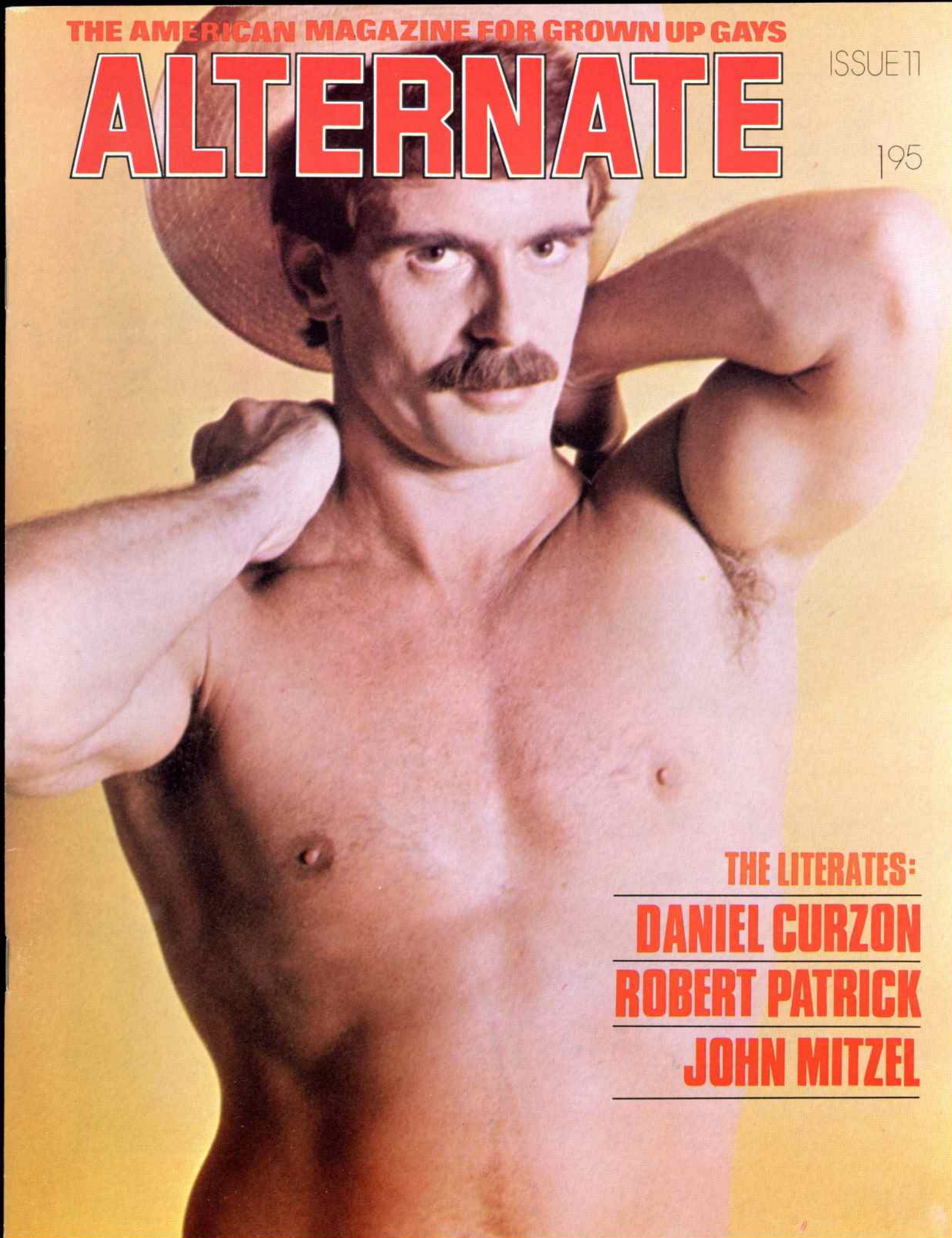


THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE FOR GROWN UP GAYS

ISSUE 11

ALTERNATE

195



THE LITERATES:

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ROBERT PATRICK

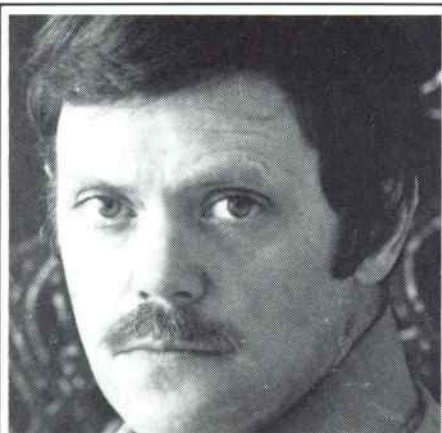
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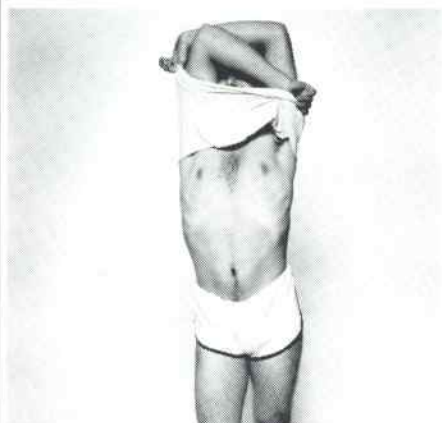
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DIRECT CURRENT

MR. HERBERT REPLIES

Mr. Ireland (*Alternate/Direct Current; Volume 2 Number 10*) took great exception to my statement 'Pasolini's death was in a sense the logical culmination of his lifestyle and creative work' (*Exhuming Pasolini; Alternate, Volume 2 Number 8*). Why? He rightly points out that Pasolini was not killed by a defensive innocent but because he was unafraid to express his anti-establishment views. Which is precisely what I meant by the above statement.

Mr. Ireland is determined to tell us he has private information. Fair enough. But to state bluntly: 'In fact, Pasolini was assassinated by an ultra-right wing group . . . ' really begs as many questions as it purports to answer. What right wing group? From the church? Within the government? The Mafia?

Pasolini offended everyone in the establishment and if you are going to assert that his murder was political (which I don't doubt) you have to say precisely who killed him and why. Mr. Ireland's private source should disclose more if he is to mention it at all.

In fact, the situation admits no simple explanation. Enzo Siciliano's definitive biography of Pasolini (*Vita de Pasolini*, Rizzoli 1978) — which came out just after I had published my article, and which I strongly recommend if you can read Italian — concludes that the killing was a put-up job, that the explanation at Pelosi's trials doesn't make sense, that the boy had accomplices. I was gratified to find that his conclusions were precisely mine: he too says the full explanation will probably never be known.

More disturbing is Mr. Ireland's assumption that I am some ignorant crypto-fascist. I am perfectly aware of the nature of the Salo puppet kingdom. I suggest Mr. Ireland read *Morire A Salo*, the story of Osvaldo Valenti and Luisa Ferida by Aldo Lualdi; but I don't recommend it for those who wish to remain blind to the historical facts on which Pasolini's film was based.

David Herbert
London, England

VIOLENCE OR?

First, I would like to congratulate you on putting out a good, gay, glossy publication where your writers have been producing excellent, thought-provoking articles about what's happening to gay men/women in the real (non-gay) world. All is not lollipops and roses when we step out of the bars, baths, discos and into the sunlight. I thoroughly agree with

Bill Schoell's article, *Getting Violent (Alternate No. 7)*. It's about time the gay/lesbian community got its shit together and actively fought back against the injustice inflicted on us.

After I was beaten up by four teenage punks who called me "queer" and "cocksucker," I gave up my vow of non-violence. I want to live and be able to make the contributions I can to the gay movement. You can't do that dead or in the hospital.

Brian O'Dell
New York, NY

Editor's Note: The Alternate, and we are sure most of the world, deplores violence; regardless of where or when it is committed. That the capacity for violence exists at all in human beings is unfortunate. Perhaps, in our attempts to show society that we, as gays, were not heir to the universal evils, we have over-compensated. No intelligent person would ever advocate violence. But what we need to reconsider is our resistance; redefining the hairline between defensive resistance and offensive action.

GAY HOLOCAUST

A Sacramento Gay researcher is searching for the remaining survivors of the Nazi holocaust against Gay People.

The Nazi government of Germany incarcerated and murdered thousands of gay people. These events are documented; but only scarcely so. Captured Nazi documents were micro-filmed by the U.S. General Services Administration. They tell of the existence of the death penalty for Gay People, and record several mass executions — in isolated cases.

Jok Church, a free-lance writer and former radio news director, is collecting the verbal histories of camp survivors. Church says "verbal histories offer a first-hand account of these events." "They add the dimension of humanity to the documentation process."

Church would like to contact these "precious few" survivors. The histories can be collected anonymously. A resume from Church with letters of reference is available on request.

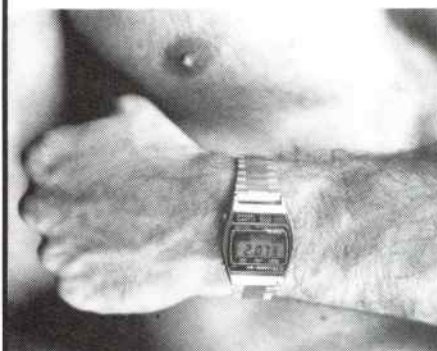
"We must get together while there is still time to record this tragedy" Church adds. "It has been more than 30 years and the first-hand accounts of the age will unfortunately be lost to history when these few people die."

Gay People who survived the camps can contact Church by writing to him at 4908 13th Avenue, Sacramento, California 95820; or by calling (916) 457-3412.

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LONDON LETTER

SEXUAL SOCIALISM

The Alternate calls itself *The American Magazine of Sexual Politics*. Well, I thought I knew precisely what such a claim implied until a chance meeting a couple of weeks ago triggered off conversations and subsequently interviews which made me seriously reassess the issues involved.

Phil, a friend from Birmingham (England) called to see me. He had, a short while before, been involved in a bizarre incident in London. What happened was this: An important alternative theatre group, Gay Sweatshop, had been performing at Birmingham's famous repertory theatre and Phil, who worked there himself, accompanied some of the cast members to the leading homosexual club, Grosvenor House, after the show.

(For what it's worth — and wait for it — Grosvenor House was awarded three stars in the *Spartacus Gay Guide*).

Just outside the club they were mugged by a group of queer-bashers; one boy was badly hurt; Phil ran to the club for help. He was refused entry, and when he pleaded to simply use the phone in the hall, stressing the urgency of the situation, the door was shut on him.

The incident made the national newspapers since, had a police car not fortuitously arrived, Phil's friend could well have died. Enough has been written about the contemptible attitude of the club's owner — arch example of a profiteer and exploiter of gays — rather less has been written about the animosity engendered by an actively political gay theatre group.

The show they were performing was *As Time Goes By* — a chronicle of gay oppression set respectively in a Victorian male brothel, a 1930s Berlin club, and the Stonewall Bar of 1969. This powerful and provocative piece was written by Noel Greig and Drew Griffiths, also co-authors of the group's most recent work — *The Dear Love of Comrades* — about the early twentieth-century gay socialist pioneer, Edward Carpenter; and an offshoot of this: a much discussed television play, *Only Connect*. The latter, the first frank and serious British TV study of homosexuality, provoked a critical furor when it was broadcast in early 1979. It told of a young student's research into Carpenter, his meeting with an eighty-year-old man who had been Carpenter's lover, and the profound influence of this encounter leading to a conversion of the student's sexist attitudes.

Only Connect was reviled critically; compared unfairly with a TV piece that had been screened the month before — *Coming Out*. This was a superficial look

at gay life in fashionable high society which purported to show the central character's escape from the closet. What it did show was the central actor embarrassingly interviewed after the play, vehemently protesting that he and the rest of the cast were 100% straight.

Such a sickening display of heterosexual machismo (and of hypocrisy) undermined any good the play might have had — which was precious little in the first place since it presented gays as brittle, witty and wealthy whilst at the same time implying their lifestyle worthless and sterile.

But the plays by Noel and Griffiths are quite different: they are uncompromising, emotionally as well as politically; honest, and in fact far more subtle in dramatic construction and effect. They reveal a search to find new forms to convey the new accent on subject matter rather than an exploitation of the shock value in confronting tired theatrical clichés with unconventional material. I very much wanted to meet the writers and the theatre group, and Phil's visit led to an introduction followed by two indepth interviews; one with the women in the group, the other with Noel Greig (now effectively the leading figure in the combines new identity).

The interview with the women was very heavy indeed. I showed them two recent issues of *The Alternate*, which they hated. I take the magazine to be concerned with sexual politics because it is gay, anti-closet and militant about social and political oppression. They found the look of the magazine offensive, notably its all-male orientation and its apparent glamourizing of a certain macho type. Noel's attitude was naturally different, although he despises magazines like *Q International* — the leading gay monthly here — because of its cult of youth and beauty. One of the most powerful aspects of his play *Only Connect* is the relationship — finally sexual — between the young student and the old man. This is very important to Noel; he hates the idea that at thirty (or earlier) you are finished — and most consequently enter another closet. The whole theatre group (the women more passionately) see sexual politics as a fight to destroy stereotypes and oppressive attitudes toward sex (i.e.; that only the young are beautiful, that men should be tough, that women are emotionally and intellectually inferior, etc.). Their aim is to break down prejudiced responses — not least those of other gays.

Two comments — one from the

(Continued on page 68)

INDISCREET

IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE

In this age of gay liberation there are a large number of gay men who are rarely mentioned, possibly because they are not considered P.C. (politically correct), but more probably because they prefer it that way. I am speaking of the *closet queens*. They are to be found at bars, baths, peepshows, and often peering from behind a bush in a cruising area, but not at gay pride rallies: their discretion does not permit their attendance at anything which says gay. The prevailing attitude is that the overt mention of homosexuality is as unappetizing and gauche as discussing diarrhea at table. During work hours these men hang up their leather, cowboy hats, tit clamps, or purses and appear to be just plain Bills. In my experience closet cases run the gamut of both age and wealth from a nineteen year-old clerk at Woolworth's to a sixty year-old Ohio banking executive who does a Raymond Burr impersonation fifty weeks of the year, only to spend the remaining two weeks in Provincetown as Miss Flora, lady extraordinaire.

The reason behind their keeping the secret is given usually as follows: "It doesn't make any difference." The logic of this statement has always made as much sense to me as saying, "Of course I'm an atheist but I don't want God to know."

Arguing with closet queens, while often entertaining, is rarely gratifying. By saying, "If all gay people came out tomorrow there would no longer be discrimination," they answer, "When all gay people come out, I'll think about it."

When dating a closet case one is well advised to adhere to these injunctions: don't call them at their place of employ, avoid the use of endearments, and do not touch them in public. Rather the same kind of treatment afforded cows in India is advised.

Too often closet queens are though unimaginative and uncommitted, but being a closet case is indeed a creative vocation. It is time consuming, requires quick thinking in unexpected situations, involves creative lying, and demands the cultivation of the ability to fool most of the people all of the time. Out of deference to this band of all but forgotten faggots I have composed a list of tips for gay men wishing to join their ranks.

Basic Hints for the Prospective Closet Case

Baskets are made of wicker and buns are placed in them, usually in quaint Italian restaurants.

Allow several strands of hair to elude spray.

Suits should be in fashion but not accentuate the wearer's anatomy. Many faggots have been discovered for correctly pronouncing Yves St. Laurent.

Master-Slave, Bondage and Domination, and Golden Showers are not considered sports in the world at large.

Several gold chains worn around the neck are not considered an anti-inflationary measure.

Queens are monarchs, often deposed, and most commonly referred to in an historical context.

Women are members of the opposite sex and with the exception of an individual's mother are spoken of at work in terms of abuse. Despite a woman's age or position, she is referred to as a girl.

Fists are used only to express dominance and cause pain.

Making money and maintaining self-respect are mutually exclusive.

She is the pronoun used at work for anyone with whom a closet case has been intimate.

Trick is taking a hand at bridge, not the object of last night's affections.

The roommate a closet queen has been living with for however many years is best referred to as "my oldest friend," "recently divorced," or "badly wounded in the last war."

Crystal and China are most probably dancers at the Playboy Club as opposed to important facets of a well-appointed home.

Blueboy is a famous sissy paint-in, not a publication.

Baths are means of keeping the body free of germs, not a place for pleasure.

Bisexuality may be just a passing fad. Don't jump on the bandwagon prematurely.

San Francisco is famous for trolley cars, Fisherman's Wharf and the Golden Gate Bridge.

Judy Garland is Liza Minelli's mother.

If the above strikes the reader as coming from more than just impersonal observation, I must confess. I passed for straight for years until I was discovered in kindergarten.

— Gregg Howe



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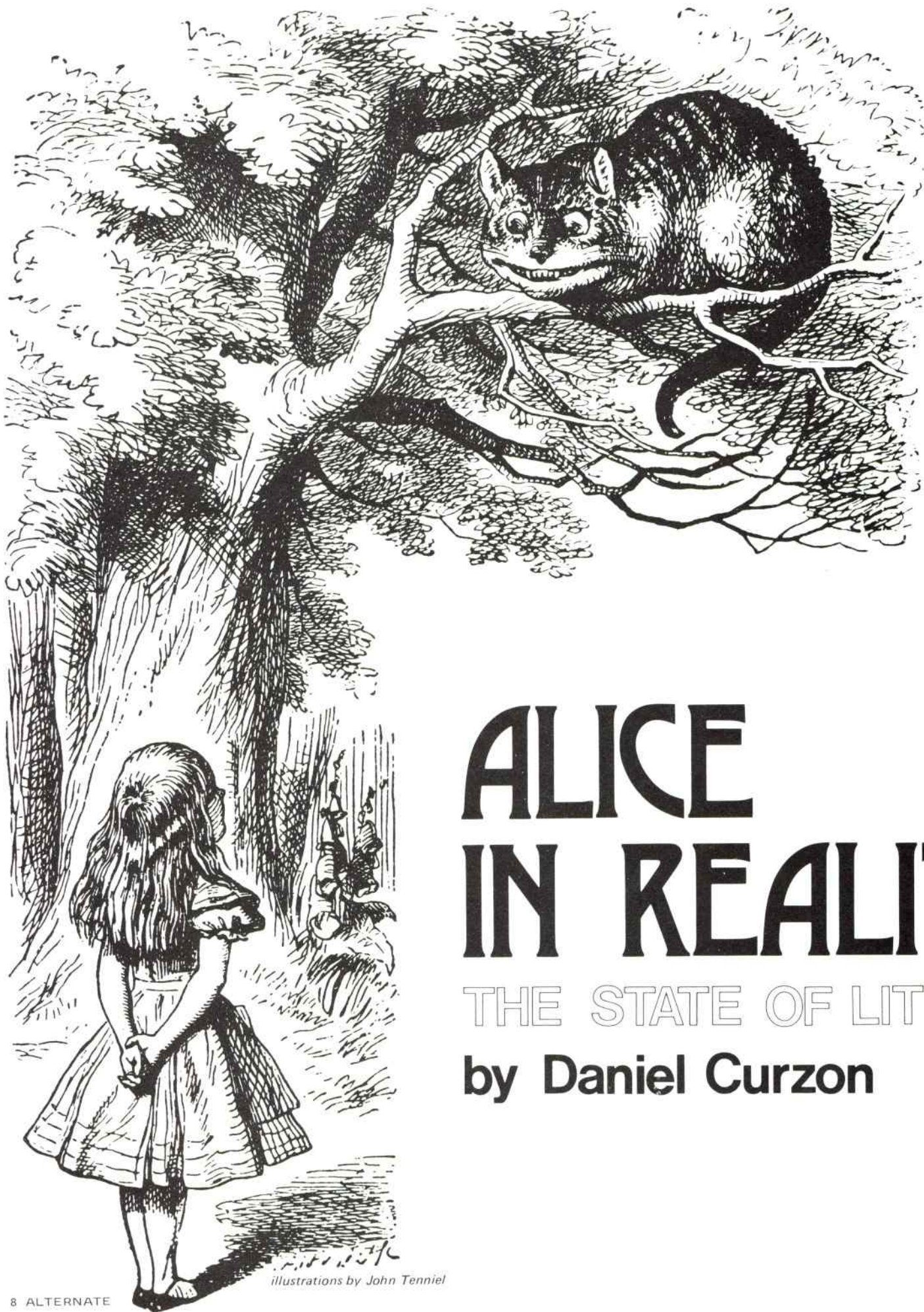
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ALICE IN REALITY

THE STATE OF LITERATURE

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YLAND

ARY POLITICS



Dear Daniel,

I have written this wonderful novel about Gay Life (or at least one part of it) and I think it's pretty good. At least my agent, my creative writing teacher, and Barbara Gittings tell me it is. How can I get it published?

Sincerely,
Alice

Dear Alice,
You can't.

Yours truly,
Daniel Curzon

Dear Daniel,

I didn't understand your recent letter. I want to get "into Gay Literature" like you. I've got talent. Please tell me what to do.

Sincerely,
Alice

Dear Alice,

Stay in Wonderland. Whatever you do, don't come here.

Best,
Daniel

Dear Daniel,

Please help me with my novel. I know it's good. You've done pretty well, haven't you? Won't you share your secrets with me?

Love,
Alice

Dear Alice,

Only masochists and fanatics need apply. For your own good, burn your novel. Better to be disappointed all at once instead of in a series of tortures.

Honestly,
Daniel

Dear Daniel,

Surely somebody is publishing worthwhile novels. Is there no hope at all?

Eagerly,
Alice

Dear Alice,

Publishers are no longer interested in literature. They used to be gentlemen who published. Now they are fast-food mongers. Once upon a time publishers selected books they knew would make money, but they also published books because they thought literature enriched people intellectually and emotionally. Today editors with literary taste have been replaced by accountants. Period.

Sorry about this,
Daniel

Dear Daniel,

You're kidding, aren't you?

Sincerely,
Alice

Dear Alice,

Novels are no longer chosen because they tell honest stories in artistic ways. The Corporations who own the publishing companies are getting rid of all the editors who know something about the history and characteristics of serious writing. These men only make trouble for the Corporation.

Your friend,
Daniel

Dear Daniel,

Surely you're wrong. There have been some quality novels published recently, haven't there?

Trustingly,
Alice

Yes, Alice,

Kiss of the Spider Woman and *Dancer from the Dance* and John Rechy come to mind. But despite all the gay books being published almost none of them are serious fiction. What's in? Genre books like *Wingmen*. Instead of honest-to-God quality writing, you get mysteries and superficial "cheerfulness." Gays don't suffer anymore, you see. We've had enough of that in the past, so we are Happy now. Bullshit, Alice!

Good luck,
Daniel



Dear Daniel,

Well, nobody wants to read depressing stuff, do they?

Hopefully,
Alice

Dear Alice,

You don't have to be "depressing" to be honest. Are there really so few readers out there who have the guts to accept a full-bodied presentation of life in artistic form?

For god's sake, Alice, do I have to justify literature?

Daniel

Daniel,

What about NOCTURNES FOR THE KING OF NAPLES and Rita Mae Brown's



novels? Aren't those literature?

Still hoping,
Alice

Dear Alice,

I hate to knock other writers, because they need as much encouragement as they can get. We're all in this anti-literature mess together.

Besides, it's also dangerous to knock them because they get mad and knock you back. So don't ask, please.

Sincerely,
Daniel

Dear Daniel,

You can tell ME. I promise not to breathe a word to anybody.

Love,
Alice

Dear Alice,

I think Ed White can do better than *Nocturnes*. He's a stunningly good writer of non-fiction. For instance, *States of Desire* is rich and crisp and intelligent. But *Nocturnes*, all lush descriptions, is a beautiful bore. He can't seem to tell a story.

Somewhere along the line some gay writers have gotten the idea that "literature" means obscurity or pretentiousness. When I studied for my Ph.D. and taught literature courses for 14 years, I discovered that literature doesn't mean that at all. A writer can be clear and still artistic. We've inherited a tradition from T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, and that crowd that's long since been burnt out. It's time we got over it and tried communicating with readers again — without selling our souls just to make readers like us.

Love,
Daniel

Dear Daniel,

What about Rita Mae? I just loved RUBYFRUIT JUNGLE.

Alice

Dear Alice,

Rita Mae has written one good novel. The last two have been bad. She too writes first-rate non-fiction, but someone should tell the leading lesbian writer that she makes some awful mistakes in basic writing — handling exposition, for instance. ("Hello, my older brother Tom" and stuff like that.) She also doesn't describe or identify her characters well enough and so they don't emerge as living beings. She's got the ability, that's obvious, but nobody seems to want to point out her faults. Maybe she'd write better next time if somebody did. But I'm not going to do it. I've got enough enemies.

Truthfully,
Daniel

Dear Daniel,

James Baldwin just published JUST ABOVE MY HEAD. Isn't that gay literature?

Not giving up,
Alice

Alice darling,

That book's certainly well written, and it certainly tries to be serious literature. But it's not a success. It's verbose and Baldwin tries too hard to make the characters understanding and good. I couldn't get beyond page 100. I figure if a book isn't interesting by then, it's time to go onto another one.

The paradox is that Felice Picano's *The Lure*, although it has few literary pretensions since it is a mystery-thriller, is more exciting to read than Baldwin's over-written tome.

Yours,
Daniel

Dear Daniel,

Are you saying all these things because you can't get something published?

Your pal,
Alice

Dear Alice,

Yes. My best novel is called *Boys Don't Jump Rope*, but my agent can't seem to sell it to a New York publisher. Many of them praise it and then say there's "no market" for it. If the same standards had been applied in the past, we would not have E.M. Forster, Nathaniel West, or most of the writers we call serious. (No, I'm not going to apologize for the lofty comparisons.) By the way, the same thing is happening to non-gay serious novels too. They are not getting published. Sometimes they are accepted by editors only to be rejected by someone higher up in the Holy Corporation because it won't sell enough. I'm speaking from a personal gripe, yes, but I'm hardly alone.

Sincerely,
Daniel

Dear Daniel,

Surely with your reputation, after four books, you're not going to go unpublished?

Optimistically,
Alice

Alice,

The literary world is not controlled by writers. I can sell my gay etiquette book fairly easily, my dear, but writers must accept the Judgment of those in Power. So we now have the ludicrous spectacle of serious writers trying to appease the tastes of those who wouldn't know literature if it hit them in the face. So be prepared, honey. Soon you won't even be able to *buy* novels that nurture and sustain and educate us as human beings — what art is all about. You are being robbed of your sustenance just as surely as you have been robbed of nutrition in the food you've been sold.

Yours,
Daniel



Dear Daniel,

How can they do this? I'm incensed! Isn't this a free country?

Indignantly,
Alice

Dear Alice,

The free press belongs to those who own one. I'd publish myself, but I have no money.

Rich and famously yours,
Daniel

Dear Daniel,

I hope you're only teasing me. What happened to your sense of humor? You've shown it in some of your works.

Yours,
Alice

Dear Alice,

Did you hear the one about the lesbian nun who had a date with the Pope?

For now,
Daniel

Dear Daniel,

You've got me worried. How about if I try the small presses?

Persistently,
Alice

Dear Alice,

Be careful of exploitation presses. They may publish your book, but: 1) they will give you an advance of \$250, 2) they won't tell you how many copies they publish, 3) they won't give you royalty statements, and 4) they will fuck up the editing and distribution of your book. Oh, I forgot 5) — they'll expect you to be grateful they published you at all.

Should, by some mistake, you happen to run across an honest or competent small publisher, it will *not* have any important distribution, so you will have to carry your books to bookstores yourself. (Be prepared for clerks who will insult you and even tear up your flyers.) By the way, you will not get reviewed.

Knowing whereof I speak,
Daniel

Dear Daniel,

But you get reviewed, don't you? You're one of the best known modern gay writers, I thought.

Uncertainly,
Alice

Alice baby,

Yes, I've had some marvelous reviews, and I'm gratified. But I've had to do everything but write the reviews myself. Sometimes I've even had to supply the review copies myself. If you think getting reviewed comes easy — even in the gay press — you are too innocent for your own good, my child.

Love,
Daniel



Dear Daniel,

I thought you'd be happier because you're pretty widely known as a writer now. Aren't you?

Sincerely,
Alice

Dear Alice,

I'm sorry I'm being a grouch. But do you want me to tell it the way it is, or do you want me to lie so you'll feel good?

Huh?
Daniel

Dear Daniel,

Go on.

Teeth gritted,
Alice

Dear Alice,

Once you get reviewed, there's no guarantee *what* anybody will say about your work. You might run into people who praise you to the skies (and I've had that experience), but their prose is dreadful. What is a writer to think about compliments from fans who can't write? Or you may be reviewed by people who compliment you for something you didn't mean at all. Or you may get reviewed by *Body Politic* in Canada. If you write real literature, you will never be able to satisfy them, because they want "politically correct" books. (And naturally *they* decide what is politically correct.) You can't show the real ambiguities of life — about coming out, etc. You must show what *they* think is best for the movement. All I can say is, "Fuck 'em, Alice!" Or at least ignore them. If you read literary history, there is always a conflict between political types and literary types. Always. (The literary types win out in the long run. Or at least they used to when literature was being published.)

I'm sorry to say that the state of reviewing of gay books is at best an amateur business. Apparently no background in reading is required. Word of mouth

ultimately is the best publicity. I've done all right that way.

Of course if *Publishers Weekly* reviews you, you'll be treated as a queer joke. If they wrote the same things about Jews, they'd be indicted by the United Nations.

Naturally, most straight publications won't review you at all. You see, *The New Yorker*, *The New York Review of Books*, and *The New York Times Book Review* can and do prefer to ignore this major social and literary movement. They can and do control history by leaving you out of their publications. I don't know what the solution is except to throw firebombs. Then at least they pay attention.

Had enough?
Daniel

Dear Daniel,

How about if I changed my novel to short stories? Would I have a better chance to get into literature that way? You've had a lot of luck with yours.

Alice



Dear Alice,

If you write jack-off stories, there's a place for you. With the exception of *GPU News*, *Christopher Street*, *Blueboy* of late, *The Alternate*, and maybe one or two others, there are almost no places that accept quality stories. There's nothing wrong with *Honcho's* masturbation fantasies; they may even do people a lot of good, but they don't satisfy the same cravings that art does.

I've never said this in print before, but if I hadn't had a friend publish my collection of short stories, they would never have seen book form. Publishers hate short story collections. (I'm only telling you this because I've had so much praise for *The Revolt of the Perverts* and thus feel I must tell how it got into print.)

Honestly,
Daniel

Dear Daniel,

I thought we were having a *Gay Literary Renaissance*? What about the books that have appeared in the past three years?

Spunkily,
Alice

Dear Spunky,

I am overjoyed so many have appeared. Many of them are great. But most of them are non-fiction. Even the fiction has been New York oriented. If you want to do well as a writer, go to New York. Because the publishing industry is centered there, the rule is that books about New York written by New Yorkers are of interest to all. (If you can't write literature or don't want to live in New York, at least be trendy.)

Practically,
Daniel

Dear Daniel,

How about if I write some plays instead?

Adaptably,
Alice

Dear Adaptable Alice,

If you have the immense talent of a Robert Patrick and the constitution of a plantation slave, you might try the theater. I mean, off-off-Broadway, of course. Expect tiny crowds. Straights won't go the see "gay plays." If you would succeed, mix your characters gay and straight. If you can tell a story with non-gay characters, then by all means do it. You'll get some coverage. Tell the same story with gay characters and it's as though you're writing for your friends. (Be sure to telephone your friends about the opening or they won't come either.)

Should I stop now?

Daniel

Dear Daniel,

I'm getting disheartened. I thought you were coasting along, becoming rich and famous.

Sadly,
Alice

Dear Alice,

Believe it or not, I'm keeping a lot of things back.

Love,
Daniel

Dear Daniel,

Isn't there at least a little money to be made from writing?

Yours,
Alice

Dear Alice,

If you're lucky, you can get food stamps and free dinners from friends and the occasional fan. I've been asked to write this article because I've clawed my way to the point where I'm well known enough as a writer to be read by maybe

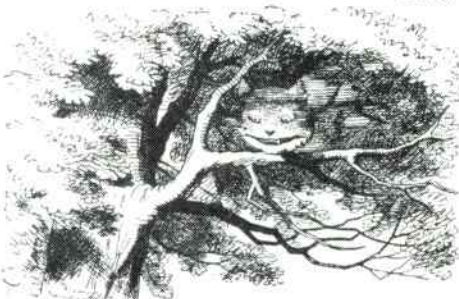
5000 readers. That does not make one rich.

Daniel

Dear Daniel,

Now about poems? I have some all set to go.

Desperately,
Alice



Dear Alice,

If you write gay poems, consider yourself fortunate if you make it onto the back page of *The One Issue Review*.

Yours,
Daniel

Dear Daniel,

Maybe I've been barking up the wrong tree. Perhaps there's nobody out there interested in serious writing.

Alice

Dear Alice,

I know there are some people who want it. I hear from both of them every once in a while.

Daniel

Dear Daniel,

What can we do?

Determined,
Alice

Dear Alice,

When was the last time you bought a serious gay book?

Daniel

Dear Daniel,

Oh, I don't BUY books. I get them from the library.

Sincerely,
Alice

Dear Alice,

I see.

Love,
Daniel

Dear Daniel,

Please give me some hope to go on!

Alice

Dear Alice,

I'm sorry if I've disappointed you, but the fact is there simply isn't going to be any literature anymore.

Writers try for only so many years, and then they give up...

Best,
Daniel

ROBERT PATRICK:

THE PLAYWRIGHT AS MOVING OBJECT

by Harry Hart-Browne

Robert Patrick's molecules move at an amazing rate. Frizzy-haired and over-alled, he greeted me warmly in his East Village apartment, and immediately helped me set up his tape recorder, chatting all the while:

"Do you know when the first Beatles record was released in the U.S.? November 22, 1963. A friend told me that. Interesting, huh?"

I sat down.

He rapidly flicks his ashes, pushes some hair behind his ears, pours coffee, turns on the recorder, and begins.

RP: I've been corresponding with blind queers lately.

HB: How did that begin?

RP: I wanted to write an article about the beauty-obsession among gay men, because — as your readers will be able to tell if there's a photograph of me accompanying this article — it has obviously wrecked my life. The fact is I've never been physically attractive enough to attract lovers. So I thought as part of the article it would be interesting to see if blind homosexuals had different values. Now I correspond with two of them. They both lost their sight not too long ago, so they have the same prejudices that sighted people have. I still haven't come across any born blind homosexuals.

HB: Do you think the ones who are recently blinded find out if prospective friends or bedmates or lovers are good-looking?

RP: Sure. One of them has his lover check out the looks of people in bars before he goes home to bed with them. Face it, it's a fetish.

HB: Isn't it also a mass agreement of certain limitations that defines what is good-looking?

RP: Oh, sure. A person like Mick Jagger comes along and projects a certain kind of sexuality, and suddenly boys who look like Mick Jagger are sexy, whereas before they would've been thought ugly. Same way when Barbra Streisand comes along and a lot of women with big noses are suddenly beautiful. I guess I'm just waiting for a star of my type.

HB: Do you think we'll reach a point as a species where love will transcend the outer differences?

RP: What — you mean some sort of happy pansexualism? The only thing I've ever worried about universal bisexu-



Patrick and cast of 1000th production of Kennedy's Children in Dallas/photo by Tom Herod Jr.

ality is, I wonder when people would rest. Isn't that the reason people set on one sex role or another — just so they can rest from the pull of sex with friends?

HB: Do you think there's a connection between attraction and fear?

RP: I know that astrologically, you often find, when you look at the charts of gay men who have been lovers for a long time, that their charts — if they were straight men, they'd be bitter enemies. I'm not sure if that's because of some

connection between sexuality and violence or what. Maybe the straight men who are enemies ought to be lovers.

HB: Do you think something extra good may come from the independence thrust on gay people in terms of no role models or rules about courtship, dating, etc.?

HP: I think already you can see the gay revolution being co-opted by those bourgeois forces. There's already an instruction manual called *The Joy of Gay*



Patrick and Theatre Rhinoceros/photo by Tom Hinde

Sex which doesn't just tell you what to do in bed, but offers advice on every phase of your love life. It assumes right off a big city life of cruising and promiscuity, and of no deep involvement. It treats people in a very property manner. The whole goal seems to be how to get as much as possible with the least possible involvement. That's just typical. The most potent weapon that the gay power probably has is the discovery of gay purchasing power, right? Gay people are supposed to be, from an economic point of view, leaders in leisure. Buyers of clothes, attenders of shows, the pace-setters, the people who are free to travel and have fun. That's the role gays are being set into. We use up surplus stuff. We keep money moving. We set styles so straight people will follow them and buy more stuff and keep more stuff moving. I don't know if that's good or bad. I know that that's where our acceptance is likely to come from. And from that point of view, there's a sort of a vested thing in keeping gay people immature. Unattached. Always out on the town. One friend of mine thinks that the reason most gay bars are such unpleasant places to be in is so that they actually sell more beer than if there were comfortable places where people could connect quickly and go home together.

HB: *If you had all the gay men in the world around you, what would you say?*

RP: "Got a cigarette?" No, I'd say "Grow up. Try to grow up." Maybe it's just a heterosexual hangover, but to me, growing up would mean very much making some sort of choices in your life, and I'm afraid for me that inevitably involves choosing lovers. Like choosing people you can be proud of, that are your lovers. And making standards of your

love life as high as your standards of anything else. If you put it on the lowest level, you shouldn't really go to bed with anyone you don't morally approve of. . . .

HB: *That would mean time.*

RP: Yeah, and the way that gay people treat each other as just objects — I mean literally as things — you like the way it's packaged, you stick your cock in it. It means thinking of yourself that way too. You know, "Gee, I want to package myself up so someone'll want to stick it in me." Granted, I'm looking at it from the outside, from the point of view of a person who has never looked good, who has never been a part of the circle. But from the outside it looks like an enormous amount of an adult male's time is spent doing very adolescent things — and it's not spent with people who share your deepest interests, but your shallowest ones.

A straight guy is expected to get started in his job or career, and then get married and settled down so he doesn't spend every night of his life and all his energy out looking for a girl to fuck. You know. He takes care of that. That's one of the things marriage is. Or as the characters say in one play of mine, "Marriage is a man's confession that he needs a woman, and a woman's confession that she needs a man." And you may not expect to be romantically in love your whole life, and people have affairs and things, but you're not expected to spend your time like high school boys and high school girls out looking for sex all the time.

But gay men are. It's supposed to be one of the great advantages of being gay, and I guess it is . . . but you see gay people who can't seem to get anywhere, they spin their wheels and spend all their time in the bars or the baths or the streets

looking for new sex partners, and with no standards of choosing the sex partners except the appearance. Which has got to result in a lower estimation of your self and your life and your goals.

Many gay people I know, their lovers don't enter into their circle of friends at all. Their love lives are quite separate. That's quite workable but it seems like quite a strain.

All of these things might result in necessitating the building of terrific individual strength and purpose. Maybe that's why you get among gay people, sometimes, these exceptionally strong, independent, courageous, self-developing individuals. That can't be but good.

HB: *Why do you wear your hair long?*

RP: Because when I first let it grow in the sixties, I mean not as long as any talk-show host's hair is now, people tried to kill me; I mean literally run me down with cars. We already knew they'd try to kill you for being Black or Jewish or Communist or Queer — but to learn they'd try to murder you for your hair being one quarter of an inch too long — that was heavy. I wear my hair long to make people remember that people will kill you for it, and maybe try to make people use their brains for thinking about something more important than the length of someone's hair.

Also I like it because the older I get the more my Indian comes out. I'm part American Indian. When my hair gets long enough I'm going to start wearing it in American Indian braids and I figure that when I get quite old I'll go out and get a tan, and I'll have wrinkles all over my face and be an old Indian. I like that.

I wear my overalls because they're practical, they're economical, and they're physically comfortable. It's very odd. If someone said the words to you, "clothes fetishism," you'd think it was an unusual thing. Or "hair fetishism." But those things are actually institutionalized. Millions of people have a fetish for wearing suits, or shirts and trousers. But I wear my overalls all the time for very good practical reasons, yet people think it's weird.

HB: *What are your projects now?*

RP: I've been doing my first journalism. I wrote for the *Soho Weekly News*, I wrote for *Playbill* magazine, I still write for *Dramatics*, a high school theatre magazine, I love it, it makes me feel very real, like a real New Yorker, like a real writer.

I'm getting more plays published. *Homosexual Acts* which was published in England is the first anthology of gay plays ever, as far as I know. I have three plays in that. I'm very proud that out of the five plays in the first anthology of gay plays ever published, I have three.

A new one, the Avon anthology, or *Gay Plays* is out and I have one in that. A play called *T-Shirts*. I'm very proud. I

really am.

HB: Are there prices paid for being well-known?

RP: You should really know that my burst of what they call "fame" started in London in 1974 when a little production of *Kennedy's Children* suddenly became the biggest hit in London and in translations all around the world. I never expected to have fame, and I guess deep down inside I had thought something must happen to you, it must make some sort of change in one's life — I mean I'm an American, I couldn't help thinking that — and what I've discovered is that it simply doesn't.

Kennedy's Children was the first play in the history of the fringe to ever move to the West End, this is an epochal thing, this is a huge event. I would have a string of interviews in one day; television, radio, newspaper, magazine interviews. Then at the end of the day, I'd find I had nothing to do till showtime. I'd walk down the streets and I'd see newspapers with me on the front pages all down the street, and I wouldn't have anywhere to go.

I wound up going to see Barbra Streisand's *Funny Lady* every afternoon for a week. I'd watch this scene where she's this big star and she's all alone and she has no one to take her to her opening night party and I'd cry. It was practically the first time that I'd had that experience of going to see a play or a movie and having someone to identify with.

It started me thinking about the whole problem of identification. In the past, where there were no gay movies, virtually no gay books, nothing for a gay kid to identify with, that there were two roads you could take: you could either identify with Judy Garland or Bette Davis and your esthetic life was often narrowed down to that kind of joking, camping, confusing role identification, or you could do what I and a lot of gay people I know did, and go see a movie like *Gone With The Wind* and identify with every-

body in it. I could identify with Scarlett because she was pursuing men. I could identify with Rhett because he was a man. I could identify with the black characters because I, too, felt outcast. I could identify with Melanie because of her struggle to survive. I could identify with Ashley because of his sensitivity and his feeling of being outside. I think a lot of gay people had to make that choice.

And I think a lot of great gay art in the past came from that . . . outsidersness. A writer like Thornton Wilder, who never

"I recently saw festivals of my gay plays in Minneapolis, New York and San Francisco — but none of them touched me any more deeply than to see three of my gay plays done by gay people in Phoenix, Arizona. I'm from the Southwest, and I had to leave there many years ago to be in theatre and to be gay. But that night I stood there watching gay people gathered together publicly — not afraid of each other as they once would have been — and applauding my plays — and I felt that I had something to give Southwesterners — and something to give gay people — and after a lifetime of belonging nowhere, I could, perhaps, come home."

Robert Patrick

revealed his homosexuality in his life, could write a play like *Our Town* because he could feel with every person in it. The men as well as the women, the young as well as the old, the outcast as well as the accepted. Writers like Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee and William Inge were the acknowledged chroniclers of heterosexual love life. They could all identify with both Stanley and Blanche, with both Martha and George, with both Hal and Midge. Williams was acknowledged as writing the best man-woman

stuff going until the critics found out he was gay, and then they got scared and revised their consideration. Same thing happened with Albee very fast. Now they all say, "Oh, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* was obviously a lot of male queens in drag." But it's not. Anyone who sees the heterosexual audience in the lobby between acts of that play, with their stricken faces and their conversations about how well this playwright understands the stresses of their married life . . .

In other words gay people can write about . . . anything. With their own particular flair. And so can straight people. One of the finest plays about gay life, *Find Your Way Home*, was written by a married man, John Hopkins, and he understands it all so well because he's a very human person. I'm not holding up that old thing of "Homosexuals are more sensitive" or "better artists" or anything, it's just that we've brought our specific thing. And I know for me as I watched my sister's and my mother's marriages go crazy, part of the pain was that I could see both sides. I knew what it was like to love a man, I also knew what it was like to be a man, and what a man needed, and I could see how everybody was failing everybody.

We've all run into the strict role-playing kind of homosexual who having found an identity in being, say, Bette Davis, can't break out of it, whose relationships are shallow, tempestuous, who cannot relate to people, who, because he forged this identity for himself so that he could deal with the crises in his life, finds that he doesn't deal with anything but crises. I know young people who identify with Janis Joplin. The trouble with identifying with that kind of tragic figure is that you tend to need tragedies to hold your sense of identity together — if you've forged your personality around this idea of "I'll struggle and keep making comebacks like Judy did," you may for-

The original cast of *T-Shirts* (Minneapolis) and a recent Los Angeles cast/photo by Gary Dontzig



get that you don't need to make comebacks. You can just get rid of the shit and have a happy life.

The clichés of Joan Crawford's films offered people a way of feeling more noble and dignified in sordid situations, but it may also have blocked them from thinking of ways to get out of the sordid situations altogether.

Another stereotype among gay people that doesn't get written about much is the very kind, caring, parental kind of gay person: (Joe Cino who founded the Cafe Cino was one of them.) who because of this very wide sympathy and empathy with all kinds of people, tends to start taking care of a lot of people. It's a role — I don't suppose there's even any name for it — you might call it a "Father Hen."

Very often you'll find gay people, who, literally being attacked all their youth, learn how to be sharp and spiteful and cut people down, and you get your terrific flashy bitchy type of gay person. It's ridiculous to pretend those types don't exist. We're all trying to get beyond stereotypes, but the first thing you have to do is realize that stereotypes do exist, and why.

Gay people who grew up in large towns or who had any kind of freedom at all as they grew up don't always know what it's like to be a gay kid in a small town where people are not educated or intelligent or sophisticated. Where you have no role model at all. Where you have no role model at all. Where you're scared to death every second of your life. Of ridicule. Of physical mistreatment. Of being outcast. My God, of being put into an asylum. Gay kids are put into asylums a lot, especially if their families are at all influential and ashamed. I've known it. I've seen it happen. It's bad out there.

HB: *Were you raised out there?*

RP: Yeah, sure. Gay publications are trying to build an optimistic picture of gay life and that's good, but they shouldn't pretend that it's not really bad out there. I take a lot of trips on Greyhound buses around the country and I've met sixteen-year-old kids from Fresno who, not knowing I was gay, would smile at me and confide in me and reach inside their pants and pull out a switchblade knife and say, "I carry this around so I can cut up any queers I meet when I travel." It's still out there.

HB: *Why do you think you became a writer?*

RP: I made up stories, acted them

out, and drew comic books from the time I was able to hold a pencil and talk. I don't know why. I was essentially fascinated with words. I remember a moment of blinding revelation, I couldn't have been more than three. I was making mudpies in back of the tent we lived in in Louisiana — we were very poor — and all of a sudden I looked up at a tree, and I heard and saw the word "tree." And I suddenly realized what the word was and how it related to the thing, and I looked all around and realized the names of everything I knew the name of. I remember it very clearly. Everything became illuminated. I felt I became human at that moment. It was a very conscious moment and very important to me.

My writing is a vehicle for trying to understand people. I write for fun. "My fun," as the Marquis de Sade might have said, "might not be somebody else's fun, but it's mine." I try to understand things. That's the greatest pleasure in the world. Robert Graves's mother once told him the family secret, and it was that work is more fun than play. And I've always found that myself.

HB: *How do you feel about the state of the world?*

RP: I don't know much about the state of the world. It seems to me we're going simultaneously through a re-run of late Roman history and incredible new things that we don't understand yet. In some ways, I would think the most important fact in history right now is "we are all one" — and I don't mean that in a mystical sense — I mean that air travel and television and inter-continental ballistic missiles have made us all one. Things that happen in Alaska have repercussions in Australia. We keep fighting to make the world one, but it has already happened. We're living in a dream, we're still fighting old fights back when people had to be divided into races and classes and religions, and that's all over. We are all one. No one can exist without everybody else, and anyone's idiocy may destroy everything. It's just a question of the race — when will we catch up with the fact? Hollywood films of the thirties and forties, for instance, gave us an international culture for the first time since medieval days, and that hasn't been sufficiently recognized. Imagine the impact of *Star Wars* all over the world. Kids are going to meet from all over the world who say *Star Wars*. That's our new culture. That hasn't been recognized. We say it, but we

don't act as if it were true.

We were separated. Mountains, jungles, rivers, deserts, languages have all separated us for millions of years. It was a fact, and it's just not a fact anymore. In no way are we separate. Tax problems in New York are affecting people in California. Bomb tests in Russia are changing the weather in Antarctica. These delusions and myths people make up about gods coming down from outer space are indications that the whole race is aware we should be one. We're dreaming of flying saucer creatures coming down and uniting us.

Simultaneously, you have the disaster picture trend. I don't think people are actually afraid of oceanliners turning over or skyscrapers burning — I think those are mass acceptable poetic symbols of a philosophic, psychic disaster that already happened. We are living in overturned oceanliners, burning skyscrapers, pilotless planes, but it's still too complex for us to grasp — that's why most people in the seventies are sitting around talking about what happened in the sixties; trying to figure out what happened. That's what the characters in *Kennedy's Children* are doing. That's why the play appeals to people — for once, it's not a symbol, it's the fact. There it is.

HB: *By "the fact," do you mean Kennedy's death?*

RP: Yes. The physical death of a leader like Kennedy was tragic enough — more tragic is that fact that had he lived, he couldn't have done anything. The old idea that we elect the right man into office as the head of one nation and he will make that nation OK — that's the disaster.

What could a leader do? If you were elected president tomorrow, what would you do to straighten America out? You couldn't do it. Not as long as people accept these fictitious state lines drawn on a map of America as being real. There is no New York, there is no New Jersey, there's no Connecticut or Texas or Florida. There's no America or Canada or Mexico or Europe. And we still keep acting as if there was. That's the ship that turned over. Those old ideas.

And now we're all wandering around, realizing there's no leader, nobody knows any better what to do right now than anybody else. And everybody knows what we have to do. We have to open our doors, open our borders, open our warehouses, open our graineries, and let people flow together. Stop having more babies than we can feed. Stop calling ourselves Americans or Russians or Arabs or Jews. I mean, how long can you go on having holy wars?

The simple paradox in dying as a way of life is one philosophers have laughed at for centuries. It may be that it doesn't matter what people believe in as long as they all believe in the same thing. Now the problem is to figure out what.

(Continued on page 30)

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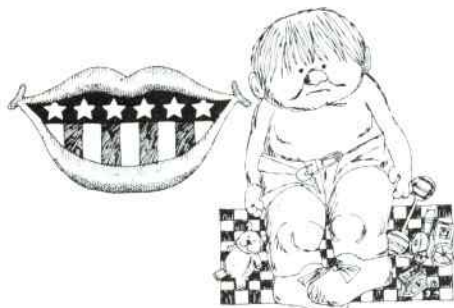
IT STARTED OUT A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO AS A BIT OF INNOCENT FUN...

NOW WE ARE OBLIGATED THE FIRST ISSUE OF EACH YEAR TO COME UP WITH OUR ANNUAL

THE '79 AWARDS



THE YEAR OF (SOME) OF THE CHILDREN



To Jimmy Carter for excluding gay representatives from the White House committee on The Family. 'Cause everybody knows gays don't come from families.

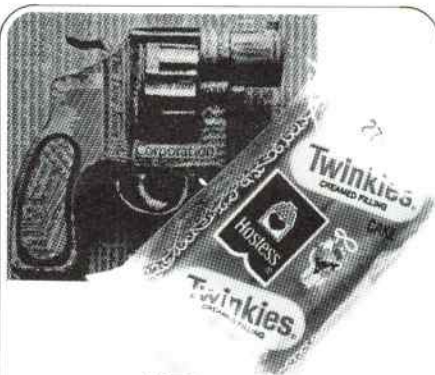
QUOTE OF THE YEAR

Jerry Brown of California, whose announcement speech for his candidacy for President was: "My platform is to serve the public, protect the environment, and explore the universe."



NEWSPEAK/NEWTINK AWARD

Cyrus Vance, concerned with Human Rights abroad, instructed the Department of Immigration to prohibit gays from entering the United States. This was shortly after Carter, also concerned with Human Rights abroad, directed the deportation of Iranians in this country under questionable circumstances (no mention of the Shan), including gay Iranians, who faced execution in their homeland.



HELL HATH NO FURY AWARD

The Dan White Jury in San Francisco, whose motto was "Give us no evidence and we'll give you no conviction." The jury, when told that peer Dan White was suffering from sugar-insanity, ordered soft drinks and donuts for lunch, thereby coining yet another legal adage, "Let the decision reflect the crime."

THE GRAHAM GREEN TRAVELS WITH MY AUNTIE AWARD

To Edmund White for offending everyone except elitist East Coast journalists with his travel book, *States of Desire*. Traveler's Advisory: See the movie instead.

THE WHEEL THAT SQUEAKS THE LOUDEST AWARD

Outstanding even in the blatant Oil Industry lineup was Union Oil which boosted prices which sold all its grades of gas for the price of premium, which was 12c to 15c higher than the others.

LIFE'S LITTLE EXPECTATIONS AWARD

The Carter administration finally got the controls taken off of natural gas after extensive lobbying by the industry. Stated reason was to give producers incentive to explore and seek out new sources. Result? Much higher prices this winter and production greatly reduced.



TEN WORST MOVIES OF 1979

"10"

Orion Pictures' big moneymaker introduced Bo Derek as the leading reason for silent movie revivals. This alleged social comedy packed more insults to gays than a Billy Friedkin interview.

Promises in the Dark

Orion again, with a sleeper about a young girl dying of cancer. She dies for two hours. The audience sleeps. No surprises here.

Luna

Jill Clayburg and a 15-year-old boy in the most embarrassing sex scenes ever filmed. And they say gays are negative role-models. Ha!

The Black Hole

Walt Disney tries for the big sci-fi bucks with a plotless, unimaginative absurdity that forgets there is no oxygen in space. 150 painted backgrounds didn't help.

Star Trek - The Motion Picture

Paramount told Gene Roddenberry that a film based on the TV series was a loser, then proved it.

Invasion of the Body Snatchers

The most unnecessary remake of this or any other year.

Tree of the Wooden Clogs

The misery of the lower classes experienced for ten minutes didn't require the additional 2 hours and 50 minutes.

Rocky - Part Two

Sylvester Stallone only had one story, telling it again didn't make it any better.

... And Justice For All

Al Pacino screams his way to integrity in Norman Jewison's slightly biased attack on the legal system.

Orchestra Rehearsal

Fellini's simplistic look at the end of organized social behavior via the metaphor of the orchestra was just too da-da for the seventies.



THE DONNY AND MARIE "JUST CLEAN FUN" AWARD

This award could go to Anita Bryant, making a nose-dive into the popular culture she claims will doom us all, for appearing on Dick Clark's much touted but not very interesting review of music in the seventies. What Anita was doing there, God only knows.

Or it could have gone to The Village People, for appearing on the same program with Anita Bryant. No one, regardless how money hungry, could be that insensitive — one would assume.

Or it could have gone to Jacques Morali and Casablanca, jointly, for allowing the VP to appear (they make those kind of decisions).

But, finally, we decided it should go to Dick Clark for having the bad taste to invite them both.



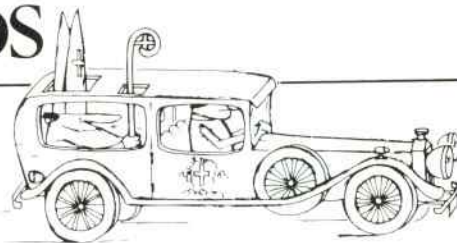
J. EDGAR HOOVER MEMORIAL WIRETAP AWARD

The Mormon organization, for developing ultra-effective spying techniques to check on wet dreams, sex drives, and potential disruptive homosexual impulses among its school of young fair-haired blue-eyed male converts.

COLOR-COORDINATED AWARD

The Airlines, perhaps in conjunction with Cyrus Vance, has created the perfect 'quick spot-check' luggage claim ticket. It's lavender and it's SFO designated (only gays go to San Francisco). This way, argue some, Custom officials can suspect any airline passenger with a lavender claim check. Or, argue others, gay travelers can spot each other and thereby avoid unrewarding conversations with retired milk farmers from Iowa.

THE '79 AWARDS



NEARER MY GOD TO THEE AWARDS

Fundamentalist Pastor JERRY FALWELL has received the coveted "Asshole of the Month" award from *Hustler* magazine for his remarks concerning the death of *Playboy* editors on the celebrated DC10 crash in Chicago as well as the shooting of *Hustler* publisher Larry Flynt, both being God's punishment for publishing pornography. Hestler asks what the two hundred and some other passengers did to deserve their fate.

So, to sit next to the Asshole Award on Falwell's gold-plated mantle, we add ours for his remarks on the Jonestown Kool-Aid cocktail party. He blamed it all on, not organized religion, but San Francisco, that "Sodom and Gomorrah" on the West Coast. Falwell's professional homophobia helps him gross, according to a CBS interview, over \$200,000 a day from the faithful. He is raved in this only by Texas Bible Bender JAMES ROBINSON, who we will have to skip this time, since even the stations that carry his tirades have begun bleeping his anti-gay remarks.

Also in the divine circle is Methodist minister DONAL WILMON of that cultural center Tupelo, Mississippi. In a valiant effort to rid network television of anything sexually suggestive, he formed the National Federation for Decency. Of the first two sponsors he pressured, Sears Roebuck and Ford, the latter refused to buckle under. But SEARS immediately complied, cancelling its sponsorship of two top-rated TV shows. So to SEARS goes our Certified Puritan Award along with the trading in of our Silvertone telly on a Philco/Ford for a better picture to catch some of the action.

REV. JESSEE JACKSON has seemingly come off the street and gotten into the gutter with an attempt to suppress music he considers too suggestive. Most of the stuff Jackson listens to and complains about is garbage anyway, according to his list. We assume he has yet to discover Cole Porter's long suppressed classic, "Love for Sale." Now there is one that tells it like it is.

WORST BOOK OF THE YEAR Jason Is Love

IT'S A JOE...



THE 'WHEN IN DOUBT, PRINT IT ANYWAY' AWARDS

SORRY, WE HAVE NO LESBIANS IN LEATHER

GPU NEWS, in their January 1980 issue, ran a photograph of two men in leather to illustrate an article on Lesbian Sadomasochism.

BROUGHT BACK TO LIFE (AT GREAT EXPENSE)

Cruise Magazine, in their October 1979 issue, ran a cover and centerfold of Tom Holland, a model who has been dead for nearly a decade.

A FAG HAG IS A FAG HAG IS A FAG HAG

Playboy, January 1980, scoops *The National Enquirer* with an expose of a glory hole. Nora Gallagher disguised herself as a man to invade and investigate what happens on the other side of the hole. Besides the stunning achievement of getting numerous text-book facts wrong, Ms. Gallagher managed to revive the Westbrook Pegler style of making the story fit the bias (this was alleged to be an investigation of backlash against gays in San Francisco). Ms. Gallagher quotes her gay friends as background source, and obviously doesn't know when she is being put-on. *Playboy* later sent nude puzzles of Suzanne Somers to editors of various gay publications. Puzzling? Probably not.

WELCOME TO NEW WAVE

ABC finally entered the gay-documentary game with their much touted profile: *The Homosexuals*. After a number of broadcast delays, the network re-established their position as leaders in dreariness.

ALLEN YOUNG:

GAYS HOLD UP HALF THE SKY

By William Russo



Allen Young and Karla Jay, co-authors of *The Gay Report*

"Isolation and ignorance are the major problems of gay men," responded Allen Young, co-author of *The Gay Report* — perhaps the seminal work on contemporary gay life in America — to *The Alternate* in a recent interview. Sitting on a granite bench on the picturesque Cambridge Common, outside Harvard Square, Allen had just completed another bookshop visit to autograph copies of the book when I caught up to him. He has been promoting the work lately and expects to do so for several months.

Why did he and co-author Karla Jay undertake this massive task? "The publisher asked us to do it," he shrugs. Young and Jay composed a detailed questionnaire — one for gay men, one for lesbians. (Sample question: "On the average, how often do you engage in the following aspects of 'finger-fucking' — [inserting one or more fingers in the anus]?") After distributing this form to a large field, they tallied the findings by computer, but included long personal comments from a variety of respondents on each section. Young believes, "No one will start reading on page one; everyone

will probably turn to his own favorite and read there first."

How did he become teamed with Ms. Jay? "I was going with a guy who was a roommate of Karla's in New York City several years ago. After dinner one day, I learned she was editing an anthology of lesbian essays — and I was editing one on gay men; so we decided to work together." The result is *Lavender Culture* (a series of essays by gays). Although they enjoy a strong rapport, they have no present plans to continue the team a la Masters and Johnson; each has his own pet projects.

Allen spoke of growing up in the Catskill Mountains in upstate New York. "It's called the Borscht Belt. My father used to be a printer, but he bought a chicken farm. So, I was raised on a farm," he says, accounting for his interests in gardening and the environment. As a boy, Allen shares many of the remembrances of many gay men: "Oh, I hated baseball. I couldn't catch the ball. I couldn't throw the ball. And I couldn't hit the ball. But I knew all the rules — I guess because I was smart — so they made me the umpire.

I was always the umpire. I had a good eye for balls."

As for coming out, Allen was candid. "Well, I had sex with boys in junior high school and high school, of course. And in college with my roommate. But I was still trying to convince myself I was straight. I had just come off an affair with a woman when I was awarded a Fulbright." The scholarship offered him a chance to go to Brazil in 1964. "To be independent and alone made all the difference. You see, Brazilian men are gorgeous. I spent a lot of time on the beaches of Rio. The men were always half-dressed . . ." he laughs, "less than half-dressed!" So, in a way the Fulbright was actually responsible for his coming out. Would they have given Allen such a stipend if they knew he was gay? "Probably not."

After three years in Brazil and Chile, occasionally writing travel articles for the *New York Times* and *Christian Science Monitor*, Young returned to America in the midst of the turbulent anti-war years. Having once described himself as a "Jewish commie hippie faggot," Young

seemed docile and less a firebrand today. "I have come to respect the U.S. Constitution more than some Marxist friends." The question is reluctantly asked: was he really there rubbing elbows with Yippies Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin? "I guess so, yeah," he smiles demurely. He worked for the Liberation News Service: "There were twelve to twenty of us. We worked for \$35 a week. We supplied news reports to the hundreds of small radical presses throughout the country." And he lists — like a litany — the names of long ago New Left/Liberation journals.

According to his findings, how radical or weird has Allen found the respondents? He pointed out some figures in *the Gay Report* where respondents called themselves mostly "liberal" or "pacifists" or "environmentalists." Indeed, the people who answered questions for the report seem to resemble what could be called *solid citizens*. Nevertheless, respondents to *the Gay Report* range to all kinds of sexuality. Notes Young: "I did have a letter from a man into water sports — which is considered weird by many. He was very pleased at how fairly he was treated in the book. He said few people seem to understand his preference." Allen is obviously proud and gratified that his book is so well-received by so many people.

Did Young find gay men obsessed with their sex lives? "Depends on how you define obsessed," he answered between sips from a cup of coffee. "If you mean, can sex be the most important thing in a gay man's life, yes; it often is. But it's not considered obsessive for straights to have *The Hite Report* or *The Joy of Sex*. This is one way the straight world keeps gays in line — by keeping things private, like *private* parts. They keep gay people from knowledge about themselves."

Allen is distracted by a young man on roller skates who clumsily goes by. He says he used to roller skate; "not backwards though," he notes before picking up his train of thought again: "Gay people are curious like anyone else. For instance, if you walk by a store window and see two people fucking, you'll probably stop and look. It becomes an obsession only if you start going around town looking into windows every night."

When asked if anything has surprised him about gay men from the report, Allen is taken aback and has to think a moment: "I think I am pleasantly surprised by the self-acceptance I found among gay men. Most gay men seemed pleased with themselves." He explained how amazing he thought his in light of



Allen Young's hand-built home in Massachusetts

the efforts of the straight world to prevent gay people the chance to educate themselves.

Again the discussion revolves around meeting gay people. Most gays prefer cities — but Allen Young doesn't. "I'm happy at my farm in rural Massachusetts. About seven years ago I put an ad in the *Gay Community News* asking for people to volunteer to come and help build our house. One person who came has stayed on." Allen shares the octagonal farmhouse with two men. There is no television or electricity. As for meeting other gays under these conditions, he says: "Sure, it's more difficult to meet gay people in a small town. It takes time and patience. But it can be done." And how do the rural Yankees take to gay people? "The old New Englanders have great respect for your privacy."

The farm is the perfect place, Allen believes, and he is no longer willing to relocate. He is happy where he is — but he will still visit New York or Boston with regularity. Of his interests, he says: "I like folk and rock music . . ." Indeed, he's going to Tanglewood to see a Joan Baez concert next day. "And I like to dance. Not ballet, but socially," he smiles. And recently he has been catching up on his gay reading list — enjoying the works of writers like John Horne Burns and James Kirkwood.

Strolling now toward a sidewalk flea market in Harvard Square, Allen stops to browse. He talks of a television interview to tape early next week and hopes to travel to the West Coast soon. He has invested much energy in the report. But the idea that *The Gay Report* could be one of the most important works on gays in the 1970s has not lessened his modesty. "Do you think so?" he asks. And like his book, Allen Young is considerate, direct, organized, well-put together, and conscientious. It is easy to understand why so many gay men trusted him enough to tell him their stories.

BIBLIO

- (All titles co-authored by Jay and Young)
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 After You're Out: Personal Experiences of Gay Men and Lesbian Women
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CREATING A GAY LIBRARY

In June of 1969 the New York police raided a gay bar on Christopher Street in New York's Greenwich Village. It was called the 'Stonewall Inn' and the raid was not unusual. What was unusual was the response. Instead of sullenly accepting the law's intrusion, the patrons of the bar fought back. Bottles were thrown, fists were raised, and that night the movement for gay liberation in America was born.

However signal this act of open defiance, it was not the first in the history of homosexual men and women. In England, in 1891, John Addington Symonds wrote: "We maintain that we have the right to exist after the fashion which nature made us. And if we cannot alter your laws, we shall go on breaking them. You may condemn us to infamy, exile, prison — as you formerly burned witches. You may degrade our emotional instincts and drive us into vice and misery. But you will not eradicate inverted sexuality."

Other voices were heard championing homosexual rights in those earlier years, and significant work was done in all disciplines. History, literary criticism, sociology, and medicine, all turned to the study of homosexuality. Poets and novelists, emboldened by the times and by such strong voices as Whitman's and Carpenter's, took up the subject in their works. During the last three decades of the nineteenth century — until Oscar Wilde's trial in 1895 — there flowered a movement which some called the 'Uranian,' a movement which was very much like the gay liberation movement of the twentieth century, though it in no way paralleled it in terms of activism or public demonstrations; rather, the battle was fought in the mind and with the pen.

Byrne R.S. Fone is an Associate Professor of English at the City College, City University of New York. Until its demise earlier this year, he was the editor of *Gayweek Arts and Letters*, and is the editor of a collection for AMS Press, *Bell's British Theatre*. He has turned his expertise to assembling for AMS Press the single most important collection of 'lost' gay literature and published work.

The project itself, under the umbrella title: *The Gay Experience; Fiction and Non-Fiction from the Homosexual Tra-*

dition, consists of 39 separate works being reprinted in 43 volumes. And while it is only the tip of the historical gay iceberg in literature; it is an impressive and valuable view.

Beyond surface archival importance, this collection demonstrates clearly that there is a gay history and a gay literature; conclusions themselves long-debated without much satisfaction by all sides.

Of the series, Fone says: "Together (the fiction and non-fiction sections), the series makes available titles long neglected, titles which have been unavailable either because of censorship or rarity, titles which have fallen into disuse primarily because they are books which departed radically from the mainstream of morality and espoused a cause and a vision which until recently was anathema to society. These books offer the work of writers whose vision, it can be argued, has substantially and materially altered the face of our own society, and in ways, some obvious, others still to be realized, changed the times in which we live."

The range of authors and material is remarkable, as remarkable as gay literature is thorough. From Edward Carpenter's *Days With Walt Whitman* (1906) and Honore Gabriel Riquetti's *The Secret History of the Court of Berlin* (1798); to Frederick William Rolfe's *The Desire and Pursuit of the Whole*; we see both the most exacting scientific research and analysis and the wildly creative environments of the exploring gay fictionalist. Works that were published under pseudonyms (mainly out of fear) to brazen and upfront testaments to a legion of writers and researchers who were stepping to the beat of different drummers hundreds of years ago.

There is the historic (as in Paul Brandt's *Sexual Life in Ancient Greece*) and the contemporary (*Homogenic Love and its Place in a Free Society*, Edward Carpenter). The biographical (*Oscar Wilde and Myself* by Lord Alfred Bruce Douglas) and the scientific (*Physiology of Love* by Paolo Mantegazza).

AMS Press has, to date, released six of the 39 titles. Prices range from \$10.00 to \$75.00 per title, depending on size and how many volumes involved. The entire collection will cost close to \$1000.

When this series is completed, it is expected Professor Fone will go on to

establishing Series Two, bring into the contemporary world even more of the 'lost' gay heritage.

— Christopher Nobel

THE GAY ARCHIVES

The Gay Archives (Natalie Barney/Edward Carpenter Library) is the country's only national depository of gay documentation. It is also the largest single collection of gay historical in existence, a fact resulting from its curator's dedication.

Jim Kepner began archiving gay materials a number of times before the founding of the Barney/Carpenter Library; always independently of government or organizational funding. A transplanted Texan, Kepner has been at the heart of early gay rights movement politics, and preserving the details of the gay rights movement came naturally to the scholar.

Currently the Archives houses over 10,000 gay publications covering the world, a huge library of titles by and about gays, numerous files of information of gay organizations, movements, events — the whole spectrum of gay culture.

The Archives has been an information bank for countless students and researchers doing gay studies. The availability of information has been a constant ideal of the Archives since its conception.


Currently the Natalie Barney/Edward Carpenter Library is located at 1654 N. Hudson, Los Angeles. While the staff is always willing to assist people desiring information, it is suggested that you first write before dropping by for a visit (the small staff has to schedule themselves fairly tightly). Their mailing address is: Box 38100, Los Angeles, CA 90038.

The Archives accepts donations of materials relating to any aspect of gay culture. Currently they are the depository for private papers, letters, and manuscripts along with the more public gay materials available.

BOYS DON'T JUMP ROPE



illustration by Olaf



An excerpt from his new novel

by Daniel Curzon

Dear Sis,

I never had a sister, so you'll be the best one ever — the one I imagine. I don't have a single bad memory of you, no long-held grudges. I don't hate you for being mean or smarter or more loved by our parents. You're bound to be the best sister anyone could ever hope to have.

You see, I need somebody to talk to because I'm going through a bad patch, as the British say. I'm forty years old and I think I want to commit suicide. I cut my finger slicing some Monterey Jack this afternoon, and I wanted to commit suicide. Perhaps that's neurotic, but that's the way I feel.

How do people keep on, and why?

I suppose they start dyeing their hair, but that seems almost as desperate as suicide. Really it does. All that desperate patching and patching and patching — sooner or later doctors'll have eye transplants to remove those weakening ones — maybe hazel this time instead of blue. They'll work on that face and get it better looking this time, less jut in the jaw (it doesn't really add power), maybe smaller ears too, and teeth not quite so spaced, and throw in some elegance (but not too much) in the posture instead of the kick-me look, not so thick in the butt, not so long between the hip and the armpit, maybe a mole or two less on the back — they'll go on making people over, optimistically, but wouldn't it be easier to find a cyanide pill somewhere — surely they can be obtained somehow — and bite down on it and vanish?

You're probably right. I've got too much time on my hands. I should get out and do some hard physical labor and forget about . . . that. Busy people don't kill themselves. Busy people don't get depressed, you're perfectly right. But for some reason I can't seem to muster the get-up-and-go I used to have.

I want to tell you a story about your brother. Maybe if he gets it all straightened out here on paper, he'll feel better, and if not then why *not* suicide — as a rational act? Let's not be gooey about it. I'm disgusted with what I have become.

A couple of neighbors, cleaning out their garage across the street, noticed the commotion on the Vances' front lawn and came running over, full of questions.

Mrs. Vance looked up at them, then at the mound of her stomach. Like a cow giving birth in a barn, she thought. "I'm like a cow," she sobbed.

"No, no," Mr. Vance soothed her. "No, not at all!"

"Can't we get you back inside the house?" Mrs. Boland, the mid-wife, asked.

"The baby'll come if I move. I know it will!"

Mrs. Boland arranged Mrs. Vance's robe so that her legs were covered. "Hold him in! Hold him in!"

"Like a cow, out in the open," Mrs. Vance cried, trying to hold the baby inside her, turning her pointed, pretty face to the side.

"No, no," her husband said, stroking her jaw.

"We could all grab the blanket and make a stretcher," one of the neighbors suggested.

But as they knelt to make it, Mrs. Vance began to groan with the quick contractions.

"Hold him in! Hold him in!" Mrs. Boland cried, her broad, calloused hands clenching themselves.

"I can't! I can't hold him!"

The baby's cranium began to emerge: then his whole head burst between his mother's legs, blue from being held back.

He was out in the world in eleven minutes.

"There was no stopping that boy!" Mr. Vance said proudly, wiping his wife's neck.

She had stopped crying and turned her head toward the baby, bloodied, still connected by the umbilical cord. "He's blue!" she said. "He's blue!"

"He'll be all right!" Mrs. Boland said.

"Just had to see what was here, didn't you?" Mrs. Vance said. "Just *had* to, you little turd!"

Mr. Vance smiled, "He's sure gonna be something, isn't he, if he's as eager as all that to get out into the world!"

The mother and the father both grinned down at the baby, blue as a bruise though he was — as parents will.

"Yes, he's very cute," his mother said, setting the plates down on the table for the customers, a man and wife in their early forties.

"I could just eat him up!" the woman customer said. "Does he sing and dance here all the time?"

"Just sometimes," his mother said.

"How old is he?"

"Two."

"You should take that boy to Hollywood and put him in the pictures with Shirley Temple!"

"Oh, heavens, wouldn't that be something!" his mother said, looking over at her son, who was still picking up the pennies the customers had thrown. She felt proud of her son — sunbright blond, square little jaw, lake-blue eyes set back in his skull, so that even at two he had a cute cadaverous look, not extreme, just haunted enough to make him interesting to people other than his mother.

"How about an encore?" the woman customer said. "I'd love to hear him again."

"Benjy Russell!" his mother called, walking over toward him. "These nice people want to hear you sing and dance some more."

Benjy was holding a fistful of pennies, with more in his pockets. He felt flushed and nervous and wonderful. He was dressed in a starched white shirt with a polkadotted bow tie and a suit made out of brown wool. The wool was prickly, but the fistful of pennies and the applause made him forget the scratchiness. "The same one again?" Benjy asked, looking over at the jukebox.

"Do you know *I'm Looking Over a Four-Leaf Clover*?" the woman customer asked him.

Benjy nodded, suddenly shy. Who were these people? The woman looked funny. Her neck had a big lump in it, and her eyes bulged. The man looked rumped and sly.

"Could we take him out for ice cream?" the woman customer said.

Benjy's mother felt a pinch in her heart. "For ice cream?"

"We'll bring him right back, we promise." The woman customer got up from the table and went over and knelt beside him. "Wouldn't you like some ice cream, honey? Wouldn't you like to come out for ice cream with me and my husband?"

Benjy looked at his mother, afraid, and yet drawn to the woman customer. Never before had anybody in the audience offered him anything but pennies, except Grandpa, who gave him quarters sometimes. Even though the woman had that big lump in her neck and those bulgy eyes, Benjy wanted to go with her.

"We'll bring him right back!" the woman insisted, turning to Benjy's mother.

What if they're kidnappers! Benjy's mother thought with a pang that was like an electric shock.

"I'd love to have a little boy just like you!" the woman customer said, hugging Benjy.

Benjy endured the hug, though the woman squeezed too hard. This woman had promised Ice Cream, and Ice Cream was worth at least a hug.

"I couldn't let him go alone," Benjy's mother said to the woman customer. "And I have to work till eleven-thirty."

The woman customer looked at the restaurant's cuckoo clock over the cash register. "It's nine-twenty now — we'll be happy to wait."

They're gonna knock me in the head and steal Benjy, I just know it! Benjy's mother said to herself.

"We don't mind," the woman customer said.

But they couldn't have no kids, Benjy's mother thought. The woman's about forty-some, same age as me, only she couldn't have no kids, I bet.

"We'll wait till you close up and then take you both out for ice cream," the man customer said. "The both of you." He grinned a sly smile.

They're gonna knock us in the head and kidnap Benjy and take him away to Hollywood, that's what they're planning! "My husband's gonna come by here at eleven thirty," Benjy's mother said.

"We'll take all three of you out for ice cream then!" the woman customer said. "Is there a place 'round here?"

"We've got ice cream right here," Benjy's mother said.

"But we wanted to take your little boy to some place special — some real fancy spot!"

"Well, there's no place like that 'round here. And we've got chocolate ripple," Benjy's mother said, hurt that they didn't think the Roundup was fancy enough.

"Coming up 66 we saw a place!" the woman said. "Didn't we see a fancy place?" she asked her husband.

"Sure did!"

"Who were these people?" Benjy wondered. How wonderful it was to sing and dance because big, ugly, threatening people applauded and sometimes they wanted to buy you Ice Cream. Why was his mother resisting?

"Hey, Irma!" another customer called. "What about them roasin' ears?"

"Coming up!" Benjy's mother said, starting for the kitchen. "I can't talk no more. I gotta work."

"We'll wait here then," the woman customer said, giving Benjy another hug. "He's just so cute I could hug him all night long!" She took Benjy by the hand and led him over to their table.

"Irma, them roasin' ears's been *settin'* here!" the wall-eyed cook said in exasperation, and Benjy's mother became nervous, not knowing whether to take Benjy with her or leave him with the man and woman. Finally she hurried over for the platter of corn, looking back worriedly at Benjy.

"Wouldn't you like to come and live with us in our big house in Chicago?" the woman customer whispered to Benjy when she lifted him onto her lap. The lump in her neck was huge.

Benjy sat there, scratchy from the wool, and a little giddy from the dancing. He didn't know what to say, and so he said nothing.

"If you came with us, we could put you on the radio. Wouldn't you like singing on the radio?"

Benjy nodded, though he wasn't certain what being on the radio meant.

"And we'll buy you ice cream all the time," the man customer promised.

"And you'll have a nice big bedroom and all sorts of toys. Wouldn't that be nice?"

She gave Benjy a powerful hug until he thought his ribs would crack.

"Want some of my steak?" she asked him, tapping the meat with her fork.

Benjy shook his head no, staring at the lump in her neck.

"You sure? It's good." She noticed him staring. "I didn't always have this goiter," she said, laughing. "Just in the last year. You want to touch it?"

Benjy shook his head no.

"Go ahead and touch it, honey!" She took his hand and placed it on the lump. "It won't hurt you."

It felt Nasty.

"You sure you don't want some steak?" Still holding him, she managed to slice a piece free and stabbed it with the fork, then held it up to Benjy's mouth. "Come on, have some."

Again Benjy shook his head no, looking over to where his mother was serving the corn to a sunburnt, chubby farmer.

"Well, I'm going to eat it for you then!" the woman said and popped the piece of steak into her mouth. She chewed and chewed, with Benjy watching her jaws moving up and down like a billy goat's. She swallowed the piece, and the lump bobbed up and down. After the meat slid down into her stomach, she kissed him. Her lips were greasy on his cheek. "Do you want to sing for us again?" she asked.

Suddenly Benjy didn't want to.

"Even for ice cream?"

Benjy's mouth could taste the Ice Cream. Yes, he wanted Ice Cream.

"We'd like you to sing again. Very much!" the woman said. "You sing real pretty!"

Benjy got down off her lap, apprehensive, and stood with his hands at his sides, the way Grandpa had taught him. Then he lifted one arm, holding it straight out in front of him. "I'm looking over a four-leaf clover . . ." he began to sing, slowly, uncertainly, almost inaudibly, his wide blue eyes on their faces. Other customers were coming into the restaurant, making noise.

"Irma!" the cook called.

"That I overlooked beforrrrr!" Benjy sang.

He didn't get to finish the song, because the woman customer leapt up from the table and kissed him with her greasy lips. Benjy looked around to see what his mother was doing, but she wasn't looking at him, busy with the cook's complaint about something.

"Let's go for ice cream, honey," the woman customer said right into Benjy's ear. She took his hand and led him over to the table, signalling to her rumpled husband to get up. It was summertime and so they didn't have any coats on.

The man and woman were hurrying now, and the woman held on tightly to Benjy's hand. They were at the door, then they were out in the parking lot, where the Illinois heat was like a headache on the outside of your head.

"Come on, we'll go for ice cream," the woman was saying, almost breathless.

The woman had his hand — and his mother was back inside the Roundup!

The man was opening the car door now, moving the maps on the front seat, and the woman was waiting for her side to open, waiting and looking over her shoulder as though she was doing something Bad. Then the door handle made a noise and Benjy was sitting on the seat between the man and the woman and the engine was starting.

All of a sudden Benjy's mother was running out of the restaurant, screaming at the people in the car. His mother was carrying a tray with some food on it and screaming. She ran right up to the car and pulled open the door. "You've got my boy! My boy!" she yelled. "Give me back my boy!"

"We're just taking him for ice cream!" the woman said, all choked up in her throat, her eyes bulgy.

"Give me back my boy!" Benjy's mother screamed, dropping the tray and yanking Benjy by the arm, dragging him out of the car. His arm felt pulled out of its socket.

Frightened, the man and woman slammed the door and drove out of the parking lot and onto Highway 66, the woman

with the lump looking back.

Benjy's mother cried all over his face and told him he shouldn't have gone with those people for ice cream. "They was gonna kidnap you and take you away forever!" his mother said, hugging him. She looked up at the departing car. "And what if they come back for you in the night?"

Dear Mom,

Why didn't you *let* them take Benjy that night, huh? He's often wondered what his life would've been like if he'd gone off with that woman and her husband. Maybe nothing would've been different, but then again maybe *everything* would have been. Yes, maybe it would have been a different life altogether and not the worthless one it was to become.

"We're moving to Detroit, that's why," Benjy's mother said. She had packed everything in the house into the U-Haul and they were waiting for his father to get in and drive. His mother had gotten all dressed up and wore lipstick and rouge.

So this is what Moving to Detroit meant, Benjy realized. He'd heard about Moving to Detroit for a long, long time now, but now he knew what it meant.

"Why we got to go?" he asked.

"Cause your father's got no job. He lost that tavern, and he's gonna try to build tanks for the war up in Detroit."

"Why?"

"Cause times is hard and your father don't know how to manage, that's why."

"Why?"

"I told him and told him to make them bums pay for their drinks, but he's no businessman, never was! And now we've got no choice but to go up to Detroit and leave here, and he ain't got no job up there yet neither! And we'll have to live with your Aunt Sophie and Uncle Hoyt!"

"Why?"

"Benjamin Russell! I told you to stop asking why all the time! I mean it!"

Stung, Benjy moved closer to the door panel, looking at the house they lived in, with its front door wide open. Why was his father taking so long?

"Where's Daddy?"

"He's crying in there."

"Why?"

"Cause he's a crybaby, that's why! He's just standing inside the kitchen crying all over himself. I never seen such a man! He couldn't charge no bums for no drinks and yet he don't mind making his family drive all the way up to Detroit so he can work in a factory!" Benjy's mother reached into the back seat and lifted a lemon meringue pie out of a box full of food meant to be eaten on the trip. She reached back for a fork and started eating the pie right out of the Pyrex dish. "I'm just as ready to leave this town anyhow, what with everybody knowing we're on welfare! I wasn't never on no welfare when I was a waitress, that's for sure! I'm so sick of making lemon meringue pies, but it's all I feel like fixing." She started to cry a little, but went on eating the pie right out of the dish.

Benjy felt something tickly-burning inside his nose when he looked at their house. They were going to leave! Oh, no! They were going to leave!

"I never seen such a man! I don't know how in the world we're gonna survive up there in Detroit!" She gave Benjy a bite of the pie.

Benjy's father came out finally, shoulders stiffened, his eyerims pink, and he got in and said nothing, only cleared his throat a few times. Nobody said a word until they'd gone fifty miles and his mother and Benjy had finished the whole lemon meringue pie.

Grandpa came up to visit them in Detroit once. Grandpa was Irish and had a bushy gray moustache that spread over his face like two squirrels' tails. He weighed two hundred and fifty pounds and drank whiskey and wine and played poker,

and his wife was dead.

"Want some more?" Grandpa said, filling Benjy's wine glass with a few more red drops.

Benjy's head was full of gooney butterflies from the wonderful medicine that Grandpa had in the big bottle. He swallowed some more of the medicine and wanted to stand on his head.

"I'll have a touch more myself," Grandpa said.

"More for me!" Benjy giggled, holding out his glass. "More medicine for me!"

Grandpa obliged. "Never let it be said I refused medicine to my own flesh and blood!" He tipped a few more red drops from the bottle.

Benjy and Grandpa toasted each other, with Grandpa prompting. "To the Irish!"

"To the Irish!" Benjy echoed.

"And to my blessed mother!"

"Mudder," Benjy mumbled.

"And of course to the Blessed Virgin Mary!" Grandpa said, saluting the ceiling.

"Virgin Mary!" Benjy said, slumping down.

Grandpa lifted him by the seat of his pants and stood him upright. "Here, here now! You've got to learn to hold your liquor, little peepot!"

Little peepot started to sing "I'm Looking Over a Four-Leaf Clover."

"Shhhhhhhhh!" Grandpa said.

"Shhhhhhhhh!" Benjy snickered back.

There was a noise on the basement stairs — a creak.

"Who's down there?" Benjy's mother voice called.

Grandpa put his finger to the middle of his lips.

But Benjy's mother descended the stairs anyway, looking at the two of them, at the wine bottle. "What in the hell are doing?" she said, aghast, coming all the way down into the basement.

"Nothin'!" Grandpa said, trying to hide the wine bottle behind his big back.

"What in the hell's goin' on here?" Benjy's mother said, furious, her face as white as starch.

Benjy felt like singing and dancing, but staggered and fell down. But he didn't care. He looked up at the Blessed Virgin Mary on the ceiling and felt the gooney butterflies playing tag right behind his eyes.

"You're not getting that child drunk?" Benjy's mother said in amazement. "You aren't!"

"Just teaching my grandson the finer points of life."

"You awful old horse's ass!" she shouted. "How dare you! He's only three years old and you're trying to make a drunk out of him like your stupid old self!"

"Don't fly off the handle, or I'll knock you down!" Grandpa said, standing up, as big as the furnace.

"You'll knock me down, like hell you will!" Benjy's mother said. "You — I don't believe it! I don't believe it! You're actually making the boy so drunk he can't stand up straight!"

"Aw, I'm just teaching him to handle his liquor, and don't tell me otherwise!" Grandpa put the wine bottle down on the floor and tried to out-glare Benjy's mother.

"You want him to turn out like you, a drunken old sot? Is that what you want?" Benjy's mother's hands were ready to throttle the old man's neck.

"And it's you who'll be making the boy into a sissy, and ain't that the God's truth!"

"You awful old sot! Get out of my basement! And go back home!"

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"I've seen what you've been doing. You smother this boy, that's what you do! Let him have a moment to be himself, for God's sake, woman!"

"You call a staggering, drunken three-year-old being himself?" Benjy's mother picked Benjy up off the floor and tried to make him stand upright.

"Mommmeeee!" Benjy said, wobbling.

"Benjy!" She shook him, and he fell down again.

"Mommmeeee," he said, thinking his remark very funny, excruciatingly funny. "Mommmeeee!"

She couldn't keep him upright and he sprawled on the damp cement.

"To the Blessed Virgin Mary!" Benjy said.

"See what you've gone and done! You horse's ass!" Benjy's mother cried.

"I'm only saving him from the sissy things I've seen him doing up here — playing with them dolls and them high heel shoes and God knows what all!" Grandpa stood up to Benjy's mother, smiling, threatening, not nearly as drunk as he pretended.

"I sure as hell don't want him to turn out like your lot back down there in Farmersville, and that's the God's truth!" Benjy's mother said, breaking the wine bottle over the drain and carrying Benjy away to sleep it off.

"You'll be ruining that boy!" Grandpa yelled after them. "You just wait and see!"

Dear Grandpa,

You old drunk you! You've been dead so many years now, and Benjy doesn't remember you very well at all. Benjy was always your pride and joy, your son told him. Your pride and joy. I suppose your heart was in the right place, just as Benjy's mother's was. (Just what is the right place for the heart, by the way?)

Was it painful trying to be such a hard-living, tough old male all the time, every single minute of the day and night for all your seventy-two years?

Dear Sis,

Is this boy going to turn out Funny? You know what I mean. Wink. Wink. Can't we do something for him? Can't we save him from what's going to happen to him? Please, can't we! Must we stand by looking at the past, unable to reach out and change the slightest ache?

"Well, Jimmy Moznik doesn't play with dolls!" Benjy's father said, his forehead pleated even more than usual; his sleeves were rolled up past his elbows, up to the work-hardened biceps, his fingernails dirty from the tire factory.

"Oh, that crazy family!" Benjy's mother said.

"He can't go on playing with dolls forever!"

"Oh, there's plenty of time. He'll outgrow it."

Benjy was holding Dopey, the doll they were talking about — made of green cotton, its soiled plastic face with one cheek dented in, its head coing to a peak in a cap like a harlequin. Once there'd been a jingly bell on the tip, but it had fallen off.

"Almost six years old and still carrying that damn doll around all over the place!" Benjy's father said.

Benjy hugged Dopey and looked down at his mashed potatoes with the puddle of gravy in the middle. Something like burnt jello fell to the pit of his stomach.

"How's he gonna hurt anybody if he carries that old doll around?" His mother hunched over her food as if somebody were going to steal it.

"He's gonna grow up to be a sissy, that's what!" He had lake-blue eyes just like his son's, but the pupils looked like shattered glass.

She flicked her fork in the air. "He is not!"

"He takes that dumb doll to bed with him! Now he's even got it at the table!"

"Well, he hasn't been wetting the bed so often since I let

(Continued on page 64)

WORDS THAT MAIM AND KILL

By Penni Kimmel

Item: A Colorado state senator recently passed a couple of days (he could have passed a couple of kidney stones to better effect) voluntarily incarcerated in the Canon City penitentiary. On his return to the "free" world he reported on the many problems in the prison, including that of "protecting inmates from homosexual attack."

Item: A Colorado Springs man who was gang-raped a year ago was told by police and the District Attorney's office (unofficially, wouldn't you know!) that he'd better not prosecute the attackers he'd identified since he would be "labeled queer" and liable for future assault. He was naive enough to ask for protective custody and lucky enough to be refused, because

Item: only two of the 40-odd reported cases (how many not??) of rape in Colorado city and county jails were prosecuted to the conviction of the rapist(s) — and those were convictions for first degree murder. And that's just *this* year's crop.

Item: (from the Rocky Mountain News) In arguing for leniency, Smith's court-appointed attorney . . . told the court that Smith "makes an attractive appearance," and was the victim of homosexual rape during incarceration in the State Reformatory at Buena Vista a few years ago . . . the experience caused Smith "physical torture and mental anguish," and he asked (the court) to consider these facts before sentencing. . . . Carl Smith was one of two men convicted January 26 of first-degree murder in the rape and stabbing death of Cesile Brewster.

Item: From Marianna, Fla. — A 24-year old man who says he was ruined by homosexuals in Florida prison admitted that he killed three women and raped at least 20 others . . .

photo by Wolfgang

Item: from Enrique Otero, a spokesman for the Mexican prisoners exchanged from U.S. jails. "As everyone knows," he said, "homosexuality in American prisons is widespread . . . the young prisoners are captured and passed around..."

Item: from Canon City. "I am writing as a result of your story of the killing at the prison of a 'Protective Custody' inmate . . . Leo Miller was only 20 years old and was fairly good looking. That is the reason he was in P.C.: Because he didn't want to be turned into a 'punk.' It is really startling that a person can't even get protection in here unless he pays for it by either money or sex."

Get the picture? Did you note the subtle mixture of fantasy and reality? The harsh reality is in the word "rape." Rape used as a justification for assaulting and killing others; rape seen as a vital (and fatal) statistic *accepted without question* by the general public (the juries, the apathetic citizenry); rape used to control the inmate system, to blackmail and coerce and subjugate.

The examples are myriad. I have a file four inches thick of similar notes and clippings (and I write small and clip close). So where's the fantasy?

Oddly enough, the fabric of the fantasy has just been torn, this April, in a landmark policy statement by the Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, Norman A. Carlson. In it, he has prohibited any further references to "Homosexual rape" or "homosexual assault" and instead instructs the prison staff to stick with terms "sexual assault" or "rape." In the directive he acknowledges that "terminology used in reporting sexual assaults . . . has created a misunderstanding on the part of the public as to the nature of these assaults . . . Through the use of such terms, the public is led to believe that these . . . are committed by persons who are homosexual. *While homosexuals are frequently the victims, the vast majority of rapes and assaults are committed by persons who are not homosexual.* (Italics mine)

Before we shower Carlson with our bouquets of pansies, let's look at some of the material — other than recent meetings with NGTF people — that might have had something to do with his finally being pressured into recognizing a long-known fact.

(The sources of the following quotes are to be found in Dennis Altman's *Homosexual*, J.E. Ragen's *Inside the World's Toughest Prison*, Tom Murton's *Accomplices to the Crime*, Gresham Sykes' *The Society of Captives*, Columbus Hopper's *Sex in Prison*, Levy & Miller's *Going to Jail*, Jessica Mitford's *Kind and Usual Punishment*, Mannocho and Dunn's *The Time Game*, and Weiss & Friar's *Terror in the Prisons*.)

"(Prison administrators) must be made to understand that most prison homosexuality is not a function of sexual

deprivation itself. It is rather, an expression of anger and aggressions caused by the frustration and indignities rooted in the nature of prison life . . ."

"Administrators profit by the perverted and poisonous atmosphere which they themselves maintain. They consciously use the exploitable homosexual atmosphere to further their own ends . . . Preoccupation with their sexual frustration acts to divert the prisoners from confronting the enemy — the prison administration. It also plays havoc with inmate solidarity."

"Sex is a pawn in the power play of the inmate system."

"There is no doubt that prison experiences reinforce hostility toward homosexuality — but that is totally the fault of the correctional system, not of the homosexuals who are the victims of its brutality."

" . . . those who had fought the reforms were further penalized — those who had committed violence against the prisoners were not punished."

" . . . unmoved by love, indifferent to the emotions of the partner he has coerced, bribed or seduced into liaison, the 'wolf' is often viewed as simply masturbating with another person."

The myths — a few, but an important few, of them — still persist even among the inmates themselves. Just as myths of gays still persist in the gay community. Basically, nobody listens.

Did you note, for example, that Carlson's directive, and his sphere of influence, applies only to Federal prisons, and has obviously not filtered down to alleviate the massive and lethal problems at state, county and local levels, much less out to the public at large? Even national gay publications didn't give it much coverage: not because it wasn't sensational enough but because of the cruel prejudices of the gay community itself towards its own.

Did you note — and run right past the crap — that rape was considered a totally sexual function in several cases, explained away on the grounds of *sexual frustration*? In short, the equation of "rape" and "homosexual behavior" as if they were the same thing?

And did you note the palpably false assumption that, given a nice open system of conjugal visiting privileges, the incidence of homosexuality would decrease perceptibly? In truth, homosexuality retains about the same percentage, throughout the ages and under the most repressive circumstances: it's the rate and kind of repression that changes — the rape of homosexuals, for example.

So much for the experts. Facts straight (in more than one sense) — interpretations way off base. It falls back on us in the end, to glean the facts as far as possible and trust OUR OWN experienced common sense to analyze and draw conclusions.

The women are a mile or so farther down the road, at least on paper. These positive words came out of the recent National Women's Conference (emphasis mine): "Rape laws should be reformed to *apply to both sexes*, to create graduated degrees of the crime based on the amount of force or coercion involved, and to specify that *past sexual conduct of defendants cannot be introduced as evidence*."

Like Carlson's pronouncement, these words have yet to be implemented. Perhaps because there's no real force behind them — the force that should be coming from the primary victims of sexual assault.

I have a very personal reason for turning my attention to the prisons, homosexuality and rape and trying to understand the nature of each: I live in the former (popularly known as the United States of America), I love in the milieu of the second, and I have been — more than once — a victim of the latter. I am even more immediately concerned for the future of the women and men of the total gay community. That is ultimately where my protection and pleasure lie — though I bring to it my own knowledge and experience, sense of security and self-worth.

The wall (Stone Wall?) I run up against is one of rampant and willful ignorance which is nothing more than the insane, vicious "morality" transplanted with dandelion-root tenacity from the mad straight-conditioned unnatural world around us.

The knowledge of vulnerability which should give strength, help us prepare, seems to breed nothing more viable than fear. The fear, in turn, promotes self-hatred. And the self-hatred is expressed in scapegoating other gay people. Instead of admitting, or even considering for a moment, that the media or "experts" might just possibly go shit-brown and flush away when a little light of logic is shed upon them, we continue to roll in it, pretend that pain and humiliation are magically transformed into pleasure and pride. We stink of it. And the other guy stinks more, of course, since we couldn't possibly be emitting that ychhy odor ourselves!

The fears of both gay women and men of incipient physical assault have been primarily responsible for a major schism and constant misunderstandings among sexist gays. And most *are* sexist: we live in a sexist, racist, and increasingly fascist culture — there's no excuse for gay people not recognizing and fighting it, for not hurling the shit back in their faces and rubbing their noses in it. Instead, we fear, we hate ourselves, and we separate from one another. This is the oldest and most inhumane military tactic of all time: divide and conquer. It's largely achieved with verbal attacks, like believing in "homosexual rape."

The new definition of homosexual rape is . . . Gay against Gay.

Try substituting the words "gay" for "inmate," "straight" for "administrator" and "gay world" for "prison" and you might begin to see where the responsibility lies.

It is indeed a symptom of "self-hatred" to assume that one's sexual orientation or activity is (1) totally uncontrollable, (2) harmful to others, and (3) something to be ashamed of or punished for.

RAPE IS NOT A SEXUAL ACT.

Rape is not, in most cases, even an ANTI-sexual act.

It is, in fact, asexual. An act of establishing supremacy; physical supremacy where mentality, character, talent, skill or anything else of value will not do. (In prison? In the home, in school, on the street, in gay meeting places, too.) It is a fungus growth on this society, this power trip. And the power is not in thinking or talking or creating or constructing or in joyous copulation: it lies in inflicting pain in order to force someone else to do your bidding, to blackmail, intimidate and threaten.

There is nothing inherently superior in physical strength — nor in physical beauty, for that matter (particularly not in the current plastic standards of the world). If that were true, Darwin's "survival of the fittest" would have resulted by now in blond, blue-eyed, tight-assed, bit-breasted, moustached, tattooed, big-cocked, sweet-cunt, IMPOTENT . . . dianosaurus!

Nor is it true, unfortunately, that the truly "fit" (in every sense of the word) are guaranteed survival. That "Holocaust" included 250,000 gays forced into sexual slavery prior to incineration, kiddies: that's what the pink triangle symbol is all about. If you were Gay AND Jewish, just think what a colorful campy set of armbands you would have worn! We're laying ourselves open for more treatment of that kind (it's happening NOW in the prisons and jails) and we're conditioning ourselves to go quietly when the time comes.

After all, sex is bad. All sex is considered a crime (or that silly meaningless word "sin") to some segment or other of the American society. Every last one of the studies done with convicted rapists (of women AND men) and from information I've personally compiled, indicates that the purpose and ultimate pleasure (if any) of rape, of so-called "sexual assault" came from the feeling of (a) power, in a structured situation that allowed no other way to "move up the ladder," (b) revenge (for imaginary wrongs and always aimed AWAY from the supposed source), (c) release from frustration — not sexual frustration but that of social impotency such as job loss, domestic problems, or general insecurities, and (d) a sense of identity — the

simple, juvenile "necessity" to impose oneself physically and forcefully on another person just to say "I exist: pay attention to me!"

Gay men and women are doing to each other what the rapists do — internalizing feelings of lack of power, need for vengeance when the object is out of reach, releasing the frustrations (particularly acute where we allow ourselves to stay in situations where we have to "pass" — what hideous scars that leaves!), and most stupidly and unfairly (to ourselves), trying to gain "identity" for ourselves by the narrowest, most restrictive definitions.

The rapists are the true "self-abusers"; they are a threat to all of us and our future in the most insidious ways. Can you recognize the "homosexual Rapists" here?

— The "flaunting" Lesbian who marched with me for a while on the way to the memorial service/demonstration for police-slain Anthony Irene DeSoto. "But," says she, "I'm just not sure I should be here. I feel so offended by men in women's clothes." (She — and all too many of my sisters-consistently refuse to understand the facts of transsexuality, the psychology of drag, the oppression common to all. More to the point, what the fuck has one's offended delicate sensibilities to do with MURDER?)

— The "older" gay man who refused to bail out a younger trick on a TRAFFIC charge because he'd discovered the boy had formerly been arrested on prostitution charges. Guess who was one of the jail-rape statistics for 1977? He has three operations to go.

— A comment overheard just a few nights ago: "Jeez, he must have been way out of line to make D--- beat up on him like that." (Just who was out of line? How do you "make" someone beat up on someone else? It's the standard whine of child-batterers, wife-abusers, bullies, rapists and other severely disturbed persons: they "asked for" it.)

— The response of D---'s "lover" later that evening when asked why he allowed the abuse to continue: "Oh, he can't help himself, you know." (No comment, but check out the next one . . .)

— That same victim, even later that same evening, when D--- was too stoned to punch any longer, began showing how his "lover's" guilt and power trip really gets internalized. Now he held the whip hand and went looking for a scapegoat to feed his wounded self-esteem. He found them and wielded the word-whips viciously — on the "nellies," "old queens," "niggers," "broads," "snotted punks" and "dykes."

— An acquaintance who professes to despise S&M and macho activities suddenly became very indignant over a couple of articles that showed what was happening with the "new" butch image in the gay world: turned out there's a

superhigh incidence of impotence in the all-male, hunky-stud leather bars. (While admiring the guts of the "sissies" and finding it more suitable to his own personality, he still has the same old put-down for himself and others: an unshakable and totally unjustified belief that one kind of artificial role-playing is superior to another. Nor has he, like all too many of my brothers, the vaguest idea of the nature of long-term S&M relationships which are necessarily based on total and MUTUAL trust and gratification, and highly controlled behavior patterns.)

— "Whore!" is heard often, and not for comical-friendly effect, either. Is there anything shameful or "wrong" in promiscuity per se? As Arnie Kantrowitz wrote recently, "To help a stranger to orgasm is a very loving thing to do." Ooops! I almost forgot — all sex is bad no-no, isn't it? So of course, multiple sex must be multiply bad. Perhaps that's why I get the abominable odor of self-hatred emanating from people bragging about how many tricks they had the night before. Or, conversely, bitching about how many they hadn't. Both sides of the same wooden nickel. The twisted psychology works this way: if multiple sex is bad and being Gay is bad, then I gotta show 'em just how BAD (read "successful") I can be . . . or else I'm obviously a failure . . . Then, of course, there are the Monogamous Michaels and Faithful Fannys, the Romantic True-blue Rubens that are telling themselves (and puncturing my eardrums to pierce my brain) that they're LESS BAD than the promiscuous ones because they're only bad with one person. One at a time, anyway.

— And I couldn't possibly leave out the Lesbian friend who shrieked with righteous indignation after (against sound advice) she had reported a friend's rape to the local police and the asshole cop said it had probably been "about time" and might help make her friend "normal." But the woman's anger wasn't directed anywhere near where it should have been. She took the same filthy trip and laid it on Gay men. "It should have been one of THEM," she said. "They all like to fuck so much." After all, how could she tell the difference between "fuck" and "rape"? (They're both four-letter words.)

In their narrow little worlds the "homosexual rapists" flaunt and flourish among us, unwilling to admit that all of us — gender males and females, androgynes, transsexuals, transvestites — ALL of us suffer from the same monstrous moral/legal code and conditioning. If we begin to fight that rapist in our own heads, perhaps we can work up to confronting the problem in our own cliques. And from there — who knows? — maybe we could even "break out of the joint" and control our own destinies.

That's what distribution of goods is about. Who eats. Who is covered from the rain. Who has shoes. Who has a gun? And somewhere along the way, we've separated mind from body, and that means a kind of schizophrenia. In an individual, we call it "schizophrenia;" in a race, we call it "nationalism." Somehow we're proud of it in a race, whereas we look an individual up for it. We call a person who has no regard for other people a psychopath or a criminal or a fool or an idiot. We call a nation who has no regard for other people a brave little nation defending its borders.

I think the biggest philosophical problem in the world — just to show you how unabstract I am — is who is going to lay down their guns first. That's philosophy.

Ask me more. I was born in Kilgore, Texas on September 27, 1937. My people were very poor, my father was a worker in the oil fields. We moved into many many states as he looked for work in those hungry lean depression years. My only friends were radio, movies, and magazines and records which followed us from place to place. Pop culture was the only permanent culture I had. But.

HB: Were you an only child?

RP: No, I had two older sisters. We were all misfits. Finally in 1961 I wandered to New York City with vague theatrical aspirations and there I was lucky enough to fall into the Cafe Cino, New York's first underground theatre. It was a place where you could be free to be anything you were, which was one of the things I loved about it. I stayed there for three years being a mere manual worker and stage manager and garbage taker-out, and dishwasher until at last in 1964 I wrote a play called *The Haunted Host* which was one of the first openly gay plays ever produced in New York, and I'm proud to say it's been produced and published ever since.

I always promised myself that I would live openly gayly as soon as I could. I lived in pioneer stock, I wasn't fool enough to come out in Roswell, New Mexico; it'd be like to claim you were a Jew in Nazi Germany. That does not take courage, it's suicidal. But I posed nude for *Gay Power* in 1969.

HB: Why did you start *TRULY GAY NEWS*?

RP: Because I thought the gay movement was getting awfully serious. Superficially serious. And conformist. And that it's doing what I had to do back in Roswell, that is butch up and pretend to be straight and ordinary and hope they won't beat you up. So I started my personal xeroxed gay magazine, *Truly Gay News*, which puts some humor and fun back into it all.

I don't agree that we should all act as normal as possible so as not to scare people, because that's just like being in a

straight-jacket. I mean, the whole idea is freedom.

Stonewall was one of the most exciting things that ever happened, partly in that it was the kids that did it. There was no way the older people were going to make a gay revolution. It had to be the kids in a bunch standing up and telling each other, "It's all right to be gay." Getting rid of that vague feeling gay people had for so long, that they were doing something wrong.

And one wonders, as we shake off bonds, are we now seeing gay people as we are? We've already talked about the enforced institutionalized immaturity of it. Maybe there never has been such a thing as grown-ups. Maybe that's just a game. I had a character in a play once say, "There's no such thing as grown-ups. Grown-ups are the invention of frightened children," and that's quite possible. In other words, maybe straight people never do grow up. Maybe they just look grown up because it's a game they play with marriage, business, respectability, parenthood, social responsibility. And maybe gay people are going to be some of the proof that there is no such thing.

On the other hand, a character in *T-Shirts* says, "It's not that people are becoming more tolerant of gay life, it's just that as straight life gets shittier, it's harder to tell the difference between it and gay life, which was always shitty."

So here everybody stands naked before each other saying, "What are you like?" It's a fascinating time — something that could only happen in a period of overpopulation when a lot of people have the spare time to think and ponder and philosophize and explore. We don't know what the differences are between men and women. We don't know if there are any differences in gay people, or if they're just the kinds of differences we've talked about: the results of necessary toughness, isolation, survival tactics. We're in one of the most fascinating times in the world. Saying, "My life is history *right now* and important history. I am the Stonewall generation. I am going to be living evidence of whether gay people succeed or fail. My life means something." It's a feeling gay people haven't had in the past.

HB: What do you want most in the world?

RP: Peace, plenty, immortality, and health for everybody, what do you want? I'd like to write better. I would like to

I've seen such incredibly beautiful landscapes, the beauty of nature. And you wonder why we need art. Why isn't life enough? Why is it that a painting of this room would mean more than the room. A very fine poet named W.D. Snodgrass wrote a poem about what fun it is for him and his little daughter to shout and hear their echoes off a riverbank, and he says, "We need the land-

scape to repeat us." And I think that's true. There's a lot of vanity in our appreciation of art, there should be in a way. I think we should be proud when we're moved by a play or a painting — to realize that that's something in us, that we're recognizing it.

Why the landscape is not so beautiful as Brancusi's abstract sculpture "Bird in Space." Why the snow in Pennsylvania for all its beauty is not as beautiful as a Fellini film. Why do people who live there, in the beauty of Pennsylvania, trek through the snow to see *Kennedy's Children*?

There's elements of magic in it. You might as well ask, why do we need somebody else? Why do we need somebody else's body? Masturbation is a perfectly satisfactory sexual practice. Why do we need to do it with somebody else? Why isn't the beauty of life enough? Why do we need somebody else's version of it?

That's fascinating, don't you think? Haven't you had a feeling sometimes and the first thing you do is try to remember some poem or song that expresses that feeling? If you're an artist — or even if you're not — Listen, people who can't write at all spend just as much time struggling to write a poem as people who can. Everybody needs not only to appreciate art, but to try to make it. That's why people love to memorize jokes to tell their friends, because then they feel a little bit like an artist. And why people like to be watched dancing.

Sometimes you wonder. A life that has been devoted to one's work, as mine has been . . . I wrote a play about a psychiatrist who has three patients, each of whom has a different recurring dream. The psychiatrist is very bored with listening to them, but as the play goes on, the psychiatrist realizes that the three dreams fit together to make a map of how to get to a treasure. So he introduces the three patients to each other, and they all go happily off to find the treasure. The doctor is left alone. Suddenly he says, "Hey — I never even thought of finding that treasure for myself."

I think every artist feels that way once in a while. When you see people enjoying your show, or you hear people saying, as will happen sometimes, that a play you've written has given meaning to their life or given them inspiration or hope or made them think for the first time or something. And you sometimes find yourself saying, "I never even thought of finding that treasure for myself."

You asked what would I say if I had all the gay people in the world in front of me? I'd say: Figure out what you want to do with your life. Something that you'll be proud of. That you'll be willing to fight for. Then find the other people who believe in what you believe in and who will work and fight for it alongside you. And make new lovers. Put it together.



CRYSTAL

by Mark R. Lewerenz

A Fiction Finalist

photo by Robert Opel

ALTERNATE 31

Crystal was slightly irritated because she hadn't found a razor blade. "Perhaps it's because I'm so stoned" she thought "and yet I'm in perfect control." Her bathroom mirror listed a final inventory of what the morgue photographer would bury somewhere in a rusty green file: wig straight, makeup in place, thin gold straps of an evening gown securely resting on too-broad shoulders, a small gold cross around the neck, rings on nearly every finger.

"Yes, everything's ready" Crystal thought. "It's time. The knife's a jarring note though. Like some pervert painting a mustache on Andy's Marilyn. Of course, some people (who shall remain nameless) will find the blood jarring. But I don't. It's the perfect commentary on a truly tragic life. I shall be an Egyptian queen, a fabulous flapper, an art deco masterpiece, a Hollywood legend awash in my own misery, afloat on a sea of rejection, abashed . . ."

Her thoughts eddied on in a near swamp of 'a' prefixed past-tense verbs as Crystal glided into "the bed chamber" where the fold-away had already been unrolled and dressed in green silk with matching pillows propped up to form a sort of chaise lounge coffin. As she slid demurely into bed Crystal switched off the lights and placed a vase of roses on her nightstand to enhance the funereal effect. The Sunday morning sun peeking over the edge of the nearest rooftop bounced gaily in the bedroom mirror.

"I simply must do this right. I'm left handed so that means I should use my right hand first." And so saying, she grasped the butcher knife and with a clean solid swipe cut a giant slash along the pulsating purple vein of her left wrist. The knife flew obediently from right to left and again bit savagely into an astonished vein and then, its work accomplished, lay down calmly on a silk pillow near Crystal's eyelid. Crystal carefully laid each wrist beside her as if they were rather silly yet treasured glass vases broken in a fit of anger and already mourned. The twin fountains briefly spurted in an orgasmic death dance but soon began soaking quietly into the mattress like the last tepid drops of bathwater sneaking down a drain.

Crystal closed her eyes in premeditated peaceful slumber. "Now to see if they find me in time. My dear, such a scene when Evelyn sees me! I wish I could see her face! I wonder, will my life pass before my eyes?"

But instead of a pageant of life Crystal saw only Rick. Her eyes shot open in unholy terror. She tried to jump out of bed, to run, to fight him off, to calmly explain that she hated him with all her heart and he couldn't affect her any more so would he kindly remove his carcass from her presence. Rick's beautiful eyes jeered at her terror but suddenly started oozing great bloody blobs of tears as he held her head in his hands and begged her to wake up. His trembling lips brushed her hair, her nipples, her little belly and then they laughed giddily as the silver knife cockily penetrated her heart, her side, her eyes. Rick: the motorcycle man of her wildest fantasies was killing . . . no, telling her he loved her but he had to go to the john . . . no that wasn't right either. Everything was getting so confused because there he was on his new bike right after the contest, well, actually during the second number and then all through the encore . . .

Yes, it was coming back now. Contest night. She'd worn the same gold gown with its low front, no back and split up the side which Tamara, despite being in the contest herself, had helped her sew. She'd looked divine walking on stage like an angel of Satan, pushing aside the heavy plush curtains denying them the joy of clinging to her sensual body.

"And now gentlemen, and you ladies too, get your fingers loose, pull your arms out of those crotches, put your hands together and give a big Top Hat welcome to our last contestant, Miss Crystal!"

And she'd appeared — warming herself in the harsh whiteness of the spotlight like a tiny declawed kitten who presses against a winter window trying to catch the warmth of the sun

— a Hollywood legend with skin like plasticized milk stretched taut over classic cheekbones, high arched eyebrows, real breasts, blonde hair with that fresh-from-love messyness, ripe almost rotten lips purple-red like an open wound. There she was: Andy's Marilyn.

"Of course, she did it with pills didn't she? Oh well, never mind that."

The annual title of Miss Top Hat is awarded to the winner of Chicago's largest contest for girls of a certain persuasion and, though she wasn't a Top Hat regular, Crystal knew that sheer hard work combined with some talent and a noisy kind of obvious beauty would tip the audience applause meter in her favor.

Like most of the girls, Crystal did the required disco number first but unlike them she thought her life depended on it. "Thank mama for all that damn Arthur Murray" she thought flashing her feet and bending her legs at impossible angles. The slit in her skirt offered the men a massive moving target which coyly disappeared just as her waist twisted in blatant defiance of anatomical laws. She stamped her tiny feet, fluttered her heavy eyelashes and raised her arms toward the spotlight imploring a just God to award her first place or eternal doom and as she slowly ascended into the air like a sex-crazed Peter Pan some of the men at the back of the bar quit talking and those in the front began clapping. She danced until she saw, one by thrilling one, the regulars rising to their feet in applause and then she fell exhausted to the floor from which she rose more like a swan than a phoenix to greet the cheers of the audience.

As she smiled and bowed, her heart moved with the fervor of an evangelical preacher. She had a message and she had to preach it because if she did, if the men understood her, she would not only win but, more importantly, she could believe the message herself. She started singing "you and me, sometimes it seems like you and me against the world" and suddenly that's exactly how it seemed. She eagerly watched the eyes beyond the footlights and she knew the men agreed. In here they were many, they could laugh and party, drink and dress as they wanted but out there, out in that sewer of every day, that nasty swamp of normalcy, out there where the other nine-out-of-ten lived it was just you and me against the world. Just Crystal and, and whoever. And — and that man there with the bald head offering her a five dollar bill or that hunky hustler pretending he'd wandered in by mistake or the young blond stud by the pool table or the other queens waiting behind the stage or any of the countless numbers here and everywhere who feel alone, rejected, whose only hope is to someday find you so it can be us against the world.

As the instrumental break ended Crystal found herself crying — she hadn't planned it, didn't want to, even tried to stop, but there she was — crying and remembering when it had been Rick and her against the world and suddenly, as if he'd never disappeared for four years, there he was grinning crookedly with that little crease by the lower lip of his Tennessee Baptist mouth, his brown eyes laughing like two little boys who've successfully deceived their mothers, his hands fumbling in his leather jacket and offering her a ten dollar bill. She walked towards him in the middle of a dream, accepted the bill, kissed his lips and handed it back as the crowd roared their approval. And then she was crying again and there were roses in her arms and someone was putting a crown on her head and Evelyn was glaring like the wicked witch of the west but Tamara was jumping up and down hysterically saying "Listen honey, I'm only number two so you damn well better remember who made that dress" and then she was taking her walk and handing the roses to someone else and the announcer said:

"And now ladies and gentlemen, do it one more time. Put your hands together in a great big drag Chicago congrats—"

(Continued on page 38)



LONG REMEMBERED



THIS GENTLE LION...

The year 1979 was over for Harvey Milk before it ever began. Shot to death in San Francisco's City Hall, along with Mayor George Moscone, at the end of November, 1978, Harvey's life and promising political future came to a dead halt. Homophobic S.F. Supervisor Dan White saw to that.

In a matter of minutes, White blew away both a liberal mayor and a gay-Jewish-liberal supervisor. Within the hour White had gone to church for absolution. For the dual-murder White was given a five-to-seven year slap on the wrist by a heterosexual WASP jury, his peers.

Dan White's murder spree resulted in three dramatic marches on City Hall. And Harvey Milk loved marches. The first, the night of the assassination, drew almost 30,000 people mostly gay, to quietly mourn by candlelight, the two fallen leaders.

The second march was the night of the jury's verdict. Eight thousand protesters spontaneously descended on City Hall, smashing windows and torching a fleet of police cars. The San Francisco Police were restrained from retaliation by Chief Charles Gaines, causing White's supporters in the department to demand his ouster. Then acting-mayor Diane Feinstein complied.

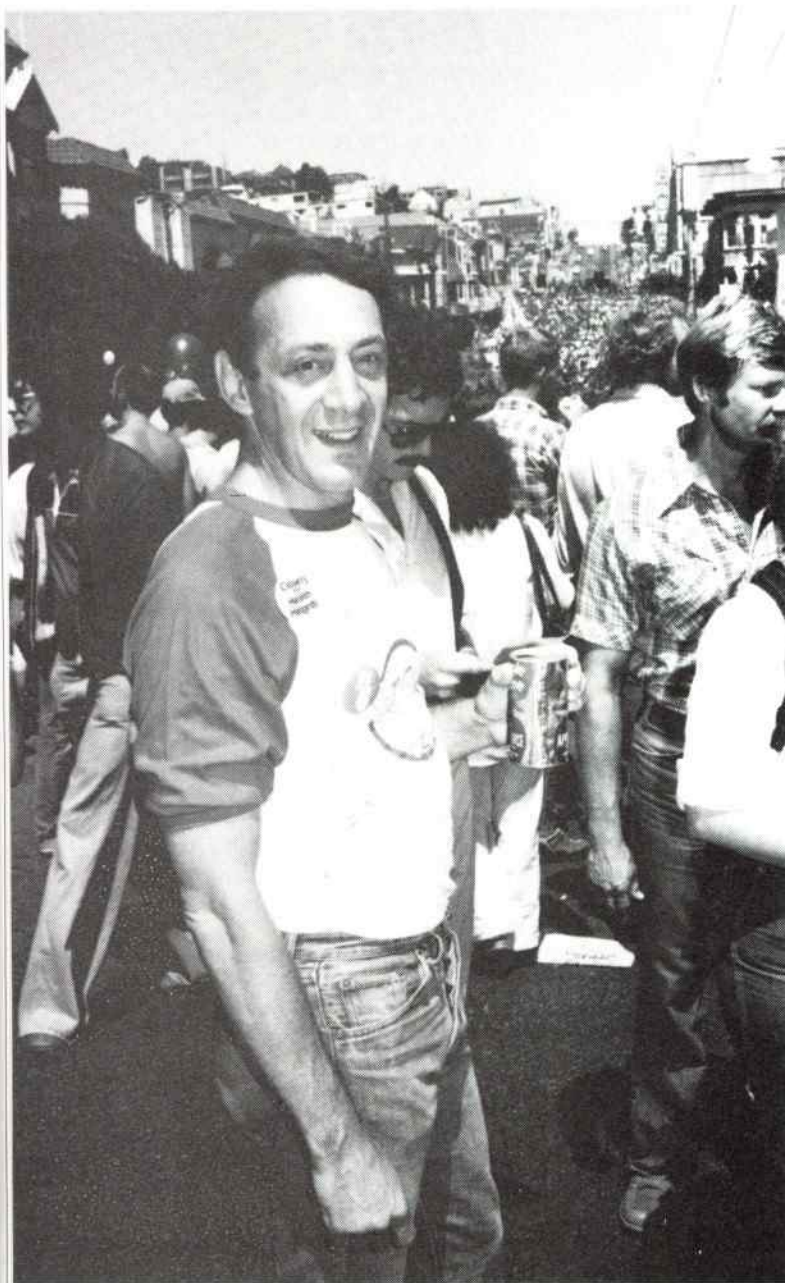
The most recent march was to mark the anniversary of the assassination, again with candles. Another 25,000 gays marched, this time joined by the new mayor and other politicians. However peaceful and restrained, the tone of the evening was dynamic, perhaps more militant than ever before. The keynote speech, was delivered by a former Milk aide, Cleve Jones, and bears repeating. It is reproduced here in our centerfold.

Harvey Milk's legacy included many things. The giant Castro Street Fair, which now enjoys international reputation, was his creation. The Gay March on Washington DC, itself the first confrontation between gays and the federal government, was his dream. A lifetime spent in seemingly small failures, he was immensely successful as a spokesman not only for the gays in his district, but for all his constituents. He brought gay politics into the mainstream with integrity. More than his martyrdom assures him a place in history.

All photos by Rink except as noted.

△ A mustached Harvey holds a political meeting at his Castro Camera in 1975.

◁ Harvey and his lover Jack Lira walk with supporters to San Francisco City Hall for inauguration.



Harvey at the '78 Castro Street Fair. Harvey originated the fair which draws 25,000 people or more each year.

Harvey and his supporters gearing up for the elections, during the 1975 San Francisco Gay Parade.

Harvey speaking with gay Sacramento lobbyist Steve Badeau and Dick Pabich, his aide at the '78 gay parade. ▽





Harvey's inauguration with Mayor Moscone, Δ Senator Milton Marks and Harvey's assistant Anne Kronenberg.

Harvey speaking at a No on 6 fundraiser held at a San Francisco disco. Jane Fonda also Δ appeared.

San Francisco newspaper headlines for the Washington D.C. March. Harvey instigated the march.

The Harvey Milk Gay Democratic Club marches. The group was named in his honor. ∇



"We are here tonight to dedicate ourselves to the legend of Harvey Milk, that word of his dream and his struggle may spread across this and all nations. We are here tonight to continue his struggle, continue his dream. We are here to spread the word, so that our sisters and brothers everywhere may know of the life and death of Harvey Milk.

"We are here to build a legend, but also to remember the reality of Harvey Milk the man. Harvey smiling behind the counter of his Castro Street Camera Store. Harvey thrown out of the Navy for being queer. Harvey the joker, Harvey the clown. Harvey who debated Briggs. Harvey in blue jeans and a torn sweater riding the 8-Market bus.

"We must always remember the man behind the legend, the man who was neither genius nor saint, the man we know was not our first martyr. We must remember that the work done by Harvey Milk is work we can all share, that his achievements are ones we can all aspire to. We must remember, as well, that our defeats, our losses, our humiliations, were also all a part of Harvey's life.

"Yes, we know that Harvey Milk was not our first martyr, nor our last. Harvey had a lover named Jack, and one summer day in '78 Harvey came home to find Jack's body hanging from the ceiling — a suicide.

"I wonder, how many of you here tonight have lost a friend or loved one to suicide? Raise your candles high, how many?

"How many of you know a woman who has experienced the pain and the terror of rape? Let me see your candles, how many?

"How many of you have been attacked, how many of you have been beaten? How many?

"How many of you have heard the taunting cry from behind: 'Hey faggot, hey dyke!?' How many?

"That is why we are here tonight. That is why we marched on Washington, that is why we keep on marching. That is why Harvey lived, that is why Harvey died. And that is why we will not rest until Harvey's dream is fulfilled: when lesbians and gay men of every age, race, and background come out to join in the struggle with all those seeking lives of freedom and dignity and joy.

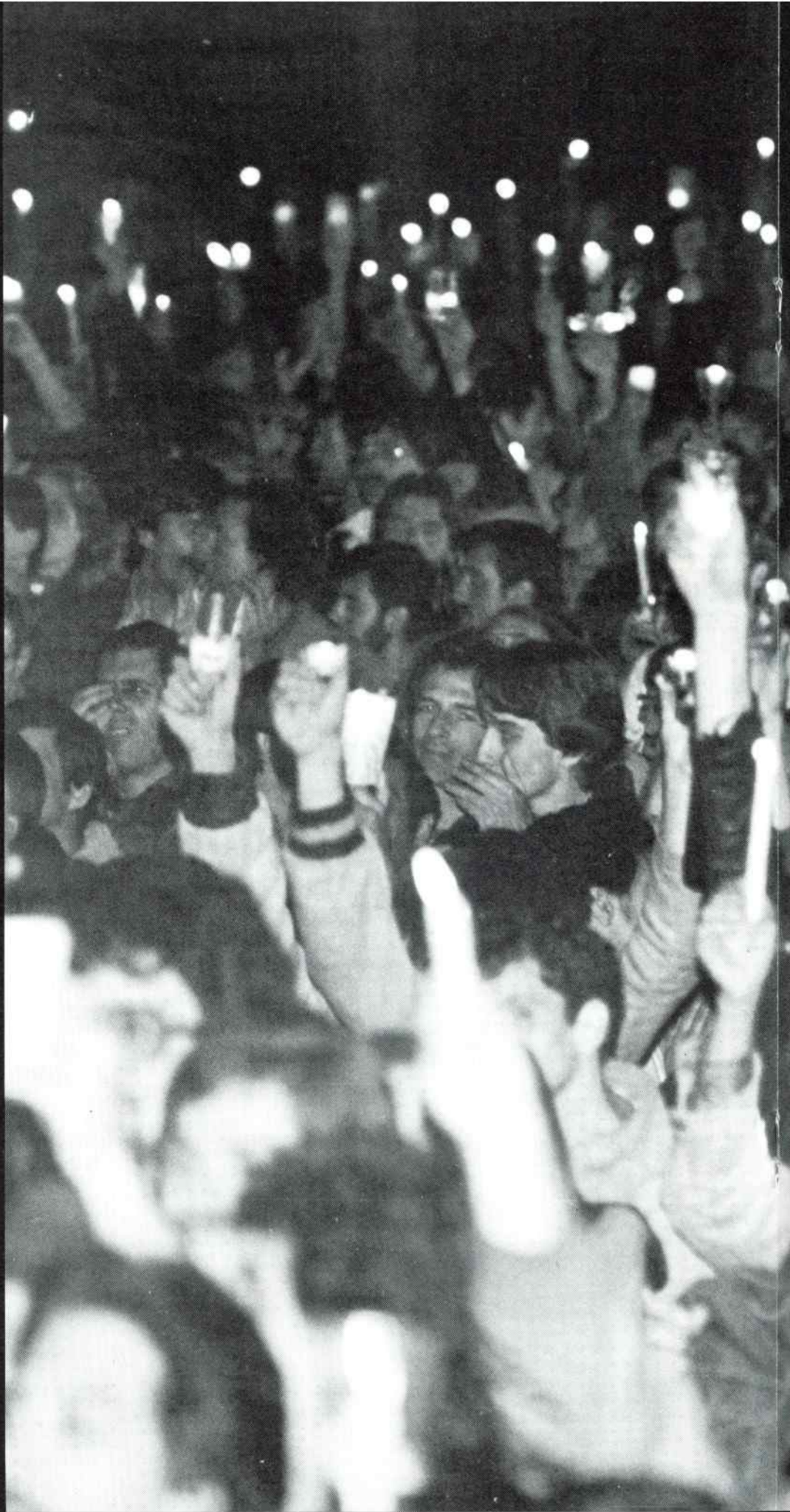
"It will be a long struggle, and there will be leaders and slogans and martyrs aplenty. But let no one misunderstand, our movement is powered by the determination of a people too long denied, too long abused, a people seeking the freedom to live, to work, and to love. Let no one misunderstand — we are deadly serious, we are growing daily in power, and we will not be stopped.

"That is why we are here tonight."

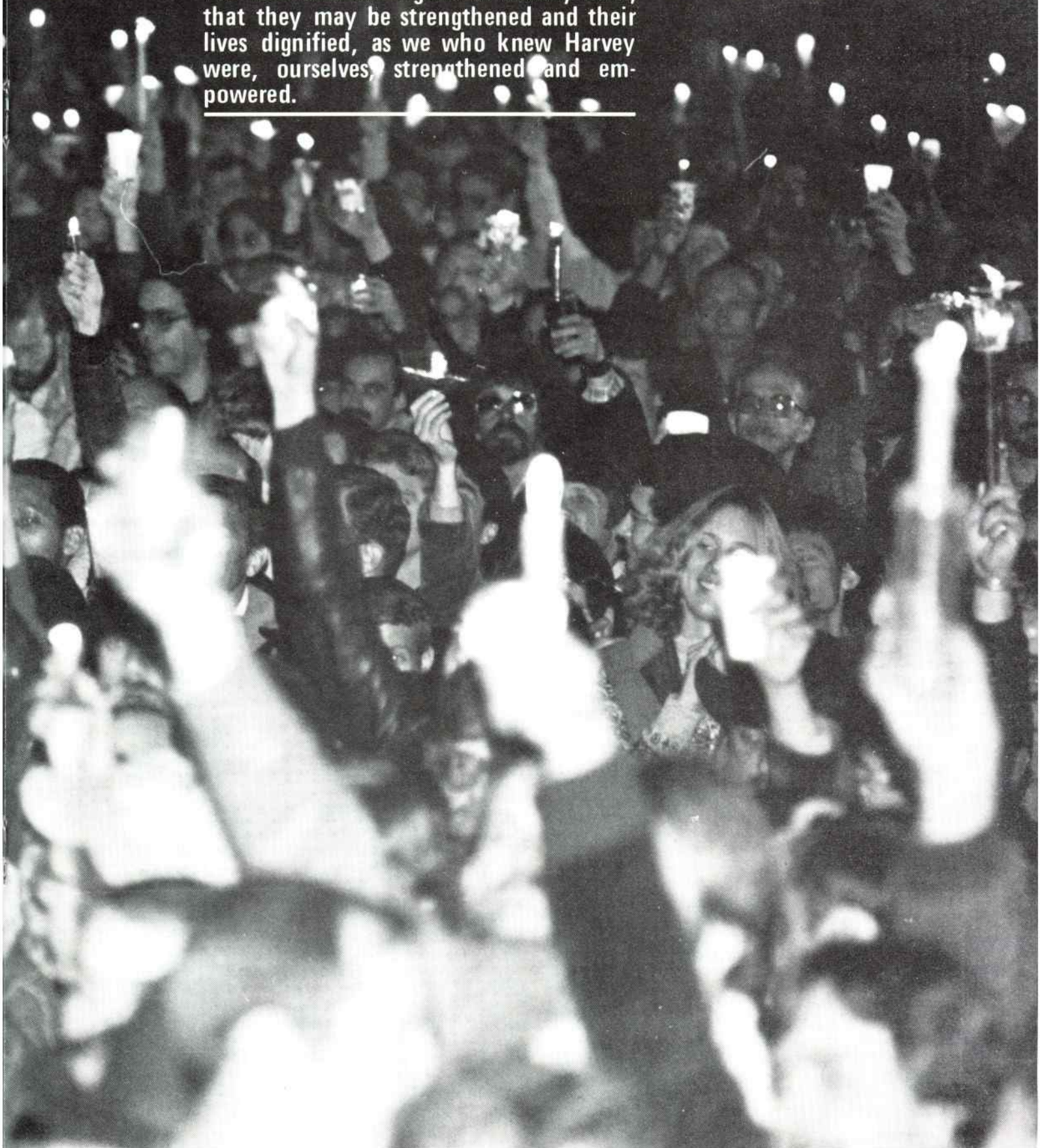
— Cleve Jones

Speech delivered on November 27, 1979

photo by John Gieske/The Sentinel



"We send this message to all the small children growing up queer in a straight world, to all the strong women and gentle men, to the old faggot uncles and silent spinster aunts. We send them our love and the legend of Harvey Milk, that they may be strengthened and their lives dignified, as we who knew Harvey were, ourselves, strengthened and empowered."



tions for our New Miss Top Hat, Miss Crystal!" And before the applause could get fairly started "Miss Crystal wants to dedicate this song to all of you who gave her this prize but especially to her friends who helped her so much and to someone very very special who she wasn't expecting."

"If anyone should ever write my life story," Crystal sang. Behind the curtain she saw Tamara lip-synching with her. "For whatever reason there might be" and there were millions. The reasons were written on the faces of the men. Reasons like *faggot* and *fairy* and *sick*, reasons named Anita this or Dr. that or Father Won't Forgive. Reasons like not reaching school or never going home again. For whatever reason? The reason was craving, lusting for love and, if you were lucky, capturing it before you completely lost your soul to one-night stands. Finally holding love only to lose him again but living anyway — living to reach out again, to sing, to try when you hurt all over, when the spurts of rejections come faster and thicker than the glistening globules lying grey on back room floors.

Crystal felt the tears again hammering against the walls of her eyelids like the thousands of men in Cal City and Peoria and Tuscaloosa and Great Neck, Nevada and Hot Fuck, Wyoming all pounding against the walls of their own fears, their inability to love someone for more than one night. She watched Rick standing on one foot and then the other, rattling the chains on his shoulder, stuffing his long thin fingers into the ragged pockets of his faded jeans. Crystal stared at his eyes and as she walked back to the stage, her dress sweeping the dollar bills into tiny piles, she stretched her arms out to all of them but especially to Rick. "You'll be there in every line that's ever written, 'cause you're the best thing that ever happened to me."

Then it was over — the disco came back on and the stage reverted to a sweating poppers vision of squirming bodies, the bartenders turned back to their spiggots and bottles, the studs resumed their poses, the old men lusted alone — but for Crystal the best was just beginning. She watched Rick on the fringes of her success, she smiled but didn't invite, she allowed him one dance and when the bar closed he joined her friends at breakfast. Between the jokes and the early morning yawns, between the pancakes and the plans for coming shows, Crystal felt his guilty eyes pleading for a second chance. Crystal felt the old fear and wondered if she dared give in.

Chicago, Sunday morning: the Tribune lying fat and ready in front of apartment doors where the odor of frying eggs wakes lethargic husbands from dreams of other women and far-away places; the El beginning to run; the Holy Name priests donning their surplices for early mass; the cretins at Moody Bible Institute rolling over fatly in their empty beds; Crystal yawning and propping her eyes open with a lacquered nail; the crowd breaking up, Tamara leaving with some blue-eyed wonder, Evelyn departing in a hail of fire and brimstone; Rick asking if she needed a ride, Crystal wavering but shaking her head, Rick roaring away; Crystal sleeping five minutes in the taxi and then dragging herself up the four flights to her door.

"It's really over" she thought, yawning and pushing the door open "but this time at least, I was the one to leave." Closing the door behind her she realized she must be more tired than she thought because she was already dreaming. There he was slumped in a chair, and there she was in his arms and there they were in bed. She vaguely remembered she hadn't changed the locks when he left and then she vividly remembered just how good the old times had been.

When she awoke Crystal smiled wanly remembering the beauty of her dream but before she could be depressed she saw the roses which looked a little sullen at being left on the window sill. Jumping out of bed she took the flowers to the kitchen, filled a vase with water and two aspirins and brought

them back to the nightstand. Climbing back into bed she stared at the face of the dream that was too good to be true.

"Unbelievable!" she thought. "He's twenty four now but he still looks like the kid I picked up five years ago. Still has that innocent 'I didn't do it' look. And his body! I never met a man that could stay hard that long." She stretched her own aching body reveling in the pain she felt. "I wonder where ..." he opened one eye, she smiled, he stretched out his arms and the years between them disappeared as fast as the space between their bodies.

Later she finished her thought out loud. "Where were you?"

"Where were you?" Not even 'good morning' or 'here's your lunch in bed?' Just 'where were you?'"

"Yeah. Where were you for four long years? I thought we really had a good thing going and then all of a sudden ..."

"Common. Stop it. I'm back now, right?"

"Yeah — now — but for how long?"

"Common, just ..." and he held out his arms again but this time she resisted.

"Look, I'm not giving up so you might as well tell me before we take this any further."

Rick sighed. "Well, I went back to Tennessee — my mom died you know."

"No, I didn't. I'm sorry."

"Yeah, she did. So I went. The old man preached at the funeral just like it was any service. I swear he never gave a shit about her — just his damn church. Shiela was there. And the kid."

Crystal remembered "the kid." And Shiela. Shiela was Rick's last attempt to go straight and like so many last attempts, she'd produced a child, a boy. Funny to think of her motorcycle stud as a daddy of a six-year-old. But they married young in the south and before Nashville, Rick had come from a little town named Clemmons. 'Welcome to God's country, Clemmons, Tennessee. Pop. 4,269' read the sign they'd roared past on the disastrous visit to his sick mother.

"Four thousand is big for a town here" Rick had shouted.

"Not big enough" Crystal thought not bothering to compete with the noise of the Triumph. And of course she'd been right. They weren't even off the bike before the preacher was screaming some sermon about Rick's fairy friends perverting his young son or worse, his grandson.

"Yup. The kid was there. 'Member how you thought he was so cute? You'd love him now. I couldn't even get near him though — the old man made sure of that. It's o.k. He don't really mean nothin' to me. Shiela tried to get me to fuck her."

"Did you?"

"Shit no. Common, what are ya, crazy? Are you kidding?"

"You did, huh?"

"Well — I tried. Before I left at night. I went to the funeral and the grave place and then we all come home and there was this big meal and all the church ladies was real polite like I was gonna gang rape 'em or somethin' if they didn't give me enough potato salad."

"You should see my brother — he's seventeen now. Goin' with this little blond chic. At first he wouldn't even talk to me but then we kind of were the last ones to leave the grave and I guess he saw me and all ... you know, I was kinda upset — not bein' there at the end and everything."

Rick's voice trailed off and Crystal waited for him to come back.

"Anyway, he kind of came up to me and suddenly we had our arms around each other and we was both cryin' and everything and when I left he gave me this cross I got on."

Crystal took the cross in her right hand and watched the sun dance golden reflections across his still hairless chest.

"So I left the dinner about seven and rode about a hour and then I thought, well, what the hell, so I decided to go back

and give Shiela a bang for old times, just to make her happy you know. But I didn't . . . couldn't stay hard, if ya really wanna know. So I left."

"That took four years?"

"Christ! Give me a break will ya? No of course it didn't take four years."

They were both quiet remembering different four year eternities, remembering the year of heaven that preceded them. "This time," Crystal thought "he'll have to want me as much as I want him. This time he's gonna have to beg." She watched his troubled face as he sorted out what he would tell her and what would remain lost, gone but not forgotten.

"No. Not four years. I had a job for a while if you can believe that. I worked in this garage in Arizona where the guy sold coke and hot Porshes on the side. I did a few tricks with him 'cause he gave me a job and a apartment but mostly I was with chicks. Then I left. This girl and me rode down to Texas but she was so dumb I dumped her. I wanted to go all the way west, ya know, like I always told ya? So I laid around in California for a while."

There was another long silence.

"That was nice. Then I busted my leg in Florida."

"Florida? How'd you get from California . . ."

"I just did. I was, you know, just riding around. 'Tryin' to find myself' your dumb friend Evelyn would say."

"My friend?!"

"Well she used to be. Anyway, I busted my leg down there. Wrecked the bike too. The doctor said I was lucky to be alive and I said 'Yeah? Prove it.' So I guess he thought I was some kind of punk or somethin'. I laid around down there and thought about how white everything was. The walls, the sheets, the pillows, the nurses, even those curtains they hang between the beds, you know, to kind of seal you off so ya don't know you're in a ward? So anyway, I just laid there with this stupid leg in traction and thought about how pure everything was and that reminded me of you."

Crystal was shocked. No one had ever accused her of being even particularly clean much less "pure."

"Me?!" She laughed.

"Yeah. Ain't that funny? I don't know why either. Except maybe I just had a lot of time." Again the silence.

Crystal thought "This is something new — these silences. Maybe he *has* grown up, maybe he was as lonely as I was." And deep inside her something broke and she quit making plans about what she had to say. She decided she would live with the fear and she laid her head next to the cross on his chest and waited.

"A lot of time." Rick sighed. "I just kept thinking about all the people I've known — especially girls — you and Shiela."

Crystal winced but Rick continued.

"Yeah, it was real strange. I thought about how much you two are alike, and different too. You know I lived longer with you than I ever lived with anybody? I never lived with Shiela at all. She stayed at home till she got the kid.

"But everything was so confused. I can't think lyin' around in bed or sitting in a chair. That's why I always hated school. 'Cause the only place I can think is on the bike. When I got better I got a new one. Did you see it?"

Crystal nodded, the movement of her head causing the cross chain to jingle. She'd seen it immediately — a Harley Sportster — something he'd always talked about and something she'd always mildly resisted because it wasn't part of her fantasy. A real stud would have a hog, even a used police hog, not a Sportster. But then, Rick had always been only part fantasy. The other part, the part she loved was — well, call it 'little boy' or 'human' or better, just call it 'Rick.'

She also knew what he meant about thinking because she'd watched him think before. After the visit to his mom Rick put a dime in a local phone booth and called his own number. Crystal watched his face soften and heard his voice lower as he

told his mom he'd tried to visit but the old man wouldn't let him in the house. She'd heard the strong young voice quiver as he said "I love you too ma" and then saw him softly hang up, jump on the bike and roar towards the edge of the mountain. She ran after him yelling and trying to stop him but finally she sat down, her heart beating so hard she could feel it pounding against her knees tucked under her chin. A lump rose in her throat and once she was sprayed with gravel as Rick traced terrifying circles in the dust, each revolution speeding closer to the side of the mountain, each turn daring gravity to catch him and hurl him miles to the valley below.

"I really thought a lot about being queer and all." Rick said bringing her back home through five years time. "Especially after that night with Shiela. I mean, I know I could never do the old man's thing — get married and buy a house and give people a hard time. Come home at night and play with the kid. But I thought, well, you know Shiela always wanted to live in a big city and I thought, what the hell, maybe she and I could come back here and — you'll laugh. I even thought maybe the three of us could live together, you know. And she could get an office job like she always wanted and I could hustle or whatever, steal stuff, and you could take care of the kid. And I thought, you know, it'd be perfect 'cause if I wanted a woman there'd be Shiela and if . . . aw shit. Now you're getting upset right?"

"No."

"Bullshit. I know you."

"I'm not upset. I couldn't care less."

"You're a god-awful liar you know that? Anyway, it ain't gonna happen so don't worry. I knew that after the funeral."

Again silence and this time Crystal had to break it.

"So why did you come back?"

"I don't know" he said softly. "I guess I just wanted to see you."

The tears in his eyes begged her to understand, begged her not to ask any more and she was afraid. She held him and thought "So now he's mine again. Mine until someone calls him faggot or until he's tired of drag queens or . . ." She rocked her wounded boy to sleep and they spent every night for the next two months that way. During the days they went to the beach or borrowed things from Marshal Fields. Rick always had cash and Crystal didn't ask where it came from. Nights they rode the bike or partied. Weekends Crystal sang.

Then came a Saturday night when Crystal wasn't booked and when she mentioned it to Rick she thought she detected surprise mixed with disappointment, even panic.

Rick struggled for words. "Well, uh, I have an appointment tonight."

"A date?"

"No, common. Nothin' like that. Just got to see a guy about the bike."

"Oh! Oh that's all." Crystal laughed. "I thought you were gonna . . . I thought maybe it was something else." Even to her ears her evident relief seemed strained.

"Nah. You can come along if you want."

So they'd gone to Carol's even though Crystal wanted to go to the Bistro and sometime during the night Rick placed his half-emptied beer next to her drink and said "Excuse me just a minute. I gotta use the john." And he was gone.



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Crystal refused to listen to the voice in her head. "I won't follow him" she thought. Fifteen minutes later she added "Maybe there's a line — you know how faggots are about johns." Two disco songs later a very handsome man started talking to her and she responded warmly hoping the flirting would fill the time till Rick got back. She didn't want to know how long he'd been gone. The man offered to buy a drink but instead of feeling her usual thrill at this mild conquest, Crystal began to feel sick.

"No, no thanks" she said trying hard not to stare in the direction of the johns. She told herself she had to convince him she'd forgotten about him — just flirt with the man and don't look in that direction.

But the handsome man was too cooperative and when his hands started roving over her body she said "Please, don't. I'm with a friend" and she gave him her famous two-fingers-to-the-lips thrown kiss. But the man only responded "So?" and Crystal had to add, "Well, I really can't go to that back room because for one I don't do that and for two I know Ricky will be looking for me." The man sighed and walked away but Crystal continued "and for three I don't want to run into Rick back there. Not, of course, that it matters. I mean, I know how he makes his money and just so long as he keeps me happy. Still . . ."

Still, she was sorry she'd sent the man away. The crowded dance floor seemed too empty somehow. The D.J. kept playing records and Crystal decided to play "Guess What Time It Is" by multiplying all the records she'd heard by the standard three-minute a.m. radio play time. Then she remembered the average disco song lasts ten to fifteen minutes and she lost her recently acquired interest in math. She looked for a clock but she was afraid to leave because Rick might come back and not find her. She bought another drink and sucked in her cheeks and made a major mental effort not to stand facing the direction of the john. Several times she thought she saw him dancing but on closer inspection the substitute always had a mustache or glasses or the wrong color jeans. She chewed the ice in her drink. She tried to make her mind blank since she knew the gagging sensation she felt was just a product of her imagination. She looked again for a clock and decided she sure as hell wasn't going to ask the jerk standing next to her what time it was but she did ask and he added another deadly lump to her stomach and then left to be replaced by another man with a watch who wasn't any nicer and finally Crystal had to admit that Rick was, well, he wasn't back obviously but he probably went home for some reason, so she started for the door but decided to visit the ladies' room first. On the way she passed Tamara who she didn't recognize and Evelyn who said "I never saw a girl in that much of a rush to the bathroom."

After her brief visit Crystal decided to try the men's room and then, moved by a force stronger than the quiet voice inside her head, she checked out the back bar and even the back room where she had to light match after match to get even a fleeting glance at the faces and where finally an irritated voice questioned the propriety of an arsonist in a back room and a man near her elbow called her a cop.

Crystal left the room trying to maintain a dignified pace as she hurried down the endless corridor toward the johns. The handsome man sneered at her "I thought for one you didn't do that and for two you were with a friend." Crystal flushed but kept moving past the empty johns, through the three bars, over the dance floor and finally back to her drink still standing lonely next to Rick's beer which wasn't half as flat and empty as her stomach.

"The street, I've got to check the street. He wouldn't leave the bike." She cautiously threaded her way between the oblivious bodies writhing on the floor and silently blessed the bouncer for quietly handing her her coat without commenting on the eye makeup streaming down her cheeks. Outside the bike was gone which only proved she'd been right all the time

about him getting sick and going home or something so she got a taxi which took five hours to get home where she ran up the four flights of stairs, threw open the door, shut it quietly behind her and fell sobbing on the empty bed.

But Crystal wasn't a quitter. She refused to give up. For a full week she asked friends, bartenders, even strangers if they'd seen him and for a full week she told all the same people she knew where he was — that they'd decided he needed to get back home for a short time but that he'd be back any day, maybe even today and so tonight, or was that last night? This is the morning so Saturday was yesterday which makes today . . . It was all getting so confused. Crystal's eyes seemed too heavy to bother opening and she wondered if she wanted to finish the story. Nothing would bring him back and besides . . .

Saturday night she'd started her show but without any warning the disc jockey had put on the wrong record and said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, here's the song that made our very own Miss Crystal the toast of all Chicago and made our bar the home of this year's Miss Top Hat. I know that, just like then, she wants to dedicate this very special song to all her very special friends."

But instead of applause a sort of hush fell on the crowd, a knowledge that at last the bepimpled Evelyn had gone too far in announcing songs girls weren't ready for. A sort of sympathy surrounded Crystal as she tried to sing but when she got to the words "you're the best thing that ever happened to me" she broke down completely and, stopping only long enough to grab her purse, she ran all the way home.

"Anyway," she thought "none of that matters now. I can just see Evelyn's face when they find me, though. I wonder if they will find me?"

Crystal closed her eyes and there he was again. But this time she was crouched on the side of a Tennessee mountain praying to the God she didn't believe in to let the bike run out of gas. The front tire edged closer and closer to the crackling edge of the asphalt, it was on the small shoulder and tempting the foolish guard rail. Crystal squeezed her eyes even tighter but still she saw him spinning off into space, flying, diving, falling, the bike sailing after him, and then she saw his tiny twisted body mangled, broken, gone forever.

A light breeze mussed her hair and she heard the bike idling in her ear. She opened her eyes and he was standing next to her grinning his silly crooked grin.

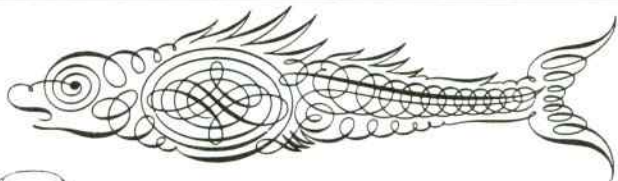
"Hop on." He said in his normal voice, all the rage gone from his face.

"Where are we going?" She asked meaning "I don't want to go in circles. I don't want to die now that I've found you again."

"Home." He answered.

Just then the sun peeked over the edge of the nearest mountain and bounced on the chrome pipes and in the rear view mirror. Crystal squinted but as she leaned against the pillowed sissy bar she smiled.

"Home." She said.



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MUSIC

ANOTHER LOW-BUDGET GAY ALBUM

Before you despair of reading about another passionate gay vocal liberationist who wrote a bunch of songs and scraped up the money for a master tape and got his friends to finance a semi-professional looking l.p. that they all believed in but no one else is likely to ever hear — give yourself a few reading minutes and let me tell you about the turning of the tide.

Tom Wilson is a semi-satiric cabaret-style songwriter and singer (for all you fans who need point-of-reference labels) who is a local-boy-makes-good in gay Philadelphia. He was, before the album, one of the founders of Giovanni's Room, a gay bookstore that has had its share of controversy. And that foundation is very telling when you begin looking for the sensibilities of Tom Wilson, songwriter. He's extremely literate.

That in itself is the best part of his songwriting, and perhaps it's Waterloo. You see, Tom Wilson is serious — even when he's very funny. That's good satire, by the way.

As a singer, Wilson is fine. He has the sincere sort of cabaret-ballad voice that is both easy to listen to, and memorable without being extreme. Less like elevator music, more like the environment; leaves blowing over autumn lawns, rainfall, the sea — that sort of thing. Soothing, but declarative.

His phrasing is fine. His vocal range is fine. In fact, he's just the kind of singer you'd want your brother to marry. Professional, au current, sincere; fine.

So what is all this about an underground album (in the trade's vocabulary)



being self-produced on a shoe-string and almost sold door-to-door? Simple. There isn't a mainstream record company (remember them: Electra, Capitol, RCA, Casablanca?) that would touch anything as personal (non-commercial) as Tom Wilson's *Gay Name Game*. Why? Glad you asked. *Gay Name Game* only appeals

to gays. It isn't aimed at anyone but those people whose own sensibilities match Wilson's.

It's so worth listening to that it's a double shame it's doomed to obscurity. Aboveground Records, Box 2131, Philadelphia, PA 19103. The album is \$7.50. — C.N.

SLOW DEATH WHITE WASH

A coming film of the 1980's will disenfranchise gays almost as severely as William Friedkin's much-touted *Cruising*, but in an entirely different way. The film is *Can't Stop The Music*, the stars are The Village People, and the rub is that by the time of the film's release, the group will have been homogenized into middle-class American heterosexual culture.

Why did that happen? Money. The Village People, intended as a disco group to play the then-growing gay discos, became too big, too popular, too crossover. The level of interest the group had garnered from be-bopping gay dancers peaked. The unwashed masses were standing in line for a new pop-cult-music hero (someone who would appeal to the prime record-buying range of 14-18 year-olds).

How did it happen? Easy. Clean up the image. Stop all the outrageous publicity, stop cooperating with the gay press, start packaging the boys to play in Kansas City.

Step One, a television special with Bob Hope where the VP sing their new big hit, *In The Navy*, on an aircraft carrier docked in New York. Make the jokes more Greenwich Village and less gay.

Step Two, create a movie around the VP with symbols of clean-living Americanism as the buttresses: Bruce Jenner, Nancy Walker (directing), lots of boy-meets-girl-looses-girl-gets-girl-back sub-plotting.

Step Three, a television special (Bob Hope again) that travels from college campus to college campus searching out talented, bright, clean-cut, rose-cheeked, Christian symbols of budding man and

womanhood. The Village People are spliced in towards the end from a studio taping.

Step Four, start denying the group might be gay, was gay, has gay members, has gay audiences, has anything to do with gays. It may have been fun and games in the beginning, but now we're talking about multi-million-dollar movie budgets, theatre screens in small town America, and the consent of mindful parents over what kind of heroes their precious little children follow. If you believe for a moment that the majority of American parents have a gnat's idea what a role-model really is, then you're as manipulated as the masses that have already swallowed the non-gay VP hype.

Step Five: Yet another television special. This time, it's go for broke. Dick Clark (the rebel of the 1950's all grown



up and respectable because the parents of the 1970's were the fans two decades before) hosting a TV extravaganza pairing The VP with Anita Bryant. Yep, you heard correctly. To say Dick Clark, Anita Bryant and The Village People in one sentence has the chilling effect of moving the third closer to the first and second — maybe even between them.

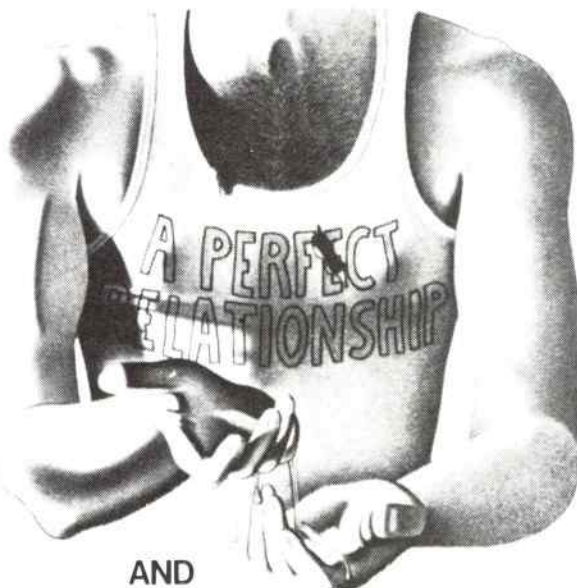
And a million parents between the oceans are saying, "Well, if he has them on his show, they can't be too bad." And another million are saying, "If they really were faggots, Anita wouldn't appear on the same show with them." And another million are saying, "Well, if they really were faggots, they would never appear on a program with *her*, she hates faggots."

And the producers of *Can't Stop the Music* are hearing three million ticket sales and three million record sales from so easy and effortless a gesture as scraping the slime of homosexuality off the bodies of the VP.

Guess what, music fans, you've just been ripped-off again.

— Michael E. Ross

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— Time Magazine

THEATRE

VALENTINE'S DAY, 1974

The nice thing about setting the action of a play in a bar is that you can let your characters get drunk and reveal themselves to the audience. It isn't a new concept, some famous plays, like Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh* and Tennessee Williams's *Small Craft Warning* are set in bars. Doric Wilson's *The West Street Gang* is set in a bar, and so is Robert Patrick's *Kennedy's Children*.

The nice thing about reworking a play that has already been produced is that it allows you, more than the fabled Boston try-out, to hone the characterizations, plot and pacing down to a sharp working vehicle. Then, with a good director, and good actors, the revised play can be better than the original. It isn't a common practice, for the most part. Tennessee Williams did it to a number of his plays, most recently *This Is (An Entertainment)*. William Hoffman had his *Shoe Palace Murray* staged as a work in progress, which is even rarer. But the intention is for the final version of the play to be as near perfect as the playwright can make it.

Robert Patrick's play is currently being staged as part of a Robert Patrick Festival in San Francisco. This production of *Kennedy's Children*, is a revised version of the original, which was something of a success on Broadway.

Robert Patrick ranks with Williams and O'Neill in the volume of his produced stage works. And he has learned from both those gentlemen a great deal about bringing his message to the audience via the "confession."

Phebe's, the bar in New York where the play takes place, is an obscure, small, mid-town cocktail lounge that, if anything, caters to the indiscriminate. The bartender, the first character we see, is a nineteen-year-old bisexual as much in love with the drug culture as he is with his respective girl and boy friend. He sets the tone for the play by speaking directly to the audience, complaining about his inability to keep his love lives separate.

Wanda is a teacher-of-sorts. It is she that brings the title into the play. When she talks to the audience, it is about John and Jackie Kennedy, the two people she most admired in the world. She is bitter that, a decade after the assassination almost no one remembers the contribution of the thousand days.

For the entire play she speaks only of the Kennedys, and only to the audience, since none of the characters speak to each other.

Spranger, the character most directly

based on the playwright, is an underground actor whose roles run the gamut from Siamese dancer to things undecipherable. He is gay, loud, bitchy, in agony. While he has the potential for the play's catalyst, he just doesn't surface even as large as life.

Mark is a Viet Nam veteran. For his part, he sits and writes a letter to his mother telling her the horrors of his experience.

Rona is an ex-marcher, a bandwagon liberal, bleeding heart, dedicated world-changer. Each character uses the theme of the past decade as a springboard for their confessions. Rona's is so perfectly chronological that she could have written the play. She is the play's most powerful



— illustration by Tom Hinde

and lucid character; her speeches build to dramatic tensions heads above the stories of the other patrons. It is through Rona that Patrick says the most about the dream of the 1960's and what happened to it. In fact, if all her speeches were assembled as a monologue, it would be an electrifying chronicle.

Carla is the final patron to enter the bar. When she was fifteen, when Marilyn Monroe died, she decided that destiny would make her a sex goddess. While her disenchantment is probably very real, it is the universal disenchantment of "50 million girls who looked exactly like me." Adjusted to approaching middle-age without a single film appearance behind her, Patrick does not spare even her the devastation he charts for his strange assemblage. It isn't a Sunset Boulevard exit, but it works.

So, there you have it, six characters in search of a reason.

Patrick sees much wrong with the

world, and justifiably so; but he also has stereotyped his characters almost into parodies of themselves. We come to the decision quickly we simply don't care about Sparger's life in the theatre. And while we can feel extreme anguish over his recollection of being raped and beaten by three soldiers when he was just a "Mixed-up" teenager; it matters more than the crux of his position on the stage. The things that Patrick has to say about the state of the theatre go without saying. Jason's (the bartender) fear of some unexplained doom is also a real fear to a lot of us. Since he is the only character not to speak from the past decade, you might consider that he is the sum of all the other parts. But an obvious prejudice on the playwright's part about the promise of the current new generation seeps into a characterization too frivolous for concern.

Patrick's feelings about the absurdity of war, and an almost nihilist viewpoint about the end of wars makes his soldier (Mark) a vegetable; more inclined to a sanitarium than the methadone program he has been placed on by the military to ease his drug habit. Too often he is simplistic, and while the horror of war can make the strongest man into a simpleton, it doesn't seem to be the character Patrick was striving towards.

Wanda (the teacher), Rona (the old time protester) and Carla (the non-sex goddess) play a brilliant counterpoint to each other. In these three characters he says all there is to say about the effects of time on dreams. He creates three characters who, each in their own way, survive to a state of disenchantment and can still recall each painful moment. There is no resolution, except for Carla. We are the people we are today because of the people we have been, Patrick tells us. In *Kennedy's Children*, they are all cripples.

Rona says it best, when describing a conversation with her husband, a former-civil rights demonstrator who decided to vote for Nixon (so the end would come sooner) and became a heroin addict. When she pours out her anguish to him, he cowers in a corner of their depressed room, needle poised for entry, and tells her:

"Sure, I'll fight for the cause, for love and brotherhood. Tell me what to do. Tell me who to kill. Tell me what to be, tell me who to be."

We don't know if it's he or Rona who says, "Lee Harvey Oswald."

— JWR

The Robert Patrick Festival staged by Theatre Rhinoceros in San Francisco included *The Haunted Host*, *T-Shirts*, *My Cup Ranneth Over*, and this new version of *Kennedy's Children*. The *Haunted Host* was Robert Patrick's first produced play (1964).

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IN TRANSLATION

TRISTESSE NORDICA

Finnish Poetry by Rauli Vettenranta



Tristesse Nordica

Ikikuuksen salossa
tuulen talossa
pakkasen palossa
jääkideiden valossa
sinua ikävoim

Koivujen kosteat oksat
kurottuvat kasvoihini
pehmein pisaroin
kyvaillen uuvasta
vilttavat veitsei

Terra Arctica

Viime yona järvi jäätyn
tahtien valossa kurjet muuttavat etelään
minulle vain kuu loistaa

On sininen kivi
(joka ei ole safiirin veroinen
mutta tunantia kallimpi
joka tapauksessa)
piilossa roudan alla
se on kaivettava esiin
paljain ja verinaamuksin käsin

on sininen kivi
täyttä graniittia

Mare Nostrum

Rantakalliolla seisten
myrskytuulessa näin sanasi

nyt kaannan kiviä
haron hiekkaa
ei mitään
vasiko huutoi hiekalta sanasi?
vesi

Kuvasi

Pöydällä
kynttilä
ja lasi punaista viinua
hehkuu
ulkona samettiyo

havaituen
kaannan katseen
seinällä kuvasi – rakas
jonka varjoni hämää
ulkona samettiyo

Suuri valkoinen koira

Mina tunnen rakkaani ikuiselon
silmat ummussakin
yhtä varmasti kuin tiedän
suuri valkoinen koira kiertää taloani
öisin
ja nauttii herkin sieraamien
tuuli lehauttaa sen hentas
ja lehtia
jotka on huomenna lakaistava

(Fragments)

Tunnen kadut
en kulkijoina
puhun sadepilvien huulin

Tristesse Nordica

In the backwoods of ancient firs
in the house of winds
in the burning of frost
in the light of icecrystals
I long for you

The birches' wet branches
stretch out to my face
with soft drops
caressing from mist
cutting knives

Terra Arctica

Last night the lake was frozen
in the light of stars the cranes fly southward
only the moon shines for me

There's a blue stone
(not worth a sapphire
but dearer than a diamond
in any case)
hidden under frosty ground
it must be dug out
with bare and bleeding hands

there's a blue stone
of pure granite

Mare Nostrum

Standing on a rock by the beach
I saw your words in stormy wind
your message from afar

now I'm turning stones
raking sand
nothing
was it water that washed away
your words from the sand?
water

Your Picture

On the table
a candle
and a glass of claret
glows
outside the velvet night

starting
I turn to see
on the wall your picture – dearest
that my shadow darkens
outside the velvet night

The Big White Dog

I feel the presence of my darling
even with closed eyes
as surely as I know
a big white dog goes round my house
at nights
and sniffs with tender nostrils
wind blows his tail
and leaves
that must be raked tomorrow

(Fragments)

I know the streets
not the passersby
I speak with the lips of rain clouds

ja lyhtypylveatkin kuuntelevat
sirsiroitellessaan sitruunantuoksuista valoa
yon kulkijan kammenille

Juuri kun kesa saapui
aurinko hehkui hitaasti
nousevan ukkospilven takana
ja karpaset tekivat vihaisai syöksyja
tuulenpuuska lennatti aveimesta ikkunasta sisaan
kolme keltaista koivunlehteä

Mina olen metsan puita

kuusi
jenka kuoteen veistat nimesi

petaja
jonka kaarmasta saat veneen

kataja
jonka kitkerat marjat
suojaautuvat pistävien neulasten alle

mina olen metsan puita
odottaen huohottaen sadetta
kantaen kivisella sydämellä
kanervan punaisia suudelmia

Jokainen ilta
mousen nama raput
nahdakseni pilvien taittyvan houkautuksista
ja kimaltelevien kalojen
hyvailevan suurten vesien saltoja

jokainen ilta
pilvet taittyvat huokautuksista
on kuin sataisi

Joskus tunnen itseni oljampuksi
sydan kulumassa loppuun
sanatkin nokisia

On niin hiljaista
voi kuulla sydämensä lyönnit

on niin hiljaista
ehka et huomaa
istun taalla ja dodtan sinua
niin hiljaa

Silloin olet maaseudulla
kun kuulet lumihiutaleiden pauhun

elama on
kuolema ei

Pasolini in memoriam
Vuerilla itkevat yksinaiset puut
laaksojen lehdossa varajava hamara

Pasolini
Pasolini

pihlajissa punaiset marjat

and even lampposts listen
as they spread lemon-scented light
onto the palms of the walker of the night

Just as the summer came
sun glowed slowly
behind the rising thundercloud
and flies made angry dives
a windgust blew in
through an open window
three yellow birchleaves

I am the trees of forest

a fir
for you to carve your name in bark

a pine
for you to carve a boat of bark

a juniper
whose bitter berries
shelter under stinging needles

I am the tree of forest
waiting panting for rain
carrying on the stoney heart
the red berries of heather

every evening
I mount these stairs
to see the clouds fill with sighs
and glimmering fish
caress the waves of big waters

every evening
the clouds fill with sighs
it is as if raining

Sometimes I feel like an oil-lamp
heart burning out
even the words are ashy

It's so quiet
one can hear the heart beat

it's so quiet
perhaps you don't notice
I sit here and wait for you
so quietly

Then you are in countryside
when you can hear the snowflakes' roar

Life is
death isn't

Pasolini in Memoriam
Lonely trees cry on the mountains
in the valleys' graves a shivering dusk

Pasolini
Pasolini

red berries in rowantrees

*(This is not a tribute to just the Italian filmmaker, but also
to my admired Italian racing driver, Renzo Pasolini, who
died in an accident in Monza, Italy on May the 20th, 1973.*

*together with my countryman, Jarne Saarinen. That is why I
have repeated the name in the poem.)*

CHANT

by Jean Genet

Jean Genet represents a compelling problem to contemporary society, a problem brilliantly explicated by Jean Paul Sartre in *Saint Genet: Actor and Martyr*. In international intellectual currency, Genet is the social outlaw par excellence, perceived by Society as its malevolent antithesis, the dragon of anarchy gnawing at the roots of civilization, the high priest of crime, especially the heresies of theft and homosexuality.

However, Genet also represents an equally compelling and quite different problem to the contemporary homosexual community, to advocates of alternate life styles, to defenders of what we might call ontological freedom. To intellectual androgynes, Genet appears almost a reactionary collaborationist, hating the right enemy, Society, for the worst of all reasons, envy. Genet's saintly burglars steal a sense of ownership, become the proprietors of the dark, mysterious, and powerful property, a brief union with the Order which characteristically receives from Genet's characters the involuntary consent of an erection. Likewise, Genet's particular style of homosexuality reflects precisely the conventional folk stereotypes which are, after all, nothing but an extension of the cultural myths of Femininity and Masculinity into the realm of the inhuman where love will not be able to follow. Genet's apparent position lends support mainly to those feathered or leathered devotees of "the poetry of pain" who find themselves mesmerized by uniforms, who cling to a destructive stereotype because it is the only available model. But Genet has recorded the inevitable rules of this game: the taboo against affection, the impersonality of sexual relations, the universality of betrayal. Those who want to find their own way must rely on the personal testimony of the trustworthy, like Genet, to warn of a given direction's dangers and possibilities. It comes to seem that Genet is something Society must, in a way, accept and that individualists must, in a sense, reject.

Genet's great value is that he undertook to live an onto-logical adventure made possible out of the materials of his personal circumstances, and has recorded his experience and his conclusions with complete honesty. It would be our misfortune if we failed to hear what he has to say. And what he tells his middle class readers again and again is that they will find in his characters and in himself, themselves. Prison only recapitulates the culture that created it. His fictional world is a vast dark mirror held up to the Medusa of established society in hope that her realization of her own ugliness will turn her to stone.

What sort of love is possible in such a world? Genet suggests the world is not ready for it. All personal relationships are too infected with nervous questions or dominance and exploitation to reach the possibility of love. Genet's characters cannot afford the vulnerabilities of affection: Querelle, his last fictional hero, consciously protects himself against them by murdering or betraying its causes. Querelle knows in his bones that Society's ultimate weapon is sentimentality, its real tyranny emotional. Genet too knows very well what both state and religion claim as the foundation of their superstructures: a love woven of suffering, patience, and sacrifice, attitudes that are virtues only when they are unavoidable, and Genet, who gloriously insists upon willing his ignoble life, wants no part of them. He arrives, thus, at the regrettable conclusion that one cannot engage in love-as-esteem without being gathered into the body politic, or at least leaving oneself entirely too exposed.

How then can Genet write "A Chant of Love"? The reader of Genet finds that he had to create love in prison out of some very unlikely materials if he was to have it at all; certainly the poem documents the



magnitude of his need.

The beloved Genet conjures here changes, shifts constantly under the pressure of lyricism all the more authentic when strained. The beloved has no name; he is shepherd, prison guard, God. The sexual sorcery compels the beloved to disappear into his parts, especially his cock which is then massaged with metaphorical transformations until it is radiant. The localizing of the beloved's Being in his cock has the purpose, of course, of transforming the human object of his adoration into the impersonal universal body of God.

Unfortunately, the impersonality flanked by transcendence on one side is flanked by the most desperate loneliness on the other. To work

D'AMOUR

Translated by Walter Mosley



illustration by Ken Wood

his magic in real life, Genet would require a completely indifferent bully like Armand whose appeal lay in his consummate selfishness, a strange and terrible god, an idol for self-hate. If Genet could have brought down the necrophilous temple of the Philistines, he would have had to perish with it like Samson. If we, following Sartre's advice to "use Genet properly" read Genet so that his "martyrdom" won't be wasted on us, we will witness his courage together with his desperation. We will also find in this poem perhaps the most reverent account of male sexuality in literature.

— Walter Mosley

A CHANT OF LOVE

Shepherd, descend from the sky where your ewes sleep!
(I betray you, sweet Winter, for the Shepherd's down)
Again if your sex is frosted, underneath my breath
Dawn will free it of that fragile dress.

Is it a question of making love at sunrise?
Their chants sleep still in the throats of herdsmen.
Let us open our curtains on this marble setting —
Your bewildered face sprinkled with sleep.

O your grace overpowers me and I look away
Fine vessel, adorned for the marriage of Islands
And evening. Tall mast; Sweet insult.
O my continent, black my robe of mourning!

Passion in clusters of gold, an instant out of God
(He sighs and falls asleep), relieved, released from yourself.
Aided by your hand, I believe the sky descends
And tenderly places his white gloves over our eyes.

It is his gentleness most of all which isolates you and spreads
This November rain over your fine brow.
What a shadow, what an Africa envelopes your limbs,
The twilight of dawn inhabited by a serpent!

Leaves dance upside down and fog wanders —
To which tree do you tie this shawl, windflower?
My finger breaks the frost on the wood of your harp,
Child of the bullrushes, standing with parted hair.

At the edge of my cap a branch of hazelwood
caught awry teases my ear.
Within your neck I hear a bird sputtering
And my horses sleep upright in the path.

The shoulder of the sea caressing the listless eye
(My sandal is wet to the loosened wing)
I feel my hand swollen under your warm moss
Fill with white flocks invisible in air.

My lambs will graze from your hips to your neck
To crop a grass fine and sunburnt,
From the acacia flowers rolled in your voice
Goes the bee to steal the honey of their echoes.

But the green pavilion of vagrants of the sea
Must keep watch somewhere, to be caught in the poles.
To shake off the night, the sky, to powder your shoulders
With your sandy feet, to pierce sources of air.

To cheer me up, maked on blue stairs
Solemn and sinking into waves of dreams,
Weary of perishing endlessly two fingers from the goal,
The horizon fell asleep in your folded arms.

Your bare arms will neigh quartering my night.
Damien, these black horses disenbowel the deep water.
Take me at a gallop, belly-born centaurs.
Arm of a negro who dies if sleep fails me.

I have adorned their nostrils with ribbons, with roses,
Even with the locks from shorn ewes;
I've longed to caress their sunny dress
With my arm extended over the stream!

Your stubborn shoulder has rejected my hand;
It dies desolate on my docile wrist:
The hand which hurries in vain is cut off but more agile
(Five fingers of a thief with carmine nails).

So many hands on the edge of these paths, these woods:
Near your neck it loved to live naked
But becomes almost a monster in your eyes.
On the heel of my hand I will kiss your fingers.

Shot by surprise, a soldier smiles at me
From a bloody trellis on the white-washed wall.
The shred of a discourse caught in the branches
And in the grass, a sour hand of rotten toes.

I speak of a country flayed to the bone.
France of the perfumed eyes, you are our image.
Sweet as her nights, perhaps more,
And like them, wounded O France, at once.

Slow ceremony to the sound of twenty drums
Veiled. Naked cadavers borne around the town.
By moonlight a cortege with brasses files past
Into your wooded valley, at the moment of plowing.

Poor hand that will melt! And still you leap
Into the grass. From a sore or blood on the stones
Who can be born, what page and what ivied angel
Choke me? What soldier carrying your dead fingernails?

Do I lie down at these feet that uncurl the sea?
A fine love story: a boy of the village
Loves the errant sentinel on the beach
Where the amber of my hand attracts a lad of iron!

At his torso, sleeping – creamy almond
Of a novel sort; star, O curled up child
– This tingling of blood in the azure passage,
It is the bare foot of evening sounding on my lawn.

This form is the rose's and keeps you pure.
Take care of it. The evening already expands you
And you appear to me (all your robes removed)
Curled in your sheets or upright against a wall.

Dare my lip to the edge of this hemmed petal
Poorly shook to gather a drop that falls?
Its milk swells my throat like a flight of doves.
O remain a rose, an empearled petal.

Your rays, spiney fruits of the sea, scratch me.
But the fine nail of evening will know how to cleave the shell.
My rosy tongue at this rim to drink its fill.
If my heart retained in the gold of a false chignon

Capsize anchored, living without being able to vomit
Into a sea of bile attached to your gender
I travel immobile with immense strides
This unkind world where you watch me sleep.

I roll under the sea and your wave above
Works its twisted axle with your storms;
However, I shall go far away, for the sky at work
With the horizon's thread has sewn me in a sheet.

Around your house I prowls without hope.
My sad whip hangs at my neck. I watch
Through the shutters of your beautiful eyes those elms,
Those palaces of foliage where evening goes to die.

Whistle hooligan tunes, march with hard face,
Your heel crushing the broods of birds in the bullrushes,
Cut to pieces, in the wind in golden shells,
The air of April mornings, and whip the sky

But see that it doesn't destroy itself and shed its leaves at your feet.
O you my clear sustenance, most fragile star
Of night, between lace and snow of these isles
Gold your shoulders, white the finger of your almond tree.

BEST BOOKS of 1979



RUSHES

by John Rechy

In his seventh novel, based as much on life as the past six, Rechy openly explores the theme that has been the undercurrent of all his fiction: gay self-destruction. Here he condenses his past characters into a handful that offer and posture arguments from all sides, resulting in a fiction that becomes philosophy. Action, too, is condensed; a single evening in a decaying New York waterfront bar. Beyond the catharsis of Rechy's fiction; the genre of gay sexuality is taken to its final conclusions. This is Rechy's finest writing and one of the most authentic of gay novels. (Grove Press)



THE CATCH TRAP

by Marion Zimmer Bradley

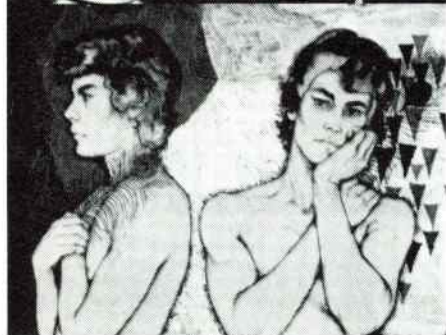
Science-Fiction writer Bradley turns to the gay romantic novel and American history in her tale of star-crossed lovers amid the glamour and squalor of the traveling circus. It is non-recriminating to say that Ms. Bradley writes like a man; the matter-of-factness of her characters sexuality rings with an honesty completely unexpected. Rich characterizations, highly-detailed environments, and the feel of the 1940s combine in an epic tale of gay awareness and the aerialists of the big top. It manages to never wane trite, as such a tale easily could in the hands of a less sincere writer. (Ballentine)



LOVERS: THE STORY OF TWO MEN

by Michael Denny

What began as a magazine article in *Christopher Street* finalized into an astute look at real sexual and emotional drama. Universal and immediate, Denny's interviews with two lovers and his analysis of their relationship has a staying power that is uncanny. Its insights and complexity creep up on the reader well after the reading. All the familiar trappings are avoided, and the finished product stands as both a sociological and psychological study of importance. (Avon)



NOW THE VOLCANO

edited by Winston Leyland

This anthology of South American gay writers opens new vistas in gay literature. From the intimate memoir to the specific reflection of life as fiction, and the highly-polished planes of poetry, the collection captures both the sense of South American gay literature and of life itself. An absolute cachet of undiscovered jewels. (Gay Sunshine Press)



KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN

by Manuel Puig

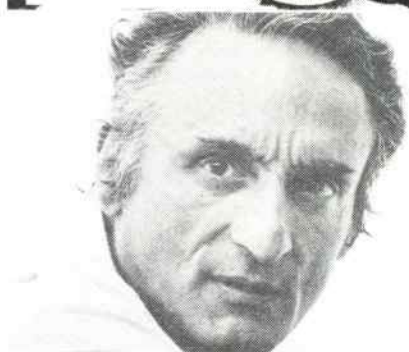
After gaining international attention and recognition with his earlier, equally daring novels, Puig descends into a hellhole of sexual and political repression in his native Argentina that stuns the reader while adding incredible power to the importance of projects like the Leyland anthology. Like his subject matter, Puig's literary devices are daring and easily exploited. He manages to entertain in one breath and devastate in the next. (Knoph)

BEST BOOKS of 1979



THE GAY REPORT
by Allen Young and Karla Jay

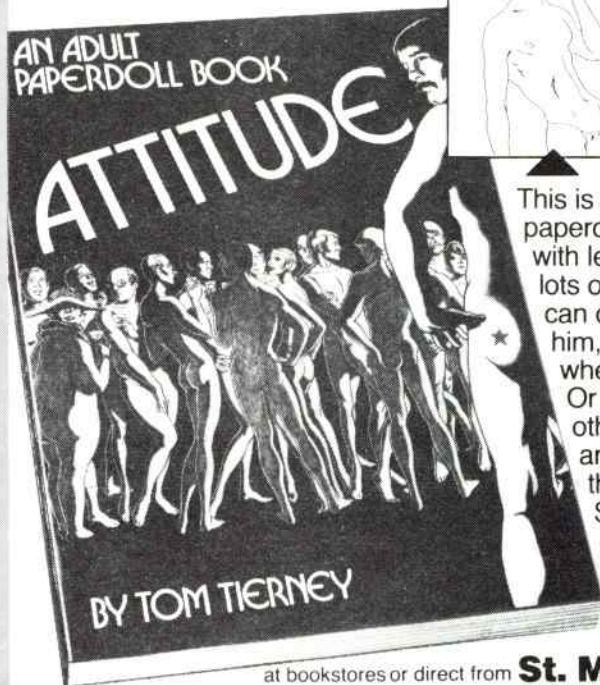
The long awaited cross-examination of gay lives and lifestyles stands head and shoulders above its forerunners. The report, culled from exhaustive and highly-personal questionnaires allows its participants an involvement lacking from the rigid scientific volumes of the past. Ordinary gay men and women add the weight against the arguments of homophobia in this massive, easily accessible work. The book has the overwhelming sense of cinema, moving from montage to close-up with extraordinary skill. Without question, and to date, the finest work of its kind. (Summit Books)



DRAWINGS AND DIGRESSIONS
by Larry Rivers

Himself one of the key figures in the modern American art movement, Rivers lays bare his own and the lives of the circle of friends in which he lived, worked and loved. For a living American artist, this combination of memoir and opinion is a singular achievement; for gays interested in the sensibilities of gays in the art movement it may be a revelation. River's relationship with Frank O'Hara is presented openly, honestly, unflinchingly. It is a rare look at both the art movement and the decades it encompassed from a man who was a part of it without the usual exclusion of the genre's inherent homosexual contributions. (Clarkson N. Potter, Inc.)

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Reintroducing

JOHN HORNE BURNS

by John Mitzal

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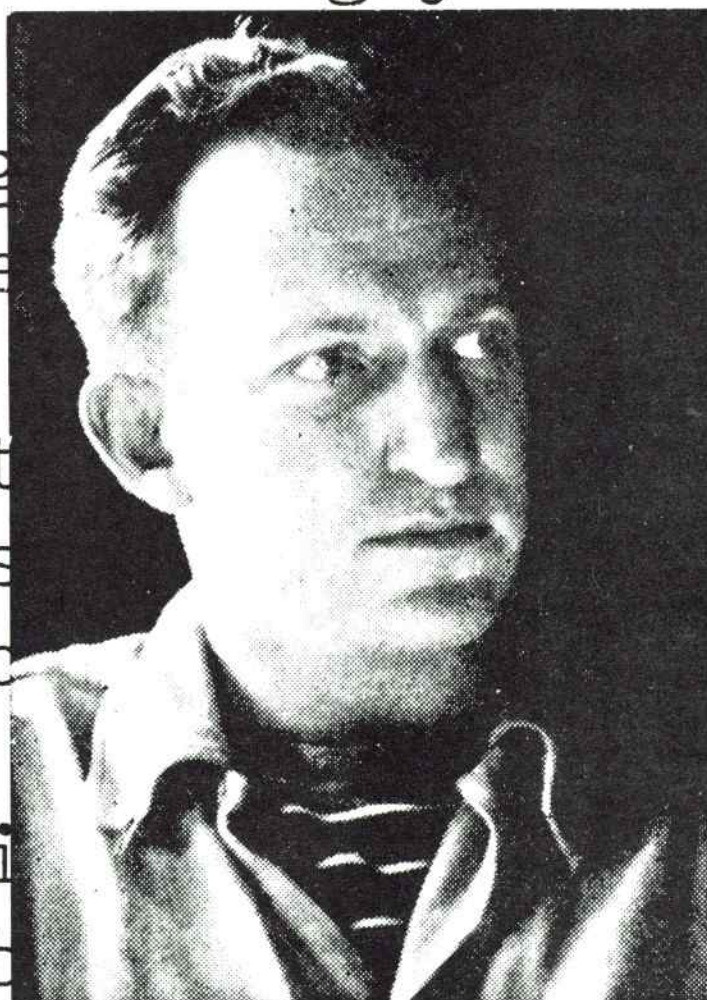
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John Horne Burns in 1949

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In the late 1940s, no aspect of American life escaped the heady rush of our government's new Imperialism. Literary life, no less than any other activity, was infected by this new sense of World Importance. Our nation was, or so it was advertised, the New Colossus. We were promised a Great Literature of the New American Age. The most highly-regarded writers were those who pushed the new Macho Imperial party line. Works of The Conquering Democracy. Brash new All-American Talent was encouraged — until it refused to conform. All this had a price. Many junk writers were overpraised and promoted. Several good writers got "edited out" for not playing ball; John Horne Burns was one of these.

Burns, a popular American writer from 1947 to 1953, was virtually obliterated from American literature after his death. Happily, there has been a renewed interest in his life and his work in the past five years. This has been a direct result of the attention paid Burns by the gay community.

John Horne Burns, born in 1916 at Andover, Massachusetts, was the first of seven children in a second-generation Irish-American family. His father had begun as a railroad worker, but escaped with a scholarship to Andover Academy and Harvard University. His marriage to Catherine Horne united two rapidly-rising Irish-immigrant clans. By the time John Horne Burns was born, a lot of family ambition was riding on him.

Burns was a shy youth. "I went to the convent school of the Sisters of Notre Dame. Here came Catholic children both rich and poor to learn to read and write. It was a long time there before I discovered that I must hit other little boys with my fists to protect my own dreamy interests." Then came Andover and Harvard. "There I sopped up learning so rich and so thick as to make me precious and more than a little snide. I came within an inch of going arty. I dwelt in a delightful superhuman elegance — delightful for me. I laughed at everything because I was above everything."

He was also homosexual, as one friend later described him, "perhaps the most committed homosexual" man he'd ever met. Enduring a repressed Irish-Catholic background where social acceptance and success were demands of the family, sexual non-conformity was not discussed and little acted on. Burn's outlet, as it has been for so many tal-

ented but closetted homosexuals, was Culture. Burns knew half a dozen languages, played the piano, was an Opera Queen.

Leaving Harvard in 1937, Burns took a position teaching English at Loomis Academy, a would-be toney prep school in Windsor, Connecticut. Loomis was to be (roughly) the model of The Academy in his brilliant second novel, *Lucifer With A Book*. He spent four years there. One of his little charges his first year was Taylor Mead who remembered Burns as a "sadist genius. He had the finest class I've ever been to, but his exams were sadistic and I really hated poetry for the next 10 or 15 years." Mead also recalls that Burns was the faculty advisor of the student literary magazine who allowed Mead to print a scatological poem which caused a school sensation.

The war came. Burns was drafted into the Army. "I went to the infantry as a private in January 1942. I went to OCS. In 1943 I went overseas as a second lieutenant. In a replacement depot they gave me forty infantry replacements to train. I was just getting fond of them when they were shipped off to Salerno and shot. All that saved me was my Harvard knowledge of languages."

Burns followed the Allied advance through Sicily and up the Italian peninsula. He wound up in Caserta as a prisoner of war investigator, where he remained until he was decommissioned in 1946. He saw the war as a personal challenge. "I decided that this was to be the test of me. I saw myself posturing, for I've always been a little Byronic, wondering if I *could*, in a crisis." He proved to himself he did have it. And he survived. But he was a changed man.

He observed in the Italians, in this time of war, something that his previous life in New England had not prepared him for. "In the nineteen days of crossing the Atlantic, I remember that something happened to me inside. I didn't know what adjustment to make for where I was going, but I think I died as an American." Writing in *The Gallery* about an Irish-American Catholic boy much like himself, he said: "He'd opened a door into a world that had nothing to do with merchandising and selling, with the trapped four-four beat of boogie-woogie, with naked girls shaking their navels through cigar smoke on a runway, with nervous old ladies totting up their insurance, with the fact that he wouldn't live to be twenty-eight, with the gum-

beatings of topkicks, with the smell of the world like a slaughter-house, with groping and misunderstanding and cruelty. He saw for the first time in his life that the things which keep the world going are not to be bought or sold."

Gore Vidal, who met Burns in Italy in the early '50s, would later write: "In Naples, he fell in love with the idea of life. For Burns it was a revelation to realize that he belonged not to an army of civilized liberators but to a barbarian horde humanly inferior to the conquered."

For an Irish-Catholic boy, on his way to becoming a stuffy academic, wartime Italy, with easy opportunities for sex and affection, presented a world of discovery. The changes Burns went through during the war are evident in his lively correspondence to his family. This correspondence is kept by his sister, Cathleen Burns Elmer. Mrs. Elmer, an occasional children's book reviewer for *The New York Times Book Review*, informed me that she has been working on the definitive biography of her late brother since 1954, and will allow no others to share her resources. She seems not at all pleased that the renewed interest in her brother's life and work is led by homosexuals. She lamented: "The current revival of interest in Jack's life and work might take an abrupt detour from the kind of wide-ranging renaissance that cuts across both popular and critical boundaries and end up as a self-defeating cultist phenomenon a la James Dean and Judy Garland, to mention two distasteful recent examples. I'm sure you'd be the first to agree that Jack deserves a happier fate than this . . ." Mrs. Elmer expresses a proprietary interest in her late brother's work, and her attitude reveals all too well the kind of fate homosexual artists often suffer at the hands of their surviving family members who perhaps would prefer to "keep his act clean."

After John Horne Burns was released from the U.S. Army, he returned to Loomis Academy for a brief stint. There he wrote *The Gallery*, his first published novel. It was heralded as the best book about WW 2. It became a best-seller and Burns a literary personality.

After Italy, Burns found Loomis stultifying. The aging tyrant who ran the school, Mr. Batchelder, had words with Burns. "The headmaster of the Loomis School dealt me what I considered the meanest cut of my life; so I lost my temper and walked out on the spot. It's just as well, because I was knocking myself out there — to no end for what I really want to do with my life."

He moved to the West End of Boston, then a densely populated, predominantly Italo-American immigrant community dotted with charming and historic Bullfinch houses (since bulldozed for urban renewal). "I live in a 5-room apartment done in gay colors; my house, I think, has

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A Cry of Children, Harper & Brothers, 1952 (Paperback: 1953)
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a feeling of relaxation and well-being about it. Here people drink my special manhattans, eat lobster, and listen to a very powerful phonograph which is a source of complaint from the neighbors. I hate to go to bed before dawn and I can't bear to be up before noon." During this time he wrote his best work, *Lucifer With A Book*. It's a lacerating look at secondary education in America, particularly in that period when the U.S. was adjusting to its new Empire, with its attendant cold-war political reaction and the creeping militarization of life. Published in 1949, *Lucifer* was uniformly knifed by critics. It did not sell well. Many reviewers were outraged by the graphic homosexual sub-theme in the story, as well as by the primance of two outrageous, screaming queens (called The Abbot and The Abbess). The Great War Novelist, on whom they had bestowed their accolades, turned out to be slightly pinko in his politics and a little too lavender in his sympathies. This was not allowed. He had to go.

In 1948, Burns also wrote a play, *Vessel of Honor*. It was never published nor produced. He appeared at Indiana University and addressed a writers' confab. In his speech, *The Creative Writer in the 20th Century*, he weighed in against the cold-war literary-tastemakers (often called The New Critics), the very same who were busy penning him. "I believe that the most vital writing in the world today is being done in America. Pressure is still put on young American novelists to conform to a critical party line. Critics of this school would like to spay the wonderful, fresh intellectual influences loose in postwar America. Their gods are the unreadable Henry James, the tenuous Elizabeth Bowen, the waspish I. Compton-Burnett, the over-rated Graham Greene, the dessicated T.S. Eliot, the garrulously-negating Sartre, the claustrophobic Franz Kafka. I think these same critics would have done Keats to death."

In 1949, Burns travelled to London for the publication of *Lucifer*. He then moved on to Italy where he lived outside Florence for the remaining years of his life. "I chose to stay in Tuscany indefinitely. I've taken a house here, and I'm very happy. As the last of the romantics, I find everything in Tuscany — good cooking, a kitten, a collie, and the love that I need. Everybody in this tiny village is Communist, and they treat me marvelously. At any rate I live sumptuously on \$45 a week."

In 1952, Harper & Bros. published Burns' third novel, *A Cry of Children*. This was a story, done in very broad strokes, of Irish-Catholics in Boston (shanty v. "two-toilet" Irish). It details the smothering influence of a repressive religion in a city of political corruption, and how both work to snuff out any genuine human contact. In Boston,



John Mitzel in the yard of Paul Revere's house/Boston (photo by Michael Thompson)

where many dead people still vote each election, *A Cry of Children* shows how the dead can win in life too. It is a harsh, unrelenting and not altogether successful effort. It contains perhaps the most brutal scene of male homosexual sado-masochism in recent fiction — a scene I'm convinced no straight critic could understand. Needless to say, this novel was quickly done in by the Lit. Mob. In fact, the bookchat writer for the toney *New Yorker* even advised Harper to drop Burns from their lists — which they did.

In 1953, Burns was busy with his next book, *The Stranger's Guise*. Harper wouldn't touch it. Freddy Warburg, Burns' English publisher, was eager about the book but wanted major rewriting, which Burns was happy to do. While busy at this, Burns died of cerebral hemorrhaging in August, 1953. He was 36 years old. He was buried in Florence.

The mother was not pleased. She had family representatives exhume the body in Italy and had it returned for a proper family burial. John Horne Burns now lies buried in Holyhood Cemetery in Brookline, Massachusetts, a few gravesites removed from the Kennedy family plot.

After Burns' death, his books quickly went out of print. But the gay interest in his novels remained, even if an under-

ground in the drear decade of the 1950s. Edward Sagarin, while still operating under the name of Donald Webster Cory, included in his volume *Twenty-One Variations on a Theme* a chapter from *The Gallery*. This was "Momma," which humorously depicted a make-shift gay male bar for soldiers in occupied Naples. In 1958, an essay exploring the homoerotic content of Burns' work appeared in *One*, the pioneer homophile magazine. Paperback reprints of *The Gallery* have appeared from time to time. Burns' novels have appeared in print more frequently out of the U.S. than for domestic readers. In 1974, I wrote and published a small book, *John Horne Burns: An Appreciative Biography*. In 1977, Avon/Discus reissued both *The Gallery* and *Lucifer With A Book* in mass market editions. The editor at Avon who was responsible for this good deed assured me that these titles will now stay in print for a long time. He has also expressed some interest in possible publication of a collection of Burns' short stories.

After two decades of virtual oblivion, the work of John Horne Burns has again been made available. It is the gay movement which has reclaimed him. He is part of our recent — but nearly lost and buried — history.

DANCE



"It seems no exaggeration to say that dance fever is sweeping the nation. There are more than 850 companies now performing (amateur and professional), and countless other groups give occasional recitals. In ten years, audience attendance has increased an incredible 1500%." That's how Nancy Reynolds prefaces her epic *The Dance Catalog* (Harmony Books, 1979), and she isn't talking about disco.

The revival of interest in ballet, and ultimately all forms of classical dance expression, has been nothing less than phenomenal. Films like *The Turning Point*, the upcoming *Nijinsky*; books like Richard Buckle's stunning biography of Nijinsky; the dance sequences in Ken Russell's *Valentino*: all have captured the public's imagination.

Nancy Reynolds, herself a former dancer with the New York City Ballet, has created a highly-readable feast with the all-encompassing *Dance Catalog*. From the simplest foundations of dance to complex dance therapy, alternative careers in dance, criticism, and hardcore information; her book is the most enjoyable reference guide since *The Whole Earth Catalog*. The 250 illustrations enhance the splendid achievement.

Established dance aficionados will revel in the release of John Willis' *Dance World 1978* (Crown Books, 1979). Willis' thirteenth annual covers every major production, company and dancer for the preceding year. There are over 700 photographs in this handsome production.

Next to Degas, no individual illustrator has captured the image of ballet as well as Edward Gorey. Well-known for

Mikhail Baryshnikov (top) with the Eliot Feld Ballet in SANTA FE SAGA; Nijinsky (center) from THE WORLD OF DIAGHLEV; New York City Ballet's BUQAKU (below left); Bob Fosse's DANCIN' (below right).

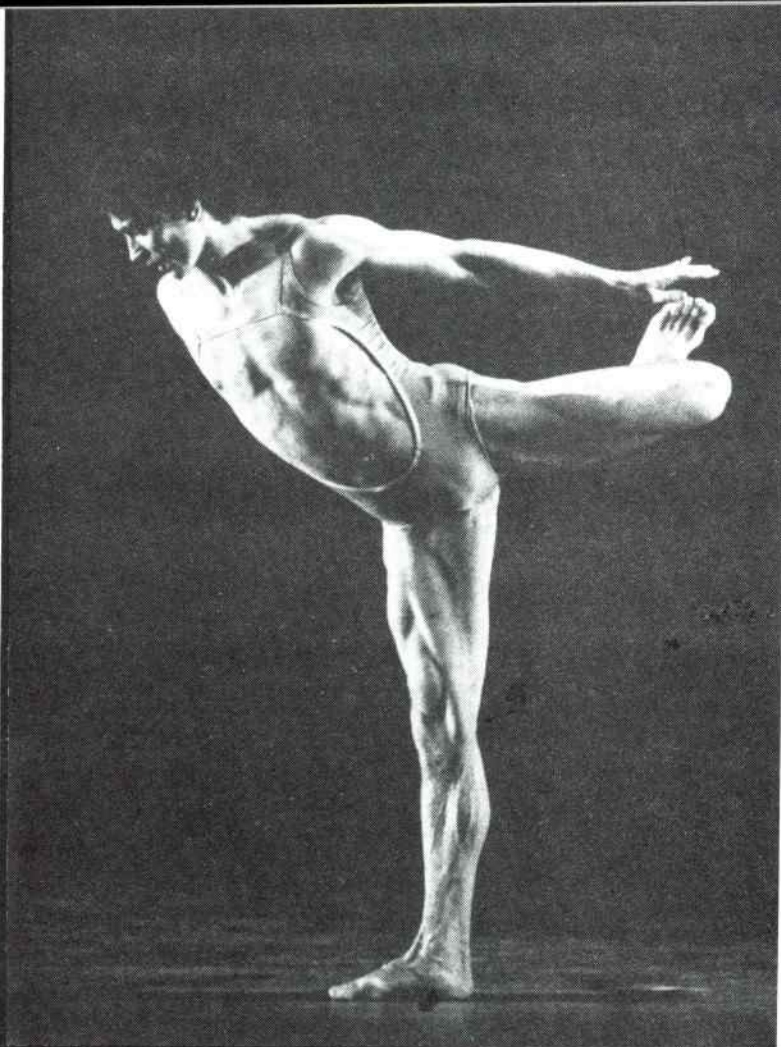


his fanciful, satiric, often frightening pen and ink drawings; his *The Gilded Bat* (Dodd, Mead; 1979) is a fine example of the artist's dance sensibilities. This delightful little book tells, through scant text and lavishly expansive drawings, a petit ballet tale that constantly seems to be about more than it's about. Gorey's books are the sort of rare little treasure that gets passed from intimate friend to initiate with reverence.

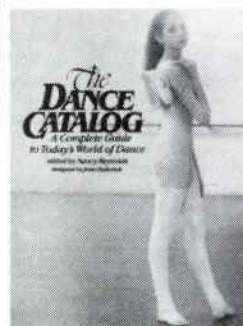
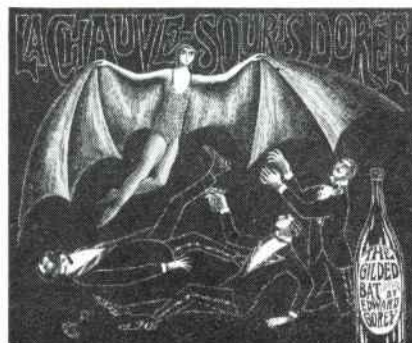
The disappointment for the year's wealth of dance literature is John Percival's *The World of Diaghilev*. Himself a dance critic for the London Times, this scant biography is long on illustrations and short on real astonishments. Disappointing, because til now all the fame of the Ballet Russe has gone, for the most part, to Nijinsky — and little to the man who created the ballet company that changed the course of dance for the entire world. *The World of Diaghilev* (Harmony Books, 1979) acts as a teaser for a still awaited definitive biography.

Upcoming is John Gruen's biography of dancer Erik Bruhn, to be published by The Viking Press.

— Christopher Nobel



Stuttgart Ballet's DAPHNE (above); Rudolph Mureyev (top right) in MOMENTS; RODEO (center) at the Joffrey Ballet; (bottom) John Willis' DANCE WORLD (Crown), Edward Gorey's THE GILDED BAT (Dodd, Mead), Nancy Reynold's THE DANCE CATALOG (Harmony).



GREEK REVIVAL

The Eternal Olympica edited by Nicolaos Yalouris; Caratzas Brothers, Publishers; 1979; Oversized edition; 303 pages; illustrated; \$40.00

Greek Homosexuality by K.J. Dover; Harvard University Press; 1978; 244 pages; illustrated; \$20.00

Seemingly unrelated subjects like the ancient Greek Olympics and the examination of homosexuality in classic Greece can be easily bound together, as in these lavish examples, when the art and artifacts of the time explored are the foundation for both.

But a basic dissimilarity stands to make one very popular and the other a tome only for the hard-core intellectual.

The Eternal Olympica is a visual feast. If the easy to comprehend text were excluded, there would be enough going for this work to warrant publication. The various authors only enhance the beauty and sweep of the illustrations by writing interesting, informative, ultimately captivating explanations of the times, the culture and the games. Each individual sport is historically traced and explained. Renderings illustrating how the events were staged open whole new doors in understanding the structure of what was

— during its time — the single most important social event of the known world. Until the games were finally banned by the church (that's right); they represented the best of ancient detantes.

Beyond the history, explanations and illustrations; the massive work also introduces the reader to some of the documented heros of the ancient olympics. The only way to describe it is this: it's the excitement of mythology brought to life — only it's real history. This should be the coffeetable book of the year.

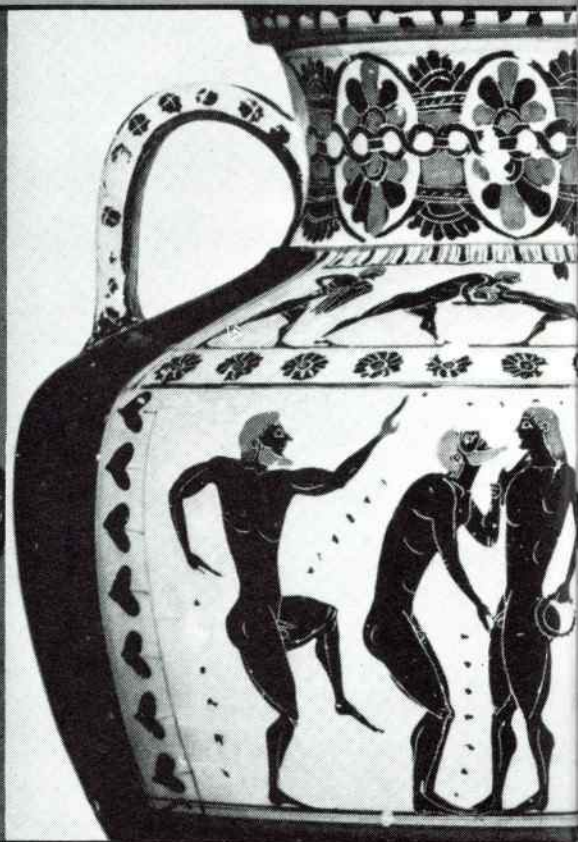
K.J. Dover's *Greek Homosexuality* is also a lavishly illustrated work, examining the documentation of homosexuality in ancient Greece through artifacts, paintings, vases and existing texts. It's a combination of literature and art; but designed for the serious student of antiquity — and the extremely patient layman. Kenneth Dover is the President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, England — and I seriously doubt he expected his scholarly work would receive the general media attention it has. But Dover may not have realized in compiling and publishing his extraordinary evidence that he was validating opinions held, for the most part, as wishful thinking. Even in contem-

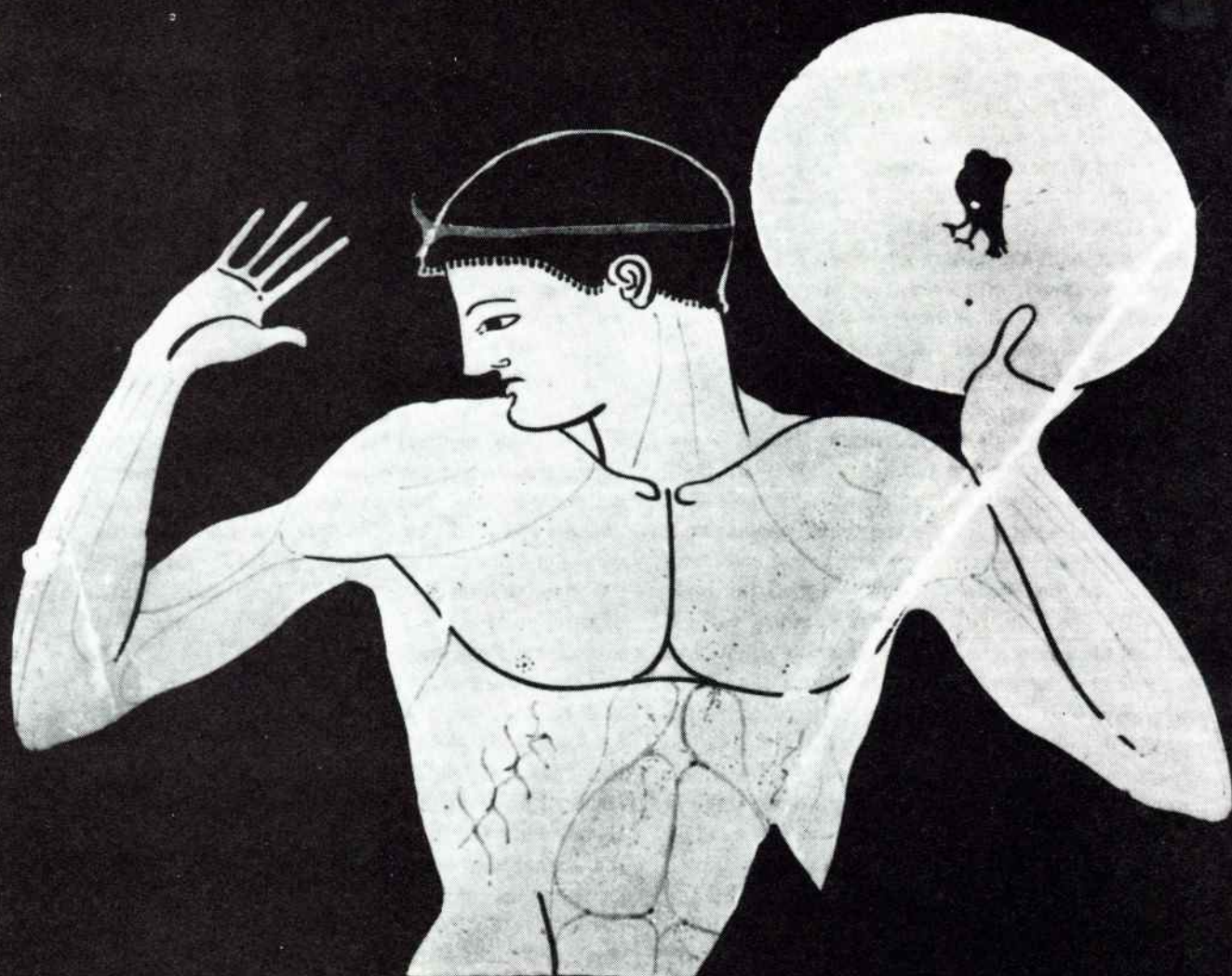
porary Greece, students are not taught of their homosexual ancestors; except in rude asides and as historical gossip. That anyone could read the surviving works of Plato or Socrates and not know what was going on might surprise today's intelligensia — but the world has maintained a habit of keeping blind about things they did not wish to see.

Dover commits a few ambiguous and unnecessary disclaimers now and then, but what must be realized is the overwhelming importance of such an academic breakthrough. More than having written the definitive treatment, Dover has opened the door for a great deal of historic examination; more of which will be presented, one would hope, under such auspicious watermarks as the university presses.

The illustrations in *Greek Homosexuality* are amazing if predictable. The predictability comes from seeing documented scenes of homosexual conduct whose existence has been hidden away — or at least not rushed into the public view — for centuries. The amazement comes from the clever ways Dover sees homosexual behavior and sensibility in heterosexual explicit artwork.

— Charles Musgrave





BOOKS

RED HERRINGS

The Lure by Felice Picano; Delacorte Press; 1973; hardbound; 410 pages; \$9.95

The Lure is divided into four sections, about 100 pages each. When you pick it up, you won't be able to lay it down until you are about half way through this psychological thriller. But by the time you get to part three, you won't be hooked anymore. That's about the place *The Lure* starts falling apart, and it does so rapidly.

And that's too bad, because the first two hundred pages are superb. Besides being extremely well-written, the beginning of the plot is amazingly original and captivating. The last half, however, has enough structural unbelievability to topple even the best of suspense writing. Not to mention enough red herrings to fill even the greediest fisherman's net.

What happened? It's hard to say. Picano is a very good writer. His earlier books (*Eyes*, *The Mermerist*, *Smart as the Devil*) were clean, quick, and effective. And maybe a lot of less demanding readers will fall for *The Lure*. But gay readers with any literary sensibilities aren't going to buy the story Picano is selling. At least not after the first two hundred pages.

Noel Cummings, a teacher, is out jogging early one morning in New York near the docks when he hears cries for help from inside a decaying warehouse. When he decides to involve himself, and finds the origin of the cries, he realizes he has seen/been witness to a murder. The dying victim pleads, as best he can, with Noel to go across the street to another seemingly deserted building and get help. When Cummings does, he is greeted with strong-arm suspicion and beaten half senseless. It turns out that the dead man across the street is but the most recent in a series of unsolved, gruesome mutilation murders. When Cummings is finally allowed to leave, the reader knows this is not the end of the involvement. Indeed, Cummings is cajoled/threatened/black-mailed into helping a police-type secret (but official) group in solving the murders and catching the killer. Cummings is to be the bait.

Picano's clever device (at first it's clever) is to make Cummings a heterosexual teacher whose wife recently died. That makes it physically possible for him to journey into New York's gay night-world — and proves to be one of the novel's most interesting rationales: That Cummings, having witnessed his wife's accidental death in his arms, having this



stranger also die in his arms — feels a compelling need to help find the killer and therefore redeem his sense of guilt over his lost wife.

But, it's this same heterosexual-in-gayland characterization that helps defeat the book; too easily does Cummings allow his sexual mores to be altered by circumstances over which he should have had more control. At first, that is; because Cummings and his sexuality are red herring Number One. Cummings' own unbelievability stems, in the book, from his own reasoning. He is filled with contradictions, and not all of them are resolved.

The major characters all take definite sub-shape in the first half; like half-sketched characters that promise more later but give enough to keep your interest, develop your admiration or hatred; generally begin to come alive. The payoff, the second half, simply doesn't bring them full term. The most inherently interesting character, the alleged killer that chance finds Cummings both stalking and avoiding; attracted to and terrified of; is like a tree viewed just after sunset: You know it's there and you can see that it's gigantic — but you can't tell if it's a maple or an oak. But he, Eric, is also red herring . . . perhaps

number twenty-seven. The real story, almost an aftermath, is so much bigger and so different from what you've been lead to believe that closing the cover and hurling the book across the room is the only predictable.

Picano wants to keep you guessing right up to the very end, and he does, as you and his plot fall smack dab into a black hole. Light can't escape the force of the gravity.

Felice Picano is a hell of a writer; *The Lure* is a hell of a disappointment.

— Charles Musgrave

PUPPY LOVE

Puppies by John Valentine; Ent-whistle Books, Box 611, Glen Ellen, CA 95442; 1979; original paperback; 174 pages; \$5.95

It would be easy to stereotype and fault John Valentine for being one of *those* kind of older, non-liberated gay men — you know the type — who only like straight teenagers and couldn't care less about 'positive role models' and 'gay community services centers.' After reading *Puppies*, you just might decide that you don't care for the man at all. You could even feel justified. Valentine sums himself up very well, "I am not the kind of person I would ever go to bed with,

and I can't understand why the people who do go to bed with me do so."

Valentine's merit lies in other than personifying the kind of gay man you might not want your brother to marry. He is an exceptional writer, almost a purist voice in a decade too filled with imitations of style that pass themselves off as 'great gay writing.' *Puppies* is great gay writing if only because it is honest gay writing.

A puppy is a young man, anywhere in a vague age range from about 14 to about 20, give or take a few years either way. He is usually straight, or straight-appearing (except that in the decade covered in this book — the 1960s — every young teenager managed to be neither or both); usually lost, either emotionally or geographically, and invariably desirable; if only to Valentine.

The book is written in the form of journal entries, which are neither consecutive nor chronological. Episodes are, for the most part, complete; gaps between years come from love-bouts where the author confesses he was too enraptured or too frantic to write anything down.

Seduction takes a variety of forms, and the highly detailed sex scenes are either too funny or too moving to be erotic. Sometimes Valentine is rebuffed; but rejection is, after all, a part of the search.

"My sole marked failure was one Hal Larch, 18, Canadian. He had a sleeping bag. There's no way to get through a sleeping bag that's zipped. Fuck sleeping bags."

The earliest entry is in 1966 and the latest in 1977. Although there is much we don't know about the narrator; the gradual change he undergoes during the most socially catalytic period of contemporary history is reflected in both his own sensibilities and in his sexuality. While he doesn't become a bandwagon gay rights activist, he is nonetheless forever changed (the ability to write this book, or assemble it, is an obvious part of the change). The sexual state of mind explored in *Puppies* exists today in a thousand uncharted places; even the influence of political power hasn't erased all vestiges of non-conforming homosexuality. Only now, people like John Valentine have a folk hero.

— Charles Musgrave

THE KISS OF THE SPIDER WOMAN

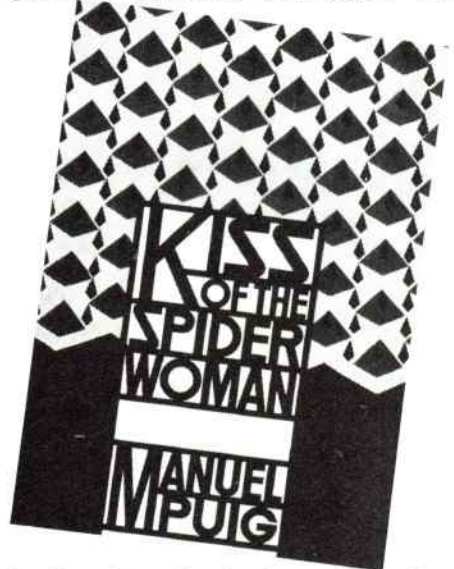
The Kiss of the Spider Woman by Manuel Puig, Alfred A. Knopf; 1979; hardcover; 282 pages, \$8.95.

I want to preface this review by saying that Puig is a very fine writer and this is a good novel. However, I also wish to point out some ways in which it could

have been better.

Kiss of The Spider Woman, by Manuel Puig (pronounced *Pwee*, I believe) is a very good novel. Talk of its being a 'masterpiece,' however, may be overstating the case.

The novel is about the interaction of two prisoners in a South American penitentiary, one a Marxist heterosexual, the other an effeminate homosexual. The



book explores the development of a love relationship, of sorts, between the two men. The author fortunately never lets the emotion get sticky. Nor does the sex get too sticky, for that matter. I found myself wanting more of the interaction of the two main characters and less of the grade-B movie plots that the homosexual (Molina) tells the Marxist (Valentin). Certainly the reader needs to understand the homosexual's love of old movies. They provide him with an escape from drab reality into the world of movie glamor/romance/horror trash art, and most of them are interesting, but some go on much too long (the story of the mag-nate and the actress in particular). Even longer are the interior monologues of the Marxist. I'm afraid I found them endless and too opaque.

We really must escape from the self-indulgence of so much so-called "art," that descendant of James Joyce that's turned into a bastard. I wish an editor had suggested to the author that a little goes a long way.

The use of dialogue, with no description of characters or action, except in a police report near the end, is an interesting technical achievement, but I do feel that it makes the book a bit thin. The reader winds up having to supply quite a bit, and I believe we'd be more deeply involved in the story if we weren't always eavesdropping, never seeing the whole scene.

Footnotes occur throughout the novel. They seem to stand in counterpoint to

the storyline. When Freud and others grow technical about homosexuality, its causes, and its behavior patterns, Molina, the prisoner, illustrates a humanity that makes all the theorizing sound pompous indeed. Perhaps the author wrote the novel to contradict some of these theories, or, in certain instances, to present behavior that he thinks is accurately described by Marcuse and Altman and other sexual theorists. At first I thought these footnotes were extraneous, but one should not skip them, because they add a background, a richness of texture that give the novel weight.

Some gay politicians might object to the delineation of Molina as a stereotype. That is, he thinks of himself as a woman, calls himself "she," assumes only the "passive" position, and so on. But the fact is, many homosexuals, especially in Latin countries, do think of themselves in traditional ways, whether they should or not. Furthermore, sometimes we are stereotypes, and denying it doesn't change the fact. The important thing is that Manuel Puig makes the homosexual the most likeable character in the book, and only the most foolish homophobe or the most rabid gay activist could fault the character for his goodness. (It's possible that the author has bent over backwards to make the homosexual good — washing the Marxist's soiled sheets, giving away his own food, etc. The homosexual even gives up his life at the end, when he gets out of prison, and dies in a rain of bullets to help the man he loves — like a heroine in an old movie, yes.)

But Manuel Puig is a fine artist who knows how to transform what could be trash into genuine art, and he's to be congratulated. And read.

— Daniel Curzon

AMOR MALDITO

Now the Volcano: An Anthology of Latin American Gay Literature edited by Winston Leyland; Gay Sunshine Press, Box 40397, San Francisco, CA 94104; 1979; paperback original; 288 pages, illustrated; \$7.95

Often you are encouraged to go out and buy a particular book that one reviewer or another, or a friend, will recommend as something your life should not be without — something worthwhile.

Now The Volcano is one of those books, and I don't think it can be recommended enough.

Winston Leyland traveled to various Latin American countries gathering the material for this impressive anthology. Often, manuscripts were handed to him by gay writers with a faith and confidence rare in the publishing world; rarer, considering the political realities of the nationalities involved. It was a trust more than an editing project; some of the

material in this anthology probably still can't be published in the country of origin.

Add to that sense of literary and political dissention the fact that Leyland is a superb editor, quickly grasping the underlying quality of inherently good writing — and you have a collection of gay literature that literally sings its way off the page.

Chances are you are not going to have heard of many, if any, of these writers before — which, in its own way is a singular treat. But you will readily be touched by the unique sensibilities of these Latin American gay writers and poets.

There is everything here from the traditional short story (although in a very real sense, there is nothing traditional about them — except in the most purist traditional short story sense), to poetry (published bilingually), to excerpts from novels . . . and a devastating section from Salvador Novo's memoirs. The illustrations, also by Latin American artists, enhance the stories.

By all means, go out and buy it; you'll savor every word.

— Charles Musgrave

LANDED GAY GENTRY

Lesbian Peoples: Material for a Dictionary by Monique Wittig and Sande

Zeig; Avon; 1979; Paperback; 160 pages; \$5.95

The Gay Stud's Guide to Amsterdam by Jacob Lowland; C.J. Aarts/*The Netherlands; 1979; paperback; 32 pages; \$2.50*

A Lover's Cock by Arthur Rimbaud and Paul Verlaine; Gay Sunshine Press; 1979; 64 pages; bi-lingual edition; \$3.95

There is something unsettling in reading bad verse by a figure as revered as Rimbaud. But everything can't be deathless poetry, and perhaps knowing that even Rimbaud could turn out the trite might bring some comfort to the lesser-known struggling gay poets of our time. When approaching *A Lover's Cock*, the reader has to remember that he is reading some of the first attempts at explicit homosexual verse written almost a hundred years ago and its inherent historical importance goes without saying. Occasionally the collection is redeemed by works like Rimbaud's 'The Tortured Heart'; a description of the poet's rape by a gang of French soldiers. When Rimbaud's passions are as deep-seated as this, the genius breaks through with a devastating cry. But in his and Verlaine's co-authored rhymes to various body parts, it remains, on the whole, silly and awkward.

Jacob Lowland is, unfortunately, less rewarding. Time and place (Amsterdam

and various gay bars) mean everything to *The Gay Stud's Guide to Amsterdam* and little to the untraveled reader. The familiar poses are in abundance.

Lesbian Peoples (originally published in France as *Brouillon Pour Un Dictionnaire Des Amantes*), on the other hand, is a compelling and often devastating reconstruction of women's mythology. Wittig and Zeig are pure visionaries; structuring a history that both inflames and soothes. Often scandalous, shocking to the run-of-the-mill chauvinist; this foundation for a race of ancient lesbians amazes and convinces. The redefined subjects range from Gaul (where the Red Dykes invented vanishing powder) to the Lance ("Amazons invented the lance from the exterior appearance of the vulva") to the orgasm ("The companion lovers of Taprobana say that on their island the blue lights produced by orgasms can illuminate the sky"). Believe it.

— J.B.

UNKIND MUTILATIONS

Routine Circumcision: The Tragic Myth by Nicholas Carter; Noontide Press, Box 1248, Torrance, CA 90505; original paperback; 1979; 144 pages

Except for a single absurd allegation, Nicholas Carter's book is the most compelling argument against the barbaric



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custom of circumcision ever written. The absurdity is an assumed equation that circumcision might cause homosexuality. Admittedly; this is not Carter's conclusion; and one that falls apart under even the simplest analysis; but to include it in his passionate brief against circumcision was as ridiculous as the concept itself.

The conclusion is based on two tests. First, in 1948, Menlitta Schmideberg treated two patients who were homosexual and circumcised. Because they also held resentment for their mothers and fears associated with their circumcisions, Schmidenberg concluded that the circumcision "was an important factor in the development of (their) homosexuality."

The second test was a study of admissions to a Naval hospital by Dr. John M. Foley where 100% of admissions diagnosed with "overt homosexuality" were circumcised.

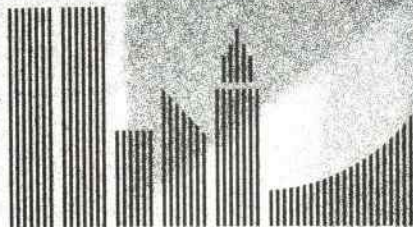
But, as the book points out repeatedly, in America a steady 90% of all males are routinely circumcised. In the last fifty years, escaping the knife has been extremely difficult. It would be expected that an overwhelming number of cases of "overt homosexuality" — whatever that really means — would be circumcised, given the overwhelming 90% of all males who have been. However, in

(Continued on page 68)



Drawing of Verlaine and Rimbaud in London by Felix Regamey

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him do it."

"You oughta take him to a doctor." His father picked up the salt shaker and shook salt all over his food.

"There's nothing wrong with that boy."

Benjy hugged Dopey, then put him between his knees under the tablecloth. He felt tiny.

Benjy's father took a bite of his mashed potatoes. "Nobody else's kid carries a doll around all the time!" He sipped his coffee. "Unless it's a *girl*!"

"We shouldn't be talking in front of the boy."

"Why not? I'm getting an ulcer — and he shouldn't be playing with dolls anyhow!"

"Well, you're gonna give *him* an ulcer, that's for sure! You eat too fast and you make the dinnertable just awful — you'll make my stomach all upset again and I'll need a laxative again —"

"I can smell that doll way over here!"

"You can't either!"

"Can too. Did he piss on that doll?"

"Don't talk like that, Patrick! You want *him* to talk like that?"

"You talk bad enough yourself when it suits you! Besides, I'd rather he talked like that then carried that smelly doll around all the time!"

"I suppose you'd like him to be a gambling old drunk like Grandpa Vance!"

Benjy's father didn't answer, shoveling peas and mashed potatoes into his mouth.

Benjy felt all sour in his stomach. The mashed potatoes in his mouth felt like sand. Yes, he'd peed on Dopey. During his nap yesterday. He knew it was Bad, but the pee-pee had dried and he'd hope nobody would know.

"I can smell piss!" Benjy's father insisted.

"Oh, you cannot!"

"Jimmy Moznik doesn't play with dolls and he's the same

age as Benjy!"

"D'you want Benjy being like that little monster, huh? Is that what you want? A little monster?"

"Better than a little sissy!"

"He's not a little sissy!" Benjy's mother said. "And if you don't quit saying that, you're gonna make him into one!"

Benjy wondered what a Sissy was. It was something terrible, like going Number 2 in your pants. He looked over at his father, who was usually not so grouchy — getting bald and eating too fast, with scratches on his hands from the factory, and dirty fingernails.

His father buttered a biscuit and bit into it. "I want you to get rid of that old doll, Benjy."

Benjy's eyes grew large and he squeezed Dopey between his legs.

"Do you understand?"

Benjy shook his head no.

"Well, you'll *have* to understand, that's all."

"You're not gonna touch that doll," Benjy's mother said.

"It stinks!"

"I'll wash it," she said.

"You'll throw it away."

"I will *not* throw it away!"

Benjy felt huge chunks of guilt crash against each other inside his chest.

Benjy's father gritted his teeth silently. "At least get him something *else* to play with. Something that's not a doll!"

"Like what?"

"Get him a truck. Or a gun."

"You gave him that gun for his birthday. Does he play with it?"

"Well, if he didn't have that stupid, pissy doll, maybe he would!"

"I tried to get him to play with the gun, but he wouldn't. He's just not like that!"

"How's he gonna defend himself in this world? Huh? What if he has to go in the service?"

"The war'll be over by then, so don't worry about it," Benjy's mother said, sipping her coffee.

"Well, I *do* worry about it! And we're gonna start by getting rid of that doll!" Benjy's father put down the fork. "Benjy, let me have your doll."

Benjy felt the kitchen walls move toward him, and he squeezed the doll between his legs as hard as he could. No, no, not Dopey! He loved Dopey, he loved Dopey more than anybody!

"We can't have you sleeping with a doll you peed on, can we? It ain't sanitary." Benjy's father got up and came over and moved Benjy's chair away from the table. He lifted Benjy off the telephone books, and Dopey dropped to the floor.

Benjy stared down at Dopey, who was lying face down on the linoleum.

"I'm just doing this for your own good, Benjy." His father picked up the doll. "Be back in a minute." He went out onto the back porch, just off the kitchen, where the incinerator was.

"No, Daddy, no!" Benjy wept, running after him.

"Benjy, you've got to start growing up! Stop that crying!" His father shook his finger at him. "Stay right there!"

"No, Daddy, *no*!" Benjy sobbed, the tears clogging his nose, not daring to move.

"You've got to start sometime!" his father said.

In horror Benjy watched as the lid of the incinerator was lifted off and Dopey was thrown inside.

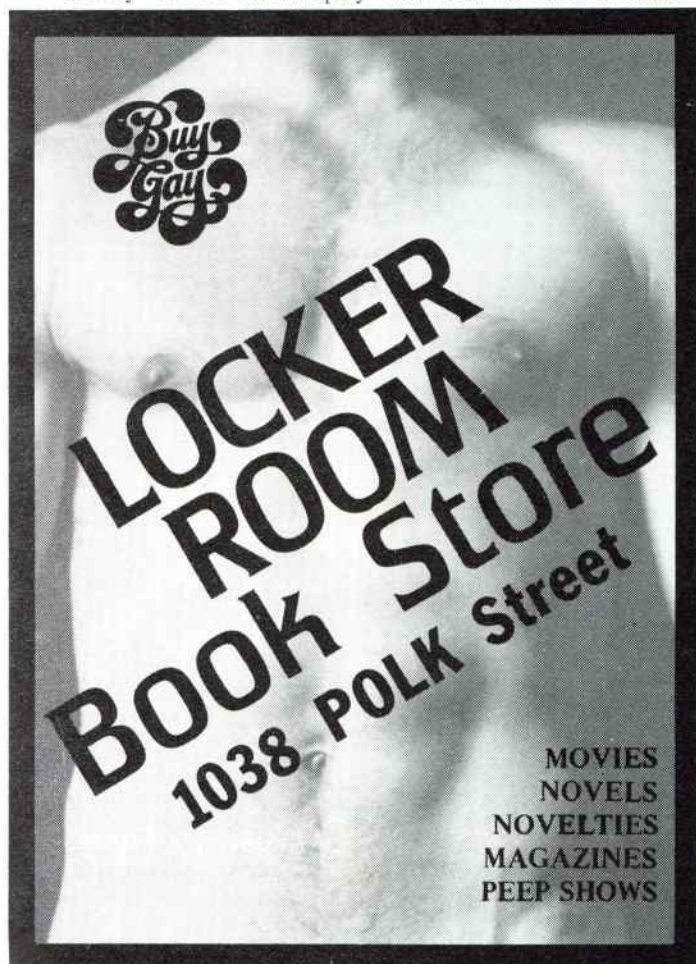
"It's for your own good," Benjy's father said, putting the lid down and coming back to finish supper.

Benjy couldn't eat for two days; he'd been run over by a truck.

Dear Dad,

I guess you meant well.

I wish I could talk to you about it, but you're dead. How is it, by the way? □



FUTURISM

DISINHIBITING THE FUTURE

Stardate 3104.11: Captain James T. Quirk and his crew are being held captive by a mysterious ray beaming at them from an unexplored planet. It turns out that this is a "disinhibitor ray," which does nothing more — or less — than free the crew (and Captain Quirk, we might add) from all sexual inhibitions. In no time at all, as these things go, there's an orgy on the bridge and everywhere else in the giant starship. The aliens are watching all this in order to select the most "talented" men to go on a mission in which only the "lustiest sex-champions" can succeed.

The mission? Well, it seems that every four star-cycles (don't ask me) the planet's high priest, Fungu, goes into divine heat and becomes possessed by an *almost* insatiable cosmic sex drive. At such times, it is the custom of the aliens to capture a passing starship and force its crew to satisfy the high priest. If Fungu has an orgasm, the crew goes free. If not . . . let's just say the price is high.

I won't tell you the rest of the story, which comes fully illustrated by Target Studios' "Stephen" and is called, appropriately enough, *Star Trick*. What I'm interested in here is the concept of "disinhibition." Ever since writing a short story on that theme in the '60s, I've fantasized about disinhibitor methods/substances. *Star Trick* was the first place I'd seen the concept taken to a funny, if rather bizarre, extreme.

Fundamentalists have always been concerned about disinhibition, although they wouldn't call it precisely that. Well-placed early childhood guilt tracks can be eradicated, after all, and then all that painstaking and time-consuming indoctrination has been done for nothing. In myself, I repeat, there has always been a fascination with my inhibitions: Not that which I do, but that which I would not do — the *taboo* — has become the source of knowledge and wonder about myself.

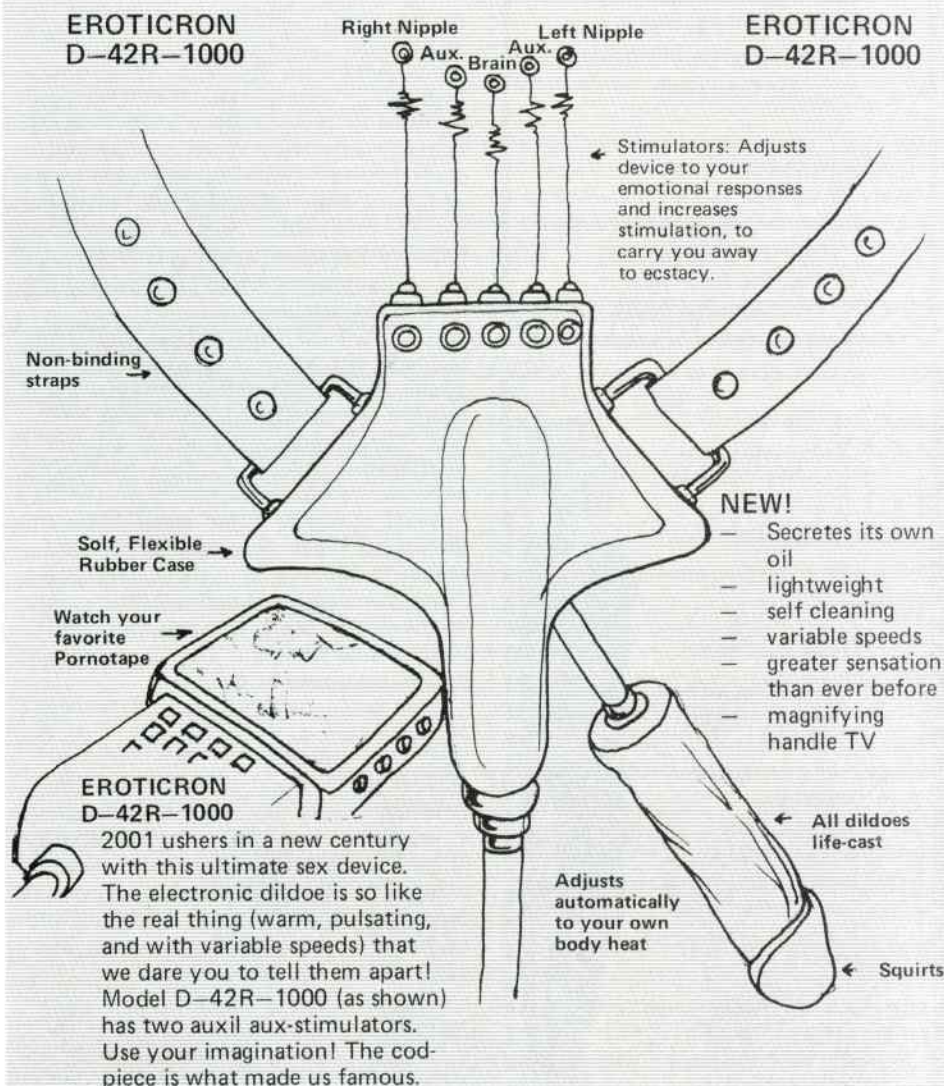
The most obvious taboos to observe and attempt operating on are those that relate to sex, surely. Which gives rise to a smattering of godderel spawned on a recent slow night:

George only likes to suck cock.
Bill only takes it in the ass.
John insists on mutual j/o sessions.
(He will never touch or be touched,
clinic be damned.)
Cliff manipulated his way into my
butt;
He can't make it any other way.
Shorty loves dirty movies,

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Aux. Brain
Aux. Left Nipple

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And his orgasms are triggered only By the sound of a clicking projector.

Terry climbs the walls at the glory holes.

Marty orgies regularly at the tubs.

Lynn can't stand "ugly men."

Frank gets his while I'm war-gaming In high black boots.

Tony has a thing for jockstraps.

Dildoes leave me cold.

But Darin never leaves home without his.

It's impossible to build a relationship on these grounds.

Sometimes I think/despair

That I'm the only versatile man

Left in America.

As Dr. Leary might have said, don't

make fun of my sexual imprints and I won't make fun of yours.

Some of the things that have been identified as being likely to disinhibit sexenergy in the psyche are: dancing, marijuana, hashish, LSD, music of certain kinds, amyl nitrite, dirty words and pictures, and — for Catholics — fantasy itself. To date, there has been no scientific study that I know of on the subject of sexual disinhibition. Even so, there is reportedly at least one psychological researcher and student of Marshall McLuhan who claims that disco music has a "smooth sexual rhythm" that appeals to people who are not afraid of sex. I assume that it's only a matter of time before Johnson-and-Masters-type research is done on the effects of various influences

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on psychosexual inhibitions.

For example, if you play disco music during sexual activity, will the movements of the participants eventually synchronize with the music? How about with jazz? Swing? Do the vibrations/rhythms of disco itself constitute an effective, early version of a disinhibitor ray? In the short story I mentioned earlier, a pair of acoustical engineers turned production men in the record industry happened upon a characteristic set of frequencies which effectively disinhibited the listener.

This set of frequencies was "embedded" into a pop song, and soon young adults all across America were in a fuck-frenzy. The situation left the government and other fundamentalities in a prudish puzzlement: since the lyrics themselves were not erotic or suggestive, in the traditional senses of those terms, the anti-libertarian types were hard put to find a reason to ban the aphrodisiacal recording other than the old standby "it's the work of the devil." Soon, however, frequencies were found that turned on *all* sexual beings, regardless of age.

But could there be, even hypothetically, a set of such characteristic frequencies? Sex researchers, arm yourselves. Robert A. Monroe, an all-American businessman from Virginia, began having experiences in 1958 that drastically altered his life. Unwillingly, and without being able to predict when it would happen, he found himself journeying out of his body and travelling in what Blavatsky called "the astral planes."

Monroe claims that, prior to his exits from his corporeal self, there was always a characteristic set of sounds he heard which seemed to accompany the triggering of the liftoff. Setting to work with engineers, he theorized that, if this set of frequencies could be reproduced and played back for people who had never had an OOB (out of body experience), it might trigger one for them. There are now cassette tapes on the market that do claim to trigger OOBs in significant numbers of persons who've never had them before. Monroe set up the Monroe Institute of Applied Sciences (P.O. Box 57, Afton, Virginia 22920) to further explore the relationships between sounds and altered states of consciousness.

And what is sexual arousal if not an altered state of consciousness?

So, there just might exist a set of sounds and combinations of frequencies that accomplish for sexual energy what Monroe's tapes accomplish for OOBs. This would be a harmless aphrodisiac, to be sure, but it has implications for other areas of research as well.

That we should be concerned about

disinhibition is beyond doubt. We have never before been in such need of what has come to be called "creativity" on this planet. Creativity has been linked to the ability to "let go" of set patterns of thinking, of rigid neurological configurations. This "letting go" is nowhere more pronounced than during human sexual orgasm. Orgasm may suspend the imprints of the mind. Some limited research has been done on the state of sexual arousal itself as a "lubricant" for creative thought. This became the subject of one of *Playboy's* more provocative articles last year, so we know that the straight world is onto this line of thinking.

The best thing one can do for the future of the species, it seems to me, and the future of the planet, is to increase one's own ability to be inventive, creative, and flexible in the face of change. Constant, ever-pressuring, irrevocable change. Each one of us carries about, in the form of our nervous system topped by a vastly-evolved biocomputer, the experimental tool for exploring expanded creativity. In the gay community, there seems to be a lot of what has been called "surplus sexual energy." It might be asked, "To what evolutionary purpose might this energy be put?"

My own interim answer is: "To the creation of the future."

Which is why I say that disinhibiting the future — personal future first, certainly — is a subject well worth investigating at this time in history.

Since traditional futurist groups, science fiction types, and futurist thinkers generally are somewhat loathe to get into this area themselves, I can only assume it's because they, too, have inherited a set of internal taboos and inhibitions that prevents them from seeing the value of sexenergy. We still live in a sex-negative culture, by-and-large, in spite of our preoccupation or even obsession with sex in print, movies, and television. It is said by some that such a preoccupation is a way of distancing the individual from his own neurological energies, thus making him much more malleable in terms of both behavior and acceptance of "given" cultural norms.

It is the unexamined norms themselves which stand in the way of the utopian future that evolution seems to have placed in our grasp. The alternative, as Bucky Fuller and others have pointed out so well in numerous critiques, is oblivion.

Let's make our motto "Sex Over Oblivion." Let's see where this future-sexenergy can take us.

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Robert Opel

London Letter

(continued from page 6)

women and one from Noel — emphasized for me the profound difference between their attitude and that of the politically gay men I know. The women expressed a lack of sympathy with the socialism so important to the men in the theatre group; whilst Noel said that the women found it very difficult actually to get on together. They are forever struggling to discover a *modus vivendi*; they cannot, as Noel stressed, drop their emotional and personal problems in order to get on with the job at hand. Noel sees this ability as a fundamentally male strength; the women see it as an unnecessary compromise. The implications of this disagreement are enormous. It is surely only by a temporary separation of emotion and reason that one comes to terms with, and reconciles into a meaningful fusion,

At one point I used the expression 'all to cock,' which the leader of the group, Gean, pounced on as an offensively male sexist phrase. One cannot combat that sort of simplistic semantic ignorance.

It is sad that the women and the men in the group work independently most of the time; sad too, as Noel explained, that there has been a basic hostility to gayness from his fellow socialist actors (notably when an imminent general election made it politically expedient to play down such minority cases). Noel discovered this when working in Bradford, Yorkshire; at the same time he also found (as he had long suspected, contrary to socialist dogma) that homosexuality was as much working-class as a bourgeois phenomenon.

His two plays about Edward Carpenter have drawn very strongly on these observations — Carpenter, a wealthy,

well-educated farmer, also found his fellow socialists unsympathetic to his love of working class boys — and they reveal the wit, sympathy and political awareness which are equally evident in his own personality. Noel spoke of his belief that gays can enjoy a better and higher lifestyle since we escape from the bourgeois trappings of family, marriage, mortgages and the need for possessions. His argument, appropriately enough a very Shavian one in its evolutionary implications, is a great challenge, presenting a positive counterpart to the negative narcissism of the women in the group and begging some intriguing questions about those gays who desperately ape heterosexuals in their desire to find the equivalent of a cosy marriage; as well as those who are committed to a self-destructive promiscuity.

— David Herbert

Books

(continued from page 63)

England, where only 5% of the males born are circumcised, the cut/homosexual ratio is exactly the opposite. And while it is a known fact that homosexuality exists in every culture; circumcision does not.

Otherwise, this massive collection of information regarding the medical unnecessary for circumcision is staggering.

No other country in the world practices routine circumcision with the abandon of the United States (except Israel,

discussed later). And, according to Carter's final summations — which are difficult not to believe — our obsession is based on the most absurd of reasons. Mothers are told that circumcision will prevent disease (it does not), that circumcision will assure genital cleanliness (it does not), that circumcision will help the boy feel 'normal' sexually (and that last line is gulped down like gospel).

The great fear of penile cancer touted as the most given reason for circumcision is a medical fallacy. Genital cancer is extremely rare in males, while its counterpart; Cervical cancer in women, is growing increasingly common. In America, with its 90% circumcised males, how could that be if the allegations of the medical profession (that circumcision prevents both cancers) is true? That cancer is infectious is only intimated by touting circumcision as a panacea; few sane doctors would be willing to make the connection sound any more concrete.

The cleanliness argument is equally false. Circumcision cannot replace the simple hygiene of soap and water. But touting circumcision as hygienic does have a striking correlation to 'convenience.' If the mother has the boy circumcised, she won't have to bother keeping his penis clean. And that goes even closer to the heart of American sexual mores, she won't have to touch the child's sexual organ. No doctor seems to have considered the option of leaving the foreskin intact and having the father do the chore.

The normalcy factor, making the boy look like all other boys is the deadliest sort of social behavior control. Chances are it is a circumcised doctor advocating physical mutilation as a normalcy requirement, perhaps secretly getting out his own castration frustrations. The equation that circumcision is a castration could hold much more psychological truth than it has previously received.

Judism has at least a religious tradition, however ill-considered, for circum-

cision. It is part of a covenant made with God by the Jews that distinguishes them from other men. It does not, however, appear as a practice in Christian religious tradition; at least not in the New Testament. The only reference to circumcision in the New Testament is one by St. Paul to a circumcision of the heart. And that was, one would hope, intended as a metaphor. Judaism, however, allows for exceptions to the circumcision-as-covenant; if a woman has two male children that die from circumcision (which is a very real danger often occurring), she may spare her third son from the act. A growing faction of modern day Jews have already raised the possibility of substituting a symbolic circumcision for the actual mutilation.

Although Carter doesn't mention it, there are currently a couple of cases before the courts where circumcised males have brought legal suits against their parents and/or the doctor who subjected them for this physical mutilation over which they, the victims, were helpless. Good for them!

— Charles Musgrave

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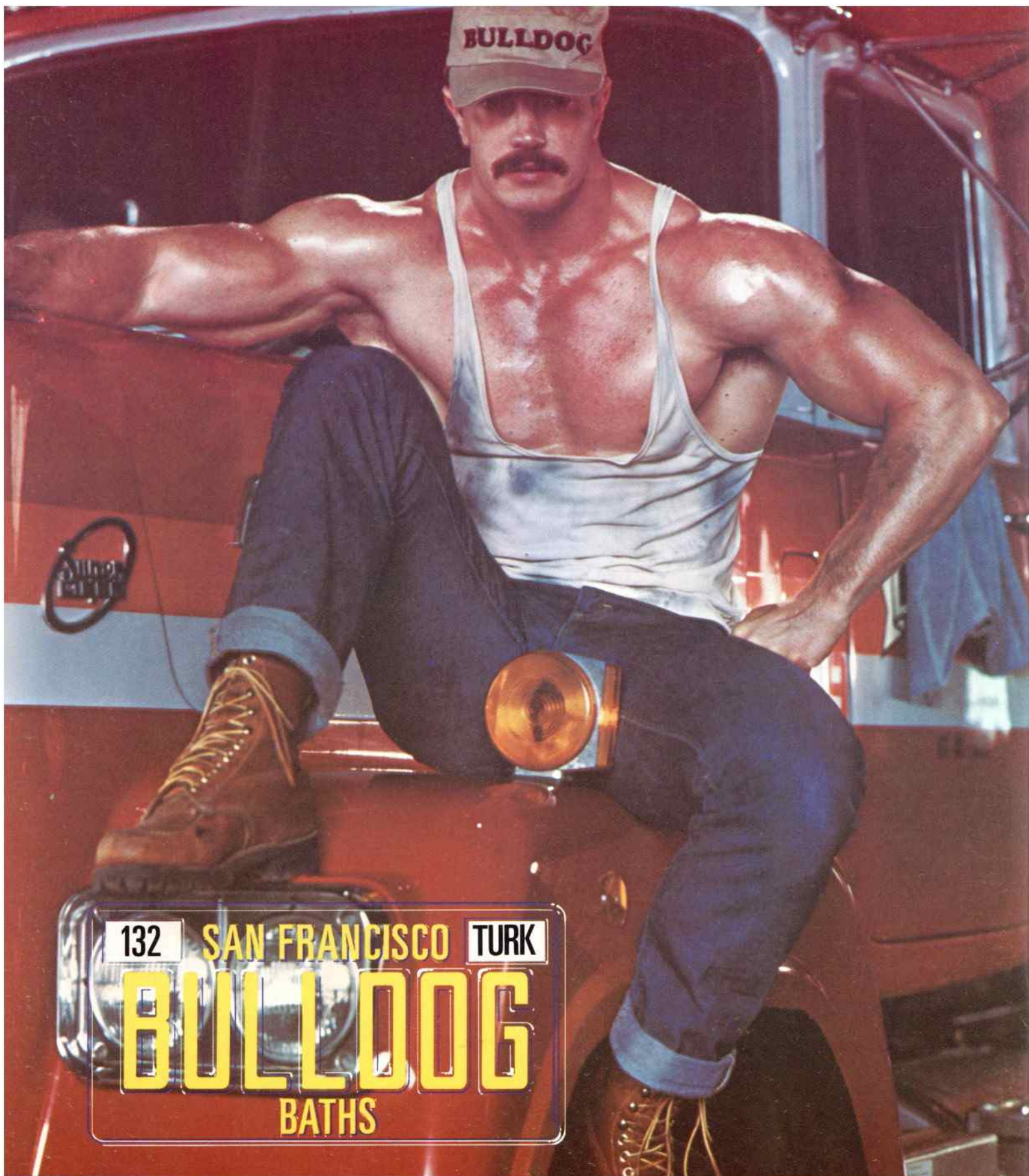
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