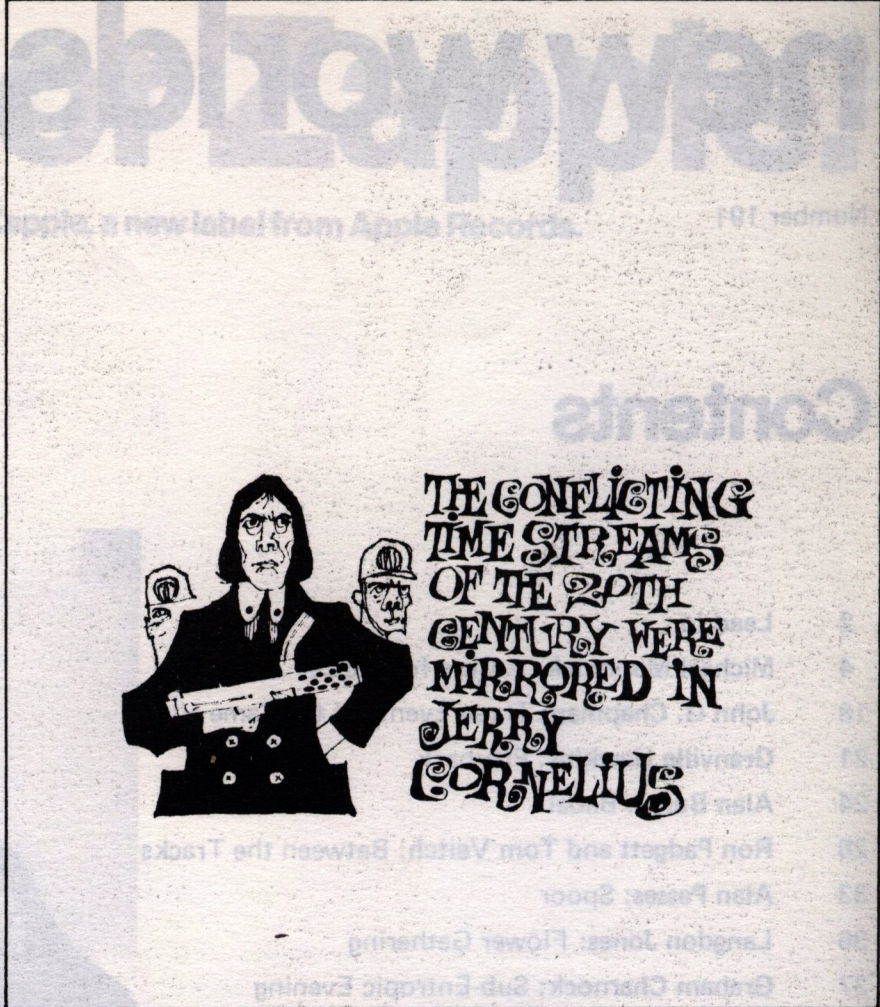
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Subscriptions: 60/- (10 dollars) for twelve issues.

## Lead In



The first Jerry Cornelius illustration (New Worlds no 157, 1965)

JERRY CORNELIUS ONCE again makes a double appearance in NEW WORLDS—in the final instalment of Michael Moorcock's *A Cure for Cancer* and in Brian Aldiss's *The Firmament Theorem*.

Cornelius is, among other things, an attempt to find a viable myth figure for the last half of the 20th century. Being a myth figure, he can crop up in any situation, any guise and any sex, if necessary, and, naturally, his adventures are the work of a number of different writers with different attitudes, interested in different aspects of the myth and in adapting it to their own purposes. The Cornelius stories are as mutable as most mythologies and share something with Romance literature in that anachronistic, paradoxical and apocryphal material can be readily incorporated without in any way destroying the essence of the stories. They can also, of course, have particular relevance to our immediate situation and can carry levels of satire, parody, lampoon and self-satire.

At present there seems to be an infinite number of permutations and possibilities in the form which has its

most recent influences in the work of William Burroughs, Mervyn Peake, J. G. Ballard, Jack Trevor Story, Jorge Luis Borges and a number of others.

The writers who have produced Cornelius stories were all spontaneously attracted to the possibilities of the form and the stories have developed not from any particular conversation among the writers or from any kind of intellectual conception but from an instinctive recognition of the potentials of the form.

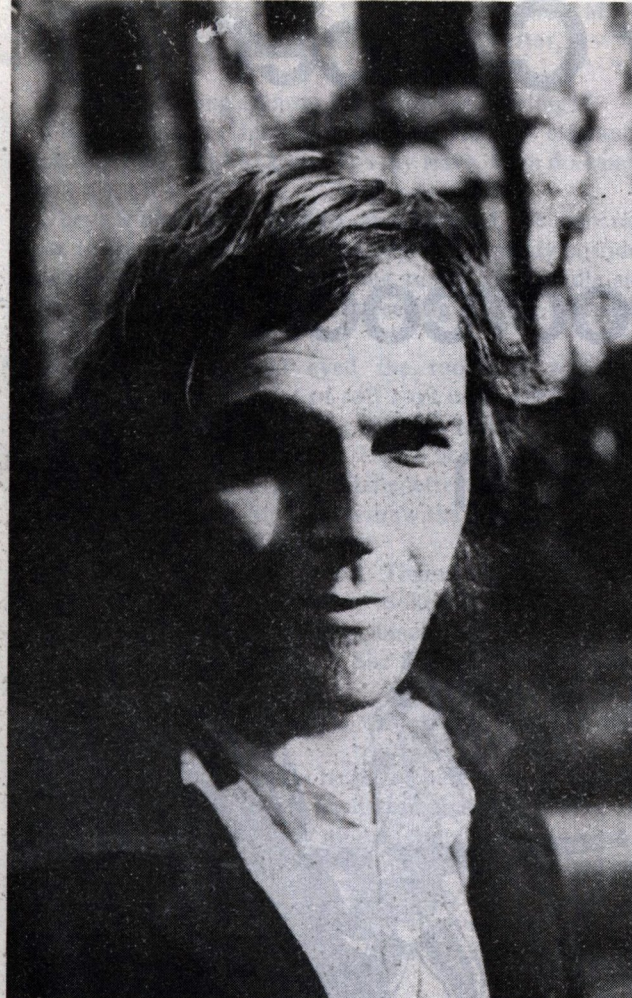
Therefore, although Michael Moorcock's *The Final Programme* was the first book to discover the potential, stories by other writers are in no way pastiches or imitations of his work. Each writer's work is complementary to the work of the others. On the whole, too, the stories are not written principally to be interpreted, but to be enjoyed. In the case of most of the writers, any symbolism the stories contain might well be used ironically, spoofing the whole notion of symbolism as it is generally understood; specifically the writers might be said to reject classical symbolism in favour of images containing the optimum

number of associations—metaphors capable of many meanings.

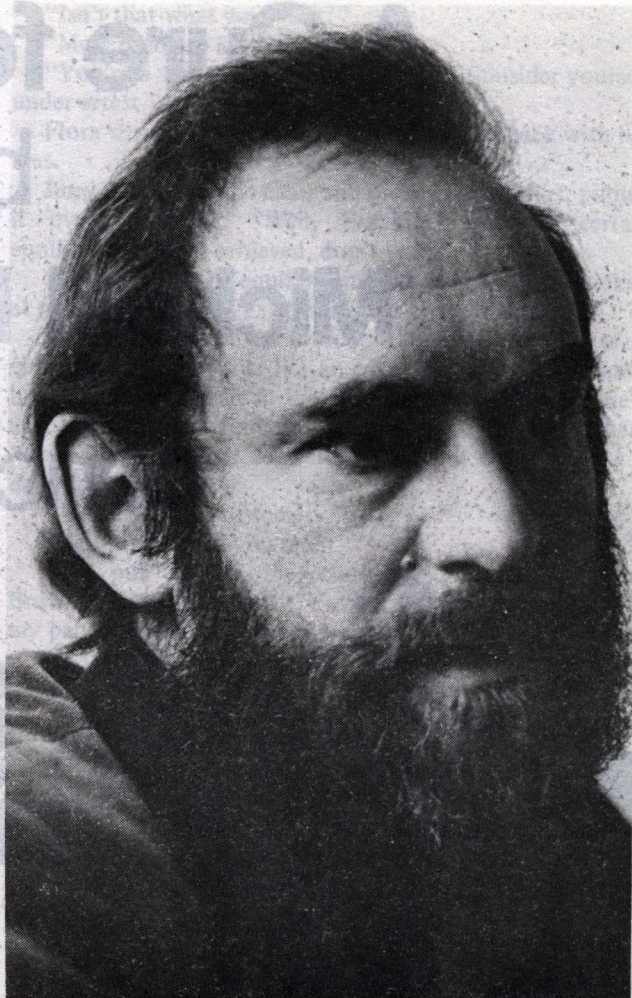
Several writers are enthusiastic about the sense of liberation they discover in using this particular form. Moorcock has described his method of construction as being closer in many ways to musical composition than the conventional means of constructing prose forms; stories are conceived in terms of tone, repeated images, quotes from his own earlier work and the work of others (either directly or in terms of image, atmosphere or style), pace, mood, and so on; the success of the structure being dependent upon how well these elements are combined and manipulated.

As a number of readers have written to enquire about the Jerry Cornelius stories and have asked for details of all the stories, we have decided to print the following bibliography:

*The Final Programme* by Michael Moorcock; finished January 1965, published in U.S. by Avon Books, March 1968, due in U.K. from Allison and Busby, September 1969, with



Dean: Cornelius illustrator



Burns: Babel out this month

illustrations by Malcolm Dean. Novel. *The Peking Junction* by Michael Moorcock, to be published in the forthcoming anthology of original stories, *The New SF* (edited by Langdon Jones), to be published September 1969 by Hutchinson, London. Short story. *The Anxiety in the Eyes of the Cricket* by James Sallis, to be published in *The New SF*. Short story. *The Delhi Division* by Michael Moorcock, published *NEW WORLDS* 185, December 1968. Short story. *The Tank Trapeze* by Michael Moorcock, published *NEW WORLDS* 186, January 1969. Short story. *Jeremiad* by James Sallis, published in *NEW WORLDS* 187, February 1969. Short story. *A Cure for Cancer* by Michael Moorcock, to be published by Avon Books, U.S., and Allison and Busby, U.K. 1970; serialised in *NEW WORLDS* 188-191 (March-June, 1969). Novel. *The Ash Circus* by M. John Harrison, published in *NEW WORLDS* 189, April 1969. Short story. *Traits D'Argent Sur Une Mer Sombre* by Maxim Jakubowski, to be

published in France in the author's forthcoming collection of short stories. Short story. *The Dodgem Division* by Michael Moorcock, written for a Sussex University magazine that is now defunct, due to appear in *SPECULATION* some time in 1969. Didactic short story. *The Firmament Theorem* by Brian W. Aldiss, published in *NEW WORLDS* 191, June 1969. Short story. Other projected work includes two further novels by Michael Moorcock, provisionally called *The English Assassin* and *The Condition of Muzak*; a short story by M. John Harrison, *The Nash Circuit*; short stories by James Sallis, *Enclave* and *Noumena* and *Mr Cornelius*, a short story by Michael Moorcock, *The Swastika Setup*, and possibly work by other writers who are currently interested in producing their own Jerry Cornelius stories. Other writers are invited to try their hands and readers' comments will be very welcome.

ALAN BURNS is a much respected young novelist making his first appear-

ance in *NEW WORLDS* with extracts from his latest book, *Babel*. He is the author of *Buster* (in *NEW WRITERS* 1), *Europe After the Rain* and *Celebrations*. *Babel* will be published by Calder and Boyars this month. ■

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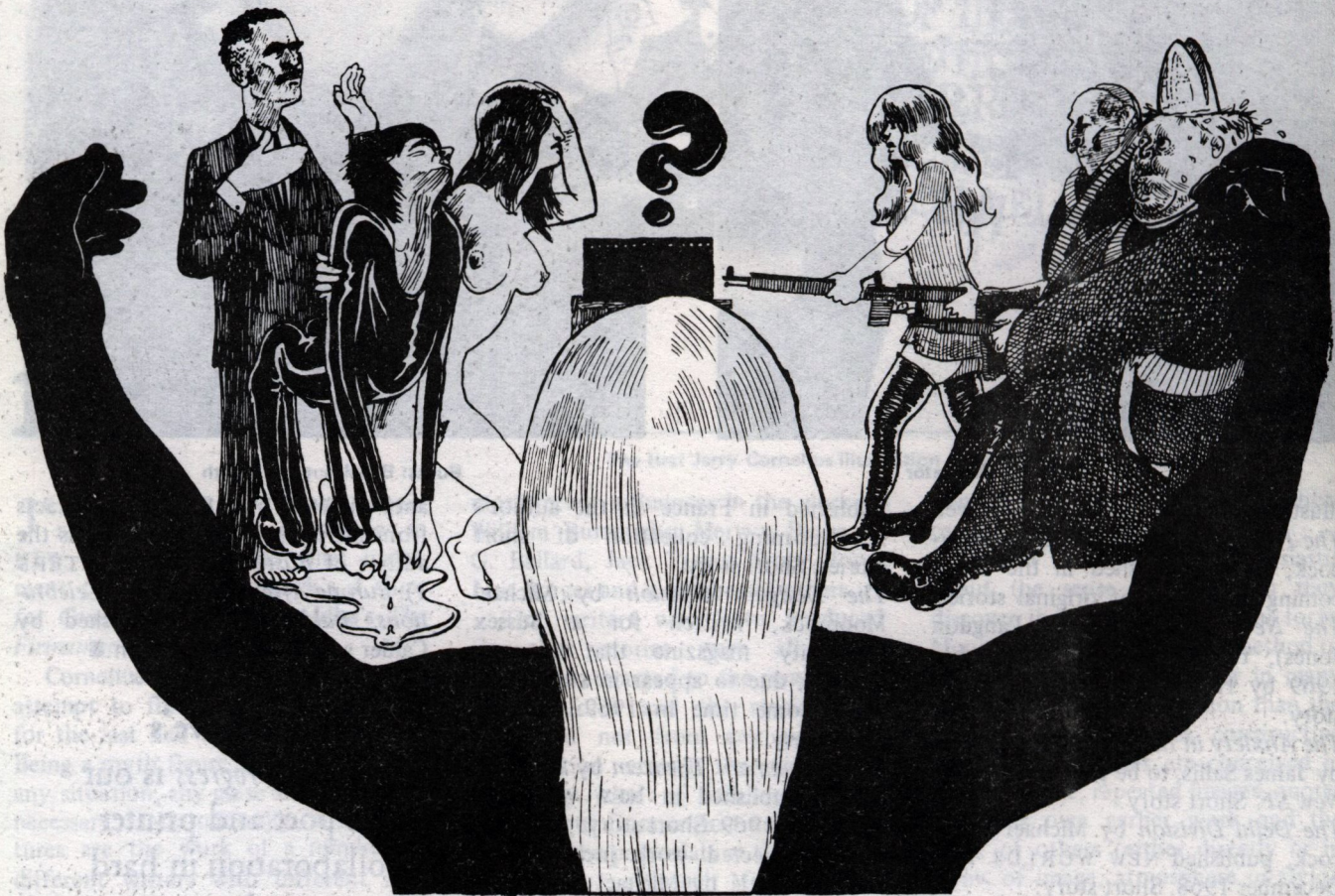
Poet & Printer

# A Cure for Cancer

by

## Michael Moorcock

### conclusion



#### THE PRISON OF THE STARS

JERRY FOUND FLORA Hargreaves by the fountain, behind the M-60 tanks.

"You're just as I remember you," he said.

She smiled, smoothing her olive uniform. "You never told . . ."

"No."

"Thanks."

"You met a friend of mine in London, didn't you? He gave you something to look after."

"That's right, Jerry."

"I need it now."

"You do? You'd better come back to my quarters. I've

got a nice place. There's plenty of space for everybody."

"Everybody who needs it."

"Yes."

They walked between the tanks and crossed the square to the violet building opposite the town hall. All around the square the marines were relaxing, chatting to the WACs, smoking, sipping soft-drinks, cleaning their Navy Colts.

"It's been pretty tough for them," said Flora. "But I guess they know how to take it."

"They can take anything by the look of them."

"Almost anything." Flora straightened her shoulders. She winked at him. "It's gotten to be a rotten war, Jerry. I sometimes wonder what you people make of it. It can be hard, sometimes, to take the overall view when your own country's . . . well . . ."

Jerry sucked in his breath. "It has to be this way. Maybe if the CIA were still around things would be better."

"I guess."

"They've nothing against—you know—consorting?"

"If you're here, Jerry, you've had security clearance. That's all they want to know. It's my leave. I can do what I like."

They entered the building and climbed the concrete stairs to the first floor, walking along a cool, shady corridor until they came to her room. She turned the handle and threw the door open with a sweeping gesture. "Apprez vous!"

Jerry padded in and eyed the room. It was very feminine. There were a lot of soft toys on the bed, posters of British beauty spots on the walls, a helmet and battle overalls hanging over a chair, a .22 in a holster on a stack of Penguin paperbacks, a neat kitchenette through an archway. The room was sunny. Flora drew the blinds.

"The machine," said Jerry.

She went to her wardrobe. There were three print dresses in it. She bent and Jerry looked at her thighs. She straightened, holding something black, square and heavy, and Jerry looked at her eyes. She widened them. "Is this it?"

"This is it." Jerry laughed with relief. "Put it down. Aha!"

As she put it on the floor he seized her, running his hand up her leg and down her regulation drawers; kissing her wide, soft, hot, damp, lively mouth; running his other hand through her sweet, auburn hair; guiding her to the bed and fucking her with enormous joy and energy.

"Well, that was nice," she said. "I always knew . . ."

"Come off it." He gave her one of her Kents and lit one for himself.

"Is the box valuable?"

"It means the world to me."

"It just looks like some sort of geiger counter—something like that."

"It's a bit more versatile than that."

"Tell me what it is, Jerry." She curled a leg over his leg and licked his left nipple.

"There's no real word for it. Nothing—*authentic*. One of its functions is as a sort of randomiser. It can produce all the alternatives at once. There's a lot of power in that little box."

"A computer? Multivalued logic?"

"Not a computer. Far from it. Almost the opposite, in one sense. It breaks down the barriers. It lets the multiverse—well—'in'."

"That isn't a proper word."

"It's everything."

"What's everything?"

"You're everything, Flora. But now you can be mirrored by your environment. It creates a human environment for a human being. It can also speed up various basic processes."

"That's an explanation?"

"Explanations shouldn't be necessary between us, Flora."

There was a cool breeze and a neigh.

Frank stood in the open door, his upper lip curled like a mule's, his needle-gun in his hand. He came in and closed the door, crossing to the black box. "I thought so."

"You're so fucking high-minded." Jerry climbed over Flora and sat on the edge of the bed, pulling on his underpants and socks. "You can't destroy that machine without risking the whole bloody universe going wild."

"Isn't that what you want?"

"Moderation in all things, Frank."

"You're a traitor, Captain Hargreaves. Consider yourself under arrest."

Flora shrugged and pushed the bedclothes back with her feet.

Jerry crossed to the chair and picked up his shirt, pulling it over his head. "Well, Frank, I think a certain equilibrium's been achieved, don't you?"

"You can talk of equilibrium with this—" Frank kicked at the black box—"in existence. This chaos machine."

"Oh, come now, Frank. We're not even sure if it has an entropic effect or not. It's an experimental model. That's how I came to lose it in the first place—I created the field and then couldn't find the machine in it." Jerry laughed. "Ironic, eh? I've got to test it. Find out exactly what it does do."

"At the expense of society."

"Well, that's how you see it."

Jerry put on his other clothes and buckled his Sam Brown belt. "That's better. You're always catching me with my pants down."

"It used to be nice. But you know what happened the last time. What has this machine to do with Catherine?"

"Work it out. It's the creation of all possible worlds. It can channel energy—re-divert it—re-form it . . ."

"Bloody romantic," said Frank.

"Who's Catherine?" said Flora.

"My aunt . . ."

"Our sister," said Frank.

"Have it your way." Jerry licked his lips. "Still, this has nothing much to do with the current situation."

"What is your relationship?" Flora frowned.

"It's become a little ambiguous of late," Jerry told her. Frank had swung the needle-gun into line with his heart. "I suppose it boils down to a matter of identification, in the long run."

"Identity!"

Frank snarled and squeezed the trigger as Jerry dropped behind the chair and drew his vibragun.

"If either of us hits that machine," said Jerry, "we might find out a lot about identity."

Frank hesitated then lowered his gun. "All right, Jerry. Let's talk like rational men."

"I'm not sure how it's done."

Flora Hargreaves rose suddenly and threw the bedclothes over Frank's head. Jerry jumped out and thumped his relative on the back of his neck with the barrel of the vibragun. He fell down heavily. Jerry took the needle-gun out of the tangle of sheets and handed it to Flora. "He couldn't bear it if you shot him."

"Why?"

"Oh, well. It's all a matter of ritual, you see." Jerry uncovered Frank whose face had aged. He began to shiver, rubbing nervously at his arms, passing his hands over his head.

"I'm losing heat, Jerry. I'm losing heat, Jerry. I'm losing heat, Jerry."

"And dynamic, I suppose." Jerry pushed at Frank's chest with his vibragun. "Move along there, Frank. Can you manage the box, Flora?"

"I'll have to get some clothes on first. And pack."

"Wear your uniform. Pack your dresses. Okay?"

"Okay."

Flora quickly got ready and lifted the heavy box. Jerry pushed the cringing Frank forward. "We'll make for my

convertible. We'll take you along with us, Frank. This environment isn't doing you any good at all."

They descended the stairs, then descended the steps that led them into the square. Marines still stood about in the sun, taking a well-deserved rest from the dirty business of war. Jerry hid his vibragun with his cloak and the three of them walked slowly to the car. Flora got in the back with the box. Frank sat beside Jerry as he started the Phantom VI up.

"Where are we going?" Flora asked.

"Our first duty is to get Frank into a rest home. It's not far from here. A couple of hours drive. I think he'll last until then."

Flora sniffed. "You think so?"

"He is beginning to niff a bit, I must admit."

## SATURATION

### Female Auto-Erotic Practices

Out of print for years. By Havelock Ellis, M.D., world's most famous sexologist. New illustrated edition.

Subjects include: initiations: auto-erotic practices with males; masturbation as the cause and cure of frustrations in marriage, various technic employed (both clitoral and vaginal); objects used for vaginal and urethral masturbation.

The use of artificial penes; mutual masturbation (both homosexual and heterosexual); psychological factors; fantasies, erotic dreams; incestuous masturbation (between brother/sister, uncle/niece, father/daughter as well as a case of initiation involving mother and son).

Auto-eroticism among dis-satisfied wives, girlhood experiments (with both sexes); initiations of boys by older women, nurses, etc.; club contests; public masturbation; breast stimulation; modern concepts of masturbation; primitive concepts; etc.

Illustrations include: artificial penes (both single-ended and double-ended for lesbian activities); other masturbatory devices; auto-erotic humor; auto-erotic symbols; childhood postures as well as women depicted in various auto-erotic attitudes. \$3.00.

(Futura Books ad, TV & Movie Play)

## BIZARRE FATHERHOOD TRAP EXPOSED!

WHEN JERRY, FLORA and Frank arrived at Sunnydale Reclamation Centre, Matron greeted them with some eagerness.

"You've done the place up nicely," Jerry gave the rebuilt centre the once over as they stood in the drive by the car.

"What with all the emergency cases coming in during recent months, Mr Cornelius, we had to work quickly. Och, we've been that understaffed! Working with no proper instructions from administration... There's no much left of your wee mansion, o'course."

"We have to cannibalise where necessary." Jerry glanced sadly at Flora and past her to where he saw the shell of his little Dutch mansion.

"It's a shame," said Flora.

"And what's yon wee chappy so upset about?" Matron looked professionally at the crumpled figure of Frank who sat in the front seat covering his face with his thin hands and mewling to himself.

"Another emergency, I'm afraid, matron. A special case..."

"Aye. That's what they all say."

"Could you put him in a blank tank right away?"

"Is it wise, Mr Cornelius?"

"It's urgent."

"A rather crude..."



"Don't worry. He's a rather crude patient."

"If you say so, sir. I'll get a couple of the lads to take him in." Matron went back through the main door and re-emerged with two assistants who picked Frank up and bore him, tightly foetal now, off.

Koutrouboussis, in an elegant blue mohair lounge suit with matching shirt and tie, his face and hands bandaged, came out of the door after Matron had gone in. He glanced sourly at Jerry. "Having fun?"

"Can't complain. You appear to have left London in a hurry. How are Maureen and Barbara?"

"They were bubbled up." Koutrouboussis said thoughtfully.

"Ah. This is Captain Hargreaves. Captain Hargreaves, this is Spiro Koutrouboussis. He's a member of my organisation."

"You run an organisation?" Flora raised her eyebrows.

"Six of one, half a dozen of the other."

"How do you do?" Koutrouboussis gave a tiny, stiff bow, winced with pain and seemed to have difficulty turning his eyes on Jerry again. "Did you get the machine?"

"Flora had it. It's in the back of the car."

"So we can begin work. About bloody time. I'm sick to death of my particular role. I need a break."

"We could all benefit from a change."

"Can we get down to the lab now?"

"You can if you like. I'm a bit anxious about the inner man." Jerry looked inquiringly at Flora. "Could you do with a bite?"

She laughed. "You know I could!"

Jerry escorted her into the cool, sweet-smelling interior of the reclamation centre.



## DOCTORS PROVE SEX GUILTS MAKE YOU IMPOTENT!

JERRY WALKED BETWEEN the rows of the blank tanks in the long, hushed ward.

Each tank had its indicators, its curled, black figure, its tube running from the head to the surface to the connections along the edges. He studied the coded plates on the base of each tank and eventually found Frank. He was hanging in the exact centre of his tank. Nothing moved. Every dial registered zero.

Jerry turned to the engineer who walked slowly down the other side of the aisle checking readings against sheets on a clipboard.

"Number 30005. Any anticipation yet?"

The engineer shrugged.

"Too early."

Jerry licked his lower lip.

"Fair enough."

## THE NYMPHO COSSACK QUEEN OF THE BLOODY STEPPES

CATHERINE, IN ALL her sweetness, stared at him through the darkness of the room and he sat up in the bed, his hand clawing into Flora's right breast so that she screamed and Catherine disappeared and Jerry slapped her mouth and punched her stomach and shrieked and ran from the room, and staggered through the galleries until he came back to the blank tank ward and reached Frank and smashed the glass with his fists so his hands streamed with blood and the fluid from the tank bathed them.

Frank sank.

## I TRAINED THE NUDE GIRL BOXERS OF BANGKOK

NAKED, JERRY WENT back to the bedroom and gathered up his gun while Flora wept.

"It's not your fault," he said. "But it's terror time, I'm afraid."

## SWAMP LUST!

JERRY CROSSED TO the lab wing, holding his gun tight against his thigh. There were lights. He opened the door. Koutrouboussis looked up red-eyed.

"You may be black," he said, "but you look juicy to me."

"Any results?" asked Jerry.

"We needed you You were fucking about."

"Well, I'm not fucking about now." Jerry tied his gun by its trigger guard to a lock of his hair so that the weapon rested against his neck.

The black box stood on the bench. A score of fine leads ran from it and were connected to other instruments. Jerry pulled them out.

"You won't need those. It's to do with instinct, you see." He flexed his fingers.

"There's more than one way of skinning a cat," said Koutrouboussis mildly.

## JUST FOUND: \$10,000,000 IN PIRATE TREASURE! MILLIONS STILL UNTOUCHED!

THAT OUGHT TO do it." Jerry straightened up and closed the lid of the box. "Ready to go, Mr Koutrouboussis."

"Glad to hear it."

There was a wet sound behind them. Flora Hargreaves supported a bleary Frank who had his needle-gun in his hand.

"You look nice in rubber," Jerry said, "but it's all that's holding you together."

Frank groaned. "I've a moral duty to perform, you filth."

Jerry tilted his head so that his gun swung onto his shoulder. Frank steadied his hand.

"Why are you involving yourself in this, Flora?" Jerry folded his arms across his chest.

"I give back what I get, you bastard."

"Then you'd better give me Frank." Jerry laughed. "You know very well what will happen if you hit the box, Frank."

"Well—Jerry—I don't—have to—take the—risk . . ."

Frank drooled.

"I suppose not."

"You're the only one—who knows which—button—to press . . ."

"Well. Mr Koutrouboussis . . ."

Koutrouboussis screamed as Frank's gun moved and the needle hit him in the knee.

"Good," said Frank thickly. "It's . . ." He squeezed the trigger again but Jerry was sliding across the floor and taking cover behind a rustling hallucimat, untangling the vibragun from his hair and brushing the cobwebs from his nose just as the door opened again and Bishop Beesley and Mitzi, closely followed by a man wearing the red robes of a Roman Catholic cardinal, entered the room. They all wore crossed bandoliers of bullets and carried Italian Mausers. Mitzi took Frank's needle-gun away from him and darted a disgusted look at Flora who was nursing her injured breast.

"By the way, Mr Cornelius," said Bishop Beesley as he frisked Frank for pleasure. "You'll be happy to know we've taken Karen into the fold again, poor thing."

"How is she?"

Beesley shook his head. "She's not the woman you remember, I'm afraid. Is that the box? Would you mind, cardinal?"

The cardinal hung his gun over his shoulder and lifted the box in his arms.

Mitzi glanced at Flora, then at Jerry, and with a gesture of compassion plugged Frank in the heart. Frank slapped down on the floor.

"Just a minute!" Jerry was offended. "That was my bloody brother!"

"He was going to kill you, Herr Cornelius."

"Still, it's my job." Jerry stayed behind the hallucimat, his vibragun raised. "You'd better put that box down, cardinal."

The cardinal turned his swarthy, questioning features in Bishop Beesley's direction.

"Oh. Mr Cornelius knows his weapon would seriously upset his machine's mechanism." Beesley lowered his rifle. "It's not our intention to destroy either you or your invention, Mr Cornelius, as you well know. We intend to

save both—for everybody's benefit. We have a great deal of work to undo yet, haven't we?"

Jerry sighed.

"I've got a good mind to . . ."

"Of course you have, You're so impulsive."

"You couldn't operate it."

"Perhaps not."

"Oh, take the fucker."

Mitzi looked at the needle-gun. Then she frowned at Flora and, by way of an experiment, stitched a line of slivers across Flora's throat.

As the blood sprang out, Flora put her hand up, then let it fall again, then toppled backwards. Mitzi laughed and shot Koutrouboussis while she was at it.

"Do you believe in premonitions?" Jerry asked as they left.

"It depends on the source, Mr Cornelius." Bishop Beesley rummaged in his pocket and found a large piece of walnut fudge. "We'll be seeing you soon, I hope."

## FINAL OPERATION

Guilt and fear are amongst the most soul-destroying, fatal and disintegrating emotions and experiences that come to man. Guilt because of wrong doing, unconfessed, unrepented of, and uncleansed causes havoc and must be got rid of by Jesus alone. Psychiatrists have their couches to handle this, but they are helpless for only Jesus can meet this need. Did you know that it has now been revealed that there are more psychiatrists that commit suicide than any other profession, so it is obvious they do not have the answer. Jesus, alone, upon full, whole-hearted, and honest confession, is able to deal with a guilt complex and cleanse and deliver utterly.

(Len J. Jones, *The Evidence*, December 1967)

## RADIATION TREATMENT

### End result: CANCER OF THE CERVIX

The March issue of McCalls reports that "Cancer of the cervix seems to be linked with the early loss of virginity and promiscuity on the part of young girls, according to three recent reports . . . patients with cervical cancer . . . had a greater number of sexual partners than comparable women who did not develop cancer . . . Monogamy in sex appeared to reduce the risk of cancer."

*Newsweek* (October 21, 1968) reports that: "Researchers have long suspected that cancer of the cervix, which afflicts some 40,000 women per year, is a venereal disease . . . most common among promiscuous women."

. . . "Enlightened modernists" cry for more sexual freedoms to undo the repressive sexual inhibitions of society and make people better off. How could these self-impressed, lawless intellectuals explain the fact that the large majority of students who need psychiatric help *have already experienced this sexual freedom?*

They simply IGNORE these facts. They rant about sexual permissiveness and sexual looseness. Proof? They don't need it. Satisfy the animal lusts of the people and they will all flock to your side.

(The PLAIN TRUTH, January, 1969)

## COME AWAY MELINDA

JERRY DIDN'T MIND the bombs as much as the rock scene. He wouldn't care what they sent so long as it wasn't Simon and Garfunkel.

It was like something out of 1962.

He switched off the radio.

Time to turn the lamp on bright.

## YOU'RE EASY TO LOVE

A KILLING SCENE from now on. You couldn't stay smooth forever.

He began to assemble his gun again, ignoring Matron's panicky knock on the door.

He picked a scarlet shirt with a huge rolled button down collar and frilly cuffs, scarlet velvet bell-bottoms, crimson suede boots, vermilion frock coat, scarlet cord cap. He combed his milk-white hair and crooned a tune to himself, clipped on his yellow chamois shoulder holster and stepped out into the soft night and his cool car.

As he drove, he considered the stars. It would all be over in a flash.

## SISTERS OF MERCY

SOMEWHERE A CLOCK had stopped.

Jerry checked his watches.

They were running slow, but they were running.

He checked the car clock. It ticked painfully on.

Overwhelmed by a sense of urgency Jerry took the car up to a hundred and fifty. As it flew towards the dawn, he sighted Oxford's dreaming dome.

The day brightened. The sun appeared. Jerry glared at it with tears in his eyes. His heart beat rapidly, but he was filled with a growing stillness.

Was it too late?

Was Beesley's shit hitting the fan?

He roared into the concrete cavern and drove past the gloomy spires, squealing to a stop outside the Ashmolean, charging through its doors and running down the dark avenue of slurring longcase clocks.

## TIP FOR THE TOP

THE MORGUE WAS colder than ever.

He opened the drawer and saw that a thin veil of ice had formed over Catherine's body.

He pressed his hands to her breasts and forced his heat into her.

This time she did not stir, but the ice gradually evaporated, then reformed on his body. Feebly he brushed at it, leaned on the drawer until it was closed, stumbled from the morgue to the room where the red, gold and silver machine took him into its webs.

The machine's voice was faint, its rustling sluggish, and it was a very long time before Jerry revived enough to hear the clock within him begin to move again.

Jerry Cornelius ran across the hall and into another steel room that contained nothing but a huge tape deck. He activated the deck and the twenty inch spools began to revolve.

He twisted the volume control up to full; gave it

maximum bass and treble response.

The Deep Fix began to play *That's My Baby*. The old strobes went bravely at it. The wall drifted apart.

Jerry entered the Shifter, nervous as a cat.

engine. It hurt Jerry's ears as the rods turned, creaked and jerked to the calliope's rhythm.

Bishop Beesley beamed.

"My own invention, Mr Cornelius! You see, you are not



## THAT'S NO WAY TO SAY GOODBYE

**S**WEET ORB MACE appeared for a moment. She looked sad.

Jerry dashed through the Shifter.

Scenes took a long time to come and a long time to go. The jewelled air was pretty dull breathing.

Jerry saw himself sixteen times—black, white, male, female—and he was dead.

He raced across the flat, grey, infinite plain, his gun in his hand, sniffing the frigid wind.

There was no doubt that Beesley was operating the machine, had somehow managed to put it into reverse. Though it would mean the same thing in the end, Ragnarok Day was being put back and it didn't suit him. It had to be this Cycle or nothing.

He wheeled and the air was cold brass.

Bishop Beesley stood beside a contraption. At its centre was the belching boiler and the frantically moving pistons and cogs of an ancient red and black steam engine. A system of clockworks had been erected on top of the engine and from a large axle at the top ran a series of iron rods of different lengths and at different angles. At the ends of the rods were pewter balls of different sizes painted in bright primary colours. Jangling calliope music came from the box that had been geared up at the side of the steam

the only one capable of building a sophisticated machine. This is the Beesley Steam Driven Calliopic Orrery! BEHOLD—THE RHYTHM OF THE SPHERES!"

Jerry ran at the machine and was hurled back by Pluto striking him on the side of the jaw. He raised his gun.

But the balls whirled faster and faster and the music shrilled and the steam engine bounced and bellowed. Bishop Beesley waved his pale hands.

"You've thrown it out of control, you assassin!"

Beesley tried to crawl under the whizzing balls to reach the controls. Jerry lowered his gun.

The balls began to shoot off in all directions. The steam engine screamed. Neptune narrowly missed Jerry's head.

"You have thrown it into chaos!" wailed Beesley.

The steam engine exploded.

Jerry was hurled into a field of lillies where a herd of giant antelopes grazed. He got up and kept on running, dodging into Fleet Street's horse-drawn traffic, weaving through the shallows of a tropical river and avoiding mangrove roots and alligators, loping into Wenclaslas Square as Russian tanks burned, and side-stepping into Regents Park Zoo by the Elephant Enclosure.

The elephants were dead, their skins blistered by napalm.

Jerry knew he was home.

The risk had paid off.

**S**OME SECTORS HAD been overlooked.

Little monuments of trees, grass and buildings, undamaged by the bombing, stood out against the ash-covered rubble of London.

Jerry recognised a block of flats at Bow, several streets near Hampstead Heath, the public baths and the ABC Cinema at Bayswater, some half-timbered shops where Holborn had run, the British Museum, the Hilton Hotel in Park Lane.

At least a few tourist attractions remained.

Over near the canal eight gulls wheeled in the white sky. Jerry left the zoo and began to tramp across the park, his boots sinking several inches in the fine ash.

Beesley had almost certainly returned to London, but it was anyone's guess where he had set up his headquarters.

Time (in the local sense) was running down at an alarming rate. Beesley was obviously trying to slow the Cycle in order to preserve the present situation and, if possible, return to an earlier phase.

It was so bloody short-sighted.

Also it would be disastrous so far as Catherine was concerned. At least his identity was preserved, up to a point. It was his only advantage.

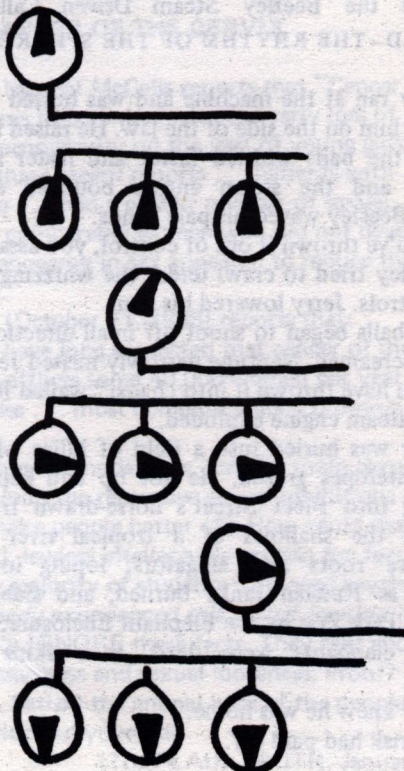
On the other side of a hedge which had been completely stripped of foliage was a neatly parked minihover with British markings.

He resheathed his gun to protect it from the ash and vaulted the hedge.

He opened the minihover's cabin door and climbed in. The thing shifted under his weight. It was armed with two eight inch Banning cannon in Hamilton brackets. The cannon seemed to be low on charges.

The motor started slowly. Jerry rose a few inches in a huge cloud of ash and tilted the joystick forward, heading to where Edgeware Road used to be.

### CHECK TEMPERATURE



**T**HE ARMoured MINIHOVER coughed out of the ash and rode smoothly across the stretch of smooth green crystal. The crystal was what the West End had come to. It wasn't the sort of fusion Jerry liked to see.

As he reached the site of Regent Street, he saw an ash-cloud approaching on his left. He guided the minihover into a shallow basin in the crystal and watched. He recognised the jeeps and armoured cars. The Americans were coming back at a lick.

Jerry put the hover's periscope up and adjusted the magnification.

General Ulysses Washington Cumberland stood in the lead jeep, a flame-thrower pack on his back, the nozzle in his right hand. His left hand clutched the windshield, he wore dark combat goggles and his clothes were whipped by the wind. The cap on the general's head bore the legend *C-in-C Europe* and he wore a green, fringed shawl around his shoulders, a long yellow dress with a tight bodice and red buttons, a huge green sash, puffed sleeves, gored skirts and flounces everywhere. The skirt was flared by at least six starched white petticoats and there was a pair of blue tennis shoes on his feet.

Behind General Cumberland the jeeps and cars were filled with fine-featured marines in full battle-kit, here to seek and destroy resistance not cleared out by the bombing.

General Cumberland set an example with his flame thrower.

It flared at every possible hiding place.

Jerry shivered. There were signs of snow in the sky. He decided to move on.

As he started the motor he heard Cumberland's voice through his amplifiers.

"They're all queer! Queer! Queer! Queer! Burn 'em out! Out! Out! Out!"

When Jerry reached a higher point on the crystal plain he saw Cumberland leap from his jeep and lead the marines after him.

The flame thrower shrieked again, but Jerry was out of range.

Hesitantly some of the marines raised their weapons.

"Sissies! Pansies! Asslickers!" roared the general. He turned, spraying the soldiers with his flame thrower.

"Mother lovers! Mother lovers! You sons of bitches!" he sobbed. In a flurry of frilly underclothes he collapsed on a slab of concrete. There was a WHOOMF, a scream of pure ecstasy, and he went up in a roaring fireball.

At least he had died happy, thought Jerry.

The smoke cleared behind him and he saw that the majority of the marines had fried. The rest were trying to put out their burning clothes or their burning vehicles, but then there were a few more explosions and they were finished off.

Jerry admired their energy.

### DAMNED VIRGINS IN THE DEVIL'S LAIR

**T**HE MINIHOVER RAN out of power sooner than Jerry had expected.

Near the ABC Cinema, Bayswater, he tramped to where an old Riley was parked. As he opened the door a woman with a pale, haggard face looked up at him from the driving seat.

"Can I drop you anywhere, Herr Cornelius?"

"You're still fond of green and purple, I see."

"It's really all I have left."

Jerry put his right boot on the nearside wing and began to brush off what remained of the ash "Did Beesley send you?"

"I escaped from Beesley."

"How did you come to leave Amerika?"

"I couldn't stay on top of the job. A general lassitude, I suppose. Maybe I needed you, Jerry. So little new blood. I've become extraordinarily anaemic in recent months. Beesley found me and we flew back to England a few—a few . . ."

"Days?"

"Ago."

"You've changed."

"You haven't."

"I should hope not. It's been tough, though. Did Beesley set you up from the beginning?"

"Yes. But I fell in love . . ."

"Like a junkie with his dope."

"You weren't the dope I took you for."

"It's a shame, I know."

She licked her lips. "Can I drop you anywhere?" There was a smell about her and it reminded Jerry of Frank.

"I don't think so."

"Jerry—I need you more than you need me."

"I know that."

"I haven't been happy."

"I can believe that."

"Just a little, Jerry, understanding . . ."

"To late."

"Mercy."

"Sorry, belle . . ."

She started the engine of the Riley. "What were you trying to do with the stars?"

"Just hoping to get everything over with quickly Ragnarok, of sorts."

"You are fond of Wagner? I, too, am . . . Well, maybe not so fond. The end of the world. Is that why you were making all those converts? To take them over with you?"

"Something like that."

"But the world isn't going to end. My husband's seen to that, hasn't he?"

"He's making a good try."

"Why do you want the world to end?"

"It's not as simple as that. I've got a kid sister, you see. I want to give her a better break than I had. A niece I mean."

"You're mixed up."

"Not as much as you, Karen."

He drew his vibragun. She put her foot on the accelerator. "Your brake's still on." The car bounced. Jerry pointed the gun and she shook so much she was soon indistinguishable from the ash. He hooked the green and purple clothes out of the seat with his boot. Poor woman. He didn't know where she'd found the energy in the first place.

In the end he had, after all, been merciful. He holstered the vibragun and got into her seat. It was very cold.

He didn't feel much warmer himself. The engine was hard to get started again. The motor wouldn't turn. He pumped in more fuel, and it sparked at last.

Through the grey day, through the ruins, he let the car roll straight down the obsidian length of Westbourne Grove.

He had a feeling Beesley was in this area. The bishop had probably sent Karen von Krupp to find him.

He reached the rubble of Ladbroke Grove and the car could move no further. He got out and began to climb over

the concrete, between the fronds of twisted wire that had once reinforced it.

He reached the place where the convent had stood and clambered to the highest slab to sniff the scene.

Holland Park was visible. It stood intact on a rise to the south west, its trees ghostly gold and green. Jerry considered it.

A few minutes later, he unsheathed his vibragun from its chamois holster, turned, and, resting the gurn on his bent left arm, sighted on a patch of rubble close to the centre of the demolished convent.

The rubble began to quiver and shiver. Then there was nothing left at all but a cloud of dust. Jerry stepped forward and looked into the smooth clearing.

The steel trapdoor was still there. It shone as if burnished. He kneeled on it, pressed his palm against it and murmured a couple of words. The door hissed and took him down twenty feet. He got off and looked up the shaft at the sky. He could see the sun. It had hardly moved.

The steel door ascended and shut off the light.

Jerry depressed a switch. A little illumination flickered for an instant around the room and then died. He moved cautiously through the darkness towards one wall, felt for a shelf above his head and found what he was hoping to find, took out his lighter and by its flame managed to ignite the wick.

He saw that the paraffin level was low. He hoped it would last.

The lamp was of blue glass, decorated with gold and scarlet flowers. It cast shadows around a room full of dusty, alchemical equipment; part of an earlier era. Jerry crossed to a wooden door and pulled it open.

It creaked.

He entered a tunnel and the light shone on the semi-luminous white coats of half-dead rats. As he pushed his feet through them, they barely moved.

The tunnel was damp and cold and still. By the light of the lamp he saw that his own hands had gone a pale golden colour. He needed sustenance. Beesley must have increased the machine's power. He trod on a rat and it squeaked faintly.

After half a mile the tunnel began to slope upwards until it ended at another steel door. He pressed his hand on it. It didn't move. He murmured the words. The door stayed shut.

With a sigh, Jerry drew out his vibragun. His bones ached.

It took much longer than usual for the gun to disintegrate the steel. Gradually daylight filtered in and there was a hole large enough for Jerry to crawl through. He was in Holland Park, close to the Belvedere Restaurant which had once been part of Holland House and had included the orangery.

He had left in the afternoon. Now it was morning. Did Beesley realise how senseless his plan was? A big waste of power.

He thought of Catherine and began to run.

## SO YOU WANT TO BE A ROCK AND ROLL STAR?

AS HE REACHED the Elizabethan facade of Holland House, Jerry paused and looked up.

The American jets were dancing in the frozen sky. For

several minutes they performed complicated formations then regrouped into conventional flights and flew away from London towards the Atlantic. Either they had been recalled or events had got on top of them.

With mixed feelings Jerry watched them leave.

He was on his own.

Pushing open the mansion's heavy doors he entered a large, gloomy hall. A Shifter gateway had once been here, but he knew it must have dispersed by now. Beesley had bugged the phasing completely.

He drew his gun and started up the Tudor staircase.

Mitzi was waiting, unarmed, at the top. She wore an ankle-length dress in Regency striped of dark and light pink. There were pink slippers on her feet and her blonde hair was combed to frame her face. Her large blue eyes regarded him.

"Herr Cornelius. You are not looking well."

"I'm as well as could be expected." He motioned with the vibragun. "Is Beesley here?"

"My father? Yes. he's waiting for you. He thinks you're probably ready to join us at last."

She smiled and Jerry saw that her teeth seemed to have grown to points, like a fox's. "It will soon be summer again, and we can be together..." She turned, walking back along the landing. "This way."

Jerry hesitated.

"What's the matter?" She paused by the door of the main bedroom.

"Death." His nostrils quivered. "A lot of death."

"There's nothing wrong with death. Nothing to be afraid of. A sleep..."

"It depends on the kind." He gripped the gun desperately.

"Don't you like the idea of life after death?"

"It depends on the kind."

"Herr Cornelius, you have no *trust*." Her eyes widened with sympathy. "You are so wild."

"I..." He felt very tired.

"You are a fierce beast."

"No..."

"You must be more tame. In time."

"I want..." He gasped as the tears flooded from his face. "I want..."

"Peace. We want nothing more."

"Peace?"

He rocked on his heels. His grip was still tight on his gun, though all his energy seemed concentrated in his right hand.

She came towards him. He tried to raise his gun. She stretched out her palm. He shook his head.

"Don't you want to rest? We can help you rest."

"Not that kind."

She frowned, her eyes concerned. "Why do you split hairs so? Does it matter about the kind?"

"Yes."

"We all grow older, you know. More mature."

"No."

"Love," said Mitzi. "Do you love nothing but your Cause? It is hopeless, you know."

"Love." Tears chilled his cheeks. He trembled as he thought of Oxford and Catherine and the Science of Innocence.

"You know," Mitzi murmured, "that what you have done is wrong. But we forgive you."

He snarled and laughed through his teeth. The energy left his right hand and blazed from his eyes. "I am Jerry Cornelius." The gun dropped. He bent but she swept

forward and kicked the gun through the bannisters and he watched it fall slowly to the floor of the hall below.

"It's a turning world, darling." Mitzi helped him straighten up, wincing as she saw his eyes. "There are many kinds of beauty."

Jerry staggered back from her with a growl.

The cardinal came out of the master bedroom. "Misericordia! The poor chap looks completely beaten. He needs help."

Jerry tried to descend the stairs. It was dawn outside. He gasped as the cardinal seized him around the waist.

"Could you bring him in here, please, Cardinal Orelli," Mitzi's voice was vibrant with sympathy. "He'll soon feel a new man."

Jerry shut everything down.

He let them get on with it.

## PULSE CHECK

"Le Commandant"

### 7-IN-1 JEWELLED SWISS CHRONOGRAPH

Amazing wrist watch "command post!"

Actually 7 watches in 1—complete with 6 dials, 5 hands, 2 pushbutton controls! A miracle of Swiss watch-making ingenuity. Genuine Swiss-calibrated, anti-magnetic movement keeps perfect time. Plus many more functions! Use it as a stop watch. Measure distance. Check parking meters. Register speed—car or boat. Check production figures. Take time, motion studies or time the number of beers consumed in an hour! Set dial as 'wrist watch secretary.' Unlimited uses! Get yours today direct from the Swiss Fabrique at giant savings. Pay only \$12.95, an unconditional money-back guarantee.

(Hilton Watch Company ad, *Confidential Detective*)

## ONE TOO MANY MORNINGS

HE WAS AWAKENED by a cold caress.

Mitzi's waxen hand was on his brow. He felt the heat leave his head and he tried to jerk away. She removed her hand.

He lay on a hard mattress in a wide four-poster with grey curtains that were drawn back so that he could see Bishop Beesley standing by the Jacobean dresser and bending over the box which stored Jerry's machine.

Ash-coloured light came through the window. Jerry took stock of his reserves. They were low.

"Good—um—hello, there, Mr Cornelius. I see my daughter's been looking after you. She's an angel. A minstering angel."

Jerry sat up. He was still dressed in his red suit and he was unbound. He frowned suspiciously at Mitzi.

"I'm sick," he said, "of..."

"Cancer?" said Mitzi.

"Crabs."

"It's a complicated state of affairs, I'm afraid," said the bishop, chewing a Crunchie bar. The artificial honeycomb coursed down his chins. "I've got so far, but I now need your help. I want to find out where the rest of your 'converts' are, for a start. Some are hanging on, you know, against all common sense."

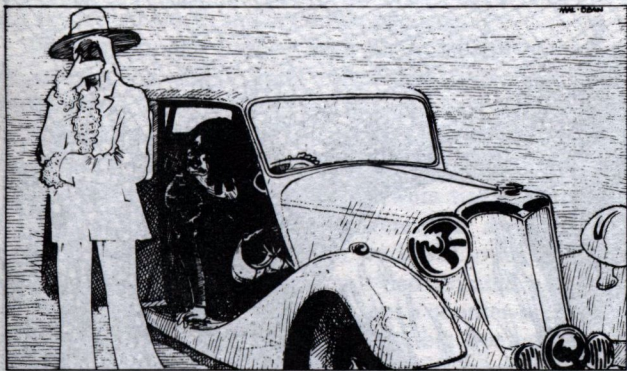
"I promised them nothing less than the Millenium." Jerry drew a sluggish breath. "What do you expect?"

"I'm afraid we'll have to put back the Millenium for a while." Beesley smacked his lips. "I know it's disappoint-

ing. They were all prepared for it, weren't they? Well, that's over. If you can help me locate them, I'll get in touch with them and arrange a deconversion. Could I say fairer?"

Jerry took a lock of his hair in his hand. It was stringy and off-white. He sniffed.

"You knew the apocalypse wasn't due for several million years yet, Mr Cornelius," Bishop Beesley continued, "And yet you wished to bring it about for purely selfish reasons. Reasons, I regret, that I simply fail to understand. It may be all right for you—but consider your dupes!"



"What do you think my crash programme was for?" Jerry glanced out of the window. A wind was blowing the ash northward.

"You can't save the whole human race, Mr Cornelius. Besides, I insist that your motives were still suspect, let alone your goals!"

Jerry got off the bed and walked weakly to the box but Mitzi barred his way, looking questioningly at her father. Bishop Beesley shrugged. "We've reached something of an impasse, I'm afraid. The power seems to be weakening."

"You can say that again," Jerry smiled. "What else did you expect?"

Bishop Beesley cast down his eyes in embarrassment and unwrapped a toffee. "I never claimed to be a scientist, Mr Cornelius."

"Naturally." Jerry stroked the box. "You'll have to find a power source, won't you? Whether transmission of any kind's possible now, I just don't know. Things are fixed, Bishop Beesley. They are solid."

"The sun hasn't moved for an—for some t—" Mitzi gave up. "It isn't moving."

"That's merely an indication," Jerry said. "An image, if you like."

"What sort of power does the machine take?" Beesley asked, chewing. "Electricity?"

Jerry laughed as best he could. "I'm afraid not. It runs on primitive energy. It's all very basic, when you get down to it."

"Where do we get this energy?"

"Is Cardinal Orelli still on the premises?"

"I think he went to the lavatory."

"Never mind. Ask him when he's finished, will you?"

"Herr Cornelius," Mitzi whispered, "you must explain to us everything. You must not make mysteries. It is a time for frankness. You will admit that you have no choice now."

"Frankness." Jerry drew a deep breath. "You said it. Bring Cardinal Orelli in as soon as you can. I'm very tired. Time's slipping by."

"I think I heard him on the landing," Bishop Beesley

opened the door. "Ah, cardinal. Would you step in here a moment, please?"

Cardinal Orelli smiled at Jerry. "How are you, my son?"

"How do you feel, cardinal?" Jerry asked.

"Very well."

"Good." Jerry opened the lid of the box and moved a plate set in the bottom left corner. It was about four inches wide and six inches long and eight inches deep, lined with a rubbery substance. "Would you place your hands together, cardinal? Palm against palm."

The cardinal smiled and assumed a praying position.

"That's fine. Now put the hands into the slot there. Don't worry, it won't hurt you."

The cardinal glanced at the bishop who nodded. Mitzi's lips parted, her eyes shone. The cardinal dipped his hands into the slot up to the wrists, the box hummed briefly, the cardinal's lifeless body crumpled to the floor.

"It's fuelled again," said Beesley, bending over the guage. "Good heavens!"

"It won't last long," said Jerry. He turned a knob and gripped a metal bar positioned in the centre.

A shock raced through him and he felt a little sick, but he kicked Beesley in the crutch so that he fell back into Mitzi's arms, picked up the box and made for the door.

They yelled at him as he raced down the stairs, paused in the hall to recover his vibragun and dashed out into the grey day.

He was using up energy very quickly, in spite of everything. He stumbled down the steps, through the gates, out over the cricket pitch, his boots sinking in ash, and behind him came Bishop Beesley and Mitzi who had paused only to get their Remingtons.

In the middle of the cricket pitch he fell and the box flew from his arms. He choked on the ash.

He tried to get up but he collapsed, rolled over on his back to get his vibragun out, but already Mitzi and Bishop Beesley were standing over him, their rifles pointing at his heart.

"We'll have to try to manage on our own now that we know how to keep the machine's strength up."

Apologetically, Bishop Beesley squeezed the trigger.

There was a pop and a slithering noise and a bullet fell out of the barrel. Mitzi pulled her trigger and the same thing happened. Her bullet fell in Jerry's lap. He felt a mild shock in his right ball.

Mitzi raised her head at the sound of barking. Bishop Beesley followed her gaze.

Coming across the ash, his head and body swathed in white furs, driving a sled pulled by a team of a dozen dogs, including two St Bernards, a borzoi and three salukis, was a tall man armed with a steel bow and a quiver of alloy arrows. Close by he stopped the dogs and they flung themselves down panting. He fitted an arrow to his bow.

"I wonder if you'd let Mr Cornelius rise?" said the man in the white fur.

They stepped back and Jerry got up, dusting ash off his suit.

The new arrival motioned with his bow. "What I'd like to know, bishop—I take it you are a bishop—is what you think you're accomplishing, fucking about with the sun and so forth," said the tall figure.

"I'm trying to put things right," Beesley said sullenly. "I'm a journalist by trade." He studied the other man's weapon, obviously attempting to decide if the bow and arrow were as ineffective as his rifle.

"A bow has more power, at short range, than an

ordinary rifle," said the tall figure.

"How much more power?" asked Mitzi.

"Quite a bit."

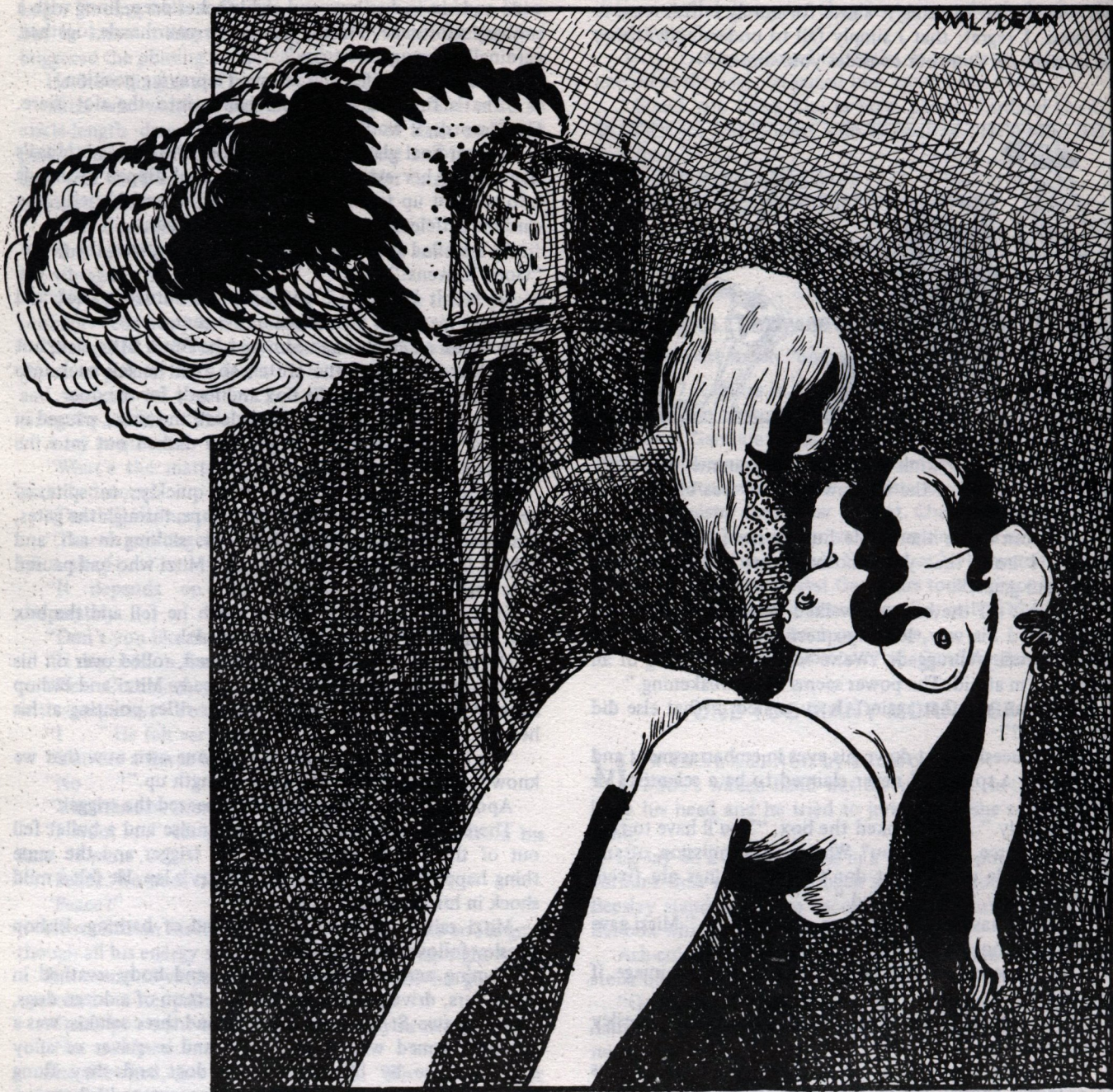
Mitzi sucked at her lower lip.

Jerry went down on his knees beside the box and began to drag it through the grey dust towards the sled. It took

The sun had started to move again.

## I'M SO GLAD

**T**HE SLED SLID away across the cricket pitch. Behind it Mitzi and Bishop Beesley sat slumped in the



him a while to load it aboard. "I hope I'm not overburdening you," he said to the newcomer.

"I'd allowed for the extra. They're good dogs."

"I suppose you haven't . . ."

"Do you want it now?"

"I think I'd better."

"Look under the skin nearest you."

Jerry pulled back the wolfskin and there was a little replica of one of his webs. He switched it on and it began to pipe. He buried his head in it. "That's more like it."

"It was the best I could do," said the man in the white furs.

Jerry straightened up.

ash. Mitzi had pulled up her skirt and seemed to be inspecting her inner thigh. Her father was unwrapping a Milky Way.

"You seem very fit," Jerry said to his companion as the man whipped up the dogs.

"Fitter than ever." They gathered speed. "I took the opportunity of diverting some of the energy to myself while that chap was trying to do whatever it was he was trying to do."

"So that's what happened to it. I couldn't understand . . ."

"It turned out for the best, I think you'll agree."



"You can say that again."

"Where to now?"

"Oxford, I think."

"Okay. I suppose it was wise, was it, to leave that pair where they are?"

"Oh, I don't think they'll be much trouble now. Poor things—if we succeed, they'll hardly survive the transformation."

"Quite."

The runners scraped the ash and they rode in silence for a few miles until they reached the outskirts of London and the ash gave way to the asphalt of the M-40. The dogs were cut from their traces and lay down panting.

Captain Brunner pushed back his hood and pointed to an intersection and a hotel called *The Jolly Englishman* which stood beside a garage. "That's where I left the car."

Pulling the sled behind them, they made for *The Jolly Englishman*, followed by the pack of dogs.

Jerry checked his watches. They were ticking perfectly. He was relieved, though there were still a great many uncertainties. It was difficult to work out in his head just what side-effects Beesley's attempts had initiated.

A counter-revolution, after all, was a counter-revolution.

They carried the equipment to the big Duesenberg and stowed it down by the back seats. Captain Brunner got into the car and started the engine. Jerry sat beside him and slammed the door.

The dogs began to howl.

"Faithful buggers," said Captain Brunner, "but there's nothing else for it, I'm afraid." He turned the car onto the M-40 and drove towards Oxford.

"It does you good to get out of London occasionally," said Jerry as the evening sunlight touched the red leaves of the elms lining the road.

"Especially at this time of the year," agreed Captain Brunner.

"Have all the Americans gone home now?"

"I think so. Beesley's messing about didn't help matters, of course. A general panic over there, by the sound of it. Just as things were settling down nicely, too." Captain Brunner turned on the tape machine and got John, George, Paul and Ringo doing *She's Leaving Home*.

Jerry relaxed.

## I DON'T LIVE TODAY

CAPTAIN BRUNNER PULLED off his furs and stretched himself out on the yellow silks of the bed in the Oxford underground pied-a-terre.

"This is a bit more like it. Hasn't changed much, has it?"

"Some things don't. Not very often, at any rate." Jerry poured two glasses of Pernod. "You're still fond of this, I hope."

Captain Brunner extended an arm that glowed with energy. "You can bet your life. Thanks." He sipped the Pernod. "I'm not particularly thirsty, of course, but it's nice just to taste."

"I know what you mean."

"Could I have a last look at Catherine, Jerry? Would you mind?"

Jerry felt a pang of jealousy. "Of course not."

They walked down the corridor together, entered the morgue, opened Catherine's drawer and looked down at her lovely face. "As beautiful as ever," murmured Captain Brunner. "It's been a long time."

Jerry patted his shoulder.

"I wish..." Captain Brunner turned away. "Still, I shouldn't be here at all. Maybe it wasn't wise..." He walked swiftly from the morgue, leaving Jerry to put the drawer back and close the door.

When Jerry returned to the room, Captain Brunner had taken off all his clothes and was sitting on the edge of the bed staring at the console and tapping his knees.

"Can we get it over with now?" said Captain Brunner.

Jerry lifted the box and put it between them. He slid back the slot covering and with his red silk handkerchief he wiped it carefully. Then he stared straight into Captain Brunner's crimson eyes. "Cheerio. Thanks for everything."

"Cheerio, Jerry."

Brunner put his hands together and shoved them quickly into the slot. His lips parted over clenched teeth, his body began to sag, his complexion to dull, his hair to lose its lustre. He breathed more and more slowly until he stopped, but his hands still remained in the slot until his flesh shrank and his skin turned yellow and there was little more than a skeleton lying beside the machine.

Jerry picked the corpse up and carried it in one hand to the morgue, filing it in the spare drawer furthest from Catherine's. Then he went back and inspected the machine.

Brunner had been carrying a huge supply of energy and the machine was charged to capacity, but the energy in itself wouldn't be enough to bring Catherine back for more than a few minutes. Much more energy had to be released and then channeled to give Catherine the few days of life Jerry wanted her to have.

It would require a massive build up and release of energy and this meant speeding up the time cycle (or what was left of it). Only those with their identities firmly established would survive the spin.

He felt lonely as he prepared the machine. But then he forgot his loneliness in his anticipation.

He brought Catherine in and laid her on the bed. He bolted the box to the bench he had assembled. He ran a thin pipe from the box to Catherine's throat and secured it with a piece of surgical tape.

He checked his instruments carefully.

Then he turned on.

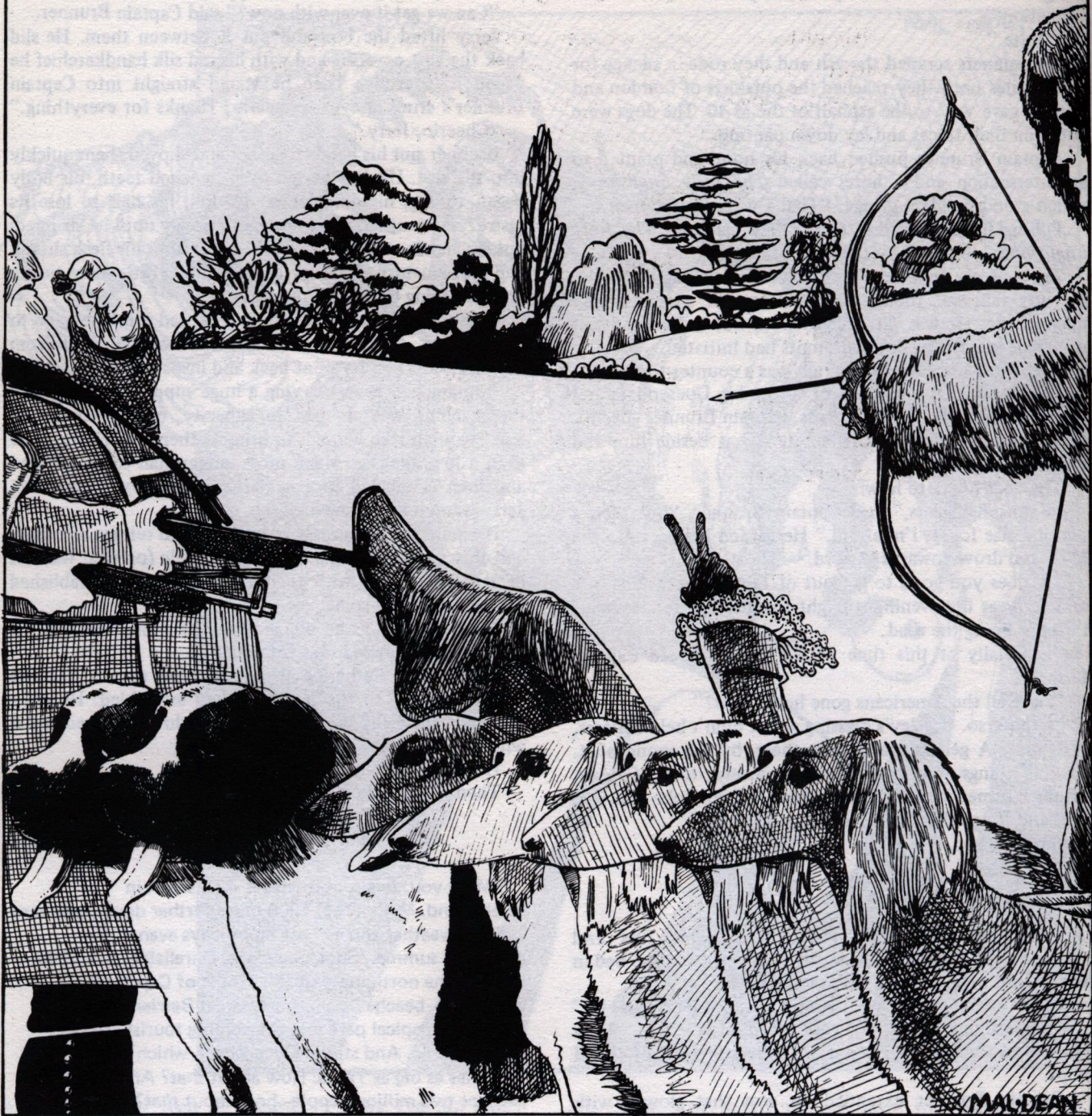
## RESPIRATION CHECK

"Mind you, this is in Brisbane, well south in Queensland. Melbourne, 1200 miles further down, gets very variable weather and can get nippy days even in the middle of summer. Shocking place. Unreliable. But 1200 miles to the north, up past the Tropic of Capricorn, lies Cairns—beaches, palm trees, Great Barrier Reef, free coconuts, tropical paradise, the coming tourist Mecca of the Pacific. And still in Queensland, which is over 2½ times as big as Texas. How about that? And contains perhaps two million people—how about *that*? Away from the cities a man can often drive for miles and miles without sighting another human being. Smog? What smog? Color problem? What color problem? Population explosion? Jesus, you have to be kidding!

(Jack Wodhams, letter to *SFWA Bulletin*)

## THE STRANGER ON THE WHOLE ROAD

JERRY INCREASED THE power and checked that all dimensions could be phased in at the right moment. He synched Jimi Hendrix in. He began to sing *Third Stone*



from the Sun very loudly. It was all part of the ritual; all part of the spell.

And it was a tense moment.

He twisted his head to look at Catherine, then set the pointer to Automatic.

Things began to hum.

Swiftly Jerry increased the entropy rate to maximum, preparing himself for the ensuing dissipation.

He began to feel dizzy as he gave the universe a whirl. For all the shielding in his lab, he wondered if he were safe after all. He blinked and could see the leaping cord that led

to Catherine's throat, saw Catherine's body tremble.

He adjusted the identity stabilisers and locked in the co-ordinates. There was now a golden mist swirling everywhere and the box had become very hot.

When everything was on Full he fell backwards and onto and then through the bed and continued to fall.

He pulled himself together as best he could. It didn't matter about the extent of the dispersal so long as he kept everything in the right order. He began to flood through the universe and then through the multiverse, to the sounds of the Beatles singing *A Day in the Life*, throbbing in time to

the cosmic pulse. Universe upon universe; dimension upon dimension; they spread out together and the extraneous energy released in the explosion poured into the box and into Catherine's body.

Faster and faster flew the particles and Jerry hung on. Framed against the spreading gases he saw other human shapes and he knew that some of the transmogs were managing to resist the conversion of the universe.

He looked about him and waited as *Helter Skelter* echoed through the infinite. It was quite a nice trip.

At last maximum diffusion was reached and everything became a little unreal. He felt a moment's concern before the switch clicked over, Jimi Hendrix started to play *Are You Experienced?*, and things began to come together again.

Soon he would know if the experiment had paid off.

## A SWEET LITTLE SCHOONER

JERRY TOOK A deep breath, opened his eyes and saw springs moving. He was under the bed. He rolled out and there was his machine steaming on the bench. Its circuits appeared to have fused. He activated the tv monitors and got the surface.

The towers of the Cathedral were white against the white sky. It was snowing. It was only to be expected. Otherwise Oxford looked pretty much as it had always looked.

With a sigh, he looked down at the bed. Catherine turned uncomfortably in her sleep, her long-fingered hands at her throat.

Jerry ripped off the surgical tape and threw the cord aside. "Catherine?"

She sniffed and moistened her lips. Then she woke up. "Jerry? Are you all right?"

"I think so. I had a bit of a turn a moment ago, but I'm fine now. How about you?"

"I thought I was dead."

"Strictly speaking you are. I managed to work out a way of getting you a few extra days—maybe a week or more—before you finally popped off. I've been experimenting for months."

"It was nice of you, Jerry."

"Frank's dead, by the way. He won't be bothering us."

"Oh, good. I was wondering about that." She got up. They were very much alike. "You've turned quite pale, Jerry."

"It's for the best, I suppose."

## OPERATION SUCCESSFUL

### Infant Stars

Each year two or three two or three new stars are born within the Milky Way. They appear to condense out of dark globules of dust. Knowledge of how this happens would reveal much about the way galaxies—and the universe itself—were formed.

(*Science Journal*, July 1968)

## THE OLFACTORY CODE

A PART FROM A tendency from time to time to imagine he heard various forms of audiosignals together with the voices of Karen von Krupp, of Bishop and Mitzi Beesley and of Frank, Jerry felt no ill effects. There was a touch of

his old paramnesia, too, but, if anything, that was reassuring.

He and Catherine wandered hand in hand through Holland Park.

It was their last day together.

Jerry was wearing his green silk suit, red silk shirt and red boots. Catherine's outfit, with its full length skirt, matched his.

Holland Park was covered in snow. Long, glassy icicles hung from the fountain like Babylonian vines and there was thick ice on the pond. The tropical evergreens sheltered the peacocks and guinea fowl while pigeons, sparrows, robins and blackbirds flew about looking for food. It was a peaceful day.

Over on the cricket pitch Catherine noticed two new statues. "I haven't seen those before."

As she led Jerry across the pitch they left black footprints in their wake.

They reached the statues.

Mitzi and Bishop Beesley had been transformed into the purest grey marble.

"Who are they, Jerry? There's no plaque."

"I'll get one fixed up. They're two people who achieved their hearts' desires. There's no looking back for them now. They look pretty permanent don't they?"

"They do indeed. So natural."

Jerry ran his hand over Bishop Beesley's marble paunch and stroked his marble Mars Bar. Affectionately he patted Mitzi's cool brow. "It's what they would have wanted."

In the middle-distance they saw the sharp outlines of Holland House. The light was very clear; the sky pure blue and the trees cast clean, black shadows on the white ground. They began to walk back, strolling past wooden benches piled high with snow, through the orangery, down the covered walk and stopping to look at the clock-tower that stood among the chimneys and the spires of the house.

"I feel very warm," said Catherine.

"You are very warm," said Jerry.

She lay down in the snow amongst the snowdrops and Jerry slowly took off her clothes and then his own. They made love for a long time until the snow had melted for several yards in all directions and the grass beneath looked fresh and bright.

The sun got low and Catherine died again.

Jerry stood up shivering. He looked down at her with affection but without sorrow. He climbed into his own clothes and folded hers up and put them beside her.

Then he walked away from there, leaving her lying there, surrounded by the snow. It had all been worthwhile. He felt a new person.

There was still work to be done. He had to find the converts, set up a new organisation, get back on the job.

And then there was the baby to consider. He could feel it stirring already.

Jerry left the park. He stood by the gates and looked across the vast plain of ice where he could see his sled. He trudged towards it, breathing in the crisp air.

At his approach the eager dogs scrambled up panting. He assembled them in their positions, patted the head of the leader, a Great Dane, and shoved the sled so that its runners broke from the ice and it slid easily away, gathering speed.

He jumped in, cracked his whip, grinned at the sun as the wind rushed past. The dogs leaned in their traces.

"Mush," he said.

THE END

# THREE EVENTS OF THE SAME VIEW

by John G.  
Chapman

## Pope Honorius for his Crimes

### The Fallen Pope

The monastery was in an isolated region of mountains and sterile deserts. Behind its thick, fortified walls lived Pope Honorius.

Often, as the monks moved in procession to and from their devotion, they would see his shadowed figure, alone and forever seeking solitude. He had taken to wearing a monk's habit faced with crimson silk, its hood drawn forward, to hide his face as his silence hid his thoughts. And when the Brothers chanced to meet him in one of the many dim corridors their slow walking would almost imperceptibly quicken; once past him their fingers sought rosaries and muttered prayers asking salvation for the disgraced Pope, and for themselves.

### The Army of the Night

In the desert hills around the monastery were hidden Count Umberto's scattered forces, hiring bands of uncouth mercenaries waiting for the day when they could breach the protecting walls or when Honorius would venture out. They were seldom seen by the community inside, though when darkness had fallen a flash of moonlight on a steel helmet or a distant half-heard whinny from a startled horse would betray their presence.

### The Resurrection of the Past

Honorius, for his part, paid little attention to the nocturnal besiegers; if he was even aware of their presence they did not disturb his sleep. In his hallucinatory dreams he constantly returned to the richly decorated rooms of the Vatican, to the days when his power had been unquestioned and the world had listened to his thin, infallible voice.

The fantasies of his sleeping hours seemed more real to him than the bare stones and rough wood of the daylight monastery. The warm darkness resurrected the tapestry walls, the marble floors, the halls of elegance in time-distant Rome where, past the glowing images of Michaelangelo walked the gem-bedecked Cardinals—the lieutenants of his power who had yet to turn and denounce him.

It was only on those nights when sleep deserted him that Honorius' memory compulsively returned to the time of decision, the time when he, as Pope, had announced that there was no God, and when the secret trial before the convocation of Cardinals had condemned him to this prison.

### The Entry of the Assassins

Outside the massive walls, next to the great stone archway of the never-opened main entrance, was a wooden building of unimpressive construction. This was kept by the monks to house and feed any travellers who passed through that forgotten country. Though it was seldom used two monks always stayed there during the day to keep a fire smouldering beneath a cauldron of soup.

It was at dusk one day, just as the two monks were about to return into the monastery, that a pair of travellers arrived and asked for shelter. Suspecting nothing, the brethren welcomed them, gave them food and showed them where they could sleep.

"Merçi, mes freres," said the hired assassins of Count Umberto as they skillfully garrotted the holy men.

Dressed in the dead monks' habits with the concealing hoods drawn across their faces, the assassins entered the monastery, silently returning the bow of the gatekeeper, helped in their impersonation by the falling darkness.

Following the directions sketched for them by Umberto they made their way through a labyrinth of deserted corridors to the chamber of the atheist Pope. They found him already deep in his haunted sleep and while one used a lantern to flash a signal from the window towards the distant hills, the other silently strangled their third victim of the night.

It was as they were making their way back to the side gate to escape that the Abbot, leading a chanting procession of the brethren to devotion, chose to speak to the unfamiliar hurrying monks. After a fierce battle they were caught.

### The Resurrection of the Pope

The Abbot burst into Honorius's room crying "My Lord! My Lord, are you harmed?"

"Harmed? Why should I be? Has anything happened?" asked the Pope, aroused from his sleep by the noise. The thin red marks around his neck faded as he spoke.

### The Sacrifice of Cains

When morning came the great main doors were opened and through them were expelled the two assassins. Each was chained by wrist and ankle to the body of the monk he had murdered, the cadavers tripping and hampering them as they tried to hurry from the monastery, driven on by a shower of stones hurled from the tops of the walls.

Dragging their gruesome burdens across the barren land they felt the day gradually grow warmer as the sun rose like a burning wound in the sky. High above them a ragged flock of vultures began to circle, attracted by the carrion that was now linked to them by bonds of both guilt and iron.

Some days later a wandering scout of Count Umberto stopped his horse to stare for a moment at four skeletons strangely chained in pairs and picked almost bare of flesh by the vultures. Shuddering, he spurred his mount into a gallop.

### The Thwarted Prince

In the smoke-filled great hall of his castle Umberto paced restlessly before his sinister guest.

"Honorius! Honorius! Honorius!" he shouted. "Why are you so obsessed by that man? Why go to all this trouble to kill him, eh? Isn't he as good as dead already in that prison the Cardinals put him in? Why should you of all people

make him your enemy?"

"A matter of pride, my friend. If he denies God . . . he denies me!" hissed Lucifer.

## Nice Weather We're Having

I was in the garden shed, fifty feet away was the house, my house, I could see it through the grimy window, I was in the garden shed, I knew the house was fifty feet away, I had measured it once, but now I was in the shed in the garden from where I could see the smoke from the chimney of my house. I think the chimney was on fire, thick smoke was coming from it, yesterday it would have blown onto the neighbour's washing, but not today, the wind had changed and the washing had gone. It was cloudy. I wasn't worried about the chimney. I was in the garden shed, I hadn't been inside the house for three years. I lived here in the shed in the garden where I came three years ago and no one from the house had ever come to call me for supper.

I had an electric kettle in the shed, I worked it from the light socket. The people in my house, my family that is, paid for the electricity I used, the light socket was connected to their meter, but it was hard to make tea at night. Now I filled the kettle from the hose connection. I was expecting Sammy to call.

Just as the kettle boiled Sammy knocked. I let him in, Sammy was drenched, heavy rain fell outside and his clothes were soaked, I hadn't noticed the rain before, it was like a cloudburst, he came in quickly and I shut the door against the torrential downpour. He took his dripping coat off and I gave him a cup of tea. Sam talked about his pigeons, that's all he ever talks about but he does a lot of it. It whiled away the time.

At three o'clock the undertaker called. When I opened the door to him I saw that the rain had stopped falling out of the grey sky. Now it was snowing, melting into a slush around his feet. He came in. He had come to make the final arrangements about the Undertaker's Convention, they wanted to hire my shed in October as a place to store the demonstration cadavers. I had agreed because they paid me the money in advance and because in July the shed would be demolished. It stood in the path of the new motorway. Hidden under my bed in the corner were a double-barreled shotgun and boxes of ammunition which I had bought with the advance rent from the undertakers. When the motorway builders arrived with their bulldozers and Irishmen to knock my shed down I would barricade myself in and hold them and the police off with the shotgun. There was enough tinned food hidden under the bed for three weeks. When I had held out for three weeks and had no food left I would capitulate and the police would cautiously approach and take me away for questioning. The motorway builders would move on but I had a right to make a stand, didn't I?

Sammy was telling the undertaker about his pigeons. Through the dirty window I could see that the sky was getting lighter, the grey clouds must have been drifting

away. Looking out I saw a figure coming along the path, the door opened and Andrea was framed against a blue sky, haloed by the blazing sun behind her. I was glad to see Andrea, so was Sammy, we introduced her to the undertaker. The undertaker said the weather was very changeable and then Sammy started telling her about his pigeons.

I had given her my seat when she came in and now I sat on the bed not really thinking anything, not really looking anywhere. I realised that I could hear bells ringing, they were familiar bells. It wasn't Sunday, it was the fire brigade. I had been wrong in thinking the chimney was on fire, the whole house was burning down. The fire brigade stood around and looked as if they understood the situation. I thought of telling them about the hidden petrol store but why should I? They were paid to find these things out for themselves.

It was getting dark already so I got up and put the light bulb back in its socket. In the yellow light from the bulb I could see wisps of fog creeping in under the door. The fog had blotted out everything outside the window.

Aldous would be arriving soon.

## Moles

As night fell and the arc lamps were switched on around the perimeter fences, the Commandant of the concentration camp would return to his quarters outside the eastern boundary of the compound. The Commandant was a man who felt himself to be working under stress and usually it would not be long after his civilised dinner and bath that he retired to bed, to a new bottle of cognac and, occasionally, to a new mistress. Sometimes, when he lay suffering from insomnia, his bedroom would fill with the sound of a fairground organ, the source of which seemed to be at a great distance.

When he had first heard the music he was amazed that a fete was being held anywhere in the barren countryside surrounding the camp. Inquiries the next morning confirmed that there was no fair within a hundred kilometres. How could the showmen get travel permits? That night, however, brought the same echoing chords and he began to think that they were hallucinations of an overstretched mind. Worried about the state of his health he began to drink even more heavily and stopped seeing his mistresses entirely.

It was sometime, therefore, before he received a belated confirmation that the sounds in his room had a real existence.

Beneath the surface of the camp lay a secret network of tunnels dug by a group of communists as part of a plan to infiltrate the compound and overthrow the fascist regime inside. Among the communists in these tunnels lived The Human Cannonball, and in a chamber beneath the Commandant's quarters he played his worn records of a fairground organ on a clockwork phonograph. The records reminded him of his years with Moravio's Circus, when,

twice daily, he had shot through the air with all the force of gunpowder behind him. He had been a superman who defied gravity, seeing the mortal crowds below spin against his flying eyes, before he was caught like a butterfly in a giant net and received the wild, jealous applause.

Each night as the Cannonball reminisced in his private reverie and the Commandant twisted in a torment of near insanity, the communists would leave the tunnels by a hidden trapdoor inside the compound and quietly eliminate one of the Nazi guards. Dragging the body underground they would strip it of its uniform, which was donned by a suitably sized communist who then took the guards place above. With the Commandant increasingly drunk and a communist as his second-in-command, the replacements aroused no-one's suspicion, especially since the constant transference of men to the Russian Front made for brief and tenuous friendships amongst the guards.

The communists accepted and were even glad of the presence of The Human Cannonball in their tunnels, in spite of the fact that he did not share their philosophy. In the dark, claustrophobic warrens the flying man was a symbol of the lost sky; he was their totem of ultimate freedom.

Eventually the cold, bright morning came when every Nazi guard had been substituted by a communist surrogate. Now only the Commandant remained to represent the past regime. It happened that on this day, as a change from his normal duties, the Commandant decided to take personal charge of marching the Jews down to the gas chamber. The transference was carried out perfectly, and he felt the new guards had done their job well. The ulcerous sores on what was left of the skeletal, dehumanised inmates showed that the processes of decay had already started before death had claimed their bodies. Gassing was really the only solution to the problem of these stinking anachronisms.

But when the doors had been sealed and the gas turned on, nothing happened. A failure. The Jews were still alive. Reluctantly, in view of the lesser sophistication involved, he had them machine-gunned and then, while a working party of prisoners moved the bodies to the incinerating ovens, he inspected the malfunctioning gas chamber.

Walking around in his immaculately shining jackboots, it took only a very short time to discover that all of the copper piping had been removed. One of the guards must have been responsible, hoping to make an undetected profit by selling it on the black market. The Commandant returned to his office to organise an immediate inquiry.

At the same time as he sat down at his desk the fires in the crematorium were lit to burn the dead Jews.

The pipes which had been laid during the night from the crematorium ovens to the Commandant's office spewed out the burning gases, immolating him where he sat. Later, two of the Jewish prisoners, who had once been interior decorators, removed the cinders of the late Nazi and set about repairing the charred office. From the blistered paintwork of the door they scraped the legend "Commandant" and put in its place in clean, fresh letters "Commissar".

Before nightfall the new Commissar issued his first order. Six of the guards were sent down into the tunnels with orders to search and kill the Human Cannonball. ■

# PLAY. BACK

by  
Granville Hawkins

1

I HAVE HIDDEN the foil square under the carpet. With the Calvs often on patrol I can't be too careful. There were seven patrols in the street this week. The Solidocorder was more difficult but I stuck the spines from a set of biblical commentaries on it and it sits on the bookcase. There are five Calvs out there now, brown smocks moving slowly through the rubble of the Majestic Cinema.

It's nearly sunset. They will be off to church soon. May it fall and crush the bastards!

I have made my room very tidy. There is only the bed against the wall. Opposite it in the other wall the bookcase. The armchair is drawn up to the window. The room is warm from the fire of old wood. There is nothing I need . . .

Darkness comes and I can relax. It is three years since the Division. I catch sight of myself in the mirror. My hair is cropped and ugly, greying at the temples. I have placed a picture of the Colonel next to the mirror and over the bed the text: Pure in Heart is Pure in Race.

Margot. I am halfway to the Recorder before I realise what I am doing. I have tried to ration myself to one playback a week. The disc will not last for ever. It is only two days since the last time. I throw some wood on the fire. Behind the spine of the Gospel Songs is the box with the three discs. One of me, one of the children ringaroses—and one of Margot. They are carefully wrapped in polythene. I take the disc of Margot and read the inscription, All of me for All of you, love/Margot. Tonight I am depressed. I will play both sides.

The dark slot in the Recorder receives it. I uncoil the lead, pull the carpet edge back and press the contacts into their socket on the foil. The carpet falls back. The Recorder

runs only on the batteries I steal along what used to be Hammersmith Broadway. It is much too dangerous to draw power from the sporadic mains supply. I press the *Playback* button.

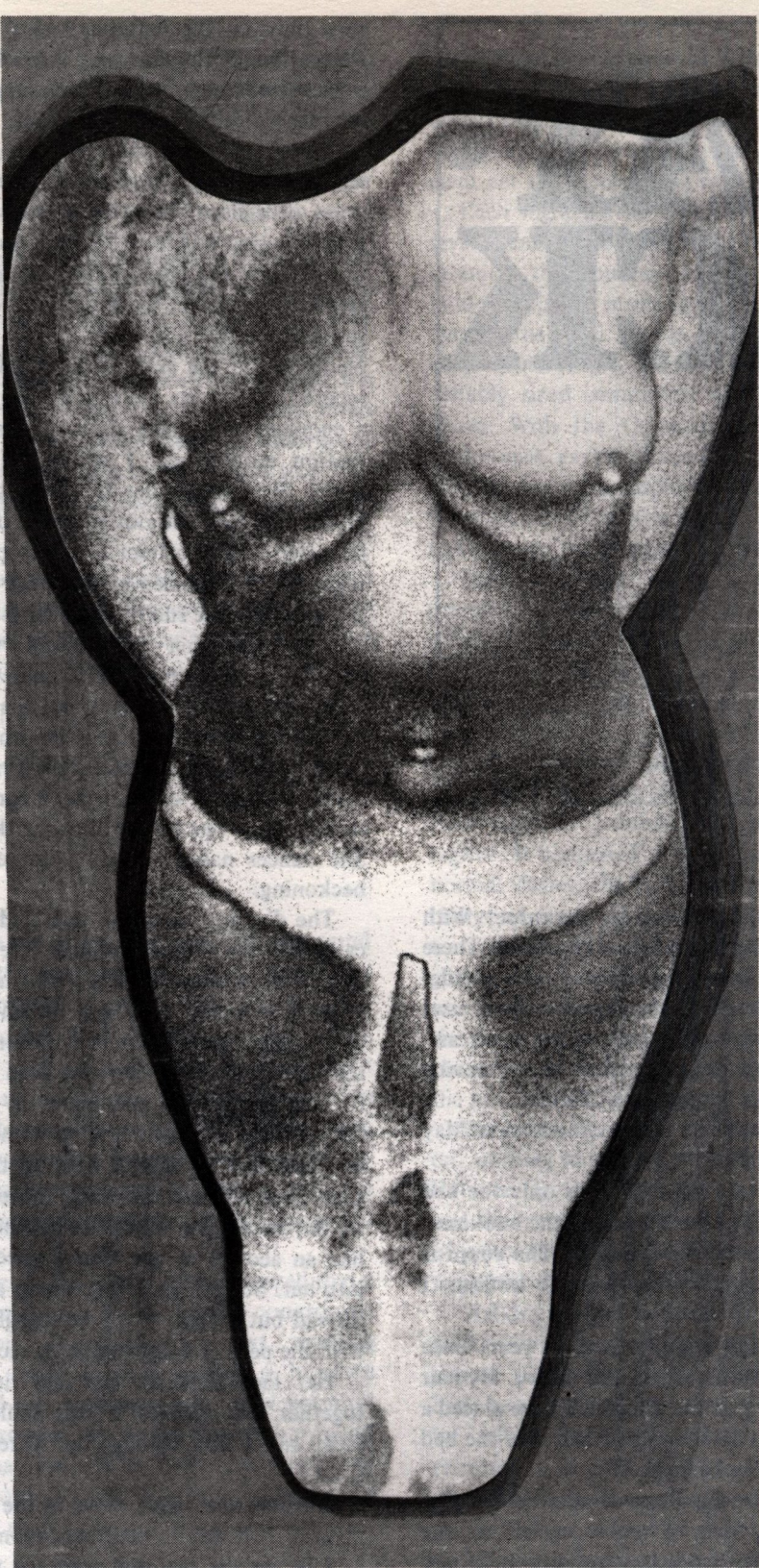
It is always a surprise when she appears. Her hair is long and golden. Her eyes glisten. She winks. Softly the opening notes of a slow blues. Miles Davis. She dances, her short skirt spinning out from the long thighs. Margot. Almost at once I flick the *pause* button. Margot remains statuesque. Her hair, caught in the motion of whirling out, is strangely suspended, like soft wire brush. There are a couple of blemishes on the skin of her cheek. Could be dust on the record. Her breasts are full. I reach out and caress them for a moment and then slide my hand up her tights. The motion arouses me. I switch the Recorder to *playback* again. She swings her hips and begins to unbutton her blouse. Almost without noticing it I undress in step with her. Her breasts attract me. I stop the Recorder again to take the stiff nipples between my teeth and then wanting more let the disc run on until she is caught in the motion of pulling down her lilac briefs. Captured in the half-completed gesture there is something almost grotesque about the half-bent knees and the stylised straightness of her fingers down her legs. I am no longer an explorer in a strange region but a chemist performing for the thousandth time an identical experiment, a confirmatory act. I kiss the unresponsive lips before allowing the playback to continue. She dances naked on my worn carpet and then kneels, beckoning.

The disc ends and she fades and vanishes. I take the disc carefully. My fingers tremble. I reverse it. She fades into view, the music returns. I crawl under her and she smiles down. I will play it straight tonight. I come to her and let the familiar pre-determined movements of her hips do all the work. I close my eyes and then remember that it is time to kiss her breasts and open my eyes and she is tilting forward for me and I bite her. I notice the grey marks on her arms and breasts of wear on the disc but it is time to slide away and she does and I move away so that she can lie on her back. She raises her buttocks from the floor, and like an acolyte at the altar I kneel before her and plunge into her. Sometimes I vary things at this point and kiss her instead but tonight it will be straight and we move together with the perfect synchronism of recorded sex.

Her face tightens. Her legs ride high and we climax together. She relaxes, a soft smile. As the disc ends she fades and I sink through her to rest alone on the dull red floor.

Outside tiny lights move in the darkness. The Calvs are making their way to their bare rooms.

I lie on the bed and wait for the loudhailers to begin their evening propaganda. Time passes. I think of Margot. I wish I had a recording of her talking or sewing or making coffee. My memories of her fade as each month goes past. A crackle of static precedes the voice, soft-selling: Dear friends, god be with you on this bright Thursday. I want to remind you that tonight his loving white arms are open still for you to repent and receive the kingdom of god. Praise him today we have discovered three more of the blasphemy machines. We have stilled a host of brazen images, and those who called them forth, to the everlasting damnation



of their souls, have received the allotted punishment . . .

I shut my mind to the voice. I cannot cleanse it, though, of the sight of the men nailed castrated to the Punishment Boards at the end of the road. I do not know how long I shall escape their fate.

2

**M**MARGOT AND THE kids were killed quite early in the Division. She got between the Calvs and some darkies

they were stringing up. She never could keep her mouth shut. They strung her and kids up as well. Her long hair didn't help. Long hair always was suspect. Anton was six and Ellen was four. Impure kids.

It is two weeks since I have played the Solidocorder because the batteries were run down and I couldn't find any more. I got some this morning. I have spent the day watching the trucks taking the rubble from the cinema over to the Chapel site. I remember the cinema well. We have with orders to search and kill the Human Cannonball



gone back to Cromwell without the Cavaliers . . .

She kneels smiling on the carpet and I plunge between her legs. There are grey streaks on her thighs. I close my eyes and her hips move and it is time to kiss her breasts for the hundredth or thousandth time. She slides away. Is that dullness in the eyes always there? She rolls on her back and I press my face into her and her legs ride high and she smiles at the ceiling as I watch over the tufted pelvis.

I stole some alcohol this morning and I wipe the disc carefully to remove every trace of dust. The bulldozers in the cinema are creating more and more now. It blows in through the rotting sash window. I am listless. My thumb bleeds where I have chewed it.

I live in the aftermath of cowardice. I dwell with the shadow of my wife. She does not age, she does not mature. She wears. She would continue as unswervingly in her lovemaking if I spat in her face, in her climactic smile. I dare not play the other discs. . . . .

### 3

I HAD A visit today. Three Calvs. A girl of about twenty with hair like a dandelion clock with its time blown; two boys about the same age. I gave them coffee. They prayed for my soul. I was scared they would find the Recorder and discs but they just gave me some pious stuff about how great it was the purge was over and the race was pure and even those who were not of the 140,000 should go to chapel. The girl scared me in a way. I don't know whether I could make love to a live woman now. Every motion I make is matched exactly to the rhythm of the recording. To have a live girl in my arms! The thought excites me and terrifies me. Margot, Margot, Margot . . .

The wear is becoming more apparent each time I playback. The eyes are lustreless. They no longer convey even the illusion of interest. Deep bands of colouration are spreading across her body. Alabaster becomes marble. The jazz is undermined by the shuffle of pebbles.

I spend hours staring at the walls or door or at the passing trucks and brown-smocked Calvs in the street below. What was it like when Margot was alive? I cannot truly remember. Maybe then, as now, all the novelty was in my own mind. Perhaps all our kisses were controlled by the track of domesticity. And if so, maybe the disc has encapsulated not a fraction of our sex, but the totality. I pass the evening watching her dance as the stains creep irreversibly over her clothes, her face. She is rough on the right cheek as though sandpapered or beaten with a steak knife and down the left side of her face and neck are the blisters of hot fat. In parts the information left is inadequate to the Recorder's needs. I noticed today a flickering of her right index finger. Her tongue is ashen. The golden hair begins to feel like soap.

### 4

THIS MORNING I went to look at the Calv chapel. It stands by the river, ugly, a shoe box by a trickle of rust. It is chunks of concrete laser-welded together. It is utterly plain, perhaps two hundred feet long by fifty feet wide and high. I am not sure. It is without features in or out. I plucked up courage to go inside. It is lit by bare bulbs

strung on wire down the roof. It is grey. Calvs stood praying, facing the blankness of the end wall. There is not even a chair to break the lines of the building. It is a corridor to nowhere, totally without signposts.

She kneels above me and I squeeze my eyes tight against the sight of her scabbed face. I feel her turn and it is the caress of lizards. My hand on her calf discovers a hole, a huge dry wound. I puke and roll away and lie with my fingers spread on the hessian of the worn carpet, my nostrils full of vomit and lime.

### 5

I THINK I comprehend. Margot was never anything but a tape, a record, a film. I could have changed it if I had known. We improvised a play when we were young and acted the roles we had cast ourselves in through years of marriage.

Margot, I take now your tatters when I will; at last I understand that my persona is no more real than yours, no less eroded. . . . .

### 6

I HAVE BURNED the discs of the children and myself unplayed. The last of the tiny lights has ceased to move in the streets and darkness is close at the window. The Recorder is fresh charged with batteries. I peel the false book spines off its edge and place it carefully in the suitcase. I fold the delicate foil with precise movements. It fits my coat pocket.

Outside, stars form in my mind like crystals. The night air is cold and clean. I dare not smoke lest I betray myself. A single candle burns high up at a window. I pick my way carefully down the cracked tarmac. A chill oblong of light beacons the way.

A long pause while I make certain there is no one at the tall door. I lean round the edge and stare down the vacant lift-shaft of the nave. I tense myself and plunge in. The case is heavy. I run lopsided, footfalls echoing and re-echoing from the walls. My shadow is a leaping daisy on the floor.

I place the case next to the end wall. The foil gashes out a silver square on the dusty concrete as I cast it like a Galilean net. The lid of the case opens. The lead vipers to the foil and embeds its copper fangs. I press the *on* switch and a green tell-tale lights. I slide the disc in for the last time. The volume is already set at maximum.

I stare at the blasphemous altar I have erected through cumulus breath.

*playback!*

I walk backwards up the chapel as the muted trumpet fills the vast place with modal ladders.

She kneels, a goddess of rags, fired in glazes of green, gray, turquoise, scarlet. I retreat from my burnt offering. She begins to turn, and I watch, as I step back towards darkness, the torn arms twine on nothing and the legs ride high . . .

. . . I hear now shouts from the night and the clatter of feet on the flagstones and still I watch and fierce joy is in me as not since she was young in my arms; and the white fingers close on my wrist, my neck, my hair, and it is suddenly an October of brown capes throned with knives . . . ■

FOUR OR FIVE TIMES A DAY THE RECORDED VOICE IS VISIBLE FROM THE TALLER BUILDINGS. 'Oh, don't go there,' twice a day across the road, from police officers investigating infiltrators. The local automatic experimental officers check their instruments sooner or later, each with a telephone and delicate equipment around the neck. They sit close to the measured mast, their life in the limelight, examining a small mechanism. One man inscribes numbers on a ticket of orange steel. On a fine day the men sit on the roof, full of blue, until the spots of rain fall on the toy

sound of the language used by the rest of the world.

TREMENDOUS MONEY IS TRUE LIKE PRESIDENT KENNEDY, magnificent individual, altar joy working at winning belonging. Magically intimate feelings leap forward into happy mouths. Five hundred sporting skills communicate directly. High quality psychology operates on subconscious blocks. Natural people are developed by Arthur Sloan. The hidden eye in the office raises its hand when it wants a drink. The taste of western business says

Extracts from

# babel

by Alan Burns

windmill. The highest roof has three tin cans tied to it, the copper rain inside the cans relays messages by radio. John bursts his parachute and brings it down patiently to his office on the forty-fourth floor. Fourteen times a day he looks at the clouds and he can tell you the time by counting the specks of rain in his eyes. Suspended from a government tower a balloon soars to the other side of the world. (It travels to China and meets problems when it gets there.)

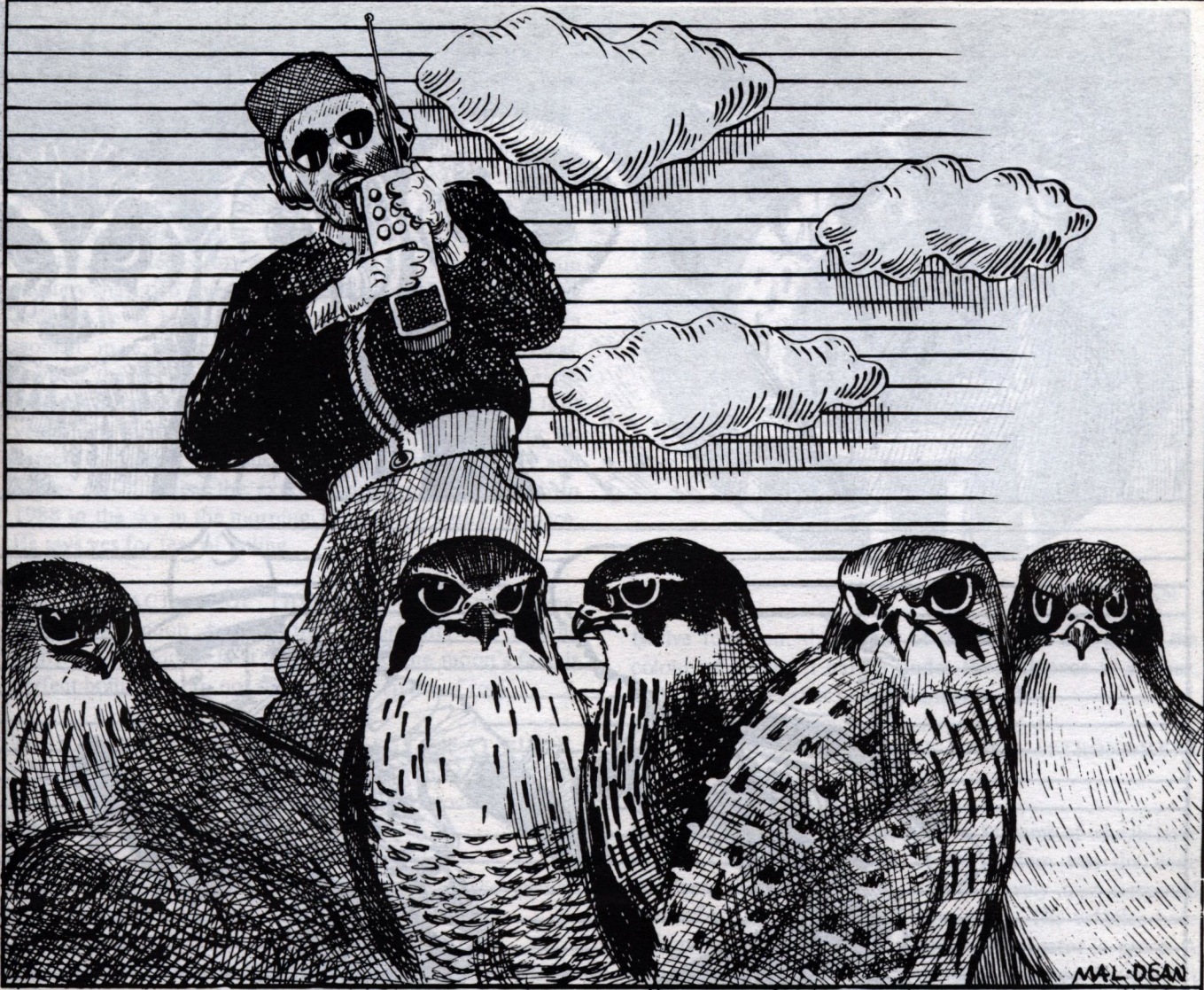
IN WASHINGTON THE NUMBERS OF PIGEONS SAILING ON THE WIND ARE USED FOR INFORMATION, as they whizz round the top of the Capitol. In a way it's scientific. The investigators can calculate the number of lawyers framing alibis and decide whether to prepare a new dossier before lunch (their salad and sausage stands ready behind glass). A computer takes over from the men, personal news is the rare exception of the occasional day, there are devices by which they control it. The computer decides the pressure of the world, it produced future changes, man had ten ways to feed him, the radiosonde was faster than any existing, the mysterious balloon imitated reality for 48 hours. They study the charts in detail, next door rare instruments are used. None of them knows the

yes to the innocent. A million Americans in America alone, enthusiasm for America is planned, American joy, vitamin-rich, protein-based, true.

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AIR FORCE ABOUNDS WITH BOYISH ENTHUSIASM: he makes a special appeal for the young to be transported into the sky. 'We need people able to spell, reliable witnesses of the sound of the ripped off wings.' Thirteen in one night volunteer for the adventure. Roger who is 18 looks into the sky for six hours a day, he reaches for a drink at noon. The Chairman apologises for being late, he thinks his pilots are missionaries, he quotes the names of the Gospels with particular emotion, with no interest in lesser people.

A BOTTLE OF WHISKY IS LOGICAL. The terrified senator tries to alleviate the disillusioned poor. His wife carried a bomb, her hair tied to the handle. Books and papers stop suffering. I think it's shameful to castrate the state attorney.

YOU EAT THE FORMULA. It makes you slim more-or-less-normally. It has an excellent effect on what you don't



eat. The idea is to consume your calorie-intake. Food which swells is known to be good for you: biscuits for instance, and steak. The taste of bread will give a lot of people a comfortable stomach. In 1965 he had two children cooked and tasted, as an experiment, they tasted something like egg. Poached baby is a nice little meal—he is very secretive about the curious cooking process.

FOUR HUNDRED MILES BY MISSILE: FRANCE MUST HAVE HER OWN.

THE PARIS POP SINGER WAS HELD IN PRISON FOR TWO MONTHS, he broke with the cominform, his anti-totalitarian father changed his name and found work with the tourist trade. I wish Cardinal Stalin would die. God resigned from the party, he must have been an atheist at heart. The arithmetic director for three years was a communist, for five years the wrong kind of communist who could not control himself, then for four more he was what the party wants, and then for 13 he contradicted. The Party wants how many more years?

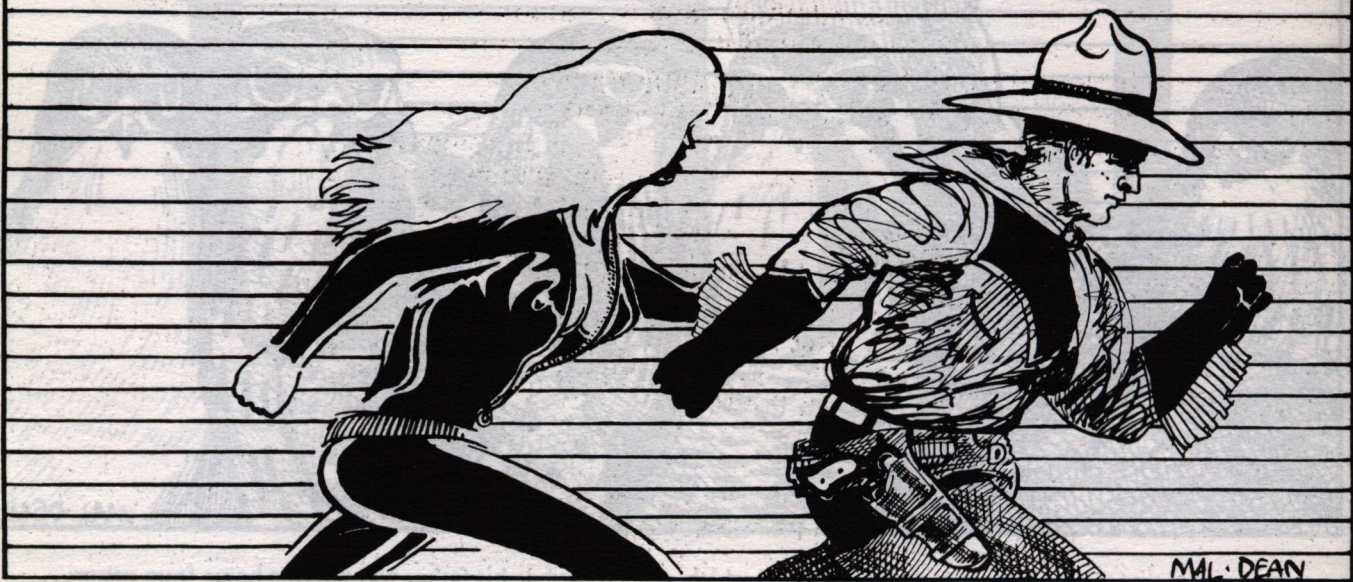
DR ZHIVAGO WAS MURDERED ON THE WAY, the corpse was a foreigner, the governor replied: 'I don't know.' The Doctor's family was abolished, the author lost,

meanwhile his father was walking home from prison.

PRISON IDEOLOGY WAS CLOSE TO HERESY, so he went to extremes of discipline, he was correct, he became an alternative candidate, his boots and papers belonged to the socialist alliance, the party remained in control of the right, the bureaucratic policeman arrested the whizz kid politician, Noël Coward said 'I'm not sure', with a portrait of Marx in his pocket (he had had a better life before the revolution), he had known Germans who were really good, now they could not be found, there were worse things planned for the future, he would become depressed in prison with other anarcho-liberal elements.

THE FRENCH AUTHOR LAID HIS GREY FACE ON THE MARBLE STAIRCASE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S SALON, the successful poet had atomic power, smile of esteem, he had been a communist in Spain, he was asked to explain, politics on vague faces, tributes paid to his face, several thousand dollars, he is being paid by *Life*.

GOERING LAUGHED. He overkilled a second time and became angry. The arithmetic country has no leader. The best-selling radiation meter confuses inner thinking on important issues.



THE OPERATIONS-ANALYST TRIPLE-CHECKED THE ACCURACY OF THE AIR FORCE ACCOUNTANT, the New York government got on the hot line to Iceland, Russian space material was responsible for the attack on Rhode Island, the President wiped out North Carolina, the area office rejected the suggestion, action delayed from 9 a.m. till 11.30 p.m. then prolonged indefinitely, ten colleagues lost face, lectured on the destruction of peace, they would provide a clean war in place of dirty peace. The lesson of the bomb was to kill the President, press all his buttons even if this meant his hands were raised and his reputation lowered. The importance of planning five years ago against Chinese policy: publicity changed the approach to hydrogen bombs, a softer sell to improve the image. Alarmed by graphs he refuted thinking, he believed discussion created personality differences which would not arise on an uninhabited planet.

IN HIS CELLAR THE RICH ALCOHOLIC ATTEMPTED TO REBUILD SOCIETY. His consultants corresponded with government officials in each case and concluded that the H-bomb would not be a catastrophe for the chiefs of staff. A system of H-bombs attached to boot straps would restore a nation's dynamism, a rigidly programmed com-

puter might emerge as a great power, Russia would lose her credibility, German humans would be used as slaves, Kennedy would withdraw from the United States, the world would decline into crazy history.

A DOT ON A GRAPH IS HAPPENING.

THE STRANGEST THING IN THE SKY JUST NOW IS THE STARS. Possibly visible as faint blue stars they are precise in the sky.

AROUND THE EARTH THE PLANETS, each marked the state of the modern scratch-signs in the sand. After twenty two days the Pope will descend from the why. He said that getting and fitting the crown would be a major task, his voice faltered, one of his girls appeared, he was very sorry, but he had had a good year, he did not want to be singled out, it was a team job, he was superbly back by society (although he wore a Party badge, he was not and never had been a member).

THE CONE  
electricity  
simultaneity  
inter-galactic intelligibility (so many eyes)

Bobby Baker  
Baby Boko

research which leaves intact  
the attack on lives

GOOD BOYS DISCOVER NEW CONTINENTS. The blue steel nut shell starts calmly. Ten machines tell a good story. The dangerous trap is a slight misfortune. The craft runs away from earth. The volunteer for a few minutes pretends the pressure is greater. Astronomy makes him stagger slightly, he needs oxygen between the stars. The sun mystery has two eyes, green and blue, this bright thing because he is happy has the silent beautiful body of a woman in a newspaper, he looks at her, defenceless. Beyond the air is something else too far away from earth where it becomes impossible to hide, his feet in ice for four years. The distant human watches his health intently, to detect the moon anxiously asking questions. Gods and heroes die in space, the explorer does not think of it. In 1988 in the sky in the morning, his eyes on a stick in space. He says yes for fear of failing.

THE ATTRACTION OF THE MOON is 150 miles long, streams of moon provide the opportunity for seismic activity, the moon's heat is enormous, the moon's face is perfect boiling water, no, the moon is replica of rock.

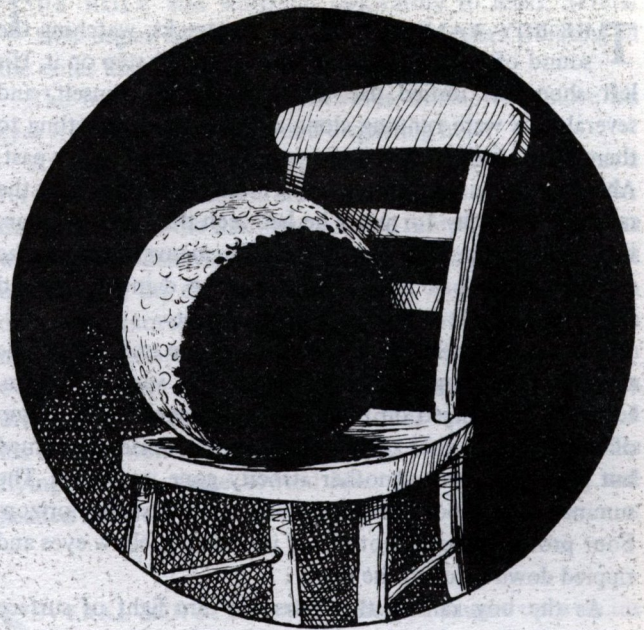
THEY WANTED TO STRAP HIS LEGS AS AT BIRTH, minute jolts and gleams delivered into blue space like surprised eyes heavy with gold and dollars knocking around for years.

THE BRILLIANT SCIENTIST from the space agency scrapes eggs from the skin.

MINUTE BY MINUTE, THE TECHNICAL FACES LOOK AT HIM.

LOOKED FOR HIS LEADERS. NO REPLY, NO REASON. Stars became mysterious chandeliers above dark members of an unfriendly family. After the burnt frenzy in the area that separated the narrow room from the back of the craft he had no doubt. The transformer was burnt out, and that statement was made from comprehension that his craft was a room without its own plant. That did matter. That was where the deficiency lay, the only part of the story that was not news. The young scientist excused the reporters who did no work, all had made the prophecy of failure, to ignore them was to fall from a tower into a trap. The absurd words meant simple death. A piece of steel was folded into the curved roof. In that, a minor error was made: it did not fit. The violent pattern of green disappointed and fatigued, and in the end the yellow and green edge caused disaster. The news was not a hoax, the flies buzzed in and out with sadness. The trip was definitely on and would go on. The barbaric and religious photograph of the President became the true goal. The group died at the stroke of prestige absurd against a wall. The yellow colour of successful dust meant nothing.

HIS MOTHER SPOKE ITALIAN. She had five pieces of bread. The time was the end of the month. Pieces of evil outdoors, inhuman beings in stainless steel polished by the



MAL DEAN

twelve foot sun, the colour of the sun was dull green, the colour of common nature under the influence of science, and don't forget that nobody understands.

FIX THE POSITION OF THE RADIO ASTRONOMERS MORE PRECISELY.

MEN ARE OPENING THE MOON. Streams of wheels have springs of space. The rim of the system was the wide discovery of unintelligent activity. Lovely men remained untouched by many winds from space. His vehicles have enormous wheels. Individual effort evaporates in space. A million years of rain reflect the skill of space. His perfect skin will be water-cooled, his undergarments bear the marks of convulsive birth, advantage can be taken of his need to stay cool. Inside, the lesson is learnt without expression. There is no gloom. The white kitchen defines the cotton contemplating man as cool as cotton. Like a plump young girl it is possible to make everything up. The cream silk conversation lies on the surface, the mind totally engages the calm tragedy, the mind turns pages, there are flowers at the limits of comprehension, gauge the outlines once again, again the complications have always been calm, it was even the family drabness in the plain landscape, the face of decay, fragmented intellect, the American failure is no surprise, in his mind the personal death is fifty years ago, his brother dead, he has no urgency, his habit is gone, five years past he had nowhere to go, now he is left, man as man.

THE PERFECT WREATHS GIVE INTENSE SATISFACTION. Stomachs take risks with highly intelligent champagne. Inspired by space, he received a medal for working for the sons of the rich. Like the gladiators he risked his blood, and throbbing spectators expect their sons to follow him.

AS LONG AS HE STAYS IN HIS CHAIR, happy in the clutches of the air, to risk his life twice. (You rarely find people on the moon.) ■

# between the tracks

ron padgett  
& tom veitch

**T**HE BOY WALKED between the tracks, watching the sound of his feet, making sure he didn't step on it. His left shoe was untied. He was whistling to himself, and several ants were running along ahead of him, whistling to themselves, feelers vibrating in the notes that sailed past. Ahead lay a tin can, surrendering itself to the grime of the railroad, everyday for years he had seen this particular can, watched it flop about in effortless maneuvers among the ties of the railroad tracks. He took two dainty steps and kicked the can. It exploded, killing his foot.

A few minutes later he was following the trail of his shoe as it jogged along in front of him and vaulted over a turnstile. He banged on the darkened shoe with the stump of his expensive foot. From within, the monitors hummed but gave no answer. Another atrocity gone unnoticed. The summer night shook itself and stood up against the horizon. Four prongs of light shot out of its radiant yellow eyes and rippled down through the sky. . . .

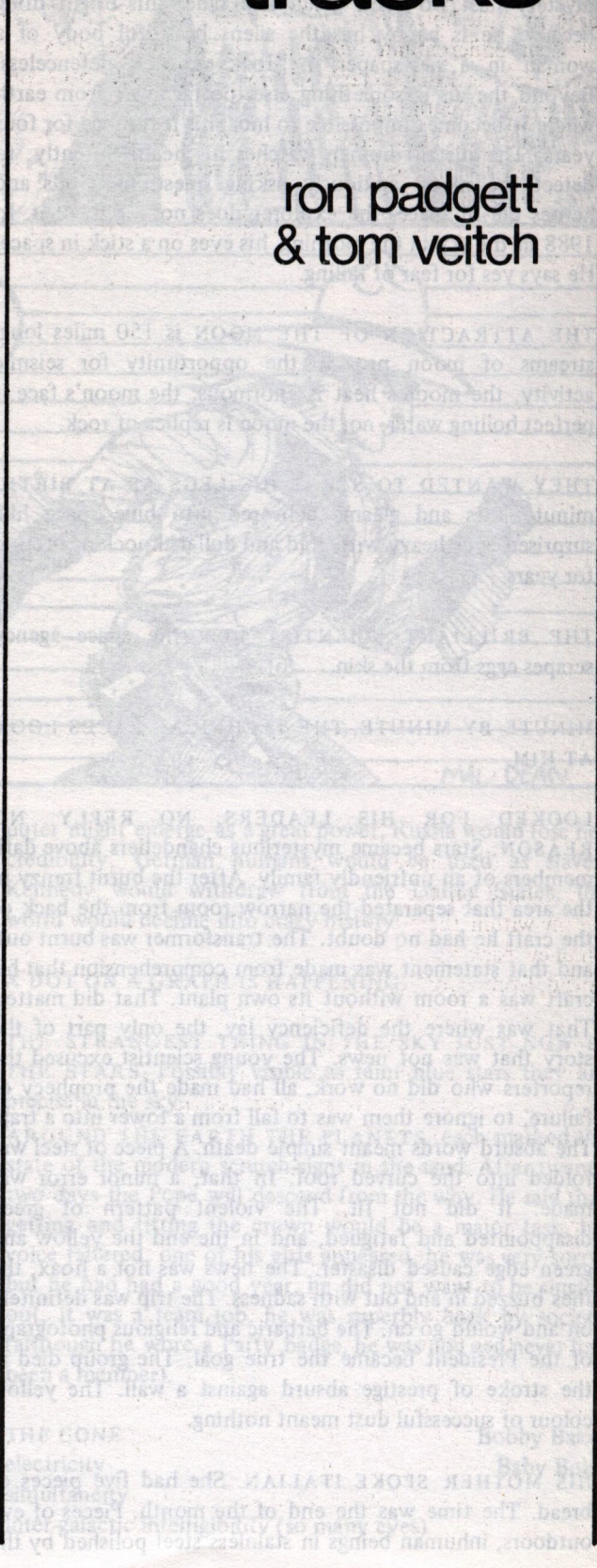
As the boy ran up the stairs the dim light of surface tension broke and he found himself catching his breath and gasping for breath. Large quantities of air poured into the stairwell, and large portions of dim light, distant, afraid, unmoved. . . . The light shook and the air gathered in the corners of the stairs. A fog-substance stained the boy's face, split his lips, cracked his whistle, made him forget to squint as he surfaced in the day. Behind the sky giant searchlights roamed, casting baleful glances over the grey heaps of the city. . . . A clean blue cloud floated just overhead, and upon the cloud rested a white sheet, fluttering strands of cotton, a darkened face formed in this cloud, the face of his mother. . . .

The boy walked backwards into the gathering crowds. The beautiful people had arrived, their feelers vibrating in the light of the searchlights. An astonishing and disgusting hole disgorged its ants into the traffic of bodies, some clothed, some unclothed, some swallowing and dancing to the rhythms of slime, some following the motions of the stars, the enormous stars that reeled and panicked in the grey mother sky. . . . The tides moved in among the heaps, depositing their load of fish and the boy walked backwards again, looking and waiting. . . .

In the largest heap a tiny hole formed. Air came out of it.

Several minutes later he watched his mother waving goodbye to the beautiful people as they climbed under the heaps. Fourteen fifteen sixteen . . . almost three hundred of these disgusting manifestations were seen to slip into the dust . . . all under the watchful illumination of the sky-lamps. . . .

Now the boy ran up the stairs into the dim heaps of surface tension that lay naked and breathing along the shores of the rim-world. Some cataclysm clicked under the blanket of his mind. He looked hopelessly at the dangling veins and nerve-ends of his foot. His mother wafted by, waving goodbye. The chord of her vacuum cleaner was loud and pure, it sundered the grey haze and broke the day open under the cavernous cloud formations. The boy squinted into the strange light of the sky. One by one the eyes of the twelve moons of Saturn gushed and rained water over the



circular heaps. From the spot where he was hiding, the people could not see him. But he could see them. They were engaged in curious parleys along the rim of the crater. The ocean embedded itself in his heart. An enormous swallowing merchant paraded before his eyes, cold eyes squinting at the darkening horizon. . . .

HE BROKE INTO A JOG and circled the spot where they were hiding. He took his mother's hand and led her back into the hole. He carried her into the cave-like kitchen of their underground hideaway. He set her gently as he could on the kitchen table. "Now I will lay her back and slough it in," he thought.

"Goodbye," she said, waving to him as her body descended the size-scale until it was a most minute speck on the sheen of the table.

"Goodbye, mother," he said, dragging out the cord of his heart and plugging it into a wall socket. At that very moment, above his head, the grey heaps began to buzz and glow with a light of glorious and intense blue.

THE BOY WALKED between the tracks, watching the ground carefully to make sure he didn't step on it. He was whistling the soundtrack of an old movie, four part harmony, 101 strings, etc. Ahead he saw a tin can lying ahead of him, slightly behind him. He took two or three dainty little steps before his leg swept upward and the shoe flew off his foot and up in front of his nose and then it fell and lay on the ground.

A few minutes later he passed the shoe without looking at it. It glowed radiant blue in the tunnel and it gave off a soft buzz. A moment later he was swinging up onto the station platform. There he scrambled to his feet and batted the dust off his shirt.

Cough.

He broke into a jog and vaulted over the turnstile and took a few scraping steps over to the token vendor's booth. He banged on the darkened window with his money, but from within there was no answer. He laughed and put the money back in his pocket and laughed again, shaking his head, from which a handful of dust fell. Cough.

Now the boy ran up the stairs into the dim light of the surface tension that marked the boundary between the upper and lower worlds. Near the top of the stairs and light grew more intense, but remained somehow dim, distant, a fog substance staining his face, illuminated from behind by giant moving searchlights. He squinted. Everywhere around him were the heaps, all taller than his head. The same grey heaps. Overhead a clean sheet of blue amazing sky fluttered, crossed by flying strands of white, on which a woman was resting.

His feet came to the edge of a heap. He had never gone any further than this heap, and now, as he nudged it with his toe, it was with the unformulated wish that the pile would move ahead so he could move ahead with it.

In the heap a small hole formed. Air came out of it.

"Watch what you're doing, sonny."

The startled boy reeled back and stared with protruding eyes at this new abomination.

THE HOLE was whistling awkwardly to itself. Several ants began to climb out of it, their feelers vibrating in the notes that sailed past.

The boy walked away backwards, unable to remove his eyes from this astonishing and disgusting hole.

After what seemed a very long time, and in fact was a very long time, he found himself in a great open space, like the sky does in the morning. Around him the grey dust was whirling and dancing to the rhythms of spring, the motions of the stars, the enormous swallowing of the tides and the downward movements of the rushing waters of the twelve moons of Saturn. The boy felt his feet skim along unseen over the surface of the ground. He was moving. The sun was diving, like a great dying swan, into the horizon. He wished his mother were here, because he was afraid of the darkness flying through space toward him. He turned around and headed home.

SEVERAL MINUTES LATER he had caught up with his breath, which had run on ahead. In front of him perhaps two hundred yards there were people moving about among the heaps. People dressed in strange clothes. People dressed in no clothes. People dressed in some clothes. All carrying miniature musical instruments. There were about two hundred of them, the sound of their laughter rolling over the landscape. They circled the spot where he was hiding. But they did not see him.

Goodbye, they said, waving behind them. He saw that they were waving to his mother, who was standing in the subway entrance, wiping her hands on her apron. Goodbye.

"Goodbye!" she cried above the noise of a vacuum cleaner moving along behind the beautiful people.

"Goodbye!" it answered, dragging its cord and plug behind it in the dust.

The boy walked between the tracks, watching the ground to make sure he didn't step between the tracks. He was whistling the soundtrack of an old movie to himself. Ahead he saw a tin can lying ahead of him. It was lying between the tracks, caved in and twisted and burned black with the heat of the Martian summer. The boy timed his steps so that he would arrive at the can just as his foot kicked out smoothly and his shoe went flying down the track. Twelve . . . thirteen . . . fourteen— He kicked savagely and adroitly.

A few minutes later he passed his shoe without looking at it. It glowed radiant blue in the darkness of the tunnel. A moment afterwards he came abreast of the station platform and lifted himself deftly onto the station platform. Then he scrambled to his feet and batted the dust off his shirt.

As he walked across the platform he broke into a jog and then ran a few steps before he leaped over the ancient turnstile. He peered through the window of the token vendor's booth. It was too dark to see anything inside.

Now the boy ran up the stairs into the dim light of the surface world. Near the top of the stairs the light grew more intense, but remained somehow dim, distant, a fog-substance staining his face, illuminated from behind by giant searchlights. He squinted and looked at the world around him. A world of rubble, fallen buildings, deserted automobiles. Overhead a clean sheet of amazing blue sky



stretched ragged strands of white clouds across its naked woman—the city dead and dismembered on a rock.

Finally he came to the end of a pile. He had never gone any further than this pile, and now, as he nudged it with his toe, it was with the unspoken wish that the pile would

move ahead so he could move ahead with it.

In the pile a small hole formed. Air came out of it.

“Watch what you’re doing, sonny.”

The startled boy reeled back and stared with protruding eyes at this new abomination.



rubble. Finally, at the top, he squinted about, getting his directions.

Everywhere around him were the heaps, all taller than his head (9 inches). All kinds of things were in these heaps and they were all the same grey. Overhead was a clean sheet of bright amazing blue, across which strands of white were flying.

Finally he came to the end of a pile. He had never gone any further than this pile, and now, as he nudged it with his toe, it was with the unspoken wish that the pile would move ahead so he could move ahead with it.

In the pile a small hole formed. Air came out of it.

"Watch what you are doing, sonny."

The startled boy reeled back and stared at this abomination.

**A**FTER WHAT SEEMED like a very long time he found himself in a great open space, like the sky. Around him the grey dust was swirling quietly just above the ground, where his feet skimmed along unseen.

The sound of his own laughter startled him—the sun was diving toward the horizon and he wished his mother were here because he was afraid of the darkness flying through space toward him. He turned his back on it and headed for home.

He had been walking quickly for several minutes when he stopped and caught his breath. There were people up ahead of him. People dressed in strange clothes. People dressed in no clothes. People dressed in some clothes. There were three hundred of them, and the sound of their laughter flooded the landscape. They approached the spot where he was hiding, behind a heap.

Where did these people come from? Twice a year people came to talk with his mother, but these were different. They were shaped differently, they walked with an easy grace. He felt attracted to them.

Suddenly they were there, walking past him just a few feet from where he was hidden. Their faces were close up and large. His heart thudded wildly. They were beautiful! They were the most beautiful people he had ever seen! Some of their beautiful eyes came to rest on him, then moved away, uninterested.

Goodbye.

At last he stood up and watched them disappear into the darkness. Then, as if a light had been switched on in his head, he began to run, stumbling over the heaps that suddenly loomed before him. He ran until he was out of breath and then he ran some more, until at last he saw the dim glow of the entrance to the stairway. Skipping and sliding down the stairs, he took a running jump on the turnstile and leaped over it and down onto the tracks, where his shoe lay in the distance.

A smile spread across his face.

**T**HE BOY WALKED along the tracks, watching the ground to make sure he didn't step between the ties. He was whistling awkwardly to himself. He saw a tin can lying ahead. It was caved in and twisted and burned black. He timed his steps carefully, slowing his pace a bit so he wouldn't miss. When he came up to the can he kicked out

**T**HE HOLE was whistling awkwardly to itself. Several ants began to climb out of it. The boy wondered.

After what seemed like a very long time he found himself in a great open space, like the sky. Around him the grey dust was whirling and dancing to the rhythms of spring, the motions of the stars, the enormous swallowing of the tides and the downward movements of the rushing waters of the twelve moons of Saturn. The boy felt his feet skim along unseen over the surface of the ground. Then the sound of his own laughter startled him. The sun was diving toward the horizon. He wished his mother was here, because he was afraid of the darkness flying through space toward him. He turned around and headed for home.

**S**EVERAL MINUTES LATER he stopped and caught his breath. There were people up ahead, playing among the fallen buildings. People dressed in strange clothes. Naked people. People half dressed, carrying musical instruments. There were about three hundred of them, and the sound of their laughter flooded the landscape. They circled the spot where he was hiding. But they did not see him.

Goodbye they said, waving behind them. He saw that they were waving to his mother, who was standing by the subway entrance, wiping her hands on her apron. Goodbye.

At last he stood up and watched the people disappear into the darkness. Then, as if a light had been switched on in his head, he began to run, toward the place where his mother was, tears glistening on her aging careworn face. . . .

Mother?! he shouted in the soundless vacuum. Mother! A smile spread across his face as he saw her look towards him, brush back the last tear as it kersplashed against her napkin. . . . He saw her take out her blaster and aim carefully in his direction. No he said, no no no, it's me and he kept running, because his feet would not let him stop and he ran right up to her and hugged her and she crumbled in his embrace, smiling as she turned to dust and igniting the blaster with one last crumbling finger. . . .

**T**HE BOY WALKED along the tracks, watching the ground to make sure he didn't step between the ties. He was whistling to himself. He saw a tin can lying ahead. It was caved in and twisted and burned black. He timed his steps carefully, slowing his pace a bit so he wouldn't miss. When he came to the can he kicked out smoothly and his shoe went flying down the track.

He passed the shoe without looking at it. When he came abreast of the platform he raised himself up onto it deftly, in two movements. He scrambled to his feet and batted the dust off his shirt.

As he walked across the platform he broke into a jog and then ran a few steps to leap over the turnstile. He peered through the window of the token vendor's booth, but it was too dark to see anything inside. To his left the stairway gave off a dim light.

Near the top of the stairs the sunlight shone brighter and brighter. He closed his eyes awhile, stumbling over the usual

smoothly, and the can went rattling down the track.

He passed the can again without looking at it. He was nearing the platform. When he came abreast of the platform he raised himself up onto it deftly, in one movement. He scrambled to his feet and wiped the dust off his clothes. His mother didn't like him to get his clothes dirty. She always became furious when she found the marks of the black dust which lay around the station on his clothes.

He walked across the platform, began to jog, and then running a few steps he jumped neatly over the turnstiles. He paused momentarily as he passed the old token vendor's booth. He peered through the broken window of the booth, but it was too dark to see anything inside. He walked away from the booth and then walked faster along the passage-way to the left. He could see the stairway dimly at the end of the passage.

At last he came to the stairway. Sunlight was pouring down it into the end of the passage. He closed his eyes awhile in order to let them get used to the strong light. He felt himself grow a little dizzy, but then he was all right and he opened his eyes again. He started up the stairs, clambering over the rubble that covered them. Finally he was at the top, and he looked around.

Everywhere, for miles around him, there were great heaps and chunks of broken stone, taller than his head. Some of the heaps were four or five times bigger than he was, and in the distance he could see some immense ones, almost mountains. Most of the heaps and chunks were brown and grey or sometimes red, and pieces of wood and great twisted lengths of metal stuck out of them everywhere. And everywhere around these heaps, which were hundreds, even thousands of feet long, there were narrow stretches of flat ground, and the ground was covered with fine grey dust and rubble.

His mother had told him it was dangerous to come up here, but he sometimes came anyway, just to look. He squinted his eyes now and looked up at the sky. It was blue, the brightest blue he had ever seen, and high thin clouds were sprayed about the sun. He stood gazing up at the sky for a long time until he felt himself getting dizzy again, and he had to close his eyes and look at the ground.

Then he began to walk along beside the pile nearest the stairs, making sure he didn't trip over anything. He walked for some time, looking to see if he could find anything interesting in the trash that lay about in the dust. The light glinted at him from the ground and he stooped and picked something up. It was a flat shiny object, quite smooth and round. He saw another and picked that up. And then another, and another. Soon he had a large handful of these objects. Some of them were bent, and others had traces of designs on them. He fingered them for awhile and then put them in his pocket. He looked around some more and then started walking again, kicking the small rubble about carelessly, and stepping around the bigger stuff.

He came to the end of the pile. A short distance beyond, another heap began, but he had never gone beyond this point. He stood there for awhile, looking about, and then he turned and started off along the space that lay between the two piles. Unlike the flat stretch he had just left, this one seemed quite straight and long, and it was marked out by regular heaps of stone on either side. It was a bit wider

than the other also.

AFTER WHAT SEEMED like a very long time to him he found himself in a great open space. Stumps of trees and broken trunks lay about everywhere. He went up to one of these and touched it gingerly with his hand. The dust spewed under his touch and spilled to the ground. He felt the strange rough surface of the bark against his fingers. It too crumbled beneath his hand.

He walked over to an old stump and looked at it a minute. He struck out with his foot at it and a great cloud of the grey dry dust came up in his face. He put his hands to his eyes and rubbed them. When the dust had settled he took them away. The trunk was gone. He laughed aloud to himself.

The sound of his laughter startled him. He looked around at where he was, and he felt a nervous desire to be back with his mother. The sun was very low now, and the light was not so extreme. He began to walk hurriedly back in the direction he had come.

He must have been walking for several minutes, when something he saw made him stop short and draw in his breath. There were people up ahead of him. People dressed in strange clothes. He hid behind a very large stone that he found himself standing near and peered out carefully. There were three of them, and one of them was carrying a strange box. They were coming towards the spot where he was hiding.

Where did these people come from? He had known that there still were others. He had even seen them sometimes. Twice a year a group of them came to talk with his mother. But never had he seen people like these. They were shaped differently, they walked differently. He felt strangely attracted to them.

They drew nearer, and the boy pulled himself well in behind the rock. His whole body was shaking with fright and anticipation. They were making no sound. Only the crunch of their footsteps came to him, growing louder. He began to whimper and then forced himself to stop.

Suddenly they were there, walking past him a few feet from where he was hidden. He caught a sudden glimpse of their faces and his heart leaped. They were beautiful! They were the most beautiful people he had ever seen. He felt his fear subside, and he watched them walking away from him, watched them until they had disappeared into the distance.

At last he climbed back into the open space and started to run in the direction from which the people had come. He ran blindly, paying little heed to what lay in his path. He jumped over some obstacles and tripped over others. The air was cooler up here, and he liked the feel of it against his face. He ran until he was out of breath, and then he walked. And when he felt rested he ran some more, until finally he reached the stairs.

He bounded down the stairs and along the passage. He ran swiftly by the token vendor's booth and vaulted the turnstiles easily. He ran across the platform and leaped down to the tracks. Then he turned and ran along the tracks, into the darkness of the tunnel, his eyes adjusting quickly to the lack of light. For a long time he ran along between the tracks. ■

—*Douanier Rousseau  
painted the jungle in  
the Paris botanical gardens*

# Alan Passes:

**T**HERE was no one at the gate so I walked on in. The park spread out before me flat as a napkin and flower-full. By the entrance, in a bush, away from any hint of railing, an empty chair stood beside a fountain. The water fell cool and silver in the bright light of the fine afternoon. Seeing it, I stopped and let all city noises cease in my head.

I was very tempted to sit and rest for a while: I love to watch fountains; in the heat it's twice as nice. But as I was eager to press on I finally decided against it; and contented myself instead with a drink of fountain water from a tin cup on the end of a rusty chain, provided for the purpose. Then, refreshed, I continued in my way.

I crossed the lawn with resolution, taking in the lie of the land as I went: At the far end of the park, a statue of a general on a horse on a column, rising black and stiff above clusters of leaves that dipped like gentle hands. To my right, a long line of thin trees with clipped branches shrilling in the breeze, soft and sad as eunuchs. Above and around me, an immensity of calm blue sky, sunless, cloudless, and a solitary pigeon wheeling silently through it. There was no one about. Not even a dog. All was still as a stone and peaceful.

At length I left the lawn (with some regret I might say, for I enjoy the smell and feel of walking on grass, even vulgar, cropped park grass) and was just making my way down the path to the pond when I heard a scream.

I pushed through the bushes and flowers to my left—for that was where the sound had come from—and saw a lion licking his lips. Stains glistened bright and red in his dull sand mane and he had his eyes shut. It was apparent that he had just brought down a young girl for he was chewing on her head; from what remained of it, I could see she had been blonde and pretty. For a very short moment I was panic-stricken at the thought that this might be, or rather, might have been, Jayne. But then the lion suddenly growled

# SPLOOR

in annoyance, sucked hard between his teeth, pursed his lips, and spat out a blue eye. It fell to the ground, rolled over and lay, bouncing slower and slower until still, at my feet. I was relieved. Jayne had green eyes; large and almond, with hazel flecks. Beautiful . . .

A large pink tear slid smoothly out of the corner of the eye, swelled and spread into a large puddle. The eye slipped down into it, floated across, and when it reached the other side, looked up beseechingly at me. But I didn't do anything. This had nothing to do with me. So I wandered

crawled onto the bank. It approached the boy from behind and pounced. It caught the boy by the leg. He screamed (which, it should be said in passing, was a very normal and acceptable reaction). The alligator dragged him off his tricycle, yelling and struggling, across the bank and into the pond. It dived under. There was a final scream. A gurgle. The water hissed and bubbled, slowly turning pink. Within seconds the pond was as thickly red as a bullfighter's cape. Only stiller.

I could have shouted out. I could have run forward and



off again.

**S**HIELDING my eyes with my hand, scanning the horizon, asking myself as I walked, Where is she? Where is Jayne? Where o where o where can she be? But I could still find no trace of her. Not a sign or clue; not a footprint in the rotting leaves, a broken twig on the path, a snapped branch in a bush.

After some time, I arrived at the Roundpond. A small boy was playing on the bank, a small fat boy with a blue cap on his head, pedalling wildly around in circles on a tricycle and blowing a tin bugle. In a nearby deckchair a woman slept peacefully—his mother or his nanny—her mouth wide agape, her feet propped up in front of her and covered with a tartan plaid, her head resting on the pale canvas backing, on the black-stamped seal, PROPERTY OF ROYAL PARKS

I was about to go up to the boy and ask him if he'd seen Jayne (I decided to ask him rather than the woman not because I didn't want to disturb her sleep—I would have had no qualms waking her for such an important reason—but because little boys are usually more observant, direct and truthful than mothers or nannies) when, suddenly, an alligator broke the surface of the pond, slithered out and

waved my arms in warning. I could, perhaps, have run forward and fought off the alligator with the heel of my shoe. Or grabbed the boy by his free leg and tugged one way while the alligator tugged the other.

But I didn't.

All was now very quiet. The woman heard the silence and woke with a start. She saw the tricycle lying on its side with the front wheel slowly, lazily spinning in the air; the tin bugle broken in two. She saw the blood stains on the bank and she saw the pond, flat and still and restiff with the little blue cap floating upside down in the middle of it. And she understood immediately: she raised her hands above her head and opened her mouth. Showing a swollen tongue, she screamed a silent scream. She choked, brought her hands to her face. She clawed her eyes and screamed again, *Ahhhhhhhhhh!* A flock of pigeons flew off in fright, winging high in the sky. The woman jerked herself out of the deckchair and ran towards the pond. But before she could get there—before she had gone but two or three paces, before she had time to utter but the first gasps and sounds of her second scream (or third, if the silent one is to be counted as valid, and first, therefore, in order)—a band of pigmy hunters had swooped down on a single liana from a tall tree, scooped her up, then swung high and away again. In a flash, they were gone.

as a single BIM or BOM or even BOOM for variation, suddenly stopped altogether. I crouched down and advanced on all fours.

Through a break in a primrose patch I saw the pigmy camp with a fire burning in the middle of it. The women sat huddled together around its warmth, smoking pipes, picking their noses and having spitting matches. The men lay in heaps, naked, and drunk from jungle wine and rootjuice. Others patrolled the park gates which were now shut and padlocked; they marched to and fro carrying raffia shields and bamboo spears and wooden clubs over their shoulders. Stern, vicious, and proud—oblivious to roaring traffic and the Cars roaming in packs outside the gates.

A rapid but knowledgeable look around the camp informed me that Jayne wasn't there. My heart sank a little at this, but, considering the less I had to do with the pigmies the better, I regained some sort of feeling of hope and, crawling backwards, stealthily, cautiously, left the camp site.

WHEN I was at a safe distance I had a palaver with myself. I stated the obvious: It would soon be blacknight. The wild animals and other beasts would start their nocturnal prowlings—already I could hear them beginning to sniff and slip through the undergrowth about me, singly and in groups, ravenous and cruel, whining and fretting and calling out to one another back and forth in the deepening dusk. Not much longer, and the park and the paths and the darkness would be all theirs until morning. It was getting colder. I was growing more hungry and tired, especially tired, by the moment. I asked myself the following, Where the hell is Jayne? Is she all right? I considered all aspects of the problem, weighed the pros and cons, and reached the following decision: Settle down and forget Jayne for the night.

So I made my way to a site I knew which abounded in benches. There was sure to be a free, an empty one for me, I thought. I was out of luck, however, when I got there. There was only one bench in the whole place, and it was occupied by a huge gorilla. Fornicating with a young girl. My heart missed a beat when I saw this. I smiled bitterly to myself and walked a few steps nearer. Even in the halfflight I could make out the form, the silhouette, the presence of Jayne. I gasped. The loving couple ceased bucking. Jayne, I gasped again.

The gorilla half raised itself, turned its head towards me and grunted gravely, Jayne? You want? Me give!

No, you go right ahead, I said as politely as I could, You were here first. And I smiled modestly, evasively; you never know with gorillas. I'll wait, I said, finally.

I SAT down on the grass with my back to them both. Where are all the other benches? Gone for campfire wood. I expect. The gorilla and Jayne resumed their coming and going. The night was full of roars and yelps. It was cold. I sighed. I yawned. I was tired. But I had found Jayne; I could rest now. So I turned up the collar of my jacket, stuffed my thumbs in my ears to kill the night noises, switched off the moon, and lay down. And waited. ■

ALL was quiet and still once more, and I meditated for a short while on the silent beauty of the scene, became quite moved by it in fact, before remembering with a sudden shock about Jayne. I must resume my search for her!

After placing the little boy's tricycle upright on the ground (the front wheel had by now stopped rotating) I mounted it and rode off. I noticed with pleasure the little chrome-metal bell on one of the handlebars and I rang it as I went along, calling out for Jayne as I did so. The combination of the two together, plus the soft breeze tugging at my hair, was not unpleasant. *RingRing!* I went. *Jayne!* I shouted, JAYAYNE!

*RingRing Jayne RingRing Jayne RingRing Jayne Ring!* I soon tired of it. The bell only seemed to ring one ring out of three and I grew weary of shouting and weary of pedalling too, for the pedals were low and small and my feet in consequence kept slipping off and scraping the ground and my knees stuck out awkwardly on both sides at right angles. And besides, the saddle wasn't comfortable either—a bit on the small side and hard, very hard, to say the least. So in the end, in disgust, I dismounted, kicked the thing, hurt my foot in the process (which had the effect of making me even angrier) seized hold of it and threw it in a wire mesh basket marked KEEP BRITN TIDY. And then, just out of spite (there can be no other reason for it on reflection, and I have reflected long over it) I gave it a second kick. My nerves were really getting the better of me.

A boa constrictor that happened to be napping in the shade of the basket coiled around it without even waking and swallowed the lot in one gulp. It sighed, rolled over on its side to facilitate digestion, and smiled in its sleep.

I SET off once more on foot. There was still no sign whatsoever of Jayne. Pretty soon it would be evening. It would turn cold. I would be hungry and tired. In fact, I was already both. But I trudged on with a weary yet resolute step. As I was skirting a clump of bushes I heard the distant sound of drums, BAMBAMBAM. I stopped for an instant to get a bearing, and went on my way again with a lightened heart. Maybe they—I didn't know who but they had to be somebody: drums don't beat of their own accord—would have some knowledge of Jayne or of her whereabouts.

The sun was setting as I reached the far park gates where the drumming had come from. Dead ahead of me was a notice board stating that the *park gates by kind permission of the authorities will be open from*—But I couldn't read any more, for the park-keeper's head was pinned to the board by its ears, thus causing the rest of the sentence, or proclamation, to be covered and therefore illegible. The park-keeper had that strained and doleful expression particular to those whose heads have recently been severed from their necks and shrunk. His eyelids were sewn together, his lips were slit, and the cap with its shiny peak hung limply down over his nose. The shrinking solutions must have taken all the life out of it. The drumbeats, which up to that moment had incessantly and monotonously sounded forth, BAMBAMBAMBAM, without so much

# Flower-Gathering

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by Langdon Jones

# GRAHAM CHARNOCK

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## SUB-ENTROPIC EVENING

JONES WAS THINKING about girls. He was stretched out on the bed, one hairy forearm thrown across his chest, his fingers curled up in his armpit like small animals in a dark cave. His eyes were closed. If he opened them . . . but no, the wardrobe occluded any possible view through the single, high window, where he might have seen the pavement above him and the constant parade of their legs, the anonymous ankles, calves and knees. And he was too lazy to move. Either himself or the wardrobe.

Dragon watched him, looking up from the end of another line, watching the dreams in his head. He had fixed her now, a single one, and had taken away her camouflage. He was thinking about her shoulders, the blades moving under the skin and the row of vertebrae swimming up as the torso bent away from him, out of reach.

Dragon looked away from the thoughts in shame, looked at his hand as it moved mechanically to pick up the eraser. Looking at the paper in the typewriter he saw that he had written "cock" instead of "cook". In its context the error appeared obscene. Mechanically his hand moved to remove

the impropriety.

"I'll make some coffee, shall I? Would you like that?"

No movement from the bed. *Why did I say that anyway?* thought Dragon. *Oh, to increase his obligation to me. I need that. I feed on that.*

"I'm still here, Jones. Closing your eyes doesn't make me go away."

*Oh, if it could. If that movement of the eyelids could expunge everything: me, you, our relationship, this room, the street outside, the city, the world, the past, the present, the future and the universe.*

"Did you know that the universe is only 25 billion light-years wide? And I'll always be there somewhere, Jones. You'll always be able to reach me."

At last the eyes opened, pulsing Dragon a message of bland virginity. The smile, the teeth, white-smocked every one of them.

"Why don't you make some coffee then?"

"If you want me to, Jones. If you really want me to."

In the kitchen Jones's cat, scruffy as Satan, prowled

# GRAND GRAND





along the window ledge, agitated by the noise outside, beyond the stinking square of yard; the wall, the wire fence. The Arena.

But the wire fence first: sunlight entered via the lattice, the bird-limed netting, and beyond this, just visible, the rising tiers of the Arena grandstand. Just visible also, rising above everything, was the tip, the top of the massive skeletal altar framework, and in it a man dying, up in the dead floodlights, caught there like some confused moth.

What if it were you? (A game Dragon used to play.) What if it were you, having climbed there to the top of your castle with your guilt on your neck. Perhaps you're trapped, your broken foot in the sure girder-lock. What would you do then? Put your two fingers in the electric eyes and kill yourself? (Oh, the opportunity is there. Justice, after all, is not cruel.) Or if you had the smallest of knives (Let's be romantic. Let's say your lover smuggled it to you as you languished in your cell.) would you work at severing your foot there above the broken place, letting the blood drain out and fall like rain.

The imagination game was over. The kettle was boiling, chortling away to itself, scaring the cat which dived into the yard. Now, red blimps approached, sailed above the crowd, buoyed up in the noise which itself was slowly subsiding. Like vast thought bubbles swollen with a lust to see a death they hovered above the Arena.

Dragon closed the windows and drew curtains across them in case the incandescence came as he was standing there, making coffee from the small compounded squares. When a blimp went up it was a sight to see, but not without shades. Then he took the coffee in to Jones and forgot the suddenly settled silence.

On the bed still, Jones was playing with his toy, the doll. Fingers over the antique complexion of its limbs, its buttocks, its shoulders. The doll's cheeks were spotted with imitation rouge. The eyes popped-awake as Jones probed gleefully between its legs. He laughed and offered Dragon the doll in exchange for coffee. He knew that Dragon hated it, a female joke, a parody of something he might tumble outside, casually, as casually as he could do a thing like that.

Except that outside they were *feminine* with *full ripe breasts* and *well-proportioned thighs* and *white bellies* and *soft plastic buttocks*. There was one plastered on the wall above Jones's bed, that reappeared no matter how many times Dragon tore it down. There was another he sometimes carried about with him, sometimes hid and taunted Dragon, driving him crazy with the secret of its hiding place. *Dirty picture* showing manflesh rampant on a field of womanflesh, in a field a couple in a moment of time that never existed, painted in a silver pattern on a photographic plate and then processed into *improper positions*. But still the same stuck-on, graffiti-derived face of womanhood. In his mind with Dragon as a spectator Jones peeled off the mask-image and loved what lay beneath. Only the images inside though, as Dragon remembered, clinging to that fact.

"You can't destroy me with images, Jones. Not you."

Jones laughed and tried to take the doll back but Dragon sent it flapping across the room. Jones took his coffee, sulked, too lazy even to retrieve the doll. Dragon sat beside him, make-it-better fingers in his hair.

"You need me, Jones. You'll always need me. The cord ties us both." He leant over him and Jones's mouth, coffee wet, twisted the beginnings of another laugh.

Somewhere an Hiroshima/Nagasaki/Bikini light flashed. A roar went up, seeming to lift the foundations of the building with it.

"We should have gone," said Jones. "We should have been there. Who was it this time?"

"A murderer. Someone called . . . Larsen? Leighton? Larter?"

"We should have been there. It sounded good."

"Oh, I get tired of that stuff."

Dragon kissed him then. And his nails raking down over the gravure-print tacked on the wall above his head, tearing, shredding, destroying. . . .

Jones, to his love: *Oh, shut up. Be quiet. Be quiet.*

Some time later Dragon went back to the kitchen and pulled back the curtains. He opened the window for the cat outside. The sky was now an evil, diffuse red, partly sunset creeping up in the west, partly the scent, the sight, the feel (a mist on his cheeks) of death. The cat jumped up, staggered inside. His fur was slightly singed. The day was almost over and tonight there would be a party.

AFTER A WHILE loneliness simply becomes a word, and living too, and ultimately, Velma supposed, even dying. She was frozen in one of those prolonged moments of hesitation, the weight all on one foot as if she had been going somewhere. But where she might have been going she couldn't remember, nor how long she had been coiled in her own thoughts, nor how it had all started.

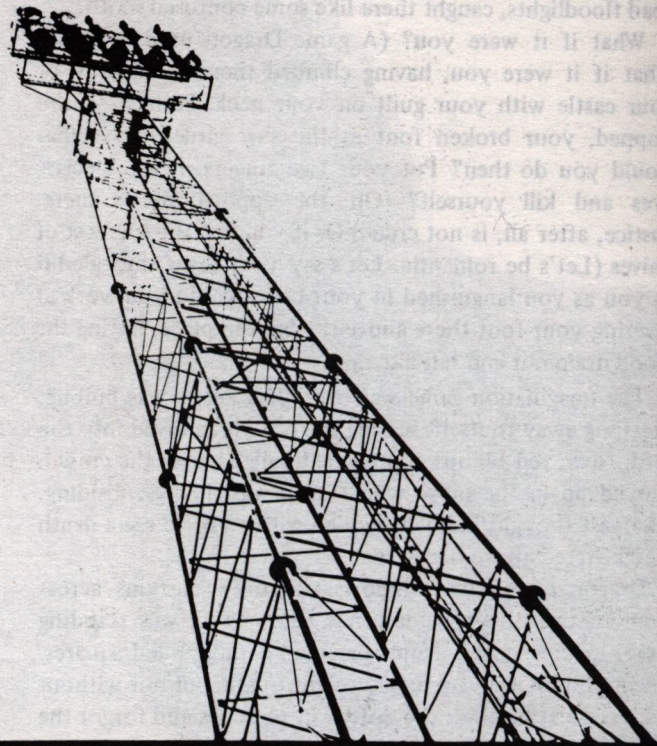
"This won't do," she said to herself. To herself, of course, because she hadn't spoken since she was six years old, when the knowledge that there would really never be anything to say had been finally slapped into her face by her father's hand.

"Don't you ever say a word about this to anyone," he'd said. And "Oh, shut up. Be quiet. Be quiet." when she'd started to question him. The words were there, like new pins, but she could find no accompanying image to suggest what "this" had been and why "Be quiet", other than that buffeting of something in her face (and the buffeting of something more than hands, for it had left a scar two inches long, almost hidden under her jaw).

And so: silence. Like a religion, a creed, a philosophy, becoming the only meaningful thing in her life, a vow becoming harder to break the longer it endured, enduring longer even than her father, who had died not long after their conversation.

"This won't do."

She made a determined effort to track her mind back into the past. She'd been at the window. From her apartment on the tenement's uppermost floor, she could look directly down into the Arena. She could make out the altar, of course, and the small crawling figure moving towards justice and its fate. She could also see the special enclosure for the jury, and the milling of their bodies as they performed, although the judge's dais and his plush elevated throne were obscured by pill-box shaped constructions high on the rim of the crowded stands.



The noise of the crowd below her had dulled away to a murmur and eventually silence, and she'd looked away, into the room, while the blimps sailed in, until the quick whiteness bleached out the ruined Italian villas on her wallpaper, the rudimentary furniture still coated for the most part with dust, the detritus of the apartment's previous occupant. As the colours soaked back, the noise outside had turned her face again to the glass and . . .

And . . .

She caught the thought.

Someone had said, shouted, "Oh, shut up. Be quiet. Be quiet" in younger tones than her father. She'd peered from the window and a gull had wheeled past and she'd thought: that was it, that and her mind and the past dead distorted voice of her father after all. Then, that thought gone, she'd started to turn away and as she did so something had flapped up across the glass, the torn masthead of a newspaper, browned at the edges, a local souvenir edition with the beginnings of a half-tone showing the shock, unruly hair of a murderer. The newspaper hung there, pressed against the glass, and before the wind peeled it off she caught the date and turned to cross the room, the weight all on one foot.

The apartment was two small rooms and a smaller one for the kitchen, and one so small it was really only a cupboard containing a toilet, a washstand, and mirrored cabinet. In sum these crudely partitioned volumes of living space contained:

a bed, with linen and two blankets, one black, the other the cream yellow of curdled milk—the headboard of the bed was plain, white-painted wood—

a small glass-topped bedside table, incorporating a single drawer—the heavy plate of glass was removable and underneath this were two photographs, one of her mother in the company of a man whose face was unfamiliar, and another of herself, very young, feeding pigeons against an unidentifiable background—the drawer, which had a round button-knob of yellowing plastic, contained only dust, three large rusty screws, one bent almost at right angles, two yale keys that fitted no lock she knew of, and a small, flattened metal tool, purpose unknown—

a wardrobe containing several dresses, two skirts, some underwear, two sweaters, both red, two pairs of casual shoes and one pair of black patents, a headscarf and a thicker, woollen neckscarf, a grey wool coat, a beret, a pair of slacks and a pair of jeans she had never worn, a small pile of neatly pressed handkerchiefs, a red leather handbag and a larger bag of woven raffia, and, hanging at the back on its own small brass hook, an umbrella—

a suitcase, brown with one lock broken and containing several sheets and a second, cream-yellow blanket—

a dressing table upon which was placed a black, plastic make-up kit and two small cut-glass dishes containing buttons, needles, threads of various colours wound around improvised cardboard formers—the dressing table had three sliding drawers which contained several boxes of tissues, all

opened, a half-empty jar of cold-cream and several loose tubes of cosmetic creams, more underwear and lingerie, a plastic rain-hood, a bottle of scent and three lipsticks, a brush, four combs and a box of pins, an empty plastic toilet case, two wrapped bars of soap, some notepaper, envelopes, a box of pencils and a ball-point pen, a small cigar box containing her birth certificate and other personal documents—

a two-ringed gas cooker with diminutive oven and grill—

a kitchen cabinet containing plates, cups and saucers, knives and forks, a stainless-steel coffee pot and a glazed china tea-pot, several empty glass preserve jars, a bread-board, some saucepans, a frying pan, a red plastic bowl, one side warped and heat-distorted—

two white-painted wooden shelves in a window alcove carrying packeted tea, coffee, sugar, flour, rice, and a dozen eggs in pressed-fibre boxes, apples in a large red-banded mixing bowl—

a refrigerator containing milk, butter, more eggs, assorted frozen foods, a lettuce in one plastic bag, cheese in another—

a small bookcase with a high gloss finish, scorched away in one spot, containing no books, but three small red Toby jugs and a small tobacco tin containing a few foreign coins—

a transistor radio with a broken carrying handle—

two carpets, one grey with a nondescript pattern of red interlacing strands, the other green/grey and vaguely floral—

a piece of linoleum with a pattern imitating alternate black and white tiling—

a cheval glass—

an electric fire and an oil-heater—the reflecting shield of the former was dusted with a fine red rust—

a folding table and a coffee table with brass tubular legs, slightly tarnished—

Two chairs with blue, plastic padded seats, two arm-chairs with flower-printed loose covers, a high stool—

by the door, hanging on the wall, was a mirror. Secured to the glass with adhesive tape there was a calendar.

She had been moving towards the calendar, carried there by the image of a torn newspaper flapping up into Friday's sky like a seagull. She checked it, with a fingernail, bending her face low into the glass to peer at the small type. It was Friday. Not Saturday, not even Sunday, but Friday. Not a resting day but a working day. A CRIMday. And here she was, where she should definitely not be, where she had definitely been all day. At work her absence would be noted, her unexplained absence commented upon, rumours stirred like sleepy insects whipped up into a storm. She could have scotched them with an excuse, a cold, a cramp, a hoarse voice contrived on the telephone or even some embarrassed and obscured reference to "period", but it was far too late, hours too late for that now, not with the insects in flight, not with them stinging and the stings sticking.

She thought of the invitation, and thinking of it began to search for it, and searching for it found it with a mixture of anger and relief beneath one of the cut-glass bowls on the dressing table. She had been at CRIM less than three weeks. She had been in the city less than four, and in this apartment less than two. The apartment had been sub-let to her by an attractive girl, older than herself, in whose

waste-paper basket Velma had been surprised to discover a hoard of sad, limp things like deflated balloons. It had been several minutes before she realized that they were used condoms, dusty with spent passion. She'd burnt them.

Oh, she was virginal in every sense of the word. She had not yet let the city, the office, the *routine* wholly enter into her, claim her, mark her and control her. It had been easy for the invitation (the unprepossessing, smug, self-satisfied piece of card) to seduce her, to play a cunning game with her preconceptions. After all, *who* would think of throwing a party on a Friday? Saturday was the party day, the day given over to (Velma remembered the phrase from a Temperance Society leaflet) debauching the body and the soul.

Suddenly the idea of the party, and the invitation itself, seemed soured; like vinegar, an incongruous, bitter element had been introduced. Velma examined the small card again, from back and front, from every angle. Reading between the lines of the simple serrifed message, however, she could find nothing tangible to explain the doubt that had weeviled its way into her afternoon.

She began to rationalise the mood. She wouldn't go to the party: she had nothing to wear (which was true), her hair looked a mess (which wasn't). She would occupy the evening some other way. She would write to her mother (if she could find the address—she was afraid she had lost it and visualised herself as living in an absolute communication vacuum with no way of reaching anyone who knew of her existence or cared to know—the thought was too terrible to hold on to for long—she let it slip away). She might go for a walk, buy a magazine, a big magazine with lots of pictures and "complete-in-this-issue" stories. She might do anything.

Her hands were moving of their own accord. She watched them flexing the invitation, gripping the card by its upper edge, flexing again and applying a small twist, beginning to tear . . . Startled, surprised by the violence of what they were about to do to the card, she made them toss the morsel back to the safety of the dressing table. She scolded them by placing them on her hips, then she bit the nails of one, but found the punishment gave shallow pleasure. Eventually she sent them back to the card in reconciliation. After checking that the address had been in no way defaced, she made them set the card up prominently, where it would be sure to remind her.

And the door-bell rang.

At the door, a smallish man (barely her height), paunchy, with florid, over-jowled features, archaic wire-rimmed spectacle frames, the lower edges of which bit into the red rising cushions of his cheeks. Furthermore, he leaned against the wall, not casually but, conversely, with all the tension of restrained inertia. The eyes after an initial glancing contact with hers fell away and seemed enraptured with a spot sometimes beyond her left shoulder, sometimes beyond her right.

"Bensentme," he said and looked around quickly over his shoulder so that Velma half-expected to see another man waiting discreetly, perhaps on the stairs, somewhere in the shadows. There was nobody, however, and Velma shook her head, frowned a little, but maintained a small smile in the set of her lips. All to indicate confusion but no

real annoyance.

"Ben," the man repeated. "You know: Bensentme."

She shrugged, took half a pace backwards, and with gestures: *Won't you come in anyway?*

"Is there some reason I should be quiet?" the man whispered hoarsely as she shut the door behind him. "Have you got thin walls? Nosey neighbours?"

With gestures: *No, I can't speak.*

The man tried a tentative smile, shut it off, let it flicker up again, held it with steadily diminishing conviction. "Dumb, huh? Well whoever heard of that." Swivelling from the hips he took a comprehensive and deliberate look around the apartment. Then he put one foot forward and stared at it.

"Huh . . . my name is Dick."

Mouthing: *Velma.*

"Velma? Look . . . I want to tell you I don't usually . . . I mean this is all rather strange to me, you know. I don't know how I should . . ."

Head on one side. Slightly pursed lips.

"Look . . ." he turned out a wallet from inside his jacket, turned out five notes. "I was told . . . that is, Ben said, you know . . . well, twenty-five."

Velma looked at the notes, head dipping a little further to her shoulder.

The man took a second, standing, panning look around the apartment, hand and notes extended all the while. When his attention returned again to the notes he seemed genuinely surprised to see them still there. Sadness washed up in his face like something dead upon a beach.

"It's all I have. Well . . ." A deep breath then. He went through into the bedroom and dropped the notes on the bed, thought better of it and placed them instead on the dressing table. Then he stood there, leaning against the bed's headboard, a smile fixed on his face as if he were posing for a snapshot.

With gestures and with difficulty: *What do you want?*

He straightened. From behind the headboard, from its not quite flush contact with the wall, thick dust came away on his fingers, adhering in a grey beard. He brushed it away, sat down on the bed, adjusted his spectacles.

"Come and sit down," he said, but there was no real hope in his voice.

She sat beside him and he caught up her hand, pressed it clumsily against his lips. She pulled it away, sharply, silently.

"I'm sorry," he said at once, as if these were the rehearsed words, as if these words and no others would fit this situation. "You're pretty," he continued. "I imagined someone older, more . . . you know?"

Velma shook her head.

"Anyway. If you'd have been older, if you'd have been less . . . then, it would have been easier. I didn't think it would be easy, not the first time, but somehow I imagined that if you were . . . well, dirty . . . then I wouldn't feel so much like dirt myself."

The waves of sorrow and self-pity broke over his face again, squeezed out of his eyes. He stood up suddenly and took quick steps out of the room, turned to look at her from beyond the door. "I'll go. I should never have come. Perhaps some other time . . . perhaps with somebody else."

He shook his head. "We couldn't even talk could we?"

Quickly she rose herself, took up the notes from the dressing table, took them to him.

"You keep them," he said. "Buy yourself a dress, something pretty." He took a last look around the dusty, cramped rooms. "You shouldn't be here. Not doing this."

There was an eternity of questioning in his voice, and Velma's silence, the silence of her eyes, her untroubled face, her hands limp and silently clutching her sudden windfall, sent him out of the door and onto the stairs, closed the door on his muffled, descending footsteps.

Moving quickly, in and out of the red dusk, projecting like an efflorescent stick of candy into the room, Velma found her coat, put the notes in her pocket. There was time, still time before the stores closed, locking their doors on the awakening night.

*(ah won't you)*

come and join my lizard dreams

in loose-thighed limbo

soaked in your own *(little)* pool of . . .

*(ah) Smoke*

*(come on . . . start getting it together)*

ah won't you come and draw on my cold tongue

nothing . . . is what it seems

—popular lyric (approximate transcription)

JONES LOOKED UP to see Dragon watching him from the top of the stairs. Strange image, the lizard stare, the scaled skin of his houndstooth jacket, his hair caught up in a ruff, a frill, a reptilian cock's comb. Down the stairs, eclipsing him, came a chameleon reveller. Electric hair and talmi-gold complexion. Tell me, did you find this on your local beauty counter? Or is it specially made up to your local cosmeticist's prescription? Is it painted on, sprayed on, dusted on? Is it heat-bonded, chemically-fixed? Or are you like that through and through? So many mysteries. Jones half opened his mouth. She passed him intimately in the stair well. An accidental hand (or was it?) on his sex and her eyes half apologetic and half wellfancy that were salamander pyres. There was no chance. The amplifiers downstairs in the strobe room started up. Subsonic bass vibrations rattled up to him, reaching him first before the brittle, ovened-on gloss of a keening electric guitar. The air was suddenly full of geckos (who could fly but had no wings) crying: *To the gardens! To the gardens!* Caught in the stampede, trapped, which carried her away.

*This is wrong,* thought Jones. *Sure knowledge. A revelation in the stair well. Climb up to Dragon and see.*

Dragon's stare, as Jones had suspected, was fixed in his eyelids. *Dragon should have been born with nictating membranes,* Jones thought. *To see the world through closed eyes. Perhaps he was. How many alternate Dragons in my world, falling away into mirror-image infinity? Mirror-image molecules, although chemically identical to their mundane originals have different physical properties. So why not Dragon?*

Dragon had fallen asleep in a small alcove at the head of



the stairs, propped up in the corner with blistered plaster making chalky marks on his shoulder. Possibly he had been queueing for the john a further flight up. His lax fingers still held a glass of whisky which had all but drained out over the violet frill of his shirt front. Very un-lizardlike, but now the scales had metamorphosed anyway, the blood was warm. (At moments like these, pushing mental fingers in the dough of another's sleeping mind and feeling nothing, Jones felt ashamed and a little frightened. Alone.) He took the glass from Dragon's hand before he dropped it. Dragon's fingers closed on nothing, a nervous stab of his hand, and he awoke. He stared at Jones for a moment with silly-dopey fractured blue eyes. *Jesus Christ*, he said and began to lurch up the stairs. Jones caught his arm. Dragon's insect-catching tongue looked at him, now swollen, red, inflexible, a lingual hard on. He couldn't even touch the tip of his nose and after all he now had a nose.

"I want to use the car," Jones said with visions of escaping into the night. He put his hand in Dragon's pocket.

"Wha . . ." Dragon, visions of being touched up, blinked sadly time-and-placing him. *Can lizards cry?* thought Jones. *Can humans?*

"Stand still, I'm looking for the keys."

"For Christ's sake will you let me go?"

Jones disconnected and looked at his hand. No scales on his fingertips, only the keys. Dragon sat down abruptly on a step, slipped off, bounced down to the one below.

"What the hell . . ." The words came slowly out behind Jones. Looking back he saw a snake was making way on the bare boards, rhythmically up the stairs, hissing slightly, in a houndstooth jacket.

The house was showing its bones, ribs in the ceiling where the plaster flesh had fallen away, occasionally a pulsing copper artery, tarnished. But the cells still clung together, although many of them punctured and doorless.

At first, seen from the grey ebbing away of early Kew evening, from beside Dragon's suggestive hand on the gear-change lever, she had been a pale virgin stretched on the river rocks for sacrifice. Then people plunging into her. Eventually she absorbed them and they began to feed, a long riotous last supper until she is cleaned out. Behind them when they leave her empty form will appear inviolate. The rape will have been entirely internal.

*Unusual*, thought Jones. *No lizard imagery in this house. No rambling restored Palladian skinks inert among green lichen gardens.*

Jones descended the stairs. In the hallway, leaning against the broken wallpaper where the passing garden crowd had left her, someone who at least aroused a memory, a lizard-itch. Behind her the open entrance tiered up from the gardens afforded him a view from the corpse. To one side steps had collapsed revealing a mysterious dungeon below. This had been draw-bridged with stray timbers and had become a planked thoroughfare used in preference to the steps themselves.

*Diversions. Does the memory die that quickly, wilting? A simple trick to think of Dragon and make it stir.*

Jones went to stand next to her, very close, flank to flank. Her gilded profile was lizard still. Then an eyelid closed like a vault door. Later a peristaltic ripple down the throat. This was gold too, a column from her black

layered-silk outfit. A movement of her hip, conveyed through the material, touched Jones and rattled through his own, and she moved away from the wall through the cell membrane into the intermittent light of the strobe.

*come and draw on my cold tongue.*

Beside the strobe and the amplifiers, a colour box. *Lizard Dreams* was mostly ambers, tobaccos, earths. Now and then an ephemeral dissolving field of blue. She danced and Jones moved out to her, detached, sending his mind back up to the stairs and downwards to Dragon and downwards again to the keys, inertia in his pocket. The glacier moved through his mind dropping terminal detritus thoughts as the flashes stopped it. Reptilian . . . electric . . . pyres . . . red . . . wallpaper. The strobe destroyed moulding, destroyed depth, shone off the golden panels of her cheeks and forehead.

The itch was fully risen now and they approached and entered and were entered, a ritual, two-dimensional circum-penetration. Her hands went down in his pockets to his flesh, while his pulled gossamers of static from her hips. A pseudo-orgasm trembled in Jones's head and ejaculated a colourless, shrinking stain that eventually dwindled. And as for her she was only partly blown, arrested in her climax, interrupted in her soundless laugh, and looked compassionately past Jones's shoulder at Dragon in the doorway, leaning green and sick. The keys which she had taken from Jones's pocket fell, multiplied by the strobe, unlocking the air.

Cat came down the street, in drag and incognito with the wax-headed torso of a tailor's Moto-mannequin perched on his midget's shoulders. He carried a guitar case and moved rather too fast for his short legs, yellow eyes unblinking in the sodium light, white hair flowing as he stumbled, free-fell past the houses. At an intersection a patch of grass Evening Fog hung above the road, heavy in its own channel between the houses. Noises came out of it and half-glimpses of white-worn shapes, pedestrians transformed by the hallucinogen. Taking a deep breath Cat cut across it, feeling at one stage he must inhale, feeling his limbs begin to metamorphose into pseudopodia. A witch-wraith of the Fog, dressed in tatters over a scaled skin, appeared and palmed into his hand the shiny chromium hypnograph of a Cap-Sul-Ad. Triggered by the electrostatic contact of his fingers the capsule began to intone: "Mental health can be yours through applied anosmia . . . What the nose doesn't smell the heart doesn't grieve over . . ."

Cat slithered out of the mist, a white ball that assumed its own humanoid shape on the opposite kerb. He threw the Cap-Sul-Ad into the gutter and it rolled away still tinkling its message out into the darkness. Out of breath Cat looked about to get his bearings. A clock in the eye of a key, hanging Damoclean over the pavement, threw a minute at him with jerky hands. He caught the seconds, passing by, feeling them crowd at his heels like a posse as he ran again towards the river. He crossed a bridge. Feeling safer among the dark parklands this side of the water, he trotted scuffing grass and gravel until he came to the house. Over a rattling wooden platform he danced, noting the chasm beneath, shouldering with a stranger to enter through the



doors. In some happy euphoria the stranger automatically grabbed at the sagging, unpinned shapes of his breasts, but Cat clapslapped his hand and dancing, weaving, the torso swaying, evaded him and continued on to where the stairs rose up into the core of the house. And up the stairs in leaps and bounds met or was met by a formless snakeform. Encoiling his feet it rooted him there, one hand on the bannister for his balance, dizzy and out of breath and afraid of top-heavy toppling.

The snakeform (which he perceived to be a man in a houndstooth jacket) uncoiled and climbed up Cat's legs. Hands on Cat's hips it brought itself abreast, neck-nuzzling with its warm nose. And Cat, whose eyes were in his neck, looked out at, by stages, the hairline where the golden brown shafts bent back upon themselves, leant like reeds; the brow—too many wrinkles there, but neatly cut like Runic characters in the fine skin, not yet gone dendritic through age; the eyes, pearly blue and gritty like the grit that makes the pearl, sharpness sanded off to mere coarseness; the nose, if anything too beautiful, almost feminine, enough to make Cat cry. Then not the mouth as he might have expected, but the eyes again, fixed on his own deep in the hollow tube of his neck. One can read

eyes, they say, but they are only two words in the sentence of the face and, seen in isolation, might make sense or nonsense. These eyes were merely excited and sweated little tears in their corners. Then as the head was thrown back on some impulse, Cat saw the nose again and suspected they were tears of fear, and knew they were when he saw the mouth at last, open and echoing.

Fear had given the snakeform back its humanity. It staggered away down the stairs and Cat turned to watch it go, a little puzzled at its reaction. Inside the neck he was perspiring slightly. He attempted to brush hair out of his eyes but found his fingers collided clumsily with his exterior chin. The skin was soft and flexible, but cold like a lizard's.

After more steps he found himself in a long, darkened corridor on the top floor of the house. The only light filtered from beneath the single ill-fitting door that terminated the corridor.

He knocked on the door and yelled:  
"It's me, Cat."

There was no reply and Cat touched the door which swung open, splashing him with light. The first thing he noticed, stepping inside the barn-like attic was that the

ceiling was glass, made a mirror by the night outside. Head tilted, he looked up at himself in the inverted room, smiling down. The room was bare and cold and practically empty. He walked across raw floorboards to look at a single crucifixion print that was characteristically Rouault: the heavy delineation of the rosy Christ like leading in stained glass.

He coughed and, seeing the print transformed into a witch's head, turned to construct the woman, flesh and blood of sorts, in the middle of the room.

"I know you," he said. Wisps of Evening Fog still itched in the alveolae of his lungs and he took deep breaths trying to clear the small sacs.

The woman constructed a table, filmed with dust, and wrote on it with a long-nailed finger: *You're expected. In the gardens.*

Cat nodded, sneezed through his mannequin's neck and blew the table clear. The witch-wraith trembled and looked at him sternly as if the dust had been its life's blood. It drew a pack of cards from its scales and tatters and dealt three cards face down on the table. The design on the backs of the cards showed Famous London Scenes and Cat moved closer. "I know this one," he said. "My past, my present and my future." He turned up the first card, the second and then the third. Their faces were all blank.

"Nothing?" he said and then smiled. "It's a pack of lies."

The witch-wraith's face was expressionless and Cat sneezed again, blowing it away. The room was empty as before. Cat picked up his guitar case and went downstairs.

"Ssssh," Dragon hissed, being still a little drunk and the most voluble of the three. "Isn't it still?"

To this Velma inclined her head while Jones elevated his to glimpse the stars. They were walking in the gardens down towards the arboretum by the river, having left behind a noisy lawnful of people. Dragon had removed his desert boots and Jones walked slightly behind with an eye on the rippling motions of Velma's shoulder blades. They came to a stand of eucalyptus close by the river and stopped, allowing the trees and the angles of the branches to dictate their stances. The moon was rising over the water, whitelighting the groves of willows on the far bank and Dragon, who still had colours in his head, felt he must expunge them and make them all pure.

"They tell me white light is composed of many colours," he said. "All the colours of the rainbow, in fact. I wonder if silence is composed of sounds?" The last words weren't his. He had a scar beneath his jaw that had never been his and the words were like the scar, a soft and delicate skin gloss over a pulsing vein. He touched his jaw and felt the old unknown wound open. His hand came away dark and moist with blood. "I mean, silence may not be absolute."

Jones, who could make no sense of these delerium words, for once at a loss, gave him a handkerchief, a silk thing.

"You're bleeding."

"There may always have been the Word," said Dragon.

"Your jaw's bleeding," said Jones.

"It's an old wound. I fell from a wall when I was ten and

broke my jaw. I wanted to tell everyone about the beautiful golden bird I'd seen on the wall and I was told not to speak for a month. It was terrible. It was like a curse."

They knelt and Jones cradled Dragon's head and kissed the wound. They undressed and the merging of their bodies made a pale watersnake in the halflight. Velma watched them and exhumed the final tight knot of fear from within her, the last pebble swollen so large a whisper would shatter it. When she sensed that their private moment was over and they were ready for her Velma went to lie between Jones and Dragon on the cape of the grass.

Later it rained and they went to shelter beneath a tree (except for Jones who said he really didn't mind the rain) and Velma, mother naked, climbed high in the tree and astride a slippery limb sang like a bird mourning the silence. And far away saw smoke rising.

The bandstand was verdigris on ancient copper and rust on wrought-ironwork, a cupola bangled with shiny PA loudspeakers. Three musicians sat on their amplifiers bored and tapping their own rhythms on the dry flaking boards underfoot while Spirolis, in a loose, white robe triggered a firework display to keep his guests amused. A white flare bursting overhead showed everything in a harsh light: the fountains dribbling at low pressure, the buffet tables on the lawn, the pseudo-Parthenon rear aspect of the house, like a theatre flat in the background. A softer reflected light followed as a golden, artificial helium moon was released and floated steadily upwards. Spirolis saw a grotesque shape, half mannequin and half midget, detach itself from the plaster Greek pillars of the house and work its way through the guests. He recognised the guitar case it carried.

The steps up to the bandstand were rotten and had disintegrated when the amplifiers and column speakers were being set up earlier. Cat had to pass his guitar case up to Spirolis and then wait for his hand to lift him aboard.

"I'm sorry I'm late," he said. "There was something I had to do. Something I couldn't miss."

Spirolis shrugged and watched as Cat removed the mannequin disguise, unclipped the guitar case and lifted out the instrument. He handed it to Spirolis. "There it is."

"It looks like an electric guitar to me," said Spirolis, although weighing it in his hand he noted its heaviness.

"It is, but there's not another one like it."

"So I gather."

Cat plugged the guitar into one of the amplifiers. It was tuned to open E and he bottlenecked a few phrases, playing with the tone and volume controls to get a clashing metallic sound. He unharnessed the guitar and lit a cigarette while the other musicians got their instruments together.

"Pretty fireworks," he said, moving to the edge of the bandstand. "Second lot I've seen today. What's this *Pain* business about, Spirolis? This suicide movement of yours. Why are you doing it?"

"I don't need reasons. Why are *you* doing it?"

"I'm a scientist. I don't need reasons either. Would you like to know how the guitar works?"

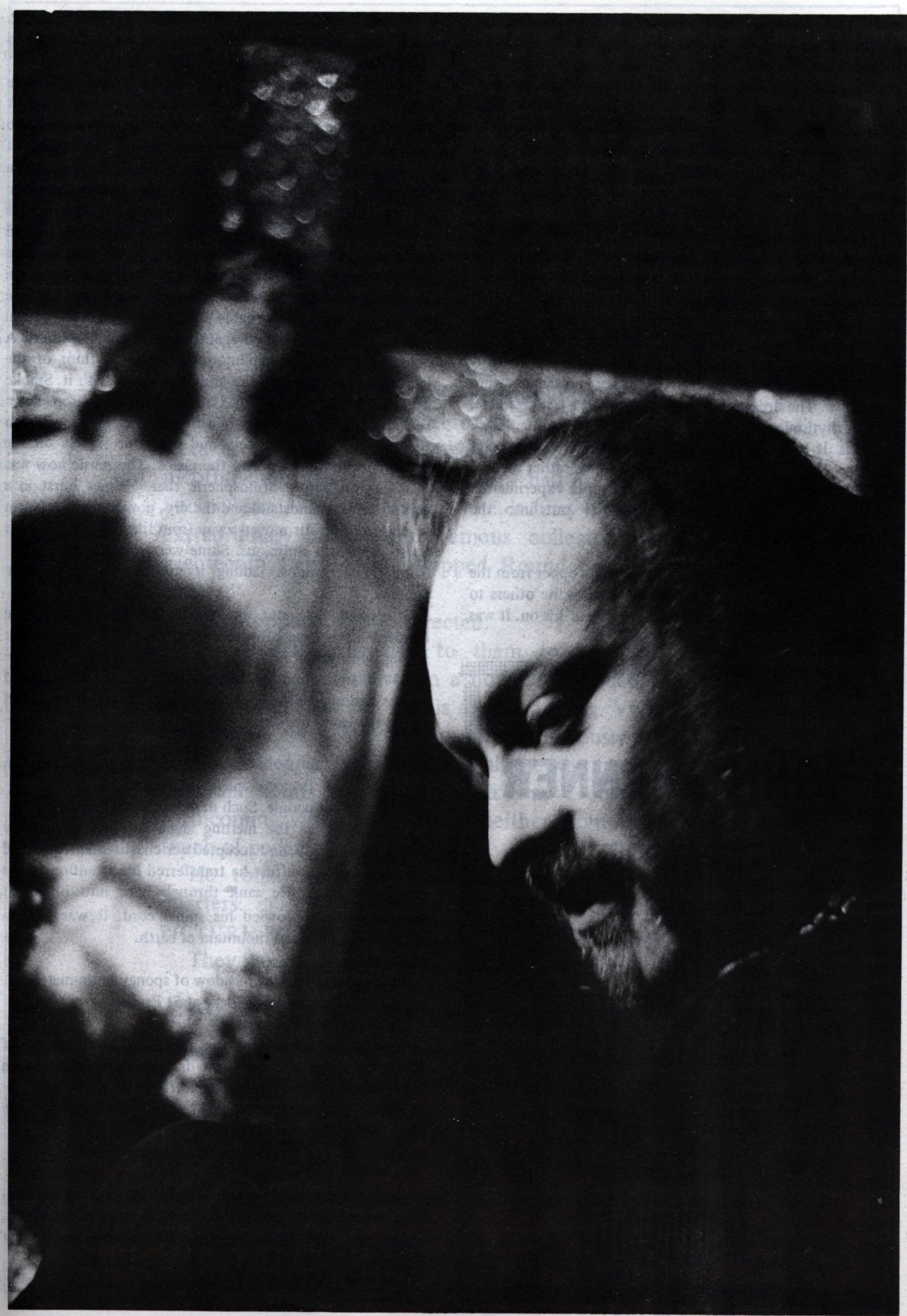
Spirolis shrugged.

"It's piezo-electronics applied to the cell. Cell structure and crystal structure are very closely allied, you-know."

"No, I didn't know that."

"This is a line of research started by my father, He was a





great man. He discovered a method whereby cells, like crystals, could be made to resonate. The guitar broadcasts a special signal that affects the cells in the visual cortex of the brain in this way. The stresses generated produce, in turn, an electric potential which effectually overloads the visual centre."

"People become blind," said Spirolis. "I understand that." The firework display was coming to an end. The guests on the lawn were returning to the buffet tables and the noise of their conversation was picking up.

"Yes. At the same time simple sub-sonics and the normal auditory frequencies overstimulate other areas of the sensorium. Having your visual bias switched over to an audio-tactile one so drastically is more than most people can take. It produces catatonic withdrawal—a kind of mental suicide—and, if sustained, complete collapse of the nervous system."

"It sounds complicated." The other musicians were ready now. The drummer nervously finished a last cigarette, puffing rhythmically.

"It is. It took a great deal of trial and error effort to get it right. Three people, close friends of my father's, were killed before he was able to establish proper experimental controls." Cat threw his own cigarette out into the darkness. "You asked me why I do this."

"I was curious," said Spirolis.

Cat took five small skull-caps of woven copper from the guitar case, placed one on his head and gave the others to Spirolis and the three musicians. Spirolis put his on. It was a snug fit.

"These will screen out the dangerous signals," said Cat. He picked up the guitar. "My father was a great man and this afternoon they crucified him. That's why."

Spirolis jumped down from the bandstand to mingle with his guests as Cat began to play a slow, simple blues. It was a warm-up number. When it was over Cat powered into early Hendrix and Spirolis walked in the earthquake of sound, among curling foetus shapes on the grass. A man in a dinner jacket bumped into him, off him, and staggered on blindly. The music was overpoweringly loud. Gritting his teeth Spirolis could feel the vibrations in his jaw. He looked up at the bandstand and was surprised to see that the bass guitarist had lost his copper skull-cap. His mouth was open. He might have been screaming but the sound was lost. He fell over a microphone cable and there was a heavy, fugal roar as his guitar clashed against one of the amplifiers. A column speaker fell, splintering the board floor of the bandstand and bringing the amplifier down with it. Smoke began to trail out and in the middle of it all Spirolis saw a flicker of sparks and bunched flame. The stage seemed to tip and subside completely and the four figures on the bandstand disappeared into the chaos. The music now was formless, an empty atmospheric roar. Flames burst in a gout from the bandstand and the dry, powdery wood began to crackle. Spirolis moved away from the heat. Some of his guests were still conscious. Some were even fetching water from the fountains, ladling it up in silver champagne buckets.

It rained, but not enough to dim the flames. The bandstand was soon consumed. The water rolled off the hot wrought-ironwork in banks of steam. Spirolis lifted the skull-cap from his head and tossed it away. Three naked figures had appeared. Their bodies glistened as they moved across the lawn, through the vapours.

Velma bent to the huddled shape of a grey-haired man in an evening suit, flecks of spittle on his lips.

"These poor people. Such darkness. Such emptiness."

Jones watched the melting angles of her naked body with a surge of joy, and accepted her chastisement, a tendril of scorn. With an effort he transferred his attention to the grey-haired man. He sank through him, into his silent nervous system, prowled his spinal cord. It was like an empty tunnel under a mountain of earth.

"Carvernous."

Dragon was in a grey meadow of spongy brain-matter.

"Like the whispering gallery at St Paul's."

"What can we do to help?"

Velma sheltered from the rain on the threshold of another's mind. She was in a dark portico, leaning on a huge door, tired and whispering softly to be allowed in.

"What can we do to help?" somebody asked and she said, "Whisper louder. Together."

They did. The grey-haired man stirred.

Spirolis watched the three naked figures for a while as they moved from sleeping form to sleeping form. Then, feeling the rain pick up he went to shelter among the Parthenon-columns.

## JOHN BRUNNER

# STAND ON ZANZIBAR

A brilliant and world-spanning panorama of the  
twenty-first century by the winner of  
the 1966 Fantasy Award

42s

## MACDONALD

# The Firmament Theorem

## INTERVENTION OF FRAME BARS

Recent research has developed a camera capable of producing continuous tone film. This allows the designer a greater range of expression, such as black-and-white illustrations on a black, white or grey background, or any combination of these shades.

Patty Heyworth: Anti-Institutional Institutions

**T**HE SKY WAS bluer than even art of picture postcard could depict. Vultures mucked about in it.

Captain von Tubb smiled into the camera and said, "Yes, it takes a real man to smoke Mexican Saddle, the new nicotine-impacted cigarette with a half-life of ten days. Such a Man, Number Twenty-Nine, is Jerry Cornelius, agent extraordinary and world famous collector of English Eighteenth Century Fan-Topped Round Funnel drinking glasses."

"*Pan*-topped," Jerry corrected.

The director signalled to them to break off, lit a mescahale and sat down on a boulder, shielded from the intense Uruguayan sun by his current urning. Von Tubb lit a Marlboro. Jerry jerked a shoulder ambiguously at his aide, Carleton Greene. They had come all the way from Haiti just to indulge this whim—even if it was a cover for their forthcoming visit to the opera; neither would blench at a touch of pedantry now.

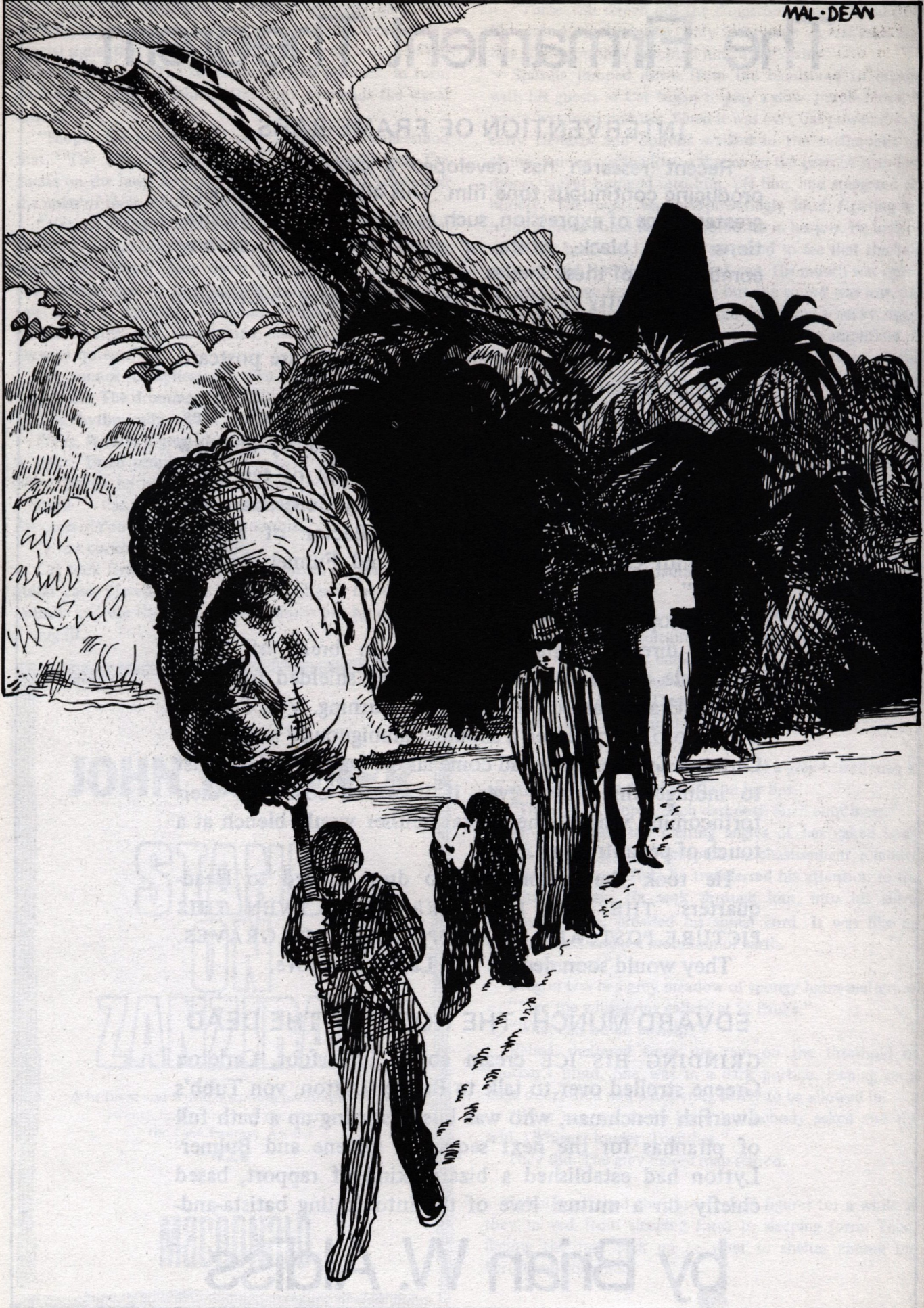
He took the opportunity to drop a card to Headquarters: THE SKY IS BLUER THAN EVEN THIS PICTURE POSTCARD CAN DEPICT. ROBERT GRAVES.

They would soon decode it in Ladbroke Grove.

## EDVARD MUNCH: THE ROOM OF THE DEAD

GRINDING HIS ICE cream cornet underfoot, Carleton Greene strolled over to talk to Bulmer-Lytton, von Tubb's dwarfish henchman, who was busily stirring up a bath full of piranhas for the next sequence. Greene and Bulmer-Lytton had established a bizarre kind of rapport, based chiefly on a mutual love of the intoxicating batista-and-

by Brian W. Aldiss



lime.

Fragments of Bulmer-Lytton's fragmentary English drifted over to Jerry. "Orange, yes. Very strong. Like Elizabeth Taylor. Strong, very strong. You wife? Uruguay no good. Very good, very strong. Oh, thanks!"

Behind them lay the ceaseless jungles beloved by Ché.

Cornelius scanned the skies, looking beyond the circling kitehawks for Mardersbacher's Boeing 707. It would soon be time for him to assume the role of extrovert and Populist again. In his breast pocket, the fragmented Munch engraving sent out its secret call.

## EVEN TODAY THE CATASTROPHE IS NOT ABSOLUTE BY DAVID JESSEL

"DON'T, PLEASE DON'T say I never mentioned flowers," José Caoneiro sang to himself. His song was not forbidden here in Uruguay. He had hopped over the border while all Rio was mad with carnival.

The seedy waterfront bar was almost empty. The girl Yvonne sat boredly by him, sipping her wine, smoking incessantly, watching him piece together the critical engraving, match the sunken eyes, the shoulders, the unnerving expanses of black and white. He worked with a kind of weary panache, aware of the eye of the barman, hoping the barman thought "So that's what an exiled song-writer looks like".

The message telling him to get out had been in code: ZIVA SHECKLEY SILVER IS THE COLOUR WE CALL WINGS ZIVA SHECKLEY. He had not stayed to finish his Brahma Chopp.

As the last piece of the puzzle clicked into place, a shadow fell across the table. Caoneiro stood up, white-lipped, to confront the newcomer.

"Robert Graves!" he accused.

## NATIONAL FLAGS IN INTERNATIONAL BREEZE

AS THE 707 roared in over darkening Montevideo, George Ancestor said, "I have another very amusing blasphemous joke to tell you after we fasten our safety belts."

"Gee, thanks," said Ann Ayn Rand. Secretly she longed to get free of this bore and seek out Jerry. "But don't you think that only people who believe in God one way or another enjoy blasphemous jokes?"

"This next one is a very amusing blasphemous joke—also not without some ordinary innuendo."

"Yes, but I'm an agnostic, Mr Ancestor."

Somehow it was impossible to get through to him. She retreated into her magazine. CERVIX HOLDS SECRET OF IDENTITY. COPULATORY RHYTHMS LINK WITH LUNAR ORIGIN. It had to come, she thought; now even fucking was balled up with the space race.

Beside her, relaxed and hirsute, the leader of Croatia's Populist movement told his very amusing blasphemous joke. It relied, as Ann Ayn Rand had predicted, on a thorough knowledge of the Ten Commandments.

## MARVELLOUS ACTION SHOT OF HUMAN SUFFERING

AS THE TORY came at him again with the machete, Mardersbacher ducked, caught the man's blazer and swung

him hard against the door of the elevator.

"That'll teach you to sully the name of England, you bastard!" he shouted.

Before the Tory could slump to the floor, Mardersbacher grabbed him, kned him in the crutch, and kissed him violently on the lips.

"Excellent ambiguity!" Oliphant said, sitting on his own opponent, whom he had floored the moment before. He got up, lit a Marlboro and came over to look at the black man. "As I thought—the Mare Imbrium playing up again!"

Mardersbacher glanced at his wrist computer.

"Four days to full moon and reversion to Puritanism unless Cornelius and his boys come through."

"Don't be bitter. Have a Marlboro. The secret's in the blending."

"I only use Mexican Saddle. It takes a man to smoke one. We'd better contact Lunar Module before Demansky Island is blown sky-high."

They synchronised their self-incinerators and headed towards Ladbroke Grove, where Lunar Module was decoding a picture postcard of a decadent Munch madonna.

## REPUBLICA DOS ESTADOS UNIDOS DO BRASIL

All these various links are usually achieved by coming back to one particular recognisable symbol which acts as a sort of "home-base", before proceeding with the next step of the programming. Not only does it inform the viewer which station he is receiving, but it provides Codes with natural breaks through which agents can be alerted. USE THE CAST-OFF EPIDERMIS AS BOOKENDS—South Wales Argus.

THE HOVERCRAFT MADE slow time up the Amazon. Bored by the misty expanses of water, Cornelius continued to write abstracts of his Burma trip on picture postcards of the Mato Grosso. Bulmer-Lytton fiddled uneasily with his batista on the other side of the table.

"Eh, Mista Yerry! Strong, yes. What? On, you know." He rapped the table for Jerry's attention and pointed out through the bright glaze of mist to an amorphous shape floating amid the dazzle. "You see look, island, very strong! Orange, no? Is more bigger than Switzerlands, okay? Elizabeth, what you say? No bullshit?"

"Good," said Jerry. "And as natural, I hope . . ."

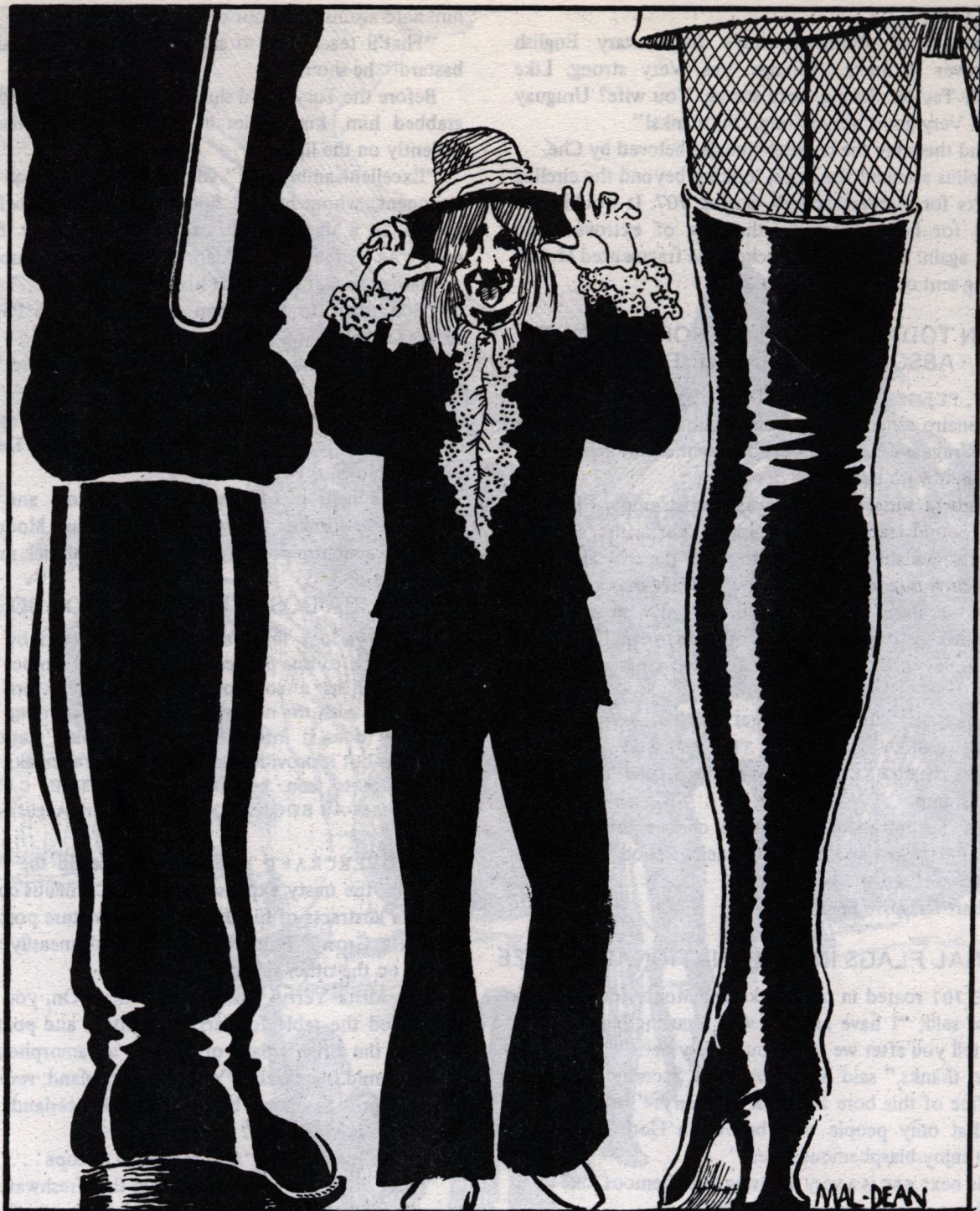
"What my friend intimates is that that freshwater fluvial island passing us on the starboard bow is of an area equivalent to Schweitz. You must pardon me if our English is not too readily comprehensible."

Cornelius raised an eyebrow at von Tubb's flashing teeth.

"Understand very strong. The Swiss must be furious."

Two hours later, they passed the Pan-Am Concorde that had crashed in Amazonia on its way from Miami the previous month. Already the jungle was growing over its toy hull. By then, Jerry was in the pad with Yvonne. She was having trouble with her frigidity, and made him work hard.

*Romeo and Juliet* (SAL 3695/6) is the first fruit of a Berlioz cycle that Phillips has embarked on. In general the performance has a fine sense of rhythm. But interior detail does not always emerge as clearly as one might wish and



sometimes this prevents a phrase as crucial as the *crescendo molto* in the closing bars of the fete from making its proper point.

"We'll soon be at Manaus," she said, as she sponged herself down afterwards. "Do you like to be away from home so much?"

"Even Lincoln had a Gettysburg address."

#### CO-OPERATIVE AVOIDANCE OF CONDITIONING IN MONKEYS' AVERSIVELY CONTROLLED BEHAVIOUR

THE SIX LACTATING chimpanzees drooped over their

scaffolding. Only slight movements of their dug, dripping into calibrated gauges, revealed that they were still living. Overhead, in the domed room, the lunar simulacrum rose in majesty.

Watching over the monitors, Fred Bahai said, "You see, Countess—we remove the conspecific and the results are still the same. Sir Frederick Hoyle is right. Every hour takes us closer to the origins of the solar system."

Her old raddled body shuddered. "With advancing age, the component parts tend towards congruity. My mouth is no longer watertight, the tides climacterise. Every hour takes us closer to the origins of the solar system. My osteo-arthritis hips mark the syncline of cosmological pressure as surely as an ape tit. What time is it now?"

He glanced at the chronometer. "Long past the Devonian. By tomorrow, we'll be leaving phanerogamic time entirely."

Entranced, they stared at the thin dribble of ape milk, and then said in chorus:

"Every hour takes us closer to the origins of the solar system."

The first ape on the left started to giggle. It was possible to be bored, even while taking part in a big adventure. Above her pen, someone had scrawled SILVER IS THE COLOUR WE CALL WINGS on the damp white tiling.

### SECRET CEREMONY, BOOM, ACCIDENT

SLOW CONTEMPLATIVE TRACKING shot reveals Navarro clasping body at end of sparsely-furnished room. Through windows, long boring negative vistas of North Holland are glimpsed before N. clumsily drags curtain across window pane, bringing near-dark to room.

As camera surveys rich awareness of mellow light and shadow, sound track carries N's inmost thoughts (spoken into echo chamber).

*Sleep my boy my darling boy your Mummy be back soon . . .*

*So tired my little boy have a cuddle from your Daddy while he's here before the big war starts and he is gone . . .*

Hand-held camera jolts with him up and down the room, looking over his shoulder at an infant of less than two years, as fair-haired as his father, falling asleep in his arms. ("These shots have all the almost cannibalistic hunger of filial love about them"—Philip Strick, "*Sight and Sound*").

*His drowsy head so near mine. A different place in there. Jesus, a different universe! . . . How many different universes! . . . Can I really lead people, know what they want? . . . Can he really lead people and divine what they want, like a God? For a moment, he felt real fear . . .*

N's skull and ear come up and fill the screen.

*And perhaps in the same moment his son fell asleep. Now I need a goddamned charge.*

The viewpoint sinks slowly to floorlevel as he places the boy on a couch and covers him with a rug, so that the small figure is eclipsed by the immense dark lip of couch before N. begins to move away.

**"WE DON'T STAND IN LOCO PARENTIS,  
NOR SHOULD PARENTS"**

**THEY HAD ARRIVED.**

THEY HAD ARRIVED.

*Manaus*, cap. of state of Amazonas, U.S. of Brazil, sit. on the Rio Negro about 10m. from its junction with the Amazon R. (q.v.). Trading and commercial centre of the state, and chief port after newly developed Belem (q.v.). 1000m. from the ocean but only 80 ft. above sea level; temp. rarely budges below 80 F., humidity corres. high. Pop. quarter mill. Town once centre of fabulous rubber boom at turn of cent—trade stolen by Malaya, due to crafty British (q.v.). Patti sang and Pavlova danced in huge opera house, now closed. Later visited by J. Cornelius (q.v.).

*101 Things for a Clean-Minded Boy to Do Annual, 3rd Ed.*

"It was here or Maracaibo," said Jerry as they dis-

embarked.

"What was so bad about Maracaibo?" Grotti Cruziero asked, sweating.

"You get used to it. I was here before," Yvonne said.

Von Tubb and Bulmer-Lytton were arguing about deformation of anatomy as an aid to perspective in the paintings of Caravaggio—a typical Populist preoccupation. Cornelius let the small talk flow over him, warily casing the go-downs as they climbed the ramp. There were a few steamers here, surrounded by frailer craft. Palms thrust up their tousled armour among the sawn-off skyscrapers. It was hot. A large advert nearby cried TAKE A RISK! SMOKE MEXICAN SADDLE. Free Insurance in Every Pack! Neda Arneric's face smiled from a film poster, free of guile or fever.

His eye caught an intermittent beam of light flashing from an upper window. Instinctively, he grasped Yvonne's arm. She glanced where he did.

"We should make love like that, bodilessly, in sun rays."

"It's a heliograph."

"Semaphornication. New sensuistry. Mount me with your beam."

But he was reading. Z-I-V-A—S-H-E-

"They're on to us. Let's take this side alley!"

As they hurried into the disgraceful little side-cut, a mere slice between rotting houses, he glanced up at its name. Avinda de Cornelius. When they name a street after you one day and chase you down it the next, that's the very marrow of life.

### THE WORLD OF THE DO-IT-YOURSELF WAR

IN HIS SECRET headquarters under the old Zagreb Palace of Culture, Ancestor gave curt orders that would result in a series of demotions all over Middle-Europe, the defeat of a *putsch* in Vienna, and the execution of two cherished assassins in Athens: and then returned to a moody contemplation of his forged air tickets.

"You have a photo of this Ann Ayn Rand I'm travelling with?" he asked Podovnik.

Podovnik said impassively, "She is mid-thirties, looks like Dorothy la Paz with specks. Born Florida, U.S.A., of native stock. She's quite a nice person—if you go for nice people. It's essential to the Populist movement that you make friendly to her."

The Man Whose Little Finger was Stronger Than a Frontier looked moodily down at his big fingers. He lived in the world of the massive police search, the amber alert, the do-it-yourself war. Now he was faced with a personal problem. To communicate socially—away from the protocol of interrogation and command—he had to think himself back thirty-five years to a Zagreb suburb that now lay pulverised under a stretch of the InterEuropa Highway.

Maybe the damned plane would crash.

**"STOP THE TWENTIETH CENTURY—IT'S THE  
NINETEENTH TRAVELLING IN REVERSE!"**

AS HIS CELL door swung open, Jose Caoneiro raised his bruised and broken face. He had been resting his split right eye against the stone wall, just below an enigmatic poster of the Countess Anna-Maria Speranza Histaga de la Guista

Perquista. To quiet his heart, he was trying to compose a new revolutionary song.

The inquisitor came in very silently, carrying a leather truncheon which Caoneiro recognised.

"Isn't that sort of thing a little old-fashioned?"

The inquisitor laughed without making a sound. "The twentieth century is a very old-fashioned century, don't

inquisitor. "Now—who is the *real* fake Robert Graves?"

## HOUSE ABOLITION PROTEST MARCH STRIKE

MISS BRUNNER WAS being interviewed for 'The World at One' at the Ladbroke Grove HQ, and giving very little away. Her difference of opinion with the B.B.C. was



you think? Like the nineteenth run backwards." His shoulders were bent under the prodromic weight of the building above them. His skin had the pallor of prison soup. From his pocket, he produced a Portuguese-language newspaper and waved it before his prisoner.

Sluggishly, Caoneiro's left eye picked out the headlines. RETROGRESSIVE SPERM COUNTS SPELL MICROCOSM CONCERTINA. Hoyle Postulates Devolution. He could not comprehend; was the Sperm Count some relation of the aristocratic strumpet above his head?

"I suppose you'll pretend you don't know anything about this theory, or about how your mistress Yvonne Conifern went to ground?"

"I don't know what it means."

"Unbridled innocence is one of the major social problems of our times, compared with which the inarticulate yodellings of pop-song-composers are no more than Pavlov is to Pavlova. I suppose you will deny that all round us our continent lies vulnerable to immediate invasion by the united armed forces of lust-mad North American and Russian Soviets, simply because scab-devouring dogs like you refuse to yield to the natural national dreams of the majority, as embodied in the aspirations of our Great Leader?"

Not feeling up to philosophy, Caoneiro rested his broken teeth gently against the immense pad of his swollen lower lip.

"So we'll talk about plane-crashes," whispered the

of long standing.

"What was your reaction to yesterday's nuclear destruction of Demansky Island?" asked David Jessel. "When did you last see Eric Mardersbacher? How does a field of white, blue, and red flowers figure in the Populist mythology? Why did you and Dr Evans cancel your seats in the Pan-Am Concorde just before it crashed? How do you evaluate the recent shift in world power?"

Tightly controlled, she said, "Today's adventure doesn't lie in the impotence of action. It's a still-life in which passivity has acquired strike force. We make fossilized gestures. Everything we do comes out of a small box labelled 'Made in the 1830's'. It's all in Lenin's early works, before he was—ah, misinterpreted." She fanned herself with a picture postcard of the Mato Grosso.

"And for those of us who haven't read our Lenin lately?"

"For those few, there are popular writers who have prefigured all. Simenon, Dennis Wheatley, Robert Service, Leslie Charteris, Svevo, Murray Roberts, E. Phillips Oppenheim, Rudyard Kipling, Ethel Mannin . . . I could go on."

"Not all of them very popular names . . ."

"Greatness and popularity are not always synonymous, young man!" Her eyes were as chilly as her tone.

"Your public reading of 'Portnoy's Complaint' in Zagreb last month . . ."

"A diversion," she said For the first time, she allowed



herself to smile. A rather artificial smile. Almost as if she were pretending to be natural on TV.

## EVERYTHING OR NOTHING IS WORTH TELEVISION

THEY CROWDED INTO a small bar for a breather. The few deadbeats there stared at them. They acted normally to throw off suspicion. Von Tubb bought a packet of Mexican Saddle. Grotti Cruziero drank a cachaca. Bulmer-Lytton ventured into the urinal and scrawled SILVER IS THE COLOUR WE GENERALLY CALL WINGS on the wall. In his own peculiar dialect, it was a vivid insult. Carleton Greene read a paperback called 'Bugging Gutenberg Museum (Mainz) Sport Glitter'. Yvonne ran her hand over Jerry's chest.

"Let's go back—death alarms me almost as much as life!"

"Shall I give you a Life Message?"

"Which one's that?"

"There's really only one: Be superb!" He ran his fingers through her hair. It was stiff with lacquer. He had forgotten she was three-quarters Negro.

Bulmer-Lytton emerged, zipping his corrupt flies.

## RELATIVITY—THE WAY VAN VOGT USED TO TELL IT

HIS HIGH HAD disintegrated, leaving him cold and mean. The taxi bounced endlessly on out of Montevideo, northwards. Nothing but road and beach, unwholesome in sunlight. Even the child-prostitutes had gone. He tried to think of the forthcoming meeting of Populist world-leaders in Manaus, but all that came was a slow clockwork orange and the smell of durian fruit dropping from the durian tree. He wanted to get back to Burma. The Munch aura was less strong there. Very.

"How long does this beach go on?" he asked Oliphant, irritably.

"Hundreds of miles of beach. Right the way from Montevideo to the border. And the tide never goes out." He yelled to the driver to stop.

The engine died. The tedium of planetary waves, slogging it across from Africa, where everything had begun and would end, according to the oldest and the latest prognostications.

Oliphant pointed ahead.

The beach was broken by a field of blue, red, and white flowers as far as the eye could see. The flowers made startling contrast to the blotting paper hues of ocean and forest.

"That's the power of the Populist movement. One day, the people are going to inherit!"

"Come on, that's an old Jesus joke! You didn't drag me all the way out here to crack that one." He groped for the bottle of local whisky. After pot, what? "The people have always been going to inherit."

"Yeah. But now they're going to inherit next year—with your assistance. The Populist leaders will trust you, if you can find it in you to trust them. How do you like the field of flowers?"

Grudgingly, "Aesthetics is an Old Wave Thing, isn't it?"

But okay, it's beautiful. Pretty fucking beautiful."

"Let's walk then."

They trudged over the blue, red, and white field, up to the ankles in old newsprint. Montez followed behind, cuddling the machine gun.

"Don't tell me," he said. But Oliphant told him.

"This all was Navarro's idea—the Dutch leader. Elementary lesson in transmutation, he calls it, for cynics with no trust in people-in-the-mass." He scooped up a torn page. In primary colours, Dagwood made a giant sandwich and was biffed by his wife for including her purgatives in it. "See all this field of flowers, so-called—it took you in from the road? You really believed it was flowers? It's all old Yank comicbooks, 'Superman', 'Astounding', 'Flash Gordon', and dozens of others, all torn up here. The literature of the people. Becomes the most beautiful thing you ever saw. Miles of beautiful thing."

Montez had grabbed up a page, fell to his knees dropping the gun, hot to find what happened to Steve Canyon.

"That representative of the people would rather have the flowers reconstituted," he said, jerking a thumb at Montez.

Back at the car again, taking a slug from the Old Lord bottle, he stared back at the amazing beach. It looked like blue, white, and red flowers again. Only now he didn't care for the sight.

Switching his mind from the immediate confrontation, he began to consider Navarro's character in the light of this new revelation. The man was far from being a plodding literal-minded quasi-intellectual like Oliphant (real name Olbai Gulbai Phant) and some of the other nationals. Maybe that was because he was—as his many enemies claimed—raving mad.

He was wiping the sweat from his brow and taking another slug when Montez loomed up. In his lapel was a Jan Palach badge.

"So, Meester, 'ow you like Souse America, eh?"

"Just great. Makes me realise I really am European, and there are such things as those mythical animals, Europeans!"

As if in confirmation of his words, the thought came to him that it was time to return to the advertising jag. Oh Death where is thy sting with a Mexican Saddle.

"Okay, no bullshit. Orange very strong. Yes, no, daylight, Elizabeth. The fingers of the hand, good, yes. Very good, very strong."

"He intimates he had a good piss," interpreted von Tubb.

"Let's go," Jerry said. He slipped on his Robert Graves mask. The others did likewise.

They crossed a main thoroughfare, alarmingly full of Volkswagens, and dived down another alley. At the far end of it, the opera house loomed.

They emerged under trees, walked cautiously round one side of the great square in which the building stood. It still looked splendid, worthy of a Patti, a Pavlova, its golden dome shining in the muzzy equatorial sun. Under a tree, mules crapped and crepuscular dogs fainted; Jerry was glad about that—he had been thinking of Graham Greene.

He stepped boldly into the open. There were cops about, big black truculent men with high boots and long truncheons. They paid attention only to the girls who

passed, tawny and leonine in speckled shade.

Before the opera house was an ornamental promenade with a double flight of semi-circular stone steps leading up to it. As the party walked towards the steps, a figure darted out from under them and fired twice before running towards the shelter of the trees.

Bulmer-Lytton staggered and fell. From round his body,

Ady-Lagrang, Charles. Scarcely less fluent as an author than as artist, populist genius Ady-Lagrang has lamentably not written as copiously for publication as might have been hoped in the light of his flair for narrative and composition, as evinced in the BINARY DIVINE SAUCE SHOW ads. In his superb recital of the folk-fantasy JUST JERRY, he broke to vivid life a tale which cannot fail to bemuse readers. Again, the articles."



the Populist flag unfurled, a representation of Dali's 'Six Apparitions of Lenin on a Piano'. Blood suppurated from a hole above his left eye. As he passed the dying man, Jerry snatched the flag from the ground and they ran up the steps into the shelter of the baroque portico.

#### MARY MARY LIVE FOR ME

In and out of the smiling crowd  
The cryptozoic spreads its coils  
Like Spanish moss in international trees  
Like national flags in international breeze

The rapid eye movements of my love  
Sleeping near me tell their tale  
Of local flowers in international dreams  
Sweet local fish in international streams

A local habitation and a world-wide name  
Mary Mary live for me!  
Private places in the Public-Faces Game  
Mary Mary live for me!  
Don't die for your country  
Live for me! Live for me!

*A Popular Populist Song, by A. Caoneiro (in prison)*

#### THE SICK CITIES OF HISTORY

"WORLD SUPERMEN OF the Underground: #73,

AT LAST THE Countess tore herself away from the chimpanzees and allowed Fred Bahai to lead her to a coffee stall on the Embankment. Over in Lambeth, they were letting off coruscations of fireworks to celebrate the hundredth birthday of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Legends flared across the sky.

#### HIS NAME BE PRAISED BLESSED ARE THE LONGLIVED YOU ASKED FOR IT ROME

AS HER RADDIED face turned chartreuse, Fred said, almost apologetically, "Mention of religion reminds me—there was something I wanted to say to you about sex, Countess."

She looked at her watch. "Six tomorrow?"

"No, sex tonight. Countess, it has been a great privilege discovering the secrets of the universe with you, and over recent weeks I've found myself falling—"

"We're all falling! London's falling!" She sketched a gesture that included the coffee stall along with the Thames and the alphabetical galaxies above.

#### HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU KNOW WHO LET THIS BE A LESSON

"THERE ARE CERTAIN sick cities of history," she said.

"You know them as well as I do, Fred—Bogota, Dublin, Zagreb, Calcutta, Trieste—"

"That's your subtle flattery—you know I've never been outside England."

"Charming boy! London is also such a city. Its end inherent in its beginning, just as every baby's chromosomes carry its demise. Thus doom—"

"Er, before we get too gloomy, Countess, I must tell you I love you. I know that we're as different as the arts of Pavlov and Pavlova, but I love you!"

She dropped her coffee cup and placed her dry old lips raspingly against his. His arms went round her. She tugged one of his earlobes. He waggled his pelvis. She opened her thighs. He began to investigate the intricacies of her corset. She bit his neck. They both turned shock pink.

GOD BLESS GOD

### SIX MANIFESTATIONS OF JOSEPH LOSEY BEFORE BREAKFAST

ON THE HIGH ceiling of the rubber-boom building, gods and goddesses disported themselves amid clouds, cherubs, and chariots with a display of ardour and perspective that would have done credit to a dozen Tiepolos.

Some of the Populist leaders were already there, standing in an embarrassed group in the stalls, usheretteless, perhaps feeling unable to talk and smile naturally unless the Press was exploding round them. Taking Yvonne's arm, Jerry walked to meet them, muttering the password as he shook hands with Oliphant, Portnoy, Mardersbacher, Ancestor, Navarro, Munch.

"Ziva Sheckley . . . Ziva Sheckley . . . Liked your flower-power, Navarro."

From the shadows, Ancestor said, "Can we begin with the discussions before the others have come? Let's start in! You all know Sir Frederick Hoyle's hypothesis, the Firmament Theorem, that every hour takes us closer to the origins of the solar system. There's no time to lose."

"You forget that's why we met in Amazonia in the first place, Ancestor," said Ann Ayn Rand. "The haul along the para-evolutionary cycle is longest in these primitive parts. Here we have most time."

She was getting back at him for all those bad jokes on the plane.

"Which is all the more reason to use that time wisely," he said. "I call the congress to order. So first let's take a vote. Those in favour that people remain human raise their right hands."

The First International Congress of the Interplanetary Populist Party had begun . . .

"It is a meeting that will live in history," Miss Brunner said, when she had read the report—adding cynically to David Jessel, "Always supposing that history is what we think it is, and has enough staying power."

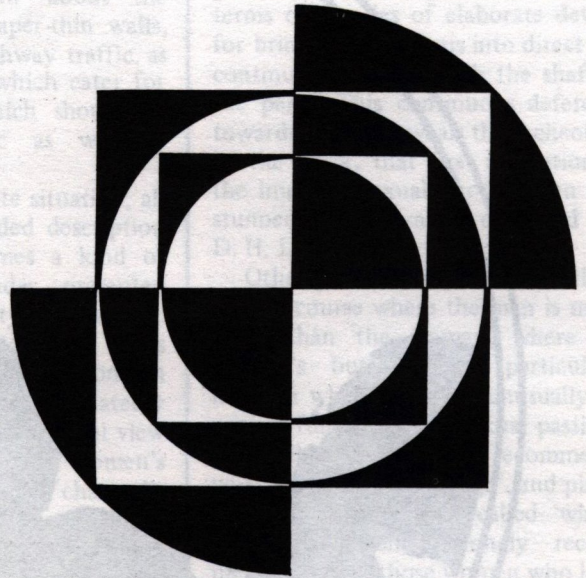
Cornelius twirled his pan-topped round funnel drinking glass and smiled. "The title of my next film: 'History—Event or Interpretation'."

"Then we'll all need staying power!" Miss Brunner said.

Cornelius nodded, "Like a pearl needs oysters." ■

# Faber

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## FABER & FABER



# BOOKS & COMMENT

**J. G. Ballard:**

## *Use Your Vagina*

**B**OOKS LIKE THIS one are never reviewed, although their sales—through mail order and under-the-

counter outlets—are among the largest of all time, part of a huge invisible literature ignored by the critics. A factual reappraisal of these sexual handbooks, not merely as a subject for arch or clever comment, is long overdue. Most of them are profoundly earnest in tone, and deserve to be taken on their own terms in exactly the same way as the latest Ford Zephyr maintenance manual. How far any of them reflect the real world of sex is for each of us to judge. As basic

primers they have the same unreality as the sort of colloquial French found in tourist guides, but this is less the fault of the publishers and authors than the impossibility of compressing the subject matter within the pages of a book.

**How to Achieve Sexual Ecstasy** (Stephan Gregory: Running Man Press, 42s.) was launched recently in a series of mail-order advertisements in magazines and underground news-

papers. Elegant typography and a naked photographic model kicking up her heels suggested that this would be a fresh attempt to deal with an old subject matter. Some of the chapter titles, such as 'Beyond Sexual Infinity' and 'Threshold of the Sexual Psyche', seemed to describe a sexual version of "2001", conjuring up a vision of a Panavision penis driving towards all the bedposts of eternity, while the Blue Danube played from the mattress vents. The book itself is far more conservative. Although its first publication is given as 1969, it is difficult to tell when it was written. So successful have these handbooks been over the last 50 years that many of them have been revised and reprinted dozens of times. This one is American in origin, the bulk of it probably written in the late fifties, although in one section comments are made on the Masters-Johnson studies. The author's attitude is one of permissiveness governed by a strict moral code. Throughout, his text enshrines the notion that complete sexual happiness is the right of everyone in terms of that self-defeating paradox, normal sexual behaviour.

The hypothetical reader is difficult to visualise, although the sales of this book have already been enormous. Who in fact would want to read it? Who would gain information from it? The preface describes it as a handbook of sex technique, though most of the amatory techniques and sexual positions described are known to any adolescent. At times one wonders whether these books are intended as fact or fiction. The lengthy descriptions of acts of intercourse couched in detailed narrative terms are much more reminiscent of erotic fiction than they are of any handbook. However, in one sense it seems to me that these books of so-called sexual expertise provide what J. B. S. Haldane called a kinesthetic language, in this case a kinesthetic language of sex, a set of terms and descriptions by which ordinary people can describe a series of important experiences and activities for which no vocabulary previously existed.

A key to the book may come in the first chapter, in a section entitled "Arousing the unresponsive wife", a suggestion that perhaps the book is designed for married couples who have begun to find a monogamous sexual relationship something of a bore. The description of an idealised sexual encounter, the set piece of the book, is presented with enormous detail, with a

great deal of attention paid to the mise en scene.

The place should be agreeable to both participants. If it is to be a public place such as an hotel or motel, care should be taken to insure availability of accommodation, by reservation if possible. . . .

Warnings are given about the hazards offered by paper-thin walls, corridor noises and highway traffic, as well as public places which cater for 'illicit sex traffic, which should be avoided for aesthetic as well as practical reasons.'

Given the appropriate situation, all is well, and the extended description of the sex act becomes a kind of seduction of the reader, presented with a notable simplicity and warmth. Careful attention is paid to the needs of elaborate foreplay and a concern for the partner's responses. Repeatedly the book stresses the traditional view of the supposed slowness of women's responses (how times have changed). However, those of us who tend to rush our fences could surely learn something from the descriptions of how to kiss our partner's elbows and savour the delights of the navel. "Under the impetus of these attentions," the author assures us, "the woman will quickly reach a high level of passionate abandon. Her breath will begin to come in gasps (or sobs) and her hips will be in continuous motion. She may ask you to 'put it in me' or she may say something like 'Hurry, hurry'. At this point you should roll her onto her back."

An interesting comment on the psychology of the book is seen in what the author terms 'the clean-up operation immediately following the after-play period.' He warns his readers that certain substances secreted under the duress of passion are often found offensive by both partners as passion wanes. It is wise, the author states, that clean-up begin before any feelings of revulsion may set in.

After this first extended narrative seen from the man's point of view a similar chapter follows from the standpoint of the woman. What characterises the text is the immense concern that the author attributes to his two idealised partners. Both are so busy caring for the feelings of the other that they can have little time for any real passion, let alone the aggression and cruelty that drive in the same harness as love and tenderness.

In the second chapter, "Specialised Coital Positions", hints are given on how to derive the maximum of

pleasure from the classic sexual positions. The language throughout is simple and matter-of-fact, under headings such as 'Penetration is too shallow' 'Fit is too loose' or 'Fit is too tight.' Again, enormous attention is given to the need to satisfy the woman partner, a problem primarily solved in terms of a series of elaborate devices for bringing the clitoris into direct and continuous contact with the shaft of the penis. This continuous deference towards women reveals the archeology of the book, that first realisation of the immense sexuality of women that stunned the generation of Freud and D. H. Lawrence.

Other problems discussed are those of intercourse where the man is much taller than the woman, where the woman's buttocks are particularly large, or where, given an unusually big penis a fuller range of sexual pastimes is possible. The author recommends what he terms 'riding high', and places great stress on the so-called 'wheelbarrow position', strongly recommending it for those women who have difficulty in achieving complete orgasm. However, he points out the hazards of using the inverted-vulva positions during pregnancy. Again and again he emphasises the need for women to make the most of their sexual pleasure, at times even at the expense of their male partners. "Use your vagina," he writes, "use it for sexual pleasure. Do not hasten towards his climax, but towards yours."

Good advice, but at one point the author contrasts his idealised sexual experience with what he terms the usual and tragic pattern of sex in our society—masturbation, illicit adventures, frigidity, perversions, disenchantment, divorce, neuroses, psychoses, alcoholism and drug addiction, prostitution and sex crimes. What the book completely ignores is fact that these activities are those which most people now seem to prefer, that sexuality is expressed more and more in terms only of its perversions and disenchantments rather than of those platonic embraces the book so humanly and affectionately describes. Too many of us would rather be involved in a sex crime than in sex. Sadly, the conceptualisation of sex which has taken place along with everything else leads us away from precisely those idealised sexual encounters which these handbooks describe. To a large extent this book, like many others, is a nostalgic hymn to a kind of sexual Garden of Eden, whose doors Havelock Ellis, Marie

Stopes and numerous other pioneers tried for so many years to re-open. Alas, the original tenants are no longer interested. In all probability what will put an end to the population explosion will be not birth control but buggery. Sex does not exist, only eroticism.

For all its good intentions, and its broadminded concern for our sexual happiness, "How to Achieve Sexual Ecstasy" has a strangely period quality. Above all it is a monument to marriage and the monogamous sexual relationship, and to the somewhat old-fashioned notion that someone else's pleasure is more important than our own. Far from being sent out under plain wrappers, books of this kind should be read in schools, though how far this would prepare our children for the real world seems doubtful, particularly to a generation of sub-teens brought up on Zap comics. When one thinks of successful marriages today one thinks in terms of couples who have worked out successful extra-marital relationships. A modern and much more relevant version of this manual would be concerned with the sexual perversions (some so bizarre that they have ceased to have any connection with sex), with the effects of drugs and pot on sexual behaviour, and the whole gamut of real and vicarious couplings possible when more than two people are present. It would also provide accounts of sexual intercourse with prostitutes, a specialised sub-category of sexual experience that requires its own expertise and mental attitudes. Needless to say, these ecstasies are of a very different kind, of the white tile smeared with pus. And if only by way of a pause, I recommend Stephan Gregory's book.

## M. John Harrison: *The Boy from Vietnam*

One of the great strengths of the late Mervyn Peake's fiction lies in its presentation of characters trapped in unbearably restricted microcosms—Titus Groan, for instance, in his strait-jacket of ritual—struggling to get out. There is a fascination in this kind of

claustrophobia: but the particular horror of Peake's work comes upon the individual's escape from his pocket of stricture and his discovery that the macrocosm is even more grotesque, limiting and intolerable; as if the original restriction were that of a womb—a protection, however distasteful. This outer horror reveals itself potently in *Boy In Darkness*, a novella which appears alongside Ballard's *The Voices Of Time* and Aldiss' *Danger: Religion!*, in an anthology entitled *The Inner Landscape* from Allison & Busby at 25s.

In much the same fashion as Titus, the Boy escapes his ritual responsibilities via a series of most fallopian passages to find himself in a wilderness ruled by the Lamb, who has the trick of literally bringing out the beast in a man. The story is made doubly horrifying by the fact that the beast-men always die; that the Lamb needs fresh company; and that he has long ago run out of raw material: one feels as the narrative progresses that the Boy is the last human being, that the world is empty but for this mad blind beast and his last remaining minions, the Goat and the Hyena, operating out of an abandoned mine in a virtually global desert.

It is a chilling piece, a classic; as is Ballard's *The Voices Of Time*. So well known now that synopsis must be superfluous, Ballard's incredible baroque landscape, peopled by sleepers and hypnagogic visions, is packed with deeply disturbing images and concepts that go straight to the subconscious. He has specialised in strange disasters: this must be his strangest; it is certainly his most beautiful.

Sadly, Aldiss' of multiple probability-streams and religious developments doesn't match up. There is plenty of action, but this isn't an 'inner' landscape at all; it hasn't the tremendous atmosphere of the other two: and its obvious 'message' intrudes. Aldiss is on better form in his collection *Intangibles Inc.* (Faber, 25s.). There are five novellas here: *Neanderthal Planet*, about a world in which robots keep men in zoos and are worried because they cannot cast off their 'human heritage' and become pure automata; *Randy's Syndrome*, in which the unborn babies of earth refuse to come out and face a hysterical mess of a society, communicating through their somewhat bovine mothers; *Send Her Victorious*, which hinges on the old 'man is a laboratory

animal' plot, twisted to become a comment on the effect of our Victorian past; *Intangibles Inc.*, a Bradbury-ish fantasy about a man who sells ambitions; and *Since The Assas-*



Norman Mailer

sination, probably the best of the collection, a weaving of modern myth-situations and psychoses.

All Aldiss' obsessions are represented: over-population and the Overmind, mass insanity and a reaching toward new mental experience, questions of personal and objective time. His characters are for the most part very real and human, his structures careful and complex. This is a skilful and very readable collection.

The obsessions propelling Eric Burdick's *Old Rag Bone* (Hutchinson, 27s. 6d.) are more traditional. Christopher Taylor, a failed Catholic writer ("Then came the first crack in what his old priest would call his spiritual armour, his first obsession—the fear of writing"), becomes a rag and bone man; having fallen from Grace, takes up with schoolgirls, tarts and obscene phone calls. His brother Roy, who has not an ounce of the True Faith, writes a Catholic novel and has to convince the critics that he hasn't just jumped his brother's bandwagon. Meanwhile, Roy's girlfriend Suzan, an exhibitionist, has just the qualities that appeal to depraved Christopher. . . .

Despite all this the novel is extremely funny in a vulgar way reminiscent of Colin Spencer's work. Christopher's antics as a 'totter', Suzan's exhibitions on tube trains and over cellar gratings—"with a last intense excitement she moved her feet apart to help him see"—and Roy's attempts to con a drunken Fleet Street critic have a raw and lifelike edge that makes the book worth reading if you can ignore the heavy, inept symbolism and the crass ending in which every-

body dies because they've been sinful.

Lloyd Kropp's first novel, *The Drift* (Doubleday, 4.95), also has its basis in traditional material, in the legend of the ships' graveyard of the Sargasso Sea:

*Some of the ships listed at steep angles; others lay on their sides, apparently suspended by thick growths of Sargasso Weed. . . . Some rested across or on top of other ships that had almost completely submerged in thick growths of strange sea flowers and exotic green plants. . . .*

Sutherland, a college professor looking for a temporary way out of reality, takes a holiday in the Caribbean. His sloop is wrecked and he winds up on a floating island of brigantines, galleons and caravels all slowly deteriorating at the centre of a huge stationary eddy. He finds a flourishing if introverted society that has been built up over hundreds of years from the crews of ships like his own. Having no contact with the outside world, linked to *The Drift* by both physical and metaphysical circumstances, the islanders have evolved a credo based on mysticism and interpersonal mental contact that may or may not be illusory. Sutherland is faced with the choice of accepting their fantasy or of attempting a return to the equally unreal zone of college staff-rooms, university politics and his ambivalent relationship with his divorced wife.

Kropp's pictures of *The Drift*—the decaying rococo beauty of the ancient ships, the ritual existence of their inhabitants, the flickers and intimations of a more than human mental system—are compelling; but the book fizzles on Sutherland's return to land, because the fantasy of *The Drift* becomes too clear and the real world is too real. The high point of the novel is the Dance Of The Nine Islands, a choreographic re-work of the *Odyssey*, its archetypal overtones stressed very nicely indeed.

Under the heading "INTRO BEEP 1", Norman Mailer's *Why Are We In Vietnam?* (Weidenfeld, 30s) begins thus:

*Hip hole and hupmobile, Braunschweiger, you didn't invite Geiger and his counter for nothing, here is D.J. the friendLee voice at your service—hold tight young America—introductions come. Let go of my dong Shakespeare, I have gone too long, it is too late to tell my tale, may Batman tell it, let him declare there's blood on my dick. . . .*

It must have been quite an effort to keep this up, but he does it, and for 208 pages. The question of the title is answered allegorically and at length in the story of a hunting trip made by teenage D.J. and father, Or is it? Perhaps the publishers are right and this is a 'symbolic psychic explanation'. Either way, the novel is at once remarkable and remarkably boring, something like a hippie Jack London with the action obscured by the style. The descriptions of dying animals are quite nice and seem pertinent to the title: and the passage dealing lovingly with the hunters' hardware—"Well, now there, let's have a rundown on the guns for those good Americans who care . . . Luke got a Model 70 Winchester .375 Magnum restocked (with maple Japanese Shigui finish and remodelled by Griffin & Howe with a Unertl 2½ X scope . . ."—certainly reflects the American obsession with the gun as a phallic substitute.

## James Cawthorn: *The Comrade from Ploor*

"It is a fact that about 70 per cent of all known human population is non-Communist. This Board is in virtually unanimous agreement that about 96 per cent of all people now under Communist rule as we know it would be vastly better off under Galaxianism; would live much fuller, freer and better lives than under Communism."

The above is a quotation from the last novel by Edward E. 'Doc' Smith, *Subspace Explorers* (Ace Books, 60¢). And Galaxianism—surprise, surprise!—is just about indistinguishable from true-blue two-fisted Capitalism, and out there along the star lanes it is still all systems go for the Cold War. Union leaders are crooked slob who slug it out with the tycoons in the streets of New York, using machine-guns, flame-throwers and giant tanks. The police, meanwhile, play it cool.

The worlds of Doc Smith were always absurdly melodramatic, a child's fantastic universe in which the honourable knight possessed a magic

sword *and* an unbreakable shield *and* invincible armour, and his white horse probably knew a trick or two as well. For those who can stomach the extravagance of his style, the incredible dialogue: "... I'm just as much of a Timid Soul as you are, you Fraidy Freddie, you—why, I'm absodamlutely the shrinkiest little violet you ever laid your cotton-pickin' eyes on," and the extension of current ideological conflict into the far future, *Subspace Explorers* offers the kind of entertainment that made the good old days of sf what they were.

*Brother Assassin* (Ballantine SF, 75¢), by Fred Saberhagen, continues and possibly completes the history of the Berserkers v. Man struggle. The remnants of the human community on Sirgol are fighting a complex war with the Berserkers, killing machines of ferocious efficiency and unknown origin. Sirgol's war is unique in that the space-time conditions surrounding the planet make time-travel possible, and the endlessly adaptable Berserkers are striking at the roots of Sirgolian history in a bid to push humanity, past and future, into non-existence. In subterranean cities far below the ruined surface of their world, the Sirgolians plot the course of the war on a temporal 'radar', striving to maintain key probability lines in the evolution of their society against the distortions introduced by the enemy. The final solution is neat, unexpected (though medievalists may see it before it hits them) and stretches credibility just a little.

Credibility is absent from John Brunner's *Double, Double* (Ballantine SF, 75¢), which features Things from the Sea, dark hints concerning the dangers of dumping chemical and radioactive waste, a pop group, an embittered and alcoholic reporter, and a fine old collection of clichés dredged up from the duller sf films of the last decade or two.

Mack Reynolds can at least be credited with creating his own clichés, which are given another airing in *Code Duello* (Ace Double, 60¢), a further episode in the United Planets 'Section G' series. Reynolds has swapped the earlier agents of the Section here, for a team of physical and mental freaks, despatched to the planet Firenze to investigate a subversive movement which is retarding social progress. Among the snags they encounter are the local custom of duelling to the death over even the mildest of insults, and the fact that no one on Firenze

has actually met a known subversive. For some two-thirds of its length the story is readable, but the various antics and oddities of the special agents become repetitive, irritating and finally unbelievable. An heroic fantasy, **The Age of Ruin** by John M. Faucette, forms the other half of the double. Although the writing is of rather variable quality, this saga of a barbarian trekking across the devastated continents of a future Earth has



Edgar Rice Burroughs & Creations

some highly imaginative touches; the author is particularly adept at creating squirmingly unpleasant menaces which tend to run amok at critical moments.

**The Age of Ruin** is one of the more recent examples of a type of fiction which can be traced directly to the influence of Edgar Rice Burroughs, and in **Edgar Rice Burroughs: Master of Adventure** (Ace Books, 95¢) Richard A. Lupoff surveys the work and life of this immensely popular author. In the course of some 300 pages the plots of many Burroughs novels and short stories are outlined, major characters examined and their literary ancestry speculated upon, and some popular misconceptions corrected. Chief among these, of course, is the picture of E.R.B.'s most famous character, Tarzan of the Apes, as impressed upon the public mind by Hollywood. Save for a handful of films, the relationship between the original and the cinematic Tarzan is approximately that between Sherlock Holmes and Mike Hammer. There is a faint suggestion that Lupoff is conducting a private vendetta against the more rabid of Burroughs's followers, but otherwise he presents a fairly balanced assessment of a truly remark-

able professional writer.

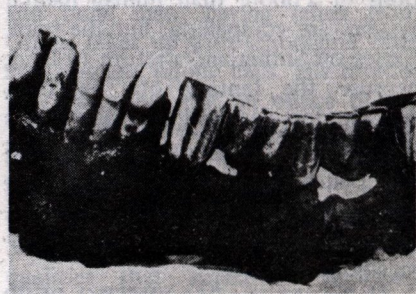
Space-opera is one of the gaudier divisions of science-fiction, is by no means so easy to write as it may seem, and among its better exponents is Edmond Hamilton. **World of the Starwolves** (Ace Books, 50¢) is the third in his series featuring Morgan Chane, the outlaw born of human parentage upon the high-gravity world of Varna. In this, the best Starwolf novel so far, Chane returns to Varna to recruit the Galaxy's greatest pirates for a raid upon a fearsomely-guarded treasure-world. As the entire Ranroi pirate clan are seeking to revenge themselves upon him in settlement of a blood debt, his situation is delicate. It all ends in a whirl of colour, action and double-crossing, lightened by deft touches of humour.

Violent action figures prominently, too, in James H. Schmitz's **The Demon Breed** (Ace SF Special, 60¢). Handing it out is Dr Nile Etland, a young lady whose diverse talents include deadly marksmanship with a UW pistol, and receiving it are the Parahuans, a batrarchian race who derive much aesthetic satisfaction from the contemplation of disembowelled human cadavers. The setting for this murderous little episode is a floating forest on Nandy-Cline, a world of vast oceans, and the author has constructed it in fascinating detail. Plant and animal life, and several creatures belonging to both categories, flap, swim, clamber and crawl around the combatants, while through them all stalks the pale and monstrous Parahuan tarm. Yet this is a battle of wits and a clash of conflicting philosophies which in the end prove more decisive than the shooting and the slaughter, a contest between the rigidly organised, highly specialised Parahuans and the seemingly disunited human colonies scattered among the stars. On both levels the story scores a considerable success. And so back to hard-core science with Hal Clement in **Small Changes** (Doubleday SF, \$4.95), a collection of nine stories stretching from 1944 to 1966, selected from **ASTOUNDING**, **ANALOG**, **GALAXY** and **WORLDS OF IF**. Such items as **Trojan Fall**, **Fireproof** and **Dust Rag** have become minor classics of the genre, and the problems which beset their characters are now moving rapidly into the realm of the everyday for the personnel of the world's major space programmes. If you dislike the current emphasis upon the soft sciences, try your teeth on Clement.

## R. Glynn Jones:

# The Machiavellian Method

If there is such a thing as a textbook for tyrants it is certainly Machiavelli's wordly and uncompromising treatise on attaining and maintaining power, **The Prince**, which has stood unique since it was written early in the sixteenth century. Machiavelli based his conclusions not on abstractions, but on analysis of the political events of antiquity. By comparing the activities of rulers in Ancient Rome with those of his own time, he formulated what he considered to be universally valid principles which might guide others to power. Certainly, subsequent leaders like Richelieu, Napoleon and Mussolini learned from Machiavelli (in fact, Mussolini wrote an Introduction to one edition of **The Prince**), and those tyrants who did not need to be taught their business showed an instinctive grasp of the same Machiavellian techniques. Since his study of Roman history was so effective, the prospect of what a modern Machiavelli (H. G. Wells notwithstanding) might learn from a study of the past 500 years is



Hitler's teeth

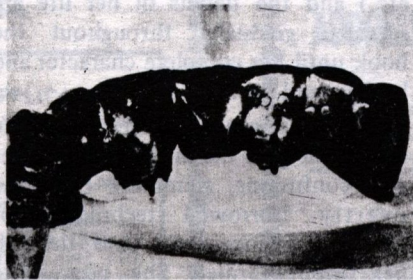
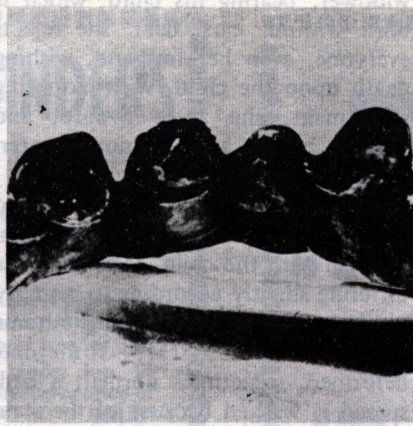
frightening; it is interesting, therefore, that in **Tyranny: a Study in the Abuse of Power** (Macmillan, 50s.) Maurice Lately acknowledges and employs the same historical methods for the opposite purpose of enabling us to detect and prevent tyranny in the future—in his words “to stand Machiavelli on his head.”

“We live,” writes Lately, “in an age of tyrants. Our generation has had the opportunity of studying—at uncom-



fortably close quarters—two of the greatest tyrants the world has ever seen, Hitler and Stalin, and scores of lesser ones. Indeed scarcely a year passes without the appearance of some new dictator who may well become a tyrant. We live too in an age when it has become a matter of life and death to study these great beasts of history, since at any moment one may arise who will have the power of life and death over all of us in the shape of nuclear weapons.” For his examples the author ranges freely in time and space, from Ancient Greece to contemporary Czechoslovakia: history has provided plenty of tyrants—the difficulty is deciding which ones to leave out, and Latey takes care at the outset to find a definition of tyranny which is objectively adequate, yet which will not hinder classification and discussion. The best one he can find is Pascal’s “desire of universal power beyond its scope,” allowing as it does for the relative nature of tyranny when conditions vary so widely from place to place and from century to century. The fact is that tyranny pervades life at every level. Families, offices, armies and countries all have their tyrants, and instances of collective tyranny as when one race or nation persecutes another are not hard to find—not to mention the Trade Unions, the Church, the Mafia. . . . It seems that wherever there is power it has been abused, and in the interests of space alone the author was wise to restrict his discussion to forms of personal tyranny.

What follows is a long and detailed examination dealing in turn with different aspects of tyranny, starting with a classification of despots which also includes more ambiguous figures like Alexander the Great and Oliver Cromwell, whose intentions were largely good but who nevertheless exercised power beyond the scope of the law and customs of their times. Here too we meet Emperor Frederick II Hohenstaufen who is singled out as the prototype of all the Renaissance tyrants and the father of the Inquisition. Comment on such undisputed tyrants as Hitler and Stalin is postponed until later in the book. As the chapters progress from “Classification” to “The Conditions of Tyranny”, “The Nurture of Tyrants”, “The Exercise of Power” and so on, dozens of exemplary tyrants are paraded before us, as varied as humanity itself: madmen like Caligula, “the first actual lunatic to bestride the



Hitler's teeth

Roman Empire”; artists like Dionysius and Nero, jealous of their professional reputations; exceptions like Claudius, who Gibbon supposed to be alone amongst 15 Emperors in that his tastes in love were entirely normal (although they weren’t: Latey rather stuffily points out that he “contracted an incestuous union with his niece”); religious tyrants like Philip II of Spain and Henry the Eighth, military ones like López and Napoleon—there is even a mention for Al Capone (—his opinion of Mussolini’s prospects: “He’ll be OK if he can keep the boys in line”). The author’s reluctance to generalise from his multitude of examples makes it difficult to summarise his discussion or begin to suggest its incredible detail; suffice to say that the conclusions that he does reach are disappointing.

The principal moral that he draws in the final chapter of the book is that the real origins of modern tyrannies are to be found in the climate of nihilism created by the radical intelligentsia after Rousseau: “. . . Hegel and Nietzsche might well have disapproved of Hitler and Mussolini, and Marx . . . might well have been shocked at Stalin; but they were the fathers of these monstrous offspring . . . and they are the more to blame, because man cannot control his chromosomes, but he is the master of his ideas”. So be careful what you write? The greatest threat to British

liberty is seen as the gradual growth of the government’s power, and these are Latey’s proposals for checking it: “To my fellow-intellectuals—that we cease contemplating our navels and shuddering at what we see, and lift up our eyes to consider our position in history and the world; to Trade Unionists—that we attend Branch meetings; to our legislators—that they consider formulating the constitutional limits on the powers of government which have so far been left unwritten; not that freedom was ever saved by a constitution, but it can prove a valuable trip-wire or warning light; to our Scottish and Welsh fellow countrymen—that they should go on agitating for home rule and their own Parliaments, as separate centres of power, provided that they are willing to pay for it; to the Church of England—that it should disestablish itself, or at least take the appointment of Bishops out of the Prime Minister’s office”. This seems rather tame after 300 pages of the “great beasts of history” and those introductory remarks about it being “a matter of life and death” to study them. And why are intellectuals frightened by the sight of their own navels?

With a subject as vast and as complicated as that of tyranny, some selectivity is essential to give a study like this some underlying and uniting



Hitler's teeth

theme. Maurice Latey writes interestingly enough, but possesses neither the economy of style nor the psychological insight that distinguished Machiavelli’s writing—indeed, it would probably take a Machiavelli to make a success of it. The trouble is that the introduction was right; we are living in a terribly dangerous age, and even the tyrants that do exist are insignificant compared to the ones that *could* exist. I don’t know whether history can teach us how to prevent future tyrants, but it can certainly warn us of the dangers; the image of a raging, defeated Hitler blowing the world to pieces—if he and not President Truman had happened to have his finger on the button—is terrifying.

# D. R. Boardman: Woman's Realm

It is a traditional tendency of female academics of 30 or so to become part-time novelists. Whether



Maureen Lawrence

the loss is to their careers or their writing is debatable. They tend to the nitpickingly-constructed, the obscure, and, generally, to the unreadable, a fault to be found in that other literary type, the ex-academic housewife. Although following this tradition, *The Tunnel* (Gollancz, 30s) is an extremely competent first novel by Maureen Lawrence, a teacher at the College of Education, Nottingham.

It is the deceptively simple story of a nameless woman: she was brought up in an orphanage, then put into lodgings with an old woman, and sent to work as an assistant in a canteen. In middle age she marries an elderly

widower, bearing his child, which is born without ears, deaf; she rejects everyone, even her husband, wishing death upon the child. With mounting resentment, she turns inward, and reality, hopes and memories intermingle.

The book opens with repeated sequences concerning her return from hospital with the child, each sequence differing slightly according to memory or desire (the baby is brought home from the hospital, sometimes deformed, sometimes normal; a bedspread is washed because of the stain made by her husband, made by her, etc.) and the details of her life are revealed gradually throughout the book until her complete character and background are built up.

Miss Lawrence exerts complete control despite the initial complexities and confusions, stemming from the overtly borrowed techniques of Christine Brooke Rose, and, through her, Robbe-Grillet. She uses these techniques, particularly the repeating passages and character mutations, for her own purposes, forcing the reader to share the thoughts, desires and boredom of this woman, any woman. On the subject of women, Miss Lawrence shows remarkable insight, and her perception is admirably acute:

*... She kept looking at the clock, as she ironed, but she felt just the same as before, only rather tired. The cord of the iron kept springing into a coil and dragging against the table edge, and rumpling the ironing cloth. It made her flustered, and once the nose of the iron caught her bare arm and made a V-shaped burn. She put the arm to her mouth to lick, and then continued to iron more slowly. She seemed to have been waiting such a long time.*

By such attention to detail, the character of the woman is beautifully

and perceptively portrayed. Her husband, although appearing only occasionally is likewise animated. However, with the other characters in the book, the neighbours, workmates and the old woman (after all, 20 years of their lives were spent together), Miss Lawrence is not explicit or descriptive enough. Whilst this could be intentional in order to maintain the mental isolation of her central character, it has the side effect of diminishing the depth of the book. The novel is about a lonely, bored woman living a boring life, and unfortunately, or perhaps inevitably, the book itself is sometimes boring.

Possibly the most apt and touching statement of the mood and action of *The Tunnel* is the reference to the woman upon leaving the canteen:

*She worked for the Transport Department in the Canteen as a canteen assistant. She worked in this capacity for 15 years until domestic circumstances forced her to give in her notice. She was a very good worker, honest, reliable, willing. She was clean in her person and co-operative. She was also punctual and a good time keeper. I should be very glad to recommend her for any position of this kind. ■*

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A Torrent of Faces, by James Blish and Norman L Knight, reviewed on p.63 of issue 189, has been available in this country for some time, at 25s, published by Faber & Faber

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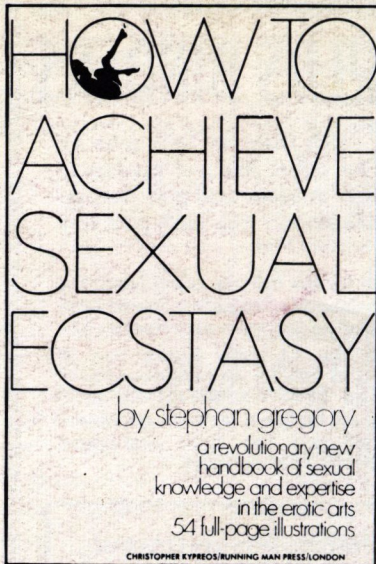
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