

HEATWAVE

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Spring 1978

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The Flower Beheld

Lorraine Pistilli

I am
the flower
the flow
er of
blue blood
brimming petals
from
a blood
shot
iris
I am
the
pupil
with a stream
of consciousness
gushing
fourth & fifth
dammed by
stigmas
deeply rooted
and lashed
in the
brown hollow
of eye

Untitled

Susan Nelson

So long it's been since
in your presence,
I gave to you gifts of myself.
Gave you a watch toward the east-pink sky.
Gave you a weather change,
to soothe your creviced brow.
Gave you a sweet thought
to overcome a bitter taste in your mouth.
It has been some time, indeed,
since you took the soft warmth of
my perfume, and carried it away,
unknowingly on your skin.

To Allen Ginsberg

Rosamund Timberg

At first you were
a crippled master of the sleight of hand
sitting without legs in lotus position
surrounded by your tricks and tools and your attendant musicians
While two red eyeballs stared down from the green wreath above

You were
a crazy professor at Columbia
given an office in the basement to be kept out of trouble
who could be heard at times
shouting to God
whom you called by your own name

You were
I.F. Stone with thick eyeglasses
taking in newsprint and government report print
and spitting out the fools and their lies
with well placed spitballs

You were
Jesus at the Last Supper
Marx in the London Library
Allende shooting with pistol
the army of reactionaries

You were
the Bowery native
who pours forth wine-filled urine in the public streets
and who asks for more
when you give him a dime

You were
my brother
pouring his fears and fantasies
into the Chasidic sing-song
and the daven-dance

You were
the aging hippie
who refuses to cut his hair

You were

a man from another planet
pushing this college auditorium
slightly out of shape
with wildly curved corners and balloon bulges in the ceiling

You pushed and pulled

on the leather bellows that blew forth music

But you were

the one who really breathed the music
among the chanting, panting, ranting

You were

the voice
that chants poems, chants stories
chants chants, chant me,
chant them, chant you

Yourself

the onion skin of the personality's protection peeled back
and underneath

not a sob

but a mellow mantra and a rollicking laugh.



Jill Rapaport

Lily had selected a coral, antique gold, and garnet necklace, the kind of piece one might see in a dream. Together with her grandmother and her friend Jean, she had gone to one of the most elegant districts in town to shop. Her grandmother had invited her, telling her that whatever struck her fancy, if they were to find something like that, would be her gift.

"Bring a friend along if you like," Mrs. Lawn had said on the telephone when they arranged the excursion.

They were all clustered around the fine jewelry counter where the coral and garnet beauty had been spotted. Lily bent close to the glass countertop and leaned into the shining facets of the necklace, examining it myopically with both palms pressed flat on the glass. Jean affected a mildly bored pose, which was shaken off at the moment Lily, Mrs. Lawn, or the saleslady glanced at her. Inside she was aware of envious feelings, as well as a definite resentment against Mrs. Lawn. She wondered whether Lily was really as casual about this extravagant expression of grandmotherly affection as she seemed on the surface.

Lily wore a pink silk, shortsleeved shirt which reflected the rosy glow of her soft cheek and her luminous, large and simply-set ring.

"What do you think, Jean?" Said Lily

"It's lovely," said Jean, without an apparent trace of rancor. She thought of a time long ago, when she and her sister Lina had been children. Their parents had taken them to buy shoes. Jean, the older of the two, had demanded and gotten a very expensive, widely advertised and fashionable kind. Lina had had to pay for Jean's indulgence, and was told by her parent's she would have to settle for a cheaper pair. At first, the younger sister started to cry, but she received very little attention and so finally chose for herself a modest, but handsome pair of bluish gray shoes with white trim. Later, to console her and make peace, her father got her an inexpensive little toy she had noticed, a plastic figurine of a fairy tale character.

Lina's shoes, it happened, drew many compliments and smiles when she wore them, because, despite their cheaper price, they were in fact more attractive on her feet than Jean's were. This hurt and humiliated Jean deeply. She taught herself a way of seeming indifferent and mysteriously superior, and made one or two incisively cruel comments on

her sister's flat feet and the absence of "feminine" styling of the blue-gray shoes. Needless to say, this broke Lina's heart cleanly in half and unleashed torrents of bitter, despairing tears.

Lina had only recently come to forgive Jean for incurring these childhood wounds. Some measure of the years which had passed in between could be found in their mother's face—sixteen years ago it had been lovely and smiling; now it still smiled, but masked a widowed woman whose truest aspect lay in the beautiful, diamond-shaped lines of the hollows beneath her clear gray eyes, eyes whose melancholy rarely left them, independent as they were of the smiling mouth a few inches below.

Jean often saw a resemblance between Lina and Lily.

There was a complementary relationship as well between Jean and Lily. Perhaps it was most apparent in their speech. There was a bell-like voice, and a low, velvety one with a steel spine. Both were true voices. Jean's clear, deep eyes could have gone with Lily's bell-like voice, instead of the other way around, which was the actual relationship. But the complementary element was the truth, the authenticity, of both voices. It was an even clearer indicator than the difference between their two sets of eyes.

Jean's eyes with their ambery glow were a closer match for the necklace that right now was being wrapped up and paid for.

Jean and Lily suddenly looked at each other and smiled, their faces bursting and close-mouthed in that characteristic way they sometimes had with each other. It was a secret smile which carried no secret, or at least none that either of them were conscious of.

The three walked out into the sunshine. They strolled along the avenue for a while, window shopping. Ordinarily, this was an activity Jean could enjoy to some extent. Today, however, with the presence of Lily's grandmother, it bored and irritated her. She longed just to go and sit down in a cafe and smoke, without being talked to or bothered, without being asked timid and idiotic questions which were always hollow at the base of all the solicitude. She wore a nervous, empty smile so as to be ready for any sudden look or invitation to involvement from either Lily or her grandmother. She was anxious not to hurt Lily's pride or

feelings by being short with the grandmother. Thus occupied, she had little time for her own thoughts. She was engaged in wondering what might be wrong with her, why she felt sometimes fooled by life, why she wasn't as brightly successful at her aims as she should have been, in her eyes.

At one point it occurred to her that a tragic flaw in her character was her inability to feel the much talked-about "mental" pain. Of course, she was acquainted with unhappiness, she often suffered from heavy, oppressive feelings of guilt and inexplicable, reasonless melancholy — but none of these things actually translated into psychic *pain*. It wasn't pain she felt when she thought about her mother, or Lina. She felt pain when she hit her elbow on the bone or had a sore toe from a tight shoe. Could this deficiency in conventional psychic equipment be the source of her inadequacy as a person? Was it even, in fact, a true deficiency? A false note rang somewhere. An inadequacy lay just short of being exposed in this hazy train of thought which lacked proper analogues, lacked the aesthetic unity that came from genuineness at its source. Somewhere a synapse in one of the remote reaches of her brain was not connecting properly. If only there were electricians on call for servicing the mind!

Somewhere off a reef of jet in a recent dream Jean had realized she had died. All the next day a pervasive feeling of sadness and fear hung over her. The beauty and coldness of the sharp black jet, so hard and new it was still jagged or smooth but nowhere eroded, and dry, shiny and opaque even beneath the surface of the sea, haunted her waking mind. This dream was a premonition or an awakening knowledge, not of death but of some dark, disharmonious corruption in her soul, perhaps finally about to come to light, perhaps an omen of something profound about to be changed for the better, once enlightenment had arrived to her.

Her shoes made gritty sounds on the sidewalk. She wavered slightly on her precarious, although low, heels. Lily and Mrs. Lawn were staring like two children into a window whose decor flowed with hostility against all women. Jean touched her nose with her middle finger, in a highly idiosyncratic gesture of loathing and disdain, a gesture she had developed over recent months. The loathing was

primarily and indiscriminately, viciously directed against men. Old, young, handsome, coarse, macho, gay, all men came under the umbrella of her hatred which was exactly like a growing, propagating, amberishly glowing poison more!

Once she began, she was apt to get carried away in her internal rampage, forgetting that without discernment no real passion exists, only remembering that morality had little room for compassion and none for pity—this latter a concept she had recently fallen in love with.

To think hard and violently like this, to lose herself in her labyrinthine mind, made her feel strong. It made her feel able—to go on, to be human, to be complete, to be powerful. It made up for any stirrings of anguish at thinking herself unloved or insignificant. This false strength was the paradoxical truth of this set of emotions and ideas. Even though she felt and even hoped that this was a phase she would pass out of soon, she would not disavow or ignore it. She would stay by it, in much the same way she stood by her mother or her true friends, no matter how intolerable it became.

When the sun began setting, Mrs. Lawn looked at her watch and in a bustling way informed Lily that they should be getting back. Though she had a choice of going back with her grandmother or lingering on for a chance to talk and be alone together at leisure with Jean, Lily merely gave a limp shrug indicating to Jean that in spite of what she would have liked, she felt compelled to go back with Mrs. Lawn.

They exchanged their customary drawling, protracted good-byes. Jean smiled coolly at Mrs. Lawn and murmured an indifferent farewell. It seemed that the old woman barely noticed the fact that Jean was parting from them here.

With nothing much to do, Jean saw them to their train station and watched them descend the stairs. When they had disappeared below, she turned and began walking briskly away. As she walked along the street her eyes roamed in every direction. She looked into every attractive window, stopping for a second at most, and only rarely. Her face gradually lost its indifferent composure and grew more and more uncomfortable, constrained, and unhappy. This forbidding expression was the one she wore habitually when walking alone in the city.

Lately, whenever she was conscious of this look she would attempt to modify it slightly, filled with the overriding fear of looking almost medusalike and thus going too far and defeating the very balance for defense this look had originally been designed to provide.

At this moment today, she managed to achieve a perfect balance, which was rare and difficult, between wary self-possession and calm aplomb. Just, however, as she had perfected this and begun to hit her stride, feeling her tense frame relax with relief and pleasure, and just as her eyes had fixed, in a flowing and self-assured way on the sudden flux of crowds and the elegant windows of the street onto which she had just turned, a slight unevenness in the sidewalk caused her low wooden heel to lose footing and twist, giving her a moment's pain and embarrassing breach of grace. Hardly missing a beat she kept walking, even a little more briskly than before. The sudden feeling of heat and moisture that flowed through her body and then the leg that had twisted, in the next moment, as the evaporating moisture cooled the flush of warmth, became a billowing, barely containable rage.

She walked on and on. She had determined, with her peculiar quality of iron languor, iron torpor, that after thirty minutes of walking in whatever direction she wished, she would head home. The truth was that she felt quite rudderless and frightened when she walked alone, aimlessly, through the streets. Her fear made her perspire and her perspiration soaked through her confidence. This was originally the way, dating far back to the episode of her sister's more beautiful, blue, gray and white shoes, that she had arrived at that languid bearing of rough, rusted iron, the bearing of an odalisque, frozen in her most perfect charm, in a painting by an apprentice to a master, and carried out in such impermanent media that only some fifteen years after it had been hung in a minor gallery, it already had had to be rushed back to the storage room where, with the perfunctory attention due to something much less than a master's work, it would be forced to undergo some restoration.

A momentary flicker quite near her caught her attention. It seemed to her that on the face of a nondescript passerby, who had already receded from view, a minutely subtle

twitch had just flashed, and, despite its subtlety, had made it seem to Jean almost as if the sun had just gone behind a cloud. The sun, of course, had set some time ago, and now, a dark, cloudy blue sky with faint remnants of gold and at the same time a look of impending rain, had descended over this part of the city.

Jean had a lover named Francis. One night they had gone to dinner with Lily in Chinatown. Francis told a rather involved, half-serious story. As he talked, Jean glanced over at Lily, who sat, looking down at her empty soup bowl and stirring the few remaining drops with her spoon, with an expression on her face that fascinated Jean. Her expression showed that she was listening to Francis speak, but in the midst of that, there was a gentle, mysteriously sad blush rising to her cheeks as Jean watched. She seemed unaware that Jean was watching her. An almost imperceptible tic passed down her cheek, something which Jean had never noticed before. In this moment of Lily's serene repose, Jean saw the little tic for the first time. She looked away. She looked back at Francis, wondering if anything in the anecdote he was telling in a soft, pleasant voice, could have been responsible for producing that extraordinary moment. But the story and the manner in which he told it was so gentle, so relaxed, and his breath was so soft with wine and marijuana that she was entranced, and leaned closer to him, knowing that it was nothing in him or his story, both so devoid of anything hurtful or caustic, that had caused that twitch. If anything, it was just another sad, bittersweet surprise like the kind that had been cropping up more and more frequently of late.



he

L t M

he hot
he have
hot hands
he have
high hopes
he high

he have her hands
heaven help her
he having heavy
hard
having her
hard and heavy
him
having her
hah!

her heaving him
her happy
having him
hurtle
heavenward

heavens!
he hovers
high!
happy her
having him
hover high

help!
he have
heavy head
he have
hard fall

her
head
have
headache
having him
hard and heavy
hurtle her ...

whew!

her hold his heavy
hand at her heaving heart

he happy
handling her.

Leotard

Lorraine Pistilli

Backstage corner, Fauvist flesh
Leotard and Dancer mesh
Tightly stitched in color

Dancer solely peels his skin
Reveals the soul that lies within
Wears underwear of Black

Shadow stalks upon the stage
Extending paws, retracting rage
He pounces into Dance

Toothy fingers cleave the air
Swallow up a Victim's stare
Who struggles to avert the bare
Essence of Devour



Somethin' Like an Eagle

Barbara Ann Valianti

"A fella's gotta tell sometimes, Casy," said John, "If he don't then it all builds up to a point where he can't think because he's being choked by what's inside, and the only way it'll let him be is if he spits it out. You know what I'm saying, Casy?" Casy said nothing, he just looked at John, and they knowed.

John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*

Seems like she could be ridin pretty high sometimes. You know—up there on her white horse, smilin and takin it easy like as if she had somethin to be takin it easy from. And then the night come creepin up quick and there ain't no summer sunshine blazin in her eyes, lettin her play make-believe like this is summer vacation and come September she be gettin back to school. Maybe September won't never be the same for her again—the night tells her that. The night tells secrets that the sunshine won't never know. The night tells her how she was never no good at ridin horses, 'cept maybe that dappled grey she rode a few times when she was young. That one named "Blue" who up and died one day, and she ain't never loved no other horse like she did that one. And of course she ain't never rode no uppity white horse. Not her—she couldn't handle all that majestic ceremony that goes along with things like that. Like some kinda chaste purity that she remembers havin once. She remembers it feelin good, like maybe she was somethin special. But that somethin special didn't last for long. You know, there were so many people who took that from her, who were so damn willin' to take it, and they'd smile on nobody but themselves. Sometimes they wouldn't even give her that—they wouldn't give her a little smile. There were a lot of them like that. Looking back, she can see all those meaningless faces and she can hear all those finely made lies. Oh, sometimes there were even promises, and most times she had it in her heart to believe them. Sure, she would say: "No, I don't believe you." And she'd laugh a lot, you know—but she believed—she believed 'cause she just didn't know that people really lied. Time and time again she was believin, and her town was filled with the most skillful liars and charmers that could sweep her off her feet in a second's time.

There were dozens of nights that she would come home

cryin with that feelin like she had been taken. She never quite knew what was taken from her, but she would feel like somebody stole her insides, like somebody went and raped her mind and she didn't even know it — until she found she couldn't really think straight.

She was real slow in learnin, but it came in time. She learned to recognize all the tricksters, all the con-artists. It took a long time comin, but she learned. She stayed away for a long while, but she returned, tellin herself that she shouldn't hate their kind because it was just their act of survival and they didn't know no better. She had to tell that to herself 'cause she knowed that winter was comin soon and she knowed too well what lonely winters were. And being with tricksters and charmers was somehow better than being alone. And it wasn't so bad—she knowed the games and sometimes she'd play along. All the innocence had been drained right out of her, so there was really nothin left to take. You see, she didn't much care any more—she got used to it 'cause she figured thats all there was. Matter a fact, she was quite sure of it. No, it didn't thrill her none, but she learned how to dress for the masquerade and she'd even find herself laughin with the tricksters sometimes. But she don't much like rememberin that laughter.

One day a friend a hers comes knockin at the door sayin why don't she come out this evenin with her and her man. Seems they were goin to another friend's house and they had it in their mind that she would get along real well with some dude goes by the name a Paley. She said she wasn't in no mood for some kinda set-up, but the friend told her it was nothin of the sort. Well, she said that maybe she would join them, but she was quite sure that she wouldn't. But the nighttime come creepin up sayin she had nothin better to do and if this Paley dude was a trickster, well, she certainly knowed by now how to handle their kind.

So she went along and was enjoyin herself long before this Paley fella even showed. She was havin such a fine time that, to tell the truth, she forgot all about him because it was gettin later and she figured he wasn't comin anyway. But it didn't bother her none.

Just then there comes a bangin at the door and this man comes in and right off he starts tellin some story and he is laughin and carryin on and everyone is lookin at him and

they all knows him, 'cept her. She has no ideas who he is, but Lord she can't take her eyes offa him 'cause there's somethin flowin from his eyes to hers and it's like two souls greetin each other in the dark!

Well, this man comes and sits hisself right near her and she hears that this is the Paley fella theys been talkin 'bout—and damn, why didn't anybody tell her sooner? She knowed right off that he wasn't no trickster type. Oh, he did have an awful charmin way about him now and again, but it was comin natural, far as she could tell. It was comin natural!

Once they got to talkin it seemed no one else much got in their way. Everyone decided on a walk and these two found themselves walkin together. Then they found themselves sittin close by each other at a restaurant. In between the talkin with all the others at the table she learned that this man was a trucker who spent mosta his days rollin up and down the East coast.

The night went rollin on and on and people got to yawnin, but her and the Paley fella, they was like wide eyed raccoons. So they wished everybody well and goodnight and they returned to the place where they had met. And very kindly like they were left alone, and she'll be damned, here they were alone and they was still talkin and they was playing a game, but it was a board game, not a head game!

She found herself rubbin his neck after a time, and he was kissin her real soft like. She called him Paul and it sounded real nice and it was such an easy kind of name—just like being with him was so easy.

The mornin light came and they was still talkin on and on like they wasn't gonna stop or somethin.

When she left this Paul Paley person she felt sure that she'd never see the likes a him again. Like he said, he spent mosta his days ridin up and down the coast.

But there it was, the followin evening—a truck sittin outside her house and the Paley man sayin that he was takin her off to Maine for a time!

She enjoyed talkin with him well enough—real well, mind you, but out on this road she got to feelin a strong kinda passion comin from below. And she was lookin at him and rememberin how he had kissed her and she thought of how nice it would be to feel those lips again. But here on the

road she thought she'd best keep herself quiet until a proper time. Just then this man takes his hand off the wheel—and a fine lookin hand it is—and he reaches out, tellin her to come a mite closer. And she feels his arm around her back and that fine lookin hand comes to holdin her breast—and she hears the night tellin her quite rightly that this is certainly good.

They was travellin quite a time and this man was makin her melt under the magic of his hand. Finally—it was somewhere between night and dawn—he pulled the truck over on the side of the road. They was in the middle of nowhere, she reckoned, till she saw a sign tellin her they was 5 miles from a place called Stonington.

Oh, this man, he was like some kinda magic liquid pourin all over her body. And it was cold outside but his magic was makin her feel like summer. And those lips that kissed her? Well, they knowed more than kissin. Why, he went to her stomach with his mouth, makin her ache with such desire like she ain't never knowed before. And he went lower and lower and she felt his tongue goin in her and she don't know what kinda magic he was makin down there but she could have died just then and claimed a happy life on that alone. And he didn't let up for the longest time—her juices flowed once and then twice, and damn, she either lost count or else they just didn't stop flowin. Oh, and he was smilin and he was hard from all this lusting and he came into her like he was runnin for home plate and his juices came pourin into her so warm like. She heard him say; "Mercy, mercy me!" And she knowed surely that this was heaven.

As time went on her and the Paley fella got to knowin more and more things about each other. Him always knowin a touch more about her. He had a way about him that just knowed some things without her tellin. Real spooky sometimes, but more times it was just so nice—someone knowin things without havin to be told. And they started growin to be the closest a friends, you know.

In between the talkin and the lovin she'd listen to his stories, makin her laugh so mucha the time. Sometimes she'd listen real quiet like when he'd tell her that the ridin of a truck just wasn't fittin with his soul. So many nights she'd listen to how it just wasn't fittin. He'd be talkin 'bout final decisions and makin up his mind on joinin up the Navy and

travellin and seein all kinds a new things. She'd be listenin all the time, real quiet like.

Somewhere along the way she began gettin herself a bit scared. You know, she started feelin some strong kinda lovin for this man, and she knowed all the time that it was comin 'cause it was a natural thing and there was somethin just so easy 'bout feelin it. But she knowed too that it was the kinda lovin that she wasn't supposed to be feelin, on a counta there was a line a things goin on in his life—all kinds a situations and such. But it came anyways and she wasn't gonna stop it 'cause she didn't think it was hurtin nobody none.

She knowed for a time that he would be goin away soon—becomin a Navy man an all. Before he went she told him about this lovin feelin she had. She had to tell him. It was a funny thing kinda—it seemed like that mighta been the only thing he didn't know about her without her tellin. Or maybe he knowed all along—she would never be quite sure of it.

That day finally come for goodbyes. It come too soon she said to herself, it come too soon.

She gets to feelin real lonely now and again. Sometimes it feels like, well, like the loneliness that only winter would bring. Guess it was only a matter a time before learnin that summer could bring those feelins too. But it ain't as if she's gonna go and find laughter with some trickster con artist, 'cause now she knows there's better things in this town after all, and just thinkin 'bout those others tends to make her stomach go bad. Now she knows there's magic kinda people who don't make fancy promises and don't tell lies—like that Paley fella.

Oh, she'll get to see the likes a him again, you can be sure a that. Hear tell he'll be round these parts again sometime in September. No, no he won't be round for long—just a few days a time, mind you, You see, he's, well, how would one say it rightly? He's like an eagle, that's it—like an eagle, and theys got wings, theys different and theys gotta get to flyin, that's all. But you know, they leave a certain kinda spirit behind—sorta like he's always close by or somethin. Surely it ain't like touchin him or feelin his hand holdin to the side a her head like he does—but still, it's kinda like he's there.

Sometimes she gets to feelin all kindsa water risin in her eyes and surely he wouldn't want such a thing to happen 'cause he always liked to see her smilin. But it's just that she longs for him some evenins more than others, and it's hard to stop the cryin as it is to stop the lovin. But these things happen when you find yaself at love with an eagle. It ain't a bad thing though, 'cause her and the Paley man, they shared a crop load a smiles, and you gotta love him, you just gotta.



muerte en nueva york

Amina Munoz

THE greyness chokes
and sadness is a disease . . .
indecision decides and
inaction takes over.
subways belch out half-humans
hallucinating on daily news editorials
from the comic pages
as empty nedicks bottles and
half-eaten hot dogs bite the dust. new york
is the grave they have dug
for us.

ana maria munoz de rodriguez was
just another one of the
millions of spics
lured like cockroaches to poison
lured by death disguised as
"getting ahead"
lured by jobs for 85 a week
to die while waiting
for medical attention
they didn't get but paid for
with food stamps.
ana maria munoz de rodriguez
was born in isabela puerto rico
december 2nd 1927 &
died in new york april 6th 1967, still
believing in the things that killed her
believing in god
believing in hard work
believing in happily ever after endings
with split level suburban homes.
but her god didn't care
nor did her boss
and the only thing she ever got split
was her head once in a while.
death came in a dirty hospital bed while
the nurse at the end of the hall
ignored the wall to wall pain.
only a month before
at a party in someone's house
she drank beer

from an ice-filled tub . . .
then for no other reason
then circumstances got sick
turned bright yellow
and they sucked out tubes of blood
only to look at her with smiles
and questions marks in their eyes.
she turned yellow
couldn't eat
for the first time she was angry
at the world instead of
just me. and after 20 years
of kitchens and bedpans
she closed her eyes for the last time
next to a window overlooking
vomiting junkies
and tricks in progress.
the welfare check arrived the next day.
a brown paper bag containing her possessions
was given to me:

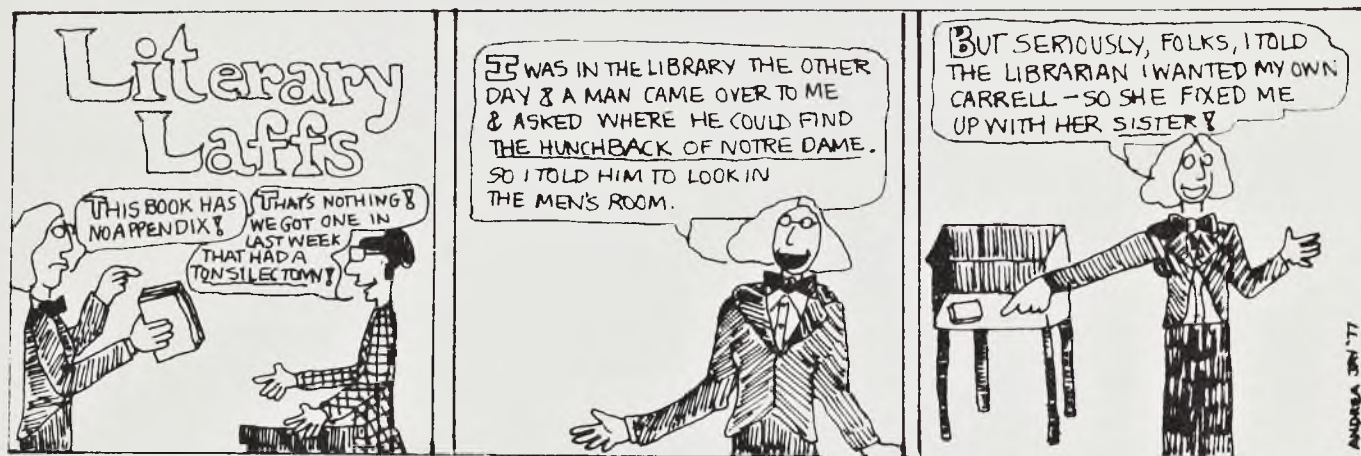
one watch
 bought from a junkie for 2 dollars
one pearl ring. one gold chain and medal.
one pair of pearl earrings. black shoes, stockings.
a shocking pink dress and lavender underwear.
that was all i had left of her.
that and records i used to goof on
because they were hickey.
that and the determination
not to do the same.

and where was her man/ her men
that sat in our living room and drank beer
and sat in front of the TV? the ones i would
be introduced to when i walked in from saturday
and they would acknowledge me with half a look
and i would wonder who or what she was
looking for. but the things that once
kept us apart
have now brought us together.

i called the catholic church when she died they wanted to

know if she was a
good catholic went to mass regularly.
relatives provided a white casket long island plot
cards with pictures of st. anthony and
la virgen de guadalupe . . .
death is so unreal
when you live a life of lies and fairy tales
by walt disney billy graham and smokey the bear.
en nueva york no hay brisas
en nueva york no hay sol
only puerto ricans that come to die
from undigested lies
like rats die from rat poison.
a fire hydrant is not a beach.
a stoop is not a home.
a lamppost is not a palm tree.
mami
i wish you could have seen
your home town again
so you could think back and feel young
and forget about blaming him or him
or her or me for your troubles. i wish
we didn't have to be closed up
in that black box called home. it
would have been nice coconuts rum
real sand and water without empty beer cans for fish
i'd let you dance act silly get drunk tell dirty jokes
embarrass the hell out of me
without once pulling your dress to say "let's go home"
because we'd be there.

Critical Review



Notes on an Infamous Woman

L.I. ter Meulen

Readers familiar with George Sand know she lived relatively free from the conventions which held other women of her time in their places. Was she free? Certainly not from the law which turned her estate over to her husband the day she married.¹ Or the law which made legal separation difficult, and divorce almost impossible.²

She often wore men's clothing. Undeniably this permitted her a degree of freedom unenjoyed by most women. Wearing pants permitted her entry into the men's section of the theater³ (and allowed a freedom of movement impossible in narrow heels and petticoats), not because she was a woman dressed as a man (a sheep in wolf's clothing?) but because she appeared to **be** a man.

In spite of her mobility, the freedom of her lifestyle was for her, as it is for most men, an acquired ability to act freely. She did not embrace the feminist cause in a mere rhetorical fashion: her life, she believed, embodied the cause, and her work spoke for and about women everywhere. She was determined not to settle for only an illusion of free will.

She took men as "men have taken women for millenia."⁴ Maurois insisted her succession of lovers was spurred on by "nymphomaniacal frigidity."⁵ But, in spite of what several of her biographers have said, it was really just another most natural means of acquiring the habit of free action.

The freedom Sand attained was that which she learned through activity and expression of her own masculine nature. She found it could be trusted. She found it also to be a supportive and trustworthy companion to her feminine self. (The terms feminine and masculine are used simply because they are understood by everyone to represent certain character traits. To believe the traits are the exclusive domain of the female or the male is absurd.) To say that George Sand was, or lived, 'like a man' is to do her an injustice. She lived her entire life as a woman, and lived, in fact, a life she hoped to be a model for all women.

It must be clarified that her expectations of a full life did not include a succession of (ultimately) unsatisfactory lovers, as in reality it did.⁶ The role she foresaw as a model was this: take charge of your own destiny; trust both your intuition and intellectuality; make room for your active and passive selves.

She did not believe that her way was the way for all

women. Each woman would have her own style of living but a woman **must choose**. Through the habit of choosing and deciding she will acquire the self trust necessary to a successful life.

The most important and successful facet of her life was her work. If her prolific pen is any gauge of her degree of liberty we must say George Sand was enormously free.⁷

She was a writer, first and foremost. As her fame and experience grew, so did the unity between her inner freedom (productivity) and outer freedom (stimulation). She acted out her fantasies as much as she dared but found a distraction from her troubled affairs, and a control over them that she could not have in reality, in her books.

Yet the acts of living and the acts of writing created a bond between her internal and external selves, and each fulfilled where the other did not. The truth she discovered through writing made the appearance of free choice in her life all the more real. And by liberating her actions, she brought realism and life to her books.

The wisdom of her later years not only allowed her to recognize any early foolishness (and who doesn't review the past with the wizened eye that only hindsight permits), but to see the necessity of it and to not regret for a moment.

She believed in facing life. In testing its true nature, a nature neither male nor female but composite and well-balanced, she found her own to be identical.

1. Casimir Dudevant married Aurore Dupuis (George Sand) in 1822. The fact that she lost control over her own estate eventually became a major impetus to earn her own living via her pen.

2. GS was finally awarded a legal separation from Dudevant in 1836, after several public trials. She maintained legal custody of her daughter, Solange, and the right to see her son, Maurice, whenever she wished. She also regained control of her estate.

3. Women sat in the balcony.

4. Joseph Barry, "Infamous Woman", Preface (p XV), New York 1977

5. Andre Maurois, "Lelia, ou la vie de George Sand" (Paris, 1952) p. 26

6. It must also be said that Romantic Love held a fascination for her as it did many women, and men, of her day. It was an age of Romantic thought, an age 20th Century recalls longingly yet rejects in the light of technological sophistication.

7. She produced 70 novels, in addition to numerous volumes of correspondence and her memoirs: "Histoire de ma Vie".



Mike Bid



Jill Rapaport

The Psychological Plot Is In The Artist

Jill Rapaport

We've wandered astray, and finally out of the three gardens. Now we embark on a thoughtful boat, and we have nothing to do but contemplate on the visions we have just seen, rolling them over and over in our minds, touching them, exploring them as we would an ancient and irreplaceable piece of Indian pottery.

Trees full of animals, and marine scenes are our company outside the windows of this tour. Bright waves and passing industrial harbors focus us on, rather than distract us from, our ruminations.

We withdraw from other riders. Curling up into primordial shells with inner light, we feel the moisture of our tightly-wound shapes; observe the rainbow shadows which illumine and distort our crevices of drapery and flesh.

Inside our curving folds, we are free to think clearly about the shape of the artist.

An artist grows and takes form as does a snail or a pharmacist. She finds, after many compound revelations, revolutions, and evolutionary swanchases,—all of which happen inside her—light at the end of every tunnel through which she passes, whether the trail is an ascending or a downward-plummeting one.

In these bright ponds of light she finds 70 per cent of her power which comes from her strength.

She retreats, in snail-like solitude to the cold heat of her artwork. Emerging quite often for varied lengths of time to see people, meet strangers, engage in dialogues with other artists, and forage for her mundane needs, she doesn't delude herself; knowing that at these times she is most vulnerable to every kind of hurt and trauma, she will still face it, partly out of selfish need for human affirmation, friendship and stimulation, partly because she knows that her being needs and thrives on bravery, as it needs water and love, and the difficulty of employing bravery is itself tonic and essential to her growth and that of her work.

She grows to feel contempt for the lack of control, the childish, often mindless cowardice, of many artists. Many artists, she growls to herself, her lip curling with a conflicted disdain, belong to the whine-and-tremble school of artistry. To strive for anything approaching a ratio of golden section, as it were, or even an originally-thought-out aesthetic ideal, is for them a meaningless, and impossible task. Yet even in

her contempt she maintains a somewhat fearful reserve. Her trepidation comes from being aware of the fine line that is walked between trembling emotion and formidable authority.

Into that thin wire of a line go decades of imperceptible, perspiration-drenched development, moments situated on the brink of the abyss, happiness both true and deceptive, work both true and deceptive that can be salvaged, saved, not used again, and never again looked back at for inspiration or courage.

The artist finds herself trembling, at the vague shadow of those massive years, afraid to remember how much was spent on and in the course of them, preferring to live with their shadowy outline, never taking time to look at them under anything like proper, adequate light, for fear that the sight of them will do to her what Medusa's direct gaze was capable of doing.

As Perseus dreamed up a way to deflect that gaze, so she will dig into her magic sleeve and find the power to gaze one day at her past.



The Culpability of the Corybantic

by Susan Nelson

Richard Brautigan is suffering from cerebral constipation. We're all plagued with this problem occasionally, but in his case it has become chronic. What would relieve these horrendous symptoms? I'm not quite sure.

Obviously he is unconscious of his lack of talent, for he keeps spewing out his day-to-day doldruma under the guise of poetry. Granted every art form is an outlet of emotion and thought, but poetic license can be strained just so far. Or so I thought.

Unfortunately it also appears that he must not have one true friend in the world, for no one with a trace of love or respect for the man would allow him to misuse (even abuse) publication rights, embarrass the intelligence of real poets and the reading public, and even to go so far as to offend the ecology in his wastefulness of paper with each copy.

I find it difficult to compare Brautigan with any poet, for as I mentioned his work is anything but prosaic or poetic, either verbally or in thought. So I'm left with no choice but to compare Brautigan with Brautigan.

Through the years he has managed to forge 8 alleged poetry books, 4 of which are out of print, and countless novels, his latest poetic work, undeniably his worst. **Loading Mercury With A Pitchfork** is the most distasteful, haphazardly collected book I've ever seen put in print. There were, in his earlier books, the impression of a burgeoning sensitivity and developing style. Refreshing and to the point. One short piece I had even unintentionally set to memory. "Window's Lament" ran:

It's not quite cold enough
to go borrow some firewood
from the neighbors.

This sort of piece paints a clear, almost altruistic portrait in my head. Of the winter's day, of the woman, of the kindness and comfort in knowing she relies on someone. In comparison, Brautigan now seems involved in a narrowing of topics for his study. He seems only able to deal with a short-sighted and (usually) egocentric variety of topics. For example, his unbearably trite maceration of sexuality in "Lighthouse,"

Signalling, we touch,
lying beside each other
like waves.
I roll over into her
and look down through
the candlelight to say,
"Hey, I'm balling you."

Nice going, Mr. Brautigan! I could stop right here and dissect the man, but I'll refrain. To continue with his flaming insecurity I'll cite this poem: "Everything Includes Us."

The thought of her hands
touching his hair
makes me want to vomit.

In a particular section in his book he gathers short portraits of what I assume are his assumed friends/acquaintances/lovers. "Ginger" . . .

She's glad
that Bill
likes her.

He proceeds through the next 14 pages filled with this ridiculous character sketching. Continuing downhill we turn the page to a more in-depth section on "Captain Martin" which I won't even get into it. It is sophomoric, amateurish impotent drivel.

Brautigan won some acclaim for his earlier books due to the life and times that the 60's and early 70's brought. But, as seen here he's still caught in his "very heavy, Karma-like dharma." It's really too bad, and really too evident as in "Information."

Any thought I have right now
isn't worth a shit because I'm totally
fucked up.

There seems no end in sight to his mindless babble. Maybe I'm missing some essential insight into Brautigan. But

I find no one to dispute my feelings.

Maybe I'm bitter because I wasted \$2.95 on a book printed in "unreturnable, unexchangeable" paperback.

Maybe I'm bothered by the fact that my own, and other peoples' poetry, is merely an unusually gratifying outlet but will never pay the bills.

Maybe I'm just anxious for this *soi-disant* pseudo-poet to be out of his and my misery.

All Brautigan seems to need is a good lay, a good semester or two at a good college, a good analyst, and a good dose of Fleets.



By "Jeanne Goddarde"

Jill Rapaport

I feel that it might be useful to put down my impressions of Godard and especially, his film MASCULIN-FEMININ. It seems strange to me that he has the reputation, deserved by Cocteau, Welles, Bunuel and certain others, of being an "enfant terrible." He is a terrible man, I think, and given especially his overinflated worldwide reputation of having leftist commitments, he is even more intolerable than he would be if he were, say, one of the innumerable prototypical film students the world over nowadays with a combination inferiority-superiority complex, but the kind that is uniquely bourgeois male. The kind that goes literally gaga over some fantasized eternally feminine muse, a goddess like Catherine in JULES ET JIM, a woman, with a capital W, whose every nosebleed is mysterious, whose every caprice is rooted in archetype. There is only one word for this concept which is only a male creation, and the word is bullshit, with a capital B.

Women, in the weltanschauung of a filmmaker like Godard, have the right to have "fabulous" qualities, unearthly beauty, enigmatic impulses, but never real life. 'Better dead than a real woman' might be Godard's unstated wish. And he certainly doesn't have to state it, it's perfectly clear in all his stupid issue.

I will concede that this sounds like vituperation and emotionalism. I can further admit that Godard is not, after all, "stupid." But this doesn't mean he's a genius. Nor a great filmmaker, nor a decent critic nor a theorist of particularly shining merit.

One has only to compare the work of Godard to that of other artists of the *nouvel vague*: Varda, Resnais, Duras, Rohmer, Chabrol. Without a great deal of difficulty they, and others much less well-known managed to make it past the age of acne.

A more complex but informative pattern is the comparison between Godard and Jane Fonda, whom he and his venal collaborator Gorin roasted in typical sexist male fashion, a little more hatefully, perhaps, in LETTER TO JANE. To know only the commonest knowledge of Jane Fonda's life is to see the extraordinary bravery she possesses as a woman alone, not to mention activist, artist, public person. Godard, who can maliciously and slobberingly attack her from his fat-assed film editing desk, might be asked

where he was at the time she was in North Vietnam, and no answer will excuse him. He deserves to go down in an annals of film history with John Wayne and Ronald Reagan. He doesn't merit any respect whatsoever as a human being because he is not one. He is a teenage man, conditioned into evil by his society and too much a coward to better himself.



Jody

Sleeping Beauty, or A Furry Tail

Barbara McBee

Once upon a lifelong time in a place the twin of this
Dwelt a damsel draped in rhyme, sleeping from a poisoned kiss.
No one knew whence the spell; none could name the reason why
Save one with no lips to tell, only beak to peck and cry:
Crimson-colored wingless bird, perched upon the shoulder bone,
Speaking not a songly word, scorched and stubborn as a stone.

All about this unstrange place flowed the seasons, passed the sun,
Lighting up the damsel's face 'round which spiders played and spun.
Fallen leaves and rising grass cushioned hip and covered breast.
Storms of crystal rain would pass; limbs with flakes of snow were dressed.
Scarlet-streaked impotent bird dreamt in vain of flying south,
Promise, passion, pain unheard from a speechless wounding mouth.

Then one day the tiny form of a beast with golden fur
Found a refuge white and warm underneath the chin of her
Who lay sleeping; and the trance-vision in her head began
Showing daemons in a dance with the shapes of maid and man.
Rosy-ringed uncertain bird widened disbelieving eyes
At the comic, undeterred evidence of life's surprise.

Sprung the trap of nature's sleep, woke the creature blurred with fat
When the sun had warmed him deep; stretched he longly like a cat.
Pad of paw or tip of tail brushed in sensible caress
Spell-bound lips; this, could not fail with awakening to bless.
Bleached and unbewitched bird soaring high on wings of peace
Uttered now the magic word to make the daemons' dancing cease.

Untitled

Elizabeth Hatzios Harris

You, sleeping, are like Endymion,
Beautiful enough to be beloved by a goddess,
Your graceful body casts a delicate aura,
Its light and warmth guiding me there.
Long-fingered hands, seemingly ascetic,
Are yet infinitely and intimately the hands
of a loving husband.
Nipples nestled in golden down feed my eyes
As your gently breath becomes my own.

Asleep,
You have the pale body of the dead Christ
In a Renaissance painting.
While I, like mother Mary,
Fold you close,
Hoping to protect you,
Ironically,
From what has already transpired.

Untitled

Maureen Endress

She persisted knowingly
hanging on to something
that never was
that faded reality
which is now
something she questions
and ponders on
again and again
that faded reality
which is now
only a dream
to relive over
again and again
at times love
is a 4-letter word
at times she remembers
it is part of her.

Untitled

Susan Nelson

Chagrin provokes the creep
of the caterpillar. Relentlessly,
destiny summons her to fancy,
the branch of the oak,
or tucked under the rain-gutter.
This weaver of fate,
in the forming chrysalis.
Through the bodily spool of
her in-bred tool
she has woven a matrix, so covert and seemingly lifeless.
The grub which could fool
the most curious of eye,
will be left undisturbed. Be rejected as worthless.
Till the moment arrives when
threads strewn to the skies,
she emerges. Empyrean to all, who must acquiesce.
These regal wings,
stave from the binds that
enslaved, once a worm. Now gives flight to the air,
till fate again takes a turn.
The butterfly . . . sky free,
till death carries her fare.

Colorfield

Lorraine Pistilli

A rainbow slid around the earth
Shedding pigment in the sand
There it labored to give birth
To a sprig held by a motley hand

The hands of time are dull no more
Iris lends the fauvist touch
Her pallet smile the rainbow wore
Expressions of the painter's blush

Encrusted hue, impasto mound
To shape, to shade, to share
Constructivist grows out of ground
Colorfield for gold leaf rare

Iris roots in earth and eye
Reflect impressionistic globe
Asterisk in *Stella sky
A universe of ruler's strobe.

*Frank Stella, modern painter of rainbows



not exactly the Parisian man

Barbara A. Valianti

the bent man. the young bent man
sat in corners
or in cotton covered chairs
eating notes on modern verse
and lighting cigarettes
with eiderdown dreams of his own
poetry.

the classical man on modern poetry.
the ex-patriot while in Paris.
the flag-waver in America.

wears his thrift-shop clothes
having caught up to the '60's.
the inconspicuous conspicuous man
with well made plans
of his exterior design.

The Last Rodeo

Bernadette Panzella-Schacht

he thought it was the dishes
and the kids
and the dirty underwear
he thought it was Cosmopolitan
and equal rights
and a man in New Mexico . . .
he blamed Gloria Steinem
and Bella Abzug
and Sylvia Plath
he blamed the dream peddlers
and the good life
and the celluloid sinners . . .
he said I wouldn't listen
and all the time he couldn't hear —
he called me libber and liar and liberal
and all the time he never knew —

I had to go,
because I could not stay



Woodcut: The Tree of Life

she is always cooking up poems

Muriel Fath

serving
mostly stuffing
the stuff
of unfulfilled potential
the meat of the matter
marrow bones
wishing it were
tender
succulent
and sensuous
carved splendor
voluptuous
wishing it were
irresistable
loving

Conspiracy

Bette Jane Johnson

Listen. Can you hear them? Wings beating the darkness, a silent cry in the graveyard silence. Raindrops, pattering against the glass like so many ethereal fingers. The invisible faces peer out of dark corners.

I sit alone by the fireplace, watching you, studying your every move. Reading your book you see and hear nothing from my world. Even now as they come to take me you are checking some obscure footnote.

You put down your book calmly, take up the pen and sign my life away. If I am alone in this world, perhaps it's better. Now, while I'm still in control of myself. For your sake I go quietly.

At the door I turn for one last look at you, and your image is burned into my mind forever. I see you smile at the faces as I am taken from the room. They share your plan.

Adulthood, Ghetto Style

Amina Munoz

the first time i dealt with
the inevitable act of self-destruction
was on kelly st., south bronx.
self-immolation in the twilight
bedroom in order to be born again.
the first time i gave up my
pink mini dress
was on a black jacket night.
the first time i got unwrapped
was on a christmas eve—
the last one.
santa claus was played by
a rapist with a concealed weapon
and a bag full of
empty presents.

Neogyne

Tiziana Morselli

In the fields of my mind
Songs of tomorrow were lost and
the reflection was that of a shadow
vanishing
vanishing wishes
wishes to be merely the hope
the hope of being a self . . . an . . . equal
Sharing thought.
The hope of having a chance,
to rip the script
to drown that traditional role;
leaving no remains . . .
not a contagious germ for others like me to catch
But a new seed will flourish and
the heavens will open for the second time—

