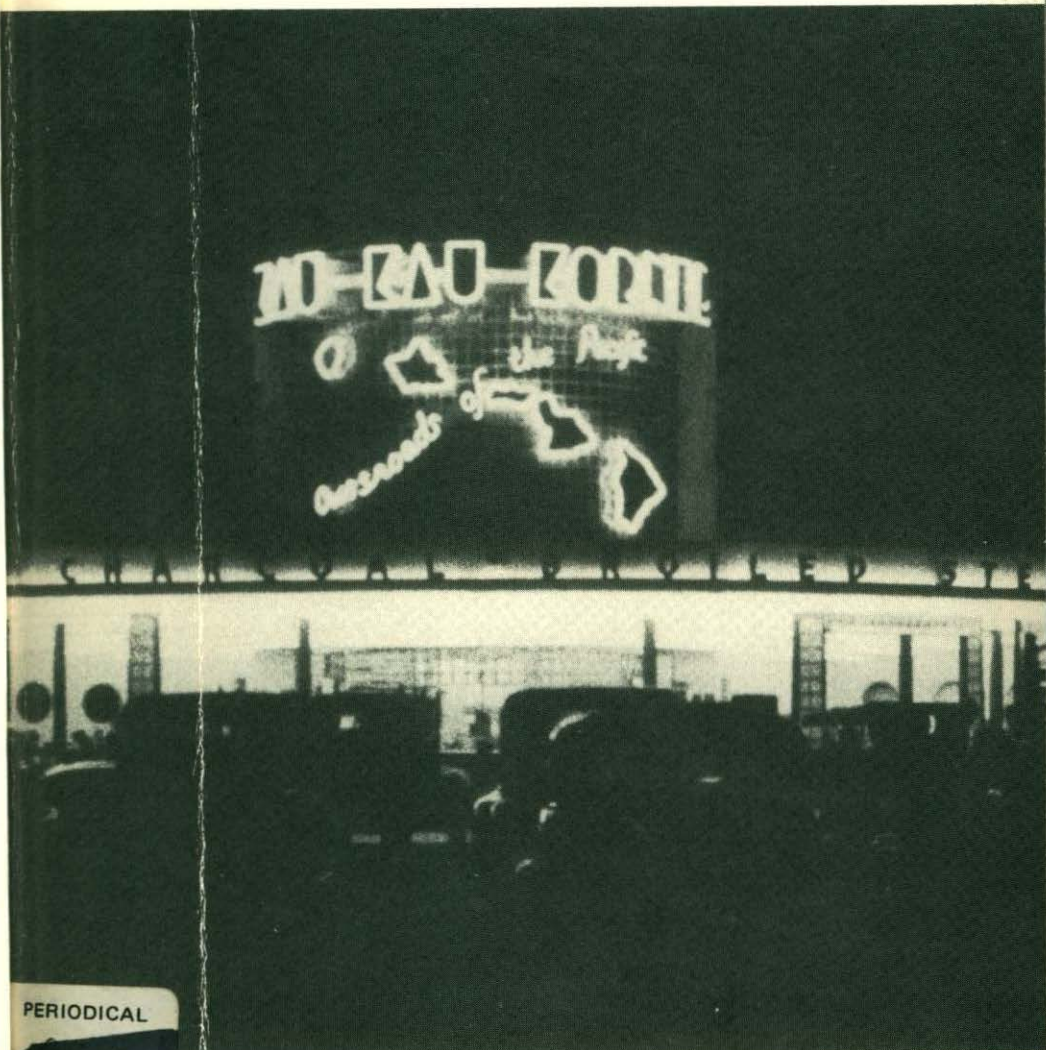


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Cai Qi-Jiao's poem, "The Pearl," was published in the original Chinese in *Highlights of Chinese New Poetry: 1950-1980*, ed. Xie Man (Beijing: People's Literary Press, 1985).

Adele Dumarán's "The World is a Wedding" was first published in *The Poet Lore* (Spring 1987).

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Adele Dumarán

THE WORLD IS A WEDDING

for my father

*He might as well be dead if he
does not know the world is a wedding.*

Delmore Schwartz

After a supper of roasted lamb and eggplant,
fish baked with tahini and lemon,
mother offers everyone demitasse.
She places the small gold cups
just so on the Quaker lace.
Her brothers and cousins crowded around
the table, one twirls his fedora, telling stories of
a summer spent at Sheep's Head Bay. The women.
Scolding him, and blessing herself in Arabic,
mother pours more thick coffee, her hand glitters
with diamonds and platinum, gifts,
my father insisted in the beginning she have,
offered to her like Van Gogh's profusion of stars.

Father, after weeks of silence, worn out
from overtime, the daily commute into New York City,
sits there drinking Four Roses as if his dream
might be constructed by the sheer recalling of it.
As if he were still mapping small countries
from the air, risking it all for the perfect shot.
Though he no longer tells the stories,
my uncles insist on the one of New Guinea,
of the dark woman in the photographs,
her heavy hair bound up in long cloth,
tatoos like lace on her shoulders,
strands of beads crossed over small breasts.
And her eyes darting into the camera like that.

He passes it off with a shrug, pours more drink,
defers to mother. She quickly reminds everyone
that he carried *her* pictures
all over the world those seven years
before they married.

I was his girl even then, she says.

When the house is empty
mother sits alone
in front of the T.V. watching
an old movie, the hero smoking a cigarette.
Father's already asleep in the small room
off the kitchen, having given himself up
to the next small loss, to King's Display
where, in a shabby darkroom
on West 45th Street he will turn out more prints,
10-foot blowups of movie stars,
heroes on the marquee, the crowds passing by.

FOR THE MAN OF A HUNDRED HALF SONGS

Another night of no sleep
and I imagine you, displaced in Belmont,
you in the cold California fog,
an uprooted tree, living on air,
indestructible.

And in the dark your words striking
dead center, *isolated*, you said,
I am my own community,
we like everything we write.

And when the young woman you loved wrecked
your car, you offered gently—
older women are best.

And later when I wrote of bleaching my hair
blond, named every other mad impulse,
you encouraged me and promised a reunion
in December. *We'll drink to nothing*
if we have to, you said. Anything
to bring it back, those hot August nights,
roses and Glenlivet and the smell
of lobster shells simmering in cognac.

But Dean, fading immortality granted,
coincidence gone forever, still we can
live on air for a night. Friends
gathered, we'll listen to your songs again,
though half drunk you won't remember
the words—we'll forgive your persistence,
your off-handed confessions that keep us
humble, and finally your falling
asleep mid-line, cigarette in hand, burning.
Then just the sound of
your breathing will be music enough.

David Moolten

FISHING ON SUNAPEE WHILE
DARWIN'S GHOST WATCHES, UNHEEDED

August; and around my skiff
Three herons shudder skywards
With a hand-clapping of wings, glide.
I look at my own arms; hand bone
Connected to wrist bone; wrist bone
Connected to arm bone,
And remember skeletons I have seen,
The precision of motion, how it is
Just so I can make tools, even language:

*Wet heat and flies while the sun settles
Comfortable in the pines,*

*Or: wind is cool and quick,
Spoonng out its texture in water
And trout do not spoil its pattern
When they dash the surface.*

I row to shore and with the *chak chak*
In the gunwhales I perform another
Complex motion. But what comes
To mind, rather than flight
Or even grace is dry bones,
Angular connections,
An equation of push and pull.
I bind slick rope to its post,
Wishing I could fix my own lines
Of thought as easily. That which I praise
Above understanding, must be pleasure,
Northern wind and water, evergreens
And wide-spanned birds, and my words for them,
Gesturing as if in convergence.

DAYBREAK IN DEER COUNTRY

Two nudes on white linen.
A campfire sleeps in a pile
Of ashes. Rim of trees,
Firs thick with steam—mist soothe
And suggest night, but the lake
Turns pewter in the nascent sun.
Somewhere near, deer move, shy,
Invisible. She wakes,
But already he has woken.
He promises the deer will come
That she will see them, but she will not.
It is almost as if they know
About the rifle in his sack,
Even if he would not use it,
How his hands are deadly, from birth,
Like his father's. He moves towards her.
Dry foxglove litters the bed
Of straw needles: soft, for the deer
Who drift among the evergreens,
Like the soft "f" in love—
His rough hands learning to submit
Themselves, to open like green leaves,
So unusual, so prepositional,
To become *of* her, that she might
Move upon them in darkness
And tenderness not hurt, as much.

Nick Bozanic

WOODCHUCK

Every afternoon
the woodchuck in the pasture
lumbers up from his fetid grave
to loaf in the grass,
bees burrowing their bumbling bulk
in the purple clover's fur.

A lazy Lazarus, plump,
malodorous, he drags his
dumb bundle over drought-brown ruts
to browse on ferns, and fierce
as butter he purrs to the birds:

"I was dead and now I'm not.
I don't understand the dark.
The sun makes me blink and the world a blur.

There is a word for what I've heard
the worms make with their long lips and turns,
a curse I cannot learn:
the earth gives me my daily birth and bread.

What is air? Does the rain make it worse?
There is no wind where the dead work
their ashes into dirt.

I love my ground but would chuck it for a wing,
a leg-up to heaven.
I hear the stars burning in the night.
Being nearer them, you sing.
I am too fat. I yearn to be light."

Roused from dreaming beneath the barn,
the sad dog with his tangled chain
and his crown of burrs barks.
The birds take flight.

Unconcerned, the woodchuck hums
and chuckles, trundling home to his tunnels,
shafts of darkness
undermining everything.

FREDRICK ZYDEK

IN PRAISE OF GRANDMA'S PANTRY

Up with tomatoes
ripening on the sill,
the pungent spices
hung like ornaments
to decorate the family tree,
limp peaches
crimping in the jar,
the tin of flat bread
dry and crisp
as an autumn thistle.

Let's celebrate
sacks of onions
drying on the wall,
blackberry wine
bubbling to an essence
in a wooden tub,
carrots and rutabagas
hip-deep in sand,
crocks of cabbages and salt
caught in metamorphosis.

I was raised
in the liturgy of such things,
trained in the mystery
of fresh churned butter,
a flour sack
of cottage cheese
draining in the kitchen sink,
Grandma and Aunt Frances
plucking chickens
under the walnut tree.

Marjorie Power

SEPTEMBER SEQUENCE

for Anne McDermott

1.

Dripping, I answer the phone.
A woman's voice
inquires about my son's absence
from school.
"He's not absent,"
I respond in a calm tone.
The voice says it will check. . . .

I brush my hair into a calm shape.
When it is dry, I smooth
a bedspread. My son was conceived in this bed—
but this is a thought
I push aside. The phone again,
relief, and for the rest of the afternoon
I adore the rain.

2.

Tomatoes. Carrots; zucchini.
Zucchini, zinnias, carrots, pumpkins, last
of the green beans, the peas.
Rain-split tomatoes. Zinnias
are red. They are light pink,
deep pink, magenta, and orange.
Tomatoes are. Zucchini is.

3.

Less than a gust is enough
to lift a seed—
a slumber on an updraft, a bit of fluff
meandering
to the other side of a ditch
or a wooden fence.
In mid-September I dream: a beautiful woman

in the spring of her life
puts a tree house up for sale. Below,
in the forest,
she waits for the right new owner—
one who will love
and care for the house as she has done.

This side of the dream, a seed settles.

4.

An old friend visits
after years of being gone.
She has lost her leaves.

I wonder whether
she will survive this winter,
who lived for July.

5.

Skeleton of a fir.

Moss hangs on it. Mist hangs on the moss
and on each leaf of each live neighboring tree;
in this garden, on pumpkin blossoms
just wilting, and hearty zinnias.
On a moist new spider web, light celebrates.

So the sticks where the fir flowed

may catch the eye but not hold it,
not while these pumpkins go yellow
or this maple discloses its name. . . .
Not until after leaves drop
and replace themselves and prepare to drop again

does the eye perceive nothing

has taken the life of a fir,
which stands among cedars, alders, maples,
and other firs, as if alive; as if it were
the very tree whose form it assumes,
looming rightfully in place.

6.

Early in the morning: apples
fallen at night. Red apples
and green ones on wet grass,
green and red apples on boughs.
Two trees full, despite all
the windfalls. Neighbors say
their trees bear none this year,
offer fresh eggs and cookies
for trade. Two trees full of
apples, and one of pears.

7.

From the back of the car, my son inquires,
"Why do we have to go see the volcano today?"
But when we arrive, he adores its damage:
Spirit Lake a slab of dull black
beneath this deep blue sky,
and conifer sticks
dashed like toothpicks all over ashy slopes.

A sign says mountain bluebirds begin to return.
Huckleberries are back, their leaves blood red
and dying at their own pace.
Purple lupines
blur in a fuzz of seeds.
Lupines
are. A seed is.

Nora Cobb

FOOD AS AN EXPRESSION OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN *JADE SNOW WONG* AND *SONGS FOR JADINA*

I've been shamed by *kim chee*: there was no way to hide that much of it in the back of the refrigerator. Leaves of *won bok* fermenting in red pepper and garlic would peek out from between and behind the loaf of white bread, the bottle of milk. My friends who came over would point to the five gallon mayonnaise jars filled with *kim chee* and squeal, "Gross! What's that?" I tried explaining once, offered a taste once, to a friend—she held her nose and said "Hot!" as her eyes watered. When I learned in third grade "You are what you eat," I stopped eating *kim chee*. Then, when someone asked, "What's that?" I'd mumble, "I don't know . . . something my mom eats."

A scenario from my own life, it is perhaps typical for those from a minority culture. I had never considered a Korean diet of *kim chee* to be "un-American" until my friends pointed it out and implied that I was "weird." I began to suspect that since I ate foods none of my friends did, I might not be like them, might not be normal, either. Food raised the question of my cultural identity, and from then on, the two have been intertwined. It is not surprising, therefore, that writers, recognizing the interplay between food and culture and identity, should use food as a concept to explore problems of identity and cultural conflict. Ethnic writers such as Jade Snow Wong and Alan Chong Lau have used food in their writing to explore what it means to be Asian-American.

In a "coke and a hot dog, please" culture, where the cultures of minorities have been suppressed or "assimilated," food, as both a concept and a manifestation of ethnicity, becomes, for Wong and Lau, a way to essentialize the Asian-American experience. In Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter* food is integrally linked to what is Chinese and is crucial, finally, in the character's expression of an Asian-American identity: a Chinese dinner prepared with American ingredients both parallels and symbolizes her personal synthesis of the two cultures. Lau, in a similar way, expresses in his poems from *Songs for Jadina*—I am thinking specifically of "home cooking" and "a father's wishes"—the ethnic significance of food but goes further to show how the "Americanizing" of ethnic food is symbolically linked to the undermining of ethnic identity.

The centrality of the issue of ethnic identity in Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter* is evident in her preface to the work. She writes, "Although a 'first person singular' book, this story is written in the third person from Chinese habit. . . . Even written in English, an 'I' book by a Chinese would seem outrageously immodest to anyone raised in the spirit of Chinese propriety" (vii). Thus, in that "spirit" of writing Wong's "I" (herself as an individual) is submerged in the text, and what is made visible in the story is Wong as fifth Chinese daughter, as Jade Snow. The character Jade Snow (who is also Wong the author, but not identical) is largely defined within the complex of traditional Chinese relationships.

As fifth Chinese daughter, Jade Snow must learn how to cook rice properly since it "is considered one of the principle accomplishments or requirements of any Chinese female" (57). The preparation of food is connected to both Chinese tradition and her identity. Her father instructs her in the cooking of rice "so that he could be personally satisfied that she had a sure foundation" (57)—not as a cook, but as a proper Chinese woman.

Rice is intimately connected with tradition, the Chinese way of doing things, and both tradition and rice are linked in the punishment of those who deviate from custom. The children in *Fifth Chinese Daughter* are taught with the cane that is used to *reinforce* the rice sack:

From each sack of rice Daddy opened to fill the rice barrel, he, who wasted nothing, carefully untied the cane, straightened it out, and saved it to make switches for whipping disobedient or improper children, because Daddy firmly believed that severe whipping was the most effective means of bringing up creditable daughters and illustrious sons. (60)

On deciding to purchase the most expansive rice imported from China, Jade Snow's father asks his family, "What is more important than the rice which we eat twice a day and which is our main food? It is what we are, or we are what it is" (60). On one level, Jade Snow's father is referring to the fact that rice is their basic sustenance, but on another level, rice refers to ethnic identity: "we are what it is." And what-it-is does not differentiate between the individual, the family, and China. There are, however, moments when Jade Snow feels the need for an identity separate from her parents, an identity both Asian and American. For instance, when preparing her first Chinese dinner away from home, Jade Snow realizes that she must adapt her recipes to the ingredients bought at the American grocery store:

Jade Snow racked her brains to decide what dishes she could cook without a Chinese larder . . . a bottle of dark soy sauce which had been bottled for American consumption . . . and a box of small-sized long grain white rice . . . were chosen after weighty misgivings, but they had to do. (159)

As she prepares the Chinese dinner for her new friends at Mills College, Wong lingers over the mechanics of the meal, attending to the preparation in detail:

In the Kapiolani kitchen, Jade Snow ransacked the cabinets for numerous small bowls to hold the chopped vegetables, a proper pot with tight-fitting lid in which to cook the rice, a sturdy, ample chopping board, and a sharp, strong knife. These together with a large, heavy frying pan, and a pair of chopsticks—which she did not have—were the minimum equipment for cooking. At home, she had taken the existence of these utensils for granted. (159)

This attention to food and preparation demonstrates her respect for her parents and her appreciation of, and tribute to, Chinese tradition, which is so much a part of her identity. Nevertheless, Jade Snow is American just as she is Chinese. With a “sure foundation” in Chinese culture (her father’s lessons in rice cooking are not forgotten), she is able, in fact, to adapt and create—even in an American kitchen, which has neither chopsticks nor the proper grain of rice—a meal (and an identity) that is a mixture of American while remaining fundamentally Chinese.

Jade Snow describes this dinner with her friends in bright, optimistic tones, stressing the union (after the communion meal) between her American friends and her Chinese self:

Such a simple dinner these dishes made, but how the girls appreciated it. They enjoyed the fire, the candlelight, and the gaiety and confidences, as only four college girls with a sense of fellowship can do during a free evening. (161)

Thus Jade Snow never “consciously” confronts the doubts and ambiguous feelings of being both Chinese and American; nor is there any explicit acknowledgement of an identity separate from her parents, or her friends from Mills. In spite of the potential conflicts in the story, as in Jade Snow’s “misgivings” about preparing dinner from an American larder, they are never seriously developed or explored. Conflicts, in other words, are disregarded in favor of harmonious compromise and cultural synthesis.

In contrast to the movement toward cultural synthesis in *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, as dramatized in the dinner at Mills, Lau's poetry conveys essential conflicts between the Asian and American cultures. Thus images of food and cooking not only function as signs of Chinese culture and identity but are also instances of ethnic displacement.

In his poem "home cooking," Lau celebrates the beauty of food and cooking: each vegetable used to prepare the family dinner has a unique color and shape, each its own "proper name," and when cut "just so" (according to tradition), its "crisp juices/ come out singing." Here home-cooking symbolizes the traditional Chinese way of doing things. When Lau's father cooks for his family—for those who hear the "music" of his cooking—he is engaging in an activity that culturally defines him; he is, like the artist, expressing himself and his world:

as you cut the vegetables
just so
and the crisp juices
come out singing

as they simmer and swim in the pot
sizzle and flip in the wok of your imagination
does it occur to you
that you have created a poem
i am trying to recreate
with little success

However, in "a father's wishes," his father, a fast-fry cook, cooks for those who neither understand Chinese culture nor Chinese food. He cooks what they, Americans assume to be "Chinese"—"barbeque pork chow mein," "pineapple duck," "shrimp chow yuk," "won ton and don't forget/fortune cookie"—because that is all they expect, or want. The list of foods in the poem is a menu of food stereotypes created for people who feed, as well, on stereotype images of Asian-Americans. Lau's father's cooking, then, is involved in more than just the production of Americanized ethnic food, it is somehow complicit in the feeding of distorted human images. And this role, Lau suggests, is slowly poisoning his father:

your act is getting old
cooking out of tune . . .

what can i say to this man
who performs in superduper papercone hat
cosmic white apron

for a full house of mouths
ready to pour sugar in the jasmine tea
melt butter on the steaming rice?

Lau remembers what the Chinese always say when eating fish: “ ‘eat the eye/ it’s the best part’ ”; and he notices how his father, who worked as a fast-fry cook for thirty years, is like the fish with his eyes, his ‘best part’, poked out and stolen: “father who jabbed out your eyes/ and sucked your sockets dry?” His father has been robbed of, denied the self-respect that comes from the recognition of him as a man and as a Chinese; and his cooking—which in a different setting (the family dinner in “home cooking”) preserves and affirms both tradition and identity—has helped in the theft.

“[A] father’s wishes” conveys the tone of frustration and anger in Lau towards his father, whom he sees as helping to perpetuate the stock image of the Chinese. By serving Americans Americanized ethnic food, his father has, symbolically, allowed for the *eating away* at Chinese culture; and by presenting himself as a comical, subservient Chinese cook—“this man/ who performs in superduper papercone hat/ cosmic white apron”—he is confirming, to his paying American customers, that image:

father
You thought you were saving face
even when they cut off your nose

Lau’s poem thus expresses a more cynical view of cultural synthesis than Wong’s *Fifth Chinese Daughter*. Unlike the Jade Snow character, Lau recognizes the destructive implications of assimilating—the eating away at Chinese culture to be replaced by American culture. But in spite of the different positions expressed in their writing, both Wong and Lau show themselves to be serious ethnic writers committed to defining their cultural place within mainstream America. And while they both take a rather different direction in that pursuit, they are united by a common purpose—to bring to the fore a discussion and understanding of the Asian-American experience. For them and their readers, food and cooking—the common manifestations of culture and tradition, become the means, the spring-board into the area of conscious ethnic experience itself.

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James Hazen

HARTFIELD

Sun and shade on widening lawns
rolling out toward hills.
Dark glens hide the lingering deer
and fawns are dappled in the swaying trees.

The house commands this prospect,
gentle windows catch the fading light
and pass along to Mr. Woodhouse
the red, lean face of age and leisure.

"Poor Miss Taylor wishes she were back,"
he says to Emma, loving but the known.
He never feels a feeling other than his own.
Emma often smiles, always comprehends.

"Poor Miss Taylor is Mrs. Weston now,
she's happier there than here."
Baffled Mr. Woodhouse watches in the night,
needing to believe that here and now are right.

Michael McPherson

TAPES

I've received your phone messages
and kept them all, years worth.
This archive contains voices dead
and dear, and much I've travelled
far to forget. Today I foolishly
played it all from start to finish,
lavished this afternoon on my back
listening to hear a long gone brother
of my heart, and the father I lost
last week. I find that in between
there are women. I must admit
there are lots of them. They call
for chocolate ice cream, for damaged
cars, cigarettes, directions, boyfriends
who've betrayed them, to hear how I am.
One offers a haircut. Another waits
on the bar. It's eerie.
I must admit I find it easier
to love the dead. It's a mistake,
this electronic snooping on the past.
Voices in prison, voices grave,
streams of promises and forget me
nots, urgent requests for
drugs and money and redemption,
cries against this restless
tide of our years toward what
we can't know—Hello. I'm here.
Still waiting for your call.

POINTS

It's not so
difficult, listen.
Any drugstore will do.
Say your mother's
diabetic, needs a gross.
Whatever works.
Say you fix fighting
chickens with gunpowder
just before they go in,
gives them a longing.
For this disposables
are best, obviously.
It's easy.
You'll be surprised.
On the register write,
mother's diabetic chickens.

A. J. W. MACKENZIE & SON, 29 MILES VOLCANO
for Garrett Hongo

There's nothing Buddhist about it.
Nor anywhere to run, like the radio said.
Some just feel it: a quickening skin.
Others never do. Today I read that a man

downslope "valiantly tried to divert the flow
with his garden hose." He's somewhere else,
doesn't know that gin works better
if you start early. It helps to know

where not to build, what wild blossoms
not to pick, which stones to leave alone.
It helps to know of what and whom you speak.
Who among you knows the essence of fire?

Grampa Mac could have told your family
these things before he sold them the store,
but he was not a man to impose instruction
and quietly moved on. Generations later

it's a simple matter of getting it right,
this reminder to write from where you are.
Each is a history his own and a story only
one can say. To master this you must first

forget ambition, then sit still and listen.
This reddest fire breaks silent in rain.
Here are crystals in the warm black stone.
This is a fear to earn before you speak.

KIHOLO

Sun rises on a land left
desolate by the fire's hunger
for the king's fine mullet in his pond.
He woke one morning and his fishpond was gone.
Now one tall grove of coconuts
stands along the black sand.
He had to come back, though what he saw
was gone and the wind smouldered.
Maui's backside looks as it has
since then, lightless by night
and a tall blue mountain by day.

Bones. Hiss of waves over round black pebbles
and in this wind the kiawe creaks and sways.

B. R. Leith

PIETÀ

If.

If not.

If she escaped.

If they had met.

If no message is sent.

If you have a true vocation.

If you'll agree, Señor.

If only.

If.

Small sturdy word . . . Vargas smiles, so small it surely staggers beneath its twin saddlebags of what might have been . . . & what may be. *Thou mirror of righteousness, thou cause of joy, thou excellent vessel of devotion, thou morning star, thou healer of the sick.*

The priests come & go. They are all old here; like Vargas, this is their last home.

The smells from the kitchen spill out into the refectory. The fathers who are too sick to dine communally have their trays sent upstairs to their rooms.

Vargas wheels the cart to the elevator. He pushes the button to the 3rd floor, the infirmary floor. If he is late, one of the nursing sisters is always standing by the elevator door, tapping her foot impatiently. She never speaks except to mention the hour, the minutes past the hour that he has squandered.

He tried once to explain how the cooks downstairs were running behind because of the extra meals, the retreats when hardeyed businessmen from Miami come for weekends. Or laughing strangers who stop to see the chapel on their way to Disney World.

"Thirty . . . thirty . . ." was all he could think to say. So he let the words die on his lips, stillborn the way they are so often these days when he looks into eyes that do not care, that shift beyond him to the metal cart and the plates stacked neatly with their shining metal hats pierced by small holes to put your finger in & lift them up & see the pale yellow of custard & soft scrambled eggs, no butter on the dry wheat toast . . .

"Never butter, never jam, Juan!" Elena scolds. Elena is the newest cook. "They are all on the bland diet, those fathers," she says. She waggles her finger at him. "You must never add anything to the trays, do you understand?" She speaks rapidly in broken Spanish, a bastard Miami-street tongue. She has a fat woman's jolly smile. Her dark eyes glow when she talks, voice soft as the kindness that he knows is in her, no matter how sharp the words.

"I understand, Senora," he answers and waits for her to pat him gently on the shoulder because she is aware that beasts of burden still respond to voice & touch, and he will carry as much as she asks of him, no matter how laden the trays, how heavy the garbage pails, the cartons of institutional brand tomatoes, mayonnaise, green beans in their 20 pound cans, the slatted boxes of lettuce from the loading dock.

He spends much time back here on the loading dock, making sure that the crates are piled neatly. He checks to see that the lids of the garbage pails are clamped on tight so that no reek of rotting food will drift in to the kitchen where Elena works with the old one who drinks and the young gringo on leave from the university who leers at Elena in a way that is not honorable.

The rubbish goes to the dumpster. But the garbage must wait on the platform until the white truck appears. He is afraid of the smells and he is afraid of the rats. But the rats do not come because he sweeps carefully around the whole platform, around the pavement below where the delivery trucks roll up and their black oil dribbles on to the gravel, coating the sharp bristles of his push broom & then he must pour kerosene on a cloth and wipe the bristles so that they stand up as shining clean as pine needles.

The push broom has broad shoulders & a sturdy straight handle made of varnished white pine which feels glassy smooth in his hands. It pleases him to see how wide a path it makes in the dirt, this broom. From studying the gardener out there now on the tractor-mower, he learned long ago to move the broom in the shape of a giant square, working into a series of smaller and smaller squares, tighter & tighter, smaller, smaller so that finally in the end he has come back to the beginning, back to when Anna used to stand on the grandmother's back stoop, shaking the mop, the mop with the long curling ringlets which he helps Anna braid sometimes when the grandmother goes to the market to sell the eggs & bargain for fresh tripe. Their mother does not wish them to visit the grandmother who is poor. But their father insists on these visits so that they may know what it is like to run barefooted in the soft dirt and play tag with the goats as Papa had once done as a boy.

"Is she not beautiful?" asks Anna. The mop is a lonely princess wait-

ing for her rescuer to gallop up the dusty pathway to the back porch where the mangle stands, steam from freshly washed clothes rising like mist around the princess who leans over the wooden railing, shading her eyes against the bright sun to better see the figure capering below on his silver stallion, the handlebars decked with small red banners that flutter in the breeze when the horse gallops fast.

"I am coming, mi corazon!" calls the princess, pale ringlets cascading over her shoulders. But just as she turns to creep down the staircase, her jailer discovers her. He grabs her long hair. "No!" she screams. But he is strong. His beard is bushy with tight black curls, so coarse these curls, as to be obscene.

"Your lover should not send messages to the castle. My spies are paid well," he leers. He smells of garlic; a bandolier is slung across his chest. Then, with a cruel smile, he shouts down to the horseman below, "Here she is, Don Vargas! She is . . . indeed coming to you!" and casts her over the railing, falling, falling, her ringlets catching on the bougainvillea bushes. Chickens scratching in the dusty yard squawk with alarm, then scatter back into the safe darkness of the henhouse. A feather floats in the air, a sunbeam of iridescent color, coppery brown & gold.

"Is that a feather, Juan?"

Elena stands beside him. She has taken off the big apron she wears when she cooks. She lights a cigarette: she has pretty hands with small wristbones. The skin on the knuckles is stained a deep yellow. This is because after every meal Elena selects a fresh orange from the bowl of fruit she keeps in the center of the soapstone table, peels it, then takes the inside of the peel & rubs it slowly over the backs of her hands. He likes to watch her do this. He knows her skin smells fragrant & feels as finely grained as a linen altar cloth. *Thou mirror of righteousness, thou tower of ivory, thou rose . . .*

"Si," he says, and blows at the feather. "A chicken feather, I think."

She shakes her head, smiling. "No chickens here, Juan. It must be from a robin." She looks around the clean flooring of the platform, the neat piles of boxes. "You are very good at your job, amigo. I have never worked in a place so clean as this before. Immaculate." . . . *by God's most singular grace, preserved free from all stain, most blessed virgin, Mother of divine grace, thou purest Mother . . . thou most chaste Mother . . .*

He ducks his head, grips hard the broom.

"Father Xavier himself mentioned this to me. Our hardest worker, Vargas, he said." She drags deep on her cigarette. "Hot today," she adds. "I will go for a swim when I get home."

He says nothing. He can see her diving into blue water and the white

columns of her legs flash like the fins of a bonita, the fish the rich Yanquis hunt for in their swift boats, the little chairs in the stern twirling like circular thrones. On the docks, the men stand to have their pictures taken; the bonita shimmers in the sunlight. A few drops of blood spill from the hook in its mouth.

"Do you live far from here, Juan?" she is asking him now.

"Mi casa," he says proudly. He waves his arm at the gardens, the stone buildings, the glistening dome of the chapel.

She looks surprised. She runs her tongue along her bottom lip, a lip as full & wet as a peeled plum. She takes one finger and removes a fleck of tobacco, then glances at him.

"You studied once to be a priest, the Reverend Father told me," she says in a low voice, but she is not looking at him any longer. They both watch the gardener who is mowing the side garden now where the Jesuits are buried. The huge square grows smaller, pale green stubble pressing in on all four sides, pressing into the dark green of the unmown grass . . . *thou gate of heaven, thou morning star, pray for us.*

"In Havana," he says & starts to add "at the seminary," but then stops. The picture is gone, those dark cloisters so cool at any time of day, the white marble slick underfoot but the footsteps fade even as he reaches for the words.

"And then," Elena continues, "the fathers smuggled you out. And you came here to Miami. To study at the university." She is speaking very softly now, even sadly. But there is a question in her voice.

It is the same question in his mind. Coming from the Commons with his letter in his hands, the red stamp slashing across his own neat script: RETURN TO SENDER: ADDRESS UNKNOWN. And then the yellow bricks of the Administration Buildings—the red tiles of the roof, the pain of the sun blinding his eyes. The faces of the gringo students turning toward him as he fell—pale white balloons floating higher in the white sunlight—while he points to the bell tower visible between the royal palms, the campanile striding tall & white across the campus lawn to where he slumps, watching it come closer, the tall white warrior chiming the lament for the dead & dying while Anna waves from the truck, "We shall meet in Miami, my brother!"

"Me, I was born right here. Here in Miami," Elena is saying to him. "But my great aunt Consuela was from Cuba. She got out before you did, before the bad times. The purges. They lived in the mountains, Sierra Maestre. It was from her I learned to cook. Roast pork & sweet yams, cheese soup, black beans & rice. So delicious . . . but not," here she laughs, "not food for the fathers, OK?" She pauses, smiles fondly. "Con-

suela made this most wonderful dessert, soft cream cheese she let me whip & whip, then she would fold in puree of mangoes. Such a pretty yellow color. We only had this on feast days . . . and when I made my holy communion."

He studies her. She is his age, a middle-aged woman with lines in her face but he can see the little girl she must have been, the delicate wrist on that forearm before it turned to fat, the great hollows of the eyes as she gazed up at the priest & opened her mouth to receive the host.

"I was there too," she says.

He stares at her. Her lips are the full lips of that young girl in white but the teeth are stained from much tobacco. But it is still a lovely smile, no? still youthful in the round face with the full brow that is the same polished ivory as the meat of a coconut, waxy smooth.

"Si," she goes on, "back in 1960. I was working in the University cafeteria then. Is that not the year you came to study?"

He shakes his head. "Si, perhaps." He smiles, holds his hands up to show they are as empty as the mouth that will not form the words aloud, too many butting each other out of line, scattering around in his head like balky goats.

She touches her hair. It is pulled back tightly in a round bun, straight back from the high temples. The bun reminds him of a large black donut. Her ears lie flat to the head. She is wearing bright red earrings, a cluster of little red plastic flowers. He wonders if it hurts to wear these earrings, to pierce the pale skin so that blossoms may grow there, scarlet stigmata against the fleshy lobes.

"Ah, Juan." She is laughing, eyes merry. "We probably saw each other many times. I may have handed you your Jello and punched your meal ticket. Not so?" She grins at him again, then stubs out her cigarette with the heel of her white sandal.

"Perhaps," he repeats & rubs his chin, the stubble harsh against his thumb. He sees that his bluejeans are very stained and that two buttons are missing from his shirt. He cannot remember when he took a shower. It must have been the night before, he thinks, but the nights are as interchangeable as rosary beads and only the clicking of his feet on the marble transept is real . . .

"Pray for me, father," he says. She looks at him quickly. Then she leans over & touches his bare forearm.

He shuts his eyes; the iron shutters close inside the window. The room is dim; in the clothes cupboard hangs the black cassock of the seminarian, black as the wrought iron balcony outside the window, black as the shrinking silhouette of El Morro Castle as it disappears behind the lighthouse.

The lighthouse blinks à Dios as the boat leaves the harbor. In the breeze he can smell the stink of rotten sewage floating in the oily water, & over the rotten smell, the sweet musk of black orchids blooming around the stucco walls of his father's house. At the end of the long driveway stand two small trees with bright green leaves, clusters of red flowers at the tips of the branches. The flowers shine glossy red in the sea of leaves and long sharp spines. He has asked his father the name of these strange trees.

His father hugged him. He smelled of cigars & mojitos, the rum cocktail he drinks out on the patio. "Crown of thorns, my son," his father had said. "To look at, Juanito . . . not to touch."

Elena turns to go back into the kitchen; she gives him a smile & a quick wave. He watches her open the screen door. For a heavy woman, she has a light step, and the back of her legs curves so sweetly down the full calves to thin ankles which carry uncomplainingly the weight & bulk of her, fragile white bones which will not stagger no matter how heavy the burden.

He says softly, "If you need . . ." But she has passed inside the dark doorway, her cheap white sandals slapping on the stone floor.

He strokes the broom, then jabs the tip of the handle hard against his forehead, so hard there are white lights inside his eyes but they will not last, they never do. They flick by as quickly as the fairy hummingbird he & Elena . . . no, Anna . . . it was Anna, Anna beside him, chasing through the oleander bushes, seeking to put salt on its whirring tail.

He rubs his forehead. The old pain is starting again.

Beyond, in the garden, the mower drones where sleeping priests wrestle with their carnal dreams. Small flat stones mark the head of each grave. No names. No dates. Only the white stone and the shrouded figure of the mother weeping at the far end of the garden, weeping for each son she has lost & will lose, over & over again.

"If . . ." he says again, then shrugs.

This too is a conversation he has never been able to continue. So, he places the push broom up on the rack over the garbage pails, hanging it on the small dowels he's made to help prop up the broad shoulders in a straight line. He checks to make sure all is tidy, then goes inside, careful not to let the screen door slam.

The door of the utility closet is locked; he has the only key. It is a walk-in storeroom where he keeps all his cleaning supplies. There is in here always a strong odor of ammonia.

He does not turn on the light; there is no need. His foot brushes against a bucket which clanks its usual greeting. He can hear the clatter of

dishes from the kitchen down the long hallway, and farther away, the chant of evensong.

He waits; lets his eyes grow accustomed to the darkness.

She waits also, waiting for him there in the niche between the shelves & the plumber's helper. Her hair falls in long pale ringlets. Her face is in shadow but he knows that she is smiling, her patient smile which is here for him each time as both welcome and benediction.

He drops to his knees, bows his head. He can smell the stink of his shirt, of his unwashed armpits, but he takes out the rosary from the hip pocket of his jeans. The beads slip through his fingers; still he does not lift his head because he and she are joined together in lamentation, and there is much pain which they might glimpse in each other's eyes, so he simply murmurs in a low voice the words that never desert him, the familiar words he must address her by: *Hail Mary full of grace, blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus, pray for us. . . .*

G. E. Murray

ON GETTING UNSTUCK

at San Francisco Airport

A real pea-souper,
As if our Limehouse days,
Us singing a mantra of retreat,
Grounded tonight by an outlying fog,
The predatory link of your disattachments,
Idled here, dead-heading at the worst of times.

I swear the air has such skillful teeth some
nights.

But on this dear shore, lapping rime and grace,
There's security tonight with inaccuracies
Alone, that old business of nothing but
Calm ahead, impatience with another
Hour's departure, love diverted,
As a voice flies into me,
Telling us, go now.

Joseph I. Tsujimoto

DOUBLE KILL

With stationary wings the unseen bird
leaps and swoops over the hedge.
My heart aches at your sudden smile,
astonished at your inevitable death,
the wake that tugs at the collar of a lazily drifting boat;
oars shipped, like a bird, too.

You meant no harm, nor did I
when I too asked my son,
What will you do when I die?
It was not, for either of us, father, a question
of being, though what I became fled
you, before your desperate imagination,
even before you could die.

Letting go, I slowly see, is a dying too,
so I must store up a powerful canon
against the time my own son flees me,
dies to me too, when I am unable to hold
even a pelt against a cheek.

Absurdity: the smell of diapers abutting true north
(and again you humor yourself with clothespins).
If you cut the legs you can fly
A Chinese dragon!
who needs no father who
needs no son.

Isn't such desire natural?
Don't ground termites eat, too, the panax hedge?
Should I be as serene?
I am no hedge, nor any part of it,
branch, bird, blade, flower, I am no example.
Let me keep my longing
and all the longing that is yet to come,
as my father had
as my son shall after me.

Priscilla Atkins

STILL LIFE OVERLOOKING LAKE MICHIGAN

I walk in
as you watch over the oncidiums
growing in the bay window
the bronze of the watering can
warm in you hand.
A letter from your grandmother
open on the table
reminds me of hot rolls
and Thanksgiving.
You offer me ginseng
in a Chinese bowl
and for a moment I taste
licorice, then eucalyptus.
Not so long ago you had given up
on plants—impossible, you said,
between an attorney's schedule
and Chicago winters.
But you have not lost the knack
for here is a spray of yellow
orchids, steady on its roots
arcing towards the pale sky
like a flight of imperial moths.

Mark Wallace

ON THE VERANDA

the husband and Varenka speak wild blue-berries. Their voices wisp to the wife through open French windows—long and throaty k's of the husband, and the slim Varenka's operatic sighs. Then, silence. The wife stays her knitting. She hears a scrape, as if someone in a chair has stood. Now a flutter wing—hard but low, like the hollowedbone scatter of pheasants breaking cover. She's seen him squeeze his berries, blues so sweet the venom still stings her lips. Deep in his sweater's wools her whitened fingers waltz their knit—purl—purls: two pheasants, flushed, take wing to swirl a figure; two needles' clicks, flex and flinch, trick her trigger.

Lyn Lifshin

WHY AEROGRAMS ARE ALWAYS BLUE

Because of the distance to you.
Because the wind fades,
dries out the verbs
till the background they've
leaned against blends
with the sky.
The blue reflects your eyes.
No, that's a lie, I don't
remember them, only the
feeling in my hands, some
thing longing aching the
blue in my veins a fast
blue burning barriers.

John N. Miller

PAR AVION

for Ille

Is this the man from Madagascar
sitting in your office now, trying
to look and sound like his letters
with their French postmarks and strange
tropic-colored stamps?

You want to reach across your desk
to test his sun-darkened skin for texture,
for a faint scent of cinnamon or cloves.
How faithfully you both
corresponded with your distant selves—
perhaps now he is picturing
your fluent hand within the folds
of perfumed airmail stationery.

Perhaps you should try to keep him dwelling
on Madagascar, on those words
with Africa and the Atlantic
stretched between your two busy lives.
Instead, you study him. He stares at you.
He reaches for your hand.

Reuben Tam

WHERE THE ISLAND ENDED

It seemed a different mix of sounds in the air
and another time zone
as we crossed the last margin beyond Kealia
where ironwoods were giving in to the ocean
and red clay tracks dropped suddenly.

We were bone and mineral pitted by salt.
We leaned like sticks in the wind.
All around us rocks peeled to sulfur-yellow rings.
Lava skeletons crumbled to black sand
on the foreshore.

We could look back over ten miles of the island
at the cloud-capped mountains, angled
into tiers of hanging valleys, rain funnels
for the canefields striding green
over the plain.

But here was another time of Kauai,
of endings, the sounds of submergence,
the worn lavas, the outer stones teetering,
the descent
and the waiting sea.

THE IRONWOODS

At the south end of the shifting bay
along the shoreline that's beginning to fail,
four ironwoods,
rooted there for more than twenty years,
face an oceanfront death by toppling
some time this month.

Tonight, full moon,
I will look at the shining face over the ocean,
at the eye commanding from bleak craters,
at the countenance of iron
pressing its stare onto the loose wayward sea
to order high tide and a charge of breakers.

I will hear the frenzy of mullet leaping,
the battering of reefs
and the scurry of ghost crabs retreating
to the upper dune line.
I will hear a heavier pounding on sand
and louder exhalations. High surf tonight.

This may well be the night when one wave,
running more fully,
could undo the last roothold
of one of the ironwoods,
and bring it down to death by moonlight.

DARK

They are really not strangers, these dark shapes
rising from the ground around you in the night.
They are cones and heaps, mass and mound, stack.
Night after night they appear,
each in its place, primal, abstract.

They will change when the night thins,
when the morning breaks open with spears of light
prodding them one by one.
Each shape will tremble into name,

into sea-grape tree, into panax hedge,
into cresting bougainvillea,
into backyard lumber, compost pile,
stump of milo, chicken coop, wheelbarrow,
rain barrel, and spider lily clumps, red, white.

Each will stir in light, sprouting twigs
or panicles, waving shadows, stretching into gloss,
tilting splinters, thorns, butterflies,
or grabbing garments of rust, or paint color,
grass color, free colors of the day.

Wait for the night. They'll be back,
simple as rim rock, dark.
They will not have moved around much,
inwardly at most, each to the core of itself.

John W. White

SHORT TIMERS

One day when it's almost too late, exactly the person we're looking for appears out of nowhere. By "we" I mean the band, but I'm by myself. And, of course, I don't know right away that he's our missing link.

I'm at the Cooke Street office of Short-Timers Industrial at six-thirty on Monday morning, waiting for my assignment. Short-Timers is a temporary help outfit that pays promptly and asks for commitments only as long as the working day. I work three days a week and bring home, after they take their cut, about sixty dollars. It's not much, but it leaves time for music and helps pay the rent until we can get our gig back. Every day they send me to a different place—a machine shop in Kalihi, a perfume factory in Kakaako, a construction site in Mililani, a trade show in Waikiki. I'm beginning to enjoy it.

I fill out the daily form, hand it to the man behind the window, mix a cup of coffee, sit down and wait. The usual crowd of down-and-outs straggles in: an assortment of haoles, Polynesians and Orientals. On the wall I'm facing, in a cartoon safety poster, a worker is being blown off the top of a buliding by a visible gust of wind. The caption says *Be Alert To All Hazards*.

A local kid slips into the chair beside mine. He points at his form.

"How come they want your address?" He looks eighteen or maybe older, stocky, strong, and short—even with the four extra inches added by his Afro hairhat. He eyes the form suspiciously.

"Do you have to put down your home address?" he continues before I can answer. "I thought they just give you a check at the end of the week."

"That's what they do," I tell him, "but they need your address for their records." I lean toward him and add in a lower voice, "You could probably give a fake one and they won't know the difference. Just don't leave it blank."

It makes sense to him. He concentrates on filling out the form. Then he hands it in at the window and sits back down beside me.

"My name's Matty." He tries a fancy two-phase handshake, but I muff it.

"Ike."

"You play music?"

"How'd you know?"

"Your shirt."

I'm wearing my T-shirt from Herman's, a musician's supply store in San Francisco. The design on the front is an electric guitar drawn to look like the trunk of a redwood tree. Musical notes and symbols make up the branches, needles and cones. The neck of the guitar tapers off into the sky and disappears like a treetop.

"Yeah, I play the guitar and I'm from San Francisco, just like the shirt says."

"All right. Righteous." He gives me a knowing look. I smile politely. I don't want to get into it.

The man behind the window begins calling out names. When I hear mine, I step up for my assignment—a slip of paper with an address and a phone number, directing me to be at "Mutual Express" at seven-thirty. The worker is required to provide his own transportation. I'm driving my friend's van, a bonus that came with the house. I nod goodbye to Matty and set out for Mutual Express.

I find the address in a downpour that begins in sunshine, wetting the streets before the clouds show up. Inside, without a word, a man gives me another form and a stubby pencil, then points to a chair. More people arrive, shaking umbrellas and chatting about the rain. Nobody pays me any attention. After a while, some people I recognize from the Short-Timers office come in, including Matty.

"Hey, Ike." In unfamiliar territory, we're old friends.

"Hey, Matty. Sorry—I could have given you a ride over."

"That's O.K. My cousins dropped me off."

At 7:30, the boss comes in and gives orders for the day. We hear what we need to hear, and in five minutes we're out in the rain, in the back of an open flatbed truck. Matty and I sit together. The driver throws us a big piece of cardboard to hide under, cranks the truck into gear and lurches off with a shout of laughter.

We pull up at the docks beneath Aloha Tower. The driver directs us into the Pier 8 warehouse where, after another wait, we take orders from a new boss: get a hand truck and move these cartons here into their proper places over there. Work alone. No talking.

The warehouse is filled with large cardboard cartons. I find one that's torn open at the end; inside are four rolls of fabric, aloha shirt material printed with a repeating pattern of green palm trees and bright orange suns. Each carton is marked in Japanese and English, the English being the destination: Watumull's, Tori Richard, Von Hamm Ltd., Polynesian Textiles. Does this mean that Hawaiian shirts really come from Japan? I begin

sorting the cartons into groups, ready for loading onto the delivery trucks. I start out at a fast pace; the leverage of the hand truck makes the heavy cartons easy to handle. I'm snappy and efficient and all hustle-bustle—until I notice my less enthusiastic co-workers, the regular employees, watching me in astonishment and anger. So I slow down and make everybody happy.

When work stops at 11:30, Matty and I buy sandwiches and sodas from a lunchwagon, and find a place in the shade where the harbor water is turquoise blue against the colorless concrete pier. Matty's still curious about my music, so I tell him about The Grown-Ups.

We're a quintet—drums, bass, rhythm guitar, lead guitar (me), and a lead singer who also plays alto and tenor sax. Before we came to Hawaii, we lived together on the San Francisco Peninsula. Six nights a week we hauled ourselves, our instruments and our sound system to four different clubs, from up north in Sonoma County all the way down to Monterey. We would leave for work right after the evening rush hour traffic died down, and come back an hour before it started up again in the morning. We would sleep for a few hours, then get up and practice. It was a grueling schedule that wore down Tim and Gloria (the rhythm guitar player and lead singer are married) to the point where they were popping pills to keep up.

After five years of hard work, we had reached a discouragingly low plateau of success: regular engagements, barely respectable pay (fifty dollars a night each, twelve hundred dollars a month before expenses), no recording contract, a few good write-ups in the low-circulation city-guide tabloids, and occasional airplay of our studio tapes on an FM station with about five hundred listeners. No top forty hits, no AM presence, no videos on MTV, no interviews on Entertainment Tonight. It didn't mean we weren't good, just that we were one of many equally good, equally dedicated rock bands in the Bay Area. But we loved music and so we held ourselves together, acting out our version of life in the fast lane, driving all over the place and getting nowhere.

Then we were offered a job in Hawaii. A friend of mine plays drums in a band with a regular gig in Waikiki, and they were going on a year-long tour of American military bases in Asia. He invited me to bring my band over to sublet his house in Waimanalo and take over the gig while they were away. He arranged everything with the club manager. I figured The Grown-Ups were due for a change of scenery, even if it meant giving up a low-rent house in Belmont and all of our hard-won gigs. It was easy getting Tim and Gloria's consent; like zombies, they were open to suggestion. We all agreed that it would be a good idea to get them away from their dealer.

So The Grown-Ups flew to Hawaii and went to work at a small club

on Lewers Street called Ukulele Lady's. The crowd, mostly tourists, liked our music, and so did the manager. But after two months, our bass player and drummer declared mutiny. They complained that Hawaii was too far from the action, that they preferred the "fast lane" to the "off ramp." So they quit the band and flew back to California. We found another bass player right away, but most of the drummers we talked to belonged to the musicians' local and couldn't play at our non-union club. The manager was upset; he told us he could find a replacement band for a couple of nights, but we'd better get another drummer fast. That was two weeks ago. Now we're about to lose the gig, and we're running out of money.

"Hey, man," says Matty, "I used to play drums. I could of been in your band."

He means it as a joke, but I forget to laugh.

"You sure you don't play anymore?"

"It's hard with no drums and no place to practice." He says he started playing the drums at about the time he started learning English—in grade school in American Samoa, in a children's marching band. When he was twelve he came to Hawaii, and he joined the bands in his junior high and high schools. He was also in a rock band that played for local dances and parties, but when the band broke up his uncle pressured him into selling his drums.

I begin to see the possibilities; there's a drum set at the house. When we moved in, I found it stashed in my friend's bedroom closet. He won't mind if we use it, especially if it means holding on to his band's gig.

On the spot, I offer Matty the job. I tell him that, if he has any talent at all, we can get him into shape with a few days of practice. I have a good feeling about him—and that means as much to me as his musical abilities. It's depressing playing music night after night with people who don't get along.

Matty listens but says nothing. So I back off a little and invite him out to Waimanalo for "a no-pressure jam, just for fun, just to see what happens," and he accepts. As we walk back to the warehouse, Matty beats on an invisible snare with invisible sticks, adding sound effects with bursts of air released from behind clenched teeth.

"How come 'The Grown-Ups' ? "

"All grown up but still playing around." The band's stock response.

"When do you want me to come over?"

"Tonight."

"Can I ride with you, from here?"

"What about your cousins?"

"They won't mind."

"Afterwards, I'll give you a ride home. Where do you live?"

“We can work that out later.”

And work it out we do: not the ride home, but where Matty lives. He has come to live with us.

Our house is on Paimalau Street, an old, two-story box of termite-infested wood half a block from the ocean and a stretch of sandy beach edged by big pine trees with long, soft needles and marble-sized cones. Two more of these trees are shedding their needles and cones all over our front yard.

I introduce Matty to Tim and Gloria; we set up the drums in the living room by the time our bass player, Sonny, shows up. Sonny is 25, a part-Hawaiian who lives with his family a few miles away in Kailua.

I'm worried because the session might not be easy for Matty. The Grown-Ups play rock and roll, but also blues, reggae, R&B, country, western swing, and a little fusion jazz. It doesn't matter where the music comes from; if you like what you hear, you can make it your own. But it takes more than just learning your own part; you need to know what's going on around it, to recognize and absorb every element that makes it work. The Grown-Ups might be more than Matty can handle.

As it turns out, Matty plays the drums as well as he speaks English. Everybody's amazed and energized. A drummer empowers his band, and we're all glad to have that driving force back again. Even Tim and Gloria perk up. And Matty catches almost everything we throw at him. He's a perfect fit, and I'm a hero for bringing him in.

We play straight through until midnight, when we decide to hang it up and I tell Matty it's time to go home. But he says it's pretty late, and can he just spend the night on the sofa? Everybody agrees it's all right; we even have an empty bedroom where he can sleep.

“What about your parents?” I ask him. “Shouldn't you call them?”

“You want to pay for the call? They're in Samoa. I stay with my aunt and uncle, in Waianae. But I haven't been there for a while. They don't get worried any more when I don't show up.”

The next morning Matty tells me he wants to join the band. He also asks if he can live with us. Maybe it's too soon, but we need to move fast. With Tim and Gloria's consent, I tell Matty he can move in as long as he agrees to pay his share of the expenses. I also ask if he plans to call his aunt and uncle to let them know where he's living. He says he'll take care of it.

During the next few weeks, with Matty available all day, it's easy to put in long stretches of practice. We reclaim our gig at Ukulele Lady's, although we suffer through some rough spots while he's learning the quirks in our arrangements. The band works from a list of two hundred

songs; half of them are our own compositions and most of the rest he's never heard before. How can we expect a Samoan in Hawaii to know "Too Much Fun" by Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen? Fortunately for us, Matty's a quick study. After a month we sound great, we're drawing crowds, and the manager is all smiles and fat pockets again.

At home, Matty turns out to be a good housemate: from his pay he always gives us his room and board first, he cleans up after himself in the kitchen, he works in the yard without being asked, he even keeps his room neat—although he has brought almost no clothes or personal possessions to clutter it with.

Some days when we're not practicing, he goes away. He never says where, just walks up the street to the highway and disappears. Sometimes he comes back with a case of beer, or plate lunches for everybody. Sometimes on Sundays, he stays away overnight. He rarely talks about himself or volunteers any information, so I never ask any questions; if he wants to keep his distance, it's all right with me. Tim and Gloria, a closed circuit of mutual love and troubles, also maintain their aloofness. We're all polite and considerate with each other, and as long as there's no conflict we can stay on the surface of things. No pain, no need to explain.

The band performs five nights a week, Tuesday through Saturday, from nine o'clock until two. We're rarely home before four, and Tim and Gloria usually sleep until mid-afternoon. I like to get up "early" at eleven and go for a swim. One morning when the sky was overcast, as I walked under the trees into the sand, for an instant I was transported to another place: a coastline near Monterey at the edge of a cypress grove. The sensation was so strong that I shivered in the cold, and ached over a loss I had never felt before that moment. Or maybe the loss was also imaginary, as false as the chill that made me tremble and raised the hair on my skin.

Sometimes Matty comes along when I swim. It's all right with me, especially one day when the wind is blowing harder than usual and the waves are choppy and disorganized. I begin my usual headlong charge into the ocean when Matty grabs me and holds me back. Thinking he wants to wrestle, I move to tackle him, but he pushes me away. He walks toward the water and looks around. Almost immediately he finds something, and motions me up close. He points to a small, transparent purplish bubble at the edge of the wet sand.

"What is it?"

"Portuguese man o' war. No swimming today, we'll only get stung. And they sting *bad*. Even the little ones."

Then I notice that, although people are spread out all over the beach, there's no one in the water. All along the tide line we find more washed-up bubbles, stranded by the receding waves, drying and dying in the sun.

"How'd you know they were here before you saw them?"

"The wind. When it blows onshore like this, it brings 'em in."

Instead of bodysurfing with jellyfish, we sit in the sand and talk. When I ask him about his family, Matty opens up a little. He tells me it was his father's decision to send him to Hawaii. His father, who has already spent a great deal of money on Matty's education, now wants him to go to college and graduate school in Hawaii, and then come back to Samoa as a teacher, doctor or scientist—Matty gets to take his pick. He says that now, at nineteen, having graduated from high school, he's beginning to wonder: does he really want to go to college? Does he really want to be a doctor or a teacher? He needs some time to figure things out. Maybe he wants to do something else, like play music. And even though his parents and sisters and brothers are there, does he really want to go back home?

I tell Matty he should consider himself lucky to have a home and a big family. I tell him how my father left Montana and my mother left North Carolina, how they met in Chicago where I was born, and how we moved to Los Angeles when I was three. How the only relatives I ever visited were my mother's parents: we stayed at a motel in Asheville near their retirement apartment, not at the house twenty-five miles away where my mother grew up, long since sold and occupied by strangers. Matty finds it hard to believe. In Samoa and Hawaii both, he has always been surrounded by relatives.

"What about your house in L.A., the one you grew up in? Isn't that your home?"

"My parents moved twice since we lived in that house. When I go to visit, I stay in a different house in a different neighborhood. L.A.'s not the same any more, either."

For me, home is just a feeling—a kind of understanding that comes gradually, when I've lived long enough in one place. It may be only a partial understanding, but it's more than superficial. It isn't information I can gather, and there's nothing I can do to make it happen. Except forget about it.

When Sonny invites us to his family's luau, Tim and Gloria aren't interested, but I talk them into it. Sonny asks us to bring our instruments, so Tim takes his Martin and I take my Stratocaster, along with a small practice amplifier. Matty stays behind; he says he's going to visit his relatives.

Sonny lives in an old house with a huge back yard, which tonight is filled with people—old folks and parents and teenagers and children—all family except for a few neighbors and the three haoles in Sonny's band. But everybody's eager to make us feel welcome.

We sit on picnic benches under a temporary awning, eating pig, fish,

rice and potato chips. We drink beer and make music. Half a dozen people play guitars and ukuleles. An old man plays lap steel guitar, a vintage Rick-enbacker with a shiny black plastic body and curved plates of white metal on top that look like blisters. Sonny's father plays ukulele and sings songs in Hawaiian; Sonny tells me they were all written by family members, and they're about the mountains and the ocean and the towns where they live. None of them have been published or commercially recorded. Everybody in the family knows the words, and I can pick out two or three harmonies joining every melody.

Hawaiian music usually follows standard chord progressions, so it's easy for me to play along even though the songs are unfamiliar. I like the way slack-key guitar flows around the melody, the way it wanders away from the root chord and then homes in on it, a little bit like Cajun music. I tune my strings down to an open G chord, and fingerpick instead of flat-picking, with just enough volume on the amp to add some background texture.

As the daylight fades, everybody keeps on playing and nibbling at the leftover food. Tim and Gloria sit with the old man playing the lap steel, admiring his technique. He plays with a heavy tremolo, the bar quivering beneath his left hand, gliding chords across the strings, his right hand picking and damping the notes and also working the volume knob, making his music swell and recede in the darkness like the sound of waves washing against the shore.

Matty's been with us almost four months on the day they come for him. For me, it's a bad luck day from the beginning.

I'm in town, caught in mid-morning traffic on the way back to the freeway. I'm waiting at an intersection where one of two forward lanes is marked for moving straight across the street, and the other for making right turns only. Across the street the two lanes merge into one. There's a car in front of me at the light and a line of others behind, but there's no one in the right turn lane. As the light turns green, a compact pickup truck with dark windows and oversized tires charges down the empty lane and, instead of turning right, forces its way back into the line of cars moving straight forward. But it has to stop immediately in the stalled line just across the intersection. The car in front of me pulls up behind the pickup and honks, long and loud. The truck driver, a large man wearing a T-shirt cut off halfway up his chest, jumps out, shakes his fist at the honker and walks threateningly toward his car, shouting obscenities, visibly at the edge of violence. The driver of the car, a bald-headed man in a business suit, hurriedly rolls up his windows and locks the doors. Before anything else can happen, the cars ahead begin to move and the truck driver slowly

returns to his pickup, stopping every few yards to turn back, threaten and curse.

That night on the highway from Waimanalo to Ukulele Lady's, I'm still grinding my teeth. The truck driver not only broke the law, drove dangerously, and acted stupidly—he actually believed *he* was the one who had been wronged. I brood and boil all the way to Waikiki, looking for malice in the eyes of every driver, finding it wherever I look.

Matty, beside me in the front seat, is also in a strange mood, even quieter than usual. Earlier in the afternoon, I walked in on him speaking loudly and angrily on the telephone. When he saw me, he lowered his voice and turned away. I left the room.

We pull into the alley behind the club, unload our equipment and haul it through the back door to the stage. It's Wednesday, generally a good night because, besides the usual flock of tourists, the local "Hump Day" crowds come to celebrate their progress toward the weekend. We play the first set to a gathering audience, and by the end of the second set the tables are filled and the dance floor is packed with gyrating couples.

During the third set, shortly after midnight, we're in the middle of a song—"Set You Free," the one I was writing on the day I met Matty—when suddenly the bouncer topples backwards over a table and drags it with him to the floor. Then the force that propelled him, a gigantic Samoan, charges toward the stage shoving chairs and tables and people out of his path.

I hear a crash of cymbals behind me and turn to see Matty bolting for the alley door. He swings it open, almost home free, but another man, only slightly smaller, is waiting for him outside. The man inside reaches Matty, shoves him into the alley, follows him out and slams the door behind them.

Then something snaps. It finally dawns on me that brute force is running the show. And since reason is powerless, rage finds me willing to strike, already holding a potential weapon—a solid-body guitar, made of hardwood and heavier than a baseball bat. The amp screeches as I rip out the plug. Pulling the strap from my shoulder—disconnecting the instrument from my body—makes the transformation complete. I'm about to jump off the stage when Sonny grabs me and whirls me around.

"Stay out of it!" he yells at my face. "That's family business! Are you crazy?"

I shove him aside and make for the door. Nobody else stands in my way; the crowd is backing off and the bouncer is still stunned, picking himself up from the floor. Out in the alley, gripping my guitar by the neck and choking the strings, I search for a target.

The fat one from inside the bar has shoved Matty into the back seat of

an old station wagon and is beginning to climb in after him. From inside, Matty can see me coming. In the front seat is the other big man, and an old, worried-looking man at the wheel.

I try for the fat one while he's still outside the car. Using both hands, I swing the Strat over my shoulder like an ax, and bring it down aiming the rounded edge at the back of his head. I'm aware that the blow could kill him. But suddenly Matty shouts, grabs him by the neck and pulls him into the car. Instead of shattering his skull, the guitar bounces off his back. At best, I've inflicted a nasty bruise. I realize there's no time for another swing, but I'm amazed that such a huge person can leap out of a car so quickly and throw a punch so true.

I wake up with a headache and a sore neck, probably whiplash from the force of the blow. I'm in bed and it's dark. I'm wondering where there's room in the club for a bed when I smell the ocean air and realize I'm at home. Then I remember being conscious earlier, briefly, in the back of the van. I don't feel like getting up, so I yell for somebody. It hurts to yell.

Sonny switches on the light.

"How are you, man?"

"What are you doing here?"

"I just want to make sure you're all right. We decided to let you sleep."

"What time is it?"

"It's almost daytime. You got a nice bruise on your cheek there. You feel all right?"

"Not too good, but not too bad. What happened?"

He fills me in. Matty's abductors drove off and Sonny picked me up from the alley. With effort, the police were kept out of the matter. I protest, but Sonny says it was in my best interests, as I had been seen by sixty people charging out of the bar with murder in my eyes and a musical bludgeon in my hands. I tell him it's obvious that I was trying to prevent a kidnapping, but he says it's not that simple: the only thing anyone actually saw, apart from a scuffle with the bouncer, was Matty running out the alley door. Besides, he says, it was probably Matty's cousins who came for him.

"That doesn't give them the right to grab him and take him away. Matty's not a criminal, he's a good kid. With a job, even."

"I suppose they have their reasons."

"So you're telling me this is beyond the law, this is some kind of Samoan family justice I don't understand?"

"Maybe. How much *do* you understand?"

Then I remember. "Matty warned him."

"Warned who?"

"I was a split second away from knocking the big guy's head off when Matty grabbed him and made me miss."

"Very interesting. And that reminds me. You're welcome to come stay at my house for a few days."

"Why would I want to do that?"

"Because it might not be over yet."

"You think they'll come here? For what? To beat me up some more? To kill me?"

"Who knows? Maybe they just don't like strangers who try to clobber them."

I don't feel like hiding out at Sonny's. I don't even feel like moving, so I stay put and try to convince myself that no one will come after me. Besides, they don't know the address, or they would have grabbed Matty here instead of in the club. And Matty won't show them where I live if they mean to hurt me. But then again, Matty saved his cousin and I'm the one who's hurting instead. Blood runs thicker than music. Thinking it over, I fall asleep.

When I wake up it's mid-afternoon, hot and still. I'm alone. Sonny's gone, and Tim and Gloria have taken the van somewhere. I feel decent enough to shower, shave, and eat a bowl of corn flakes. I sit in the living room playing the Strat unconnected to the amp, with no volume of its own apart from a muffled twang you need to hear in silence to recognize as music. The Strat came through with only minor cuts and scratches; Sonny recovered it from the alley.

A breeze is blowing and the twilight air is cool when the station wagon pulls up. I'm still in the living room where I've been dozing and stirring, picking on the dead strings and waiting.

I'm scared, but I refuse to be bullied into running. No matter how little I know about what's happening, I can't believe that any member of Matty's family would indulge in purposeless vengeance. Yeah, sure.

I walk out on the porch. From the station wagon, slowly, come the fat Samoan and the old man. Matty follows. At first I don't recognize him because his Afro is gone; his hair has been cut short. He looks like a stranger, and he won't meet my eye. The three of them proceed silently up the walk. The old man points at me and mumbles something to Matty, who nods his head.

To the relief of my pounding heart, the old man seems to be in charge. He's obviously not going to hit me, but it's more than that; he's calm and dignified. Matty is still avoiding my glances; he's embarrassed

and shy like a child. The fat one just stands there, staring at me. Finally Matty speaks, looking at me with difficulty.

"I'm sorry about what happened last night, Ike, and I'm sorry because I lied to you. I quit school before I graduated, and when I came to live with you I was running away from my aunt and uncle. I didn't want you to find out because I was afraid you wouldn't let me stay with you and be in the band."

The old man says something to Matty, who nods and slowly, reluctantly continues.

"This is my father. He came from Samoa to find me because I didn't answer his letters, and after a while my aunt and uncle stopped hiding the truth from him. He wants to speak to you. I told him that you didn't know anything about this, that you didn't know I was running away. He wants to apologize."

"It's not necessary."

"For him it is. Please let him do it."

Matty's father speaks to me in Samoan. Every so often he pauses, patiently waiting for Matty to translate.

"He wants to tell you that a choice has been made for me. I was sent here for a purpose, but I broke my word. It's a very serious matter, or else he wouldn't be here. He's going to take me back home. He says that he's responsible for what happened last night, and he wants to apologize for hurting you. He knows now that you were only trying to help me."

The old man says something else to me, then steps up and ceremoniously sticks out his arm. I shake his hand and smile. He speaks again to Matty.

"He says that my cousin also wants to apologize for hurting you."

The big cousin grunts and shakes my hand. I return the apology. We shake hands again.

The old man makes another statement that sounds like a concluding speech. Matty tells me he is saying goodbye. But I'm not ready for that; I take Matty aside.

"You're over eighteen, right?"

"It doesn't matter, I have to go."

"No you don't. Not if you're over eighteen. It's your life, you have the freedom to make your own choices. Why go with them if you don't want to?"

"Why listen to you? You told me you don't have a home, so you don't know what you're talking about. I knew this was going to happen, sooner or later. I knew I would end up going back."

"Don't listen to me, listen to *yourself*. What do *you* want to do?"

"When I listen to myself I hear too many voices." He looks into the house and smiles, then turns the smile on me.

"Thanks for the music, Ike. That's what I'll miss more than anything."

"When do you leave?"

"Tomorrow." He's so different with his short hair, so much younger in the presence of his father. He's already a stranger again.

We all shake hands again and say goodbye. Father, son and nephew pile back into the station wagon and drive away. This is how Matty leaves the band, the same way he joined us.

I sit on the porch and watch the sky darkening through the trees. There was another tree like these in Sonny's back yard. His father told me they were brought over from Australia about a hundred years ago, and they're called ironwoods. Iron-wood. Sounds like a guitar. Or a saxophone. Or a drumstick hitting a cymbal.

E. G. Burrows

THE LANGUAGE ABOUT TO BE LOST

Two aged women speak it
whenever they meet
which is less often after a deep snowfall.

They strip reeds, they weave.
They have a name
for baskets in the shape of red strawberries.

Jefferson said: what a pity
our native tongues
should be scattered and die out in the muddle.

Even now when two women greet,
impurities creep in:
food stamps, Goodwill, steam heat.

RUNNING TO HEDGES

Towering over the filberts, an old hedge has become grossly exaggerated: a windbreak of jowled and sullen-browed trees side by side with the mawkish blue hysteria of Atlas Cedar gangling over a garden lost to ferocity and gigantism.

I suppose there is a riverbed roots can tap, a glacial repository, black where the ice wormed all teeth and defiance digesting iron. Too late a corps of young nurserymen and women battle to prune and control. They deploy green trucks to gaps in the perimeter, they hack fearlessly at the looped stranglers, the thickets rich in secrecy and exchanges, but there is no gain, only a little wounding.

The pale plants I windowed for warmth of the merest sun and condensation diminished or stretched themselves so far their backs broke. I held their heads up. I offered water. I called for strong lights but there were none. So I wear no green and let what grows grow as it will. They die and we do whether mothered or turned loose on the world to scramble for nurture, wild, running to hedges or bedded behind glass uselessly plotting to take over when our time comes.

Juliet S. Kono

PEARLS

I hung my face like a moon
over the galvanized kitchen sink
to watch mother clean
the *aholehole* father
caught while pole fishing
off Suisan, a sampan dock,
in Waiakea Village.
Mother scaled the fish
with a spoon, an occasional
scale or two spiralling
into the air like snowflakes.

Mother slit the silver bellies
like a surgeon—her water-logged
fingers, shriveled like prunes,
disappearing into the cavities.
In one pull,
she had the gills
and gut out, intact.
Tsking at the sheen
of my scale-flecked face,
water ran red under the faucet
as she washed each fish out.

The luminous fish
made a neat row
on the cutting board.
They were then salted,
dredged in flour, and pan-fried
in a Guardian Service fryer
rippling in Crisco oil.

Mother taught me how
to eat these fish.
Working with her chopstick,
she picked her way clean
leaving a white necklace
of bones on her plate.
I watched and tried to imitate—
not good at dodging bones.

While I can now pick on
and eat fish without much trouble,
I will never acquire the knack
of eating the fish head
the way mother does.
She has no qualms about
sucking out the brains
or the gelatinous eyes with a slurp
and plopping from her mouth
into a cupped hand,
the eyeballs,
like pearls.

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Norman Hindley

SHOPPING THE LIQUOR BARN IN ALAMEDA
WITH TOM

You're ¾'s blind, imperious, impatient
and supposed to show the way. The drive
from Oakland's ugly. I'm visiting, freaked by traffic,
phobic about tunnels that run
under bodies of water
(and there's a long one, I know, coming up).
You've 2 cigarettes going at least,
ash everywhere,
a street directory you can't see
and behind me 100%. It helps.
Swelled by your faith we arrive.
Ah, winsome couple.
We need 2 carts. You go right
to the hard stuff, I head for the reds,
aisles, racks, oceans.
I adore the order, selection,
diction of description, the hyperbole,
the feminine, tapered shoulders
of cabernet bottles,
muscular bottles from the Rhone like cops,
the barolos, my gumbas,
the grave, squat ports.
My testicles creak like cork. It's greed. I'm weak.
I need money, more and more of it.
I think law, medicine maybe,
it's too late.
I make my picks.
Waiting, itching to drink,
you've the best brandies,
the single malts like ingots,
silver soviet vodkas.

Slim Jims and Beer Nuts on top
to make people think you eat.
We pay.
Windows down, we smoke and speed,
the tunnel ain't shit,
heading for Piedmont for cigars,
like liquor like crystal like chocolate
you buy the best ones.
We reach Jean St., unpack,
sit out back accomplished and rich in the sun,
listen to Joe's waterfall,
his fish nosing the pond edge,
and H. Upmann burning,
a Heitz '72 Bella Oaks breathing,
all the living going on in the wine
and outside.

BILLY'S

Billy Fong has a 2nd floor beauty parlor
off Kapahulu, he lets the lights burn at night
and cherry falls into the street.
Folks wanting the bus wait in it
like candy.
I look up and think about Billy Fong,
how he welcomes women in,
praises their shoes,
the scent of their soaps.
His finger slips the rose rim of an ear,
the hot web of his thumb
rises through the down on the back of a neck.
He removes the warm earrings
sets them without sound in a pearly dish.
Today he admires noses, tomorrow brows.
Billy has never seen a wart.
He holds hair in his hands like pears and champagne,
a truffle, a trout.
His combs the color of toast.
His mirrors make everyone thin.
The magazines are in French, it's o.k.
The women sit, above the street,
the braking cars,
highlights in Billy's cool chairs.

Nancy Zafris

FINAL WEEKS

Fifteen years ago I was a student from a Quaker college in Indiana who was abroad in Japan. I spent an academic year in Tokyo after which I lingered most of the summer in the mountains near Kanazawa where I worked in a lodge. I grew close to the lady who ran this mostly deserted hostel and when I left she cried. We promised to write, and at the more unlikely promise to meet again we simply nodded politely. I snapped my final pictures like last desperate waves from a car window and left. The photographs I took during that summer were gathered in a growing bandolier of cartridges. Once back to Tokyo I hurried to the camera store where, stopping to collect the rolls from my handbag, I fumbled and dropped them all on the sidewalk. The film sprung loose at my ankles and jumped out like snakes. My first impulse was to throw my body over the negatives and protect them from the sunlight. But it was already too late. Passersby, sensing my shock, stopped in mid-stride. They gathered around me and looked down quietly at the black coils. Someone came up and patted me on the shoulder. I opened my handbag around my face as though it were a feed-bag, and pretended to peer inside until I gained control.

A letter is all I have to remember her by. The ink of the letter is fourteen years old; black Kanji crawl out of it like tired crustaceans. When I look at it now, I have the feeling of something barely rescued, a memory caught in the webbing of a glove before it flies out of sight. I used to be able to read it. It all used to make sense to me.

Toda ended her letter with the Kanji for "sailing away" and calligraphed it to match its meaning. The tail of the Kanji stretched across the paper until the ink drifted off the page and the letter ended as if on air.

I was finishing my senior year at Earlham when I received it. Earlham, a small Quaker college in Richmond, Indiana, had a program in Japanese studies and a tatami room in its library that featured doors of *shoji*. Students liked to wet their fingers and touch the paper *shoji* until a hole slowly appeared. Such was the extent of vandalism on campus.

The same dated tranquility could be seen in the town of Richmond itself. Its downtown swirled around a train station still in use. The Amtrak

from Chicago stopped there; going home on this train during vacations, I felt thrown into a black-and-white film from a previous era. There was something seductively obsolete about riding a train.

Such remembrances came to me as I left Tokyo that summer and headed for my job on Hakusan mountain. I was immersed in thoughts of Richmond and of my easy Amtrak commute between college adulthood and Chicago childhood. And I was glad to be rid of the Tokyo commuter trains, their long plastic benches and plastic-smelling oxygen. The trains were usually so overpacked that the first row of loop-holding standers were pushed swaybacked over the benches until they hovered above the seated passengers. For months I had ridden the trains like someone neutered, my thoughts delving into blankness that uncannily buzzed me at my station. Now and then, whenever thrust adrift into the teeming core of commuters without loop or bar for balance, I felt like a skydiver in a crowded sky. Tumbling against them, I was conscious of their absence of odors.

So I stepped into the old passenger train enroute to Kanazawa with the feeling of relief. I had a seat in a foursome compartment where I could sit without someone falling over me. I didn't have to pretend it. I was alone. Thoughts returned to me like breezes; I felt suddenly like writing a letter.

After the train arrived in Kanazawa, I rode the bus upward toward Hakusan until, two hours into the climb, the paved road ended suddenly. There, in the small village that sprouted at the end of the bus line, I asked for someone named Toda and stayed overnight with a nasty-tempered old lady who made me wash her stairs. She had been expecting me. The next morning I left with a crew of construction workers who drove me further up dirt roads until we came to the point from which I would have to walk. The clutch burned as the truck plunged up wide, stripped paths. I was pitched and thrown against the men; they looked at me and elbowed one other. They yelled, America? I screamed, Yes!

After the truck stopped in a circular expanse, the workmen poured me tea from a thermos and then headed toward the sleeping necks of their backhoes. One of the men who had been sitting in the cab came over to the truck bed, wrestled out two poles and said, Let's go! I put down my tea. When he saw that my cup was still full, he gestured for me to pick it up and continue drinking. I picked it up and sipped. He made a motion to chug it, but the tea was steaming hot. I put the tea down. He signaled for me to pick it up. I sipped, he gestured to chug. Sip, chug. Trying to do the right thing without burning my mouth, I spilled the tea and burned my chest instead. I ballooned out my shirt front with my thumb and forefin-

ger and shook it. Humiliation and pain forced a smile to my face. The workman read nothing into my smile except embarrassment, if he even registered that, for I had always possessed a mysterious ability to be overlooked. As a child I had often been in the position of watching the world pass while I looked on as an invisible Tiny Tim, trying to keep up and desperately signaling while friends ran to their bicycles and disappeared. Due to my singular talent, nobody ever noticed that I'd just sprained my ankle or just skinned my knee or just spilled hot tea on my breasts. It was a quality that served me well at this moment. The workman never recognized my distress, which was good, because I didn't want to cause a scene in a foreign country.

I put down the tea and we climbed out of the volcanic mouth of construction toward the steep forest paths. A few hours later I finally arrived at the lodge where I was supposed to work. Outside an old man squatted in the sun in the posture of a squirrel eating an acorn. His bottom did not touch the ground, but he appeared quite comfortable.

A much younger man and woman stepped out of the lodge. This was Toda and her husband. Toda started to bow but caught herself. Since I was an American, she greeted me with an Anglicised gesture: a quick step forward like a British servant being briefly introduced. Her husband made grunts in my direction. "She can't understand that," I heard Toda say. "Oh," he said. His head bobbed vacantly. An ugly creature, he had buck teeth so terrible they looked like stage props. Beard stubble like crumbs of mud grew on the tip of his chin and upper lip. I was frightened to think they were married.

"I'm looking for Toda-san," I said.

Everyone stepped forward.

"Ha ha ha ho ho ho," the old man laughed. In a series of leverages and balances, he had moved from squatting like a squirrel, to resting on all-fours like a canine, to legs propped and pushing like a frog. Finally he was on his feet. I liked the old man okay just from the effort he put into getting off the ground. I found out later he was the husband of the nasty old woman I had stayed with in the village. Toda's husband was their son. Toda asked me quietly if I wanted to see the place.

I said yes. Neither of us moved.

I waited to follow her inside. She must have been waiting to do the same. Finally the old man waved his arm. "Go ahead!" he said happily. "Go ahead! Go ahead!" He was gaunt and hollow-cheeked. His grin transformed him into a skull.

I made the first move toward the lodge. "That's right!" the old man

cried. "Go ahead!" I turned slightly and caught Toda looking at me. "Now go ahead!" the old man said to her. "You too! Go ahead! Have a good time, enjoy yourselves!"

I waited for her inside. She smiled at me and I smiled back. The old man was still at it. "Go ahead!" he yelled. In the mountain air his cheers came to us like a yodel. I threw back my head in an imitation of silent, appreciative laughter. But neither of us spoke.

We stood in a big room with rustic, dirt-eaten floorboards and long tables, divided from the private area by a long counter. She cleared her throat. "This room is for the guests," she said. "There are no guests today." She coughed. "So that's nice." I nodded agreeably, even desperately, for I could feel my frozen smile begin to quiver from exhaustion.

We moved quietly toward the kitchen, a small part of which curved into the counter that overlooked the main room; otherwise, it was hidden from general view. We stood for a minute and nodded. The silence peaked and rang a mutual bell to move on.

Opposite the kitchen was a tiny four-mat tatami room with a window that overlooked the main paths outside. In front was another counter where people registered and paid. We wandered briefly toward the counter before gravitating back to the tatami room. Toda glanced out the window. I looked out with her and we watched the old man skate jerkily along in the dirt. Toda was quiet but not nervous. Me, on the other hand, I was in a panic, my smile limp, my biggest asset out the window, wondering *What do I do now?*

"It's nice," I said nervously. She looked up and smiled, a polite smile, a smile that wasn't going to call me on this. She had a strange, calm shyness. It wasn't an acquired skill, obsequious bowing, hand covering the mouth during chuckles, that I was used to seeing in other Japanese women. Her eyes made contact, she laughed with her mouth open and uncovered, but she seemed to move in a slow, internal world.

Down the hall were segregated toilets with their huge country holes in the ground. She laughed with embarrassment. "They don't have these in Tokyo," she said.

"Oh yes they do," I said. "Don't worry" I tried to assure her.

She looked at me doubtfully.

"I'm used to it," I said.

"I'm very sorry," she said. Then we fell silent again.

We walked back to the main room where a wooden structure, half staircase with a railing and half ladder with narrow rungs, led to the loft. This was where I and any of the tentless hikers would sleep. The loft was primitive, but there was a clean improvised tatami area for sleeping.

Except for here and the other tatami room, you didn't have to remove your shoes. Toda pointed this out. "You can wear your shoes," she said. "That's nice, isn't it?"

"Yes."

A couple of sleeping bags curled on the tatami. Toda caught me looking at them. Throughout the tour she had been sneaking glances at me.

"Two other college students work here," she said.

I couldn't imagine why. There didn't seem to be anything to do.

"Ashida and Naoka."

I nodded.

"They're not women," Toda said. "They're men," she explained.

"But I don't think . . ."

"That's fine," I said. I was used to neutral cohabitation with men. In one of my college's Quakerlike impenetrabilities, it had made the dormitories coed. Even the bathrooms. Outside the showers you had to turn a sign to indicate your gender; the opposite sex was requested (with that quiet firmness of a spinster teacher looking over your shoulder) to respect this. Sometimes you left the bathroom stall to see a boy washing his hands at the sink. Sexually ignorant, we co-existed on another rankly intimate realm. Perhaps the point was to take the sex out by putting the bodily functions in. It was hard to fall in love with the boy in the stall next door.

Neither did Toda have to worry about the boys in the sleeping bags next door. She said, "American girls" pause, nod "a lot, don't they?"

"My college doesn't allow it," I said.

Toda smiled. "Oh. I wondered. I hear a lot of things on TV."

"I see what you mean," I said. Silence. "So do I."

Toda nodded thoughtfully. "It's nice to be young," she said.

"You're young too."

"Twenty-eight." It seemed to be a denial. "Would you like some tea?"

We went back downstairs into the kitchen, a room with the cement, outdoors feel of a canteen though without its size. An old picnic table was in the corner. It was damp in the room because of the cement. Down at the train station it had been a humid 80. Here it was cold. Toda wore a sweater and flowered butcher apron. Her chest rose flat and thick with this armor of warmth. My own chest, scalded from the tea, had confiscated the heat from the rest of my body. I started to shiver.

Toda left the kitchen while the tea steeped and came back with what looked like a narrow cigarette case. "This will keep you warm," she said. A tiny stick of charcoal about the size of a cigarette smoldered inside. She wrapped it in a scarf and tied it around my waist. The unit branded the

small of my back. Instantly I felt heat. I saw Toda fight back a smile. "It's for old women," she explained. "This one belongs to my mother-in-law. You stayed at her house last night." She searched my face for a reaction but I didn't say anything.

She poured the tea and I looked across the table at her. The name "Toda," given its auditory cousin in English, had been perfect for the old woman whose toadish warts trimmed the neckline of her kimono. But this Toda was pretty. Country living had left her softly disheveled. Missing from her was the look, that you saw in so many Tokyo women, of being pulled tight. Hair pulled tight and yanking the eyes into slits. Shoulders pulled tight and stretching the neck. Mouth withdrawn and bitten on. The vinyl sheen of relentlessly black hair.

Toda's face was more relaxed. Her eyes were rounder, as if their corners weren't tugged at by the severity of hairstyle. Her own hair was a simple bushy pageboy, a charcoal colored disarray that dipped low on her forehead in a light widow's peak. She kept it off her face by tying back the front portion with a rubber band. This exposed a layer of babyish cilia at her hairline. She looked too young to be a wife and mother. (I had seen a boy and girl outside and a baby sleeping in the tatami room.) She was young but not as young as I was. So I thought of her as a lot older.

She asked me where I was from. "Chicago," I said. The old man walked into the kitchen.

"Chicago," she repeated. "Chicago. I've heard of that. It's—." She smiled and shrugged. Now that she had begun the sentence she would have to complete it. "It's near New York I think."

"The Great Lakes," the old man said. "You know that word!" He leaned close to my face. He was all skull and swollen cheekbones. "Great Lakes, ha ha."

"Yes," I said.

"Ha ha." The old man laughed in distinct syllables. He pointed to his head. "Very smart. Tokyo University. Straight. Ha ha ha ha." He poked me. "Not enough air," he said. "You'll like it up here." Continually stooped, he rested victoriously on his knees after a joke. To me he looked like an old Chicago black man playing the spoons, the body too far gone to possess color or race.

Toda's husband walked in. "Tea," he said.

The old man prodded his son's arm. "Hooo. She understands everything. It's wonderful."

His son didn't answer. He sat down at the table and stared into space. I couldn't look at him without disgust. His buck teeth prevented him from closing his mouth. His beard-crumbed jaw hung down as though dripping dirt. A general vacancy hung down with it.

Toda emptied the used tea leaves into the drain and measured out fresh ones. "Do you want tea too?" she asked the old man.

The old man bowed militantly and barked. "Thank you very much!" he exclaimed in a single blurt. He poked me on the arm until I watched him; then he repeated his bow and samurai oink.

Toda's husband finished his tea and burped. Then he got up and left without having grunted another word to any of us. Toda sighed and refilled our tea cups.

The old man looked at his tea but didn't touch it. He pointed to the cup itself and said, "This is very special. This is the Japanese spirit. They don't have this anywhere else in the world. Do you know what this is called?"

"Unomi," I said, quickly coaxed into being a proud student. It was one of the easiest words to remember. *You-know-me* meant a teacup.

"Ha!" the old man exclaimed. "Ho! Ha! She knows everything!" He slapped me on the back. I could see the corners of Toda's mouth twitching. He went to a cupboard and took out a porcelain flask and cup. "I'll teach you some more Japanese words. Better Japanese words." He placed the set before me. "Sake!" he exclaimed. He bowed theatrically. "Oooooooooosake!" He poured us each a cup. "Go ahead! Go ahead!" Toda reached for her cup. The old man poked me to notice. "Country women drink," he said.

I touched my tongue to the sake, hoping this would pass as a sip. Drinking was not allowed on the Earlham campus. Though I tried not to make a big deal about it, I knew there was a slight widening of my eyes whenever alcohol appeared. I hoped for more vocabulary drills to divert attention from the wine. But the old man went through the same pantomime as the workman had earlier with my tea.

"Gulp, gulp, gulp!" he told me. "Like this!"

To avoid another accident I obeyed.

I could feel the cold sake as it startled successive parts of my throat and esophagus. When it lodged against my burn, a distressing spot of heat seethed against my chest while the rest of me began to shiver with a prickly chill.

Toda noticed me shaking. She put down the flask of sake into a small pot of hot water to heat it.

"This will warm you up!" the old man said. "It's not summer up here. We only have three seasons. I'm very lucky. I get winter twice a year and old age makes three. Ha ha. Ho."

The small cups held only a few thimblefuls of sake. I thought if I gulped the first, they would leave me alone for seconds.

"Snacks," the old man said.

Toda got out some rice crackers and poured me another cup. "Feeling better?" she asked. I grabbed at the crackers. So far I didn't feel anything, but I wasn't taking any chances. I was going down on a full stomach.

Eventually Toda had to lead me up the stairs to the loft. I looked down through the slats and saw the old man following. He climbed the stairs on all fours. I sat on the raised platform of tatami with my feet on the floorboards while Toda spread out a futon. As if coming up through a manhole the head of the old man appeared, then his elbows. His forearms pushed off and he landed on his belly like a seal. I took off my shoes and made sure I lined them up heels first.

The old man staggered over to Toda and poked. "Look at that," he said. "She's wonderful. Even though she's drunk she lines up her shoes."

I plopped on top of the futon and wormed into my sleeping bag. Toda covered me with more blankets and I looked up at them. There was nothing more comfortable than being sick in your own bed with blankets that felt cool against your chin, and nothing worse than being sick in the bed of people you'd just met. I was humiliated. My chest hurt and I lacked the privacy and medication to help it. Two children, a boy and girl, appeared and looked down at me. The boy's face twitched in the beginnings of pain when he saw me.

"A foreigner," Toda explained. She drew him against her leg.

When they left me I opened my shirt and looked at my chest. Tiny blisters covered my breastbone. I pulled down my bra and saw that it had protected me. The burn ended in a V-shaped red cleavage. I dug in my knapsack for some packets of Wipe-n-Wash that a waitress in Richmond had given me. Even without refrigeration they were always cool to the touch with a sharp antiseptic smell. I spread one over my chest and experienced a few seconds of soothing freshness until the napkin grew hot and useless, and its stinging citrus odor staled. I applied one after another until the last one dried on my chest and stiffened like a bib. The thick lemony tincture began to smell like the sickness instead of the cure. The burn started to throb, hoarding heat from the rest of my body. Lured by such images of my own distress, I was suddenly comforted. I began to write an imaginary letter about it, savoring my reader's reaction, wondering which particular family member or friend would be the best recipient for this episode in my life. My thoughts began to ride on a train, enhanced by the rhythmic throbbing of my burn. A story began to unfold; etiolated like a leaf, it conformed to a pattern that made perfect sense until I opened my eyes. Then it made no sense at all. Two guys were standing over me. I closed my eyes and tried to remember something, but the narrative lines of the dream grew tangled and illogical. In another second it was gone com-

pletely. I was left with another sensation. The aroma of briskly chilled skin. The two guys looking at me had come in from a long day outdoors. They must be Ashida and Naoka, the two college students Toda had told me about.

"A foreigner," one of them said. He was a tall shadow with hair in a puff.

"It's time to eat," the other one said. He was a shorter shadow with long hair. He leaned down to me. "Do you understand?"

"Uh-huh," I said.

They burst into laughter. "Uh-huh," they repeated. I sat up holding the stiff Wipe-n-Wash to my exposed chest. Beside me were other wipes, thrown like used kleenexes. "Do you have a cold?" the shorter one asked.

"No," I said. They continued to look at me as I tried to button my shirt with one hand and hide behind the Wipe-n-Wash with the other.

"Colds can be very dangerous."

"You have to take medicine very early to stop it."

"I don't have a cold," I said. "I burned myself."

The shorter one widened his eyes and pointed to his chest. "Yes," I said.

"Oooh," they said meditatively. They turned to each other and discussed how this could have happened. The shorter one lit a cigarette, held it out to me and said, Like this? He jabbed the air. Un-uh, I said. Un-uh! they laughed. No, the burn most likely occurred, they agree, when I splashed myself as I tested the water of the public bath in Kanazawa. That public bath is really hot, one of them said. Did you go to the public bath in Kanazawa? they asked me almost as an afterthought. No, I said. They looked at each other. Not cigarettes, not bath water. What could it be? They went downstairs to get Toda.

Toda arrived in a restrained state of panic. She was carrying her baby and a flashlight. Her other two children darted ahead and then rushed back behind her legs when they saw me. She shone the flashlight on my chest. Ashida and Naoka looked over her shoulders.

"That's bad," they said to Toda.

"A burn like that can be serious."

Toda turned her flashlight to the stairway. A downy head appeared and then the tips of hands. The rest of the old man slowly emerged and crawled over to have a look. His cheeks caught the light. He regarded my burn from different tilts of his head.

"Trouble," he said. He pointed to my chest and drew a V in the air for the others.

"Yes," Toda said. Downstairs she gave me a thin towel to wet and

keep against my chest while she hunted for ointments; all she found was Chinese medicinal tea and harsh antiseptics for cuts. The old man claimed he would go down the mountain in the morning and find some salve for burns. "In the meantime," he said, "drink plenty of Chinese tea." I protested, saying the burn wasn't that bad, which it wasn't. But Toda said she would be responsible if it became infected.

The old man hooted and poked me appreciatively. When he stopped laughing he leaned down against his knees and breathed hard. I didn't see how he could possibly make it down the mountain. He climbed a flight of stairs like a man reeling from gunshot wounds. When I saw him leave in the morning, his head disappearing down the steep trail as though sinking underwater, I never expected to see him again. I saw him as one of these creatures in a myth, the blind man with a walking stick who throws magic stones into the lake whenever he needs to see. He would need such a miracle. Then I realized the miracle had already taken place: somehow he must have climbed up the mountain in the first place.

The best thing about my summer job was that I didn't have to do much work. People who climb mountains are the same kind of people who sleep in tents and cook their own food over campfires. All I did was write down their names (to much applause), collect money, and send them on their way to the campsites up the hill where Nakao and Ashida cleared sites of rocks and stump and tried to establish some sort of plumbing. Together we formed a workforce of two and a payroll of three.

Nakao and Ashida seemed to thrive in the mountains. When they weren't working they were hiking. When they weren't hiking they were playing two-man baseball or keep-away from Toda's two older children. For Toda and me, however, it was as if the altitude had thinned the usual high-octane yearning for organization and cleanliness. We more or less hung out, all morning, all afternoon. The pace of life slowed to a drowsy sway. The same mountains that fueled Nakao's and Ashida's energy sent Toda and me into early retirement. We watched those two from the tatami room as we might gamboling dolphins from our tourboat. It was a form of sightseeing, actually, a pleasure to watch, but we had no intention of joining in. More often than not we found ourselves jerking awake to one of the children's screams outside. Since there were no chairs in the tatami room we conversed by lying down and resting our heads on the crook of our arms. With the chill and lack of oxygen it was as deadly as sitting by the fireplace. Lie down, get a blanket, start a conversation—that's about as far as we got. Her eighteen-month old daughter, Hiromi, played quietly between us. Sometimes I would wake up with a pair of eyes in my face, and Hiromi perched over me like a cat.

Other times, it seemed always the times that I had persuaded Toda to make instant coffee for us instead of tea, we would wake to find her husband standing over us, a vacant but mean stare, his lips and bold ugly teeth embossed with spit. He didn't require a greeting of any sort. He looked around, though there was nothing to see in the cramped four-mat room, and left. I realized suddenly that this was their bedroom as well.

"Doesn't he want me in here?" I asked Toda.

"No, it's all right," she said.

"I'm sorry."

"No." Toda got up, slipped down into her sandals and picked up Hiromi. "I have diapers to wash," she said. I followed her down to the stream. She did the dirty part and I rinsed. A certain intimacy had been won, I felt, so I finally broached the subject of taking a bath.

"Every week or so," she said.

"Every week?"

"Or so."

"When's the next one?"

"I don't really know."

I said, "When will you know?"

"I don't really know."

"But you do have an ofuro?"

"It's in the shack." She looked at me and laughed. "That's why we don't prepare it very often. It takes time. Nobody's here all the time except me." She stopped. "I tend to forget about it. Do you want to take a bath?"

"Yes."

"I forgot all about it. Oh," she said. She wrung out a diaper with the most languid squeeze I have ever seen; just as slowly she hooked it over her forearm. "I'll wait until my husband leaves. You don't want to go in after him." She looked down at the diapers she was lining up along her arm. "He comes and goes," she said. In no hurry to finish, she seemed instead bent on using as much time as possible.

"Because I know you don't like him," she said quietly.

"No. I like him very much."

"I don't like him either," she said.

"I hate him," I said.

"So do I." She whispered it to me and turned bright red before my eyes. "Don't laugh," she said. Laugh? I was lost in a strange selfish gratitude: after working hard to learn the language, someone was bestowing an "A" by confiding in me. Laughing at her would have been like laughing at myself.

"Do you know this word?" she asked. She said a word.

"No," I said.

"It means the mother-in-law problem. It's a famous expression." She looked at me. "Because it's true." She drew some Kanji in the air with her finger. "See?" She drew them more slowly. One of the Kanji was for "bride."

"Oh yes," I said.

She found a stick, drew the Kanji in the dirt, and then handed the stick to me. It was a complicated Kanji and though I wouldn't have known how to pronounce it, the stroke order was easy to see. I drew it quickly and well. Toda smiled. Then she wrote the simpler phonetic Hiragana underneath it so I could remember how to read it.

She handed back the stick and pointed to the Hiragana underneath. I wrote them, and her cheeks puckered. She almost laughed. She had found me out. The Hiragana characters were simple two- or three-stroke characters that you could learn in a couple of days. Yet their very simplicity gave me away. My slurred handwriting of a multi-stroke Kanji might at times be able to fool someone, but once called upon to write a single-stroke Hiragana, I was caught out every time.

I drew a circle around the Kanji and Hiragana. "And you've got this problem," I said.

"Everyone does. Especially in the country. You met her. You stayed overnight with her." She laughed. "Alone."

"She's a witch," I said. "Unbelievable. I couldn't believe it."

"What did she do?"

"She didn't say hello, she didn't give me tea, she didn't ask me what America was like. She gave me a bucket of water and a washrag and told me to wash the stairs."

"That's her. That's what she's like. She does it to me too."

"Why don't you get away from her?"

"In the summer I do. Up here. My husband's usually down there too. It's better. Even though I'm all alone."

"You have your children."

She nodded.

"And Hiromi is the cutest baby in the world."

We started back toward the lodge. I found myself devising easy plans of escape for her—get a divorce, melt your mother-in-law, go to Tokyo, meet someone nice. I was like an author who vaults her character over life-long chasms of culture and resignation by drawing up a quick reading list. I was all vain hopes and collegiate hubris.

"Well you know," she continued after a minute, "in the winter we don't take so many baths because we don't get dirty. It's like winter up here. You don't get dirty."

"I see," I said.

"It's the same in Tokyo," she said. "Did your Tokyo family take baths in the winter?"

"Yes," I said.

"How often?" she asked.

"Everyday. Or every other day."

"Everyday? A very progressive family," she said thoughtfully. She walked ahead of me, then caught herself. She turned and waited.

The next morning her husband left with the workman who had led me up Hakusan and who reappeared every few days with more poles on his shoulder. Eventually, Toda told me, they would have telephones on the mountain.

As soon as her husband was gone Toda walked to the shack that housed the ofuro and began preparing the bath. It was the old kind, heated by a fire underneath. Toda explained it to me. I waved her off. I know all about it, I said when she told me to be careful. I waved to her from the door of the shack with a wash basin pressed against my stomach. I did it just to get a reaction. I could tell Toda was worried.

The shack was unheated and cold. I washed quickly on a pallet whose wood had grown slimy and then lowered my shivering body into the tub. I had to squat high in the tub to protect my burn from the hot water. By now the burn had dried and splintered into a perfect cleavage of cracked red clay. Though it no longer throbbed, the skin had skrunked. If I straightened my shoulders suddenly, some of the cracks would widen and ooze.

I crouched on my tiptoes and balanced myself on the wooden slats that kept me from direct contact with the red-hot bottom of the tub. The slats were removable and thus movable. They rode several inches high to prevent scalding by the hottest dregs of water, but nonetheless I could feel all the heat pooling at my feet. Because of my burn I wasn't balanced well enough to swirl the water effectively. I stood carefully to get out. As I swung my left leg over onto the slimy pallet, the heel of my right foot pushed through the slats and touched the searing iron bottom. I lurched into the air as though by electric shock, fell on the pallet—snapping its wood into the shape of my butt—and skated into the wall. Another burn, a good one that sizzled, more panic among my keepers. Still it was worth it. I was clean, I was warm from the inside out. For the first time in days I felt totally relaxed. I lay on the palette like a dish on the rack until I dried.

The burn on my heel forced me into even less usefulness. Knowing it wasn't serious, I was in no hurry to get well. I walked along with an inept, limping shuffle—left foot scraping, right foot on tiptoe. Part of it was due

to the burn, the other to the condition of my shoes. The spines of both my tennis shoes had long been broken from my habit of slipping into them like sandals.

I could hop easily from the tatami room to the counter to register any campers. One day, like something up from the fog, there he was. The old man was back. A couple of arriving hikers told us an old man was a little ways down the trail. I hopped to the edge of the clearing with Toda's shoulder for support, and we saw him worming himself over a fallen log. Once on the log he just spread out and rested. We went back inside the lodge and arranged ourselves at the kitchen table. "Oh my!" Toda said in surprise when he finally crept in. "Oh my, oh my." She stood up in welcome. The old man leaned on his knees, head down, and briefly flicked his hand. Still not looking at us, he produced the ointment. Then he sank side-saddle onto the bench and rested his body against the table.

I went into the bathroom to apply the medicine his rescue mission had produced; the ointment was especially welcomed on my chest for I had been hunching my shoulders as the burn contracted. My heel was still in the inflamed stage. Its blisters felt thick and topographical and, like a Band-Aid, not attached to me except at the edges. I suddenly realized life up here left me an awful lot of time to think about these two spots on my body. I had begun to mark their progress like a pregnancy, hoping to produce something more at their termination, something that lived beyond the daily grind. It was almost frightening what I'd sunk to. I was plunging my stakes into two tiny burns, wishing they were a little bit worse. What if these two little burns were two little kids? What in the world, I wondered, could Toda's life be like day after day?

When I returned to the kitchen the old man was sipping on a water glass of sake. His cheekbones looked like two swollen eyes. Toda and I began a soft conversation.

"It's just wonderful," the old man suddenly said. "You've come up here." He stopped to think, massaged the bones and hollows of his face like a man stroking his beard, stopped, laughed to himself. He turned to Toda. "It's wonderful," he told her. "She's come up here. She's climbed a mountain. She wants to learn about us." He patted me on the back. Then the ineffableness of it all caught up with him. All he could do was shake his head.

Toda suppressed a smile. She pushed the hair back from her face and I saw the black babyish cilia.

"I think it's wonderful," the old man said again.

Everyone else seemed to admire me too. I just sat back and waited for it. As I checked in the climbers I waited for their surprise. I got Oohs! and

Ahs! and Let's see you do that again! just for knowing the Kanji of a few basic names. What's your name? Tanaka? Can I write it?

I wrote Tanaka.

Amazing. Did I know that Prime Minister Tanaka was also named Tanaka?

Yes.

Did I know more names?

Yes.

Kurosawa?

Are you kidding? You mean like the movie director? Yeah love his movies, me too. But his name looks like a robot with caster rollers for feet. Watch this.

I wrote it fast and slurred all four feet into one squiggly line.

Ooooooh! they sighted collectively.

The old man, my biggest admirer, stood next to me like my manager.

Any more? he asked. Go ahead! She knows them all.

More than a slight exaggeration but I had nothing to worry about because they chose only easy ones. Even without trying, they were too polite to give me difficult names, names that only their ten-year-old brothers and sisters would have known for example.

Seldom have I been so universally admired for doing nothing. Just as I had always been overlooked, now I was always noticed for no reason. Like a star, I could create a stir just by existing. What a freebie, I thought. You could live life here and never look back. Or forward. It was tempting.

My life at the lodge became a series of mishaps that amused everyone. As my stay drew to a close they seemed to expect one last fiasco. I didn't disappoint. One morning I limped and scraped to the toilets and dropped one of my shoes into the swamp of excrement below me.

Early, too early in the morning I awoke to noises and the smell of cigarette smoke. Naoka and Ashida were lying sideways in their sleeping bags and chatting. Ashida was propped on his elbow, smoking a cigarette without an ashtray. His case of fidgets buzzed up a gear as he tried to wave off ashes without burning either himself or the tatami. He jumped and swiped at each dropping ash as though it were a bee.

"Thank you for waking me," I said sarcastically.

"Indiana Gozaimas," they said. They thought this was such a funny joke.

I wad cold but I had to go to the bathroom. I looked at myself under the sleeping bag and saw I had my clothes on. Sometimes this happened when Ashida, Naoka, and I went to bed at the same time. There were, however, some benefits to sleeping in your clothes. You could get dressed

really fast in the morning. I threw off my sleeping bag, slid to the end of the tatami and shoved my feet into my tennis shoes. I minced carefully down the stairs, and shuffled into the bathroom. My shoe, hanging from my toe like a sandal, caught an edge of the rim and fell into the deep abyss of the latrine. When I saw my shoe below me, I clenched my nerves and went to get Toda for help.

The door to the tatami room was slid open. In a place barely big enough for two, I was confronted with three children and two adults strewn together in one large lump. Poor Toda was surrounded by babies stroking her head and a man on top of her body. Just as I walked by, he emerged from the storm-tossed mass of futons like a walrus, gibbous-fanged and salivating, beard on his chin like moss. He looked at me blankly before resubmerging into the heap. Toda never saw me and I didn't break stride.

Outside I stood on one foot and took a deep breath. I wished I had Ashida's cigarette. After a few minutes I sidled past the room and went upstairs. Naoka and Ashida noticed instantly I was shoeless. For boys, they were remarkably fastidious. When I told them what had happened they curled up into fetuses and howled. I noted their tendency toward excessive hilarity. Practical jokes, committed with the energy left over from virginity, were not beyond them. I sometimes caught a painful glimpse of myself in their overeager manners, but after what I had just witnessed I felt judicious and superior. I crawled back under my sleeping bag.

I waited until I heard noises of children and bustle and then I went downstairs and told Toda what had happened. She didn't laugh at me. She got a mop. I directed her to the hole and there was my shoe, still afloat like a buoy. We tried to jimmy the handle into a grip-hold on the shoe. The level of the waste was high enough that the handle could reach it. When it was this high, you could check on all the activities of the guests. You could know their problems, their time of the month. It was that intimate. It was that embarrassing. I started to lose control.

Toda gently guided the hair from her face with her fingertips. It didn't seem to bother her. She balanced the shoe at the end of the mop handle and managed to get it up and through the hole. She lofted it in front of her. Shoe swaying in the air, we marched to the stream. "I can't wear this shoe," I was moaning in English. "These are the only shoes I have." I started pulling at my hair. "I can't wear this shoe anymore but I don't have any others!" Toda looked at me curiously, trying to decipher the words. I couldn't stop repeating this. I sensed I was on the verge of hysterics. Part of me started to watch the other part break down. Just go a little further and see what happens, I found myself thinking. Just go nuts and

see what it's really like. Then I quieted down. Gradually, and with a sense of disappointment, I realized I was completely calm.

Toda was watching me. "You're lucky you didn't fall through," she said.

"Right, sure, count my blessings," I said in English.

"What?"

"That's hard to do," I said.

"My son fell through when he was six. He was in the hospital for three weeks. My mother-in-law pushed me away while I was talking to the doctor. She told me to clean up. I was dirty."

She got on her knees and leaned over the water. "I jumped in after him," she explained. She laughed. Then she didn't say anything else.

I picked up my shoe by the string and inspected it as it twirled.

"You must have a lot of boyfriends," Toda said.

"No."

"Ashida and Toda like you."

"They're just friends," I said.

"Those are boyfriends too," she said.

"Oh."

"How many do you have?"

"Boyfriends?"

"Yes."

"I don't know. None."

"None?"

"Yes. I mean no. I don't have any."

She looked at me and smiled. Her disheveled hair flew into her face.

"What?" I said.

She shook her head.

"What?"

"Nothing. You don't have a boyfriend?"

"No."

"But you have been kissed."

I looked at her. I shrugged.

"I was just wondering what it was like."

"What?"

"What it's like to be kissed," she said.

"You've never been kissed?" I asked. I stared at the side of her face.

"That's not true." She tried to laugh. I felt a shock of disbelief. At the same time a thrill I tried to deny. The thrill of having my own experience deferred to.

"People say it's really nice," she said.

"Do they?"

"Is it?"

I looked at her and gestured helplessly. "Look," I said, "if I say yes, it's not fair. But if I say no . . ."

"How nice is it?"

"Well," I said, "How nice is . . . you know . . . How nice is that?"

She said, "I always thought kissing must be better."

"Can you give me a few more details?" I asked.

She adjusted her shoulders as though she had been sitting a long time. "All right." She laughed and turned red. "I'll tell you all about it," she said. Believe me, I wanted to hear.

But what would I ask her to tell me these days, the mysteries gone and with them an electric, hidden empathy? I don't know. When I left the mountain I couldn't look at her face. I hid behind my camera and shot pictures instead. Later I would look at the pictures, I told myself, and think about her. I disappeared down the trail, keeping my head down, watching my feet. I searched for stepworks of roots. Suddenly I could have been anywhere.

"I'm sailing away," she wrote me fourteen years ago, the words themselves made to drift into inklessness, into my own absorption. But today when I hold the letter and open it again, the characters that once leaped to my senses now gather in a lifeless blur. I can no longer read a word it says.

L. L. Harper

VANITIES

*And in the lake many pearls are found,
that kings place in their ears.*

Nennius

We have not come to shop
but to offer up
to the Piercing Pagoda
two perfect ears;
deflower with pin and cork
plump, naked lobes.

As the pin takes flesh
Kate's pinched eyes open.
The pin wounds again.
Before the pearl stud
is screwed in place,
one perfect comma
silk red
wells up.
She climbs down
to enter with shining eyes
a life pearlescent,
a world of gold hoops and diamond drops
she will wear in pairs,
she will wear with her hair tied back.

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Chris Hindley

CHINESE AUNTY

for M. Y. M.

My Chinese aunty was a Christmas light
For the first
Ten years of my life; a birth of presents
Each time she saw me.
Her dresses were pressed like
Apple pie.

Last night I smelled
A flower called the
Australian Wax,
Like merry-go-rounds
Like the Opium she wore from
Paris.

You have vanished like a
Letter.

MRS. MITCHELL

Alone with you one morning, in the library,
You whispered how you and your husband had
Picnics in a
1934 Ford Coupe
In daisy fields
With the rusty sun breaking over the edge of a page;
The plains, you said, turned wheat yellow.

My heart is burning out the hymn notes
On the pew in front of me.

Near the altar, your grandchildren wear pink
Ginger leis.
Your daughter's hard,
Jaw lines, like yours, embracing you in the casket.
I remember lipstick on special occasions;
Easter,
Christmas.
Touching you last in the
Morning,
In your yard,
Tucked in behind the rubber tree,
Book in hand,
Wearing a winter dress.

Naomi Rachel

SAFFRON: CROCUS SATIVUS

A sleep potion:

Venus sprinkled it, gold dust, on Vulcan's meal.
While he slept she well spent the time with lover Mars.
In Rome it scented the baths of emperors.
As rice after a wedding, tossed in the streets
when nobility went forth.

The world's most costly spice, it requires the stigma
of one hundred and fifty thousand flowers to total a kilo.
In the family garden
Six healthy plants will produce enough spice for one recipe.
In the Fall, before the saffron dies down,
its lovely lavender blossoms are but an added bonus.

Taking over our herb bed, given the care
most exotics demand, our saffron never flowered.
It never even greened.
Forbidding as a crown of thorns
unfriendly as Canada thistle,
it spread viciously but produced none
of its promised wonders.
In the herb bed the plebeians: thyme, rosemary, oregano,
basil and mint neighbor the saffron.
Trenched in compost, planted intensively, nurtured to compete.
Even a volunteer buttercup, usually so invasive did not cross
the border of thorns.
The distinction between aristocracy and peasantry,
as rigidly defined as if a stone ha-ha
pruned all roots.

The saffron was untouched by the community of insects.
Even the tough gluey coating of the banana slugs
could be punctured by the thorns.
Cutworms in their second generation could no more tackle
a bamboo grove than the trunk of the tyrant spice.

Our resident monarchs, the muster of peafowl, passed by the saffron
as they walked and dined through the garden.
Unaffected by pies worth of poisonous rhubarb,
they would not risk even a nibble of the untouchable.
Curious birds the cocks cock their heads and stretch
their blue necks in wonderment at the strange centrepiece
crowding the herb bed.

The saffron stood erect long after the first killing frosts flattened
other hardy plants; the spikes of the globe artichoke
and rose of the muskmallow.
Only the perpetual bloom of the wild feverfew
remained as a promise of winter as but a single season.
All the garden was put to rest,
covered with a warm fertile mulch of seaweed.
Then we ventured to approach the saffron, brown against the snow.
Outfitted with nylon gloves and pruning shears,
properly equipped to spring a trap or capture a swarm.
If the saffron had produced nothing, it would not punish.

It had to be cremated.
In the hot purple blaze of a Fall bonfire.
It would have refused to compost in the piles
with the rabble of vegetables, vines, hay and weeds.

Next year that space in the herb bed will be empty.
We could allow the mint to send out tendrils.
We could.
But perhaps we will try the seeds of the aconite
to preserve our balance, unnatural though it be.

Nancy Lord

WHEN BONNIE CROSSED

Even after eighteen years in Alaska, summer's arrival always surprises me. On one day, towards the end of May, it rains and then the sun comes out and everything turns green. Just like that. For people who spend too much time in the snow and mud, it's a radical change. They let loose—swarming over the beaches, clouding the air with barbecue fires, beating up on each other.

I'm a lot more restrained. My way of letting loose is to put on a sleeveless blouse even if I have to wear a sweater over it, move my zucchini starters out to the garden, and splurge on a pint of fresh California strawberries at the grocery store.

I remember very clearly, a year ago last May, sitting at my table. It was so warm—hot—in the sun that I was sweating. I was eating sliced strawberries with yogurt and watching a robin hop around out front. Bird songs floated in through an open window. I was thinking that life was pretty darn good.

The robin flew off, and there was Bonnie, my neighbor, coming up through the field, bouncing along in her rubber boots. The backpack towering over her shoulders didn't seem to do anything to weigh her down. I could see her energy straining to fly free.

Bonnie set her backpack on the porch before she knocked and pushed the door open. She struck her head inside. "Can I ride with you to town?"

"I'll be ready in a few minutes," I said. "Look at this." I pointed at my bowl. "Strawberries. They're on the counter. Eat what's left."

"No, thanks," she said, stepping out of her boots. "I've got my mind set on getting across the bay. Go ahead and finish, though. I'll wait."

I dearly loved Bonnie. If I hadn't, that was one habit of hers that would have driven me crazy. Every time she did that—acting as though she were doing me a favor or agreeably suffering though some inconvenience I forced on her—it set me back for a minute. I'd have to catch myself with a big *hub*? Was I supposed to feel guilty about not fitting neatly into *her* schedule or plans?

I went ahead and poured her a cup of mint tea. She endured it.

With Bonnie, my latent mothering instinct—such as it is—came to life. I mean, here I am, a thirty-eight-year-old single woman who lives alone, not for want of trying to do otherwise. And there's Bonnie, almost young enough to be my daughter, determined to be entirely on her own. She interested me, the first time I saw her, when she came to work at the cannery. She had her head in the clouds, I would have said. I liked that about her, but at the same time I wanted to pull her down a little, get her floating in sight of earth.

I was the one who arranged for her to caretake, over the winter, the cabin down the road. Even then, I didn't see much of her. She wasn't exactly Ms. Sociability, and I was busy with my own life—work, mostly. Somehow the whole winter went by and I rarely saw Bonnie except when she stopped by for a ride or to borrow something. Just two days earlier she'd been over looking for a tube cake pan. I've never owned a tube cake pan. She tried to hide her disappointment. "That's okay," she said. "I'll make do."

Bonnie just saw things differently, that's all. Her sense of reality, compared to the rest of us, was a little off. When it rains, most of us react by getting out of it, or at least turning up our collars. Not Bonnie. She wandered around in it with water dripping down her neck, "experiencing" it. Of course, she *was* from San Francisco.

"So," I said, "you're headed across the bay?" Bonnie had talked, for months, of wanting to go live in the wilderness. Anyone else might have thought that living alone in a cabin in the woods without running water would be close enough, but she apparently had more in mind.

Bonnie nodded from behind her cup of tea. Her dark eyes were as wide as I'd ever seen them, and lit with something like a spark. Her long reddish hair, still damp from however she'd managed to wash it that morning, was beginning to frizz out around her shoulders.

I spooned up my last strawberry. "So what's the plan? Where are you going exactly?"

Bonnie shrugged. "Right now, I just want to get across the bay. I thought I'd go down to the boat harbor and see where I can get a ride to. Then I'll just hike around. I just want to spend time by myself."

"And when should we look for you again?"

"My goal is a year," she said.

I couldn't help laughing. "C'mon, Bonnie. Be real!" I mean, a week or two in the summer, I could understand. But how in the world did she think she could live over there through a long, dark, bitterly cold winter, by herself? It was *remote* over there, with its scattering of vacation cabins locked up tight by Labor Day.

Bonnie shifted in her chair, straightening her back and leveling her broad shoulders as though she were a cannon taking aim. I could read the body language. She'd made her decision.

"Well," I said. "Take it easy. I hope you've got plenty of grub and matches." If that's what she wanted—she'd learn something from it for sure. She was certainly old enough to live her own life. Besides, I thought, for Bonnie to head into the bush alone was probably more or less the equivalent of my going to Alaska with a friend years ago. My parents had thought it was a crazy, dangerous thing to do, but their fussing only made me more determined. And hadn't I survived?

When we left and she hefted her pack from my porch, I thought it wasn't awfully big for a year's outing. I took as much on a weekend camping trip. She had a sleeping bag tied on the bottom of the pack and a roll of visqueen on top. There wasn't all that much room between them for everything else. Of course she didn't have a gun. Bonnie didn't even set mouse traps in her cabin, preferring to let the mice chew up her food and nest among her socks. I couldn't imagine her killing *anything*.

I took her all the way to the harbor, although it was out of my way. "Keep in touch," I said. Isn't that what you always say when you see someone off? In Bonnie's case, it didn't make much sense. I imagined her sticking a message in a bottle and tossing it into the bay.

"Thanks for the ride," she said, getting out with her pack. The last I remember of her was her red hair glowing in the sunlight as she strode off toward the floats. I smiled because she looked so purposeful, bearing down on the boats in her oversized black cannery boots.

I thought I'd see Bonnie again before the summer was out. Certainly, even if she managed to find or make herself an acceptable shelter, she'd eventually have to come in to resupply. When I didn't see her I still didn't worry. I wouldn't necessarily see her when she came to town. The cabin down the road was reclaimed by its owners, so there was no particular reason for her to come out my way. She might just stock up on toilet paper and brown rice and head back across.

Besides, my own life was so busy, I didn't have that much time to think about Bonnie. I was working steadily at the cannery, as the new forelady. I guess because I was the senior woman there, the management decided to bump me up. I wasn't at all sure I wanted the responsibility, and I was torn between taking care of my workers and watching out for production. Aside from that, I found a man who showed promise, so I was putting a lot of effort into that area.

Whenever Bonnie drifted into my thoughts it was always with a sort of tidal action that would wash in and wash out, throwing up just another

piece of flotsam into my already-littered mind. Summer on the other side, with all its tranquility, finally seemed not such a bad idea. When I pictured Bonnie making campfires on the beach, watching the birds, I was almost *jealous*.

As summer edged into fall, I thought she surely would have had enough of blackflies and a wet sleeping bag, would have made the compromises we all make with our ideals and caught a boatripe back. By the time the fall rains started, I was sure she'd sneaked through town and headed out, perhaps all the way back to California.

On a raw, windy evening in November, I settled into my chair by the woodstove and opened the weekly paper. It was pitchdark outside, and I half expected to hear the static of snow against the windows. That morning, the snowline on the mountains across the bay had dropped almost to eyelevel.

Information requested concerning the whereabouts of Bonnie Erikson. The words, in a large, bold type, surrounded Bonnie's picture. *Call the State Troopers.*

It didn't snow that night, but as I lay in bed I listened to the wind rattling bare branches. She couldn't still be across the bay, under visqueen and clouds, with the snowline descending on her. Whatever her adventure was, it would have ceased being fun long ago. My mind roved through the possibilities all night. So many types of accidents happen in the bush—bear attacks, falls, drownings. Perhaps she'd moved into a cabin, perhaps even teamed up with one of the few bushy types who lived on that side year-round. Who had become concerned enough to report her missing?

When I awoke in the morning, I was surprised I'd slept at all. My fire had gone out and the cabin was cold; my legs were stiff from being hugged high, seeking warmth.

Since I had to drive to town, anyway, to find a phone, I drove right to the troopers' station. I'm afraid I wasn't much help. When it came down to it, I didn't know much—only that I'd given her a ride on a day late in May, the size of her pack, and what she'd told me about going wherever she found a boatripe to and staying for a year.

Her mother had reported her missing. Bonnie had written to her before she left, telling her of her plans and promising she'd get some word to her by October about how she was doing. Her mother hadn't heard from her again.

Bonnie had lived in Alaska less than a year when she left for the other side. I remember her newness, working at the cannery the previous August. Across the shrimp line from me on her first day, her regulation

hairnet securely in place, Bonnie leaned intently over the product as it rode by on the belt. She scrambled to pick out the bits of shell and waste as though her life depended upon it. At break time, everyone gathered in the lunchroom—everyone except Bonnie. I saw her out on the dock, staring off at the mountains and the clouds.

The lunchroom, where the smell of coffee did little to overcome the stink of fish, wasn't my favorite place either. The shouting got to me, too. Everyone talked too loudly, as though to compensate for the machine noise that was so difficult to yell over while we worked. That day I took my sandwich and went outside.

Bonnie didn't notice me at first. She was watching the gulls. They were shrieking and flapping, fighting over perches on the dock pilings. One no sooner set itself down and folded up its wings than another shoved it aside, only to be bumped off by a third. Then the first gull went on to challenge another.

"Musical chairs," I said.

She looked at me then, as though recognizing me for the first time without my apron. "Oh." She smiled. "Musical chairs, that's perfect."

We both watched the birds, she with a sort of reverence, myself thinking what a nuisance they were, shitting all over the dock and crowding out the other shorebirds with their aggression. Way out on the bay I could see a flock circling and landing, squabbling and flying up again, circling and landing. Bonnie was looking that way too.

"That's where the outflow comes up," I explained.

She looked at me. "The what?"

"The outflow—where the cannery pipes out all the wastes. The bits of shell and stuff that we just washed down the drains—parts of it float up, and then the gulls fight over it."

Bonnie shaded her eyes. "You mean they dump the garbage in the bay?"

"Well, garbage . . . I guess it's what you call it. They call it 'recycled nutrients.' It washes out and the fish and the crab eat it all over again and get big and strong and get caught by the fishermen and come back to the cannery and so on again." I folded up the plastic wrap from my sandwich, crumpled my Coke can, and left her staring out at the bay.

Last week, almost exactly two years from the day I pointed out the fish wastes, a family on a clamming expedition to Tuskatan Cove found shreds of sleeping bag, scattered belongings, Bonnie's bones.

This morning, at the troopers' station, I read her diary. The troopers asked me to do it, to see if I could understand. I sat alone in a small, closed

room and read her schoolgirl script—little circles drawn for the dots over her i's. I checked the dates against her calendar and kept my own hand poised to make notes on a legal pad.

At last! At last! I'm so happy. This is truly paradise. The sun shines down, the birds call to one another, the sea sparkles. I feel so peaceful here. I think I have found my home . . . I am going to write down everything I think and feel, because I never want to forget how beautiful this is . . . what a perfect beginning to my twenty-third year. (Happy birthday, everything sings at me.)

I remembered the tube pan she'd tried to borrow. It was her *birthday*, the day that she crossed, and I hadn't known. *Should* I have known? I tucked my hair behind my ears and made myself keep reading.

She wrote a lot those first days and weeks, much of it pure enthusiasm with her environment. *The gulls wheel overhead, calling to me. I think, in time, I will come to understand them. If only I could fly with them as well. I'd like nothing better than that freedom . . . I feel like I'm very close to the essence of life, to what really matters on the earth.*

Bonnie didn't have any maps of the area and didn't seem to care where she was or where she was headed. She talked of moving farther along the coast, wanting to get away from cabins and boat traffic. *I like it best, she wrote, when all I can hear is the ocean rubbing on the sand, the creek gurgling, the wind rustling the trees, the gull wings beating. The airplanes are the worst. They take up the whole sky with their obnoxious buzzing and remind me of that other world in which I never quite fit.*

June 7. *I'm not feeling well. It may be something I ate, or just my stomach getting used to the change in diet. I threw up yesterday—so hard I thought I was going to die. I hate those dry heaves.*

The next day she drank a mouthful of water and threw up again.

On June 16, she was still having trouble eating—*not hungry most of the time*—although she chewed on some rose hips and gathered more to boil for tea. *Sometimes I find myself thinking of food I might have brought. On the whole though, I think it was right to go cold turkey—to push myself entirely into the self-sufficiency of what I can gather.* She spent a lot of time sharpening rocks to make a knife, a spear, arrowheads.

It's so basic, she said two days later, something so simple as finding fresh water. All day I looked for some. If it rains I can collect some in my pot. Otherwise I better keep moving.

June 22 was the last full-length entry. . . . *The longest day of the year is now past. It gets darker now. I don't think I will try for a full year. My new goal is the end of October. There should still be fish and berries until then. After that? I don't really relish returning to civilization.*

For another month, there were occasional brief jottings. *I seem to*

sleep a lot . . . I can see in my wrists where I've lost weight . . . It's too much effort to make a fire . . . I made myself drink a cup of water . . . I'm beyond feeling hunger . . . Sometimes I fear I might die, but then I think of the alternative . . . I feel very light . . .

Taped to the inside cover of her notebook were small calendars, the kind that come on check registers; she'd cut out the parts of the two years she needed and crossed off the days as they passed. The x's continued past the diary notations for another month. The last date crossed off was August 20.

When I was done reading I looked at the legal pad the trooper had given me. It was still blank. I picked up the pen and doodled a square in one corner, then crosshatched in and around it. I knew one fact: Bonnie had never been that far from help. Any time that summer she might have built a fire on the shore to attract attention, delivered herself to a cabin door, or simply waved down a passing boat. She seemed never to have considered it.

I was struck, too, that for all of Bonnie's sensitivity to nature, she was curiously ignorant of what she observed. Throughout her diary she referred to "birds," naming only gulls and eagles. She'd certainly never made any study of birds or plants or tidepool life, any more than she had of wilderness survival. It was as though she wanted to meet her new world on some primitive, primordial level, before anything had names, so that she could discover it all for herself. Or as though names, words, details of coloring or habitat or edibility were unimportant to her when she was concerned with finding the "essence."

That fit, too, with the lack of any mention of the past. She might have had none—no family, no friends, no history from which she'd risen. Except for the one reference to "that other world in which I never quite fit" and a couple of hesitations about "returning to civilization," Bonnie's diary was entirely centered on the present, on *that* very moment *there* on the beach, as though there was no before and no after.

Looking at the diary before me, I realized I was feeling something like relief. I had come all the way to the end and—aside from the birthday reference I'd reacted to right off—found no incrimination, no lines drawn against those who had stood in her way, let her down, failed her expectations. I closed my eyes. What I had feared most, after all, was finding my own name.

I scratched inside my ear and looked around the bare room. It occurred to me that it was probably where they put people to write out or tape-record confessions. Okay, I wasn't a very good friend, not to find out what she had for food and where she was headed. I failed at understanding her and the lengths to which she could go. I didn't believe that she could,

would, or did stay over there. I eat, every day, food that comes from the store, and I drive my car. I care mostly about myself. I'm a normal person.

I tore off the sheet I'd doodled on, crumpled it, and threw it into a basket in the corner. *Sometimes I fear I might die, but then I think of the alternative.* The alternative to death is—surely not something as simple as life?

When I left the station I drove down the hill to the beach. It seems the only place to be, walking into the wind.

Now, I rest one foot on a rock and retie my tennis shoe. The tide's out, just turned, and it leaves a line of foam where it rolls onto the beach. Farther out, the chop tosses the surface of the bay into cut glass. The sun, over the mountains, is bright but somehow distant; it doesn't penetrate the air's chill. *I feel* the end of summer.

Down the beach an arctic tern flutters in mid-air, eyeing something in the surf, and then soars away. I keep walking, following the tideline. There's not much along it that a person could eat—just some ribbons of seaweed. The one crab leg I see is very thin, very detached and dead. I suppose, over at Tuskatan Cove, a person might find tidepools with live crab. The flats there are full of clams and mussels and the tidal grasses I know as goosetongues.

Right now walking is the only thing I can do, knowing that Bonnie, at the end, had faced the same sure knowledge of winter's approach. When it came to her, did she lift her face to it determinedly, or did she roll over in her cocoon of down, snuggling back into warm dreams of some other possibility?

Finally, all that was left were her written words, double-bagged in plastic, sealed against rain and snow, against time. She safeguarded her words, even as *she* went without protection.

Her bones were stripped and scattered by bears and mice and camp robber jays. The troopers gathered what they could find. They sent samples to a lab for analysis, for the indignity of being ground to powder and tested for poisons and deficiencies. Did she eat water hemlock? Did she dehydrate from drinking saltwater? Did she simply fade away from malnutrition? It's important, I suppose, to know the cause of death in the scientific sense.

When the tests are done, her family, the troopers say, plan to drop her ashes into San Francisco Bay. I think of her first day at the cannery, when Bonnie watched the gulls fighting over roosts and scavenging the fish waste as it floated up in the bay. I can imagine fish eating her particles, passing them along to gulls, Bonnie finally set in flight. "Recycled nutrients," I had told her, there at the cannery, while she stared across.

珍 珠

慕 其 娇

贝的创伤，
在柔软体内，
侵入粗硬的妨碍物。
一月又一月、一年又一年，
裹上一层又一层的粘液，
使它圆润光滑。
这是痛苦的结晶、海的泪，
却为人世所珍惜！
我仿佛觉得它犹带着海的咸味，
那是闪闪的泪光啊！
带着日月星辰和云的悲泣！

1979 年

（选自慕其娇诗集《生活的歌》）

Cai Qi-jiao

THE PEARL

translated by Edward Morin and Dennis Ding

The wound inside
The oyster's tender body
Expands into a hard, rough obstruction.
Month by month, year after year,
Wrapped in layer upon adhesive layer,
It becomes mellow and smooth.
Here you see crystalline grief and sea tears,
Yet all humankind treasures it!
I sense that it still wears the salt smell of the ocean,
That its glistening teardrops bear
The laments of sun, moon, stars, and clouds.

Jeff Worley

KOKKARI

for Chuck and Ruth

On Tsamadou, where flesh
overtakes the most stalwart
attempt at thought, two
Alsatian girls wore nothing
but thin undershirts—
four moons rising
toward me on the tide.

A boy, maybe fourteen,
climbed from the sea
and through sharp reefs
waving the white flesh
of an octopus. Its
arms were silver chains,
still now, the boy
planting his speargun
like a flag in the sand.

Against a large rock
he threw the creature,
picked it out of the sand
and threw it again,
a small bundle
of wet laundry.

Later—and this is how
wherever you walk on Samos
the blue night air
can complete any image—
the octopus hung
from a clothesline
between two t-shirts.

The moon brimming with light,
we raised full glasses,
our sundrenched arms
surrounding whatever
we could hold,
anchoring for the night.

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Frances Fagerlund

HOUSE AT POIPU BEACH

Tonight I remember the day
and a woman waving
across a vacant lot.

I heard her voice in the muffled surf
as she waved at me, a stranger,
but I turned away to explore the garden.

Rounding the house, I saw her again,
both hands to her mouth hallooing me,
then pointing to the beach.

Wave-spray was misting the shore.
Over and over, all I could hear was *under*
under, until my mind supplied the tow.

Like shore birds, sandpipers or plovers,
you were working your way down the beach—
two small children,

curious about surfers with boards
glinting in the sun
that shone on your blond heads.

Here in the dark now,
the net-draped bed
has caught all my fears.

Stumbling down the slope and through the sea grass,
my own water phobia propelling me,
I ran awkward as a booby in take-off

to pull you back to the house,
dropping your hands long enough
to wave to the woman closing her door.

Years later
I learn what Poipu means:
"To be engulfed by waves."

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DUST

In the lion print
he hopes no one will see the flaw,
magnified to a fine line
through the body.
He strokes with spotting-colors
to white-out the effect
of a minute dust scratch
on the camera's film.

At night in our room in Kenya,
he sat on the bed,
camera and disassembled lenses around him,
stroking gently with tissue
or camel-hair brush,
blowing softly with ear syringe
the ubiquitous dust
of East Africa.

Hanging side-lighted now
on the wall,
the massive head
defies distraction.

Why does the flaw matter?
The lion and we
were all bathed in dust.

Mitchell Clute

THE APOTHECARY'S GRAVE

When I was small, in my third autumn,
Grandmother's heart took poor augury,
its cups and valves filled by fever,
making of her tongue a black cinder,
a throat of fire to speak around it,
but she lifted up
and inched to the woods.

Under the hibiscus she spread
out on the kneeling ground, and spoke grace
over the apothecary's mound
to raise him from slumber,
so he might make a paste of herbs
to tauten the sail of her breath.

Then I was small, and the grace of healing
was on the lips of every beast,
but this was strange, when she returned
with her skin floating from the tired bones
as if her little demons washed away,
and no failings were left
her song, only lights.

Gladys M. Pruitt

TO MICHAEL

from his mainland Tutu

He holds my hand as we walk along the beach;
crabs scabbling across the sand into holes
out of his reach. Sleeping on my lap all

the way from Kailua to Honolulu; my rosebud lei
crushed against strawberry blond hair.
When we get to the airport, he smiles; he's three.

"My hair is orange," he says, when we return
a year later and uses that color for a pumpkin's
head. The October twenty-third child—

balancing on scales with scorpions, weighing
his thoughts, reciting eating habits of dinosaurs
with five-syllable names. When I look surprised,

he says, "Mommy read it from a book."
Soon he's six. "How do you like school?"
"Science is my favorite subject next to math."

He adds, subtracts, multiplies in his head;
later admitting that his hair
has turned from orange to red.

Next year we'll walk on the sand, but he may not
chase crabs or hold my hand. I must take time
today to look at eyes as blue as mine while he

looks toward the stars or beyond the sea.
Who is there? Who does he see?
Someone from Atlantis or Mars?

“Michael?” He turns his head, but I don't know what to say. How can I ask him the color of his hair . . . or say, “Stop . . . wait for me.”

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Kathryn Takara

HALAWA FALLS

Two waterfalls

stand side by side
like tall twin sisters
beckoning us across the wide valley

Sun surprises

drift and dart through ulu groves
touching occasional copses of ferns
lighting the spectral theatres of stone

A poltergeist wind

whirls untamed and romps with the rapids
bending a great hillside of ti-leaves
camouflaging illusive presence of water rumbling

Deserted path

meanders up and through rectangular rock rooms
remnants of ancient Hawaiian movement
lingering ghosts from an unrecovered past

Giant bird's nest ferns

perch like emerald parasols in branches
high above mango tree trunks thick as generations
watching their offspring grow.

Kukui tree songs

excite and stir enormous elephant ears
fresh with morning raindrops and prisms
casting shadows down graveyard ravine of flash floods

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Deep mudways
carved by horses' perennial passing
carrying riders like idolons to sacred places
where legends, phantoms and menehune spring, glide, fly

Trees, plants, boulders, stones
knock, crack, swish, creak to coalescence
Vibrations up and around Halawa Falls
If they could talk, they would tell us stories.

Richard Morris Dey

AT HILL HOUSE

I stood there, trying to take in the view:
to the west, the harbor
and the boats at anchor; to the east
and south, out over Hope, islands
and beyond them the horizon,
a hazy curved line between
the sea and sky. Or
was it not a line but their blue merging?
What Morris said he likes is how
the islands (Baliceau, Mustique and Cannaoun)
break up the horizon and give
you something to focus on
like a landfall or departure, something *there*
against the blue-blackness
catching the light,
taking the sea's beating.

The light had started to fade
when I saw flying up from the harbor vale
a cattle egret. I'd never seen
one before. It flew at eye level
and its white silent soaring was something to see
high against the deep green
of Hope and the red flamboyant leaves.
Bequia had always been like this
for me, and I felt the wind tear at my eyes
and saw the island as if
for the first time. The bird banked north
and then I saw two more.

ARCHIPELAGO

for David Perkins

You see how these poems are
like islands, each
with its own name, co-ordinates, topographical profile—
however unlikely,
that much about them is clear, I hope,
suggestive of settlement, an interior.

But should anyone ask why
this range of islands took a lifetime to chart
or why, after all the exploring,
there are so few islands in it,
say it's because each discovery
came in something like a line squall,

at a cost I could not have foreseen.
Should I have been more content
in the city
among my contemporaries? Sailed
a different craft on another course? Say
the one in Freneau's wake found in this archipelago

the right place for a man divided
in his faith between the land and sea,
and that for every island fixed
in the saltwind, dozens
had erupted before him before they were overwhelmed by
the dominant sea.

BOATS AT ANCHOR, OUT ON THEIR MOORINGS

I see the boats at anchor, out on their moorings.
What is it about them that arrests the eye—
that even though they've stopped, they're still moving?
I see them facing into the wind or tide,
all of them facing more or less the same way—
Matinicus, Java, Turtle, Mackinac.

I see them drawn together and apart,
each in its own swing, shapely and distinct,
and shifting at the whim of wind or tide,
shifting, seemingly at rest but waiting
for someone or something, waiting to be used—
Matinicus, Cat, Nantucket, Tonga, Smith.

I see the space between those once so close
you couldn't tell which mast was whose, widen
as if the views between them that hadn't mattered
suddenly did, or one felt disappointed
somehow, crowded, bored or just plain restless—
Tonga, St. Pierre, Peleng, Tenerife.

And sometimes one will swing away from one,
and then another will swing away from *it*;
and sometimes two will swing back together,
though never to be exactly as they had been.
(And sometimes two collide: *Matinicus, Cat.*)
Others, sometimes, come in to fill a space
or steal it; and sometimes no one comes at all.
And of the boats I see today—*Corfu,*
Eleuthera, Mallorca, Bali—not all
will be here tomorrow, and fewer still next day.
And will it not be, but for memory then,
as if only the ones who are here, *are here?*

Sometimes I see them sheering wildly
but this is not a scene that needs a big wind.
At night, when their small lights shine brightly and nod,
they look like stars in a small constellation,
a system afloat in an orderly world. But
our lines are imaginary, drawn by fear—
or are they drawn by longing and by sorrow?
Matinicus? Pasque? Tahiti? Bali? Ch'ungming?

No matter how mesmerizing boats are to me
(and if it floats, it's here), I never quite
get used to them at anchor, out on their moorings—
Matinicus, Figi, Bali, Bequia, Pitcairn,
Palawan, Cat, Catalina, Okinawa, Skye—
and shifting in their allegiances, their views
as if constantly reinventing their lives:
Matinicus, Juan Fernandez, Tonga, Man.

Phyllis Hoge Thompson

WAITING

In Memory: Joan G. Kirtley

Down the wet shingle showered salt water splashes
Cast out in rainbows under his feet
As he raced, exultant, thinking, "She's waiting." Heat
Sang on the sand. Splinters and flashes
Of sunlight shafted into the noonblue wave.
He ran the bright beach back, and she turned,
Transparent, her black hair haloed. He saw then that she burned
With a radiant illness. It was the grave
Shining in her. It was a ghost
Waiting, seized into glory. Lost.

THE SILENCE OVERRIDING

for Al Attanasio

Withdrawn to a grassy hollow on a summit,
I lay down, and after a while, I drowsed,
Shaded from summer's drumming midday heat
Under ancient oaks. Oak leaves
Shuffled the sunshine's dapple
On my warmed skin
When they roused,
As I did, at a breeze and a brown wing's beat.
When the wind fell, I feel half-asleep again.

I do not know when my vision veered, to sweep
Beyond the dense grass and clover of the declivity,
Or how from a place on the Earth I could see
The whole globe and the moon that circles it swung
In the unthinkable black,
The seven continents displayed,
Backed on the magma,
And all the myriad islands inlaid,
Shaped and rounded to the oceanic arc.

Even while I gazed, as rapt as if death had changed me
Entirely to vapor, a friend's voice intruded.
I heard her laughter
Carried from a nearby pavilion on the stream of air,
And silence after.
Then laughter again, without humor or happiness,
Only a noise she made to keep from foundering
In the floods of silence around us.
I began to listen.

My pulse thudded inside.
Close-by I could hear
The scant, delicate activities of insects.
A grasshopper laddered acutely along a leaf blade
Arched over a winged scarab feeding on dung.
Bees among purple-tipped clover steadied in air.
Such busyness, I thought, would please me,
If I were God, my creatures intent on matters
Apt to their gifts, contentedly thrumming.

Wind sifted in the grasses, and, overhead,
Articulated small wishes among oak leaves—
Wind, whose origin rests in the coasting motion
Of the sunwarm world in orbit
And its blue atmosphere.
When sound waves pulse to us from our throbbing star
Across intervening darkness, they kindle winds.
Our vibrant earth responds.
The solar music hums through all we are.

We cannot hear it.
Though we perceive the waves of heat and sunlight
In our eyes, on our skin, no mortal ear
Has heard vibrations of the celestial song
Encircling us.
Every sound on earth rests in a sphere
Of silence: Thunder astonishes rain-quiet air.
The labored creaking of glassy, emerald ice
Appals the glacier.

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Earth of itself is silent. Yet when rock burns,
Liquid and crimson in the black, volcanic orifice,
And instantly hardens to thick plates which sheer
Against each other and crack,
A voice breaks out, profound, as if the Earth
Beneath the fire took breath in a shuddering rale
Drawn up heaving from inexhaustible caverns.
Though summer's heat fumes with illusions of silence,
Flames whistle and roar in the leaping fire.

Silently the oceans well
To the moon-pull,
And fog is silent,
And the dew collecting,
Yet music streams as rain falls,
As heavy surf pours forward,
As rapids thunder through a rivercut canyon,
As shallow brooks rabble on bedded rock—
Forms of water resounding with origin.

Every voice on earth, every quaver,
Throbs from God,
And grieves to go back to Him,
To grow accordant again with the single rhythm
Of overarching silence.
Our bodies, sensing it, respond
As before the Fall to the inaudible pulse
When we feel where it beats
Through our years.

Sound returning to silence—to discover
In the beauty of the passage anodyne
For what we suffer,
Being mortal,
That is all,
Since there is no diminishment of pain
And nothing that explains it to us.
Prayer is our faith that silence can bring peace,
That final comfort rests in the quiet air.

The wind had fallen. Oak leaves, clover, grass
And insects—they were stilled. The night drew on,
Deep cobalt near the horizon,
Eastward. Murmur of voices from the pavilion
Ceased, and vision
Was gathered home to darkness.
As the good night fell on shores of the abyss,
I made a strong prayer: that all the sounds
Of all our lives return to silence, like this.

Maria Mitchell Hayes

KILLER

When my brothers enlist for boot camp, I do too. I get made MP at the women's jail. Ft. Leonardwood is the armpit of the world, but we have fun. We have fun anyplace.

What my brothers like best about me is I'm the only girl can drink more than them. What my youngest brother likes best is my knife collection. The only way for a girl not to get counted out is to do everything better. So I do. We have lots of partying, lots of fun.

But my brothers get sent to Germany. Now it's just me and the Leonardwood ladies. But it's cool. I'll be fine.

The prisoners like me. They vote me best guard. They say they like me because I don't act like I'm God. Other guards come in and line the prisoners up and yell, "Prisoner So and So?" But I say, "You don't have to yell. It's a small place. They can hear you." I tell the prisoners, "You don't give me any trouble, and I don't give you any trouble." We get along fine.

And after hours now, I play drums off-base. The music gets my whole body going and I get wringing wet, my hair drips sweat down my cheeks, into my neck, and all you can hear is drums. God, I love that. But some girls say, "Who do you think you are, anyway?" One night two of them jump me outside the bar and we get into it with knives. This bald guy—his name turns out to be Billy—runs up, hopping around and circling us like a big herd dog. "Whoop! Whoop! Whoop! Reba, reba!" he hoots in this dark voice. This first girl yells, "I didn't want to get in this anyhow," and she's running away when Billy grabs me. So the other one takes off too.

Billy keeps saying he's saved me, but those girls was getting beat and he knows it. So he says, "You're OK, for a girl." I've heard that before. Next he looks me over and says, "Look. We fit." I've heard that before too. He's just my height and he's a real chunk. Even his face is square. His knobby head shines and the back of it has red shadow where the stubs of hair are starting to grow. When he looks down at my left foot, I see a diamond earring in one ear. I'm about to subtract him, on principle, and he steps up tight against me and all our crevices and crannies kind of slip-lock together and what do you know? He's right. We fit. Not only that, but someone down there is saying hello. Interesting.

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I move into Billy's trailer, off-base. We fight a lot—he wants me to bleach his undershorts, but I say what the shit does he think I am, and he should send the damn things out. But there's lots of partying, lots of fun. We're always with his next trailer neighbor and his neighbor's girl. She talks about sky diving and how great it is, and Billy's friend says he's sick of spaceheads. So they fight too, but they're cool.

Weekends we hunt. We all get in camouflage gear and fan out so we don't shoot each other. No one fights; we don't even talk. All you hear are bugs, our boots in the grass, and we track game. It's cool: me against that pheasant or rabbit or deer, life or death, whichever of us is faster or smarter. Everything I got is tuned up. One time Billy's off balance and misses a rabbit, so I shoot and blast the little bugger right into its hole. Head clean off. Billy says, "You never gave it a chance," but I tell him, "What'd you want me to do? Invite it to dinner?" After that the three of them call me "Killer."

Out there the sky is huge and my body's humming and sometimes I think I'll take a deep breath and raise right up. I'll stretch out my arms and flap slowly, go up with deep breaths, or dive by blowing out air. Or I'll stretch my arms and glide like a hawk watching for rabbits. Down below Billy and his friends and his friend's girl are looking up at me, with their guns . . .

Billy and me get matching tatoos and decide to have a kid. I like kids. It's a good idea. I get pregnant. But one day, I come home and Billy's walking around in these bright white boxer shorts and he says he's taking up sky diving. I decide to go to the next trailer and do some housecleaning, but he says, "And about the kid. I changed my mind."

"Too late."

"Get an abortion."

"No way." But that minute I know he's a real jerk. I knew that before, but I was too busy and we was having fun.

Billy leaves. But it's OK. We never got along anyway. In a way I always thought of the kid growing up with me and my brothers. Or just me, I guess. But there's lots of stuff I'll teach him: what kind of people to watch out for, how to throw a knife so it sings, and rhythm. He'll have plenty of rhythm.

But this guy, Chester, is pissed at Billy. Chester says he loves me. He's back at the barracks where I go to live with my girlfriend, Betty. Chester's kinda small and I'm pretty big and I have all this fuzzy hair—perms are a style now so it looks like I did this on purpose—so when we go anywhere I look like a six foot Orphan Annie and her dog, Sandy. Chester runs around, talking all the time, and he's real excitable, and he wants to go

after Billy and beat him up. I say, "Skip it, Chester. Billy isn't worth it." Truth is, I have my hands full making sure Chester doesn't get hurt. Junior and Chester, both at the same time, are more than I need. I tell Chester, "Take me out to dinner instead."

"Are you sure?" he says.

Chester wants me to marry him, and I can't. But he wants so bad to take care of me, and I've never been pregnant before, so after awhile I kinda try it on. One night about midnight I go out to the hall, "Chester."

He pops out of his room, like one of those Arabs in a bottle.

I say, "I want a tuna sandwich."

"Now?" The nearest town is about five miles away. His baby blues are blinking in his skinny face and blond hair sticks straight up at the cowlick, in back. He must of been sleeping.

I point to my tummy and say, "Junior's hungry."

Off Chester goes.

Spinach, liver, I eat all this krud. This kid just better be healthy, or I'll kill him. By now he's making my trousers a little tight and I get to worrying, will the army let me stay?

I get leave and go home and my Mom isn't worried. She's not a worrier. Her friends worry though. They're like Chester, thinking I'm in trouble now, so I'm not so smart after all and here's a chance to grab onto someone they couldn't get at before. I know that's hard, but people are like that. They love stray dogs. My mother's girlfriends start telling me, "Marry Chester," or "Move home." This old girl been divorced three times tells me, "Quit being so dependent on men." For chrissake. I tell them, "I don't need this noise. You don't pay my rent."

Actually, I don't pay my rent. I go back and work harder. Extra shifts, I don't care. Someone says, "Hey, would you mind staying over?" I say, "That's cool." An hour later: "Do you mind finishing the shift?"

"No problem."

People think I'm crazy. A lot of officers notice and say they'll give me a good recommendation, but that's not why I'm doing it. I'm doing a good job. That's enough. I'm not dependent on anyone.

And that's when I bump into Josiah. Just like the movies. I'm cooling out after a set and I got my earphones in and I'm listening to "Truck Rock Stomp" and doing drum rolls on my thighs. The place is hot and crowded and smells like salty grease and pizza. I back into this great big guy carrying a pitcher of beer. When I turn, I bang my forehead into his chest. He holds out the pitcher and doesn't spill a drop. Jukebox lights are flashing and he looks down and he's got earphones too and he says in this Texas drawl, "You just interrupted the best song ever written."

I say, "You just interrupted 'Truck Rock Stomp.'" And he's listening to the same thing. Whenever we pass each other that night, we say, "Truck Rock Stomp."

Next set, some jerk in the booths yells, "You can swivel those hips on me anytime." I'm about five months along and I've got a little round belly that Chester says is kinda like Madonna's. Chester thinks that way. But the guy in the booth, the one with the mouth: I'd take care of him myself—like the time I got some guy outside and handcuffed him to a lamppost and left him out to cool in twelve degree weather—but I can't do that with Junior in tow. It gets me down. Later, my girlfriend says, "That creep is *rude*. I mean, you're somebody's *mother*." She's *right*.

She goes over to this big Josiah and he looks up and listens to her and he's got this round face and all this straight black hair that falls down to his nose so you can't see his eyes. His face turns all soft and sloppy and he says to her, "That's not right." He goes over to this creep and says, "Excuse me." Josiah's from Texas and talks with this drawl and he's real polite. "You've offended the lady and I think you better apologize."

"Is she your girlfriend?"

Josiah looks up and these straight black eyebrows of his pop up and he does have eyes. He says, "Sure."

Josiah's built real strong and no one would really want to pick a fight with him, so this guy says, "Gee, I'm sorry."

Josiah says, "I think you better walk over there and apologize to the lady herself."

The guy comes over and says, "I'm sorry if that bothered you."

I can't believe this. I mean, this is me, Killer.

So that's Josiah. Another time, who knows. But right now, I know something's happening. Every night I dream and I can never figure out where I am in the dream. Sometimes the kid is with me and sometimes I can't find him, but I never know where we are.

When Josiah frowns you can't even see his eyes under all that tangle of hair. "This world's a hard enough place," he shakes his head. "Why y'all making it so much harder on yourself?"

I tell him it's not so hard. There's not much I can't do.

He leans back in his booth and puts up his hands—no contest. "Equality's a fine thing," he leans forward again. He's got nice eyes. "But if you'll pardon me for saying so, it does indeed seem to me that what the female species really needs is a little bit of respect."

Wasn't that what I said? I tell him me and the kid will do fine.

"By my way of thinking, you're going against nature, darlin.' There's a host of your fellow man out there just loves the chance to show you that

on any down day he can be a better man than you. And it's not like nature wasn't generous to you, if you don't mind my saying so."

I guess I don't mind.

"Don't misunderstand me, but sooner or later you've got to trust someone." Joe says everything in a real nice way, but when I think about it, Whump!

We go to a movie and a bunch of guys in back are making noise and Josiah goes up, real polite, and says, "Pardon me, but you're making a lot of noise. The lady's being bothered." They say what's he gonna do about it. He says, they quiet down or he's gonna throw them out. They quiet right down.

I'm busy trying to work my shoe off of some gum on the floor and I listen to Josiah behind me and right there in that theater, I see. Josiah's right. Equal you get with knives, and you only need to turn your back once—like being pregnant for a few minutes. But being with someone else doesn't have to be like having a foot in cement either. Once I see that, it's like something comes loose. It's OK for me to have someone on my side. But what do I do with my fists?

Josiah has an answer for that too. He pries open my fists, finger by finger, and kisses the pink, fleshy tips. He does this very slowly. Josiah never hurries. He starts over, even slower. I've got to say something: Josiah's not like a brother. Not the same at all.

I'm marrying Josiah. Joe. Joe says it's cool about Junior. Joe likes kids, let's get married. This takes time, of course, and Chester is pretty upset in the meantime. Chester keeps asking me, "Are you sure?" But I'm sure. You don't meet guys like Joe very often. He's a real southern gentleman. And it's nice being treated like a lady.

Nicholas Kolumban

NEW YORK

Yesterday I escaped to New York
and did what I pleased.
I drank Tchindao beer at a place
where the cook bled into the sandwich.
Then went to the faded Hudson
which my mood dyed Danube-blue.
I saw dunes and dust.
It was a lovely day, without thorns.
Nobody lectured me on how to teach,
how to keep the kids from fleeing rooms.
I saw a couple—he rolled
a croissant out of her blond hair
and the sun baked it in his palms.
She nibbled on his Adam's apple, grabbed his thigh
and said: "Look, what happened to us."
I wandered what she meant—
is making love inferior to loving?
I became a bit sad but kept my grin.
Didn't want to anger the brilliant sun.

THE VOYAGER

Father insisted that I go to college.
I had to cross 3000 nautical miles.
I packed a pair of pajamas,
a kilo of smoked sausage and two dictionaries,
each for a major tongue.
Mother escorted me to the railroad station;
I made her walk fifty meters behind
because I was flaunting my teenage independence.
Under the bridge, ice flows collided
on the Danube.
People wore coats, lined with shabby fur.
They looked drawn, burdened with gifts.
They gawked at ornaments on trees;
paid no attention to the voyager.
I bought a ticket,
promised to write and sleep in pajamas.
Before the train crawled out of its house,
I withdrew to a warm compartment.
I saw soldiers searching for dissidents.
They commanded respect with silence and bayonets,
the fashion of the day.
My Sunday clothes and naive eyes saved me.
From the window I noticed that Mother was grim,
her face on weekdays.
She didn't wave, just stood there,
clutching a moist handkerchief.
Did she know that a voyager
can only find his new home
light years away?

RETURNING FROM THE CAPITAL OF A SMALL COUNTRY TO A SMALL TOWN IN AMERICA

There the cars can't use their voices
 the police forbids them to scream
Here silence drops on parks; thick feverish silence
 inside the ferment of mid-summer
Here the jets are exuberant and owned by America
 they don't hunt down a makebelieve enemy
Here the borders weren't deformed by the scissors of history
The value of alarm clocks tops 40 dollars
 but they don't holler they're the relatives of chimes
The buses are dear the taxis work, they pick you up gladly
 and transport you to the destination of your dreams
The money is rum-bottle green, not flag-red
Here retirees are willing to enter newborn restaurants
No charge for dumping in the toilet of a diner
Here I'm at ease, don't peer behind my back
 to view the apparition of an agent
I visit a friend here without the urge to inhabit his place
 when he improvises a trip
(An apartment is a national treasure there)
Here I don't have to track down cork screws, plugs or glue
 they were born in the store
Here everything offers itself for intense consumption
There there're no consumptives
Here I'm at peace I lack nothing—
except the capital of a small country
whose native son
I am

Jeff Schiff

A LEARNED GESTURE

Rain this morning,
July rain needling the mountain wash,

and I am out to hike the lookout trail
spread a few miles

below Elden and further
toward the Great Salt Lake

where Brigham Young insisted he found Zion
or, more likely, enough inland brine

to pickle his unmatched libido.
Some days we walk to create loneliness,

others to know that
loneliness is not worth creating at all.

Whatever it means, today I'm not worried about
who I know, was slighted by, and wish to forget.

I'll not waste thought
on insolent friends or broken dates,

nor curse the athletes
dislodging cinders as they bang past.

I'll even manage to ignore the highschoolers
turning summer boredom into hardwon love behind prehistoric rock.

With any luck, on these narrow paths
I'll learn to step aside and again step aside

as everyone I am trying not to be
continues their way toward the distant top.

Joseph P. Balaz

JUST CALL ME NERO

just call me Nero

and hope i don't
burn it down.

it's either or you see—

either you feel my talons

or i find my feathers
bathed in rebellious 30 weight.

no 3 ways about it
no in between

no middleman
to the imperial court.

it's not easy being an emperor

everyone wants your jewels
everyone wants your chariot
everyone wants to be carved
in marble
and everyone wants to call you
crazy.

well
if that's the case

just call me Nero

and compromise
this bit of insanity—

i'm not
going to let you have my jewels
i'm not
going to let you have my chariot
and i'm not
going to let you carve yourself
in marble.

for all your fears
of unprovoked destruction

a touch of Augustus
could be ruling in disguise.

so just let
my gold and ivory scepter be

or you can start passing out
the marshmallows and sticks

Michael J. Shapiro

**WEIGHING ANCHOR: POSTMODERN JOURNEYS
FROM THE LIFE-WORLD***

Introduction: The Terms of the Debate

For some time, the debates over the politics of postmodernism have tended to be debates over the way to treat representation. The more conservative postmodernists, reacting against radical modernist styles, have preached a return to "representation," which they understand as a close connection between what "is" and the style of expressing it. The more radical forms of postmodernism, such as poststructuralist postmodernism, advocate a different view. Eschewing a truth-falsity axis for treating representations, they focus on the domains of power and authority with which various modes of representation are complicit.¹

This latter focus, which is central to the contributions of the more radical forms of postmodernism to political insight, cannot be easily domesticated within traditional epistemological conceits. Even the more recent epistemological positions developed by critical theorists, who have abandoned correspondence theories of truth in favor of more dialectical or conversational models, fail to come to terms with the political impetus of this kind of postmodernism. For example, in a critique of Lyotard's influential treatise on postmodernism, Seyla Benhabib charges that he conflates power and validity (the kind of charge that has been characteristic of critical theorist's reactions to the poststructuralist version of postmodernism in general).²

This is not the place to treat what I regard as the many misconceptions in Benhabib's treatment of Lyotard's arguments. What is central to her reading is her attack on Lyotard's position that language moves are power moves. Here she displays a tendency to assume that discourse is primarily a

*This is a revision of a paper by the same title delivered at the Nineteenth Annual Meeting of the Northeastern Political Science Association, Philadelphia, November 12-14, 1987. I am grateful to Jane Bennett, William Connolly, Thomas Dumm, Kathy Ferguson, and Stephen White for their critical reactions to the first version.

face-to-face, conversational exchange of intentionally controlled meanings (e.g. she refers to the effects a speaker "wants to generate").³ Because of her focus on language as conversational communication, she infers that Lyotard is equating the persuasive effects of a statement (what Austin calls the perlocutionary level of meaning) with the illocutionary or meaning force of the statement (the speech act or what is done *in* saying something).⁴

But Lyotard recognizes, as indeed Austin did, that what gives a statement its force is not merely its psychological correlates but the institutional context in which it is uttered. Like other postmodernist thinkers, Lyotard recognizes that statements are situated in structured interpersonal relations. Power and authority regulate their circulation and contextualize their meaning and value. At present, therefore, their use value cannot be separated from the power configurations that characterize modernity. Moreover, because meanings exceed what speakers may want to do with statements, persuasion is as much a function of who is speaking and under what circumstances as it is of whatever personally motivated markers may exist in the statement. To erect the conversational genre as the context in which to apprehend the postmodernist treatment of discourse is to create a dehistoricized and decontextualized frame that cannot adequately encode the politics of postmodern approaches to discourse. To appreciate the politics of postmodernism, one must become alert to the politics of linguistic forms.

The Politics of Linguistic Forms

There is a tension between participation in a collectivity and analyzing it, between the linguistic competence one needs to join in intelligible conversations and the linguistic resources one needs to create discursive practices productive of political insight. In everyday life this tension tends to be suppressed because the achieving or exercising of a competence in the dominant social forms of intelligibility is the major social problematic. In the case of children or others in marginal positions (e.g. recent immigrants) the phenomenology of everyday life is organized around showing one's eligibility for full participation within the institutionalized forms of intelligibility. The objects and events that dominate their mental lives are produced within the motivated conceptual space of seeking full membership. However, even in the case of those with full-fledged social credentials, the problematic tends to remain membership-oriented because negotiating one's way through a complicated public space requires an energetic exercise of acquired interpretive and conversational skills.

To the extent that a culture is well articulated, that mutual expectations are readily discernible, and insofar as people's situations and tasks are represented unambiguously, the tensions associated with resistant, insurrectional, or merely questioning modes of interpretation remain suppressed. And there are few day-to-day occasions in which the tensions are revealed, for most linguistic genres, whether presentational or interactive in form, are merely communication-oriented; they emphasize joint task achievement rather than rendering problematic the society's systems of meaning and value.

In this context, those less socially accommodative genres, among which are the poetic or aesthetic, are especially noteworthy. For example, in the case of a play, it is the very form of its relationship to discourse that produces a distance between whatever communicative functions are involved and the interpretations that are engendered. Because those attending a play are at one audience and spectator, they are able to perceive that the ownership of actions is problematic. This is because, as Jameson has pointed out, there are at least two domains of facticity, that which is voiced and that which is seen.⁵ With two different voices, the verbal and visual, one gains insight into the constructed nature of events. Unlike participation in a conversation in which meanings are achieved and shared rather than observed from a distance and contrasted with practices, significance in the play becomes an issue as verbalizations and actions are distanced from those who commit them.

The play thus affords the audience/viewers a distancing or analytic capability that is difficult to achieve in those other linguistic forms in which one is less able to perceive how discourse is situated. Nevertheless, despite its limitations, conversational imagery predominates in many interpretive and critical genres of social analysis. This is worthy of scrutiny, especially in connection with debates over the politics of postmodernism, in which questions of the epistemological status of conversations hold center stage.

The Problem of Conversation

In the midst of a discussion about poststructuralism, Michel Foucault's interviewer from the journal, *Telos*, evoked the concept of post-modernity. In response Foucault remarked, "What are we calling post-modernity? I'm not up to date."⁶ To grasp the ironic turn of Foucault's remark we must recognize its different levels. At one level, it is a remark about himself; he seems to be saying that because he is not *au courant* he is not prepared to discuss the issue. Indeed, seizing on only this simple level, his

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interviewer produces a long soliloquy on the concept of post-modernity. At another level, however, the remark is not an observation about personal knowledge but a more general, epistemological point. Foucault is saying that "we," those of us situated in this historical period, cannot understand our age if we remain within contemporary conversations. Foucault's playful response is therefore more than merely dismissive. It becomes significant and theoretically provocative when considered in the context of the different genres in which Foucault expressed himself in his last years. On the one hand, there were his writings, historical analyses which both situate and defamiliarize, or make remarkable, contemporary conversations. On the other, there were his public conversations, the increasingly frequent interviews on his work and its relationship to contemporary intellectual/political positions. Foucault's remark has the effect of announcing that there is an ironical dimension to such interviews, for his work is, among other things, a concerted effort to distance us from contemporary conversations; its logic cannot be elaborated easily in a conversational mode, which necessarily treats the present situation as a shared and unproblematic background facilitating conversation rather than as part of the problem for investigation.

Foucault's unusual perspective on the conversation is addressed obliquely in several of his well known historical works, but it achieves optimal lucidity in a brief and rarely noted essay on the origin of contemporary preoccupations with "criminal danger."⁷ There his initial object of analysis is a 1975 conversation in a Paris criminal court, the interrogation of a defendant accused of several rapes and attempted rapes. When questioned by the presiding judge—"Have you tried to reflect upon your case?"; "Why at twenty-two do such violent urges overtake you?"; "Why would you do it again," etc.—the accused remains silent, and his silence impedes a judicial process, which in the modern period registers its interest in "the criminal" by asking the accused to elaborate his or her self-understanding. Summarizing the import of the judge's question as "Who are you?" Foucault points out that this kind of question, which is perfectly intelligible and appropriate in modern tribunals, "would have a strange ring to it 150 years ago."⁸

Prior to the 19th century, criminal law paid attention only to the offense and the penalty, while the new criminology peers through the crime, which has become "but a shadow hovering about the criminal, a shadow which must be drawn aside in order to reveal the only thing which is now of importance, the criminal."⁹ In showing, with this exemplary conversation, that legal justice today is focused more on criminals than on crimes, Foucault is distancing us from the conversation in order to show

that what we have come to regard as perfectly normal and intelligible is the result of some significant historical changes. He then proceeds to take us back to the early 19th century to elaborate some stages in "the psychiatrization of criminal danger," which created and legitimated "discussions between doctors and jurists." It is shown that this new field of knowledge of criminals was correlated with other developments, e.g. "the intensive development of the police networks, which led to a new mapping and closer surveillance of urban space and also to a much more systematized and efficient prosecution of minor delinquency."¹⁰

Without going into various aspects of the political context of crime, which Foucault's analysis helps to disclose, we see, at a minimum, that his analysis situates the courtroom conversation in a highly politicized field of power relations and, further, that such a field is not easily recoverable within the confines of contemporary conversations. If we become involved *in* the conversation, we are drawn into the issue bothering the court during this 1975 case, whether it would be appropriate to invoke the death penalty without a more elaborate understanding of the accused. But Foucault's approach to conversations counsels resistance to being drawn into the problematic governing communicative interaction. Instead it makes remarkable the conversation as a whole, allowing us thereby to perceive the emerging power and authority configurations that the identities of the conversation partners represent. It becomes evident that insofar as one remains within the conversation in the courtroom, one must accept the policy terrain already implicated in the intersection of psychiatric and penal discourses and thus ponder the proprieties of the "issue" of capital punishment. Encouraged, under the direction of Foucault's brief genealogy of criminal danger, to resituate the conversation within the more politicized space of modernity's novel approach to crime and the correlation of that approach with emerging structures of power and authority, one encounters a range of political insights unavailable within the confines of contemporary conversations.

The Hermeneutic Anchor

Foucault's way of resituating this conversation, and modern poststructuralist resistance to society's communicative coherences in general does not deny the positive role figuring understanding as conversation plays in representing the process of accommodation among parties seeking to move toward concerted agendas. But it does politicize the issue of understanding. To explore what is politically at stake, between hermeneutic and the more radical postmodernist modes of writing and inquiry, we can consider the different forms of delusion toward which they are addressed.

The difference between philosophical hermeneutics and postmodernist approaches to knowledge and inquiry can be assayed in connection with problems of distance and intelligibility. Perhaps the distance concept is the most telling, for hermeneutics is dedicated to overcoming it while such postmodernist positions as Foucaultian genealogy is dedicated to creating it. In figuring the process of understanding as a kind of conversation, hermeneutics presumes that the hope of reaching understanding (conversational agreement) closes the distance between individual conversation partners and the common ground they share. The Nietzsche-inspired genealogical and deconstructive modes of analysis open gaps by disclosing two kinds of delusion that the process of conversation uncritically accepts. The first has been presented by Derrida, in his continuous attacks on "phonocentrism": the thought encouraged by seeing ourselves as involved *in* conversations that we are wholly present to ourselves. As he put it in one of his earliest works:

The subject can hear or speak to himself and be affected by the signifier he produces, without passing through an external detour, the world, the sphere of what is not "his own."¹¹

Much of Derrida's subsequent philosophical work is dedicated to demonstrating the delusion of the ownership of the meaning of one's utterances. Meaning, according to Derrida, is controlled instead by a pre-scripted structure of signification, which precedes individual speakers or writers. Thus, for example, the linguist Benveniste thought he was inquiring into the question of whether thought and language can be regarded as distinct, while Derrida showed that Benveniste had inherited a philosophical vocabulary (including the notion of the "category"), which already holds them to be distinct.¹²

The second delusion is one which naturalizes the spatialization of the society within which speakers converse. Foucaultian genealogy defamiliarizes such modern spaces as the prison with two different kinds of stylistic gestures. The first is a historicizing move in which he shows how prisons were invented as part of a series of strategic knowledge practices committed to a surveillant form of normalizing power, and the second is a form of linguistic impertinence in which he consolidates his historicizing move, further imperiling the seeming naturalness of the present by recoding it. For example, to emphasize the present as a stage in the process of increased surveillance, he expands the notion of incarceration to include such "services" as social work, education, caring and curing as part of a "carceral apparatus."¹³

These observations are not meant to deprive the hermeneutic tradi-

tion of its one distancing effect, a distancing from the traditional conception of knowledge. It should be recalled that a founding gesture of the hermeneutic tradition, as it is represented by Gadamer, is an attempt to distance us from a history of social thinking based on epistemology.¹⁴ A major dimension of Gadamer's contribution to social theory is a dramatic shift from the problem of knowledge on which explanatory social science is predicated to the problem of understanding, which supports interpretive analyses. While the epistemological tradition constructs knowledge as a problem of method for allowing subjects to attain truth about the natural or social world of objects and relations, Gadamer's focus is on the situating of subjects in a background of practices—scientific, artistic, legal, etc.—which express fundamental aspects of human identities and can only be discerned through reflection. Such reflection is engendered through events, through concrete attempts to become familiar with what is initially unfamiliar. These episodes of understanding have the effect of enriching people's conversations about themselves as much as they create broader spheres of mutual intelligibility.

What this approach has implied for the practice of inquiry is represented in among other places, the ethnographic analyses of Clifford Geertz. The Gadamerian problem of understanding as well as the grammar of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics hovers in the background of Geertz's plunges into exotic terrains, and despite Geertz's occasional use of the typical vocabularies of more empiricist traditions (hypotheses, concepts, theories, etc.), Gadamer's more reflective orientation supplies most of the consequences Geertz adduces from his studies. Indeed, even Geertz's writing style is aimed at creating intelligibility where understandings are partial or inadequate. His approach is quintessentially hermeneutic as is shown, for example, in his attempt to overcome what he regards as a delusion in our political understanding of both 19th century Bali and his own culture from which he writes. Providing a telling contrast with the political delusion toward which Foucault's genealogical analyses are aimed, he presents the 19th century Balinese state as a system of governance directed, "toward the public dramatization of the ruling obsession of the Balinese culture: social inequality and status pride."¹⁵ State functions such as treaty making and water irrigation become intelligible when he shows how they conform to the Balinese pattern of ritual obligation.

In such analyses, Geertz sees himself as one helping to overcome a fundamental delusion of mainstream Marxist and Capitalist forms of political analysis. This is the delusion stemming from the fact that we are too "impressed with command." Because we focus on direct relations of power "we see little else."¹⁶ Bali makes visible, by virtue of its display orientation,

what our conceptual orientation makes invisible: "What our concept of public power obscures, that of the Balinese exposes; and vice versa."¹⁷ The delusion Geertz overcomes is therefore a poverty of meaning, which, he thinks, stems from a failure to pay attention to culture, for Geertz believes that "a country's politics reflects the design of its culture."¹⁸

Foucault's analyses are addressed to a similar delusion, our inability to see the functioning of power as a result of our impoverished construal of the political domain. The prevailing construction of the political discourse, the ways of putting controversy over power and authority into language, is monopolized by a narrow notion of the "political," for the idea of power operating in the West has been tied for centuries to the sovereignty discourse. To the extent that the history of political discourse has concerned itself with the limits of sovereign power and the other face of sovereign power, the exercise of individual rights, what have remained silent are other forms of power.¹⁹ Just as one is misled by writing a history of sexuality as the history of prohibited speech, one is misled by treating the history of the political as the history of the limitation of sovereign power. Emphasizing how the creation of a particular discourse is an imposition of a form of order, Foucault refers to how an entrenched discursive practice, in this case, the one involved in constituting the "political," creates an economy which has the effect of silencing alternative (discursive) economies, other ways of constituting political problems.

[I]n a society such as ours, but basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association.²⁰

Within the confines of the political discourse, which emphasizes sovereignty and rights, what have been silent are the controls and potential challenges and refusals immanent in the creation of the human subject as we "know" it. This is the human subject scripted not only by recognized disciplinary agencies such as medicine, social work, education, and the recognized carceral institution, the prison, but also by knowledge disciplines themselves—political science, sociology, psychology, biology, etc. The creation of identities by knowledge agents is, according to Foucault, disciplinary in a sense similar to the discipline emanating from what are recognized as social control agents. Knowledge agents, the human sciences in

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particular, act as relays for power by both monopolizing the discourse controlling what can be said and by whom and by helping to script the kind of identity or self-understanding that is docile in the face of demands from controlling social, political and administrative institutions. In the absence of alternative discursive possibilities for constituting the self, one cannot oppose power because, to the extent that power is only thought within the confines of the narrow sovereignty/rights political discourse, it is represented as something else, as, for example, caring, curing, educating, evaluating, motivating, and resolving disputes. Without interrogating the power implications of discourses that produce the modern subject, one cannot question power because power is continually reinscribed, even within forms of knowledge that seek not only to disclose it but, ironically, to disavow it or at least escape its worst excesses.

Thus while Foucault, like Geertz, refigures—with such rhetorical gestures as identifying education and social work as carceral functions—the domain of the political, his approach departs radically from the interpretive methods of Geertz and others of the hermeneutic persuasion. Foucault is not seeking a frame of analysis that shows how the behavior of various actors can be recovered if we know their cultures or background fields of meaning and use a more informed view of culture. To interpret, according to Foucault is to unreflectingly accept the “rarity” of sets of statements; it is to seek to find their hidden meaning rather than to undertake a more politicized inquiry into the discursive economies they represent. Accordingly, Foucault has sought not to improve extant political conversations by making them more comprehensive. Rather, he has sought to distance us from the various linguistic practices which give us objects, subjects, *and* the more general valuing practices within which they function, the discursive economies of meaning and value in given historical periods.

While Foucault does not deny a place for the kind of hermeneutics practiced by ethnographers like Geertz, he warns that the history of the subject “is” the history of interpretations. Because he argues that there is no deeper level of meaning to be revealed, interpretations are Foucault’s data, not his mode of inquiry. Therefore, the delusions with which Foucault is dealing (political and otherwise) are not misunderstandings. Rather he is highlighting what amounts to a meta-level delusion within which particular delusions are wrought. This is the delusion of understanding itself, the idea that there is a truth or unmediated level of meaning to be discovered, a resting place for the mind in a field of concepts that opens reality to us. Accordingly, Foucault distances himself from the traditional conception of ideology inasmuch as he is not criticizing something mask-

ing the truth but showing how the very production of "knowledge" and "truth" is linked to systems of power.²¹

One way of underscoring the contrast would be to note that the Geertzian unmasking is one that aims at gaps in our conversations about society in general and the political dimension of social process in particular. These gaps are overcome when we achieve the appropriate figuration (what Heidegger called "the capable word"). Our conversations about what is exotic thus begin to coalesce with our conversations about ourselves, and, as a result, we are enabled in the sense of being able to have better, less deluded conversations about ourselves. Foucault's delusion is the delusion that provokes conversations in the first place. *Any* discourse constitutes a delusion inasmuch as it administers dimensions of silence as soon as it begins; it established practices which force out other possible practices.

It is more appropriate, moreover, to use the metaphors of scripting rather than conversation to characterize Foucault's notion of discourse. The prevailing discourses are not parts of one's conscious awareness. Perspectives are pre-scripted in the sense that meanings, subjects and objects are sedimented in the dominant and thus most readily available discursive practices. When we reference an object in an available discourse, we reproduce it unreflectively. And, because *we* (our available identities) are scripted into these same discourses, we end up telling various "truths" about ourselves, be they medical, psychiatric or political truths. Ultimately, for Foucault, the only way for an individual to avoid subjugation is by disavowing power, by refusing to be the self that power has scripted for that individual. What this involves is not improving conversations but constructing counter discourses, modes of writing which oppose the terms of power and authority circulated and recirculated in prevailing modes of discourse.

However, despite all of the anti-hermeneutic gestures in the Foucaultian approach, there are what I call "hermeneutic anchors" in Foucault's analyses. Foucault is an incessant politicizer; he thus wants to insinuate his analyses into conversations about politics and power. This much is clear from the very fact that Foucault is intelligible; while his analyses depart in many ways from ordinary discursive modes and thus create discomfort with the prevailing fields of analysis, they still communicate; they engage at least part of the ways of thinking/speaking already in circulation. He has stated quite explicitly that we in the modern age fail to incorporate the workings of power into our predominant political discourse because we neglect the normalizing power of disciplinary agencies and systems of "knowledge." We fail to encode in our political talk the way that moder-

nity has witnessed a structure of domination elaborated through the various mechanisms of power. These mechanisms are not to be understood as things operating from a distance in the control of the willed forces of individuals. Power is incorporated into our identities such that power functions through what is "known" about us.

This, then, is Foucault's main "hermeneutic anchor." He commits his analyses to our on-going discussion of politics and power. In arguing that the terms of the discussion have been disabling, he lines himself up with others, like Geertz, who are also trying to improve our political conversation. Foucault's hermeneutic anchor is tossed out explicitly in several places, but one general characterization he has offered should suffice for purposes of this discussion.

The question I asked myself was this: how is it that the human subject took itself as an object of possible knowledge? Through what forms of rationality and historical conditions? And finally at what price? This is my question: at what price can subjects speak the truth about themselves. . . .²²

This statement is primarily a description of the genealogical mode of analysis, and Foucault's treatment of knowledge as a power-related practice draws us out of our customary discursive distinctions. But when we get to the "at what price" portion, we are into the hermeneutic dimension of Foucault's project. We have been encouraged to recalculate the economies of the exercise of power within this altered way of representing the locus of power. Thus, genealogy reveals the process by which humans invest the world with value, but as soon as we assume that we are already *in* a kind of world, we begin to ask value questions *about* it, and this kind of question *about* value is a hermeneutically not a genealogically inspired kind of question. Within the hermeneutics of value questions, Foucault is asking about the political costs of a disciplinary society in which that discipline, which is a form of power, is disguised within depoliticizing forms of discourse. He is inviting us to weigh the costs of this modern, masked form of power which represents itself as something else. The bulk of his analysis is taken up with a figuration—the politics of the body—which alerts us to a delusion encouraged by a more pacifying form of imagery, but then the conversation about the price we have been paying is offered. What does it cost to be dominated and subjugated in the names of healing, curing, nurturing, and educating?

Once we appreciate how the different modes of analysis, the hermeneutic and radical forms of postmodernism position themselves in relation

to problems of intelligibility, we are better able to locate the politics of postmodernity. Certainly there is a readily available "politics" in every society, the politics that exist in what are recognized as political conversations and are part of the reigning system of intelligibility. And any mode of social analysis tries to connect the intelligibility of these aspects of politics to a more distanced view, to connect, as it were, the life-world to a less hectic conceptual world of analysis. The politics of the life-world contains recognized forms of partisanship, cleavages which can threaten social solidarity but are, for the most part, constitutive of that solidarity.

With this as background, we can locate a hermeneutically-oriented politics as a politics of reconciliation. Richard Rorty, for example, tends to endorse the hermeneutic view, using the conversation as his justification for moving away from the epistemological tradition. And Rorty wants an engaged hermeneutics, one which helps to resolve extant forms of partisanship, one which makes a connection with "the daily problems of one's community," that enhances communication and harmonious solidarity.²³ Accordingly, he chides Foucault for maintaining his distance from existing forms of partisanship, referring to him as a stoic:

It takes no more than a squint of the inner eye to read Foucault as a stoic, a dispassionate observer of the present social order, rather than a concerned critic.²⁴

And he goes on to complain of Foucault's "dryness," which he sees produced by a "lack of identification with any social context, any communication." Rorty also complains that Foucault affects to write "from a point of view light-years away from the problems of contemporary society."²⁵ Finally, he states that there is no "we" to be found in Foucault's writings, nor in those of many of his French contemporaries.²⁶

The View from Offshore

There are several misapprehensions in Rorty's complaints against Foucault, each of which joins with issues others (e.g. Habermas and Lyotard) have raised in debates over the politics of postmodernism. To begin with, Rorty is insensitive to the politics of radical postmodernism's grammar. He is indeed on to something when he looks unsuccessfully for a familiar "we" in the writings of Foucault and "in those of his French contemporaries," for what radical postmodernists are doing is questioning the familiar theoretical constructions of the life-world which fail to situate actors in contentious terrains of meaning. Like Habermas, Rorty sees the life-world

as a set of conversations about contemporary problems, and also like Habermas, Rorty cannot see the relevance to social criticism of thinkers who challenge the grounds of those conversations rather than entering them within the terms of the contemporary debates.²⁷

While Rorty (and Habermas) emphasizes one aspect of language, communication, and one aspect of a social formation, the shared background of practices that support conversations, Foucault and others emphasize the discursive economies of language, its effects in constituting privileged actors and locations for the exercise of control over meaning and value. And rather than seeing the life-world as a relatively uncontentious sphere within which "problems" are approached, they see it as a potentially contentious domain of *problematization*. The grammar here is significant, for Foucault, for example, shows how a particular range of recognized social problems, those that have achieved recognition within dominant modes of policy discourse, is only one set or kind of problem among a vast variety of possibilities. It is one thing, for example, to ask what is the appropriate policy to respond to "crime" and "sexual deviance," and another to show how contemporary modes for problematizing crime and sexual deviance are peculiar when seen in a particular kind of historical context.

The life-world, in which Rorty and Habermas valorize communicative competence and solidarity, is quite different in Foucault's construction of it. It is a pattern of volubilities and silences, of problems about which some communicate and non-problems, and of alternative possible modes of problematization. Moreover, what constitutes competence—knowledge, expertise, eligibility—is a product of the way a given social formation in a given age carves up its spaces. To go back to the example introduced above, psychiatric discourse has juridically relevant meaning *now*; it helps to constitute knowledge of "criminals" in the present age because of the way in which modernity problematizes crime. It is therefore politically vacuous to speak about an intersubjectivity as the ground of communication without situating subjects in the distribution of spaces—professional, delinquent, administrative, marginal, etc.—that direct the meaning, value, and authority of their utterances.

In light of this we can consider the problem of the "we." We, in radical postmodernist terms, are not all the same. The meaning of an utterance is not controlled by the intentions of the speaker. Rorty, in his emphasis on conversations among non-situated speakers appears to adopt, with Habermas, a grammar of subjectivity in which subjects intentionally produce meanings. Despite his attempts to transcend a subject-centered version of reason by resorting to the idea of communicative action, which presup-

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poses an intersubjective meaning context, Habermas' grammar remains relentlessly subjectivist. Even his recent call for a "paradigm of mutual understanding" is constructed with an intentionalist rendering of the subject-meaning relationship.²⁸ Even Austin's speech act theory, heavily relied on by Habermas, does not lend itself to an intentionalist, communication-oriented gloss. While Habermas speaks of communicating actors who "pursue illocutionary aims,"²⁹ what gives an utterance an illocutionary emphasis is not the intention of the speaker but (as I pointed out above) the context of the utterance. An utterance for Austin becomes illocutionary as a result of the rule governed context in which it is made. Although Austin never got around to historicizing those "rules" and problematizing or making contentious those contexts, his approach to language does not license an intentionalist grammar of subjectivity. That grammar, as it emerges in the analyses of postmodernists is further radicalized to construe subjectivity as epiphenomenal to meanings rather than accepting a grammar in which subjects produce meanings.

There is indeed a "we" in Foucault's approach, which assumes that meanings make subjects, but it is not a unitary, univocal we but a fragile series of produced we's which are resident in the institutionalized forms of utterance, and, hovering in the background, are alternative possible we's. The politics of Foucaultian grammar thus rests on a Nietzschean way of posing questions about subjectivity; the question is never "who" but "which one," which of the multitude of possible selves is being brought into recognition by a particular institutionalized form of intelligibility and the practices it encompasses.

Rorty is also on to something when he notes that Foucault is operating from "a point of view light-years away from the problems of contemporary society."³⁰ Distance is indeed what Foucault's analyses achieve. In allowing us to see the present as remarkable, as a peculiar set of practices for problematizing some things and naturalizing others, for allowing some things into discourse and silencing others, Foucault's distancing recodes the present. It turns current "truths" into power-related practices by situating them in relation to alternative past practices and tracing the correlated economies of their emergence.³¹

This is not, moreover, the dispassionate observations of a stoic but a textual practice oriented by a commitment to freedom, a freedom that is not the traditional, liberal individualist model of minimizing the domain of controlled public space but the freedom that allows one to see the possibility of change. Foucault argues that, "by following the lines of fragility in the present—in managing to grasp why and how that-which-is might no longer be that-which-is," it is possible to "open up the space of free-

dom understood as a space of concrete freedom, i.e. of possible transformation."³²

In short, Foucault's analyses politicize what passes for the uncontentious; they take us outside the politics resident in contemporary conversations in a frame that makes them peculiar. In so doing his writing does not consort with the distribution of conversations locked within the all-to-familiar present set of recognized problems.

The problem is not so much that of defining a political "position" (which is to choose from a pre-existing set of possibilities) but to imagine and to bring into being new schemas of politicisation.³³

Conclusion: Weighing Anchor

Recognizing the conversational basis of hermeneutical forms of analysis, Fred Dallmayr notes, "for hermeneutics, inquiry is routine conversation."³⁴ After explicating the details of hermeneutics, which goes a long way toward demonstrating the "linguisticity" of understanding, Dallmayr laments the strangeness of the "poetic idiom" to political life.

While pragmatic language and discursive argumentation occupy an acknowledged place in public proceedings, the poetic idiom seems to be a stranger to political life. Yet, its strangeness does not render this idiom negligible or marginal—as long as politics is not reduced to the simple reenactment of established routines.³⁵

Following Dallmayr's suggestion, in order to find an escape route from the political space constituted in conversations, I will pursue a post-modernist strategy, a form of literary strategy which demythologizes the foundational codes through which the political boundaries and recognized controversies are reproduced. Recall that I began with some remarks on the politics of genre, which were designed primarily to put pressure on the conversation, especially to point to the limitations in regard to political insight that stem from one's inability to gain distance when confined within the discursive terrains that make intelligible conversations possible. I suggested that Foucault operates from a position offshore, that he has anchored in a strategic position that gives him distance but at the same time a strategic view of modernity's present. It is now time to weigh anchor and sail to another distancing location, to Robinson Crusoe's island, which will allow for an exemplary demythologizing that will articulate with the political impetus of radical, postmodernist writing. My focus here is on

Michel Tournier's version of the Crusoe myth, a version that makes Friday one who manages in subverting rather than aiding and abetting Robinson Crusoe's rationalization of the island terrain within the understandings afforded by political economy.

At its origin, myth is designed to legitimate an order by either rationalizing the origin of its construction or providing a view that naturalizes it. Subsequent retellings or commentaries also tend to have a legitimating function, for they are retellings complicit with the various discursive procedures through which prevailing structures of power and authority are implemented.³⁶ However, some "work on myth" is demythologizing, putting pressure on institutionalized sources of authority and value rather than encouraging allegiance to them. Such is Tournier's, which seems to operate within the postmodernist assumption that political economy has mythological rather than foundational legitimacy.³⁷

Recent analysis is convincing on the issue of the mythologizing impetus of Defoe's original treatment. Rather than creating distance from the dominant conversations of his age, Defoe was valorizing them. His Robinson Crusoe is at a distance only geographically, for he reproduces and rationalizes the political/economic practices of his age. Indeed, despite the popular assumption that the original Robinson Crusoe was designed to celebrate a concept of a nature free of the busy commercial behavior of England, Defoe identified the domain of commerce *as* natural. As he put it, "Nothing follows the course of Nature more than trade. There Causes and Consequences follow as directly as day and night."³⁸ And, there is little doubt as to what model of trade Defoe's story is meant to exemplify. As Ian Watt points out:

Defoe's hero—unlike most of us—has been endowed with the basic necessities for the successful exercise of free enterprise. He is not actually a primitive or a proletarian or even a professional man, but a capitalist. He owns freehold, an estate which is rich but unimproved. It is not a desert island in the geographical sense—it is merely barren of owners or competitors.³⁹

As is well known, many subsequent commentaries on Robinson Crusoe enlist the story as material for the historical conversation about alternative models of political economy. The classical political economists simply explicate their systems through Crusoe, while, of course, Marx uses him in his critique of these political economists to attack the mystifications involved in their theorizing of the commodity. For Marx, Robinson Crusoe was an exemplar of clarity, the meeting of a man with his labor capacity

with a nature filled with abundance. The result being the unambiguous transformation of nature into need-satisfying goods, "useful objects for himself alone."⁴⁰

But, as Jean Baudrillard has pointed out, Marx had not achieved the distance from the discourse of political economy he thought he had, for insofar as he assumed that there can be a transparency in "man's relation to the instruments and products of his labor," he accepts that part of "bourgeois thought" that fails to register the politics of representation.⁴¹ As he has argued more thoroughly elsewhere, in his remarks about Marx on Crusoe, Baudrillard claims that Marx's treatment of Robinson Crusoe is parasitic on the discourse of political economy that he scorns.⁴² Marx continues to write within a discourse that represents the production and exchange of value within a society wholly within the terrain of the economic. It is a discourse which, in Baudrillard's terms, continues "the apotheosis of the economic."⁴³ Marx, like the political economists whose commentaries on Crusoe are his object, thus accepts the two major determinants of their argumentation: (1) the idea that one's relation to value is transparent or unmediated by representational practices, and (2) the quarantining of social value within the imagery of economic, productive relations.

By contrast, the radical forms of postmodernist writing are highly attuned to representational practices. Showing this level of attention, Tournier gives us a Robinson Crusoe story that achieves a significant distance from the perspectives on political economy that have marked the capitalist and Marxist discourses which, in Baudrillard's terms, "were born together, in the historic phase that saw the systematization of both political economy and the ideology that sanctions it."⁴⁴ What Tournier's novel *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* does is offer a parody that shows the limitations and self-defeating difficulties of a view in which political economy is the only way to represent value.

The subtitle of Tournier's novelistic parody is important because "the limbo of the Pacific" expression locates Robinson Crusoe's island both spatially and temporarily in a place remote from Crusoe's home, the English society of the 18th century. While there are a number of significant implications involved with Tournier's changes in the frame—e.g. moving the story from the 17th to the 18th century—what is most significant here is the way that the limbo in which the island is placed allows Tournier to subvert the Robinson Crusoe myth.⁴⁵

The beginning problematic in the novel is Robinson Crusoe's solitude, but rather than reinforcing the myth of the natural autonomy of the individual, Tournier's Crusoe becomes disoriented by his solitude once he fails in his initial attempt to build a boat to escape the island (he build it

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too far from the water's edge to move it into the ocean). Deprived for a while of a social context, Crusoe degenerates into an animal-like creature, finally hitting bottom when he wallows in a mud hole. Then, deploring his state of degeneration from the familiar human condition, Crusoe attempts redemption through administrative organization. He begins ordering and administering his island, having decided that his choices consist of returning to the mire or reproducing, as governor and architect, a wholly "humanized estate."⁴⁶

In the process of constructing this estate, Crusoe lives out a mythical, human historical narrative, starting as a hunter-gatherer and proceeding to the role of cultivator and herdsman, not because this sequence is demanded by the necessity for food and shelter but seemingly out of a symbolic necessity. Insofar as he constructs what constitutes humanity on the basis of the political economy of 18th century England, he is led to reproduce the up-to-date conditions of production and the narrative of human progress that legitimates those conditions in order to affirm his humanity and achieve modernity. Tournier's Crusoe is thus laboriously involved not simply in surviving in a remote place, he is naturalizing the political economy of his homeland, thereby bringing home what is spatially and temporally remote. He even goes so far as to "humanize" plant life, taking as a sexual partner a "quillac-tree" which has been blown over by the wind and whose bark is "smooth and warm, even downy" and which has "two branches thrusting out of the grass" that appear to him to be "huge, black, parted thighs."⁴⁷ Among other things, Crusoe's conjugal relations with the island represent another aspect of his attempt to reproduce a familiar self. He makes of the island a feminized other in order to regain his purchase on himself as a "man."⁴⁸

It becomes evident that the man-woman relations that Crusoe establishes are just as entangled with notions of proprietorship on the island as they were in 18th century England. His "vegetable way," as he puts it in his self-conscious ambivalence about his relationship to the plant, is not confined to the sexual act itself. He takes a proprietary attitude to "his tree," referring later to sprouting plants nearby as "his children," and subsequently administering a severe beating to Friday when he catches him "making love" to "his tree."⁴⁹

This is but one of Friday's many transgressions of the island administration. His arrival and subsequent playful disregard for Crusoe's administered spaces provides Tournier with the parodic material he needs and Crusoe with the *reductio ad absurdum* he needs to think his way out of the confining, political/economic code with which he has constructed his understanding of humanity and his administration of the island. After Friday's arrival, Crusoe reproduces the conditions of a capitalist system, using

the money he saved from the wreckage of his ship to make Friday a wage-earner. But although Friday seems to accept his status in Crusoe's strictly administered island, complete with a money system and a penal code, he ends up subverting the system, destroying almost every aspect of Crusoe's rationally administered island, while, at the same time, creating another kind of island, one dedicated to play rather than the duties of administrator and wage-earner.

It takes some time for Robinson Crusoe to discover this other island. In the transition from stern island administrator to Friday's student, he manifests ambivalence before finally succumbing to "Friday's devotion and calm logic," which allow him to rid himself of his administrator's consciousness.

. . . there were times when the Governor, the General, and the Pastor gained the upper hand in Robinson. His mind dwelt on the ravages caused by Friday in the meticulous ordering of the island, the ruined crops, the wasted stores and scattered herds; the vermin that multiplied and prospered, the tools that were broken or mislaid. All this might have been endurable had it not been for the *spirit* manifested by Friday, the tricks and devices, the diabolical or impish notions that entered his head, setting up a confusion by which Robinson himself was infected.⁵⁰

When eventually Crusoe's bafflement and ambivalence are replaced with recognition, what he is able to discern through Friday's subversion is that his administered island is but one among other possible islands. Friday has existed on such an other island all along, dedicated not to a system of rational exchange, which in any case makes little sense on the island with no market, but to an order based on play. Accordingly, he takes objects that have a high exchange value in 18th century England and uses them to decorate plants and then enlist them in his elaborate rituals of imagination. Once, with Friday's help, Robinson Crusoe discovers this other island and is thereby able to denaturalize his home, England, i.e. he is able to see that political economy is but one possible model for representing value, he has extricated himself from the confines of his old domestic conversation. And, very much like the intellectual orientation of radical postmodernist thinkers, Robinson Crusoe elects to remain at a distance. When a ship arrives and he is offered passage home, he decides to stay offshore, living in a world that had, before his tutelage under Friday, existed in the shadows of England's mythic discourse on political economy. For "us" (those involved in theorizing the language of analysis) it is not a question of choosing a permanent venue, either on or offshore; it is a ques-

tion of seeking distant terrains which are exotic to the extent that every homecoming (every subsequent conversation) takes on meaning and value in a broader context of possibilities.

Notes

¹ For a discussion of the difference between radical and conservative forms of postmodernist thinking, see Hal Foster, "(Post)Modern Polemics," *New German Critique* 33 (1984): 67-78.

² See Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1984); and Seyla Benhabib, "Epistemologies of Postmodernism," *New German Critique* 33 (1984): 114.

³ Benhabib 115.

⁴ The relevant work is John Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1962).

⁵ Fredric Jameson, *Sartre: The Origins of a Style* (New York: Columbia UP, 1984) 27.

⁶ Gerard Raulet, "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism: An Interview with Michel Foucault," trans. Jeremy Harding, *Telos* 55 (1983): 206.

⁷ Michel Foucault, "About the Concept of the Dangerous Individual in 19th Century Psychiatry," *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry* 1 (1978): 1-18.

⁸ Foucault, "the Concept" 1.

⁹ Foucault, "the Concept" 2.

¹⁰ Foucault, "the Concept" 12.

¹¹ Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, trans. David Allison (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1973) 78.

¹² Jacques Derrida, "The Supplement of Copula: Philosophy before Linguistics," *Textual Strategies*, ed. Josue Harari (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1979) 82-120.

¹³ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1977).

¹⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Seabury, 1975).

¹⁵ Clifford Geertz, *Negara* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1980) 122. This part of the discussion is a slight revision of what I have done in Michael J. Shapiro, *The Politics of Representation: Writing Practices in Biography, Photography and Policy Analysis* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1988) ch. 1.

¹⁶ Geertz, *Negara* 13.

¹⁷ Geertz, *Negara* 14.

¹⁸ Clifford Geertz, "The Politics of Meaning," *The Interpretation of Culture*, by Geertz (New York: Basic Books, 1973) 311.

¹⁹ Michel Foucault, "Two Lectures," *Power/Knowledge*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, Kate Soper (New York: Pantheon, 1980) 78-108.

²⁰ Foucault, "Two Lectures" 93.

²¹ Foucault, "Two Lectures" 102.

²² Raulet, "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism" 202.

²³ Richard Rorty, "Habermas and Lyotard on Postmodernity," *Habermas and Modernity*, ed. Richard J. Bernstein (Cambridge: MIT, 1985) 174.

²⁴ Rorty 172.

²⁵ Rorty 171.

²⁶ Rorty 172.

²⁷ For Habermas's attack on Foucault's failure to provide a critical position see Jurgen Habermas, "The Genealogical Writing of History: On Some Aporias in Foucault's Theory of Power," trans. Gregory Ostrander, *Canadian Journal of Social and Political Theory* 10, ns 1-2 (1986): 1-9.

²⁸ See Jurgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT, 1987) ch. 11.

²⁹ Jurgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Competence*, vol. 1 of *Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon, 1984) 295.

³⁰ Rorty, "Habermas and Lyotard" 171.

³¹ For a similar rejoinder to Rorty's argument see Jonathan Arac, Introduction, *Postmodernism and Politics*, ed. Arac (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1986) xviii.

³² Raulot, "Structuralism and Post-Structuralism" 206.

³³ Foucault, "The History of Sexuality," *Power/Knowledge*, ed. Gordon, 190.

³⁴ Fred Dallmayr, *Polis and Praxis* (Cambridge: MIT, 1984) 193.

³⁵ Dallmayr 198.

³⁶ See Michel Foucault's discussion of the commentary in "The Order of Discourse," *Language and Politics*, ed. Michael Shapiro (New York: New York UP, 1984) 114-16.

³⁷ See Michel Tournier, *Vendredi ou les Limbes du Pacifique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967). All quotations are from the English edition: *Friday or the Other Island*, trans. Norman Denny (Middlesex, Eng.: Penguin, 1974). My discussion of Tournier's novel benefits from an excellent reading by Anthony Purdy, "From Defoe's 'Crusoe' to Tournier's 'Vendredi': The Metamorphosis of a Myth," *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* June 1984: 216-35.

³⁸ Ian Watt, "Robinson Crusoe as Myth," *Robinson Crusoe: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds, and Sources of Criticism*, ed. Michael Shinagel (New York: Norton, 1975) 315.

³⁹ Watt 322.

⁴⁰ Karl Marx, *Capital* Vol. I, trans. Eden and Cedar Paul (New York: International Publishers, 1929) 52.

⁴¹ Jean Baudrillard, "Beyond Use Values," *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*, trans. Charles Levin (St. Louis: Telos, 1981) 140.

⁴² Jean Baudrillard's extended critique of Marx is in his *The Mirror of Production*, trans. Mark Poster (St. Louis: Telos, 1975).

⁴³ Baudrillard, "Beyond Use Values" 141.

⁴⁴ Baudrillard, "Beyond Use Values" 141.

⁴⁵ Tournier moves the Robinson Crusoe story from the 17th to the 18th century. The change in time frame does not enter my reading but is analyzed in depth in Purdy, "From Defoe's 'Crusoe' to Tournier's 'Vendredi,'" 223-25.

⁴⁶ Tournier, *Friday or the Other Island* 96.

⁴⁷ Tournier 99.

⁴⁸ For an extensive treatment of the feminization of the island theme, see Alice A. Jardine, *Gynesis* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985) 218-23.

⁴⁹ Tournier 143.

⁵⁰ Tournier 141.

John Rieder

CLASS AND POWER: FOUCAULT'S CRITIQUE OF MARXISM*

The bearing of Michel Foucault's work on Marxist social theory is not clear cut in part because of Foucault's own evasiveness about the topic. Thus one finds, amid a welter of anti-Marxist postures, a passage like this:

I often quote concepts, texts, and phrases from Marx, but without feeling obliged to add the authenticating label of a footnote. . . . It is impossible at the present time to write history without using a whole range of concepts directly or indirectly linked to Marx's thought and situating oneself within a horizon of thought which has been defined and described by Marx. (*PK* 52-3)¹

I think Foucault can be and ought to be understood within the horizon of thought defined and described by Marx. The question I wish to address is whether his work ought to be read as a contribution to Marxist theory or as a more or less decisive critique of it.

One of Foucault's major contributions or challenges to Marxist theory is articulated in his concept of "power." Foucault criticizes the base/superstructure model of social relations, or the idea that the function of political and cultural institutions is to maintain and reproduce economic dominance, not so much by questioning the primacy of the economic as by objecting to the conceptual opposition of economic production to other, non-productive, merely reflexive activities like the formation and transmission of ideologies. Instead, Foucault thinks of something like a pervasive discourse of power, a kind of positional language of social forms and spaces which confines and directs practical activity. It is "not an institution, and not a structure, . . . [but rather] a complex strategical situation in a particular society." Therefore, "relations of power are not in superstructural positions, with merely a role of prohibition or accompaniment; they have a directly productive role" (*HS* 92-4). Power neither rises from an economic

*This lecture was first delivered at the Modern Language Association convention in Washington, D.C., December 30, 1984, as one of three talks included in a panel titled "The Bearing of Nietzschean Critique on Marxist Social Theory." The body of the talk is reproduced here with only a few minor stylistic changes. I have added some substantive comments in the endnotes.

base nor descends from a dominant class, but rather circulates: "Individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application" (PK 98).

Foucault's notion of power helps to produce and support his most important contribution to radical social theory, his genealogies of the "disciplinary" modes of power in eighteenth-twentieth century industrial society. Discipline, in Foucault's usage, is a tactics of knowledge, a system of impersonal, centralized surveillance of dispersed and individualized subjects; it is an architecture of relationships whereby "prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons" (DP 228). "It is not," Foucault tells us, "that the beautiful totality of the individual is amputated, repressed, altered by our social order, it is rather that the individual is fabricated in it, according to a whole technique of forces and bodies" (DP 217). Foucault's master metaphor for the disciplinary is Jeremy Bentham's panopticon,² which is an important figure of political technology because of the way it "automatizes and disindividualizes power," investing power not in a person but in an arrangement of bodies and gazes. This automatization of power has the frightening effect of intensifying both its generality and its internalization: "He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection" (DP 202-3).

Foucault's analyses of power and discipline offer Marxists one of the most provocative of all recent contributions to an historical understanding of bourgeois hegemony. I choose the word hegemony carefully. Raymond Williams argues that Gramsci's concept is a major turning-point in Marxist social theory, one which transforms the concept of class rule by removing culture from the realm of the superstructures. Rather, it attributes to culture the basic, formative role of constituting identities, meanings, and values in such a way that the pressures and limits of a given form of domination come to be experienced and internalized with the force and unquestionability of common sense (Williams 108-10). Thus, like Foucault's power, it breaks with the base/superstructure model; and like Foucault's discipline, the concept of hegemony stresses a multiplicity of moments of domination rather than a central determining instance.

One can read Foucault's discipline as not merely parallel to the Marxist notion but rather as a major contribution to the specification of its concrete form and its historical descent. And there are certainly reasons to read Foucault within the Marxist tradition in this way, not the least of which is that Foucault himself ultimately inserts his analyses into a Marxist historical narrative. In *Discipline and Punish*, for instance, he argues that the

economic take-off of the West is accompanied by a political take-off, the one administering the accumulation of capital, the other administering the accumulation of men. In this capitalist politics, "the traditional, ritual, costly, violent forms of power . . . soon fell into disuse and were superseded by a subtle, calculated technology of subjection" (221). The same argument appears elsewhere in more explicitly Marxist terms:

what the bourgeoisie needed, or that in which its system discovered its real interests, was not the exclusion of the mad or the surveillance and prohibition of infantile masturbation . . . but rather, the techniques and procedures themselves of such an exclusion. It is the mechanisms of that exclusion that are necessary, the apparatuses of surveillance, the medicalisation of sexuality, of madness, of delinquency, all the micro-mechanisms of power, that came, from a certain moment in time, to represent the interests of the bourgeoisie. (PK 101)

I am suggesting that the terminal point of Foucault's analysis—its horizon—is the Marxist historical narrative of capitalism and class struggle. Indeed, Foucault is sometimes rather precise about the place of class and class struggle in his work. He refuses to deduce anything from it as a hypothesis. Rather,

One must . . . conduct an *ascending* analysis of power, starting, that is, from its infinitesimal mechanisms, which each have their own history, their own trajectory, their own techniques and tactics, and then see how these mechanisms of power have been—and continue to be—invested, colonised, utilised . . . by ever more general mechanisms and by forms of global domination (PK 99).

"Forms of global domination" appear here at exactly the point where the bourgeoisie appears elsewhere—that is, at the point where the analysis is exhausted and fades into a rather crude, sketchy melodrama of global mechanisms discovering their real interests. The concept of class in Foucault's writing usually appears in the guise of a "global" or general effect—a "wide-ranging effect of cleavage" or a "general line of force" (HS 94).

Foucault defends his reticence about general effects as a matter of principle. His project is to diagram the circuits of power, to render the pattern of social domination and resistance with the kind of specificity and abstractness found in a road map. He sees the role of the intellectual in radical politics as the drawer of maps rather than as a leader, guide, or overseer. This point is well taken. It behooves us not to exaggerate our political risks or our importance when we theorize. Yet it is hardly an adequate reason for leaving the "global" map so ill-defined.

A better one, perhaps, is that Foucault has nothing to offer at this level other than what he gives us, that is, the insertion of his analysis of disciplinary power into the Marxist narrative of the growth of capitalism. This is no small thing, after all, and there is no reason why he should have said more. But certainly he would have been more straightforward if he had wanted his work to be absorbed into Marxism; it is obvious that he did not. He says, on the contrary, that he has broken free of the limitations of Marxism by following the pioneering effort of Nietzsche. It was Nietzsche, according to Foucault, who moved the focus of philosophical discourse to relations of power rather than, as they were for Marx, relations of production. "Nietzsche is the philosopher of power, a philosopher who managed to think of power without having to confine himself within a political theory in order to do so" (PK 53). To what degree, we might ask, has Foucault's Nietzschean focus on relations of power liberated him from the confines of Marxist political theory? To what extent is his contribution to radical theory also a critique of Marxism? And what exactly is at stake? Is freedom from political theory a liberation we really want or need?

I have already said that the concept of "power" challenges the base/superstructure model. Challenging this model is hardly a break with Marxism, however. The English Marxists Raymond Williams and E. P. Thompson have severely criticized and all but abandoned it; and Louis Althusser's strategy of granting relative autonomy to the superstructures has so attenuated the base/superstructure model as to yield a virtually new paradigm.³ But many of Foucault's attempts to distinguish himself from Marxism convey the odd impression that Marxist theory represents class domination as something that is propagated like radio waves from government and corporate headquarters. No competent Marxist would disagree that this is a stupid way of thinking. But the issue separating Foucault from Marxism is not the status of the base/superstructure model. It is the problem that is left over once that model has been put aside, the problem of the relations between what Foucault calls "capillary forms of power" and "global mechanisms." The Marxist concept in question, I think, is the one that Foucault calls the "general line of force" or the "wide-ranging effect of cleavage"—the concept of class.

I can hear some advocates of Foucault, at this point, straining to object that the real issue is not so global, but rather lies at the other end of the spectrum; it is the problem of the subject. Foucault himself says, "what troubles me with these analyses which prioritise ideology is that there is always presupposed a human subject on the lines of the model provided by classical philosophy, endowed with a consciousness which power is then thought to seize on" (PK 58). The question, however, is whether

there is any necessary connection between the concept of ideology and the humanist subject. This would not seem to be a difficult issue to resolve; one only needs to note that when Foucault says, "We should try to grasp subjection in its material instance as a constitution of subjects" (PK 97), the theorist he is quoting without quotation marks is not Marx, but Foucault's Marxist contemporary Althusser. He is echoing, in fact, one of Althusser's central theses on ideology itself.⁴ I will proceed, then, under the assumption that the status of the subject, although it is certainly an important issue, is not the one that distinguishes Foucault from Marxists.

Let us return to class, then. The problem with the hypothesis of class domination, according to Foucault, is that one can deduce anything one wants from it (PK 100). And surely class ought not to be treated as if it were a geometric axiom from which one could logically deduce the forms of social domination. Once again, no competent Marxist would disagree. Foucault calls instead for an "ascending analysis." Two things need to be said here. First, Foucault is only describing the general movement of any historiographic analysis between the delineation of local situations and a more comprehensive historical narrative. It is an integral part of what Thompson calls the historian's dialogue; and Foucault engages in this dialogue throughout his work when he refers, for instance, to the relation between disciplinary power and demographic changes, the accumulation of capital, the history of law and the courts, the transition from monarchic to democratic forms of government, and so on. Second, the opposition Foucault sets up between this procedure and that of deducing one's conclusions from the hypothesis of class domination is odd. Certainly Foucault does not think that his analyses are *inductive*, as if one could accumulate instances of "power" until they added up to class struggle. The case is, rather, that the patterns which rule the broad sweep of historical narrative do not necessarily show up in local situations, and should not too hastily be read into them as their real, most profound motivation or cause. Foucault argues that one ought not to say that the development of disciplinary power answered the needs of the bourgeoisie, but rather one should say that the bourgeoisie used what was at hand and suited its interests—the political technology of discipline. What exactly is the function of the concept of power in this ascending analysis? I venture the hypothesis that it is best read as a delaying tactic. Power, here, is a way of deferring the allegory of class motives, and so clearing a space for Foucault's Nietzschean, anti-economist, anti-essentialist work within the general territory of what remains the Marxist narrative of class struggle.

What is at stake, then, is not so much the relation of "power" to class, as the moment when one can speak of class struggle rather than the

less confining term "power." Can we say, then, that power is not a *de*-politicized term like "social conflict," but rather, in an important sense, a *pre*-political one? For the term "class" is not simply descriptive (or cartographic), it is programmatic. Foucault, in the essay "Power and Strategies," says that "the 'revolutionary' thought of the nineteenth century adopted the *logical form of contradiction*" to conceptualize struggle (PK 144, his emphasis). Isn't that because what Marx and Engels wanted to bring about was precisely the polarizing effect of binary opposition? The project of "class" analysis is not to interpret the world but to change it. The term "class struggle" implicitly seeks to install this imperative in the strategies of whatever situation it describes. It is guilty, then, of trying to impose the coherence of a global perspective on the multiform confrontations and skirmishes of the exercise of power and its resistance.⁵

This drive toward coherence would seem to be an important difference between the Marxist historical narrative and the Foucaultian genealogy. In the influential essay "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," Foucault calls for a form of narrative which "maintain[s] passing events in their proper dispersion . . . [and] discover[s] that truth or being do not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents" (LCMP 146). But the coherence of class struggle, I would argue, is not that of a metaphysical foundation or an essence of being. It is the coherence of a political project. The Marxist narrative is founded on rationalist ambitions, but this does not oblige Marxists to believe that history itself has the form of rationality.⁶

And once we recognize the tendentiousness of the terms "class" and "class struggle," we still need to ask the meaning of Foucault's alternative. If Foucault's use of Nietzsche liberates us from the confines of Marxist political theory and its call for unification, than what other program does Foucault deliver us to? Do we now have a politics without political theory? Foucault leaves us a multiplicity of struggles, each of which has to be mapped in its own specificity. But resistance to power, at such a level, precisely because it lacks the coherence of the concepts of class and class struggle, threatens to turn into a mere ideology of subversion, a kind of underdogism. As soon as the underdog takes over the position of ascendancy, he or she becomes the enemy (from the perspective of the eternally radical intellectual). Consider for instance Foucault's discussion of popular justice (PK 1-35), in which he argues that revolutionary justice cannot take the form of a court, or his caution that a revolutionary movement must at all costs avoid the forms of bureaucracy (PK 27). Such injunctions are not merely over-valuations of structural determination; they violate the principle of differential analysis itself. They fail to articulate the difference

between a court that is actively maintaining the *status quo* and a court which is operating a different program, and which is therefore in a different relation than the first one to prisons, schools, barracks, and hospitals. This relationship, and not the court's immanent structure, is the political meaning of a given tribunal. I am not saying that one can ignore Foucault's warnings that the spatial arrangements of the court or the role given to the judge as impartial arbiter of truth have a logic of their own. But I am saying that the concept of class struggle is a more adequate frame in which to measure such objections than anything Foucault gives us. I am saying that the analysis of power without the analysis of class is not yet a useable political analysis.

What, then, is the role of the theorist? If one keeps on talking about class struggle, does this mean that one continues to elevate theory to the role of mastery? Does it mean that Marxists must hoist the banner of the Communist Party and wait for their class allies to fall into rank behind them? Certainly these are ridiculous postures for an American academic. But I don't think these are really the stakes in a dialogue between Nietzschean and Marxist thought. What I have tried to produce in this talk is the difference between taking Foucault's critique of Marxism on its own terms and, on the other hand, interpreting his Nietzschean discourse as both a displacement of and a contribution to Marxist social theory. I opt for the latter choice, and I do so partly because Marxist thought needs to bend quite a ways to let Foucault in. But such eclecticism is our privileged opportunity, isn't it? Given the poverty of radical politics in the U.S., American theorists can dismiss Foucault's crude and often trivializing dismissals of Marxism and work, instead, in our own small but significant way, toward articulating a radical social theory that might, someday, work.⁷

Notes

¹ Citations of quotations from Foucault's writing use the following abbreviations: *DP* = *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1979); *HS* = *The History of Sexuality: Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1980); *LCMP* = *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1977); *PK* = *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980).

² Bentham's panopticon is an architectural design for a prison, which Foucault analyzes at length in *DP*, 195-228. The panopticon is a circular building with an interior courtyard and a central tower. The interior of each cell in the outer structure is entirely visible from the central tower; at the same time, the inmates of the cells are completely isolated from one another.

³ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977) 75–89; E. P. Thompson, "The Peculiarities of the English," *The Poverty of Theory & Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review, 1978) 245–301, esp. 289–90; Louis Althusser, "Contradiction and Overdetermination" and "On the Materialist Dialectic" in *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1977) 87–128 and 161–218.

⁴ Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Toward an Investigation)," *Lenin and Philosophy*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review, 1971) 127–186; Althusser argues that "*the category of the subject is . . . constitutive of all ideology insofar as all ideology has the function (which defines it) of 'constituting' concrete individuals as subjects*" (171).

⁵ It should be added that Foucault's "delaying tactic" responded not simply to an intellectual problem, but also to the pressing political problem of the French intellectual's relation to the French Communist Party. If Foucault was freeing a space for his discourse by deferring Marxist categories, this move also had an urgent practical dimension. He was attempting to theorize a valid, radical political practice that would not be shackled to the mechanism of the party. Foucault's position needs to be understood in its historical and political context; however, this context itself should also make us wary of taking the theoretical position precisely on its own terms. The fact that "Marxist theory" sometimes seems to mean "French Communist Party" is exactly the reason why I hesitate before some of Foucault's formulations. When Foucault invokes Nietzsche as a counter-authority to Marx, we need to ask not only what this meant to Foucault and to French intellectuals after May, 1968, but also what it means now, to us. My general thesis is that Nietzsche's philosophy (and specifically the use to which Foucault puts Nietzsche) does not offer a reliable instigation to radical political practice *except* when Nietzsche's methodological and conceptual tools are *brought into a dialogue with* the social theory—the theory of the structure and tendency of capitalism—first elaborated by Karl Marx.

⁶ Marxism does however seek to give history a plot—the plot of progress into rationality. Marxism does not seek truth or being at the root of what we know and are; rather, it posits labor at the root of what we know and if not of what we are, of what we do and can make ourselves. Thus it does not posit the exteriority of accidents as the fundamental character of historical process, either, and it could be argued that Foucault himself falls into a negative metaphysics when he does so. That is, Foucault is himself using a notion of "proper" narrative in this passage, which could be seen as reinstalling the metaphysics of truth and design he is trying to escape.

⁷ When I first delivered this lecture, Professor Micheal Shapiro directed to me some questions he had adapted from Foucault: whom (I paraphrase him loosely) was I speaking *for*? To what subjects of what discourse was I granting the authority and the power of "truth"? What power, and for whom, was my discourse attempting to produce?

My answer is that, on the one hand, no one ever knows the answer to these questions. But on the other hand, my intention was to combat a tendency I saw in American academic discourse to use Foucault as an eraser (yet another eraser) of Marx and Marxism. The word "Marxist" makes many Americans nervous. The word "Foucaultian," while it is certainly less ambiguous, is also unfortunately remote, elite, and inconsequential in relation to American politics. So I hope to be speaking for and to anyone who considers capitalism an intrinsically oppressive system of social relations, and to suggest that we remember that we must be "Marxists" before we can even think of being "Foucaultian."

Notes on Contributors

Priscilla Atkins lives in Honolulu and teaches in the Poets-in-the-Schools program.

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E. G. Burrows has published four poetry collections—the most recent of which is *The House of August* (Ithaca House, 1985)—as well as two chapbooks and a verse play. His poems have appeared recently in *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Blue Unicorn*, *Fine Madness*, *Ice River*, *Oxford Magazine*, *Plainsongs*, *Poetry Northwest*, *West Coast Review*, and others.

Cai Qi-jiao (1918–) was born in Fujian, China, and in 1926 emigrated with his parents to Indonesia, returning to China by himself at age eleven to attend school in Fujian. His seven collections of poetry include three published during the Hundred Flowers and Anti-Rightist era of 1957–58: *Echo*, *The Sound of Waves*, and *A Further Collection to Echo*. At that time he was criticized for writing mainly about scenery, people and love, with too small regard for Party political ideology. His prolific publication since the Cultural Revolution includes the poetry collections *Prayer*, *Songs of Life*, *Facing the Wind*, and *The Drunken Stone*. Recently he has been working at the Fujian Federation of Literary and Arts Circles.

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Nora Cobb is working for her Bachelor's degree in English and Psychology at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

Richard Morris Dey's collection *The Bequia Poems* is forthcoming from MacMillan in the fall of 1988 (the three poems that appear in *HR 23* are part of this collection). Dey's dramatic narrative in blank verse, "The Loss of the Schooner Kestrel," will appear in the April 1988 issue of *Sail Magazine*.

Dennis Ding—whose Chinese name is Ding Ting-sen—was born in 1942 in southwest China. He is currently an instructor of English and Assistant Chairman of Foreign Languages at Guizhou University. Ding has translated from English to Chinese over 100 works by T. S. Eliot, H. D., Robert Frost, William Carlos Williams, Theodore Roethke, Saul Bellow, Ernest Hemingway, and Peter Ben-

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Frances Fagerlund was born in Logan, Utah, and graduated with a Bachelor of Science from Utah State University. Married, with two grown sons, Fagerlund lives in Dungeness on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington State since her husband's retirement from the National Park Service, which included an eight-year assignment as Naturalist in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

L. L. Harper teaches in the English Department at the University of Pittsburgh and has served as co-managing and as fiction editor for the *Pennsylvania Review*.

Maria Mitchell Hayes has lived in Cairo, Tel Aviv, New York, and Elko, Nevada, and has written copy and PR for CBS Radio and J. Walter Thompson. She now lives outside Chicago in Kenilworth, Illinois, and spends part of each summer prospecting in the mountains of Nevada. She is at work on a novel, one chapter of which, "Wind," received second prize in the 1987 *Redbook Magazine Fiction Contest*. She is married and has two sons.

James Hazen teaches English and Creative Writing at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He has poetry in *Change*, *College English*, *Galley Sail Review*, *Mark*, *Old Hickory Review*, *Poem*, and *Poetry Flash*, fiction in *Roanoke Review*, and criticism in many professional journals. He is Associate Editor of *Interim*, which resumed publication in 1986.

Chris Hindley is a senior at Iolani School in Honolulu and likes to burn rubber. He will attend the University of Hawaii at Manoa in Fall 1988.

Norman Hindley quotes from Dickenson's poem #210:

The thought beneath so slight a film—
Is more distinctly seen—
As laces just reveal The surge—
or Mists—The Apennine.

Nicholas Kolumban, a native of Hungary, teaches English and Creative Writing to children and adults. His *Reception at the Mongolian Embassy*, a book of poems, was recently published by New Rivers Press.

Kau Kau Korner, the cover photograph, was a landmark in Hawaii for twenty-five years. It stood on the corner of Kapiolani Boulevard and Kalakaua Avenue. By the late 1950's Kau Kau Korner was the most photographed object in Honolulu (the statue of King Kamehameha and Diamond Head came in second and third). Known to have stayed open for business on December 7, 1941, it finally closed its doors for the last time on March 1, 1960.

Juliet S. Kono lives and works in Honolulu.

B. R. Leith, born in the States but raised in Shanghai and Argentina until she was eleven, now lives in Kansas. Her stories have been published in *Carolina Quarterly*, *Other Voices*, and *Pikestaff Forum*, and more are forthcoming in

Kansas Quarterly, *Maguffin*, *Nebraska Review*, *Sepia*, *Southern Review*, and *West Branch*.

Lyn Lifshin has published poems in *American Poetry Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Massachusetts Review*, *Ms. magazine*, and *Rolling Stone*.

Nancy Lord's "When Bonnie Crossed" is one of fourteen stories in her manuscript, *Alaskan Gothic*, which won second place in the Associated Writing Programs' Short Fiction Competition. Recent stories appear in *Chariton Review*, *Green Mountains*, *Greensboro Review*, *Northern Review*, and *Puerto del Sol*. She lives in Homer, Alaska, after receiving a MFA from Vermont College.

Michael McPherson was editor and publisher of *Hapa*. A frequent contributor to *Hawaii Review*, he also has recent poems in *Chaminade Literary Review*, *Exquisite Corpse*, and *Literary Arts Hawaii*.

John N. Miller, who directs the undergraduate Writing Program at Denison University, was a resident of Oahu and the Big Island of Hawaii between 1937 and 1951. He has submitted poems to literary journals for more than a quarter century.

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G. E. Murray—poetry critic for the *Chicago Tribune* and *Chicago* magazine, and winner of the 1979 Devins Award for *Repairs* (University of Missouri Press), one of his four collections of poetry—has poems in over 60 magazines, including *Antioch Review*, *Chicago Review*, *Hudson Review*, *New Letters*, *Poetry*, *Poetry Northwest*, and *TriQuarterly*. His poems are included in anthologies, such as *The Morrow Anthology of Younger American Poets* (Wm. Morrow, 1985). Murray's criticism, reviews, features, and interviews appear in *Saturday Review*, the *Nation*, *Harper's Bookletter*, and others.

Marjorie Power has poems in forty literary journals. Her book, *Living With It*, appeared in 1983 from Wampeter Press. She edits the monthly newsletter for Northwest Renaissance, a Seattle-based poets' organization.

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Naomi Rachel lives and works on an apple and filbert orchard in British Columbia along with numerous and varied creatures including the peafowl mentioned in her poem, "Saffron: *Crocus Sativus*."

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Phyllis Hoge Thompson, who once taught poetry in Hawaii (at UHM), now lives in New Mexico in three houses, in three towns: Albuquerque, Silver City, and Mogollon. Her fifth book, *The Ghosts of Who We Were*, was published by Illinois in 1986. *There's Justice: New and Selected Poems* will appear shortly, and her first prose book, *A Town With a Name Like Thunder*, is nearly ready for the rounds.

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Nancy Zafris lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Her stories have appeared in *Black Warrior Review*, *Story Quarterly*, and *Wind*.

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